THE dopé’s TALE

A COUNTER HISTORY:
SCHOOLING SPACE AND IMPERIAL SUBJECTIVITIES

By

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Department of **EDUCATIONAL STUDIES**

The University of British Columbia
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Abstract

The body’s Tale

A Counter-History: Schooling Space and Imperial Subjectivities

The body’s tale traces the genealogy of my educated body. I used postcolonial autoethnographic methods in field research at sites of my schooling, combined with self-writing, to come to “know myself” through **Askesis**. The Tale uses poetry, narratives, academic prose and visuals, as well as liberal doses of irony; it is set in the temporal frame of an academic Book of Hours. A feminist and Foucaultian counterhistory, the Tale re-presents my education, in parodic and dis-associative ways, as a discursive and a colonizing practice which resulted in the (frequently willing) subjectification of myself as female, heterosexual, upper middle class, white and Imperial.

My subjectification began at Home, was perfected at school, and reinforced in university education. Capacitive and communicative power was literally applied to me/my body to induce a self-understanding of an essentially flawed interior with a “natural” sexual identity. My countermemories illustrate how I internalized the effects of pastoral power, learned to interpellate liminality, and to police the spatialized ingestion and abjection of identity creating substances. Profound early training limits my body’s ability to consciously subvert some subjectivities, like gender and race, even though I understand these to be performative.

Where power relations existed in educational settings, then, as an active agent, “fields of possibilities” for reworking subjectivities opened up to me, and especially in heterotopic and “liminal” places/contact zones like toilets, bathrooms, cemeteries, and hallways. I tell stories of frequently futile resistance struggles against dominating power, yet, as this power needs to be constantly applied to subjects, iteration contains the potential for its failure. Resistance to communicative power is possible through re-writing the self, and in correspondence with others; the Tale chronicles a parallel (largely unconscious and unplanned) body project, which successfully re-inscribed some subjectivities, simultaneously with the writing of the academic Tale, thus demonstrating the productivity of power relations.

University adult educators can become aware of: how we use power in education; the possibilities for change inherent in finding out and then resisting what “we are”; how subjectivities shift across spaces; and, how to counter our learned tendency to “swarm” out as colonizers/disciplinary mechanisms. We can practice an ethics of caring for the self, rather than caring for others—a discourse which cloaks pastoral power—where our aim is self-knowledge through writing and counter remembering.
# Table of Contents

## The body’s Tale

A Counter-History: Schooling Space and Imperial Subjectivities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abstract</th>
<th>ii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>iv-vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## The body’s Tale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>September</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th>625</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Appendix A: Narrative Genres in The body’s Tale** | 649 |
**Appendix B: A Note On Fonts and Visuals** | 653 |
A Preface...

The body's Tale

A Counter-History: Schooling Space and Imperial Subjectivities

Over the last four years I have traced the genealogy of my educated body. I have revisited places where I was schooled and trained, I have talked to old friends, old teachers and old lovers, and I've made new ones. I have written, every day, in every way, to find out how I became the subject I am, with the subjectivities I own. I began with a belief that education is both a discursive and a colonizing practice, and the body's tale has reinforced that belief. I have also, along the way, found much joy, as well as pain, in writing and researching, and am now ready to believe we take pleasure in the construction and inscription of some of our subjectivities. I discovered many other things over the last four years...

From earliest childhood, capacitative and communicative power was, literally, applied on to me/my body, in ill meaning and well-meaning ways, to induce a self-understanding of an essentially flawed interior. My body, as I know it, my soul-case, was constructed to contain and curtail this darkest and dirtiest natural sexual identity. By adolescence, I had internalized the mechanisms necessary to interpellate, on my own command, the liminality of the body, and to willingly police the spatialized ingestion and abjection of substances which delimit me from Other; constant monitoring by those in a pastoral power relation with me ensured slippage was detected and corrected. The subjectification of myself as female, upper middle class, white and Imperial, was begun at Home, perfected at school, and continuously reinforced in undergraduate education; by early adulthood, I was well trained as a colonizer/individual disciplinary mechanism, ready to
“swarm” out from the centre to the educational periphery, there to articulate on to others’

bodies the same techniques of power and discourse which had constructed me.

Subjectification is secured in boring and endless repetition; a petty daily litany of
eating, sleeping, talking, playing, having sex, and going to the toilet, “properly.” However,
writing my own story, as a counter history, and coming to “know myself” through aSKESI<S, a
form of ethical self care, has demonstrated that it is the effect of discursively formed
subjectivities that is crucial; the search for their origins or essential nature is far less

important. It doesn’t matter if I really believe I am flawed, as long as I act as if I am. My key
argument, however, is that power needs to be constantly applied, again and again, for its
success lies in iteration, as does the potential for its failure. The body-subject engages in its

own resistance struggles, which are sometimes expressed as consciously held performances,
like “bad girl,” or “troublemaker.” But the earliest, most profound, training of the body limits
its ability to consciously subvert some subjectivities, such as gender and race, even though
these may be cognitively understood to be performative.

If power relations, as defined by Foucault, exist in educational settings, then the “field
of possibilities” which open to me as an active agent, especially in heterotopias and
“liminal,” or in-between places, offers the space for several kinds of resistance struggles.
Resistance to dominating power is less meaningful or probable; some resistance to
communicative power is possible, through re-writing the self in aSKESI<S and in

correspondence with others. A largely unconscious and unplanned body project has produced

a new subjectivity, which has been constructed simultaneously with the academic story—
from the essential learned substance “girl who can’t do games,” a marathon runner has been
produced. There are thus two endings to this body Tale: A PhD and a Finish, both of which demonstrate the potential for the positive productivity of power relations.

Implications for practice include: becoming aware of the widespread use of pastoral power, as well as power relations, in education; the possibilities for change inherent in finding and then resisting what “we are”; understanding the learned tendency to “swarm” out as colonizers/disciplinary mechanisms; educators are encouraged to take up a practice grounded in an ethics of caring for the self, rather than caring for others—a discourse which cloaks pastoral power—where the aim is self-knowledge through writing and counter remembering. Through the use of narrative, a device more likely to appeal to a wider audience than the straightforward, traditional presentation of theory drawn from research, it is hoped more teachers and learners will become conscious of the possibilities for resistance to inequitable subjectification in educational spaces where power relationships exist, and may re-write their own Tales.

I also hope none of my readers will still want to become the operator of the panopticon, nor play the confessor by the time they get to the last page. And nor should you have resisted laughing out aloud at times, for humor and pain are good companions on our journeys...

Finally, all my resistance struggles will have been worthwhile if even just a few of you have difficulty walking through a doorway, or into a toilet, without thinking about some of the body's stories.
Acknowledgements

It seems a long time ago, the day I first considered doing a PhD, March 30, 1995; many times since then, from my official start date of September 1996, to today, October 9, 2001, I’ve thought, “I can’t do this, I just can’t.” I’ve heard that the path of the exile—the one who searches for where they belong, a place to call home, the woman who sets out to find her own soul, the genesis of her self, as I have been doing over these last four years—this person’s path is darkling, ill-lit, and lonely... many symbolic deaths occur along it... as when I say, “I give up,” when I feel I can’t take another step, speak to another person, visit another place of wounding, or a place in which I knew great happiness, and know it lost forever, when I can’t write another page, take another course, edit another paragraph, go to the library for one more book, print out one more draft, then I remember the Tale of the Ugly Duckling and Clarissa Pinkola Estes’ reading of it.

On a day in the early spring, when I was most forlorn, someone lent me the tape and I listened to it, mesmerized, knowing, surely, that duck’s doing a doctorate! I heard “most people have someone waiting at the side of the road for them,” and it’s true, for when I needed just one word or phrase, someone has stepped out of the shadows, often bringing light with them, and walked beside me, even a little way, along the rough path. Sometimes the person says something to me, or puts a blessing on me, wordlessly. These blessings have been enough to carry me, to give me energy and strength, not to finish, but to just take another step, run a few more paces, crest the hill, see the down-slope and know, maybe, maybe...

“When an exile is on the road, all kinds of mothers and fathers emerge...” As I’ve trudged my path on some days, raced along on other days, often with hope, sometimes with
the conviction “this work is good, this is worthwhile,” but more often with none, some of the most unlikely people have showed up to cheer me on, to run me in to the finish... Most of all I have come to realize, as I’ve been writing and telling the body’s Tale, that it’s a multigenerational story, and so my first gratitude is to the women of my family, those who didn’t have my choices or chances, but had a spirit they passed on to me. To my mother, Maisie, most of all; to my grandmothers, Dorothy and Edith; to my great-aunts, Barbara, Doris, Isobel; to my Auntie Barbara; to my mother’s sisters, all of you, thank you. Your tale has inspired mine. And to the men, my Uncle D., my father, the teachers in my life who were good, to my old friends and lovers, thank you.

To Heloise, who reminds me the exile and the stray can find IJorrie, and to my “family” here now, William, Tizzy, Bertie and Sam, thank you, and there’ll be all the tuna you can eat and all the crunchies you can throw up... soon. To my friends, all of you, in England, Canada, and the US, and especially, Johanne, Marlene, Sonia, and Lyn, who have encouraged me via email, voicemail, and letter, and in person, thank you. To my university “mothers and fathers,” thank you for having faith in my project and encouraging me along the way—especially to Tom, who has lent me his camera, his computer, his books, his time; it’s been a long seven years, and I’ve got two degrees out of it, I hope I’ve given you some things of value, too, not counting the postcards! And to Patricia, move over, I’m coming into the kitchen; to Carl, thank you for telling me I could write; and to Gerry, for being spacious to me, as I wandered in Geography...

I have to go now, I’m running a race soon, and my body says I have to get off the computer, get out ... and stop writing!
the body's tale

a counter history:

schooling

space

and

Imperial

subjectivities

By
Valerie-Lee Chapman

(and the body)
In the Duc du Barry's Book of Hours, the illustration for September depicts peasants in the foreground harvesting grapes (one of whom is clearly losing his trousers), while a fine crenellated castle makes an important and flattering background; the Virgin and the Scales look down upon the fruitful scene, observing rich and poor, grapes, fields, mules and cattle. In my Book of Hours, I return to school, looking for bodies, the academic year begins, and the Tale begins to unfold, in ways familiar and strange. In this section of the work you can find:

- Autumn and the Year Begins, A Poem
- A DOORWAY Poem
- A Map of the Heavens, a Narrative
- Upwardly Mobile, a Narrative
- A Postcard Story: To the OLD GODS
- Speculum/altars, a Meditation
- Lovers, a Poem
- Bathroom Story: The Limes
- Bodies in Libraries
- A BOOK OF HOURS
Autumn Again And The Year Begins

Waves and flume wind on the sea, the sea too full trying to come on to the land
The seawall shrinking from the water
And sun
And rain
And wind and walking.
Running into the wind, breathing hard
Pulse high and legs hurting smiling
Leaves falling, flopping
Flapping, flipping just out of my hands.

39 years on and I still can’t catch one
wanting one because it means a whole
year’s luck I knew that at 11.
Conkers brown and sticky and ready
to fight or fright. The smell of frost
leaves dying and excitement, a
new year!

Cold crisp chilly clammy plums and damsons and greengages and
singing *We Plough The Fields And Scatter* and
harvest home is wrong, it’s
seed time new time fertile mind planting time.
Sycamore seeds whirling helicopters
fall into my hands at least a month of good luck.
Heart pounding racing and trying to catch red

Leaves running and gulls crying and drab brown ducks
and fierce anticipation all the glories of learning and writing and essays and tests
and splendid new things to know.
Then and now who knows who sees who cares who learns
eleven or fifty one all the same
and my mind is still too full like the sea
trying to climb the wall and so

Autumn and the year begins!
**DOOR-WAYS**

**DOOR**: a gate, English; Middle English, *dore*; Anglo-Saxon, *duru*; Latin *dore*

See also:

*dores*, plural, many doors, doorways, twelve in all, twelve seasonal *dores*

a hinged, sliding or revolving barrier that closes an entrance or exit,

*entrance*, to bewitch, to cast a spell over

*doorway*, a means of obtaining or approaching something like

*a dissertation*, a story, a life, a work, a piece of, a slice of

*door-keeper*: stands at the door, a doorman, a person on duty at the entrance to a degree of doctor of philosophy

*door-man-reader*, I am ringing your doorbell, do you hear me, read me?

*doormat*: a mat placed at a door for wiping dirt from shoes; a very submissive person as in not-Valerie, as in *not-Valerie's-ocity*, which gets to write the opening

*door-way*, into the life-of-slice

*doorway*: an opening filled by a door

*doorstep*: a step or area just outside a door; a thick slice of bread; see also, doorstop

*body has doorways, three doorstops/tips to stop up doors*

*skin* is a doorway, no stop, no step... skin is a lintel

See also:

*lintel*: a horizontal piece of timber or stone over a door or other opening; from limit, a boundary, akin to *limen*, a threshold, *limus*, Latin to traverse

*body* learned those at the *Limes, French and Latin and boundaries*

from boundary, to limit

*body was limned at Limes*
also allied to, *preliminary*,
the work, the life-sliced-door-stopped-up-opening-body
from the Latin, *liminaris*, coming-in, and, the beginning or threshold...

See also:
*āucid; bright, to shine, white, allied to light, lightbringer, morning star, from the Latin, *ferre, luci-fer*

*a devilish piece-slice-of-devil's food-cake, just like Mother made*
*luminous, bright, and allies to *lunar*, giver of light, to shine, Latin *lucere*

See also:
*luminary, a bright light,*

the *body-wearer, her to be doctored, fixed by the doorkeepers, doctored, doors all stopped up now,

ready for *light work*

See also:
*humanic; literally, mad-afflicted by the moon*

and *lustrue, a lustrum, a window, shining and pellucid, transparent,*

and *sublunar, under the moon, as in the earth,* and also, *translucent,* to let shine through

as in *illuminate,* to limn, paint, burnish

and a final *body/doorway/stop-word*

*lucubration,* a working by lamplight; to bring in lights

"Lighting up time, my dear," says my grandma, at dusk, "how the nights do draw in!"

And although a faint light still remains, the door closes shut

*a nearly doctored body*

retires for the night.
Letty, my best friend at college, went up to University College in 1968, fresh from her small seaside town, an innocent abroad in the world’s biggest city, and the most impressive thing about UCL, she thought, was the portico and frontage of the college, facing out to Gower Street. Pillared, and Victorian/Greek, Jeremy Bentham’s progeny is nothing like his panopticon. Until you venture into the building underneath those huge pillars, and find yourself in its central space. This rotunda, with its corridors and doors leading off in eight directions, we used to call the Octagon. Students there still do. The College calls it South Junction or something equally boring. It is a perfect space for being seen and seeing... panopticon-style, one can arrange to meet and be met—or not. I was stood up there in 1970 by a lawyer, waited for jurisprudence for a half hour until I gave up the legal life and went for tea instead with some historians.

Imagine yourself now in a similar space. It’s busy, people rushing to and fro, strolling, chatting, many carrying books, bags, food, drinks, while some perch on benches and eat sandwiches or crisps or apples. You stand there, buffeted by bags, packs and knapsacks, and the odd umbrella pokes you where you’d rather it didn’t. Unlike my college’s eight entryways, this space has twelve doors, debouching and swallowing bodies as you watch.
Maybe you’re like me and you read your horoscope. So for us, it’s a zodiacal interstellar locality. Cancer wheels past, nipping at the toes of the Lion, the Archer staring dreamily over the shoulder of the Twins… Transits, ascendants, rising signs, natal nodes, astrological certainties…

And maybe, like me, you’re a medieval historian by training, and now you’ll recognize it’s an architectural Book of Hours. See, here we are, peasants in a pre-literate locale. We can’t make out the words on these twelve doors, but we can understand the pictures… pastoral scenes all, wintery, summery, autumnal, vernal, greens, russets, azure blue skies… and we know if we walk over to peer at them, we will find ourselves falling down into the pictures, haymaking, or swine-herding, happily feasting and gorging in autumnal splendour… or, god forbid, starveling, shivering, in icy midwinter bleakness.

Or, perhaps like me, you are hooked on your horologe, and this is nothing more nor less than a placed-time-piece, a timed and timing zone of small hands and big hands and second hands, and ten-minute miles, 10 km hours and chronotopic sprints. Or perhaps like me…

Alright, let’s just stand here and see what it truly is. (As if any thing has a true-ness and an is-ness, but, see here, let’s not be postmodern, let us instead aim for understanding).

Twelve doors then. And behind this decagonal meeting place, more meeting places. Twelve. Some worded, some wordless. Some metered and rhymed, some prosaic. Stories, many stories. Pictures—if you’re lucky, pretty coloured things to look at, not wordy things to head/hurtingly make-sense-of. And Me. (Who’s me? Who knows, isn’t that what this is about? Ok, so, Who’s Who there?). Theoreticians? Yes. Behind this and that door, Michel Foucault, bald head in hands, discoursing with Judith Butler, several spacey female geographers. Friends, teachers, mentors, playmates and bullies and enemies… Many Me’s. A ɔdɔdɔ behind every door.
Perhaps one whole doorway opens on to a West Coast space, a rainy day...oh, yes, look over here, a furiously paced espresso/\textit{dody} bar, \textit{dodyista}’s serve up steamy-foamy drinks, and hot air clinging to wet skins and umbrellas, we’ll stand in line, patiently waiting, admiring the smooth moves, choreographed/caffeinated/creations, watching, waiting for our \textit{dody} to be called out. “Pick up over here!!” Turn and see, Oh, look! Hissing, spurting, bodies rise like Botticelli’s Venuses, delicate toes hidden in their styrofoam shells...

And for sure, behind these doors there are schools, and colleges, and classrooms and blackboards and overheads and erasers and satchels and blazers and gymslips and ties and socks and bloomers and plimsolls and walking shoes and runners and trainers and sweats and jeans and inkwells and ruled sheets and three hole punches and boring books and paper-covered ruled line writing in books, and books with fifteen or fifty names signaling the years passing and the texts unchanging and boredom and pain and prizes and speech days and graduation days and silent days and sonorous days and buzzing days and bristling days and free days and not-free days...

I expect, no, I know, there will be some poetry. And words. How many? I don’t know. You can do the word count. And some lovely fonts, one for each voice, one like this for \textit{dody}, one like this for \textit{DESRVAUX}, and one like this for \textit{GODDESSS} and one like this for \textit{Imperial Women}.

And like all circularities, curvaceous, clockly or celestially seasonal, you can start anywhere and find a story, a theory, a collage, a prosody. I can guarantee you intelligibility—after a few \textit{DESRVAUX}. Start where you like and come and go as you please. And don’t worry, there’s a \textit{BATHROOM} behind every door, so you won’t be caught short. Enjoy!
Oh, I almost didn’t hear you, I have to be on my way, I have places to go, spaces to see, and my identity’s waiting outside for me. Why should you read this? All about me? And what’s it do with you? Well, I read a book by a good friend of mine, and he said, *We teach who we are.* And I teach, so I need to know who I am. That’s the pedagogical explanation. And I live, and I want to know how and where I live and what my body is to me and was to me and will be to me...

.... and because there’s a mirror on the back of every bathroom door... and if you look in the mirror of me, you’ll see you... or you can just sit and take a nap, if you want, I won’t tell on you, but I might catch you, like I caught the man in South Junction, below, sleeping on the bench, tired out from all the rushing around... but I won’t say a word, trust me...
Upwardly Mobile White Writing: September 3rd 1999

The sleazoid launderette down the street from Ed’s B and B.

Wash and clean no way dirty place to play with my new toy mobile phone.

Oliver hates mobiles and black women in equal parts women should have mobiles for when they go into unsafe spaces the phone genders and renders space unsafe and protects men’s privacy. The mobile becomes a phallocentric device. Men fondle them on tubes and trains.

He said Clapham Common is full of black women screaming into their mobiles kids on every arm breeding like rabbits some go back to school at 20 25 I say and they learn to be different but he doesn’t hear. A dark thought where did he learn to be that way oh at college of course.

He was funnier then.

Need to put some money on the phone.

Need to lose weight.

Need money why don’t they send me my Killam money?

Phone them tomorrow. Mobile student calling from foreign strands.

Beautiful sunset underwear greying in dryer outside orange sky and orange blinking Belisha beacon a very English ornament.

Bands of colour, blue, pale pink, grey orange and red. Darkening.

A dark man and with all his faults he remembered the day of my birthday.

Cultural experiences. Gendered phones and technology and restaurants and bars and the teashop in the cathedral. Women ganging up. Raced spaces. Which one isn’t. Class at the bed and breakfasts beaches food library eating shops voice hearing seeing words intonation body “carriage” surface and insides all classed.

A lovely morning in the monastery garden at the Cathedral.

Lots of churchy stuff still over here.

Mobile.

I am mobile.

My number is up in and out.

Oh a phone call, my auntie to see if it works. And it works. I am British, my mobile proves it. You cannot be British whatever colour gender and accent without a moby.

Did I know about race and class and gender in 1970.

No. Yes.

A dark night now. Clothes dry. Back to ghastly Ed and dark thoughts. What did I learn then when he learned how to be a racist and fascist.
A POSTCARD TO THE OLD GOD
... A QUANTITATIVE RESEARCHER

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Do your n's recite poetry?
Do they dance for you? or
Do they slide shyly behind slumbering anova's?
Do your n's make you cry?
Do your n's get the giggles?
Do those n's have a sneaky side?
Perhaps they excite you with their boldness?
Or soothe you?
Do n's tell you(r) stories?
Do n's sing to you?
Do n's live for you or for themselves?

And by the way,

I'd still rather be an anecdote than a statistic
Sunday November 14, 1999: Back home in Canada, even if not “at home.” Arrived in Saskatoon late last night and my cousin’s husband, Arnfinn, picked me up—it was so nice to see a North American face and get a welcome back. I thought several times I wouldn’t make it home... a typical trip.

Swarms Flying On One Wing....

I got a taxi to Victoria, from London House, with a typical cabbie. They hear my voice, assume I am American and begin gently insulting me in the mistaken belief I will not pick up that what seems to be humorous banter to the foolish tourist, is actually sarcastic commentary... all about stupid naïve Americans who pay large sums of money to be driven the wrong and long way to their destination. What are they all, Henry James reincarnated? I switch representations and slip into my London (lived-here-seven-years-no-class-accent-did-my degree-at-college-just-over-there-where-you’ve-driven-past-three-times-know-exactly-what-you’re-getting-at-you-rude-git-and-I-don’t-give-a-toss-and-don’t-even-bloody-dream-you’re-getting-an-american-size-tip-for-taking-me-around-the-houses) front stage performance, as Goffman would say. I had fun. He didn’t. He never even moved a finger when we got there, just glared at me from his padded seat, made me carry all my bags myself into the station.

I started thinking of that article I read in Derek’s class, the one about the panopticon at Poona by the anthropologist, who was it, Martha Kaplan... much, of course, on my mind lately, as I have been visiting Mr. Panopticon himself, over in his box at UCL. I remember reading about how, long before Foucault took up his idea for the Panopticon and put the desire for the wretched thing into every well read bureaucrat or criminologist’s head, some early nineteenth century British civil servant or judge, a colonial type anyway, thought it was
a grand idea, and planned to build one in Poona, in India, early 19th century, and then when it did get built, it didn’t work.

That’s the whole point, I thought, standing there in Victoria Station, watching the cab driver shoot off tip-less in a cloud of disgusted diesel fumes, the bloody thing doesn’t work. Because the swarms who come out from the centre of the disciplinary bloc, the ones who are supposed to enforce surveillance and discipline, the petty clerks in charge of actually lowering the grid over our heads to trap us in our partitioned metaphorical spaces with our carefully rehearsed movements, all pedagogically guaranteed to articulate time, place and body with normalizing or pastoral power, well, the swarms aren’t as well trained as they could be, or something, because it doesn’t bloody work...

See here, right now, I thought, some drone or worker bee acting in a power relation with his boss, casting a cynical eye over the field of possibilities open to him, and no doubt smiling smugly as he reports he’s finished his task—designing access to the New Express Rail Service from Victoria to Gatwick in Just 15 Minutes!—look what he’s done... Cunningly placed the arriving passenger, laden with heaps of recalcitrant and knobbly hip and shin gouging luggage, at the top of a flight of stairs, with no elevator or escalator available to get to the booking office and platforms. I had to laugh! Only in Britain, long live the bloody-minded swarms!

I carried all my stuff up, found the platform I needed was down two flights, as well as the information that I didn’t need to buy a ticket up here anyway, only on the train, (hah! See, no sign about that at the Arrival levels!), and carried it all back down to the departure platform. Once on the train, I paid the ticket lady an amount of money for the fifteen-minute trip which would have paid my rent for a month in Vancouver, and settled back.
Heavy Bodies

Arriving in Gatwick, I found, of course, after queuing up for an hour to check in, that my luggage weighed over 44 lbs and I would therefore have to queue all over again at another place to pay them a punishment/fine/ransom for being too heavy, before they'd give me my boarding pass. Once on the plane, I strapped in and got all ready to go, panting triumphantly at my three-minutes-to-spare dash to the gate from my double queuing experience, yet another grid which failed to work! Alas, not so quick to leave...

A passenger who needed oxygen, maybe, and hadn’t brought their own (I mean, if you need oxygen, that’s pretty vital, wouldn’t you bring it with you??), and the plane couldn’t take off without the passenger getting some, courtesy of British Aviation rules, so we waited for four hours, lashed into our Canada 3000 seats, peanut-less and drink-less, while the entire Gatwick airport conurbation was scoured for a canister of oxygen, and, one found to be lacking, a call was made to London, to have one sent down on the next fifteen minute express train that takes 35 minutes, and finally we took off. This smooth and efficient morning’s work ensured I would miss my connection in Calgary for Saskatoon...

I am happy to say, though, that Canadian Airlines waited a half hour for me and I got on my plane, still, it’s true, in my hard armored sharp London shape, and it was a long while til I could find my softer Canadian one...
November 15, 1999: Visited Lindsay at work, great exhibit!

Crotchety Feminists

I went with Lindsay, my cousin the artist, (a print maker with an MFA degree, a house full of stunning and un-saleable in Saskatchewan pieces, four cats and a husband) to the Craft Gallery where she works.

A wonderful exhibition by a Saskatchewan craft artist. Pictures in needlepoint, crocheted and knitted objects and quilts and button pictures; each piece showed a stage of her fraught relationship with the medical establishment, as they progressed together through her four year long bout of suffering with a complex and uncommon disease. That weird one where you keep falling over, and your muscles waste, and things happen inside and they can’t find out what it is.

I was amazed—here’s a blanket crocheted and buttoned, its colors reveal a doctor’s disapproving face as he tells her she is imagining it all; next, a series of computer monitors, all covered in little wooly knitted blankets, where each pattern shows a scan, or x-ray of her muscles and joints; then, an embroidered cushion set shows her operations; and now, my favorite, a mound of cold shiny metal speculums? specula? all piled up in a great heap on the floor, to show just how many brutal internals she has had. But as she says, “because I come from a family of women who suffer and knit, I crafted my way through each torture,” so each speculum is covered in a little wooly coat, a heaped and gaudy collection of warmed up coverings, so many feminizing pastels smoothing out hard abrasive masculine surfaces… I think I’ve written about this myself somewhere, where?
Vancouver at Home: An illuminative epiphany today: one that “symbolically represents a major problematic moment in a person’s life”, as Norman Denzin says. I have struggled all my life to fit myself into the places I am supposed to be. At 7, 27, 37, I have tried to fit myself in, cram my questions into other’s spaces, dislocated my sense of self, trying to articulate myself onto the Other’s world. Then, this morning, I decided to stop referencing. I step outside the academic place I have been (re)fe(er)enced in and say, “No, I won’t.”

Since coming to graduate school I have fought a losing battle with myself over referencing, and footnotes, and headers, all the survival gear the academy thinks its workers should suit up in before reporting for work at the coalface/monitor. I have never been able to master these schemata—what level of headings, where does the comma go, why can’t you do footnotes and endnotes...

I didn’t wonder why I don’t fit, how I could find out, until standing naked in my living room today, stopped half way to the shower, book in hand, I read Louise Heshusius and Keith Ballard’s plea for a way of knowing and living in the academy that honors somatic, affective and emotive epistemologies, as well as the rational. I thought, “Oh, I could ask my body why I am referentially and APA-challenged...”

It seems I/and/or/my body doesn’t like these cold intrusions into my text. bell hooks says that the interpolation of dates and names of third parties disrupts the dialogue between reader and writer... yes, it puts a judge, a mediator between the two. For me, it goes further, because when I am writing passionately, with fervor, the insertion of a footnote, an (1996) outcropping, breaks the spell, it’s a narrative pelvic exam—you know what’s coming, but when that speculum goes in (and if it’s a male doctor, it’s always freezing cold), it’s still a
huge shock, even braced as one is, it’s a violation, and the heart and lungs and uterus STOP, dead, for a moment, stunned. Expected or not, the speculum/date is an ugly surprise.

I have decided not to break the reading/writing spell. But I know what it’s like, too and I’ve said, “Who said that, where can I find those words,” so I’ve put all that stuff at the end. Have a smooth read.

Chronotope Vancouver June 22, 2001

Well, I’m not bell hooks. Maybe I should have changed my name, too. I’ve tried to avoid the APA speculum and not always been successful. I’ve compromised in the oooy’s Tale.

Where it’s a narrative, a poem or a story, there’s no specs, wooly covers or not, no grids around the text, no panoptical prose mechanisms. But, in the academic writing, the swarms are at work, covering the naked shape of the words with brackets and periods and commas in the right places and names and numbers. Two styles?? Well, what’s a subjectivity or two between friends—one without APA and one with? But I can promise you, if I mention a person or a text, you will find them identified at the end, in the Tale’s tail... well at least their names...

Have a smooth, safe read.

speculum 2 temporalities

Vancouver October 3, 2000:
When I started out writing my identity I wanted a narrative that would comfort the I, startle the Other into seeing me as I really am. I wanted a story which would tell me why things happened, a story to make me sleep well, a story to make me happy. I wanted to rediscover identity, I wanted to be whole again. In short, I wanted a traditional history, as Foucault
might say. Narrative was my desire, my desire was for history as a lovely story, but that was not my life nor my lived experience. Instead, I got an effective history.

What’s The Date?

As I write and read and wander in search of my subjectivities, I find, instead of a nice, seamless story which starts Here, goes to There, and ends Now, hopefully happily, I have a collection of stories of “countless lost events, without a landmark or a point of reference.” Well, there are landmarks, doorways, and toilets, too, but you get the point... this Tale is a counterhistory. I’ve discussed this further along, but it seems a good idea to give you a bit of a warning, if you’ve started here at what seems to be the beginning, about what you might get. It’s not WYSIWYG, here; there’s enough shifting sands of time in my stories to give Scherazade a run for her money.

What Foucault says about counterhistory in Nietzsche, Genealogy and History confirmed, or, (don’t tell the Foucault Police I said this), authorized the account that was writing itself on my computer, in spite of my best efforts to order it. I found out that the “traditional devices for constructing a comprehensive view of history and for retracing the past as a patient and continuous development must be systematically dismantled.” Bad news, really, it meant I had to recognize and “dismiss those tendencies that encourage the consoling play of recognitions. Knowledge, even under the banner of history does not depend on ‘rediscovery,’ and it emphatically excludes the ‘rediscovery of ourselves.’” Damn.

my body has been holding

a pocket of pain
grief, fear, anger, rage,
envy,
lostnesses in folds,
still it holds tightly
love in its tissues,
scars on its skin,
tears in its blood,
joy in its veins,
ever withholds bliss.
1997
“Stories are important for our identity, they can tell us who we think we are,” I used to say; I thought I could fuse my experiences with my stories, then interpret that new story, and thus find a new identity. Get a better subjectivity with a better story. I pondered, “Will I find my life story, its essential ‘truth’ in this new re-story”? By telling my story, interpreting it, I thought, hoped, I could change my life.

Troubled By Tribbles
I thought I could stand outside time, and see an event, re-tell it, re-create it in a story to inform my present time—there would be a fusion of horizons. I know, now, that time is as much a social construct as any of my stories, or bodies, and since I’ve discovered I’ve been writing “effective history” all the way along, I am very much afraid I’ll never find the right time for the right story. Mind you, I’ve told some of my stories several times, and each time they change, and, while there is a relativistic irritation about all these proliferating stories, a plague of Tribbled Selves, there’s a comfort, too. For in the space between each timed telling, there’s room to tell it differently. No inner essential truth, but a lot of truths. Like Foucault says, no immortal soul, just many mortal ones.

Paraphrasing Foucault, I can say now that history becomes “effective,” rather than traditional, to the degree that it introduces discontinuity, dissociation, into my story—it divides my emotions, dramatizes my instincts, fragments identities, multiplies my body parts and sets It against Itself. “Effective” history deprives me of the reassuring and assumed stability of life and nature; it uproots its traditional foundations and relentlessly disrupts its pretended continuity. “This is because knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting” (Foucault, NHG, p. 88—so much for my stand on naming, hey?).
Witnesses Wanted

In my Tale, I’ve been cut apart, and in turn, I’ve cut time and narrative apart, disordered the smoothness and evolutionary nature of it all, stopped myself from thinking (and of course, you too, when you’ve finished reading the Tale), “Well, finally I know what happened, and why it did, and how it all turned out! Good, now I can pick up this new and improved body and get on with life!”

I had a sense of this some years ago, when I wanted to ensure my story had a quality to it that evoked witnessing. Shoshona Feldman defines narrative as “verbal acts consisting of someone telling someone else that something happened... that ‘something happened’ is history.”

She argues for narrative as testimony, for it to open up, in the belated witness, history “in one’s own body,” a knowledge of what it means to be “from here.” In an age of testimony, Holocausts and silences, and questions of belonging, we must bring the reader/listener/witness to the other side of “here”.

In his grueling fifteen hour documentary about the Holocaust, Shoah, Lanzmann rejects the usual narrative in which the reader would have prior knowledge of what was to come, a clear beginning, middle and end... an end in which the Holocaust could be past. The Holocaust must always be present. There should be no continuity, no closure, no distance for
the witnesser. "The voice of the commentator must be clearly heard. The commentary should disrupt, introduce alternative interpretations, question any partial conclusion, withstand the need for closure." Lanzmann says we might be tempted to answer the "why" question—why do such things happen? But he rejects any answering, any settling for the "truths" of "why." His film is not chronological, has no cause and effects, it ... is. There is no why...

Primo Levi tells us that the rule of Auschwitz was thus taught from his arrival in the camp by an SS guard. "There is no why": this law is also valid for whoever assumes the charge of such a transmission. Because the act of transmitting alone is important and no intelligibility, that is, no true knowledge, preexists the transmission. It is the transmission that is knowledge itself. (cited, La Capra, 1997).

I used to think this was wrong, that to be narratives should answer Lanzmann, and Foucault—I We're all monsters and all us to why... but for my feminist, and a poet even, not monsters, and how gets "how" to be useful, as a there must be an element of testimony or witnessing, to the Tale. I am aware that witnessing can be painful, embarrassing and messy. There is a world apart of different pains in the places between genocide and education. But pain is pain, and it should be witnessed. As should joy and light and laughter and hope; there's a lot of that stuff too, in my stories.
The shifting temporalities might you make you a bit “cross”, as my grandma would say, cross eyed and cross brained, even if nothing else does. Yet, that’s the way it is, really, in un-real life stories, no beginning time, no ending time, no why, no smooth river of time

13 ships

1 walked the seawall every day and every night when you left
1 counted the ships at rest in the day and thought
one day there will be more than 13 ships and
magic will happen and you will return

but one day there were 14 ships and one
steaming in and you still didn’t come.

why?

so much for magic 2000

mean, it would be untrue to the spirit of counter history to have time flow through this text in an orderly and smoothly continuous way. If this is to be a counterhistory then it will disrupt and challenge the usual story line, it will disturb our notions of time. There are varying temporalities in this Tale. Just as the spaces shift, from London to Louth to Vancouver to Changi, from bedrooms to schoolrooms to toilets and hallways, so too do the times shift. In one story I am 8, in the next I am 48, and suddenly I am 18, or 28 and maybe I will be speaking as I will when I am 78. I am in Nutford House at 19, 49, 50, which time is which, and I am being examined in 1960, 2000 and 1972...

The temptation is to make it all neat and retell it so that my toilet stories match Foucault’s heterotopias, and my body stories match the body I have now, and the times are all nicely chronological, but that’s an effective history… with an ending in one identity.
Once into it, though, the stories take over and it gets easier. Trust me. Or perhaps it is best to be uncomfortable? Keep on our timely toes? Run like the wind or at least, hare around? Perhaps we should not wrap the speculum in light fluffy hazy pastels, perhaps we should keep our image of the cold hard timely instrument in front of us, eye to eye, even if we want to squirm? I don’t know.

speculum in overheated?

Vancouver June 24, 1999
I ran my second marathon today, amazing, it gets easier, the body modifications are for real, no need to have read that special edition of body and Society, just needed to sign up for running... happy, with my medal round my neck and my number, 184, still pinned on my chest, I stopped at the Little Mermaid With No Nipples to get an illicit cup of coffee... noticed, for the first time, the caution on the cup: Enjoy this beverage, but it’s hot so be careful!

Caution! Contents are HOT!

I think it was a message to me. I need to say, if I am ethical, I should issue you a similar safety warning before you plunge your lips into this text, sipping at stories here and there. You may not like some of these stories, they were hard to write and will be difficult to read, witnessing and all that, seeing my suffering and, what some might say, is my immorality, (well at least out in the Valley), and, if you know me, you may not be able to look at me again, or I you, without some embarrassment.

You may not agree, either with my choice in telling them, but I felt if I was going to do the body’s tale, then it had to be a real body, with all the grotesquerie and ugliness that real bodies bring. Bakhtin’s carnival sounds so nice, doesn’t it, in the safety of the library, or in earnest debate with graduate students, but when it gets real, it’s pretty ugly. Or beautiful. I think much of the writing here is honest, stunning at times, graceful at others, and disgusting
too often. But that is what I intended, that translates the fancy but dense prose of my last SSHRC application:

My study will “give [Butler’s] abstract text some body” (Bordo, 1993); it moves from the abstract, non-specific, third-person textual representations of the post-modern feminist “body” to “my body,” in “a plunge into lived experience and particularity” (Rich, 1986.) I have chosen to use myself as subject because I do not wish to speak for others (Alcoff, 1992) and also because my body, although inhabiting deeply personal and private spaces, has been historically shaped by political forces and public systems of control; as such, my body can serve as a synecdoche, a metonymical allegorical device, for Woman/body.

Chapman, 1998 ©

My tales, my plunges, if you like, are ugly, dirty, all that, yes, like life and the body; I would be untrue if I only told the stories poetic, or made good. So, yes, embarrassment reading and the the cartesian litmus test

18 this knowing untouched by human hand?
18 it contaminated by relation
or constructed cleanly in isolation?
were any bodily fluids exchanged in the production of this theory
this learning?
any tears, blood, sweat, snot, semen?
any discharges at all?
1998

and here is the glory of Derridean and poststructural textuality (that’s an ironic comment), the writing of them makes them into texts. I am able to read them, then, as texts, not as “me,” and I obtain some objectivity on them. (Not all. I cry each time I edit some and cringe at others). I hope this will work for you, too. And for those wondering if I selected only from a certain pool of well-known and pre-worked material, no. I did find out things about myself I had rather not, as I wrote my body, and many of those stories I didn’t put in… and many I did. But we should remember, “Once you get it past the teeth, it’s ok.”
Also remember: It’s a selection from time and space, and it’s not me, and it’s not my life, and it’s not my body, it’s a representation… of what might have happened to a girl a woman and a teacher and lover and learner and person and daughter and friend … or not… the telling changes the representations, and so does the reading, what my intention was is mutated by our reading. Are they real? Are they true? I don’t know. Real enough, true enough, wrong enough, fiction enough.

Ahh, The Matter Of Interpretation!

If you were there at the time, if you were one of my friends, or lovers, or teachers, your interpretation of my story and body, especially where it intersects with yours, may differ radically with mime. If you told it, it would be different! I know that. The thing is, it’s my body and my tale, and only my story… my interpretation, and remember, my interpretation is supposed to be an answer to my beginning purpose: “My autoethnography will trace the making of my/the educated body, with particular attention to how gender, sexuality and class are inscribed on its surface.”

I wanted, too, to reserve the right to be as critical as possible—theoretically critical, that is. (One of the reasons I chose my body to work on, how could I be so rude about some one else’s?) I also wanted to be able to be merciless and treat my stories and poems and tales as data, to shred them, looking for meaning and implications and discourse and power relations… I wanted to be able to say, this is because of, or that happened when, and, look at this theme! When I did my previous study for my thesis, I gave my participants the right to change my stories of them if it didn’t fit with their interpretation. I honored their wishes, of course. But I felt that made my study a lot less incisive and critical theoretically. This time,
it's my story and my body and my interpretation—any one else's story is only a lens to view mine, a different set of glasses to put on for me, too, when I read my own too well known, old story. When I interviewed people I was interested in their Story, but it was peripheral to me figuring out my Story/body. Often I used their stories to trigger my memories, people helped me see things from a different angle, gave me space and time to re-vision, "think differently." When we talked, sometimes people agreed with my interpretation—and often they didn't. Letty thinks there was nothing wrong with our undergrad education, it was me and my personal life that's at question; yet my Tutor and one of my Professors shared my dis-ease with my college; others loved it all, said it made them what they are today, happy and successful. It made me what I am today, too.

If you were there (at school in Louth, or in a hallway with me, or washing your hands at the sink as we looked in the mirror in the Ladies, or traveled on a train, or went to lectures, or shared my bed) with me, you may not recognize yourself. Or you may, and you'll know that's not your name!

 Naming Again
That's been another choice I've made. I realized—although everyone (only two people wanted to be nameless) wanted me to use their first name and not make them anonymous and signed my consent forms to do so—stories and names might make them identifiable to readers they didn't even know about when we talked. Now, my cousin Arnfinn (that's his real name), from his lofty PhD heights, says no one but the "thesis guys who have to," read a dissertation, and this could be true—but, just in case, I have taken the liberty of changing names and disguising details that might render someone "visible." I considered changing places and schools and university names, but that seemed too much. If anyone is really
interested, they can figure out where and when one was at school—after all, it’s right on the frontispiece of this dissertation.

Power At Work
There’s still a fear I have that some of you might not like my stories, but again, remember they’re only my stories, not the “truth” about life, and ourselves/yourselves. I tried to pick extracts or words or anecdotes or stories that illustrated themes and conclusions I was drawing; there were many more of your stories I withheld, good ones that made things even more clearer... but that was an ethical issue for me, too “clear,” in terms of revealing who it was who was storying. I would have loved to include more stories, say, from my graduate study, but the thing is, I’ve learned a great deal about power while creating this text, so I thought it not too wise to walk too far down that path. Not if I want to be a doctor some day. Now, there’s a really power-full statement.

And a last little story: there were some stories I didn’t dare to ask about...When I interviewed staff at my old college, two of them told me they had got out my file in preparation for their time with me. My god, a file on me is still available and on hand, 29 years later! I could have demanded to see it. I didn’t. I didn’t want to read it. I wanted to reserve the right to my interpretation of that story. It was bad enough to have lived 30 odd years believing my name had finally made it on to the Honors Boards that hung in my old school hall... read the rest of that story elsewhere!

The Speculum Is A Necessary Instrument?
So the speculum is stilled, the pointy ends turned away from us, or clothed in a furry suit. I know there will be some discomfort; speculations/a exist to discomfit and disrupt. What
might Foucault say, the man who got me into this counter history mode? Nothing too reassuring, I'm betting!

Impossible not to think of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's teaching and of what was for him the essential philosophical task: never to consent to being completely comfortable with one's own presuppositions. Never to let them fall peacefully asleep, but also never to believe that a new fact will suffice to overturn them; never to imagine that one changes them like arbitrary axioms, remembering that in order to give them the necessary mobility one must have a distant view, but also look at what is nearby and all around oneself. To be very mindful that everything one perceives is evident only against a familiar and little-known horizon, that every certainty is sure only through the support of a ground that is always unexplored. The most fragile instant has its roots. In that lesson, there is a whole ethic of sleepless evidence that does not rule out, far from it, a rigorous economy of the True and the False; but that is not the whole story.
Australian aborigines map the dream time. Saramaka maroons in Surinam fete the first time.

Beyond the hills and below the ground I remember a first time dream, feeling shock, surprise, a fumbling, ecstasy.
Bathroom: The Limes

I scurried in through the front door, an hour 'til tea time the clock on the wall by the window said, hung up my coat, the ugly blue Harris tweed, rough and shapeless, suitably school uniformed even for a Sunday afternoon walk with a suitably approved boy. Threw it somewhere near the hook in the lobby with all the other ugly blue coats, and raced up the stairs, my heart just pounding sure everyone was staring at me. They weren’t, luckily; quiet time at the Limes, Sunday afternoon, 4 o’clockish, everyone either in the common room or doing homework. I made it to our dorm, no one in, thank god and then dashed out again, looked in the mirror, couldn’t see the changes yet, then, too shocked to settle, dashed across the corridor, threw open the door to the toilet, sat down and locked it.

The only private room, with a private thinking and breathing space, anywhere in my life. The toilet. Window up, and you could see down the drive to Westgate and watch everyone come and go, up to the Limes, across to the school, down the drive to Masson, and they could see you, we would wave and shout out, “Hang on, I’m coming, save me a place, I’m coming,” or “Go on without me, I’ll be a while!” But still private really, even if only til someone else came and banged on the door, with a “Hurry up I can’t wait, come on!” But no one did, just yet.
I sat and tried to get at least some breathing happening. Talk about being in a state. I was in a state, alright, physically, and all other ways. More than that, worse than that, I knew my whole body had changed in the last hour, and I knew I looked different. My mother had warned me, full of menace, “If you ever do IT I will know! I’ll be able to tell just by looking! Everyone can see it on you, don’t you even think about it, not until you get married!” When was this, you might wonder? 1966. Swinging England, you know the song, “Enguland swings like the pendulum ddooo...” or something equally stupid and yankeeish. Well, not up in Lincolnshire, it don’t, and especially in the Limes, it don’t, and most especially it don’t for 16 year olds in the Lower Sixth of King Edward VI Grammar School for Girls. And boys. Boys, that was the problem.

My grandma would have said, “Oh my dear, you are in a state, you’re all worked up!” I was worked up. I didn’t know what to be/think/feel/see/say/do.

I had just had sex, done it, lost my virginity, done what only bad girls did, tarts, oh no, everyone would know, I would be expelled, laughed at, humiliated, oh no. I did feel alive, completely alive, every inch of skin, every body hair, head hair and my eyes, I am sure they were staring, pupils fully dilated, shockey, needed a cup of sweet strong milky tea, that would help, I thought wildly. Wildly, but I couldn’t be wildly, I had to go to tea in half an hour. And then tomorrow I had to go to school, and what would happen then?

Because, of course, as all of us girls knew, if you ‘did IT’ they went right off you, the boy, that is. Other boys would be after you, though, but only because you were a tart. So I expected he would drop me. Oh dear. I wonder what he was thinking now, on his way home?

It’s hard to believe, that at 16 going on 17, in 1965, there were still virgins left in the British Isles, but I only knew one girl at school who wasn’t a virgin. We all knew her, Vera,
she was a real tart, we could all tell just by looking at her, and she smelt funny too, and smiled in that dead giveaway way... I didn’t want to be like her. I wonder if I will smell like her? Thinking of smell reminded me I should go and have a wash, how to do that without someone coming up and saying, “What are you up to?” Strip washing was a public act, but a morning act. Not an afternoon act—but I could say I had the curse, that would be alright. I had to get rid of its evidence though… and it did smell.

My hardest thing was going to be leaving the toilet and seeing Sue or someone who would say, looking at my body, “Oh Val, you’ve done IT!!!!” I didn’t know how my body had changed but I knew it had—we all knew it did. It must have gotten a had-sex look to it. Likely the skin, or the colour of my cheeks, or just the all over impression, “Hah, that’s a body that’s had sex,” they would say.

I didn’t even hardly think of what had actually happened. It had been a bit of a let down really. Not much different than what we usually got up to, it’s just that this time it got up a bit more, sort of. I didn’t feel anything, not much, but my boyfriend had got something out of it. I think. We didn’t talk much about IT. Beyond him blaming me of course. He was such a puritan, made me feel so badly, like it was all my fault, for “leading him on,” I dunno, maybe it made him feel better, but I had long realized that it was in the minutes or half hour leading up to the doing of IT when he might actually be nice to me, or at least say some nice things.

Years later, when I heard Meatloaf singing *Paradise By The Dashboard Light*, I knew what he meant—we girls all did joke, though, and sniggered very wisely, talked like women’s magazines (where we learnt some of this), about men saying or doing anything for IT. That was why we had to be so careful, we all knew they didn’t mean anything, but it was
a gamble, getting some ‘nice’ things said, before having to go too far for them... Anyway,
my boyfriend was especially bad. He could say a lot of not-nice things, and did, because he
was always going on at me, but in those few minutes before, he was ok... except now that we
had done IT that was it, likely for good. No more nice, no more boyfriend. I hadn’t even
thought of that—he was as shocked as I was I think, but I thought he would tell Pinky and
Jim anyway, even though he told me not to tell anyone. As if I would.

We hadn’t used anything of course. We hadn’t meant to do IT, it’s just what seemed
to be a natural end to our Sunday afternoon walks. Oh, god, I thought, what will I do? Half
elated, half dead. Wholly terrified.

Finally, after half an hour, I had at least calmed down enough to come out of the
toilet. I made it to the washbasins without incident and cleaned up a bit. A part of me, a really
tiny part, thought, “Oh this could have been so special...” but I squished that down, and got
on with worrying about how my body looked. Sexed? And Sue, my friend, especially, she
had eagle eyes. I could count on Diana to not notice anything, nor Margaret, they were so thick
and slow. But Sue, hawks didn’t beat her.

I sauntered down to the Common room and opened the door. Usual scene. A few
battered chairs and settees, girls sprawled on them, Sue and some others over at the long
table, books spread out, French doors open to the lawn, even though it was cool, March I
think. People getting ready to go across the road to Masson House for tea. Some eating
crisps. Hungry. I felt sick. I stood there, looking for Sue. I watched her. She stared at me, that
long way away stare, she had been doing some of her biology prep, and was still with her
cells or whatever they were and she said,
“Oh, you’re back. Did you find out what’s for tea? I hope it isn’t bloody macaroni cheese or those ghastly sausage things.”

She didn’t notice. Why didn’t she see it, my mother said everyone could tell. My legs started to shake, more than they had done when I was actually doing IT.

“No, I didn’t smell what it was when I came past. Dave went home to do his history prep. I haven’t even started mine. I’ll have to do it after tea.” I said.

She said, standing up and yawning, “Well, let’s go over now.” And she linked her arm in mine and we went out of the common room, the others trailing along after us, and I opened the front door and walked down the drive with her, still arm in arm, feeling like a dirty tart. Of course she couldn’t tell—I was beyond good girls now, her not seeing just ensured I was beyond the Pale of civilized conduct. I couldn’t tell her, or any of them. I was flawed, they were still whole and good and perfect. Obviously that was it, good girls couldn’t see IT on my body, but I knew Vera would be able to... I would just avoid her on Monday.

Tea was just as usual. And so was the rest of the day, and evening. Lost my virginity and all I got for it was macaroni cheese, with lumps in it, and stewed apples for pudding and an hour of Tudors and Stuarts after.
odies In Libraries and Other (Educational) Places

In 1996 I handed in my Master’s thesis, took the seat at the table in the doctoral seminar that had my name on it, and went looking for bodies. My thesis research had involved asking five women program planners how their lived experiences as women learning affected their practice (Chapman, 1996b). In individual and group sessions, they told me stories about their university adult education and I responded by writing up my first “real,” academic, narrative study called, appropriately enough, *All This Talk! Stories Of Women Learning*. The women’s metaphors for learning were talking, opposition (from what they all called the “old, male model”), and confronting power—that is, recognizing the power-knowledge structures that disciplined and regulated their learning. In many of their stories, the “body” sung out a contrapuntal theme, a light and pretty descant to the ponderous basso profundo of regimentation; for example, all the women mentioned that their best educational experiences were those where teachers and/or learners were “embodied.” This seemed to mean those (rare) times in their education where they felt that the connections between cognition and emotion, affect and intellect, were recognized, where “bodily” knowledge was honored as epistemically valuable, and where body and mind, both, were welcome in the learning space.

It’s about being embodied. In this environment that makes a difference. The professors that I work best with, that’s the way I describe them, and I found the learning most transformative when they had that quality of being embodied; when you talk about an embodied learner, then you’re talking about the integration of all things, an inter-relationship. Sonia, *All This Talk!*
I really live in my body, you know? Like I'm big, and my arms move, and I move, and so, for me, when I think of talking it's all of me that talks. Some people it's just their head, but I think my body is very much my grammar, it's how I punctuate things, and it's how I teach. Yolanda, *All This Talk!*

Most often, though, their body stories were about learning how to become disembodied, disconnected, about "creating distance," about becoming unemotional. Yolanda, laughing, said, "In education we try to get emotionless; bury, repress, make Freud happy!" Even as I concluded, that, yes, the women did carry their experiences of gender and learning with them into their daily practice, I kept returning to those stories about the body. Perhaps because there was so much passion, energy, even poetry in them?

I started to look for bodies in classrooms, my rooms, and found them. Much to my surprise... I didn't much like my body then, and rather wanted to ignore it, and yet, there it was... with other bodies

* Bodies in Colloquy I

*November 1997:* It is a dark and stormy night. I am cross. I have to come to this stupid colloquium, not be at home with my cats and my non-university self... I stumble in the dark parking lot (it's free after 5 but the trade off is no light, student as cockroach again, I am thinking, cockroaches don't need light, they flee from it, it's a form of roach control, student control) and fall in a puddle. Now I have wet feet. Now I am angry. I have spent the usual tense day at school, work its usual prickle of politics, me balancing smiles and subversion, and then a meeting with my advisor on my latest SSHRC application.
I enter the seminar room, and am tickled pink at the sight of the Faculty body, barred from the space until the student body has been democratic, (we’re voting for faculty meeting representative bodies). Astonishing, to see them lining up outside, restless, kvetching at the wait... we student bodies hold the power, we control the space! Voting over, all the bodies mill around, trying to find a comfortable spot, a table, a chair. We have to do a GROUP activity on the theme of Theory and Practice. A few faculty bodies are inserted into the student tableaux where there is an insufficiency of weighty intellect. We are very polite, courtiers at Versailles, wondering how we will be judged on our pavanes, our musical chairs. How many hate this compulsory fun time at the ball, long to go home... how many are maneuvering their bodies to better spatial and political advantage?

The faculty/faulty bodies in our grouping are very quiescent—are they given scripts, or do they just follow the leader? Are they told to leave this night’s debates up to the student body? At our group, where we are set up like a whist table full of old folks at a rest home, and about as lively; we make less than inspiring chit chat about theory vs. practice, and one of the faculty bodies (who once told me that no educational thinker had had anything worth while to say since Dewey and Wittgenstein, thus effectively ending any hope of a viable conversation between us in this lifetime), is talking, bored and boringly, about descriptive and prescriptive. Our student bodies pay ostensible attention, glazed but upright, until finally, it’s time for the panel discussion.

We choose up sides, faculty body versus student body, the stately dance begins, we all know our places, our steps, and assassin’s knives are well hidden in folds of elegant mental clothing... still, they are sharpened, ready to flash, should any body mis-step, mis-speak...
Question, answer, question, answer, blah, blah... so much for the faculty body privileging the student body, once they get talking, that’s it, no room for student body-voices, and of course, we perform our well rehearsed dance steps, backing off, no interruptions, standing at the sides of the debate like so many academic wallflowers. Someone, a faculty body, says querulously, “Why can’t we have the wine now?” but on it goes, question, answer, blah, blah, “stories of teaching and schooling that we learn from,” and one of the panel says, “But that’s not theory, that’s just stories.” I am astonished. Again. No room for stories? No bodies, no stories about bodies practicing. I go home, and my feet are still wet.

**bodies in Colloquy II**

It is a dark and stormy night. Again. I have to go to the Colloquium. Again. But I am not cross, I want to be there. Tonight we have a wonderful feminist speaker—cold, cruel, brilliant. We cram into the already-full-up-with-bodies room, squash into spaces created for littler bodies, knees up the back of the body in front, ooh, sorry, wiggling for a little space. The faculty tend to stand around the back, a horrible trick they’ve probably forgotten they learned in school. One which the managers at Prentice Hall used, too, all standing up behind us at the back of the meeting room at International Sales Conferences, monitoring which of their reps was silent, which contributed, giving “pep talks” to those who were letting them down by not speaking up... coffee breaks were disciplining moments. I don't miss working.

When I shared this story with one of the faculty at the back of the room, he got quite offended and assured me he had to stand at the back of the room because he was late, and there were no spaces left for him to sit, and I shouldn’t therefore generalize about things I didn’t know about... so then I went to the library to look for bodies, a safer thing to do than
scrutinizing my educational spaces, and antagonizing one of the few supportive faculty bodies.

I was happy to find many, many bodies in the stacks... Too many, really, and to tell you all about them would take this whole text. Here's a claque of outstanding bodies, some beautiful, some useful.

**bodies in Main**

A preliminary lit search led me to one immediate conclusion: Suddenly, it's chic to have a body again! "After Enlightenment, embodiment!" is the rallying cry from anthropologists, geographers, historians, sociologists, literary critics. bodies all over; unfinished, malleable, plastic, multiple. Social bodies, bodies at work, consuming bodies, political bodies, pedagogic bodies, gendered bodies, sexed bodies, medical bodies, disabled bodies, identifying bodies... Amazingly, (to one who thought Descartes was a bit too keen on the body), at even the most sedate institutions of higher education, there are courses on the body, centres for the study of the body, even degrees on the body.

**body Counts**

The notion of having more than one body, two bodies, three bodies, four, even five, winds its way through much theoretical work on the body, but the term "body counts" also works to emphasize, that now, post-Enlightenment, the body does, indeed, count. Generally body theories fall into two camps. There are those who believe there's a foundation, or essence, to the body, and those who believe there's none, no pre-discursive, ontological status for the body. Interesting.
The phenomenological body perspective asks, *Who am I? What is the relationship between my body and my mind? How am I in the world?* Merleau-Ponty asserts, “The world is the answer to the body’s question… for … the body is our general medium for having a world” (cited in Thrift, 1997, p.127). Lived experience is the expressive effect of an internal reality, embodied. This is the non-discursive body, although some prefer the terms “phenomenological,” or “foundationalist,” or “expressive.” The “social constructionists” believe no real or natural body exists before discourse; with no depth, no interiority, all signification, all social construction, is simply inscription on the body’s surface.

The body as an area for research, scholarship and inquiry is not new. Since the Greeks and Romans, scholars and clerics and philosophers and writers, not to mention “just plain folks,” have all been concerned with attending to, and questioning, their relations to their bodies. After all, it is the one human experience that crosses race, class, gender, age, and all the etc. categories of the post world—we all have a body, we are all embodied. But the scholarship and the questions asked about the body and identity have changed since the Enlightenment. When Descartes succeeded in splitting the body from the mind, and separating the soul from nature as he distinguished between two kinds of substances, *res cogitans* (mind) and *res extensa* (body), he helped set up the dualist perspective which still dominates much academic, and indeed, nonacademic discourse; this Cartesian legacy lingers. Much of the scholarship that preceded Descartes was somatophobic, and unfortunately, some still is.

However, while Descartes might have wanted to reject the epistemological construction of a sense based world, there has been a movement back to wanting to understand all that
the body can offer. Beginning with the work of Engels and Marx, the study of the body has spread across the humanities and social sciences (Foucault would argue the social sciences are an effect of the body), from the disciplines of philosophy, psychology, anthropology and sociology, and into history, geography, literary theory, the fine arts, and applied fields of study like education. In the natural sciences the body is, it goes without saying, an object for study, and in turn this has given rise to sub-fields such as medical sociology. The body also finds a place in cross-disciplinary theorizing—in feminist theory, postcolonial, performance and poststructural studies it is very much at home.

**Discursive bodies**

The socially constructed body paradigm holds that bodies, and the identity they exhibit, are discourses embodied, the effects, the results, of the flesh being immersed in the field of power relations. Social constructionist accounts of the body see it as an object of control (Foucault, 1975, 1977, 1980, 1985; Turner, 1984, 1992; Frank, 1990); as metaphoric or symbolic with a physical connection to the world (Douglas, 1966, 1978; Bourdieu, 1991); as the origin of transgressive capacities (Bakhtin, 1986); and as “a signifying medium, a vehicle of expression, a mode of rendering public and communicable that which is essentially private (ideas, thoughts, beliefs, feelings, affects)” (Grosz, 1994, p.9), where information comes in, and goes out, and the body, transparent and pliable, expresses interiority whilst it also inputs the external world.

Mary Douglas favors two bodies—the self and the social—but asserts that the body (which one?) is a natural symbol. “The body symbolizes everything else,” (1978, p.122) so that every natural symbol from the body carries a social meaning. Erving Goffman (1959,
1963) takes a similarly socially constructionist view. I liked their work. I am drawn, as well, to the textual and metaphorical bodies of Barthes (1972), Derrida (1978) and Lakoff (1980, 1987); Susan Leigh Foster says:

The body is never only what we think it is. Illusive, always on the move, the body is at best like something, but it never is that something. Thus, the metaphors enunciated in speech or in movements that allude to it, are what give the body the most tangible substance it has. (1995, p.4)

I decided, in my body search, regretfully, to ignore work of leading theorists like Marcel Mauss, or the anthropologists Margaret Mead, Malinowski, Boas, and Benedict. I wouldn’t deal with “working bodies,” as described by Engels and Marx and David Harvey (2000), nor the “sacrificial body” of Durkheim, nor the “religious/ascetic body” of Weber, nor O’Neill’s five bodies, nor Lacqueur’s sexed bodies. I wanted, rather, the “eminently social” body (Synott, 1993, p.37); I wanted to see how institutions played out in bodies, and I wanted to investigate how discourses, “small acts of cunning endowed with a great power of diffusion, subtle arrangements, apparently innocent, but profoundly suspicious, mechanisms” (Foucault, 1977, p. 139), effected bodies. I wanted a “history of bodies and the manner in which what is most material and most vital in them has been invested,” (Foucault, 1990, p.151).

Because Theodore Schatzki says:

It is not bodies alone, but more crucially, individuals and their identities, that are constituted through the social shaping of bodies. There come to be individuals (subjects) with particular identities, genders, characters, joys, understandings and the like—largely through bodily transformations that result from the immersion of bodies in the field of social relations and power. (1996, p. xx).

He offers a nice little taxonomy of the discursive body, well, four bodies. Sociologists like to study groups, if there isn’t one, they’ll make one. Firstly, there is physicality, the
actual physical ensemble that supports and makes possible the other dimensions; secondly, *bodily activity*, which "bodies forth" the mental conditions of mind, gender, character, of "individuality into the public world"; thirdly, there's the *lived body*, the body as experienced by the person; and fourthly, we have the *surface* of the body, "the slate upon which is inscribed the marks of culture, human coexistence, and social toil...the flesh that is symbolically and meaningfully punctured, incised, decorated, clothed, done up, disguised, stylized" (p.5). Nice device for body working.

This four-part body is socially molded through "techniques," (borrowed from Foucault), which conflate discourses and practices with political and social institutions. Power, embedded in these techniques, is thus articulated on the body through (a similar fourfold process) *discipline* (as in training, teaching, sanctioning, punishing), through *normalization* (conscious or unconscious self-attending and molding), through the *establishment* of signifying activities (hand gestures, crying, sadness, bad posture, rebelliousness or staidness), and through *surface* expressions. Specific signifying conditions, such as gender, character, mental capacities, are thus produced—for "the body is a style of the flesh" (Butler, 1990).

This is the body that traps Foucault's soul, "this whole technology of power over the body that the technology of the soul—that of educationalists, psychologists, and psychiatrists, fails either to conceal or compensate, for it is one of its tools... (1977, p. 30), and thus the soul becomes the prison of the body.

I hankered, still, after some beautiful bodies, some poetic bodies, these were all so grim, so... so unpleasurable. Maybe I needed to take another look at the disparaged foundational body?
Non-Discursive ḃodies

The non-discursive ḃody is neither a postmodern, nor a modernist project. It has been celebrated and deplored, again, from Classical times to the present. For me, the non-discursive ḃody is:

The hard and the soft, the grainy and the sleek, moonlight and sunlight in memory give themselves not as sensorial contents but as a certain type of symbiosis, a certain way the outside has of invading us, a certain way we have to welcome it.

And this is a tactile ḃody; Alphonso Lingis writes:

Merleau-Ponty takes the sensing to be active from the start...[he] envisions looking—palpating with the eyes—tasting, smelling, and even hearing as variants of handling. The tactile datum is not given to a passive surface; the smooth and the rough, the sleek and the sticky, the hard and the vaporous are given to movements of the hand that applies them with a certain pressure, pacing, periodicity, across a certain extension...blue induces a sliding up and down movement...orange, an increased tension and extension of the ḃody...the moist, the oily, the sleek, the restful green, and the aggressive orange are palpated by the hand or the look...
(1994, p.8.)

Beautiful... Isn’t it? The non-discursive ḃody is lyrical, has agency, it is expressive, it is essentially soulful; the “weak” side of the Cartesian equation, ah yes, the beautiful side. I wonder if this might be a way into thinking of refusing subjectivities, refusing ḃodies?

Resisting ḃodies

Nigel Thrift (1997) looks to the elusory ḃody (Radley, 1995) as he searches for a way to frame resistance. He proposes an embodied non-representational theory as a frame for “everyday practices and how they provide, especially through embodiment, alternative modes of being in the world which afford a continually evolving symbolic resource” (p.125). Thrift suggests we move away from the negative position that sees the ḃody as only
capable of being elusive, of avoiding compliance with social controls, of turning away from
discursivity, and take up a more positive view, where the body becomes a ‘body-subject’
which jointly configures a number of different realms of experience. He uses dance and its
body-practices as an example of expressive embodiment. Dance can be seen as play, a kind
of exaggeration of everyday embodied joint action, which contains within it the capacity to
hint at different experiential frames, “elsewhere’s” which are here. As such, the body
dancing/playing is not just about getting away from social norms, or for escaping strictures
and codes. It is about a way of being that eludes the grasp of power. Well, it sounds good,
but I am not sure... sounds still a bit too textual and as I am not much of a dancer... now,
what about sex? Foucault would ask that, I am sure...

Feminist bodies

There has been so much speculation as to why the study of the body has become so
widespread; I think that the growth of consciousness of the globe as one place, one village,
has also heightened awareness of the political importance of the local, the specific and the
particular. What is more local, more specific, more situated, than the body? In this age of
Diaspora, the body has become the Home many yearn for. For feminists, it’s easy to begin
with home and the everyday, the body. Elizabeth Grosz has said, “feminist conceptions of
the body are unlike those of their male counterparts (Nietzsche, Freud, Lacan and Foucault)
insofar as the bodies are always sexually specific and may well entail different regimes of
power and their associated knowledges” (1993, p. 196).

The non-discursive body has been both a curse and a gift to feminism; the “essential”
body renders women at a disadvantage, inhabiting as they do “bodies that are represented,
even constructed as frail, imperfect, unruly, and unreliable, subject to various intrusions which are not under conscious control” (Grosz, 1993, p. 13). This is the “eternally wounded woman” (Vertinsky, 1994). The male/female split has ideologised patriarchal oppression.

Susan Leigh Foster says:

\[\text{body stands along with Woman, Native, Other as a neglected and misapprehended subject of inquiry, but it stands uniquely as a category that pivots inquiry easily into any of these marginalized domains. The questions “what \text{bodies} are being constructed here?” or “how do these values find embodiment?” or “how does the \text{body} figure in this discourse?” can be asked within each non-canonical field of study. (1995, p. 12)}\]

While many feminists moved on to the discursive body, many still linger with embodiment, some very poetically:

>Doorways are sacred to women for we are the doorways of life and we must choose what comes in and what goes out. Freedom is our real abundance.
>Marge Piercy, From Circles On The Water.

Some have tried to hold onto the mystery of womanhood, some have tried to rewrite it—Kristeva, Simone de Beauvoir, Shulamith Firestone, and many ecofeminists. If the essentiality of sex doomed women to oppression, naturally, discourse and social constructionism offered ‘gender,’ a learned category of difference that could be deconstructed.

This social constructionist camp holds most feminist theorists today, including Marxist psychoanalytic feminists. Presuming that biology fixes sex as a category, these feminists focus on transformation at the level of gender. The work of postfeminists is of considerable concern and irritation to feminist social constructionists—deconstructing gender is a nihilistic political act. But for postfeminists, the body is still crucial for an analysis of women’s psychical and social existence; it is not understood as ahistorical, acultural, or
biologically given, rather these theorists are concerned with the lived body, its representations and the way it is used. The body is not a neutral ground, it is both signifier and signified, it is an object of systems of control and coercion and it carries meaning, it is a cultural interweaving and production of nature, which exhibits sexual difference. As sexually specific, this body codes meanings that are projected on to it in sexually discursive ways. As Liz Grosz says, “Far from being an inert, passive, noncultural and ahistorical term, the body may be seen as the crucial term, the site of contestation, in a series of economic, political, sexual and intellectual struggles” (1993, p.19).

**bodies in (the) Education (Library)**

I thought I should wander over to my area, now I had a good sense of what bodies were about and see what the pedagogues had to say—after all, I am an educator and I have an educated body. But as I went looking for bodies in the education library, I was surprised at how few I found. Many of the few tended to fall into the non-discursive, or what I call the “Embodied Way,” camp. Here we see the body being “brought back into” educational theorizing and practice (hooks, 1994). As Madeleine Grumet says, the body has been absent in curriculum and in schools. “Silent too, was the language of the body, the world we know through our fingertips, the world we carry on our weight-bearing joints, the world we hear in sudden hums and giggles” (1988, p.xv). Educators are urged to take a more holistic approach to curriculum design, to teaching, to learning, and to research—we read, and hear, about the embodied mind, affective and somatic knowledges (Heshusius & Ballard, 1996), and how best to incorporate the “whole person” into pedagogical practices. These are
celebrations of the body beautiful; if you like, the body with knowledge that the mind
should tap, frequently, a knowing/silenced/absent female body (Rich, 1986).

In the last few years more work on the construction or regulation of the discursive body
has appeared (Davies, 2001; Middleton, 1993, 1998; McWilliam, 1996, 1999; Kirk, 1998;
O’Farrell, 2000; Gore, 1998) and in my own field, university adult education, I am pleased
to see some work (Michelson, 1998; Orner, 1998) emerging. It’s interesting to note how
much of this pedagogical bodywork is emanating from Australia and New Zealand, and to
some extent, Britain—the continental and antipodal reception of Foucault’s theories is more
positive and widespread than here in North America. (I wonder if this is another example of
the “perversity” of the antipodes? The early explorers couldn’t get over how perverse and
upside down things were there, as Ryan (1997) tells us. Foucault the perverse favoured in a
perverse landscape?)

Now, the temptation is to ask, “Why is the body so ignored, so under represented as an
object for analysis or inquiry in education, when so much of education is about the body
and it’s training?” But the better question, which could come close to answering the why
one, is, “What effect does it have if the body is not theorized or investigated in educational
scholarship?” If Foucault is right, and the body is the point at which power is articulated on
to subjects, to produce subjects, then it would be reasonable to assume that, perhaps, for
power to operate, “Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms... For
it, secrecy is not in the nature of an abuse, it is indispensable to its operation...perhaps just
as indispensable to those whom it dominates...” (1990, p. 86). If power is to be exercised
and circulate on bodies, in classrooms, lecture halls, and so on, then the effect of having no
bodies to notice in those places, might guarantee its successful operation. Indeed.
It’s interesting to note, as an example of power and discourse operating at the textual level, that many student theses and dissertations take up the body (see for example, Anderson, 1993; O'Reilly, 1996; McClaren, 1999), but these don’t seem to get cited, or circulated like “really important” scholars’ works… And of course, “It is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together”; Foucault goes on to say, “discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (1990, p. 100-1).

Here I am more inclined to agree with bell hooks, who wrote that subverting dominant forms, undermining them, “happens much more easily in the realm of ‘texts’ than in the world of human interaction…in which such moves challenge, disrupt, threaten, where repression is real” (1990, p. 22.) I would love to subvert the process, but how? Well, perhaps by finding out about how my body became my body and what part education played… I went back to Main, to see what Judith Butler had to say…

Her work seemed to offer the most promise to me, not because it was the easiest to read, but because it seemed to contain within it the power to unmask power, to challenge, subvert, disrupt. After reading her Gender Trouble, I was certainly disrupted—and troubled. I had expected to be—the first reference to her I had come across had been embedded in Hartsock’s essay on power (1990), which had mentioned Butler, in passing, as being scandalously detrimental to the true feminist cause, typical of those who just don’t get that Foucault fails to offer women a good theory of power. One of the charges leveled against Butler—and other postfeminists—is that her language and textuality is too difficult for her work to be practically useful to women. I dispute that claim. I wonder why it is that texts by Habermas, Jameson, Benjamin, Harvey, aren’t too difficult? Peggy Phelan says, “such a
post-age, like all postage, is re-inscribed, written over, as the very condition of the post’s arrival,” (1998, p.5); like the post, or mail, Butler’s theory comes from somewhere, it’s going somewhere, and it has to get delivered to the right address—is (my/our) education the right address?

Judith Butler, the Queen of Gender(ed bodies)

Butler’s aim in Gender Trouble was “to expose the foundational categories of sex, gender and desire as effects of a specific formation of power requires a form of critical inquiry that Foucault...designates as ‘genealogy’” (1990, p. viii-xi). She says sex is “culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all” (p.7).

Judith Butler was interviewing Gayle Rubin for a feminist journal, differences; as Rubin concluded some comments, Butler said, “I’d like to bring us back to gender.” And Rubin replied, laughing, “You would! I think I will leave any further comments on gender to you, in your capacity as the ‘Queen’ of Gender!”


With Foucault as a starting point—“I believe that the political significance of sex is that sex is located at the point of intersection of the discipline of the body and the control of the population,” Foucault, 1980, p.123)—she asserts that compulsory heterosexuality requires the binary of gender. Constructed through a historically specific deployment of sexuality, gender is performative, in the linguistic sense of J. L. Austin, where performative means to call something into being by naming it, for example, marrying, naming, betting and promising (van Oort, 1997). Gender is an identity that is (politically) required and is called into being as an effect of power and discourse. But it is repetition, constant iteration that fixes gender; in a parody of an idea, a copy of a copy, repeated under pressure to comply to
hegemonic norms, gender becomes a repeated stylization of the body, which congeals on its surface, and purports to be a representation of what is immanent beneath—sex.

Butler claims Foucault seems to be looking for a prediscursive status for a free and unregulated sexuality, while she believes that sex is always determined, heterosexually, by the active male, as opposed to the passive female. Butler calls for an understanding of the body, not as a bounded and prediscursive entity, but as only existing through and by abjection—which establishes its boundaries, and thus its identity. Inner and outer are linguistic terms by which the subject tries to know itself; Butler asks, why does the body need inner and outer, what discourse is interpellating interiority? Heteronormativity.

If I follow her, my body is not a being, it's just a boundary, a signifying practice, permeable and politically regulated, where the hegemony of compulsory heterosexuality calls into existence an interior sense that I must feel is sexed as male or female. Then I will exhibit on the surface my gender/sex; a specious figure to my interior's ground. Genders are therefore neither true nor false (heterosexual or homosexual) but simply fabrications—truth effects of discourse, with three contingent dimensions of corporeality—anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance. Butler uses drag as an example of how the parodic performance of an internal gender, exhibited on an external gender, reveals instead the instability of the category of gender. We see a woman, who is really a man, pretending to be a woman, so we should therefore begin to question, which is real, the real man, or the real woman? Her call to subversion—which she never exactly spells out—is in the instability and contingency of gender, not in the performance of gender. Gender is a corporeal style of the permeable body. It is not fixed. Sex is not fixed. This means that notions of:
An essential sex and a true and abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy [of social performance] that conceals gender’s performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality (p. 145).

Butler reiterates that the possibility of her work is that it refuses the trap of the cultural construction of the binarism of gendered free will and determinism in which feminism seems to be stuck; what it thinks it mobilizes for political action, gender or sex or the body, is actually working to limit and constrain women. If, instead, we locate the political in the “very signifying practices that establish, regulate and deregulate identity,” we might well be able to disrupt these foundational discourses. (Well, if I can ever get this in everyday language and everyday contexts, it might be what I need…)

Judith Butler’s work has been misread, and especially around the notion of performance/performativity. She responds to these misreadings.

The[se are] misapprehension about gender performativity. That gender is a choice, or that gender is a role, or that gender is a construction that one puts on, as one puts on clothes in the morning, that there is a ‘one’ who is prior to this gender, a one who goes to the wardrobe of gender and decides with deliberation which gender it will be today. (1993a, p. 21).

Butler reiterates her claim that gender performativity is an “effect of a regulatory regime;” there is definitely no subject in the old liberal humanist sense that proceeds gender performativity. There are subjectivities, but these are concealed from their subjects, by the very discursive practices that enact them. Deutscher (1997) suggests that Butler must have been startled by how thoroughly the notion of drag as gender performance was taken up; readers have decided that her work gives them the way to subvert—all they have to do is act differently.
What would it mean for me to acknowledge that Butler is right, and that the categories of identity, like gender, that we take so much for granted (a sure indicator that a discourse is at work somewhere!) are (simply?) social constructions? I am quite unsettled by this notion.

**Misreading Butler**

I thought, after reading Butler and all the other body theories, “What do I believe will help me understand my body?” I wrote:

Where is the hope, in my body, what is its answer?

All these bodies are so grim, so joy-less, so dour... is there room for resistance, or difference, in *play*, in that hopeful space between which Thrift talks about? In pleasure?

Is hope in the space of the play itself, shall we say, *The play's the thing*, in Will's words, because it might all be *playacting*?

Or is it in the unfinishedness of bodies, never complete, never fully done, always trying again and again, in repetition, in new moves, to see new bodies emerging? Is the space in the *incomplete play*?

Or is it the fluidity of bodies? Is Biopower about trying to catch water in a sieve? If panopticons are flawed, is Biopower? Is the space in the *holes*? The grid that the bodies ooze through? Is the clue in slipping and sliding and slinking into new shapes?

Or should I pick a different topic?

I decided to go with a deliberate “misreading” of Butler (Bloom, 1975, cited in Stone, 2001), with performance as subversion. Butler says it’s not the way to read her theory, but as every “body” who has ever taken up theories for use will tell you, you take what you like
and leave the rest. What people have taken up, and used, and what has value, is the idea that identity is: performance, and, perhaps, a pedagogy (Phelan, 1993, 1998; Gallop, 1995), a reflexive method of inquiry (Behar & Gordon, 1995), a site of resistance (Thrift, 1997; Radley, 1995), and ethnography (Denzin, 1997).

If performativity is not performance, then just what does performance mean? In my dictionary, it says performance is ‘the act or process of performing... a play or other entertainment... or a fuss, a scene, a difficult or complicated task”. Peggy Phelan (1998) raised the question, “If the diversity of human culture continually showed a persistent theatricality, could performance be a universal expression of human signification, akin to language?” (p.3). Turner gives performance the quality of ‘liminality,” where performance is situated between drama and culture (1983). Performance has had other “points of contact,” with, for example, Freud’s notion of “afterwardness”, a psychoanalytic understanding which involves a lot of talking—talking after and talking over, to cure the traumatic symptoms of past events, talking to successfully join the unconscious to the conscious, and to fully interpret, understand the past. This resonates with Schechner’s dictum that performance is twice behaved behavior. Performance inquiry, in its afterwardness, in being “twice behaved,” can discern what “consciousness overlooked during the event’s performance” (1998). Homi Bhabha explores this concept of “double narrative” which calls into being (national) subjects, (1994a, pp. 139-170). He speaks of a “range of discourses as a double narrative movement” (p.145), in which people must be thought of as being in “double-time”, and of the split between the continuist accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious recursive strategy of the performative.
In my words, the traditional, linear, autobiographically constituted subject is not the performing self, which is instead constructed/written in repetition, getting it right, reading and acting the script, even if it's done unknowingly, unconsciously. It is at the site of the splitting, in the ambivalence of in-between, that performance is made.

Butler says subversion lies in the cracks between iterations, when one can see the copy, or performance, slip. Therefore the meaning of the original is dependent on the forgery. Phelan suggests that performance intersects with performativity, when we engage in behavior that has been behaved (many more times than) twice. Mimicry and imitation, this is where performance and performativity join. But how much of performance is knowingness? I was in two minds, let alone two narratives, about the status of the non-discursive body. I am convinced, with, and by, Butler, that there is no prediscursive body.

But I Long For...

... the elusory body, and for “the body,” that absent presence at the heart of the stories of learning told me by five women planners; The body is at the heart of performance. When, as Jane Gallop (1995) claims, we teach, we are really performing, im-personating; is there a body to im-personate? I think, for me, Butler’s greatest contribution might be that, if an elusory body, that lovely Merleau-Ponty body that builds the world for me, is not “real,” if it has no home inside my discursive body, perhaps I can take it as an effect and perform as if I had an interior body, displaying it on the surface in a series of repetitions, stylized acts that call it into being, then: Please, can’t I have a non-discursive resisting and subversive and lovely body? Effect or performance, won’t it be “real”? Between what Schechner calls performative behavior, “how people play gender, heightening their constructed identity,
performing slightly or radically different selves in different situations,” and performance, that “bends and remakes time, adorns and reshapes the body...behavior that is not-for-the-first-time, rehearsed, cooked, prepared.” (Schechner, 1998), in the liminal space between Freud’s “afterwardness” and Butler’s beforeness, there is a subversive space. Here, I think the political energy for resistance is generated, in a performed/ative elusory body.

Right after doing my body search in all the campus libraries, I took my body out for an afternoon date. Despite my “knowing” gender, sexuality, femininity, are performative, I knowingly performed gender, a behavior I have behaved many, many times. For me, the value of Butler’s theory was that I could watch my performance, see the figure and the ground, understand, and feel too, surprise at the forcefulness of the imperative performative utterance, drawn forth by the hegemony of compulsory heterosexuality—knowing “it’s all performance,” I still was, willy-nilly, against myself, my will, forced into my own performative behavior. I behaved as a gendered heterosexual woman. I enjoyed it. I wondered, even as I wrote out my prose poem in a performative gesture when I got home, just where this body thing would take me...

After tea at Granville Island on a wet Saturday
You stand on the earth as if to challenge it, massively, not move, not to shift, not to be a floating, shifting and slippery ground. What will you do if it does not obey?
I see you, watch you watch me, I shift, I move, I slide, how will you grasp me, how will you make me not move? I move, I slither, I roam, I am froth on your deep wave. How will you sail on me, how will you dive in me, how will you run with me, how will you move with me? Will you move with me, will you slide with me, enter with me, a world of queasy shiftiness, a globe of uncertain roundness, a sphere of unsteadiness?
This world of mine, it laughs, mimics, hurts, explodes, implodes, it has emotion and substance, but it slips, skips and whirls away, quick as you see it, I am gone, but not. How can a stander on the earth and a walker on the water roam together?

I ask these questions, demand, don't listen to answers, for words don't tell me, body tells me, how body leans into me, veers sharply from me, now sneaks up to me, now fronts me, confronts me, for I am not an answer keeper, but a body keeper, body teacher body learner of body leanings and gleanings of useful and useless knowledge.

Here, fingering totem stones, I hesitate, space for you to enter, play your role. Butterfly would fit, you say. I cannot choose, drawn to frog, blinking at butterfly, but bashful of being so beautiful... but I smile, touch it.

All women try on hats here, you say, and I feel I must try on hats, remembering boaters and felt hats and navy blue mornings in church and spotted dresses and spotted adolescents and first love...

I know the dress is the wrong colour, but I want you to see me, see me in it, wouldn't that look lovely on me, I say, but I dare not look at you looking at me. Feel that, I say, offering the sensuous velvet book's cover, we/I know I am saying, feel me, touch me, smooth me, slide your fingers over me, linger on me, drowse on me, skin me, write me...

I laugh and you laugh, and I like you. We lean toward each other, two pliant Pisan towers, too wary. Others see us, I see the woman in the window look, envy.

You stand on the earth, massively, heavily lightening, linger at my door, offer me help with my new computer but I want a touch, a promise, a hope, an assignation... we part, scripts still running, exiting

Shut down.
Illuminated manuscripts are one of the few surviving examples of medieval art. While paintings, sculpture and panels have been ravaged by time and hostility, the brilliant illustrations in medieval books retain their ability to dazzle and inform us. When we come across one of these jewels, open its vellum pages, or see it displayed in a museum or gallery, the glorious work, executed perhaps over a thousand years ago is as vivid, gaudy and golden as it was then. We can find in their miniature pictures examples of social practices, mediaeval technologies of the self, if you like, as well as representations of the everyday world of peasants, ladies and knights, as well as depictions of religious and political leaders.

Illuminate/Light Bringing/Lucifer

Illumination is the art of decorating hand written books, with colours, usually red and blue, but also green and pink, and metals, chiefly gold; the term derives from the Latin, *illuminare*, meaning to brighten or lighten up. Pictures and the embellishments of text were executed in bright colours and then heightened with gold, producing a sparkling effect which, literally, lightened up the page. Illumination refers to the illustration of the text, as well as its decoration and embellishment. Most books written and illustrated in the middle ages were religious; a few secular works were illustrated, including travel tales, medicinal works and classical texts. Most of the population was illiterate, however, and the illustrations provide a pictorial elucidation of the book's message. For those who could read, the pictures formed a welcome addition to the stark text. There is a close association in our modern minds with illuminated manuscripts and the church; naturally, for the church was all-pervasive and often
more powerful than the local state. The church was a fundamental part of life—and there was no separation, then, between church and state. Schooling, for example, was provided by clerics—my own school in Louth is first mentioned in 1356, as boys from the town were taught their letters by the monks.

Book production, too, was almost exclusively monastic, at least until the late thirteenth century. Far from our romantic image of a few dedicated monks, ruining their eyesight as they labour over vellum in the scriptorium, in between the saying of the Nine Daily Offices, their toil in monastic vineyard and fishpond, the distribution of alms to lepers and the poor, manuscript production was usually a well-organized—and profitable—venture. The production of illuminated works by lay artisans, as well as monks, was accomplished in Fordist stages in established workshops. Some lay illuminators travelled from community to community, concentrating on executing the more artistic portions of the books, and had a certain amount of fame. Eventually the workshops became secularized, often under the auspices of booksellers whose wares were commissioned by the literate, usually urban and wealthy, middle class, which had emerged by the late mediaeval period. The original illuminated manuscripts were nearly all religious in nature, comprising liturgical texts, such as Bibles, missals, breviaries, and choir books, which were used in church services, and private texts, used in personal devotions—Books of Hours.

**The Book of Hours**

The Book of Hours was the most popular of all the religious books in the late Middle Ages, the bestseller of the times. Originating as an appendix to the church Psalter, it became detached from this by the 13th century, and assumed a place as the favoured prayer book of
the (moneyed) laity. Huge numbers of Books were produced, and decorations ranged from
the humble to the most magnificent. Some were mass-produced, some were custom orders.

Most texts included calendars, (essential for working out when the feast days fell),
and zodiacal signs, and showed the occupations and labours of each month, often in
miniatures on the borders. Then came the Psalter itself, which contained Bible stories, as well
as psalms, and the services for the days. Illustrations and pictures, miniaturized, showed the
meaning of the texts and allowed the artists much freedom in depiction. A disciplined artistic
freedom however—it’s interesting to note that illustrations for May, for example, which
feature too, the astrological sign of Gemini, were the only place an artist could include bare
naked, nude bodies. But generally, all manner of animals, people, common and high born,
mystical creatures, birds, kings, monks, bishops and abbots wound their way through thickets
of trees, leaves and flowers. The border “was the favourite habitat of the miscellaneous cast
of drolleries”.... in which the “grotesque creatures, monsters, animals in human disguise,
baboons or monkeys, birds, insects, musicians and acrobats were very common” (Harthen,
1983, p.8). Harthen notes that:

Playful secular imagery of this kind may seem out of place... and it is curious that it is found
much less frequently in secular texts where it might be more appropriate, but this reaction
misinterprets the medieval approach to life. Although Christian belief was seldom doubted,
the mingling of profane and religious motifs was accepted with little question. The
juxtaposition of unrelated themes in books nominally made for devotion diverted their
owners from the tedium of long church services while at the same time giving scope for the
artist’s fantasy. (p.8)

**Pastoral Power**

Why have I chosen the Book of Hours to frame my story? For several reasons. Firstly, while
we tend to think the influence of the church has disappeared, I hope to show in my Tale that,
while we rarely think of religion and education as conjoined, (except as an oddity and
something to be spoken of humorously as we work say, in our pre-service teacher education program, as in "the fundamentalists out in the Valley" with a roll of our sophisticated urban eyebrows), this union is far from either waning or dying. The church's legacy to education, pastoral power, is waxing mightily, and usefully, for teachers, psychologists, counselors, principals and supervisors—in short, most educators. I also hope we can find some of the same evidence of resistance to such power in the Tale, instances of the way students and learners cheerfully squeeze out their identities in the spaces between the lines and bars of the pastoral grids of power, living parodic stories hidden from the all seeing eyes of the godly in the prolific clusters of vegetation bordering the main story.

**Time Waits For No Woman**

Secondly, the Book of Hours accentuates the timed nature of schooling. While I know, from working in other professions, time is always important in the modern world, within the world of the school or the university, time in all its manifestations, is King. Short time—the minutes in the lesson, the fifty-minute tutorial, the half hour lecture, the 15-minute break, the three-hour seminar—and long time. Long time is measured in terms, in semesters, and in years, four years for a Master's, six for a PhD, eighteen years for school. And each school year has its own peculiar rhythm; just as the mediaeval peasants and lords and ladies hunted the boar in December, scattered seed in October, tramped grapes in September, and spent the long nights of January in front of the fire, if wealthy, or in the communal bed, if poor. So, too, do we labourers in the academy have our seasonal occupations. The writing of scholarship applications is the task of the graduate student in the late Fall and early winter, and final exams in June and July consume examiner and examined alike, as do the ceremonies of initiation, the registering, the recording and eventually convocation.
Who can ever think of September without thinking of Orientation Days, or Fresher week? Who can be a teacher and not flinch at the thought of June and endless marking?

Schooling is timed, and disciplined through time. In some school districts now, children in the elementary grades are handed out daytimers, and encouraged to track their lessons, extracurricular activities, sports and homework. Faculty measure their time in three year or four year increments, to review, to tenure, to associate and maybe, to full professor.

Everything about education is timed, hourly, monthly, yearly.

**Carinvalesque Buttocks**

Thirdly, I love the dichotomous nature of the Books of Hours. Within the decorous text for May, all the saints days are neatly laid out, while over in the border’s bushes disport the nude bodies of Adam and Eve, or the Twins of Gemini, the Christian and the pagan, all the same to the bored reader standing in chapel (pews are a modern invention, all folk stood for medieval worship, unless old or infirm “went to the wall” where ledges allowed them to perch weary or wizened buttocks) dreaming of the spring to come. There is a carnivalesque, Bhaktinian nature to the Book of Hours, a dialogue between the sacred, and profane. Bodies contort themselves, bodies of acrobats, musicians, and weird animals, birds with tails and wings that could never fly, dragons and dreadful beasts, fat monks and bearded kings, lissome ladies and lithe lads and lasses... if ever a non-discursive body had a Tale, it would need a Book of Hours.

**A Bit Of Light Relief**

Fourthly, the Book of Hours allows me the autoethnographic freedom of idiom I am searching for. I know my diverse and heterogeneous audience (more than the four members
of my committee and the examiners, I hope) will seek out the parts with which they are most
at Home, be that academic prose, fairy tales, or personal narratives, I hope the elements will
all combine to "brighten" the text, make it more appealing, more readerly. And, I hope, some
beauty, pleasure and humor.

The same humor and irreverence, the disruption of the work, as that of the apprentices
in Lincoln Cathedral. As I wandered there, on a cold October day, half heartedly looking
either for the tea-shop, or some teenaged memories, which ever came first, I found instead
the work of some bored boys/pupils from the 14th century. Set to carve rows and rows of
(monotonous) traditional ornamental English roses for an interior dividing wall in a dark
corner, sufficiently unimportant for novices to practice on, and they did so. But hidden in the
laboriously worked florets I find, not the stamens of a neat English rose, but instead, at its
centre, a nest of lustily shrieking fledglings, mouths open, beaks pointing up to the rafters
with a silent stony demand for, WORMS!

And a hound curled up in the center of another
rose, some boy's pet.

Not to mention the pregnant
bishop on the rood screen, some medieval
stone-carver immortalizing his wife or
lover as model, and so the bishop's
rounded belly announces, what? to his celibate choir? The use of pleasure. Pleasure, these
carvers took pleasure in their work, as did the artists who laboured with, albeit delicate, gusto
at the production of the ribald and bawdy and saintly miniature worlds of their day.
I want to take some of the same pleasure in writing/about/schooling. Like bell hooks (1994) I want to enjoy my work, remembering the ecstasy as well as the terror of learning and like Parker Palmer (1998) I want to admit, to confess, if I can, that I love what I do. Foucault talks of the uses of pleasure in the construction of the self (1985), but it still seems deviant to admit in the academy that our work could please us—whether that be in teaching, learning, reading, writing and shaping others. If we can’t take pleasure in some of our subjectivities, life is going to be even harder than it seems... Beauty. And there is a beauty, at times, in writing, in words, in the art of the instruction, in the faces of school children, and graduate students, as they sit rapt, listening to a lecture, or the movement of absorbed heads ping-ponging back and forth as a debate erupts over ideas, theory or practice. How often do we say, “What a wonderful class, I enjoyed that!” Not often enough... And how often do we say, “I really took pleasure in reading/writing those words in the dissertation/thesis/article...”

Look At The Power In That Picture!

Fifthly, as I explain elsewhere, visual representations are a means of conveying information, of creating knowledge, of presenting in a different mode, lines of inquiry, trajectories of reflection. They are a means for me to convey to you, the reader, something of power relations, of displaying all kinds of bodies, and of forming theory, somatically.

A Profuse Tangle

Lastly, I like the play of historical text, countermemory, disruption of lines of descent... “Genealogy ... operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times” (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1984, p.76). My counter memory, this óody’s Tale, is not a traditional history, “a smooth continuous
movement, a natural process” rather it is chance, and “a profusion of entangled events” (p.88-89). If a genealogy is about the systematic dissociation of identity—because the identity we think we have is “only a parody; it is plural; countless spirits dispute its possession; numerous systems intersect and compete”—then what better way for me (and you?) to find in myself “not an immortal soul, but many mortal ones,” not a forgotten identity, eager to be reborn, but a complex crowd, unamenable to synthesis. Like the crowds in the borders, the multitude of little stories in the initials of my names? So, I hope to convey, no, to illuminate, for you and for me, that “The purpose of history, guided by genealogy, is not to discover the roots of our identity, but to commit itself to its dissipation” (p.94-95). I want to use a Book of Hours as my travel guide. I hope you’ll enjoy it too.
In the Book of Hours, the peasants are tilling and sowing, while the scrupulously rendered and betowered castle of the Duc hides within it the dungeons, the library and the kitchens, and I am sure, garderobes. The scene, a 14th century snapshot of life on the outskirts of Paris, reminds us that it is time to begin thinking of winter, but for a little while, it’s still pleasant to stroll along by the river. In my book of hours, corn is harvested, and rabbits killed, the ocean is visited and tea is drunk in many locations. The body learns about disciplining its excretory functions and how to take a bath, and, while Foucault pontificates about countermemories, we are having them.

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An October Doorway: 29 Westgate

Postcards from Dangerous locations/Safe Places 1

Histories, Genealogy and Methodologies

A Poem, Saturday Afternoon at The Opera

A Narrative, Cold in Louth 1

Tea in London 2

A Postcard from Norfolk: Listening to the Light

Foucault, Perambulating In/Out/Around Adult Education

A Narrative, Cold in Louth 2

A Poem, Postcolonial Fieldwork

Bathrooms and Toilets at Masson
AN OCTOBER DOORWAY

29, WESTGATE
The old man dropped me off at the foot of the church tower, and I walked as fast as I could around the church, past the Wheatsheaf pub, couldn’t resist a glance over at the Vicar’s gateway, and hurried on down Westgate. Number 29. Past Masson House, and the Limes opposite, past School House and Suffolk House, Westgate House opposite it. On further, past Breakneck Lane, he’d said on the phone that morning. And there it was, 29. White house. Georgian looking or at least early Victorian, beautifully proportioned; in London it would have been over a million, here in Louth, well, no idea.

I rung the doorbell and waited and he opened the door, and he was so nice! He was tall, and had fuzzy eyebrows, how could I have forgotten them, and he shook my hand and then he gave me a big hug and then he gave me a kiss on the cheek and I felt so good. Felt like I had come home. And we had a talk right there on the doorstep, his hand patting mine, and he said he remembered me, he had hundreds, thousands of pupils, yet when he heard Valerie Chapman, he couldn’t recall what on earth I looked like, but he could see my name at the top of the page, “that very distinctive writing!” I smiled, and said,
“How lovely to see you, Mr. Strong!”

“Oh no, call me Ian!” he exclaimed.

“But you’ll always be Mr. Strong, my history teacher.”

This morning when I got up in the ghastly house in Legbourne where I was doing Bed and Breakfast, I was desolate and desperate. Now, I thought, this was worth everything, to find someone, just this one person, who had cared for me, in this miserable town. And still does. I remembered the story I had written a few years ago, Love in the Classroom... It had been real, true, valid, whatever that means.

“Come on in, let me take your coat, I’m so sorry I have to leave this morning, oh yes, now I remember you! I can still see that writing! And those essays, and you were very, er, friendly with Dave, weren’t you? You used to sit together, didn’t you? No, take this chair, it’s much more comfortable, and can I get you a coffee, or tea? What exactly is it you’re doing here, by the way?”

While he went off to make me coffee, I sat, stunned and happy, and looked around. His house was beautiful, William Morris wallpaper, a sort of reddy brown in the living room and up the lovely curved stair way, and there were two chintz plush chairs together, his and hers, and then a couch and then another couple of chairs, and then a TV, so comfortable, but very elegant, and so schoolmasterly somehow, and it all looked out down through big picture windows to the river at the bottom. Beautiful green grass and flowerbeds outside, and inside, a beautiful house. I said how lovely it was, as my coffee was making, and he said, yes, they’d like to stay there but it’s getting very big. He asked me, didn’t you and Dave came once to our old house to work on something? And I said, yes, I vaguely recalled that, the school magazine or something. I told him briefly what I’d been doing, and that I was still a rebel. Isn’t it funny, after all those years he
remembered—a bit of a rebel, yes, you talked up a bit. And he valued me, he thought I was a good person and a good pupil.

“What are you doing here, in Louth?” he said again. “Well, that’s a good question.”

I thought, I can say, “My body brought me,” or I could say, “I’m just visiting,” and cop out, which is what I wanted to do yesterday and this morning, so badly. Or I could say... I didn’t know what to say. So I said,

“It’s a long story, but really, it’s about my research. I’m doing my Ph.D. and this is part of my research, but I would have come to see you anyway. If I had ever come here, but I doubt I would have done, it’s been a ghastly time so far, re-visited. And I have to go up to the school in a half hour and that will be trying!”

And then he’ll want to know, “What’s the research about?” Oh, no not history, well, maybe it’s history, it’s about me, my story of schooling, it’s a counter history, I do Foucault, and I’m in education now, and I want to...

How do you say, to such a nice (not even old man, how could I have thought him ancient, all of 30 years ago, when he didn’t even look 65 now)? “Well, I want to see what you did to my body, how you made me, you and all the other teachers and school people in my life, how my subjectivities were constructed, willy nilly... imperially... and I want to know if Foucault was right when he said that education is one of the four great discourses that constructs the subject and that it all happens on and at the body, and I want to know if Judith Butler is right when she says we perform our identity, or if I am right, and think the body is non-discursive and discursive and that the non-discursive body fools and performs for the discursive one, that the body has backstage and front stage and that of course, all this happens in a space and how is
that space made, and what shall I do when I know all this, Mr. Strong, when I can write my
exam, be examined on it, what difference will it all make when I go into a room to teach people,
like you used to come into my schoolroom just up the street at Suffolk House, the Sixth Form
House, four times a week to tell us all about Modern European History and show us how love
worked in the classroom, what difference will it make?"

... and so I said instead:

"I’m doing an autobiographical study of my education, because I’m interested in
educational theories. I got a research grant to do it, to come over here, a fellowship."

Was I ethical?

Anyway, we talked some more and he told me what happened to all the teachers. Mr.
Cooper was always very “nervous” and not very well, went away and was a deputy head,
somewhere in the midlands, and I said, yes, he did suffer with his nerves, and he said, yes, he
died young, in the 80s. And they sent somebody there to the funeral. Mr. Flagg left shortly after
I did, he’d been a bright lad.

“Bright lad,” he said again, thinking of him, “hadn’t heard from him in 25 years. Early
modern wasn’t he?” “Yes, and that was why we wanted we wanted to go to UCL, after
Cambridge, because he told us how wonderful it was, all about Hurstfield, and Bindoff and all
the other great Tudor men.”

Edward Runcey was still around, the Geography teacher. Boring man with a large
Adam’s apple. And then he said,

“Oh, you’ll like this, I was there when Mrs. Charneaux got her comeuppance!”

He told me how, after Miss James, our old girl’s school headmistress, retired after a
transitional period, Fred Yardley (who had hated Dave), took over as Head of both schools, and
the boarding houses. He was very nice, a kind man. "Soft," said Mr. Strong. He supported Mrs. Charneaux, even when everybody hated her and all the boarders complained, and so she continued her nasty reign. In the 80s he left. Mr. Johnson, who was a "hard man," came in as Head. Mr. Strong was invited into the room when the hard man dismissed her. Mr. Johnson told her exactly what he thought of her, and she protested, patronizingly, and in her upper class (fake) accent, as if no mere mortals could even approach her august presence, but Mr. Strong said, laughing, "It was no use, she was out on her ear! Johnson relished it, and, I must say, I did too. She was a nasty woman." Mr. Strong said he was very happy about her dismissal, and I told him how awful she had been to me, and then about the bad character reference she gave me, and how it had ruined my chances of getting anywhere, and then I told him how she got Dave expelled. He said he hadn't remembered that. Dave being expelled. I said,

"Oh yes, but he recovered well enough. All in all, my life at King Edward had been pretty awful, what with her, and the old miserable school mistresses who thought me a bad girl, a trouble maker, until the Sixth Form, when we amalgamated with the boy's school, and I finally had some good teachers, you and David Cooper."

We talked a little more, until he had to get ready to go to Italy, leaving in 30 minutes he said, "How lucky you caught me!" His wife returned, and she said, "You came to our first house in Legbourne Road, with your boyfriend, and did some work with Ian, I remember you!" and they both invited me back, and I hugged them both and left with tears in the throat, and although I wanted to just sit on a bench somewhere and howl, I had to race up to Cherry Tree Lane and the boy's school to meet with the headmaster. Master! I thought, bitterly, and then recovered a bit of feminist spirit, looked down at my purple shoes, hefted my camera and my tape recorder, hitched up my soul and sprinted away.
Walking on Galiano
Harvest smell, corn fields and poppies
all along the edges
flowers waving nodding talking to corn

A smaller girl remembers August poppies in corn fields
and men with guns and dogs surround the uncut centre
smaller and smaller and all the rabbits
tremble in the little square the choice is
death by blades, death by dog, death by gun
no choice for life at all
cruelty and grins and shots and screams
a littlest girl is stone, darkness, horror, the blood.
blo015-red poppies gallantly flying over the rabbits,
red markers, here they are, hear they are, and the
screams echo down the years to...
When I would tell people my study was an autoethnographical or autobiographical account of my education, they’d sometimes say, “Oh a sort of history, then?” And I’d say, “No, it’s a genealogy. That’s quite different, it’s a reversal of the traditional histories…” Then I would run out of explanations because I know all about how to do history, but what is a genealogy, a counter history? What would a genealogy of my educated body look like? I needed to find out exactly what Foucault meant by a genealogy. He had been quite eloquent in *Discipline and Punish*, speaking of “Small acts of cunning endowed with a great power of diffusion, subtle arrangements, apparently innocent, but profoundly suspicious, mechanisms that obeyed economies too shameful to be acknowledged, or pursued petty forms of coercion” (p. 139). I would need to find out about those small acts, then. But HOW to do it, HOW to frame it? How to get a sense of what to write in the boxes of the Ethical Review Form, WHAT to say to a committee, other scholars, about what I was hoping to do?

**Truth And Knowledge: The Will To Research?**

I have found, as usual, that although many talented and perceptive scholars have explained, “what Foucault really means,” it’s best for me to talk to him one on one… have a heart to heart with his textual voice. Much of what has guided me in my understanding of genealogy and counter memory, in fact, my overall methodological approach to the study, comes directly from *Nietzsche, Genealogy and History*, the essay written in 1971 (reprinted in Rabinow, 1984), and delivered as a lecture at the College de France shortly after. This essay, together with
Foucault’s summary of his inaugural Course at the College, *The Will to Knowledge* (in Rabinow, 1997), represents his thinking on the contrast between an Aristotelian will to knowledge—the harmonious linking of sensation, pleasure, knowing and truth—a desire to know who we are, an essential impulse, and Nietzsche’s will to truth, and what implications that has for doing history.

For Nietzsche, knowledge is not a naturally endowed faculty, it occurs and accrues in a cycle of skirmishes, it’s a weapon in the universal war of domination and struggle. It emanates not from an immanent pleasure in growing and flourishing, but is allied instead to hatred and struggle. Truth, then, is not our partner in self-development and awareness, nor should we think it our goal, for it is an intimate and capricious enemy. Nietzsche’s knowledge is an invention that masks the basest instincts, interests, desires and fears.... Contingent, temporary, and malicious products of deceitful wills, striving for advantage, fighting for survival and engaged in a ceaseless effort to forcefully impose their will on each other... a series of struggles, a weapon in the universal war of domination and submission... linked not to flourishing but harnessed to hatred and struggle. (Rabinow, 1997. p.xiv)

Pretty grim, but it makes sense to me, sounds just like life at my boarding school. Later on, Foucault would turn back toward pleasure and its uses in the ethical care of the self, linking this, as Aristotle had done, to the body, if in a very different way. But at this earlier point in his career this was his interpretation of the will to knowledge, and the will to truth. For Foucault, establishing truth in a context of justice, as a historically evolving force for good, is a farrago. Instead, his task is to establish “the difference between the will to knowledge [savoir] and the will to truth [verite]; the position of the subject or subjects with respect to that will” (*Will to Knowledge*, in Rabinow, 1997, p.12). During the College seminar of that year, as an example of tracing a discursive practice, Foucault followed a
development in justice in Greece from the seventh to fifth centuries. He concludes his summary of the Course with the thoughts:

During this period justice is the focus of significant political struggles. They gave rise to a form of justice linked to knowledge [savoir] in which truth is posited as visible, easily established, obedient to laws like those governing the order of the world, and whose discovery holds a purificatory value for oneself. This type of affirmation of truth was to be decisive in the history of Western knowledge. (P.15)

This leaves me with a sense of the dilemma I might be in if I choose to use a genealogical and Foucaultian approach to inquiry—I will not be able to produce "knowledge" and a "true" report about my study, if I use these definitions. But this is not revolutionary thinking to those who research in the qualitative paradigm, is the idea that "truth" is constructed in social and political relations. What is unsettling for me and something I must take into account, is the will to truth. What knowledge am I seeking? What discursive practices should I be on the look out for?

As Foucault defines it, a discursive practice is "characterized by the demarcation of a field of objects, by the definition of a legitimate perspective for a subject of knowledge, by the setting of norms for elaborating concepts and theories. Hence, each of them presupposes a play of prescriptions that govern exclusions and selections" (Will to Knowledge, p. 11). So, what objects, on what field, will comprise the study? What perspectives will attempt to array themselves as the ones to take, in pursuing knowledge about the body? What norms will I find myself compelled to use, in analyzing and theorizing, from the stories and writing I collect and produce about the body? What will I want to exclude, or select, and what will others want me to say, or not say, about my body, their relation to it, and my relation to them? Most importantly, I think I shall have to keep asking, what truths are being offered to me, and what effect do those truths have on my relation to the offerer, the body and myself?
What truths will I find obvious, and what truths will I want to select, as I script the body’s Tale? What will the effect of the truths I take from others have on the body and what effect will the truth I make of it all, the knowledge and the truth, and the world it reveals, have on me, on those who read the study, and any application to practice I might make from it? What is the truth I will find, what knowledge will prove it true, and where will those truths go?

So Much For Epistemology, What About Methods?

“Genealogy is grey, meticulous and patiently documentary. (Nietzsche, Genealogy and History, p. 76). Oh yes, indeed. As for what people might reveal to me in interviews, or talks or discussions, I should be vigilant, for “The world of speech and desires has known invasions, struggles, plundering, disguises, ploys” (p.76). I must be restrained, and record the oddest of events, occurring in the most unlikely spaces (toilets?), I must search through what none of us think is really history. In doing a genealogy, I

must look in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history—in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts; it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles. Finally, genealogy must define even those instances when they are absent, the moment when they remained unrealized...

(NHG, p. 76.)

Quite a proposition!

I already know that “Genealogy, consequently, requires patience and a knowledge of details, and it depends on a vast accumulation of source material.” It is constructed from “discreet and apparently insignificant truths and according to rigorous method;” and it cannot be the product of “large and well meaning errors.’ Foucault cites Nietzsche here; “Genealogy ...opposes itself to the search for ‘origins’” (NHG, p.76-77). I take this to mean I must be
pains-taking in my research, and that I mustn’t go asking why or when, but instead, describe what happened, and what effects it had on my and my body.

**Where To Begin, And What To Look For?**

But why should’t I look for the origins of the body or of power relations, look for the whys? Both Nietzsche and Foucault claim that the genealogist can’t capture the “exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, their carefully protected identities,” but that, actually, there is a secret behind things, “not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence” (p.78). I think this means, instead of asking why this teacher or that one, felt a need to humiliate or denigrate my/the body, I should be guided by the thought that “

*a genealogy of values, morality, asceticism and knowledge will never confuse itself with a quest for their ‘origins’... on the contrary it will cultivate the details and accidents that accompany every beginning, it will be scrupulously attentive to their petty malice; it will await their emergence, once unmasked, as the face of the other. (NHG, p.80)*

So, I must record the things that the teachers did, to humiliate and denigrate, to show how this produced an effect on me, and what effect, and how did that effect travel, so that I come to, *What affect did this effect have on my actions now?*

When I did history at school, and at college, and I think here especially of my Special and Optional studies at King’s, in the Norman Conquest and Mediaeval English Constitutional Documents (no, really, it was fascinating!), we were only concerned for origin. *When* did the feudal system assert itself in Anglo Saxon England? Did the Normans bring it as civilizing conquerors in 1066, sorting out the brutish English into nice orderly affinities of vassals and service relationships, building nice castles all over the land, not to mention churches and monasteries and all that, to help them out of their dreadfully backward ways? Or did the noble Saxons merely acquiesce to the barbaric colonizers from over the
Channel, in fact, training *them* in the niceties of life? These were the big questions. It was traditional history, a search for *Herkunft*, the “equivalent of stock or descent; the ancient affiliation to a group, sustained by the bonds of blood, tradition, or social class” (NHG, p.80-81), which often involves looking for race or a social type. Foucault claims the search for this will only reveal the exteriority of accidents, but he says, “Descent attaches itself to the body” and “everything that touches it, diet, climate and soil.” (p.82) Good! He says:

> The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language, and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration. Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body. (p. 83)

Later on he cautions,

> We may believe that the body obeys the exclusive laws of physiology, and escapes the influence of history, but this too is false. The body is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest and holidays; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws; it constructs resistances. (p. 87)

This is the kind of thing I need to know—I shall ask my interviewees then, about dining and working and playing and not about what we thought education was doing to ‘us,’ for in all cases, thinking of ‘us’ would involve cognition and the pull to the intellectual. We would try to make knowledge. Instead we must simply talk about, I must write about the everyday, all the boring things of life…. The ones, which when some calamity befalls, we wish desperately we could just be doing, and grumbling about, as normal, just like always….

**Three Traits To Watch Out For…**

Foucault talks about the other “devices” we can rely on to do genealogical work. We, I, should not rely on what I think is traditional history, patiently tracing a long, smooth, and
continuous development of certain features, nor should I aim to “rediscover” myself. Instead, this history I undertake must be “effective.” History becomes “effective” when it causes discontinuity, when it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts,” and above all, when “it deprives the self of the reassuring stability of life and nature… It will uproot its traditional foundations and relentlessly disrupt its pretended continuity. This is because knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting” (NHG, p. 88).

I’m pleased to hear that effective history has three distinguishing traits: I’ll know it if I see it… but I think I already know it, it’s what I wasn’t taught….

Firstly, it isn’t about smooth continuous movement, from this treaty to that battle, to a reign, to a demise, instead it’s about “a profusion of entangled events… haphazard conflicts and the randomness of events.” It’s not about progression, but about chance and the changes in relationship, the way language, vocabulary, is used and about the “entry of the masked other” (p. 88-89). I am not sure about the masked other, but I’ll wait to see what that might mean. Just so long as I remember Foucault citing Nietzsche, there is only the “iron hand of necessity shaking the dice box of chance.”

This is profoundly different for me—for 6 years I was trained to make meaning of it all, to assure my examiners that I knew that the present rests on “profound intentions and immutable necessities,” not that we exist among “countless lost events, without a landmark or a point of reference” (NHG, p. 89). I would have been failed in my degree examination by the London University Board if I had even intimated that! I guess this means I should not expect to find that my body has progressed smoothly along, from one sure episode to another. To become, say, female; I should see instead that gender has been learned from one mistake or another, one haphazard event here, bad luck there, and a wrong move this way, a
change of wording that way. Oh, I guess that means, no enemy, no Others? I see that if I start looking for gender as a trait that grows more visible from toddlerhood on, smoothly into childhood, a seamless laying down of sediments of femaleness, on and up to adolescence, and thus to womanhood, effortlessly reinforcing itself, rediscovering its femaleness through middle age … that is a traditional history. An “effective” history of learning gender hops from an episode here, at 12, to a scene with a lover there at 34, to a contretemps with Mother at eight, it shows that not winning a place to a male dominated institution at 18 is about bad luck and being the wrong object in the wrong field at the right time... ah hah!

Secondly, “effective” history inverts the traditional historian’s use of distance and proximity. When I did History before, it was with distances and heights, noblest periods, highest forms, and just conclusions. This kind of new history “shortens its vision to the things nearest it—the body, the nervous system, nutrition, digestion, and energies… if it chances upon lofty epochs, it is with the suspicion—not vindictive but joyous—of finding a barbarous and shameful conclusion” (p. 89). Indeed, I already have experienced the displeasure of some traditionalists, historians and researchers, who hate to see me reverse the traditional “pretension to examine things furthest from themselves,” in my choosing to “study what is closest, in an abrupt dispossession so as to seize it at a distance.” They doubt my ability to be distant and to seize the “truth” about myself. I’m in august company though, for as Foucault claims, following Nietzsche, history has more in common with medicine than philosophy. History should not be the handmaiden to philosophy—which completely denies the body—its task instead is to become a “curative science” (p.90).

Thirdly, an effective historian affirms their own knowledge as the perspective from which they operate, rejecting objectivity and their own erasure. As an effective researcher, I
should claim, with Foucault, an historical sense that is "explicit in its perspective and acknowledges its system of justice," rather than one which "tries to remove all its groundings in a specific time and place. Thus an effective historical sense is slanted... not given to a discreet effacement before the objects it observes... and it gives equal weight to its own sight and to its objects" (p. 90).

This is familiar ground for feminist researchers, who have argued for explicit situation for decades. Donna Haraway claims that that is precisely the strength of situated knowledges, which in their relativist, local, oppositionally positioned and "webbed accounts," oppose the "god-trick," which, while it claims to make objective knowledge, in its own situatedness "produces, appropriates and orders all difference" (Haraway, 1991, p. 193). Foucault, never one to mince words, compares the historian to the demagogue. Masking "his singular malice under universals" the traditional historian "must invoke objectivity, the accuracy of facts and the permanence of the past," because traditional history—which he compares to Platonic history—relies on past achievements and adopts the base curiosity of the plebs (NHG, p. 93). Effective history is strictly anti-Platonic, and should be free of a demand for "suprahistorical history." I think I understand this.

When I studied the Norman Conquest, it was from the context of the 20th century, in the wake of a world war and during the decades of nationalism which followed it, and we wanted to find a natural, glorious heritage for the English, the British; if we could establish that the blonde and stalwart, but cultivated, Anglo Saxons of 1065, were, in fact, politically, and culturally superior to the swarthy and violent European, that bastardly Frenchman William, then we established a supr histoire for Britain’s "natural" dominance of Europe, and not coincidentally, its right to lead a European Union. It was all done very objectively, of
course; the documents and the language in them, demonstrated, quite impartially, that feudal
terminology had been well established in England (if not in the ghastly Welsh Marches or
Scottish Highlands) for at least 20 years prior to the Conquest. Thus, QED, the pure English
king, Harold, was better than the mongrel Frenchman, who was a bastard, in all senses of the
word. Dr. Allan Brown, who had written about all this, was quite a fan of Harold… but he
had a hankering for William too, so probably wasn’t a good example of a demagogic
historian. (He called his pair of spotted Dalmatian dogs, William and Matilda, and used to
regale us with stories about their antics.)

How best can the effective historian oppose Platonic/traditional history? There are
three ways. (For a man who opposed grids and taxonomies, and statistics, Foucault is much
given to lists… and numbers). “They imply a use of history that severs its connection to
memory, its metaphysical and anthropological model, and constructs a countermemory—a
transformation of history into a totally different form of time” (NHG, p. 93).

The Best Three Ways To Do Genealogical History

By Parodic and Farcical Means

The first way is by parodic and farcical means, “directed against reality, and which opposed
the theme of history as reminiscence or recognition.” The 19th and early 20th century
historians offered the confused and anonymous European the possibility of alternative
identities, preferably as romantic and Wagnerian sword wielders, rather than lowly street
vendors. The genealogist will offer an excessive choice of identities, push the masquerade,
prepare for the great carnival of time where masks are constantly appearing. “Genealogy is
history in the form of a concerted carnival” (p. 94). Great, a clear link for me at least, to
Bakhtin!
And Dissociation of Identity

The second way is by the systematic dissociation of identity “which opposes history given as continuity or representation of a tradition.” This is necessary because the identity we think we have is “only a parody; it is plural; countless spirits dispute its possession; numerous systems intersect and compete” (p. 94). By studying history in a genealogical fashion, we can be happy, as we find in ourselves “not an immortal soul, but many mortal ones.” Doing my study genealogically, I won’t find one forgotten identity, eager to be reborn, but a complex crowd of them, unamenable to synthesis, because “the purpose of [my] history, guided by genealogy, is not to discover the roots of our identity, but to commit itself to its dissipation.” Genealogy should raise questions and should reveal the systems which inhibit the formation of any identity.

And By Being Sacrificial

The third way is sacrificial, “directed against truth, and opposes history as knowledge” (NHG, p. 93). This is perhaps the most important of the three, for me at least. Let me explain.

The third use of traditional history is the sacrifice of the subject of knowledge. Foucault recalls the will to knowledge, “all knowledge rests upon injustice, (that there is no right, not even in the act of knowing, to truth, or a foundation for truth), and that the instinct for knowledge is malicious (something murderous, as opposed to the happiness of mankind)” (p. 95). Knowledge is not pure, it cannot be detached from the roots from which it arose, it’s not about constituting and affirming a free subject, rather it enslaves the subject in its ongoing violence. “Where religions once demanded the sacrifice of bodies, knowledge now calls for experimentation on ourselves, calls us to the sacrifice of the subject of knowledge” (p.96).
Oh, yes, as in endless therapies, self development, and psychology, and aptitude tests and learning styles inventories and prior learning assessments...

Foucault summarizes his arguments for a critical use of history, and, relying again on Nietzsche, he presses for the an effective history with "its just treatment of the past, its decisive cutting of the roots, its rejection of traditional attitudes of reverence, its liberation of man by presenting him with other origins than those in which he prefers to see himself" (p. 96).

**What Does This Mean For The ōdōy?**

I take this to mean, then, that counter memory is historical practice as genealogy; it rejects reality, and monuments, and offers, instead of a romantic identity from the past, a plethora of life and its intensities, masks of carnival, in parody; it dissociates identity and dissipates it, not providing an essential or forgotten identity, nor an immortal soul but many mortal ones; and thirdly, it recognizes the will to knowledge and the potential for the sacrifice of the subject to the pursuit of knowledge. There is no way to use a pure knowledge, now, of what happened in the past; we don’t have a right to truth or knowledge, nor do we need to experiment on ourselves; we can then abandon the will to knowledge.

And how will the ōdōy’s Tale satisfy these requirements?

Well, we’ll see...
I took the number 9 bus to Alma
walked down to Jericho, along
Locarno and Spanish Banks
East, West.
on to the grey beach.

A bored gull, and another, and one more
watched me take a photograph from my breast pocket
keep it safely dry in
all the rain. Then I tore it up.
Slowly. Tenderly. Leaving until last
the two of us, face to face.

I gently ripped
my cheek from yours
let the pieces of our picture
fall into the stream and rain and
wind. A confetti of love, caught on
a green morning in May, emptied out
into an October ocean.

The waves hurried our picture out to sea.
The rain fell. I didn’t cry.

The last task done now.
Funeral rites for a dead love
held in a
sandy wet cemetery.
Quiet, and grey, only the sound of
rocks pulling at the water’s hem,
the three gulls and I watch the little
white boats of memory dance and
sway and swirl away.
Cold in Louth 1

Imagine my dismay at the Coach station in Victoria, looking at all the names of the places we would stop, names I hadn’t heard for over 30 years, and the hairs on my arm stood up and looked up at the departure board with me and the feelings which welled up as National Express swept me around corners and down hills and up wolds into ancient and familiar territory, Horncastle (Horncastle boys…) Market Rasen, Coningsby… (all those RAF stations) and “Louth” starts to appear more regularly on the sign posts and the temperature drops inside the coach and the hairs are standing up on my neck, goose pimples scratching my thin yellow Taiga Vancouver coat hugged around me, a protective shawl of my present, I have a present, not only a past, we speed closer, I am looking for the church spire (tallest in England), my heart begins to speed up a little and I shiver
and then we are in the town, and I can’t recognize anything, where are we, I see street signs, Lee Street, Queen Street, Gospelgate, the War Memorial, and the Cattle market, and I know where I am.

and I think I will choke with fear, or that my heart will burst, dead of a coronary on the damned bus, not even making it into the town...

and the angry bus driver throws my cases off and I climb over the bags of the doddering old couple in front to get my luggage and I am frozen with something, not just cold, and the bed and breakfast lady is here to meet me and carry me off to Legbourne and I am a mess, but I look good. It is a matter of pride. “Always dress well for travel, girls.” I get into her car, and I say, I am so cold, and cold I stay.

and then I had a bowl of soup with her, ate the sandwiches I bought in Marks and Spencer’s on the Edgeware Road in London an aeon ago this morning, creep up to my unheated room, “a special treat,” she says, “I’ll turn on the immersion heater for a nice hot bath,” everything with her is nice, nice house, nice soup, nice room, nice yellow paper, nice breakfast, but nothing is nice and warm,

and I sit and write this icy script.

and, somehow, I knew I would freeze—see, cold again, always the cold. Always cold in Louth.
A Postcard from Norfolk
Listening to Light and Waiting for Tea time

It is not as quiet here as it was, the other guest is talking too much.
She should listen more.

Listening to the light, what does it mean, it means

Watching loud swallows chirp
Seeing Luke bark with boredom
Hearing scruffy white clouds run amok above
Observing brown hens scolding Mr. Rooster
For his defective crowing
Examining the way the afternoon sunlight hits the grass sideways

All these things are listening to light.

And inside, what does listening to the light mean?

I don’t really know, what do you think it means?
Who knows, obviously, one knows, for after all
Listening to the light inside is
cupping the ears to catch the inner/ocent voice

But one doesn’t want to hear what it says
when it isn’t nice...

Listening to the inner light is about seeing the bad news.
And what about good news, is there good news,
I don’t know.

Maybe the rooster knows.
Tea in London 2

Today I went to the National Portrait Gallery

a cool autumn day. who can tell. the seasons are all the same here diesel petrol fumes and dirty scraps milling around the dustbins clinically depressed plane trees pedestrians on prozac and speed.

28 red bus still conductored ferries me grudgingly by gaudy coloured hoardings posters hotdog smelling onions queue here for tonight’s tickets. Shaftesbury and Drury Lane and Criterion. lion and pigeon infested tourist tangled square. here it is a building greyly grave bland side entry heavy bloody door opens in. not welcome here?

wandering the galleries. a room or three of winners of the year’s photography competition look good to me. rooms and rooms and rooms. empires full of old men. pop stars and footballers and politicians aren’t there any bloody women here? yes. the queen by anigone. diana as real as aspartame in some good family snaps by tony wedgewood ben a replacement husband for the dashing wing commander she couldn’t have the only one of the royals my mother had any colonial regard for. margaret. she did not do well with the windsors.

oh gosh some women. great detective stories writers of. sayers. christie. allingham. my favourites. read the Nine Tailors 4 times. this is more like it.

ah. very interesting. victoria handing over a present of a bible the secret of england’s greatness it says in the caption absolutely would I ever lie to you smiling queenie says to a nicely kneeling black as the ace of spaces former note former in caption moslem trembles smiling hard hands stretched out to get all the greatness he can.

jasmine. a lovely fifties early sixties newsreader. herstory. she always read the news in an evening frock after six even though it was radio and we couldn’t see her it was very important to keep up the tradition. empire. empire. no mr. kurtz.

oh the café. many very upper/middle class customers absolutely no americans no young people. one can hide from awful colonials here. the better kind of lady comes in her blonde dyed do and thousand pound suit and afternoon jewelry to swig her wine look at her knock that back tucking into sponge cake cream filling strawberry jam too.

poor tea dreadful service. but now we know where they keep the Empire in London.
MORE DARTS AT FOUCAL'T'S SCRAWNY HAUNCHES
Camille Paglia, Salon Magazine, December 2, 1998

Yes, I have indeed written at length about my objections to the grossly overpraised Foucault. One of my observations was that Foucault's works are oddly devoid of women. Shouldn’t that concern you as a feminist? His later writing on ancient sexuality is a garbled mishmash.

Foucault’s analysis of “power” is foggy and paranoid and simply does not work when applied to the actual evidence of the birth, growth and complex development of governments in ancient and modern societies. Nor is Foucault’s analysis of the classification of knowledge particularly original—except in his bitter animus against the Enlightenment, which he failed to realize had already been systematically countered by Romanticism. I’m afraid I bring rather bad news: Over the course of your careers, your generation of students will slowly come to realize that the Foucault-praising professors whom you respected and depended on were ill-informed fad-followers who sold you a shoddy bill of goods. You don’t need Foucault, for heaven’s sake!

Foucault-worship is an example of what I call the Big Daddy syndrome: Secular humanists, who have drifted from their religious and ethnic roots, have created a new Jehovah out of string and wax. Again and again one sees the scenario of Melancholy, Bookish, Passive, Insecure Young Nebbish suddenly electrified and transfigured by the Grand Epiphany of Blindingly Brilliant Foucault. This sappy psychodrama would be comic except for the fact that American students forced to read Foucault have been defrauded of a genuine education in intellectual history and political analysis.... students, forget Foucault! Poststructuralism is a corpse. Let it stink in the Parisian trash pit where it belongs!
Foucault is …

erambulating In and Out and Around Adult Education

I woke up one day, a few years ago, and realise[d] that if I didn’t change my job or change my life I wasn’t going to make too many more birthdays. I come from family that doesn’t allow quitting—neither the English nor the Canadian side. The laws had just been changed too, so I couldn’t qualify for Unemployment if I quit. I was working at the time for an educational publisher, and spending a lot of time on university campuses, finding Profs who might either write for us or use our books. I noticed that lots of the students were pretty old... I was also volunteering at a local woman’s centre which offered resources and information for women in recovery from substance abuse. I heard many of them talk about “going back to school,” which seemed to be about finding new ways to live, or work, or be in the world.

So I signed up for a 6 credit course in the Foundations of Adult Education, part time student for a year. I thought, vaguely, that I would learn how to work with women like the ones at the centre. It became the high point of my week, Mondays, 4:30 to 7 pm, September to April. By the time I finished, I had applied for a student loan, been accepted as a master’s student in the Adult Ed. program and quit my job... I didn’t know then that I was an absolutely typical an adult learner, in terms of my motivation, and reasons for participating. In one way I wasn’t typical—after my first year (the one where I had thought I would have all the time in the world to learn how to meditate, read books, discuss theory and be generally very leisurely and very clever and find work) I stayed on, and then went on into the doctoral program...and, if I’m lucky, I might be teaching and working with women like me in similar university adult education programs in the near future.
I tell you this story for two reasons: One, I know adult education from the inside and the outside, theory to practice, and back. My exposure to, and reactions, then, to Foucault’s work are likely to be representative of others in adult education. I am reminded, too, of a comment from an adult educator on one of my papers: “You seem to find Foucault’s work productive, and provocative.” With emphasis on the provocative. If I at times seem to be taking a scolding tone, or even a blaming one, forgive me... I know that (adult) educators as scholars are no more intellectually challenged than any others, and I know too, that it is the discursive construction of the discipline that I am really taking a tilt at, and I really don’t want to offend. Much. Judith Butler says much the same thing, her response to those who accuse her of being too critical:

I understood myself to be in an embattled and oppositional relation to certain forms of feminism even as I understood the text to be part of feminism itself. I was writing in the tradition of immanent critique that seeks to provoke critical examination of the basic vocabulary of the movement of thought to which it belongs. There was and remains warrant for such a mode of criticism and to distinguish between self-criticism that seeks to undermine it altogether.
(Judith Butler: Preface to 1999 ed. of Gender Trouble, p. vii)

I think one of the reasons I like Foucault is that he liked to provoke. And so, obviously, does Camille Paglia, so we’re all in good company today. But why do I want to use Foucault’s work as a frame for some of my own, why, amongst other whys, use a man? For me a feminist? (Like Camille.) And just what was/is my reaction to Foucault’s work? How did I, as an adult being educated, gain exposure to his scholarship?

This is important to know—I’ll probably be a graduate adult educator one day, and, as we are so fond of saying in my field, “We teach as we were taught.” If I think Foucault’s work is important for my field, then I must be one of those who work with it and introduce it to others. Another reason, right up front, is because I love theory, and his theory, in particular. Unusual for an academic to take pleasure, or to say they do, in their work? Maybe, as Erica
McWilliam (1999) says, it’s too strange for us to speak of pleasure and scholarship and Foucault in the same breath... but this question, too, finds, its way into my work—are we not willing at times, in our subjectification, and shouldn’t we, and don’t we, enjoy some of it? I therefore maintain my usual writing style, and insert my personal narratives/commentary into this “theory bit” of my text. I am aware, of course, that this might be construed by some as a confessional practice... 😊

I have found myself more and more intrigued as to why adult education, as a field of study and practice, and as a discourse, fails to accept what has been called Foucault’s challenge (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). I noticed this, all over again, when I co-edited a volume of papers for the 2000 Adult Education Research Conference (Sork, Chapman & St. Clair, 2000). The conference had a larger international presence than normal; every decade or so, six international adult education organizations meet to discuss the state of the discipline, and share their research and theoretical explorations of the terrain. I had the pleasure (at times) of reading papers from the United States, Europe, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, as well as South Africa, Mexico, and, of course, Canada. It has brought me back to my field, this duty, a genuine pleasure.

But I am still wondering... Why don’t they like Foucault, why do so few use his work? Now this is true of most educationalists (see Roth, 1992; and Chisholm, 1991; who says of Ball’s Foucault and Education—the only text published in education for a long time, to explicitly take up Foucault in educational analysis—“Foucaultian analysis is a perspective which explicitly fails to move beyond critique, is pessimistic and discouraging, even denigrating... I do not want [it] to paralyze education as it has threatened to do in some quarters of critical sociology” (p.145)), but I thought it strange that only a few authors cited him, and
only one made substantive use of Foucaultian theory. Just what is it about adult educators—or the discipline—that wishes to exclude or ignore a Foucaultian analysis? What do we adult educators, and I include myself in this, have in common with Camille? I know, better to ask, what effect does it have, to shut out Foucault? Later...

So, What is Adult Education?

A caveat: I am thinking that I may have an audience or some readers who are not familiar with adult education as a discipline or field of study... If those of you who are adult educators find this section over-general or under-theorized, it's really not for you... But you might like to read it, anyway. Adult education means, simply, any kind of educational activity undertaken by those considered by their societies to be adults, as opposed to children. It can be education that is conducted, formally, in institutions that award credentials upon successful completion of a prescribed course of study, or any kinds of activities that adults engage in, informally, and non-formally, inside and outside of educational institutions, which might enrich or improve their life, or expand an area of knowledge or expertise. The discipline of adult education draws from other fields to build its body of knowledge; sociology, psychology and gerontology, for example, have all contributed to the theory and practice of adult education. It is, above all, a field of study that draws heavily upon practice, and most adult education scholars generally seek to produce theory that will improve or transform practice.

One of adult education's defining characteristics is its historical origin in non-professional and, indeed, amateur and non-formal institutions, hence the continuing suspicion at times of any professionalization of the field, and its strong theory/practice split; at times this schism has lead to anti-intellectualism and a refusal to accept theoretical considerations of
practice. As a field and discipline, adult education has been marginalized—academically, spatially and socially. When I took my first classes we were, literally, located just off campus, near to coffee shops and a good cheap Chinese restaurant, but well away from the library and other institutional facilities.

The adult educator usually holds philosophical or understanding that big children, to be taught. Adult education, North American model, adults attend education motivations and reasons school children; adults they are psychologically apply in their lives children are taught skills and knowledge to draw upon in some future time; adults are self-directed, learn best when their own experiences are linked to the learning process and content, and when they are respected as fully functioning adult members of society who can and do cooperate in setting their own learning goals and outcomes. Much adult education is about working for, or bringing about change, in society as a whole, and/or within the individual learner. (The clipping above is from the Times, October 28, 1969 and somewhere in the middle is the body, trying to bring about change...)

95
Adult education has always been associated with social movements, such as the democracy, literacy, citizenship, Labour and women’s movements. Adult education’s enduring canonical heroes are those, like Paolo Freire and Miles Horton, who educated for social change. In recent years, it has continued to use, and be used by, participants in the New Social Movement’s, such as the Green, the peace, the New Age and the gay and lesbian, and women’s liberation movements.

**Adult Education Was/Is Androcentric**

This traditional model of adult education is a product of a field whose scholars were, and are, mainly white, middle class and male, and whose typical learner is/was the white, middle class, male American. In recent years, this model has been problematized and critiqued by those of differing gender, sexual orientation, color, origin and class (see, for example, Tisdell, 1993, Stalker, 1996, Alfred, 2000); what remains however, is still a vital commitment to adult education as a vehicle or agent for social and personal change—with a strongly liberal-humanist flavor!

My own particular area of study is in university adult education. I teach, work with, and theorize about adults who come to university to be educated. Some are beginning teachers, many are people pursuing graduate degrees in adult or other educational fields, many are adults who are coming to university at a point of transition in their lives, personal or professional; many want to “learn their way out” of an uncomfortable life setting, and lots just come because they have to, “for work”. I bring to my theory and practice as a feminist adult educator a firm belief in the possibility for social change and the alleviation of social inequities through education. I realize that this belief is a discursive construction, and that (my) teaching and many
of the educational activities that I engage in are discursive practices that work to construct “acceptable” subjectivities in my adult learners. If Foucault is right, and education is one of the great discourses that subjectify and normalize, I still believe that there are some subjectivities that are more worthwhile than others, and those are the ones I seek to instill. I admit I often struggle, wrestle, with this question, but in the end I usually agree with Foucault, who once said:

It seems to me that the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them. (Foucault, 1974, p. 171).

I acknowledge many learners are at the university to get their degree or qualification and move on, and thus an ethical dilemma arises: Have I the right to so unmask and unsettle those who did not appoint me to that task? What would Foucault answer, I wonder? Keep being disruptive?

Critical Traditions

I think a critical educational project would want to engage with Foucault’s work, to engage with issues or problems in the practice and theory of adult education. Thomas Popkewitz defines a critical project:

We use the term critical in this chapter to place the work of Foucault in a field concerned with issues of power and the political in schooling. Critical refers to a broad band of disciplined questioning of the ways in which power works through the discursive practices and performances of schooling. Foucault’s work is illustrative of a move within critical traditions to focus on knowledge as a material element in social life. (1998, p. 4)

Stephen Brookfield, a canonical figure in adult education scholarship (and a nice guy too, says she, a feminist), defines being critical in adult education as, “not an unequivocal concept. It is rather, a contested idea. How the terms critical or criticality are used reflects the ideologies of the users” (2000, p.1). An interesting contrast.
Brookfield believes there are three critical traditions in adult education. Firstly, ideology critique, as seen in Neo-Marxism, and as propounded by Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse, and, more recently, Habermas, a great hit with many North American and European adult educators, while others, like Mezirow, use ideology as a critique in ways that allow for systemic critical reflection on (what he believes to be) sociocultural distortions. Canonical figures here are Freire, Tawney, Coady, Tomkins and Horton. (Maybe bell hooks too? Note that all these educators are men...) The second critical tradition in adult education derives from psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, and often figures in developmental and life course/life-roles adult education; adults learn to become critical about events, traumas and inhibitions deriving from their childhood. It is seen as an emancipatory process, with individual and social transformation intimately linked. Rogers, Fromm, Laing, Gould and Mezirow all stress this approach to critical reflection, in which the personality is to be re-constituted, as is society. The third tradition is pragmatist constructivism, and how people learn to construct and deconstruct their life experiences, and assign meaning to them. It rejects universals, and endorses pragmatic continuous experimentation to bring about better social forms. Miles Horton’s work at Highlander joined ideology critique to a constructivist approach “to help activists realize that their own experience—properly analyzed in a collaborative but critical way—could be an invaluable resource in their fight for social justice.” (Brookfield, 2000, p. 3) They all sound a long way from Foucault and his poststructuralist view of the world.

**Adult Education Epistemologies**

Brookfield defines epistemology as, “centering on the way we believe we come to accurate knowledge of reality.” Note the personal conceptualization, and the experiential subtext. In
contrast, Popkewitz defines epistemology as "...Knowledge as social practice that generates action and participation. Knowledge, for our purpose is a material practice that constitutes the self in the world rather than part of what Marxist analyses refer to as epi-phenomenon" (1998, p. 5).

Ideology critique and the psychoanalytic traditions work with objectivist conceptions of knowledge. There are truths out there: "after long and sometimes bloody struggle, ideology critique contends that false consciousness and hegemony can be penetrated to reveal the world as economically determined" (Brookfield, p. 3). The psychoanalytic tradition believes in acquiring truth through self-knowledge, reaching a state of being that is more integrated and authentic than what we have now. In the pragmatist and constructivist tradition, knowledge is viewed as "malleable, as individually, socially and culturally framed" (p. 4). Postmodernism is now often the preferred framing for this tradition, but it is based in much older intellectual traditions; both argue for a multiplicity of meanings, and a constructivist understanding of oppression that emphasizes the role of humans as co-constructors of their own oppression, and thus intersects with theorists of hegemony. But such oppression is contextual, and individuals can switch from one context to another and be both oppressor and oppressed, or both at the same time. Personal experience is also taken very seriously. As Brookfield contends, "Adult educators who interpret critical reflection from within the objectivist tradition of ideology critique and psychotherapy will be likely to have a more fixed idea of what critically reflective adult education, properly practiced, looks like" (p. 5). And a much different response to Foucault's work?
In Which Valerie Meets Foucault

I came to know all these traditions very well in my first two years of adult education, and accepted them pretty uncritically, falling more into the constructivist paradigm. I should tell you though, how I met Foucault and what I thought of him. I heard his name twice during my first two and half years. The first time was in the Foundations course, when the professor, (very lively and very well known—he’s a great recruiter for the program, both consciously and subconsciously), referred at one point in his lecture to “some of these new postmodern figures, like Foucault.” I thought he was talking about the Umberto Eco novel *Foucault’s Pendulum*, which I had tried to read, found incomprehensible and then abandoned. I didn’t even think of Foucault again. And no one else did either.

Which was a shame, because by the time I was trying to analyze the findings, the women’s stories, in my Master’s research project, I needed some help figuring out what was going on in their accounts of struggles with power and regulation, and their ambivalent need to conform to this disciplining (Chapman, 1996). Then, in an advanced seminar on research traditions in adult education there was one throwaway line, something about “discipline and disciplines and this man Foucault” and it was one of those moments... *Oh*! I thought, *that’s it!* *The women were being disciplined!!!*

I went off, not to read the original, the professor had said it was really boring and hard to get into, but some secondary sources. Luckily, these included Nancy Hartsock’s piece on feminism and power and Foucault (1990), which helped me a lot... and so I kept on, reading more, and more, and then eventually, when I went to take classes outside of adult education, then outside of education entirely, in cultural and feminist geography and philosophy, I met Foucault properly, we were introduced, so to speak, and I read him in the original/flesh... I think
now, there were lots of uses I could have made of Foucault in my studies back then but it’s never too late, and in this text I have taken a great deal from his theories, his concepts, his methods of study and his writing and *Askēsis*. I think there’s a lot others could take, too, but it’s an uphill struggle in a field still largely liberal humanist, still androcentric and still very white and very “practical.” Why did Foucault appeal to me so much? Who was he, anyway?

**The Man Himself And His Work**

I think I have in fact been situated in most of the squares on the political chessboard, one after another, and sometimes simultaneously: an anarchist, leftist, ostentatious or disguised Marxist, nihilist, explicit or secret anti-Marxist, technocrat in the service of Gaullism, new liberal etc. An American professor complained that a cryptomarxist like me was invited to the USA and I was denounced in the press in Eastern Europe for being an accomplice of the dissidents. None of these descriptions is important by itself; taken together, on the other hand, they mean something. And I must admit that I rather like what they mean.

(Rabinow, 1984, pp. 383-384)

Who was Foucault? He called himself the *Masked Philosopher*, his own choice of pseudonym for a 1980 interview with *Le Monde*. Foucault himself, personally (scrawny haunches and all), let alone his work, seems to excite emotion, in even the most drab academic breasts, and especially amongst feminists. “Not a ladies man,” Meaghan Morris says, while Biddy Martin says, primly, “feminist thinkers should not be seduced by the work of Foucault” (cited Griffiths, 1995b, p. 228). And there’s another kind of feminist reaction, more positive, “a writer whom many readers want to have on their side... Foucault is read desiringly...when he doesn’t quite say what is necessary, then the reader will sadly or admonishingly fall into a discourse of ‘what Foucault fails to acknowledge’” (Still, 1994, p.151; see also, Ramazangolou, 1993). Lately, though, feminists have been using Foucault as a “one night stand” (Mayo, 2000), a rather strange thing, considering the heterosexism of that comment. But, for sure, feminists have
found his work useful, even though he reneged on his intention to study gender, which he
realized was a patriarchal construction—He had intended to do a genealogy of the patriarchal
family, but this is one of the projects that died with him.

I am not sure at times, really, why his work appeals, but it does, and in common with
many feminists, I take what I can and leave the rest—usually, I take the analyses of power, the
body stuff, the discourse stuff, the genealogy stuff, the ethical stuff, the writing stuff, the
relational stuff (Stone, 2001), well, I see, quite a bit of stuff. Could adult educators find
something equally useful—male or female?

The goal of my work during the last 20 years has been not to analyze the phenomenon
of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. My objective, instead,
has been to create a history of the different modes, by which, in our culture, human
beings are made subjects.” (Foucault, 1982, p. 208)

There were three phases in that work. In *Madness and Civilization, The Birth of the
Clinic, The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, all published in the 60s,
Foucault worked with an archeological perspective, which he characterized as avoiding the
hermeneutic search for depth, seeking to describe, instead, the conditions of possibility for
knowledge. An archeology seeks to show how discourses are enshrined in disciplines, how
those disciplines form power/knowledge structures that produce ‘truths’, and then constitute
subjects. These first works examine how the disciplines were created in the modern age, and he
outlines the rise of the human sciences.

In the second phase of his life’s inquiry, Foucault turned to the micro level, to see just
how discourses actually work, materially, in institutions, in practices, on people. This shift is
marked by the use of genealogies to expose the effects of power relations on subjects; he
examines, not why, but how, discourse works through power relations, in education, medicine,
criminology and justice work, to construct docile bodies within the hospital, the school, the barracks and the prison, in *Discipline and Punish*, and how the regulation of individuals and populations—bio-power—is achieved through surveillance and self-regulation. Foucault next deconstructed the discourse of sexuality and its deployment, the effect of that power, on the subject, in the *History of Sexuality, Volume 1*.

In his later works, the second and third volumes of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault turned to the Greeks, Romans and Early Christians to investigate how the care of the self/body, the technology of the self, and the uses of pleasure, might be a means to achieve an ethical and moral life. In my favorite quote, Foucault finds that it is not sex after all that drove those men...

[The Greeks] were not much interested in sex... compare[d] to what they say about the place of food and diet... About what the Greeks had to eat in order to be in good health, we have thousands of pages. And there are comparatively few things about what to do when you have sex with someone. It is very interesting to see the very slow move from the privileging of food, which was overwhelming in Greece, to interest in sex. Food was still much more important during the early Christian days than sex... in the rules for monks, the problem was food, food, food. Then...a very slow shift during the Middle Ages when they were in a kind of equilibrium... and after the seventeenth century it was sex. (Foucault, 1980, p. 340)

**What can Adult Education/Me Take From Foucault?**

I think, like good scholars, we need to understand the whole, and not lift nice quotes out of context, to illustrate points; if we do that, we miss the nuanced readings of issues and problems. We tend to want to put panopticons everywhere, and construe governmentality as being purely dominating—here we fall back into our comfortable old ideology critique (Boshier & Wilson, 1998; Broadhead & Howard, 1998), and miss the consensual nature of surveillance, for example, and its doubling back on external surveillance, a much more subtle example of how power operates. By viewing power as only oppressive, we miss its productive capacities, the way the subject is constituted through dividing practices, scientific classification, and
"subjectification", that is "the way a human being turns himself or herself into a subject" (Foucault, 1980). It seems to me that an "understanding of the whole" as it applies to power relations in the classroom would problematize the role of adult education in not necessarily liberating learners, perhaps even being complicit in reinforcing inequities.

We could also, as we like the practical, follow Foucault and avoid abstract questions and claims to universal truths, and examine instead the social functions that produced those questions. For example, Enlightenment discourses, as we see them used, for example, in the critical adult education tradition, deal with whether truth or human nature or free will, or agency, exists; Foucault’s analysis works to show how those ‘truths’ play their roles in designating certain types of discourses—not whether they exist. Foucault was concerned with the ‘how’, not the ‘why’ of social relations—he won’t help you answer why, but if you want to start with how, you’re on track. However, in a field that has relied on universals and essentialism, for good political reasons, “why” is not an easy thing to give up—and if one is working against repressive homophobic practices, say, in AIDS-HIV education, or if one is working with women on welfare, this might not be the time to start equivocating about monolithic power systems.

Foucault believes our:

real political task ...is to criticize the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that we can fight against them.” (Foucault, 1974, p.171)

Some of the criticisms made of Foucault are that he is, in fact, apolitical, even an anarchist, (Cheney, 1995; Willers, 1993), or worse... I have heard adult educators, usually structural functionalists, complain that “there’s nothing to get hold of, no real structures there to fight
against". But Foucault worked constantly to show how truth, truth games and truth effects discipline and regulate. There is obviously room here for an enthusiastic engagement in a field which sees the personal as political! Why is it that Foucault is so under utilized, when his work on institutions, on discipline, on power/knowledge, on the constitution of the subject, on the care of the self, all these and more, could be useful in understanding our practice as teachers, or the way we learn as adults, or how power relations are imbricated in the graduate student/supervisor relationship?

Fourthly, Foucault has given us several key concepts for analyzing social and cultural phenomena, including those found in education. These include, 'discipline,' 'discourse,' 'power/knowledge,' the construction of subjectivities in discourse, 'governmentality,' the deployment of sexuality to control populations, and the self-construction of the subject, or what he calls the 'care of the self.' I think we, (and I am, for sure), ready to move beyond a simple use of some of these, to a richer working out of the topic, by bringing in, say, the other foundational aspects of 'discipline'—the regulation of time, the partition of space, the articulation of the body with activity, and the examination of bodies against norms, for productive purposes, instead of propping up the tired old themes of punishment and coercion.

I notice lately (how nice!) there's a much more thoughtful use of concepts like power and subjectification (see Cervero, 2001; and Wilson & Hayes, 2000) in adult education works, and there are some good treatments of higher education in other recent publications (Orner, 1998; Middleton, 1998) which reflect a thoughtful engagement with discipline, sexuality and discourse—welcome additions. I need to be up front here, though, and say, for me, the ability to use these concepts well has been a gradual process; it's taken a long time—I note, though, that
once scholars in adult education get a taste for Foucault, they keep on with him (see Edwards, Usher, 1997; Usher & Edwards, 1994; Usher, Bryant & Johnston, 1997).

Fifthly, and last, Foucault has offered us not just concepts, or theories to take away and try to bring down in a grid to see if they ‘fit’ our own educational area of inquiry, but methods for doing that research. As Marshall (1990) points out, we can use the theory, or, we can use an archeology or a genealogy of our own. By examining, say, ‘dividing practices,’ or the ‘scientific classifications,’ at work in discursive educational practices in our own classrooms, offices, tutorials, and lecture halls, we can perhaps come to a better understanding of how those discourses come into being in the first place, and/or how they then inscribe power relations onto the bodies of the learner, the teacher and the administrator. Which is of course, what I am doing here.

My Suggestions… Humbly Offered
(And lest you think me too critical, let me paraphrase Parker Palmer, and say that I am downhearted because I care very much for the future of adult education, as a discipline, an area of study and as a force for social change—not least for women and other minority groups. I think we should be specific intellectuals, and I am disappointed when we are not, when we are less than we could be… Specific intellectuals have replaced the universal intellectual of the 18th and 19th centuries, as “he, (sic) who along with a handful of others, has at his disposal, whether in the service of the state or against it, powers which can either benefit or irrevocably destroy life. He is the ...strategist of life and death” (Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 1980, p.130).)
I began by wondering why we don’t use Foucault. I think a more interesting question might be, what does it mean it is “impossible for [adult educators] to think about,” in Foucault’s work?
We seem to have a desire for a clean, and neat, answer to the power question, Who has it, who doesn’t? Who is clearly oppressive, who is responsible for social injustice? Who can we work against? Who can we take on? Who can we challenge? I don’t think we are responding well to Popkewitz’ comments, that Foucault’s work is “both generative and illustrative of movements within social and educational theory to break with certain principles of critical traditions dominating Western leftist thinking” (1998, p.xiv); nor do we seem to want to take up the three challenges Foucault offers us in (adult) education: how the subject is constituted in power relations links to social theory on the politics of identity; can we view adult education’s history with a lens that takes into account Foucault’s consideration of change as a series of ruptures and breaks, one which disrupts the notions of steady progress that underpin many worthwhile and committed adult educators’ theory and practice, and lastly, can we agree that Foucault’s pragmatism raises questions about the relationship between intellectual production and social practices?

I think it’s a disciplinary functioning of adult education that restricts our response to Foucault’s work and his challenges—and that we need to learn how to work with Foucault. We have to move away from old “just plain folks” attitude, and get into the world of ideas and the discourses that are animating the rest of the humanities and social sciences. We should be reading Habermas, and Foucault and Derrida, and Judith Butler and Luce Irigary and Patti Lather and Peter McClaren and Henry Giroux. We should not be saying, “Oh, that stuff is too hard, or that stuff is too far from the real world.” But I am hopeful.

Maybe that we can get used to using “real theory,” like Foucault’s and not find it impossible to think it possible to assign students an original source. But that means we have to give up our subject status as “just plain folks.” Cervero’s description of the four kinds of
theorizing about using/not using theory in adult education (1991)—the theory that adult education lacks/and nor does not need theory, the view that theory should be the foundation for professional practice, the stance that theory is practice, and that theory should be used for emancipating learners— is still viable. Where, in his list, would we place the reluctance to engage with Foucault? Probably in the first, second and third areas; as for the fourth, I suspect that because Foucault is such a strong critic of the liberal, humanist, and radical emancipatory traditions which posit reason, knowledge and learning as essential for political and personal progress, he would, and has been, maybe always will be, given short shrift.

Is it impossible to think of women as playing a more substantial role in adult education? I suspect there will always be men on top, in education. But I don't have to be underneath. I have used Foucault, and will continue to do so. I have also found that some men are good to work with, and some not. Like women. Men seem to still hold the best positions in education, and adult education. But I don’t accept that they need to be there, or have the right to, or that I should accept them as authority figures. I have considered leaving education altogether. And especially adult education. When I started, it was an old man’s field. Old men like Freire, Knowles, Horton. Old faculty. Faculty who were men, and although not old, were so old and set in their ways. Now there are more women. Most of the students are still women, and most of the jobs go to men. Still. And while the old men’s thinking still seems to dominate—it’s changing, changing... An old empire, crumbling...

I also think we need to consider that adult education has moved to take its place with entertainment and culture. We’re part of consumer culture now; information technology and the changes in the global economy have taken adult education a long way from the old social movements, the WEA, Unions, and the Women’s Institutes. We also need to see that students
are changing—that, as Usher and Bryant say (1997), learners are concerned about lifestyle practices, confessional practices and vocational practices, and not the same old, same old. And if students want to learn the new stuff, or get their credentials in a new way, then our old tired liberal and humanist views shouldn’t prevent us teaching them?

But we need to be sure we are not indulging ourselves in pastoral power (Fendler, 1998), and the confessional, as we, say, get learners to write (Birren and Deutchman, 1991), and journal, and yet refuse to reveal ourselves—so Edwards writes about the turn to narrative in adult education but doesn’t use his own story (1994), although Nod Miller does (1986). But that was a while ago, the 90s, and even David Harvey is doing it now, telling his own story (2000), so there’s space for hope. I wonder why is it still impossible for some adult educators to think of using their own tales, and what effect would it have if they did? (see Chapman & Sork, 2001, for the mixed reaction to personal narrative).

As for me, time for another cup of tea ... funnily enough, I have great faith in my field and my profession—after all, I’m in, I’m using Foucault, and I’m making changes.... The body’s tale is a refusal to be constituted as a traditional adult educator, as I write it, I constitute myself as a differently thinking adult educator. A nice Foucaultian paradox, a parody maybe?

Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are.... The conclusion would be that the political, ethical, social, philosophical, problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state’s institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries. (Foucault, 1982, p. 216)
Cold in Louth 2

“In town” for the first time in 32 years. Last evening as the coach sped through country towns and market places, dusk falling, came a torrent of memories, cold and lonely days, a chilly Sunday of polite talk at Woodhall Spa with another girl’s family when my parents wouldn’t/couldn’t get me, a Saturday in Horncastle where Diana came from, and the icy feeling stayed with me.

I woke up cold, and then I am out, in Legbourne, nothing to make me fearful here, walking, running, freezing, and I see the pub, oh no, the “Splash,” my heart shudders, I can see and hear Thomas as clearly as I see the wind bending the trees, hear him laughing, see Dave with him, and me with them, but barely, Thomas yelling with glee as we go splash! through the ford in his police father’s car, up to the bar to get a pint on a forbidden Saturday night, I see us, feel us... no, I cannot describe how I feel.

Cold?

I walked down Eastgate past the uniform shop, Eve and Ranshaw, established 1740 something, remember the Cash’s name tapes my mother bought there for me to sew on all
those hankies and bloomers and blouses and being 15 and looking in there for special occasion dresses, me and Sue and Lesley and Diana.

But it was on the wrong side of the street. And Robinson’s, the greengrocers, all wrong, too, and I come to the Market, and it hasn’t moved, but the Mason’s Arms is on the left side of Cornmarket, shouldn’t it be the right side, luckily Woolworth’s sits redly in its correct spot, and Boots too, but where’s Diana’s uncle’s shop, superior men’s clothing, he who used to give us sixpences every Saturday?

I walked, slowly, looking for the Tartan Café where we all used to meet for grown up frothy coffee, where Dave came to tell me about being accepted into UCL, and me not, and couldn’t find it, had to have a cup of Tetley’s tea in Tilly’s Tearoom, but I did find... myself at 12, and 13, and 14, and 16, illegally at the Greyhound pub’s Sunday night Jazz club, laughing, with Dave, at Thomas, and I turned around and ran away, tears, back into the middle of the town. The wind, so cold, still coming from Siberia after all those years, why didn’t it stay there, now Krushchev was gone?

Thomas’s mother’s hat shop is here, and closed, dead. Cold, and I shake.

I spent some research money on a pair of gloves and a fleece top at Eve and Ranshaw’s, useful but not necessary, and ate at up-market Chuzzlewit’s, common Hansen’s that was, where we bought
Russian slices, and cream cakes, running up Gospelgate breathless and starving on our break, and then finally I walked to the church, past the Vicar’s gateway, all the trees gone, no shade nor peace for young lovers, no shelter now from the frosty winds, on into the church, open, with a gift shop, and a guide, who showed me the 15\textsuperscript{th} century angels, you wouldn’t have seen \textit{their} like in America, and I gazed up at the frozen blank faces, the gold and blue roof, remembered them, watching us, Evensong, and coming back quietly to the warm common room at Masson House, late, to sit drowsy before the gas fire, desultory chat, the boys in church and tomorrow’s lessons, bread and marge and chocolate spread, and my hands are a little warmer in my new black gloves.

Tomorrow, I will visit the school, wear my new uniform, sanctioned at Eve and Ranshaw’s, still the best protection from the cold and ghosts.
Post Colonial Field Work: Eating, Sleeping, And Traveling,
With Provisions, And Without.

1. I ate food at 30,000 feet on 10 planes
And only one was good, British Airways to Copenhagen.
Maybe because the plane was struck by lightning on take off and for seven
seconds I thought
We would crash and die. We didn’t. The food tasted wonderful,
even the plastic wrap on the cheese was well flavoured.

2. I ate my own food on 8 of 12 National Express coaches
Always a rock cake from Upper Crust in Victoria. And apples. Leaving Bungay we were
stopped by the police
  for speeding and languished in
A market town in Suffolk for an hour.
  I had tea. The driver had a ticket.

3. I sat and looked out the window on all 11 trains and ate my own food on 6, a rock cake and
tea. On one I bought a sandwich from the buffet.
On one there was no toilet and on one a Virgin man served me coffee.
  On one I didn’t pay and I just ... travelled free.
And on one I went to Elsinore and didn’t see Hamlet, only a madwoman
  they put off the train.
  Ophelia, all grown up, I expect.

4. I sat downstairs on all 12 of the country buses
and never paid more than three pounds for any trip
and didn’t eat or drink anything, too seasick watching my suitcases
  Fall over every time the bus stopped.
Knew I needed native bearers in this Darkest countryside where bus stops are several miles
apart.
  And fierce dogs hate the sound of the wheelies.

5. I took a hundred, two hundred tube trips
And walked up the escalator at Holborn at least 38 times developing good quads and I had an
interesting sexual relationship with a house painter
  in rush hour from Russell Square to Mile End, and
the Docklands Light Railway was disappointing but the Starbucks coffee I sipped while I
rode on it made me very
homesick for Kitsilano.
6. I slept in 31 different beds. Single, double, twin, rope frame, duvets, feathers and nylon, slippery sheets, deluxe linens, dirty grey towels and my own face cloth from Marks and Sparks came with me into every bathroom.

7. I snored in the Bishop's Palace and catnapped in The Danish Kong Arthur, and lay eyes wide open all night in a welfare hotel and had a drunk student climb into my room in Roskilde.

8. I had always Tetley's for morning tea from the tray in 8 bed and breakfasts but coffee in the convent with the 7 spiders in my room for company, all High Church hairy-legged arachnids.
   But the housedog bit me in the night when I went to the toilet so he must have been Low Church or just rude.

9. Next time I will come without all the luggage.
   And leave my laptop at home.
   I will bring my own sheets, and never leave home without a rock cake or two for the journey and a teabag in my pocket.

10. Next time I will pick an easier methodology.
Bathrooms And Toilets At Masson

When I was 12 my parents sent me to boarding school. I was an only child and had been used to my own room. A series of rooms, over the years; most lately, in a large house in RAF Married Quarters at Coltishall, with one toilet, the ‘cloakroom,’ downstairs, and one upstairs, in the bathroom itself. There were many things I hated about boarding school, the very fact of it was anathema, but if I had to say what I hated the most, there were three or four things to top the list.

The barren dormitories, one thin blanket per bed, when combined with the glacial chill of an unheated 18th century mansion and the housemistress’ need for us to sleep with the window open all night in order to receive fresh, bracing Lincolnshire breezes, made just simply standing fully clothed in the dorm unbearably difficult—but sleep was often impossible. That’s when I began to understand why a “good quality wool traveling rug” was included in the “List of Uniform and Supplies, all articles to be CLEARLY identified with Cash’s woven labels, sewn on, it is suggested girls purchase Cash’s labels from Eve and Ranshaw’s, uniformer’s to the school.” (Note the “sewn on;” hand sewing was preferred over machine stitched, and every article had to be piled neatly on the bed before it could be packed or placed away, ready for the Housemistress to inspect at the beginning of
term—"Machine sewn, I see!" was a chilling condemnation, I suppose all good upper class girls had to learn to hand sew?).

The next worse thing, after the constant cold, and the chilblains on hand and feet and legs which accompanied it, was the lack of private bathing and washing facilities. I had been heartened to read all about The Sponge Bag on the "List of Articles to Accompany Girls" before I had come. The List was a constant source of interest for my mother and me, in the weeks before I went to the school. She was a colonial, from some ghastly place in the middle of Canada, where they had moose, railways, snow and ice and lots of geese for her brothers to shoot, but they didn’t have girls’ boarding schools. My store of knowledge came from exuberantly breathless novels of boarding school life, which featured jolly girls playing hockey, having midnight feasts and excelling in games. When we read about the "Sponge Bag, plastic, drawstring top, containing a soap dish, a sponge, soap—preferably carbolic, or Pears— toothbrush, toothpaste, and if required, bath salts," we decided that meant baths and my mother was re-assured—especially by the soap, she was godless but surpassingly clean, and I had learned to scrub every available space of skin and nail and hair.

As it turned out, the Sponge Bag was as much a lie as the jolly hockey playing chummy girls. Used to seclusion and already a lover of long, and hot and dreamy baths, the shock of stripping down in front of all the other girls standing waiting their turn at the three
washbasins, and under the beady eyes of the Housemistress, and then having to wash what had once been my private parts, (now public parts copiously critiqued by all those giggling in the queue, all dutifully clutching their Sponge Bags), was beyond trauma. Within a few weeks I had got used to it, but I missed real baths... we had two a week, in a regulation 12" of water.

It was the first thing we looked for when we came back each term, the bath rota pinned up in the bathrooms. Morning shifts were ugly, 7 am to 7:15, or 7:15 to 7:30 am; if one had the early slot there was the galvanic struggle to get the body out of the cocoon of skinny blanket, dead hot water bottle, dressing gown, socks and vests and pyjamas and into the freezing air of the room with the bath, and then into the chilly 12" of water. But worse was the 7:15 am slot. Even though some vestige of steam might remain, creating an illusory sense of warmth, the puddles on the floor and the unwashed bath were cooling and dirty... Then if one actually sat in the clammy hairy bath for longer than 5 minutes, one would be late for breakfast at 7:40 and that meant more trouble, more punishment from the Housemistress. I learned, then, how to get up, take a bath, and dress again, all in 10 minutes... oh, but it was hard.

Evening baths were pleasant; a whole half hour could be spent, if on the 7 pm to 7:30 shift, just dawdling along in the foot of water, singing and splashing and enjoying the sensation of cleanliness. But, of course, only the favourites ever got the evening slot... and usually the ones the Housemistress liked to “check on” as they were bathing. Nearly always Margaret, or another of the little, blonde ones. Mind you, one term she had taken against some one else more than me and I found my name on the evening bath rota and was a blissfully happy “Tues. & Thurs. eves.” for 16 weeks. I had by then become a “real boarder,”
and, with the other girls, hoped anxiously for the gift of little cubes of bath salts, or a container of virulent green or pink crystals, which we treasured and used crystal by crystal, half a cube, quarter of a cube, at a time, stretching out birthday or Christmas bath treats for weeks and months, and speculating on which was the better smell, Boots’ *Honeysuckle* or Yardley’s *Freesia* on our Saturday morning shopping trips.

But most ghastly fate of all was finding one’s name on the rota for the Sick Bay Bathroom, being one of the two girls who had to take their bath there—for it was also Her bathroom. In a wing once given over to the servants, the Housemistress had her Sitting Room along the corridor and her Bath Room down the stairs, next to the old housemaid’s dormitory, which now contained three beds for those too sick to be let in with the common herd.

As the bath room was in the sickbay area, it was often quieter, only girls who were literally at death’s door were admitted. I was in there several times for a septic throat, some hazy memories of the delirium which accompanied the incredible pain and the inability to swallow, but incredibly vivid, still, is the recollection of the viciousness of the Housemistress who stood over me with pointy sharp food, rock hard toast and iron like bacon bits, waiting for me to eat it, ALL, until she was called away, and I dizzily stumbled across the corridor to the toilet to sick it up, and then flush the rest of it down before she came back.

Taking one’s bath in the Sick Bay could be peaceful, but the experience was still prone to unexpected visitations, of having girls wandering in, looking for Her, to report stomach aches, and constipation and tiredness. And of course, Her sliming in the door, sneakily, silently, so she could bellow and frighten you out of all your goose-pimples.
"VALERIE CHAPMAN! Have you washed that filthy neck? And what about those disgusting feet! I will be back to inspect you in five minutes!!"

I would wait, shivering, naked, standing barefoot on the cork board mat, for the inspection, five minutes, ten, fifteen, no sign of Her, but woe betide if you tried to get dressed, that was "disobeying" Her. It is very hard to be 13 or 14, just coming to puberty and already discomfited by the appearance of what are blithely called "secondary sexual characteristics," breasts and body hair, and changing shape, and then to have to be so exposed... for so long, and so knowingly. Whenever I have seen footage of Jews and other non-desirables herded into the shower rooms at the concentration camps, I have a visceral resonance, understand the terror and humiliation and the utter nakedness they felt. When I smell honeysuckle or freesia bath salts, I feel helpless, warm, happy, disturbed, and goosebumps rise, along the arms and legs and I have to breathe deeply to recover myself. Smell, pain, cork board, fear, disgust of the naked body, and a hatred of self-tormentor which chokes all other sensation... for a few seconds, lost in a drug store on West Broadway, or in a chemist's shop in England, I am again just a dirty girl with disgusting feet, and a 34 AAA top half, and a revoltingly haired bottom half, standing naked, head bowed, hands trying to cover my ignominy ... an immanently filthy body offered for examination while freesia flowers cruelly scent the air...

Ah, but the top of the list of hated things? That spot is reserved for the cubicle dedicated to elimination.

The toilet.

One on each of the two floors. One floor comprised only 12 girls sharing, but the top floor, oh, god, up there we were 17. There was never enough time. Long queues in the
morning meant only the most perfunctory of visits—god help any girl whose body wanted to move its bowels in the early morning. No time! “Hurry up, Hurry UPPP,” from outside, as a line of little girls jiggled from toe to toe, and hopped around, trying to hold themselves in. No time after breakfast. Only 10 minutes from end of the meal to going out the door in full school uniform, hat, lace-up shoes, pullover, skirt, tie, clutching satchels, books, and the two pieces of beige linoleum cleverly disguised as Shortbread Biscuits—our Masson House designated break snack.

Well, that left going at school—but no time there, either, and again, just one toilet for two classes of girls, up to 30 of us waiting at break. Well, after school, then? But no, back to the boarding house at 4 pm, change to civvy clothes, (From the List, one winter skirt, one winter cardigan, two winter jumpers) prep til 5, and then tea time from 5:15 to 6 pm. Finally! But no. More prep time, until 7 pm. Then, blessed relief, a whole hour free until bedtime, at 8 pm as Second Formers, and Third Formers, gosh, 8:15 pm!

Of course, the downside, as I am sure you’ve worked out, is that all 32 of us still hadn’t had time to move our bowels... until now. There was one cloakroom downstairs in the lobby. A bonus if you could get it. And the sick bay toilet, but that was too close to Her. Most of us just became completely constipated. Hence the sick bay queues morning and evening after breakfast, after tea—syrup of figs, or castor oil, and a tonic, were the standards dished up whether one asked for them or not. We were not shy about our bowels, we discussed it, in a somewhat ladylike fashion; it was commonly agreed, one had to wait at least three days without activity before going to Her. It’s probably a good job we never came down with diarrhea; I don’t know what we would have done. The cook tried hard, we had stewed prunes every other breakfast, along with the stewed windfall apples, and All Bran was
the cereal of the day, three days of the week. Of course, this was offset by the large amounts of white bread, white margarine, and hard cheddar cheese we consumed daily.

But there was one bright spot in all of this. Although my body learned the habit of chronic constipation, developed a lifelong pattern of refusal of all excretory functions if someone were waiting outside the door, ahh, once inside the toilet, into that little room, (just big enough for one, seated, and pleasantly accompanied by the odiferous sani-towel bin), I found there the only private space in the whole building, the whole block of buildings, the whole of a life lived in communal unpleasantness.

I remember nice days, when I could push up the sash window and look down the lawn to the river at the bottom of the gardens. It was a nice spot—you could see what everyone was doing outside, admire the trees in the spring and the autumn, even see over the wall into the garden of the Wheatsheaf pub next door and spy on the girl who lived there. It was pleasant, to sit, and rest one’s hand on the windowsill, gazing up at the blue sky, or the clouds, or the rain, and hear the birds singing, girls’ voices drifting up. It was a space for daydreaming, a space where the mind could lift one up, out, carry one away, to warmer and kinder and even more solitary perches.

Then would come the bangs on the door, “Chapman, is that you in there? What are you DOING? Hurry UPPP!!! I need to go!” And sighing, one would rise and flush and leave the only 3 square feet of individual identity one had, out the door and into the herd… So body learned…
In the Duc’s Book, a peasant, feeding his pigs on acorns (his right as a feudal vassal), throws a stick up into the oak above to dislodge food for his rather evil looking hogs, as his wolf like grey dog looks on. Other peasants are collecting wood, while a brooding castle in the distance reminds us how power always circulates. In my book, I travel to Lincoln, visit churches and eat food; I am bitten by a dog and haunted by ginger cats; I also tell fairy tales to keep myself sane in yellow rooms.

A DOORWAY With A Soft Heart ... a body tale
Cold In Louth 3
AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AND FAIRY TALES, INSPIRED BY FOUCAULT
A Postcard From Academe’s Garden
Body bits 1
PLAYING IDENTITY
Tea In London 1
Cold In Louth 4
A Bathroom Story In Three Time Zones: Roma Johnson
Home Is, A Poem
guy fawkes night
Field Work In Yellow Rooms With Ginger Cats
FOLK TALES AND FAIRY TALES
November 24, 2000: I went to see Philip Wood for bodywork today. I have been so busy, teaching and putting out energy on all kinds of things not to do with my dissertation that I have done nothing for weeks and weeks. I feel so guilty. I am also so tired, so tired. I spent all November teaching, teaching, teaching. For ever, it seems. I hurt.

I went for a run, oh, been running enough teaching and work, huffing and I saw the crows going was an eagle sitting on the and I was so happy to see the metaphor Philip had years ago, for keeping an at that. I do so well when I try to close it and control it, it hurts me. I fear opening, letting the valves and the chambers become naked, no flesh to protect them… I fear teaching with an open heart, a soft heart, for it will surely kill me.

I went for the bodywork session right after. I lay there, asking myself, “Where is my dissertation?” and found it in knees sagging under the weight of not-writtens, shoulder sore from unsaid words, my hip hurting from hugging all the sharp pointed words to me… all my grief of not-writing is in there, and then I felt him dragging up the words, the creative stuff from my hips to my stomach, and over the belly, up to my arms, and out my head and back into my mind’s eye’s heart… I fell asleep or down into a trance and saw myself at the corner...
of the Market Square and Mercer Row, in Louth at 12, 13, 14, 15, 16... having coffee, being a teenager, drinking ugly beer at the Golden Fleece with Dave and Thomas and Sue, but me as I am was there too, a 51 year old doppelganger, all of my bodies in the same place time, and Dave said, “Oh, you’re a writer! Of course, I always thought you would be a writer, you have to write,” and I was wearing my blue school coat, all hairy tweed, it was now, and it was last year, a blue summer dress in June 2000, but I heard it then/now...

Then I saw Oliver squinting into his cigarette smoke, “You were always a clever girl, Valerie,” then and now, “but you never worked.” Letty, laughing, “Chapman, you’re so funny, just write about us!” and Nan smiling, “You have to find your shape for your place, write out its address on a piece of paper,” and my political thought Professor looking at me very hard in the Institute over cold tea on a November afternoon, “What are you doing now, do you put your heart into it?” and my Tutor, “Have another scone, do, you need it more, you’ve got a lot to do, and you feel the cold like me...” then and now, they were all there and I woke up and came to.

The body came too. Bringing a soft heart with it. It is settled. I will write. All my characters demand it, all the stories in my dissertation have told me so. Yes, but only when I allowed them all into my body, through the door of an open heart....

Now, how the hell do I write this up for my methodology section, I could call it writing with a soft heart, no, how about, body writing, no, someone’s said that already, or how about, “when I was blocked, I was energized by my participants words...” oh yes, that’s nice and academic.
Cold in Louth 3

I walked to the playing fields and it was just the same, the wind came in like a knife and I remember Wednesday afternoons, games day, walking up the path, carrying our stuff, changing into blue aertex vests and navy blue culottes, lining up for hockey sticks and waiting to be chosen, shivering and staring out across the empty fields to the church spire in the distance, never allowed to wear a cardigan, even on the coldest day, like today, freezing to death. Silly girls, Miss Harte says, run around and you’ll keep warm, she kept warm watching us in the showers afterwards, as we hunched and crouched to get away from her, turning our adolescent bodies to the wall.

I always remember it being winter, or autumny. As it was today. How did I feel then? Nothing. Traumatized. And today? Overwhelmed. Cold. Frozen.

Now I feel anger and hostility and pain, did I feel it all then, and these feelings should be hot, but they’re icy cold, because it’s so bloody cold, in and out. I’ve been cold since I got off the coach on Friday. I have not warmed up. Just like my school-years, always cold.
And then I walked up to where we tobogganed that day when we were still little, only third or second formers. One of the few good days at the boarding house. We took tin trays from the dining room and we slid down the hill, we had snow, the only time I remember snow. And although it was cold, it was wonderful. We stayed out there for hours, I don’t know why they let us. That was a good day.
UTOETHNOGRAPHY AND FAIRY TALES... AS INSPIRED BY FOUCALT

So I am in love with Foucault. Not to mention counter-memory, counter history and genealogy. But I have a problem. I am also a poet, storyteller and story-listener, story-lister. I couldn’t write up the Óddy’s Tale without a few stories, a poem or two... For some time now, in my writing, and telling, I have been using what some are now calling “critical personal narrative” (Burdell & Swadener, 1999, in the Educational Researcher, the journal of the American Educational Research Association, one of the most traditional and conservative, not to mention unadventurous, power-knowledge/disciplinary blocs, I’ve ever encountered). Lately this kind of storying has got more academic cachet than it has had, but not much. Over the last seven years I’ve always had to spend a lot of time dealing with “validity” or legitimation issues when I present my stories for “examination.”

I have found my work welcomed—in some areas; I know I am not alone in wanting to write in a more auto/biographical way. I was delighted to read Judith Butler’s preface to the 1999 printing of her Gender Trouble: The woman who won the 1998 Bad Writing Contest has started to actually write about herself, and to write intelligibly—not a coincidence, I am sure. She says, now, of her groundbreaking work on gender and performativity that it was “produced not merely from the academy, but from convergent social movements of which I have been a
part, and within the context of a lesbian and gay community... there is a person here... and though *Gender Trouble* is an academic book it began, for me, with a crossing over, wondering whether I could link the different sides of my life...” (1999, p. xvii). Her story of her uncle, “incarcerated for his anatomically anomalous body, deprived of family and friends, living out his life in an ‘institute’ in the Kansas prairies,” and the stories of the gender struggles of those to whom she is related or acquainted, do more for me to make her work intelligible than her explanations of why it is/isn’t. Butler says, “I think style is a complicated terrain...” (p.xviii).

I know my style/work will always contain stories, but as this is, in part, an academic exam, I’ve learned that I still have to justify and explain how my work has “validity.” More on that later. I’ve also had to justify my work to myself—Is it confessional, self indulgent, even worthwhile? More on that later. I face questions from scholars with whom I share a predilection for Foucault—How can I contemplate sitting his (anti-authorial) theory, I mean, this is the man who gave us the death of the subject, a kind of poststructural funeral director, side by side with tales of my life, stories from an author-subject? No problem. I choose Foucault’s work to *start* my theorizing and analysis, to provide a frame for what I do, did, and will do, but I don’t have to write like him, nor do I have to re-present/story as confessional, or self construction. (Although he does, actually, write beautifully and tell some wonderful stories, as well as use language poetically, see the insert; so, it’s not the stretch it could be, his thoughts to my words. And more on that later.)

I now know a great deal about what Foucault said about genealogy and counter history, but he still doesn’t tell me HOW to go about it; I have a desire to use countermemory, *and* to write creatively, *and* to dialogue with the others involved in my *body*’s Tale... I’ve decided to use “autoethnography as counter-memory” to guide me in researching the *body*’s narratives and
re-presenting it to my audience. Autoethnography as counter memory, out of Mary Louise Pratt, via Foucault, what a genealogy.

Autoethnography is a word I have used a lot in the last few years. I first came across it in 1995, and it spoke to me, and, because I wrote autobiographically, and ethnographically, and put in lots of emotion, and lots of feminist theorizing, and lots of stylistic markers from the “new ethnography,” I thought I had it to heart/rights. I was wrong. I have spent a lot of time lately worrying at it, like a wirehaired terrier with a bony method, and but now I think I have it more to heart, more to the (academic) head, more to rights. Questions: What is autoethnography? Where does it intersect with critical personal narrative? Through which of education’s doorways is autoethnography peering, and will it get a welcome? Lastly, why do I choose to use a postcolonial autoethnography?

**Storying: The New Self-Help Movement In Education?**

Narrative and (auto)biographies has become a widespread phenomenon in education, the social sciences—and in everyday life. We encourage students to use life stories, for example, to reflect on their experiences as learners, teachers or administrators (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 1996, 1999; Graham, 1992; Walden, 1995; Butler & Bentley, 1997). Some of us use their stories for our research (Grumet, 1988). Why do only some of us use our own stories? (Johnson, 1999; Ellis, 2000) Is this new, all part of the postmodern moment, this turn to textuality, this telling of life stories, or is it, simply, an old educational practice re-visioned? Millennial or perennial? Confessional construction of subjectivities? (Edwards & Usher, 1996; Usher et al, 1997)
Narcissistic and self-indulgent? Untruthful? (Bourdieu, 1986). Is “writing a life” about “getting a life” (Smith & Watson, 1996), is it about writing ourselves back into society... knowingly?

Perhaps it is all of these things. Narrative research is deeply implicated in contemporary conflicts over theory, methodology, and politics in scholarly investigation. Trying to find a simple definition for “narrative” exemplifies this confusion. Denzin (1989) lists 26 varieties of the biographical method, Casey suggests 18 (1995), and Morwenna Griffiths (1995a, 1996) talks, comprehensively, of “(auto)biographics.” Denzin cautions, “the very word, biographical, implying as it does the ability to write or inscribe words on a life, eludes fixed meaning, for lives, like words, exist only in traces, spaces, and difference” (1989, p. 47).

Critical personal narrative, as a research device, is congruent with trends in the academic and life-world over the last few decades. It is linked to the shift away from positivism toward interpretivism, where meaning has become a central focus; a prevailing, possibly narcissistic, interest in “the empty self,” a search response generated by the fragmentation and nihilism experienced by many in postmodern and existentialist cultures; with social movements that, from the 50s on, demonstrated a felt need amongst those involved for a sense of human agency and identity; demographic trends in the university population, resulting in the “undermining of the conservative glorification of the great White Men in the established autobiographical tradition ” (Casey, 1995, p. 215), and the celebration, instead, of ordinary people's heroism; and, especially, to questions about representation, authority and power raised by anti-racist, post-colonial and feminist theory and practice (Alcoff, 1992; Behar & Gordon, 1996; Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Bhabha, 1994; Deutsche, 1996; Duncan & Ley, 1993; Gregory, 1994; Rose, 1993; Said, 1979, 1984).
This congruence, between narrative, and the de-centreing of traditional, positivist, forms of educational/academic methodologies, has resulted in a siege mentality in some quarters. Just as narrative has many characteristics and forms, so, too, are there almost as many objections to it. From the most frequently voiced, that personal narrative is solipsistic, sentimental and self-serving, to doubts about the value of narrative studies in the academy, and on to concomitant ethical questions about supervision, judgment, differing values, rigor, reliability, congruent style, methods and goals (Piantanida, 1996). There as many stories about story as there are stories.

There are three features of the turn to the (auto)biographical. Firstly, there is nothing new about storytelling. From the beginning of time, storying has been part of the human condition. The human need to make meaning of life’s events, traumas and crises, as well as to (re)arrange the vagaries of everyday chaos into a narrative that structures unpredictability and tames uncertainty is ancient. We tell our lives, daily, in a repetition of stories, beginning and ending, rewriting and reforming ourselves. In a world with no certainty—and the postmodern is probably no more nor less unpredictable than any other era—we story ourselves into a comprehensible existence. Oral cultures, written cultures, machine cultures, electronic cultures—the common thread is the self-story. But the modern age has heralded a new story.

Foucault tells us in *Discipline and Punish*, that with modernity, and its shift from sovereign power to the bureaucratic, to governmentality, comes the storying of subjects by the State, whereby subjectification is embedded in a network of writing, an essential part of the
mechanism of discipline. The examination (either medical or educational), makes possible the writing up of an individual as describable and analyzable, and also makes possible the ordering of a multiplicity by the description of groups. These are all small techniques; notations, registrations, filing, facts in columns and figures, familiar, innocuous... but, taken together they made the science of the individual possible, for “The exam surrounded by all its documentary techniques, makes each individual a ‘case,’ a case...which constitutes an object for knowledge” (Foucault, 1977, p.189). This reverses the past, where only the great were written about, documented for future memory. From the privilege accorded a few, writing, recording an individual, their biographing, becomes commonplace and “fixes” the individual.

Those of us in education know this, of course. Grading, evaluations, assessments are so routinized as to be unnoticed; discursive practices that fix educational subjects are rendered invisible by their banality. Education is but one facet of the bureaucratic machine that writes us all—and in which we write or story ourselves, willingly or not; we fill in those forms, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, as if our very lives depend upon them, as they do. So we are written, storied into official life.

But with power, productive as well as dominating, comes resistance, and the third distinguishing trait of modern narrativising. Anxiously, willingly, too, we confess ourselves into being, self-regulate and self-create, obsessively telling ourselves into life, creating our own cases. Our case is our story, we narrate and document and are so documented, our identity contained in our wallets, with all their plastic and laminated stories, the ones that proclaim we exist. And so, simultaneously complying, and maybe lying, we story ourselves in a myriad of individual ways. “We are habitual authenticators of our own lives. Every day we are confessing and constructing personal narratives in every possible format: on the body, on the air, in music,
in print, at meetings.... we are culturally obsessed with getting a life, and not just getting it, but sharing it with and advertising it to others (Moorti, 1998). We are, as well, “obsessed with consuming the lives that other people have got” (Smith & Watson, 1997, p. 2-3). In this getting of lives, we may refuse the official, governmental life as it is issued us in offices, forms, and plastic cards—or re-use it. We may choose to be silent, and not story. We may ‘camp’ it up, perform the life so given in ways that parody it and reduce its power. And as each life is produced, excessively, we can work with that excess, reconstitute our lives differently, subject our selves to new narratives, and walk away with a different story. Each day, there can be a different ending to yesterday’s story, a fresh start. Or is all this just an academic story? Am I being lured, as Britzman (1997) says, toward the promise of educational research as “self-help”? Researchers, she claims, are “recovering from objectivity.” Not at AERA.

Autoethnography: Writing Back the Self

Many use the word autoethnographic to describe research or projects which are either autobiographic or autochthonous. Texts which incorporate other’s words into otherwise autobiographic material, the inclusion of writing which aims to be “creative” or “authentic” within ethnographic reports, and the presentation of ethnographic studies in genres other than the traditional text, these have all been termed autoethnographic.

Feminist Autobiography

It seems like a long time since Carolyn Heilbrun opened up the autobiographic topic in Writing a Woman’s Life, back in the 1980s, following the first two critiques of women’s autobiography by Jelinek (1986) and Stanton (1987). Her work is more accessible and engaging, more direct, than some of the newer theoretical texts—likely because she is also a “popular” writer, using
the nom de plume Amanda Cross to spin murder mysteries. Her contention is that a woman's
life can be written in four ways:

The woman herself may tell it, in what she chooses to call autobiography; she may tell it
in what she chooses to call fiction; a biographer, woman or man, may write the woman's
life in what is called biography; or the woman may write her own life in advance of
living it, unconsciously, and without recognizing or naming the process. (1988, p.12)

Ah yes, I think I have been written, and now I would like to write back. Heilbrun claims
women were previously prohibited from writing lives where anger, or “an open admission of
the desire for power and control over one's life, or a need to declare publicly their right to public
power,” were expressed. We need to re-write the patriarchal text where “women have been
deprived of the narratives, or the texts, or the plots, or examples, by which they might...take
control over their own lives” (p.17). I know there is a lot of anger in my Tale. And the energy it
brings writes many stories—often in advance of my active knowledge of what they are about.
That’s, after all, how I've produced much of my data... I have just sat down and let the anger,
or whatever emotion it is, write for me.

The trouble is, autobiographic writing has long held an inferior status within the closed
shop of literary criticism—let alone women’s autobiography! (Baisnee, 1997). Autobiography
is traditionally regarded as too closely linked to historiography and works written by “famous
men”—thus doubts are raised about the ‘truth’ status of the work; autobiography as a genre has
a lower status than “proper” genres which have conventions, rules and terminologies—just
telling your own story doesn’t cut it. Baisnee suggests that, rather than asking whether a text is
true or not, the critic should ask “what or whose interests are served by references to such
concepts?” (1997, p.7). Feminist autobiography is marked by its theory of a self which is non-
unitary, embedded intertextually in socio-historical situations, and its belief that selfhood differs
for men and women. Shari Benstock has said, “the self that would reside at the centre of the
[traditional male autobiographical] text is decentred, and often absent altogether, in women’s
autobiographical texts” (1988, p.12). Feminist autobiography does not generally tell the story of
“the subject,” instead, it consistently, if unevenly, recognizes the situatedness of its author in
other’s stories.

Yet Linda Anderson points out that much of women’s autobiographical work deals with
memory: but do we even know, can we remember, what our subjectivity, our self, is? Is it
worthwhile talking about the self, or do we just deal in what Alice James, (yes, Henry’s sister...
she wrote too, a diary for a year or two, before she died...) called only “little bits” of
insignificant memory? (Anderson, 1997, p.8). Susan Brison believes that “losing oneself” in
trauma can be countered by the remaking of the self in autobiographical projects. “Survivors of
trauma frequently remark that they are not the same people they were before they were
traumatized”, she says, (1997, p.12). Working with the “self as narrative,” as embodied, and as
autonomous, one can rewrite the self. Like “witnessing” (Feldman, 1994; La Capra, 1997), self-
writing is a personal, racial, and ethnic act; the political and personal power of “testimonios”
has long been evident—and controversial (Salverson, 1996). Auto/biographies is, while
therapeutic and personal and self-indulgent, also political.

Is feminist autobiography essentializing? It’s said that a white, heterosexual woman is
frequently construed as the only possible autobiographical author. But women have always
written their lives. All kinds of women. All kinds of lives. All kinds of colours, shapes, sizes
and abilities. All kinds of writing. Journals, diaries, memoirs, these gossipy productions were
always sanctioned. I myself am very partial to the bawdy, baffling and brave women
immortalized in folk tales and folk memory (Carver, 1990, 1992; Chinen, 1992, 1996; Estes,
feminist autobiography concerns itself with women’s lives: that are lived politically (Stanton, 1987; Stanley, 1992), that are transnational and transgendered (Brodski & Schenck, 1988); historicized and situated (Jelinek, 1986); cultural representations (Gilmore, 1994), and that deal with subjectivity and its place in a postmodern world (Smith, 1993). Leigh Gilmore (1994) says differences among women are so pervasive it’s hard to theorize across categories, but admits that much emphasis is still placed on locating the similarities of women’s experiences in diaries, oral histories, and biographic work; she cites Judith Butler’s famous line, “even if one is a woman, that is surely not all one is” (Butler, 1990, p.3). Gilmore asserts, “Autobiography is positioned within discourses that construct truth, identity, and power, and these discourses produce a gendered subject” (1994, p. xiv).

Anyway, wherever the old arguments lead—the feminist one, about whether we should theorize or practice, not apparently being able to do both at the same time, or the ethical one about who speaks for whom—autoethnography has been inspired by the trend in feminist autobiography, contentious, though it is, to risk writing about the everyday, and about lives that once were not accounted important enough for the researcher to bother with... counter-memories of counter-lives. I like what Linda Anderson says, “Whilst autobiography resists theory...theory equally resists autobiography,” and she holds out hope, with Shoshona Feldman, that “what is at stake is not merely the combination of autobiography and theory but their interaction: not merely their mutual information but their mutual transformation” (p.6).

A word, too, about the use of the confessional. Many reject feminist and autobiographical writing as too personal, too confessional, calling for all such texts to engage theory with experience in a dialectical exchange that renders such writing political and useful to others.
beyond the writer (Griffiths, 1995b). But I note, with Moorti (1998), that such confessionals can be used to create a discursive space in which “non-hegemonic definitions [of oppression] can be articulated.” While Ellis (2000) remarks that the very intimate nature of much personal writing and the visceral reactions it elicits—especially from more traditionally oriented researchers—can be both a strength and a weakness for feminist work, I expect I will always vacillate over the exposure of emotions and self and its usefulness.

Autoethnography Across The Social Sciences

For my own purposes, I feel the need to go beyond my own autobiography. While acknowledging that one woman’s life can be used as a synecdoche, a metonymical allegorical device, for Woman/Life, I want other voices, other places, other stories, other theories to collide, saturate, cohabit with mine. I want some Others in my work. Autoethnography draws much of its vigour from anthropology and the social sciences… with their long history of ethnographically (mis)representing the Other and it’s had a chequered career, a sign vehicle with many different meanings—as it still is.

Originally coined in a study of Dani schoolchildren in 1975, auto/ethnography was used to describe data that was autochthonous and automatic (Heider, 1975). It was suggested autoethnographers possess “the qualities of permanent self-identification with a group and full internal membership, as recognized by themselves and the people of whom they are a part” (Hayano, 1979, p.1). It’s been offered as one of the alternatives to ethnographic mimesis, because the ethnographer is the native (Van Maanen, 1995, p.8), and, as an ethnography of one’s own culture it deconstructs the insider/outsider dichotomy (Strathern, 1987), and refuses or mends the binary split of objective/subjective, insider/outsider, because the autoethnographer
incorporates elements her/his own life when writing about others (Denzin, 1989); self-inscription and self-referentiality make the outsider/ethnographer redundant (Dorst, 1989).

Autoethnography can be a form of life history where it's not the life history that has intrinsic interest, but the cultural phenomenon it reveals (Brandes, 1982). Literary and cultural critics' claim autoethnography is important because of its polyphony and the inclusion of a "hierarchy of voices," which verify indigenous voices (Deck, 1990; Lejeune, 1989), and it can be a mode of resistance to colonial discourse (Pratt, 1994).

"Auto/ethnography" is used to describe a text or a method which is self-ethnographic, or a text that is autobiographically ethnographic, where the interest lies in the cultural phenomenon revealed. Certainly, the line between ethnography and auto/ethnography is becoming fainter and fainter as anthropologists engage in self-documentation, and Others increasingly represent themselves. As ethnography becomes autobiographical and autobiography reflects cultural and social frames of reference, the most commonly agreed definition seems to be that

autoethnography is form of self-narrative that places the self in a social context (Reed-Danahay, 1997).

Auto/ethnography stands "at the intersection of three genres of writing...native anthropology, ethnic autobiography and autobiographical narratives" (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p.2), and three concerns emerge. Identity: how does the autoethnographer cross boundaries, work with different identities, as researcher, storyteller, native, outsider, insider? Truth: who speaks more "truly;" the insider (the autoethnographer) or the outsider (the ethnographer) and can we even make such distinctions, when we acknowledge how identities shift, hourly, daily, professionally, personally? Home: what is "home," and what is now "abroad," when the one certainty of the globalized village and Diaspora is that few of us can say we are at home, as
native, as visitor, as researcher or as researched. All questions I have asked myself as I have tried to “write” / “my” / “story.”

And what about the re-presentation of the autoethnography, once the research is done and the conclusions drawn? While fieldwork by a single individual is, and was, the cornerstone of much social anthropology, anthropologists are still reluctant to publicly acknowledge that “race, nationality, gender, age and personal history of the fieldworker affect the process, interaction and emergent material” (Okely & Callaway, 1992, p. xi). Instead, their autobiographical/autoethnographical work has frequently been written up as novels, in diaries, or published under pseudonyms. Reflexivity often fails to make it into the text of the final ethnography, as does the poetic, both being written out along with the voice of the author—except for the occasional “I” that legitimates the discourse of “having been there” (Duncan, 1993). Ironically, there’s long been a tradition of incorporating poetry and performance sessions at the Annual American Anthropological Association meetings. Just not letting them get into print…

Creative Writing As Autoethnography

Recently, ethnographers have been provoked by questions about self-reflexivity, and representation, to try new or experimental genres in writing up their research. Sociopoetics, autoethnography and reflexivity work to explore “the use of the first person voice, the appropriation of literary modes of writing for utilitarian ends, and the complication of being positioned within what one is studying” (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, p. 30).
Foremost among the “emotive” writers stand Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner (1996, 2000, 2001); between them they have practically invented the now commonly accepted form of autoethnography. They say the “new ethnography” appeals to many discontented with their own fields of study, and especially to those marginalized by colour, age, sexual orientation and gender. In short, “All of us who weren’t buying the party line, who wanted to come to grips

Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through refract and resist cultural interpretations… relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed through action, feeling and thought, and language.

(Carolyn Ellis, 2000, p. 739)

Carolyn says, in answer to a statement from her student that it all sounds easy to do, just write about yourself and what your participants tell you,

Oh, it’s amazingly difficult. It’s certainly not something most people can do well. Most social scientists don’t write well enough to carry it off… the self-questioning autoethnography demands is extremely difficult. So is confronting things about yourself that are less than flattering. Believe me, honest autoethnographic exploration generates a lot of fears and doubts—and emotional pain. Then there’s the vulnerability of revealing yourself, and not being able to take back what you’ve written, or having any control over how readers interpret it. It can be humiliating. And the ethical issues… (p.738).

This is exactly how I feel—but then, that’s the effect she hopes to have. She calls for writing that is affective, emotional, personal, and which seeks to make “connections” (1996), where ethnography is an activity—inscribing patterns of cultural experience, and undertaking cultural analysis—at the same time as it encourages connections between those who create ethnographies and those who receive them. If literary and aesthetic treatments of ethnographic texts can enhance that connection, then those kinds of strategies should be used. “Evocative
"narratives" are: written in the first person; focus on a single case; their mode of storytelling is akin to the novel or biography and fractures the boundaries of normally separate social science from literature; the reader is co-positioned as active in a dialogic relationship and reader and author become co-performers, examining themselves through the evocative power of the narrative text; details of private lives highlight emotional experience and challenge the rational actor model of social performance; they refuse the impulse to abstract and explain by stressing the journey over the destination, thus eclipsing the scientific illusion of control and mastery; and their episodic quality dramatizes motion and connection. "Evocative narrative stories activate subjectivity and compel emotional response." They long to be used, to be told and to offer lessons.... "To substitute the companionship of intimate detail for loneliness of abstracted facts" (2000a, p.744).

For me, at least, Ellis and Bochner’s work shows that it’s impossible to get toothpaste back in the tube—personal narrative is a fact of social science life now. Think of over 40 kinds of autoethnography being used across the humanities and social sciences—why, there’s even work in education which takes up personal narrative (Tierney & Lincoln, 1997; see also Burdell & Swadener’s (1999) review of autoethnographic texts in education). I think we need to recognize that personal narrative demands a “radical transformation in the goals of our work—from description to communication. The goal is to encourage compassion and promote dialogue.” (p.748). For them, autoethnography, or the text, is to be used as an agent of self-understanding and ethical issues. The point of it all, is that it’s about how to live, more than about how to know.

My uneasiness about “creative autoethnography” stems from my fear that some—authors and critics—might think it doesn’t need to be as rigorous as traditional ethnography,
because it is marked by the use of experimental genres and connection to the personal experience of the researcher. I hope I am wrong. But being caring and connecting and emotional and evocative has not played too well in my culture. I also detect some grand narratives, or discourses, at play, the liberal-humanistic myth, or its successor, the empowerment-is-possible! story, in much of the work—it’s good work, but it still presupposes a dominating power and one that can be taken on and vanquished by a noble subject. It doesn’t sit well with Foucault’s notion of power relations as being productive of subjects; nor does it allow for the co-construction of subjectivities and powers.

**Re/Searching Memories In The Postcolonial Moment**

Autoethnography is, for me, a political, dialectical and interactive strategy; it has to resonate with Foucault’s intent for counter-memory and my own biography. Mary Louise Pratt’s postcolonial form autoethnography (1992) is a closer match. Pratt says usual ethnographic texts are representations of “the Other” constructed by the European ethnographer, but auto-ethnographic texts are the means whereby “the Others” construct themselves, “in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations...they involve partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror” (p.7).

**Women and the Other and Postcolonialism**

Women (students) and the Other: Both have been marginalized, oppressed and “colonized,” and have used guerrilla warfare in their struggles against imperial/patriarchal domination. With colonized peoples, women (and school children), share terrifyingly intimate experiences of the politics of oppression and repression; we have had to use the language of the oppressor as a tool in a struggle for liberation. For women (learners), and for the colonized, “language, ‘voice’,
concepts of speech and silence, and concepts of mimicry have been important” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, p. 175). “Postcolonial” has been taken to mean the work produced after independence, but I am using it to “cover all the culture [including education] affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (Ashcroft, et al, p.2).

This implies the continuous and continuing processes of European imperial aggression (schooling); postcolonial literature and discourse has emerged out of the experience of colonization, and reflects the tension of acknowledging imperial power, while asserting differences from the assumptions of the metropolitan centre. For me, this speaks to the educative processes to which I have been subjected, and which I have rejected/adopted, so that I am a hybrid—a colonized become a colonizer, or, a learner become a teacher. The heart of my educational experience is a “heart of darkness” (Conrad, 1902/1994). I don’t think Marlow or Kurtz, or Oliver or Letty, or Roma or Miss Jenkins, or Thomas or Dave, or I, wanted to become our “civilizers”—our colonizers/teachers were charismatic, brutal, clever, exploitative, exploited, charming, brilliant, corrupt, ignorant, unethical, naïve, moral, amoral, and mysterious... we hated them... and we became them. Some of us willingly. I don’t think any of us said, thinking back to them, “I had got a heavenly mission to civilize,” (Conrad, p.3) but ... it happened. I digress.

Post-colonial and feminist discourses question the forms and modes by which assumptions of domination are made, seeking to make them visible and then to destabilize them. Rather like Foucault with his call “to learn to what extent the effort to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently (1985, p. 9). Foucault’s counter memory as “parodic” is echoed by Homi Bhabha: Where Spivak makes the subaltern mute because “there is no space from where the subaltern (sexed) subject
can speak” (1988, p.311), Bhabha asserts speech is possible. The colonized is constructed within a disabling master discourse of colonialism, which constitutes itself in opposition to a “degenerate native population” (1994, p.178). Bhabha, working with a notion of mimicry or parody, claims the colonizer uses strategies of “reform, to regulate and discipline,” which appropriate the Other, but that the native, in turn, uses inappropriate imitations of this discourse, thus menacing the colonial authority. This parodic utterance is a recovery of the native voice. Ah, countermemory as/an/d autoethnography!

I am sitting here, writing and thinking and listening to “Oklahoma.” An autoethnographic counter-memory. I am (apparently 51), struggling to cite Foucault and do my APA right, but I’m really 13, traveling back on the coach from Nottingham, the windows black, some of the girls asleep, some of us, me, in an altered state... it’s a few weekends before Christmas and the conquerors have magnanimously allowed us some limited freedom, a bit of shopping, tea, and then an experience so far from our narrow world as to be epiphanic. A visit to the theatre to see the musical, Oklahoma! We had chocolates and waited for the thick red curtains to go up, giggling. Christmas presents in brown paper bags shoved under our seats, getting shushed by Mount Snowdon, and I think we expected something like the pictures, but it was... magnificent, stirring and almost nauseating... an overwhelming shock of words, songs, stage, scenery, costumes, dusty seats, Cadbury’s milk tray, Curly the nasty cowboy, and the surrey with the fringe on top, all in front of us, live, real, right there, and oh.... We were so dazzled we hardly spoke, coming out of the theatre, got on the coach and were driven back to our lackluster daily round of dorm, lessons and prep, but oh, for two hours, we had seen the world, we had seen how it could be, colour, light, and song.... I want to weep with the joy of it and the sorrow of it, to see... and not to have...

Imperial Eyes

Pratt embeds her work in personal narrative (a good start), using two letters—one her own, and the other a missive addressed to the king of Spain, and written in 1613 by Guaman Poma. Pratt links her childhood in 1950s English Canada, (a childhood which was “still colonial: reality and history were somewhere else, embodied in British men,”) to the colonial legacy in East Africa, and on to “redundancy, discontinuity and unreality...the chief coordinates of the
text of Euroimperialism, its power to constitute the everyday with neutrality, spontaneity, numbing repetition" (1992, p. 1). She is about “contestatory expressions from the site of imperial intervention, long ignored in the metropolis; the critique of empire coded ongoingly on the spot, in ceremony, dance, parody, philosophy, counterknowledge and counterhistory, in texts unwitnessed, suppressed, lost or simply overlain with repetition and unreality...” (ibid, p.2). Pratt examines the signifying practices that created “Europe,” “the rest of the world,” and thus, empire, and its economies of knowledge and profit. She shows how Eurocentric natural history displaced vernacular peasant knowledges, how bourgeois forms of authority displaced older forms, how gender was determined, how race was determined, and most interestingly, how forms of writing, such as slave autobiography and what she calls auto-ethnography, challenged the British explorer tradition. I particularly like the way Pratt takes up the “archeological” challenge, and tries to disrupt epistemes of official knowledge/power—it resonates with my intent in the body's Tale.

**Transculturation**

Transculturation is how “subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant and metropolitan culture” (p.6). While they cannot control what is directed to them, they *can* control how they take up and use such material. A clear parallel here, to Foucault’s “active agents” in power relations. How are metropolitan modes of representations, the colonizer’s view of the world, received and used by those on the periphery, and how are peripheral views of the world received back in the metropolis? For transculturation does flow in both directions. Those in the metropolis are unaware, or choose to be unaware, that their representations of themselves and others are shaped by the representations that come back, are written back to them, from the periphery. There is always an ongoing, obsessive and
anxious need for those in the centre to present and represent the periphery to themselves, and to
the others. The metropolis thinks it sets the borders for the periphery, but the periphery plays its
own part in determining what the entity "metropolis" is. Thus, the setting of borders, the
creation of their space and our space, the classroom and the bathroom, and the casting of roles,
the handing out of scripts, and the listing of dramatis personae, the Colonizer, Colonized,
Metropolis and Periphery, Student and Teacher, Valerie and Miss Denison, Valerie and Dave,
Other and Self, all are dialectical, historicized interactions.

Contact Zone

This is the "space of colonial encounters," where peoples who have been geographically and
historically separate come together to establish relations. Usually, "coercion, radical inequality
and intractable conflict" mark this space. "Contact" comes from linguistics, where it describes
the "improvised languages" people use to communicate, usually in the context of trade—such
languages are often chaotic, barbarous and lacking in structure. "Contact zone" emphasizes how
subjects are constituted in the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters—
making contact—and underscores how interlocking and copresent were such relationships, not
withstanding those radically asymmetrical relations of power. I see contact zones as those
spaces in education where we share pidgin languages in literal, contact zones. So that
Mrs.Charneaux and Dave stood eye to eye in the doorway of the Limes, speaking of exeats,
permissions, and allowances, and actually spoke one to another at some level where he
challenged and she resisted, and vice versa. An outsider would have seen nothing remarkable,
but I see a joint construction of my body as a spoil or trophy.
Anti-conquest

Anti-conquest means the strategies of representations used by colonizers/Europeans to proclaim their innocence at the exact moment they assert European hegemony. The main protagonist of anti-conquest is “the seeing-man...he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess” (p.7), yet he tries to ameliorate or refuses responsibility for his actions as a colonizer. Is this similar to what some academic feminists do? Talk about hegemony, and making a difference, but still enact the old power relations?

Is this like what Mr. Cooper did, offered us encouragement and then withdrew his sanction when it got too hot for him? Is this what overpaid and overindulged academic scholars do when they pontificate at AERA about counter-hegemonic strategies for doing research, to crowds of assistant professors and graduate students, before retiring to their all-expenses paid de-luxe hotel rooms and their self-important free dinners?

Autoethnographic Texts

Autoethnographic texts are typically heterogeneously addressed to both metropolitan readers and to literate sectors of the writer's own social group—and they will be received very differently by each audience. They use idioms, language and visuals which are familiar to each group, in a polyvocal fashion. Sometimes, autoethnographic texts are the point of entry for the writer into the metropolitan literate culture—kind of like a bolshy doctoral thesis. Autoethnographic texts are a widespread phenomenon of the contact zone (the dissertation socialization process/Graduate thesis defense rooms) and are important for providing histories of “imperial subjugation and resistance at the site of their occurrence” (p.9). Like this text.
A Satisfactory End To The Search For An Autoethnographic Counter Memory Recipe

Using postcolonial autoethnography takes into account my own deep desires, to write autobiographically for myself and other interested feminists, and creatively, for educators, about what education made of me. It also allows me to acknowledge, not just dividing practices, which make an object/victim of the body, and scientific classifications, which make it a thing, but the subjectification of the self. The latter it is true, is usually mediated by external authority figures, but it is a self-regulation. A writing back of the self that sites the self in colonizing practices and within self-practices, that appropriates and mimics the colonizer idioms, but inverts them, resists them, that’s what I am aiming for.

I need to re-present not just the process to myself—an autobiographic and worthwhile cause—I also have to represent this inscription back to the inscribers/educators/metropolitans—those in the metropolis/teacher’s chair/Headmistress’ office/seminar room. My audience comprises the women and men I have taught, so it’s about how to resist while keeping our slave-skin in one piece. It’s for the women and men who taught me to resist, and to make mock, and to make poetry. It’s for the colonizers out here in the provinces with me, a long way from the Imperial splendour of the centre, those who supervise me, day in and day out, and who have more in common with me than we want to acknowledge. And, yes, it’s an exam, a way of writing myself into that metropolitan centre, the professoriate, to be accepted there, so that I can write more autoethnography...
In its writing and representation, I use the idioms I have been taught; I have to collaborate, I have to mimic and parody and so my autoethnographic text is a Book of Hours, a ðodyg's Tale; it's also a doctoral dissertation, and an opportunity to infiltrate the idioms of the conqueror—academic prose, literature reviews and analyses—with poetry, life stories, fairy tales, narratives of hope, narratives of despair. Visuals, too, for every ethnographer knows the value of a picture, a photograph, a drawing, that shows the metropolitan reader the exotic subject as it “really is”. But in my contact zone, I hope I have recuperated vision, long the conqueror’s tool, appropriated it for my own use, in seeing what is written on my ðodyg—and heart and soul.

**Legitimation, Messy Texts, Rigor, And Confession: Who Cares?**

Questions. Of humility. And “legitimacy.” And questions of congruence—can I mix Foucault and folly, frolic with genealogies and gaudy words? Three things I need to know/be able to say:

Is my work confessional, is it worth, and is it suitably modest?

**Modesty and Revelation**

Is my Tale self-indulgent, immodest? Is it sufficiently metonymic, and how can I know, and what is sufficient? And embarrassingly, How can I/how much/should I reveal of my self/ves as I write?
I went to hear the newly appointed head of the Centre for Women’s Studies and Gender Relations, an authority on women’s autobiography, speak at a noon hour seminar. A group of us—all women, all working with variants of narrative—went along to get a free sandwich and listen to her. The talk was unremarkable until she commented that she was uncomfortable with the turn to personal narrative, which seemed to make faculty think they must include some embarrassingly personal material in articles or essays. (As if it was ok for students, but not for “real people,” like professors...? Well, we know that, check out Madeleine Grumet, in Jane Gallop’s 1995 book, a whole chapter on the use of autobiography for reflexive research, and then she uses her student’s journal and notes to illustrate her points—a voyeuse, that’s what I call her.) This caused a flock of eyebrows to be raised, a heave of shoulders, a ripple of bosoms in the back row...

This brought up two points for me—firstly, the use (even in this poststructural, critical, feminist world) that faculty make of student’s work to keep the relationship between them set in asymmetrical power relations, where the student is expected to write, and act, provide material for the professor to read, fondle, manipulate, but where the professor is not reciprocally bound to offer such information back. The second point is that, actually, she had a point.

It is embarrassing to read other people’s lives. It is stomach churning at times. And sometimes it’s as boring as listening to someone tell you what they dreamt about last night—makes sense to them, thrilling stuff ... for them, but god, do you have to listen to these ramblings? And really, does it deepen our understanding of a subject, or of the research topic, to hear what someone/the researcher had for breakfast, how they started thinking about their relationship with their mother, what they said to their baby, what a breakthrough they had in therapy, in meditation, in aerobics class... I mean, really, let’s be honest, boring is boring,
whether it’s boring statistics, boring grounded theory, or boring self-indulgent narcissism. It can also be embarrassing. The poem that looked so strong the night before, the story that was so poignant, one cried writing it, the essay that spoke so compellingly of, what was that about, again? All these really shouldn’t have to face the light of day; like Maggie May, the lines show in face, and middle age is not attractive.

And if one has been raised in a British culture that abominates the use of the personal, a culture that refuses to first-name itself, it is doubly difficult. Therefore I walk a tightrope. I write personal material. I think it makes my points. My academic points. After I hand over my work/self, I cringe at the thought of the reader’s face as they pore over my words/self—and I make myself look the reader in the eye at our next meeting; inner humiliation and deep embarrassment make me physically ill (and here I am doing it again, who cares Valerie, if nauseate yourself?), but I still do it. Why?

Because, in the hunt for what seems vital to me, my quest, the search for the genealogy of the educated body, my political and personal need to provide an archeology of the categories of inequities we learn/teach at schools, some momentary embarrassment is likely. “The way a human being turns him or herself into a subject” (Foucault, 1982, p.208), is profoundly tied to the (embarrassing even if now hypothetically unrepressive) discourse of sexuality—and to petty and unpleasant little stories. And in this Tale, the self-forming of my “self,” the performances I give, the way I am in the world, a woman, is at the heart of the narrative. But if Foucault is right and the subjectification process is always mediated through an external authority, like the doctor, the psychoanalyst, the confessor, well, here the operations upon my own body, (and my own soul, my own thoughts and my own conduct), entail this mediation by you, the academic
readers. You, my professors, have the authority to examine me, to hear this confession of myself into the University’s subject, this story of the way I make meaning of my self...

So, I must tell, and you must hear/read, if we are to get through this Tale together... If you are embarrassed, so am I. And that in itself is an intriguing excavation of the discourses that govern our sexuality. The repressive hypothesis, at work again. (And what about the bathrooms and the toilet stuff? Funnily enough, not as embarrassing or as difficult, for me, as the sexual and the gendering of the sexual.) But tell all I do, stories of sexual encounters, relationships that formed me and embody me, stories of school, being schooled, schooling the self, a gendered, sexed self. And an abj ecting, eliminating and consuming self...

I just hope no-one I know reads this.

A Little PostScript: Art Bochner defends personal narrative against those who claim it’s only about the romantic construction of the self, that it’s unworthy of being called social science, and if the research goal is therapeutic, rather than analytic, then you’re not doing social science, because one can only use narrative to achieve serious social analysis, is that, it’s ok to be therapeutic. Why should we be ashamed if our work has therapeutic or personal value? “The question is really, should we express our vulnerability and subjectivity openly or hide them in ‘social analysis’?” (2000a, p. 747). My feeling is that I want to do both—I think I’ve have paid more, financially, socially and emotionally, to get this damned degree, than a classic course of 7 years of psychoanalysis would have cost—I want my work to have personal value AND be an attempt at serious social analysis... always this binary.
Legitimation, Or On Whose Authority?

How does a text like mine gain, or claim, authority in the academic world, how does it answer calls for validity, surely a desire for epistemological certainty? In the episteme of the academy, a text can claim authority if it follows certain rules that refer to a reality outside the text, where these rules reference knowledge, its production and its representation—the old rules I had to follow when proposing my Master’s thesis, about epistemology and ontology and methodology. If one follows these rules then validity follows. Without validity—authority—there can be no truth, and without truth there cannot be a trust in a text’s claims. But with validity or legitimation comes power. Validity, as a discursive practice, serves to act as a boundary marker, dividing off what is “good research” from “bad research,” and it works to exclude and include. The vocabulary of this discourse includes: logical, construct, internal, ethnographic validity, text based data, triangulation, trustworthiness, credibility, grounding, naturalistic indicators, fit, coherence, comprehensiveness, plausibility, truth and relevance—all discursively constructed to build a power/knowledge structure that will offer “truth” to a text and legitimate its authority, and thus its author’s place within that power/knowledge structure/discipline. (You may have noticed there isn’t much of that vocabulary in my work.)

Always this discourse falls back into its unshakable belief in an ontological perspective

I have an unfortunate habit. When people speak about this or that, I try to imagine what the result would be if translated into reality. When they “criticize” someone, when they “denounce” his ideas, when they “condemn” what he writes, I imagine them in the ideal situation in which they would have complete power over him. I take the words they use—demolish, destroy, reduce to silence, bury—and see what the effect would be if they were taken literally. And I catch a glimpse of the radiant city in which the intellectual would be in prison, or, if he were also a theoretician, hanged, of course. We don’t, it is true, live under a regime in which intellectuals are sent to the ricefields. Michel Foucault. The Masked Philosopher (He sounds a little wistful at the end, doesn’t he?)
that views the world as a reality that is *always already* there. Some claim textual authority through the use of methodological strategies to *thicken* (Clifford Geertz has a lot to answer for), contextualize, and ground the work in an external empirical world. If we can just write enough thick description, we *will* describe that world. Using enough of these methodological strategies will give internal validity to the text, or research project, as announced by the text’s author. Maybe.

In a poststructural world view, epistemological validity/authority can be seen as the text’s move to assert its own power over the reader, and then on to assert its own regime of truth over, not just the reader, but the reader’s community. (See Constas, 1998, for a confused but valiant attempt by a positivist to classify “postmodern” work in his community—and its worth.) Postmodernist examiners (is that an oxymoron?) would claim there can be no criteria for judging products, because the very idea of *assessment* is antithetical to this research and the world it studies; the postmodern perspective doubts all criteria and privileges none—but they would want to hear me say something like....

The authority or validity of an action is determined by the nature of the critical understandings it produces—those glimpses into culture in action, in action in settings or spaces that cannot be transferred, simply because the action instantiates a cultural practice, a story telling performance, that is shot through with shifting conflicting cultural meanings (Denzin, 1997).

“Messy” texts like mine are not written in a world that concerns itself with generalizability or scientific credibility. I am assuming all their writers already have tenure” (Chapman, 1999a).

I might also use one or more of Patti Lather’s four forms of validity—*ironic, paralogical, rhizomatic and voluptuous* legitimation, or ask whether my text has made connections—emotional, political and subjective with the reader (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, 2001). Elizabeth St. Pierre (2000) very nicely explains the dilemma I, as a poststructuralist, am in: the
difficulty for me, and my task as the “examined,” (it’s a bit like one of those old fairy tales/stories of a rite of passage, where I have to go on a quest and bring back a trophy to prove myself fit for my next role, perhaps in this story, the grail might be a certificate of worthiness, a piece of parchment, seal dangling that says, Dr. Chapman on it… or the tanned hide of an examiner?) is about how to make intelligible to one discursive formation, statements that seem clear and coherent in another. I have to ask another question then, How can I “make myself available for intelligibility?”

This shifts the burden of intelligibility to both the reader and the writer. If I ask the examiner to accompany me in a “rhizomatic close reading” (to paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari), where one “citational trail leads from one text to another, from one thinker to another, from one researcher to another,” an immersion in the discourse and practices of postmodernism” (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 27), into a “rigorous confusion” (citing Lather, 1996), which “proceeds in fits and starts and makes no claims to mastery,” itself a modernist concept, then that might suffice—if the examiner/reader/audience is still with me at the end of the twists and turns. More important, perhaps, says St Pierre, is to question why we occupy and defend the territory we hold, and to try to come to terms with what that defense means to us as a promise or protection. I agree, and the best test of legitimacy for my work, then, might be to see if my examiners ask themselves, Why do I want to classify this work, what does it gain me, what does it allow for Valerie, and what does it say about the power relation that exists between us, and between us and the academy? If I have established enough of a connection between us, they/you might ask me that. If I hear that at question, then I know I have established some worth for this genealogical tale.
I can hear a question at my defense, But is this text a “true” representation of events, did this really happen, did Letty say that, did Oliver actually do that? Well, as an autoethnographer and a genealogist, I accept there is no reality unmediated by language and communication, that there is no text outside my text to give it legitimacy, that there are constructions, not descriptions, of society and culture. This doesn’t mean I give up serious, systematic inquiry for frivolous relativism—the unspoken/spoken fear that haunts the halls of (social) scientists. Instead of finding Truth, I accept my responsibility to deepen my understanding, and yours, of words like truth, knowledge, and reality, to deepen our understanding while maintaining my commitment that “making something” is not “making it up.” I try to be “faithful to [my] experiences in the field,” (Ellis and Bochner, 1996), and my participants, including my body, while admitting that all my autoethnographic stories, poems and pictures are partial, situated, and selective productions; this doesn’t mean being sloppy or parsimonious or less than ingenuous with details, or excluding material and opinions that don’t fit my notions. Lying, deliberately, or by omission, is not licensed by my need to tell a good story. Language may not be neutral, ethnographers certainly aren’t neutral, but I do produce deliberate, careful empirical work. While I understand that truth and lies are discursive constructions, I also aim to be true to the effects of my work.

Ethical claims are sometimes made to give texts more validity, especially in feminist and poststructural inquiry. An assessment of a work’s worth there must be based on its politics, and the form of values or ethics or morals that are immanent within it. Feminist research protocols call for my text to be a catalyst for action, as well as embodying the connections that spark the movement to change. As good poststructuralists we should also ask of our research
the questions Linda Alcoff poses, “Where does our research go and what does it do there?” (1992). With Bettie St. Pierre, I can say:

This kind of inquiry then is always already political, ethical, and material since it does not stray far from the lived experiences of those influenced by educational research ... in order to produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently as we work for social justice in the human sciences (St. Pierre, p. 27).

The political usefulness of a work is one criterion that I might suggest be applied to the judging of my work, and I also applaud work that contains a moral core. But I would not insist on it—that would imply a foundational narrative of ethics that I do not see operating in the world that I experience. I will explore this in the next section, from a Foucaultian perspective, but I will just say, This text of mine is about the everyday, the taken for granted, the very ordinary world of very ordinary women and men, and it calls for ordinary women and men to take action, on some level, at some point ... to make the story have a political/happy ending, I hope someone who reads it gets angry enough or upset enough or impressed enough to get up and ..... 

"What Difference Does It Make Who Is Speaking?"
A Reconciliation With Foucault

Foucault celebrated the death of author; how then, would he possibly approve an autobiographical piece of work, let alone an ethnographic text that might aim to re-present “truth” or “reality”? In his essay, “What is an author?” Foucault categorizes authors; scientific texts used to be authored, until modern times; this gave them credibility, but now anonymity is the validity check, because “truth is more anonymous”; literary texts have followed a reverse process. In the

I shall propose a game, that of ‘the year without a name.’ For a year, books would be published without their author’s names. The critics would have to cope with a mass of entirely anonymous books. But now that I come to think of it, it’s possible they would have nothing to do: all the authors would wait until the following year before publishing their books....

Foucault, _The Masked Philosopher_, 1980.
Middle Ages, the best stuff was by Anon, now it has to be Stephen King or Atwood or Ondaatje to sell well. Foucault calls those authors, like Freud and Marx "founders of discursivity," because they provide paradigmatic ways of organizing concepts, images and terms and thinking about society. These three kinds—anonymus scientists, named novelists and Big Thinkers are ok, the authors Foucault had difficulty digesting were those who claimed to speak as universal intellectuals, (for example, Sartre); he calls them "ideological products," who act as regulators of discourse, while purporting to do the opposite. He hopes we will arrive at a point where it is unimportant to determine "who is speaking;" instead we will ask, "What are the modes of existence of this discourse? Where has it been used, how can it circulate, and who can appropriate it for himself? Where are the places in it where there is room for possible subjects? Who can assume these various subject functions?" (Rabinow, 1984, p.120).

Doesn’t sound much like Foucault would applaud a text like mine—not for its "authority," nor for its confessional tone, nor for the whole process of self-subjectification it seems to impel in me. It’s not often feminists and Foucault are in agreement (see Hartsock, 1990; Ramazangolou, 1993) but I have wondered, at times, if for different reasons, both would disapprove of my work, refuse its validity. Feminists might say I am being either too personal too confessional or not political enough. Foucault might question me on what I think or say is my text’s truth status—but I am not claiming it to be “true,” as I have noted above, I know truth is an effect of power and I know writing can be one of the means by which one is made into a subject, or confesses oneself—thus, any self-writing should be immediately suspect, for it is an effect of power relations.

But in his later works, Foucault turned to the whole business of the care of the self; he interprets this in the classical sense, as being about “attending to oneself,” and coming to “know
oneself.” In the *History of Sexuality, The Uses of Pleasure*, and the *Technologies of the Self*, he came to see “self writing” as a means of accessing the processes of subjectification. Foucault returned to the work of the Greeks, not because he admired their society or wished it recreated, “for it was inequitable and we must find it intolerable,” but because he identified a way of thinking about ethical issues and practices, and a form of practice, *askēsis*, “understood as a training of the self by oneself,” (Self-writing, in Rabinow, 1997, p.208.).

*Askēsis* is undertaken by abstinences, memorizations, self-examinations, meditations, silence, and listening to others, and also writing, which came “to play a considerable role.” Foucault continues, “writing has, to use an expression that one finds in Plutarch, an *ethopoietic* function: it is an agent of the transformation of truth into ethos” (p. 209). I believe this text “is a matter of constituting oneself as a subject of rational action through the appropriation, unification and subjectification of a fragmentary and selected already-said,” and, because I use epistolary accounts I am “bringing into congruence the gaze of the other and that gaze which one aims at oneself when one measures one’s every day actions according to the rules of a technique of living” (p. 221). I have gone into self-writing in much more detail, elsewhere, but I think Foucault and I could accommodate our perspectives quite handily, and agree that this text is about “nothing less than the shaping of the self” (p.210-211).

**A Last Conclusion**

I started this section of the Book of Hours looking for a way to do my body’s genealogy. I have taken you with me on the journey I made, through feminist writing, ethnographies, countermemories; I have wandered continents, European, and American; I have waded through rivers of words and streams of protests, and paddled by brooks of poesy, picking up languages
and dialects to use in my depictions of the Other/Body’s history. A summary: I think my work is
worth spending time with, whether or not you’re a positivist, a postfeminist, a poststructuralist
or you’re just post your bedtime.

I think this work is legitimate, worthy and value-laden… I hope both the text and I are
available for you… and I hope we are intelligible to each other.

I want my Book judged for its ability to make cognitive and subjective connections to you,
my readers; if it makes an emotional impact on you, and you feel discomfited and
embarrassed, then I hope you’ll be disinclined to forget that discomfiture, and continue to
think about it.

It’s a messy text, it enacts a cultural performance… and it’s beautiful.

I am engaged in an ethical practice of the self in writing it and maybe you are in reading it.

It’s useful—it offers stories that give you ways to animate your own stories, about your
body, your subjectivity and your ethical practice; it should prompt you to begin theorizing
your own story/history/

It might impel you to begin your own genealogical and writing projects, to determine what
discursive practices and spaces have constructed you, and to think of challenging the
construction of the world you make/inhabit.

This text is a joint performance—reader/audience, examiner/examined, we make the text in
the space between us, creating new sets of meanings for the events and histories we
live/write. Your reading and my writing make it between us—how do you judge your part
in the performance?
Fusty Flowers

The flowers of the academy are blooming nightly. Fussing fuschias nosegays of nonsense pompous poppies rigorous roses smug snowdrops snippy snapdragons posies of prose winsome wallflowers bouquets of bluster textual tansies and irritatively earnest iris. Valid blossoms all.

I crave unreliable weeds.
Good morning Valerie, this is your body speaking! Welcome, and on behalf of the crew, thank you for using us today on your life journey. Before we begin the day, let me take a few minutes to re-acquaint you with the layout and safety features of this body.

Standing about five foot five, and weighing in today at round 135 pounds, this body has been serving you for 51 years now and is in good shape. The hair is graying but constant maintenance has improved its coloring. We here at the body are pleased to see you are allowing our "natural curl" to show these days—it was tiresome to see you straightening out our essentialist corkscrews (during the 60s, especially), and we didn’t appreciate the times you ironed it. The ears and nose were quite traumatized by the experience. The eyes are maturing and want to remind you to consider new spectacles—they deserve it, they say, after all these years of overuse and are now ready to take the support offered.

The back wants you to know, firstly, that it’s grateful you’ve been seeing the physiotherapist and doing those nifty exercises, but even though the cardio-vascular system (not noted for its perspicacity at the best of times—heart’s are romantic but pretty dumb) is really enjoying your marathon training, the back’s not happy at all. It wants to serve official notice, that, with the pelvis and right hip, the right knee and both feet, it is considering taking job action unless you limit workout times.

The digestive system is feeling more lively, and small and large intestine enjoyed their moment of fame back in November, and the Polaroid you kindly donated to them, courtesy of UBC hospital gastrointestinal clinic—they’ve got it pinned on their wall. They appreciate your earnest attempts to come to some understanding about food allergies—and want me to ask you, rather cheeky, but take it in the spirit in which it’s meant—if you really
had to take 51 years to notice how much they hated wheat and onion? There are still some other problems and they would like you to access memory more often than you do, and retrieve relevant information about elimination diets. Or else, they say.

The feet are feeling better today, much better than yesterday. The heart may love doing a 14-mile run, but the sides of the great toes are less than ecstatic.

The major message for the day is that the sinus infection you are ignoring is causing much distress. The nose, the jaw, the side of the face, and the teeth are feeling much pain; indeed, the whole left side of the head, and all within it, are angry and wonder how you can ignore the dis-ease? In fact, and I am sorry to say this, they have decided to ground you for the day. I have negotiated with them and we have reached a compromise—if you will purchase some analgesics, take the day off and stay home in the warm, and rest, they are prepared to cooperate in healing. Here at the body, we are reluctant to ingest antibiotics—we’re intolerant of them and also pretty immune now, thanks to your life time usage and your childhood overdose of penicillin, you’ve now left us all with an instantly negative reaction to any variety of same, so don’t even think of it. We here at the body take pride in our ability to heal our own problems and if you’ll just give us a break, take a nap and drink some nice tea, we guarantee the white cells will get to work and get that infection routed. It’s our job, after all.

Barring that, we are all in pretty good shape here today at the body. We appreciate the time you spend with us, and the extra care you’ve been trying to extend to us these last few years. We are however, still discomfited that you refuse to acknowledge us, and that you let the Mind dominate. We are as you know, constantly depicted by it as the inferior, the Other
to the great (hegemonic) white brain/mind, and your lip service to equity is just that. (The lips wish to register illicit and demeaning use of their name, here).

After a lifetime in servitude, if not downright slavery, to that few pounds of grey matter, we want you to know, “Come the Revolution, Mind will be dethroned and us lot will be in charge!!! When you’re in a nursing home, and mind-less, we’ll still be here—in diapers!” Sorry, let me just say, we suggest you forget all this nonsense Mind has been whispering to you, about essentialisms and discourse and all that crap, performative, schmormative, WE/I is here!!! Oh, and spirit has announced it is with us. Now there’s a poor downtrodden thing...

Well, we note that the time is now 7:03 am and you will begin your morning routine in just a minute or so, leaping out of bed to feed the cats, urinate, weigh in, fuel up and be out the door, so we thank you for this small portion of your time and remind you again, sinus and back are contemplating job action, and...

too late, she’s gone, action stations, crew!
PLAYING IDENTITY

Oliver said, *Well it's all playacting, isn't it, Valerie?* and I think he was right

HUPOMNENATA LONDON NOVEMBER 1999
Every one has a different image of me, and wants me to be different from what I think I am.
So which is the real construction?

HUPOMNENATA LOUTH SEPTEMBER 1999
When he heard my name he couldn't recall what I looked like but he could see my name at
the top of the page, very distinctive writing, he said. Not a starring role then...

HUPOMNENATA LINCOLN OCTOBER 1999
I am not sure what all this stuff is, just testing out what it feels like to have a real identity,
and be able to be real. If I am real. I wonder about all this performance stuff. I don't know if I
am certain in myself enough to be able to perform, don't you need a base identity to come
from? Maybe... I think I will go and get the bracelet. My mother's legacy to me. A good
daughter wears good jewellery.

WRITTEN IN THE TEA ROOM AT HYDE PARK NOVEMBER 1999
Val is frail and fragile and nervy: Oliver, so he can keep me safe
Val is emotional physical and needy: Dave, so he can put me away
Val is condescending and upper class: Thomas, so he can leave me
Val is sexual and alluring: Thackwell, so he justifies emotional rape and abuse
Val is disdainful and above it all: UCL, so it can excuse its inability to reach/teach me
Val is funny, smart, and has a solid sense of self: Nan, because she is
Val is lots of fun, cool, popular and well liked: Letty, so she can be too
Val is good looking, fun and bright: Rick, so he can be part of swinging London again

Do I Play The Role They Give Me, Or Make My Own?

Really brilliant and bored to death with second rate minds and stuff
Not really believing in my brilliance but also believing it totally.

Impatient, sure of myself, knowing exactly what I want
But not how to get it...

Ruthless, a user and manipulator
Idealist and believer in justice, the wise woman leader teacher

Sexual and appealing and still a damn fine woman
One uses sex for controlling, love is craving love for the self, to be accepted

Always played the rebel, resister,
so it doesn't get to me when they don't accept me
Pretty cool teacher, but a poker face
A woman in my class says I always look so calm and clear

The colonizing role... the bad colonizer expiating her sins
Sins of church family upper class, money, oh yes, but they needed my help!

DIALOGUE COACH NEEDED HERE/MEMORIES OF ENGLAND

You were this threatening female.
You always beat me and I found you pretty obnoxious
You were a star attraction
You pushed the envelope
You always were a clever girl but you tried to hide it
You were lazy
You didn't work at it
You were one of the bright stars in the school
Valerie does not try hard enough, she can do better

LAST THOUGHTS BEFORE LEAVING ENGLAND GATWICK AIRPORT NOVEMBER 11 1999

The play this Winter is about decolonizing
it is about gender
and more about sexuality and its use in dominating and replicating
it's religious and spiritual
my landscape is churched, inner or outer

it's all about playacting taking a role
it's about dress and address
it's about what happens when you get old
it's about what you were young
it's about redemption
it's about renaissance
it's about recreation
it's about growth
it's about death and disease and desire
it's about dominance
it's about

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE IT TO BE ABOUT?
Tea in London 1

KING’S CROSS: it’s the day after I met Nan, I feel brave enough to go to Cambridge for the day. I had intended to go much earlier on but it’s been an avoidance thing I suppose. Meeting Nan and Clare was such a wonderfully bolstering experience, and after all, now I have a pierced nose and a sparkly thing in it, it’s a different body and I can take it anywhere, right? Sit and write this on the train, don’t let the young guy across from me see what I write... I left London House midmorning, it’s Saturday, late October, and walked up to King’s Cross, past the seedy hotels and phone card shops and telephone boxes with their litter of working girl’s postcards, call Tanya for a good time it used to be, now it’s pager numbers and pictures of impossibly beautiful teenagers.

KING’S CROSS: now there’s a slice of (my) life. Always passing through, the train from Louth left from here, and I would come in here, from Louth, on the way home, Mother waiting for me at the barrier, worried we’d get lost, me so confident, change and take the tube or taxi to Paddington, and down to Salisbury, Daddy waiting there to drive us to Amesbury.

KING’S CROSS: dressed for travel, boarding school uniform, the boater and the spotted dress in summer, the navy blue costume in winter with the hairy blue coat over it, and the felt cloche hat, cram the hat into the carrier bag with the rest of Prowt’s packed lunch. Dressed for travel... My nose hurts like hell, but I love the way people stare at it. Reminds me of the way I used to get stared at 33 years ago, that godawful spotted shirtwaister dress, and 28 years ago—wearing long dresses, Afghan long fur coat and boots, long hair red hair, smoking incessantly, as Oliver says. Very smart. Now it’s likely my yellow Taiga Vancouver coat they’re all staring at, but not to worry, there’s so many tourists on the train, I don’t stand
out. See, I am not English anymore, the body is giving out its own loudspeaker messages,

"The body now standing at Platform 8 is the 10:39 North American Tourist body, bound for Cambridge, calling at all stations to Letchworth and Royston, and then non stop to Cambridge."

KING'S CROSS: when I got really sick of it all at UCL, I would drift over to King's Cross, take the train to Letchworth, and walk the two or three miles to go see Mother, if she was there, or, I'd go just outside the station, stand and wait at Nott's Bakery and Tea Shop for the Green Counties Bus, Stotfold via Norton Road, and see Grandma, I'd just walk in on her, "Oh, my dear how lovely to see you. I'll make us a nice boiled egg for tea, I'll just slip out and get one from the hens up the orchard."

KING'S CROSS: we'd go there, from Stotfold, Letchworth, Huntingdon even, in to London King's Cross, then on, take the train up to Cambridge. A day out. Suffer the visitors, mother's dreadful sisters, coming serially, female Ted Bunson's, each summer. Ivy, Joyce, Tootsie, up to Cambridge for the day. Where they gushed indiscriminately over King's and the lasagna at the Copper Kettle, and spouted lines I thought Monty Pythonesque, "Gee, these are old buildings."
Before we left the station, Tootsie needed to use the toilet and she ranted about the state of them for the whole day—and the rest of her visit—so filthy, so unclean and you had to pay, she was beside herself. I thought she was strange all the way through, and what was wrong with the toilets there, not bad, actually. And the tea and buns in the Waiting Room were really actually quite good. Sometimes when I felt lonely, I would go to King’s Cross and have a cup of tea, just to sit and hear the train destinations called out, recollecting earlier bodies, the spotted dress gleefully passing one way, glumly the other, a liminal space, where I changed bodies and personalities, happily, tragically, morosely, it was the space where I knew to change—I don’t know what else you do in railway stations, though, aren’t they always about changing?

**KING’S CROSS**: going to Cambridge from Letchworth with Dave the summer we were 18, after our results, when we knew he was going up there, and me we didn’t know anything about, and he remembered how we had sex in the hallway of my mother’s house when she rather nicely left us alone “to go shopping.” We had been separated for a few weeks, “desperate” he said, I forgot that, but he recalled it, the pattern of the floor tiles remained in his subconscious. I remembered us going to see Fitzwilliam College, and we couldn’t find it, but did find the Fitzwilliam Museum. He was so excited. I was so depressed and so angry, why him, why not me,
too? I hated it, in the wrong body again, female not male, not enough rooms or spaces for female bodies. We wandered around the Museum, in awe. I walked into a room and saw Monet and Seurat and was stunned—beauty. Beauty outside of a book, or my boyfriend’s body. A small consolation. A life’s consolation. On the way back we had sex in the train toilet... now there’s a bathroom story. More liminal spaces.

**Kings Cross:** all changed now, not changed at all. The booking hall automated, line up for a machine, put in the Canadian Bank of Hong Kong Mastercard and punch the buttons, Cambridge Return Day Trip, too many choices of departures, get the first one, see even the times are all listed, and out comes the ticket and off I go to *Upper Crust* and get a rock bun and cup of tea to take away, stand on the platform, here comes the train, and get on and settle in.

**Kings Cross:** always a going home place. Not Cambridge. Cambridge never was home to me, although it was my grandmother’s home. But it means “Home.” When you are abroad, in Singapore, or Saskatoon, it means England, and Home, and it means class, and even though all kinds of classes go to Cambridge now, it’s still Oxbridge-equals-upper class. Whatever Tony Blair says. Nan told me yesterday, “Clare went to Cambridge, she will always have that, it sits there on her CV like a signal, “This one is one of us.” I feel like I couldn’t go, but she went for me, the baby who played on the rush mat while I sat at the table and marked endless history exercise books, and taught her to say Bismarck and Schopenhaur, as I swotted up the notes for the adult evening class in Later Modern European I taught the next night to five old folks getting a general degree. Clare went for me. Clare says St. Eddies is not a great college, but it’s still Cambridge. Cambridge, so little about education, so much
about educating, training for a life most of us will never have. It turns out drones, yes, but it’s a nursery hive too. Not for swarms, for the ones who lead the swarms.

**KING’S CROSS**: going to Cambridge to see Tim and his friend, with Letty, after she was dumped by Len, complaining about the stupid Irish and their stupid bombs in letter boxes, making the Tube late, we have to make the train, we are expected at Downing College for lunch. Letty coming home late to 105, Constantine Road in taxis from King’s Cross, once in a state because the drunken Irishman before had shat all over the seat of the taxi and it was all over her best green brocade bellbottoms and the driver didn’t even let her off the fare. Racism, I see, lived at King’s Cross. They said the Irish got off the ferry train there, and Camden Town was as far as you could walk with a heavy suitcase, so that’s where they all stayed. We went to pubs there, now and again, but we weren’t welcome, we were the bloody English.

**KING’S CROSS**: a place in my life between places, from and to places, a place with no place, a place along the way, a Station of the Cross, a pilgrim’s resting place, named after the dead King’s wife’s last resting place on the way down from the North, all the Crosses coming down from Yorkshire are for Eleanor… so put down the old identity, rummage in the carrier bag and get the new one out, shake out the creases and there you are Bob’s your uncle! Fourteen year old schoolgirl, face drawn and sad. Sixteen year old beauty, face alight and joyful. Eighteen year old lover, becoming one with the left luggage, not wanted on the journey to Cambridge. Twenty something adult smoking Benson and Hedges in a long blue dress and beaver coat going home Home home Home to mother to grandmother to nowhere. Middle-aged woman from Canada, platform 14. Who knows all these lives are contained in that one twinkling diamond stud. Who knows how many bodies are placed in one placeword,
King's Cross. A life's worth of bodies sips a tea, eats a rock bun, touches a nose, smiles...

"another old bag, thinks the young man opposite, "but not that old, got her nose pierced, at least. Cool."

KING'S CROSS BUFFET

Bitter sharp sour crisp cold
hot sweet tea.
Sandwiches of anticipation
and exhilaration.
Going home crusts of joy
over a piece of melted sorrow.
Salt and sugar
no pepper.
Cold in Louth 4

Before I left, I went to the cemetery, where we used to go, Saturday after the cinema, and sometimes before, they’ve taken all the crumbly old headstones up now and stacked them against the wall. But there, and I remember but not on them, on the cold. See, cold again. I when we had sex.

I am sitting in a actually have been the 33 years ago, when I that weekend, the one introduction to got here, after 2 hours jogging along the the flats, only 20 odd miles but such a long way, talked to the receptionist, found my room, went for a walk, had a bowl of soup, and then came back and asked for a warmer room, one that faced South and had the afternoon sun, so that I could sit and write in comfort. Something was nagging at me.

Déjà vu all over again, as some annoying man I have to teach with says, something about the rooms, the location, the starkness, the rooms, uneven staircases, divided sections, been here, how could I, then I asked the receptionist, Sue, when did this building start to be used for accommodation for groups and bed and breakfast and she said, mid 60s and then it
was there, memory, another damned memory, and of course, as it has all week, there was Dave’s voice too… that ‘intellectual discourse weekend’ Ahh, I said, then, indeed, I have been here!

It was cold
We had come, ostensibly to take or whatever it we would have own, (trans. Have we wandered and the cathedral area, seeking some privacy, had an Indian meal, and never did find a quiet corner, found that girls and boys were more strictly segregated than blacks and whites in South Africa, and came home stimulated in all senses—mentally, physically, and for my part, emotionally. Can’t speak for him. He was likely in his cold mode and pretending not to care.

Sex outside in the winter, cold, always cold. Cemeteries, churchyards, lanes and nooks. Fields and grass and trees and hard little tussocks, digging in to the back, and goose bumps and ….
A Bathroom Story In Three Time Zones: Roma Johnson

Prologue to the Epilogue

_London, 1999:_ I have been invited to do a presentation in one of the teacher training classes. Nell the instructor asks me to talk about my research, how I use narrative and perhaps my experiences in the program back in the 1970s. I am really pleased to do this, it seems like a fitting conclusion to my visit to England.

I decide to tell them the story of the Teacher, the Tutor and Roma Johnson, about how I fell in love with the Teacher, gave up my aspirations for a career in the Civil Service to become engaged to him, got myself into a teacher training program so that we could drift off into the land of happy ever after, teachers at matching schools in a pleasant area of the Home Counties… of course, the relationship ended when I got pregnant, the Teacher taking off for the Home Counties without me as soon as I promised to “get rid of it,” and I last saw him at Tottenham Court Road Tube Station, Northern Line. I managed to complete my teaching practicum, but it wasn’t easy. The Tutor I had been assigned was a predator, and I was as easy to take down as a wounded wildebeest at any water hole. I refused to have sex with him—in Florence, now that I do regret!—and he refused to give me a reference, but I got hired anyway, largely because my academic credentials were impeccable and that was what counted, that and my class and background.

I had never reported Ross Thackwell, the Tutor, although I did tell one of my peers at the time and learned he had been placed on probation for similar offences. I had been very happy to do some detective work on him when I first got to the old poly/new uni. He had been fired! Yes!
And hired immediately at another institution, the University of the Southbank, where, no doubt, he continued with his harassment of vulnerable students… I finished the trilogy with this piece about my first day as a teacher. More updates at the end. Read on.

**The Story: Roma Johnson**

On the first day I was a teacher, I got to school at 8 o’clock, early. At 8.15 I was sitting in the staff-room, scared, upset, sad, desperate, hating myself and teachers and school, I was so nervous I had to go pee, again! I went into the Ladies, and went, and as I stood at the mirror inspecting myself, the door flew open, and a young woman rushed in, screaming, “I can't stand it, they were waiting for me, I can't stand it, I'm going to kill myself!” I watched as they led her away, and asked one of the other History teachers, Liz, “What was that all about?”

“Oh, Roma Johnson,” she said.

Roma was about 13. West Indian, as we said then, but English born. She led a gang of about six other really tough girls. Each term they picked one teacher to torment. Followed them around, name calling, waiting for them at the gates at the beginning of the day, leaving “anonymous” nasty notes, disrupting their classes, talking, fighting, and, at the end of the day, escorting the chosen victim/teacher to the bus, tube or car. After a summer away, the young woman teacher I had seen had pulled herself together enough to come back, but Roma had been waiting for her outside the staff-room, with the one liner that had worked its magic the previous term, “Ugh, your legs are all hairy, why don't you shave them, Miss?” Simple but effective. Roma's skill as a tormentor had precipitated a nervous breakdown.

For the next two years, I was Roma’s target. But I was tougher, I had been educated by the Teacher and the Tutor, I had forfeited kindness, softness, clemency, and compassion. I
won. I also made sure I shaved my legs; as we couldn’t wear trousers this meant a lot of work in a cold water flat but I remembered that first day...

I was a tough disciplinarian, hated the school, the girls, the racism, the madness, the bullying, the violence, the pain, the non-learning, the exam classes I took. I enjoyed only the lower level classes we all had to take, the ESN's they were called, but it was such fun, teaching them about all the good (trans: gory) bits, castles, dungeons, the Slave Trade, the Crusades, and their attention span of about five minutes was one I understood. I was more myself with them, trusted them to see me, in a way I did not the teachers or the other girls. But I “kept order,” even with Roma and her crew.

Miss Jenkins, our history department head, patrolled vigilantly for the sounds of an noisy/undisciplined class, a sure sign of an ineffective teacher, but I managed to avoid those dreadful little “chats” about “controlling the girls.” Only one day did Roma get the better of me. The window cleaners came around and Roma did a strip tease, for them, over my protests, and one fell off the ladder. We were on the second floor but he didn’t seem to be hurt. We all laughed so hard we cried.

When I left for Canada the next year, Roma shed tears, and all the girls gave me presents, an travel alarm clock, and a teddy bear and lots of cards, one of those enormous ones from Roma’s gang, signed by all my tormentors, and we all admitted we liked each other.

“What are you going to do there, Miss?” she asked me.

“T'm not going to teach,” I said.

“No, Miss, I didn't think you would,” she said, “you're good but you hate it here don't you, Miss, almost as much as I do.”
“What are you going to do, Roma?” I asked.

“Get a job in the laundry at the hospital with my mum,” she said, “soon as I’m 16, then Enoch Powell, he can’t send me back to Jamaica,” she said. “They don’t even have TOILETS,” she said, “and it’s full of lazy black people! I don’t live there, I live here! I’m English!!”

Roma and I didn’t understand racism, or sexism, or ableism, or any kind of isms, they hadn’t been invented then, but we both knew that that school was not a good place. I wonder who was teaching who, who learned what?

November 1999

During the class, while I was at the bit where Roma talked about the toilets, one of the instructors walked out—he thought I was being racist. (From this I learned that it might be good to prep the audience, but doesn’t that detract from the story?) The rest of the class was enthralled, hearing about their program as it had been, and discussing their experiences with gender, race, class and sexual biases. They all wanted to know what had happened to Roma and had I found her as I had found other people? No, I had to tell them, I hadn’t, but I did hear from my old teacher friend Nan that one of Rosa’s younger contemporaries, Heidi, from the same area, Crouch End, same immigrant family background, and same colour, too, had persevered, and gone on to university, and then to teach, and had just got her Master’s degree as an adult. They liked that, and I did too. I still want to know what happened to Roma though.

Nell and I went for coffee and we talked for an hour, excited at the similarities in our biographies. She said the hairy legs had been a bane of her life, a metaphor for the compulsory heterosexuality, and the sleeping around that we felt compelled to do in the 70s.
We agreed that it was onerous; the culture, the discourse was all women’s lib but we were even more put down by the expectations that we encountered from the men we went out with. If we didn’t have sex, we were labeled frigid, and if we did we were “really open” and part of swinging London. In either case, we weren’t expected to show any desire for longevity, fidelity or constancy, either to our lovers or our friends, just smile and leap from bed to bed. Nell’s first resistance came in the refusal to shave her legs; from this small rebuttal of compulsory heterosexuality, Nell moved eventually to declaring her lesbian identity. She doesn’t shave her legs. I still do.

**Epilogue 1: November 1999**

One week later I got an email from one of the women in the class.

_Deep Valerie_

*I should have written this message to you sooner rather than now; I had a few questions - but didn't write them down and had forgotten them. ('Typical student' - I hear you say).

But what I would like to say is - "thank you" for coming into our class to share your experiences about teaching. It is definitely food for thought. I am glad you shared the good and the bad and about the people that mattered - and those that didn't matter in the end.

Brainwave - I just remembered two questions:

1. What were the final factors or thing that made you angry enough to go out there and want to make a difference?

2. Where do you get the energy to do all that you're doing: - training; learning; working (illegally); and being in London and still managing to remain so calm and collective? I look forward to hearing from you. Regards and thanks again._
It was not until yesterday, walking hard along the beach, trying to understand why I hate teachers so, hate schools, hate bad education that I found the missing piece. I knew my own schooling was appalling, have all the little wounds and the big wounds to prove it, but I still have some unnamed emotion... What's missing from this picture?

Yesterday I realized I had never become angry, not at any of it. Not angry at a system that would allow a gifted woman like me three career choices—nurse, secretary or teacher. Not angry at a social system that had me sacrifice my career, my hope, my future for a marriage with a man I would not ever be able to talk to. And who had me believing that was ok. Not angry at a man who would leave me, pregnant and alone, absolutely alone, at a tube station, because being pregnant was “my fault.” Not angry at a man who saw how easy it would be to make me a victim again. Not angry at myself, for finding out that Ross Thackwell was on probation, and still being too afraid to tell on him. Not angry at a system that condemned a bright girl like Roma to being an outcast in her country, and to a life as a laundry woman. Not angry at an educational system that allowed Roma and I to hate each other, torment and punish and discipline each other, but not love and respect each other.

And now I am angry, really angry, and I demand to know how we can change these things, how we can shake the hierarchy apart, disturb the surfaces, root out the injustices. No one should have to become a teacher. No one should have to live in fear, convinced it's their fault that they lead lives of quiet desperation. No one should have to endure learning.
The smell of jet fuel the sound of night fighters
exercising, bump and grind
whining engines roar of afterburners
circling lullabies for an air force kid, officer’s daughter.

Home is getting our marching orders, then marching in, mother complaining
not this filth again, dirty English women, change that paint,
all beige blankets and curtains and carpets with black convict arrows.
Who would want to steal them?
stripes and mushroom walls and all this to keep up,
one, two, three, four, five, six, bedrooms
and only one bathroom, but two toilets.
Cloakroom, bathroom, dining room, morning room,
Study, sitting room, butler’s room, pantry one, pantry two, Aga cooker.

Night flying, oxygen masks jeep and the dog goes to the squadron too.
Postcards from Honolulu and San Francisco and grapefruits
from Cyprus a sack full some frost bitten from the cold cockpit.

Cold Javelin mornings
late for school, reading the comics, take the school bus
reading, sitting only with the officers kids and
never once talking to airmen’s children.
Airmen’s mess, Sergeant’s mess, Officer’s mess.
My father’s higher than your father. Home.
I am better than the airmen’s kids
but not as good as the air commodore’s daughter.

I know who I am, I am at Home.

Picking mushrooms on the runway
when they’re not flying. Playing in concrete
guard posts and fences and pill boxes
and crying when we watch the Dam Busters and he loses his legs.
Weeping at the Air Force March Past and
being proud on Battle of Britain Day.

Home is having a batman, a cleaning lady, and my mother betting on the pools with them
and my father not approving.

Home is a cold old, barn of a house,
warm with the smell of dinner cooking
when you come Home from school.
Home. I know where I am, at Home.
Guy Fawkes Night

November 5, 1999: Spent the day with Nan at her school, so lovely, someone who admires me and respects me and whom I absolutely admire, too. Wonderful, to connect. Full circle. We even went and looked at the school in Hornsey, looked much smaller, and had a brick wall out front and bushes, so different from what I imagined. Funny the students at her school looked so small too, and young, I remember similar ones as terrifying and big and so tough. They were lovely today, and so nice, and well-behaved and so normal, yes, normal, nice kids.

Hard work teaching, though, and such energy. Nan is a great teacher: uses voice tone, soft spoken and allows them to find their own projects while subtly guiding them. Homework contracts, and they do research, and then paint or create a project that incorporates their own work and that of famous artists. They were linocutting, painting, pastels, shaping, sculpting, collages, pen and ink, drawing and colouring and acetates and all kinds of things, some lovely things, and their sketch books were wonderful, the theme was adorn, embellish and decorate bodies, wow.

I loved it. She is so good at it.

We had a rush to get there, my Tube was late and then it was Form time, her home room with about 28 kids, taking the register and collecting money and slips and then some of the little girls asked her if they could talk to me and they wanted to know if I came from Australia and we chatted then it was off to her class, 14 year olds, year 9s and their GCSE’s and she could leave them, so took me for tea, got me a badge, introduced me to secretary and we talked to the Head Master, who’s in PE.
Then she introduced me to her next class and she said I could talk to them, and I went round and visited them all, boys and girls, wonderful stuff some of their projects were super and then it was end of that and then the 6th form and they were super, so in to art, talked to them too, and then it was break. We tried to find the head of Lower School, to see him so I could interview him but he was busy, so back up to class, a whole pile of little ones and such good energy. Nan let me give out some merits and I quizzed them on Canada, what a fun thing, and then they worked with glitter and sequins and we talked and I visited them all again, then it was lunch, late, about 1pm and Nan had brought me a tuna sandwich, as she said two of everything, and I ate mine and we had tea and then the Lower School Head came in, casually dressed, and we talked, I asked about racism, and multiculturalism and discipline. He said it is a good school and I asked if he would send his kids there, he teaches PE and RE wow religious education, England is different, and ethical things, and administers, too. Such a nice man, all nice. He didn’t know if he would send his kids here though...

Lola, the science teacher visited and then we had a meeting with her, and the art and technology team, and it was freezing, and I got cold while they discussed “Insight into Industry,” three day real work project where they make things like real business people, the year 9s that is, and then sell the goods to the year 7s and it was fun, listening, but so tired by this time and so cold and then we tidied up and left and it was all over but so good so much fun, couldn’t believe it.

We went to a nice café in Crouch End, The World, had suns and moons and stars like the Dress, and she had leek soup and I had pasta and tea, and I got to pay as a thank you, and then we drove to the school and sat and stared at it, when did they put the walls up and the barbed wire fence, it was so miserable, all of us so unhappy, how horrible it was, I left and
ran away to Canada, she stayed, and so different from where she is now, but is it really? I think so, and then she took me to Finsbury Park Tube and I came home, here, very tired and just overwhelmed.

Feel as if I have found a huge part of me that was missing, but I didn’t know it was important, like trying to do a jigsaw and missing all the edge bits and not knowing. She says I have a crystal sense of fire, and won’t settle for normal, to keep on, keep coming full circle, and then we talked a lot about men and relationships and what worked and what didn’t told her. Thought her so brave with Claire, a single mum in those days, she was scared the whole time of the social taking her away. I used to baby-sit her. Claire is lovely. So nice and such a lovely smart girl.

It wasn’t me that was wrong, it was the school, some schools can be ok.

Guy Fawkes tonight, but fireworks in my head and Catherine wheels and pin wheels and sparklers lighting me up all day, and so so emotional, crying is an option, and laughing, and so is wonderful. The Dress. The nose.

I am so so absolutely thrilled that I met her and Claire again, I lost my mother, but I found me, and old friends, family. Wonderful day, will send her my purple scarf to thank her she liked it so much, and to replace the Dress.

So tired now. Go to bed.
Here I am in Norfolk. I went for a run this morning, aiming for the Lighthouse, and then along the beach, cold North Sea, just like when I was little and my mother and I walked along the Bacton, where I was yesterday. Nearly lost my liver out, huge fierce dog tried to get through its gate to me, why do they all have such vicious dogs here, what happened to the peaceful countryside?

And the love of animals? I can’t believe the sad state of those poor cats, not farm cats, they belonged to the man who lived there, his house pets and then when he died the heirs just tossed them out and they try to live by scavenging in the barn but they are so thin, the ginger one I picked up was on its last life, it was pathetic, and the people here don’t want to “interfere,” even though she is a cousin to the heirs. How bloody English. What a country, if they didn’t have such stupid quarantine laws I would take it back to Canada with me.

Mind you, it’s a nice bathroom here, yellow towels, they match the little pattern on the duvet. Nice people and they serve a good breakfast, sausages from Old Gloucester Spotted Pigs, probably had a name and all, before it got slaughtered. I am not English anymore, I’ve lost that identity. Rabid dogs, starving cats and they all drive at a hundred miles an hour.
Was Norfolk like this when my mother came here, is this why she hated it so much, she must have felt like I do now, so out of place, so different. They had food rationing, she said, and the cute thatched cottage my father rented was full of silver fish and mice in the roof and no one in the village would speak to her, called her “Yank” behind her back. She didn’t want me to start school there, even though some children did at four, which was my age then... It must have been horrific, here, after Saskatchewan.

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Ed's Yellow Room, Norwich

I didn’t like him, as soon as I saw him when I came up the steps, thought of turning around and going back into the taxi, but I’ve booked here for three nights, at EdMar Lodge, wonder where Mar is? Then he told me about the room, said it was his best, an old man, a real “gentleman” had lived in it, but he told him he had to go into a home and then he redecorated, made it “ensuite,” and because he likes a nice bright colour, he made it the Yellow Room, the old gentleman came back for a visit and he showed him the room and, Ed says, “He was knocked out, just speechless, oh yes, it’s a lovely room!” When he opened the door I knew why the old man couldn’t talk. I have never seen anything like it. Bright yellow walls, curtains, and bedspread, all different shades of yellow, red and green “fitted carpet,”
and not one, but three yellow jugs, bought off the market stall I expect, and full of yellow plastic flowers. Even the damned teacup on the “tray” is yellow! Oh god, how can I sleep in this place!

جان: Well, I don’t care for ensuite, what he did was put a toilet in the cupboard, and I feel like I am doing my stuff right on to the carpet, it feels like s/h/itting in someone’s living room. The shower is in another little closet, one of those power showers, and I think it’s going to scald me, I get out of it as quick as I can. The yellow sheets are nylon, pilled, and the mattress is visible through them, and it is dirty. And the traffic goes by outside all night and day. Oh, this is not my style. Be honest, not my class.

I am rediscovering class. I am not the kind of person to stay here. I have to say it, Ed and his room are *common*. My god I am a snob! Ed told me I had to go for my run BEFORE breakfast. With an angry tone. So I did. I always run after. He is scary. I ate more junk today, but did find a nice place for a sandwich and I had tea with a piece of guilty yellow lemon cake at the Assembly Rooms. I have been thinking of my mother all day, we came to Norwich when she needed new clothes, we would shop all day. And eat. And then go home on the bus. It was nice. We went to the Maid’s Head and for tea at Purdy’s, on Christmas Eve. I wanted to go to the girl’s school boarding school here, but they wouldn’t let me.

September 1st: Still in Ed’s yellow room. Had brainwave! Theme: churches and cathedrals, have been to Coventry, Westminster, Roskilde, Norwich, and churches in Happisburg, St Paul’s (funeral), going to Lincoln, and Ditchingham, see, more to the Vicar’s gateway than sex. Church important here and at school. Noisy dirty smelly yellow room; yesterday had tuna roll and two tomatoes for supper, bowl of soup for lunch, minimalist Eng. Breakfast, tea at cathedral—Lady Grey, took lots of good photo’s; schedule for tomorrow: run 7:45, 11 am to
cathedral, write there, email at Library, have veg. dinner, 7 pm, walk more, and maybe go to see Star Wars—near library. Go to the convent on Saturday, if Ed lets me. Man is frightening; have to walk all night to stay away, what if he comes in here? What is this all about?

**The Yellow Room, All Hallow's House**

All I can say, is, I have come to heaven. When I got here, long bus trip from Norwich but fun, got a taxi I called on my new mobile from the village, I met Sister Pamela, who showed me the House, quickly, and then took me for lunch with the community, a sparse but wonderful meal—veggie stew and bread—and then back, she is very energetic and busy, as she had some three and forty hundred things to do, and then she showed me my room. It’s yellow of course and it faces the south and the sun was coming in the half opened window, outside of which grew, get real! Is this honeysuckle? Yes, and she had put a little wooden desk in here for me, to write on, and there was a single bed, COTTON sheets, yellow cover and it is bliss... a large number of spiders live with me, Arachne is near.

*Later:* It’s still bliss. Three days of quiet, well, country quiet, and good food, breakfast, dinner at 6:45 and a tea at night. awkward. I run each morning the fields, and sit on the bench poor pheasants, being reared for slaughter (Sister Pamela says they all fly over here into the convent garden when they start shooting them in Autumn, seeking sanctuary) and hear the bells on the church and I feel warm and safe. Mind you, Sister Pamela is a bit of a piercing inquirer—she left me some reading, how did she know, Estes and a goddess book. There is
even a ginger cat here, and a black one, all rescued, along with the biting dog, and two
donkeys and a bunch of birds. Some of the sisters are pretty sharp—they have a primary
school, and a retreat center is being built and, of course, they ran a residential school in BC...
many spiders.

Gordon House

Today is October 3, (oh, my father’s birthdate), 1999, at 6:02 pm, I don’t want to write all
these field notes up, and I can’t write anyway, because I’m so bloody freezing, my fingers
are blue, but I can sit here and tape my impressions! Which seems like a bloody good idea,
why didn’t I ever think of this before? So here I am sitting and taping myself in Gordon
House, Legbourne Road, Legbourne, which is not a mile and a half from Louth, it is THREE
AND A HALF miles if it EVER was! I know. I walked every yard of it. NO bus. She lied to
me, like she lied about the heat in the room and being able to write here. In this room. It’s a
yellow room. Another yellow room, what is this? Like that Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s
Yellow Wallpaper thing—I hope I’m not going mad! I will, if I have to live in this country!
Make a note to myself here, that under no circumstances do I ever want to come back to
Louth, that I do not want to live in England, and I do not want to work in England, I do not
want anything to do with it! When I was walking back down that Legbourne Road, cars
whizzing past and trying to kill me, no sidewalk, no, they call it a pavement here, I thought
that, never live here again, and my feet hurt and I was just feeling awful, just awful, after
looking at all those places at Louth today.

I’m tired of cold and lonely rooms and I’m tired of walking miles and miles and not
having a place to sit, not having a place to be. I want to go home, I want to be in my home, I
want decent food. The food here is appalling! I can’t believe all the crap I ate today! Two
pieces of fruit-cake and ghastly soup, well, actually, the soup wasn’t too bad, two apples, tea, I had, I don’t know how many, cups of tea today! Now I have a headache because of this oil heater, but if I don’t have that on it’s absolutely terminally hypothermic in here. Looking out the window, nothing to see, crouched down on this little chair, no legs on it, they sawed them off to get the damn thing into this attic space, how quaint, I’ll remember this, this little pink velvet chair and pink rug and yellow and pink bedspread, very pretty, I’m sure! All Laura Ashley, the landlady says to me. What’s that, a fly! Where did it come from, it’s been below zero all day, oh gross, one of those ugly big blue bottle buzzy things. Yech.

This is depressing. It is pouring rain now. My heater is stinking, (starts laughing) and the fly is buzzing, fieldwork! I don’t think I want to do it anymore! And I don’t want to be here in Louth any more. I thought I would be here five or six days and I have had enough already.

Lincoln, Edward King House

991005: I think Edward King House, the old bishop’s palace, is the place we stayed when we came for that weekend in the Sixth Form. I changed rooms, not going to have a cold and miserable room, from number 10 to 15, a nice sunny room with a view, with yellow and white patterned duvets on two beds, blue curtains, industrial carpeting—harsh but at least Hoovered, two blue-bobble trimmed lamps and a wash basin, two black chairs and one easy chair for reading in, and of course, my HEATER, complete with old fifty pence pieces to put in when it gets cold, and the radiator, where my central heating comes on for an hour in the am, and maybe two if one is lucky in the evening.

I remember my mother saying that she was never warm in England and I understand what she meant, this cold theme is one that is marking every day and every entry. So, here I
am in a room, that if I was given it in Canada, I would scream about, but here is just
wonderful, and only 19 quid a night... with cold breakfast, I don’t need that big breakfast,
felt sick this am and last, trying to eat those poached eggs and ghastly tomato’s at Legbourne,
who would have thought that anyone could turn me off a tomato, anyway, here I am,
computer up and running, Prokofiev playing, and my heater on, sun in the window, below
freezing out, so ... quite happy... finally.

October 6: What did I do today—tried to find accommodation, all the places I tried full and
never an answer from that stupid Goodenough Trust. Always voice mail. Is this what life is
about, just one crappy mix up after another, no fun, no love, no warmth, no human touch,
nothing. Maybe this is fieldwork, all fuckups and no intimate contact. Endless moving
around, never being in one place for any time, bad food, yellow rooms, not enough of my
kind of exercise, tension, irritations and loneliness. I have been back into some of the worst
places in my life and times... The very thought of being in Hubbard’s Hills on Sunday last is
quite chilling. It is truly a Winter’s Tale, this part.

Cold, betrayal, abandonment on a rocky coast and a sense of being lost in a foreign
country. It is amazing how much events of the last few weeks have mirrored that past
country, Oliver, UCL and Nutford House, September and early October, and all the
dreariness of the silliness of the girls and the boys and the not fitting, but really, the worst of all, is the feelings of being back in Louth. Rather strange too that I stayed with a family breaking up, in Louth, with much tension, stress and unhappiness. The wife completely dependent on the husband, the child at boarding school. The dis-ease in that house was so strong that I felt on edge at all times, and the cold, the cold. It was like my adolescence all over again. And the endless walking around, just like the last term I was there.

Email to Canada, Oct. 6

Thanks for the update—please pay the rent when you can. I am staying in Lincoln at the moment, at the old Bishop’s Palace next to the Cathedral. It is actually very cheap and they have a nice ginger cat who lives in the office. Give my cats a hug for me, tell them I will be home in 7 weeks!
FOLKTALES AND FAIRY TALES

so, fairy tales and folk tales, there's an idiom to play with! Long known as Old Wive's Tales, what could be more othered, and what a subversive genre, reflecting representations of myself back to the patriarchal metropolis! Not so much myths, I've dealt with myths, a more masculine kind of story, now I want to find folk tales and women's tales, not in a book composed by a man, like Allen Chinen has done, but one for, and about, women. Of course, we are white, Eurocentric women, but we are Other. Oh yes.

I am not the first. Marina Warner, Angela Carter, both fairy tale artists. And in the academy even the folklorists are getting themselves into the (womanly) act... feminist philosophers like Linda Alcoff are saying folk tales, "Old Wives Tales," are epistemologically sound. Just think, we've been out here, telling our stories, laughing at the world... and the world's centre is catching on. Of course, under the Enlightenment, women's—and the commoners—stories were co-opted by the Nationalist movements and turned into evidence for Herkunft.

Here's the first I ever did... It mutates... What fascinates me is the responses it evokes; audiences have taken it, variously, as a metaphoric account of gendering and sexualizing education, as poetic license and as sentimental silliness. For those experiencing doubts before reading/listening, let me give you a little hors d'oeuvre. Rayna Green calls this an example of expressive culture.

While teaching a folklore course, she had her students keep notes on what stories they heard, and when. A male student, a bit embarrassed, reported a session of storytelling amongst his pre-med friends. In the story, a dentist is afraid of women—his mother has told
him women have teeth “down there”—but he eventually marries his receptionist (no comment) and faces his wedding night. After his new wife urges him into bed, he confesses his fears, she suggests he do an examination and reassure himself there are no teeth waiting for his tender parts. “Of there’s no teeth here,” he says, “but look at the condition of your gums!” Fairy tales don’t have genealogies you can trace, they circulate and circulate… and parody.

The very same week, in Rayna’s rap group of women her age, all products of the 70s, one woman told the story of her first tampon—a classic woman’s horror story. At one point in her recitation, the woman, like the tampon, could go no further, both inhibited by fear of the passage to come. As she tried to tell the story, haltingly, one of the other women in the group said, “You know, it’s okay once you get it past the teeth!” They collapsed in laughter.

Green suggests that the absurdity of the male-centred myth, which creates fear for men and humiliation for women, became real, was rejected and reshaped in a female-centred, healing, and real world version of the old tale. She says this is what feminist scholarship hopes to achieve. I hope, too, that once you get my first fairy tale past your teeth, you’ll maybe feel relieved and ready to open wider to others.

**Tears: The Boy Who Cried**

Once upon a time, in a country far away, there lived a boy and a girl. They were true lovers. The Boy was golden-haired, straight and tall, and the Girl was merry-eyed, bright and lively. But as is often so, the course of true love did not run smoothly. For he was shy, and could not speak of his love, and he envied her bright ways, and she feared he did not love
her. Yet they had eyes for no others, and sought each other's company only. But the Boy had some fickle friends, who were envious of his good fortune and the love that the bright Girl showed for him.

One night, a great feast was held, and all the folk were bade attend. The Girl dressed herself in her finest gown, a dusky pink silk with a rose, pinned just so. She was sure the Boy would speak of his love for her that night, and she would know that he loved her as she loved him. The Boy and his friends began the evening drinking in the tavern, and the Girl watched anxiously as they plied him with wine. Then all the party left for the feast.

The Girl drew the Boy aside, for she longed for his kisses. They entered a quiet chamber and the Girl lay down upon the bed, drawing the Boy to her. "Come love me", she said, and he came to her, kissing her and pushing back the rose, pinned just so. But suddenly, drunk and scared, the Boy stood up, and looking down at her, began to weep. "Look at you, laying there, you have no right to be so beautiful, so white, so soft, and I am mad for love of you, but fear I am unworthy, and my heart is breaking", he sobbed. And the Girl listened, silent, awed at the passion on his face and in his tears and voice. She reached up to him, but he stumbled away, crying wildly and fell upon the door, which burst open.

Outside stood his fickle friends, listening to the young lovers, and they laughed at the Boy, who stood sick and miserable before them. They crowded past him, to stare greedily at the Girl's nakedness, and began to point and snigger. The Girl dressed herself, heeding them not, fearing only for the Boy and his pain. She went to him, but he had fallen into a stupor.

The next morning, the gossip was all around the market of the Golden Boy brought to tears by the Bright Girl, maddened by her brazen nakedness. But the Girl knew this not, and seeing the Boy, ran up to him, and asked him, "Did you mean the words of love, the tears of
passion, you had for me last night?" But the Boy, ashamed perhaps of his tears, or of his
drunkenness, or of her nakedness, that he had let the others see, pushed her away and denied
the words and the tears.

And the Bright Girl knew, sadly, that he could never love her as she loved him, so she
turned and left him. His fickle friends laughed at her, but she swept past, heart broken but
proud still. She bought passage on a ship that was leaving that day for foreign lands, for she
knew she could not stay with the Golden Boy who had so betrayed her. But she loved him
still. And so she took the memory of the precious tears, and the precious words of love, and
folded them all together, very small, and took a little golden key and locked the memory
away in a very small drawer of the cabinet that stood in the farthest corner of her heart.

The ship sailed that day, and the Boy watched her go, telling his fickle friends,
"She'll be back, what do I care anyway", and they laughed and told him he was well rid of
her. But the Golden Boy knew this was not so. He prospered as the years went by, and found
another bright girl, and they married, had two fine sons and lived happily ever after. And the
Bright Girl became a beautiful woman, but she did not live happily ever after, even though
she had many adventures. And then, one day, many years later, she found again the little
golden key, and turned it in the lock of the very small drawer of the cabinet that stood in the
farthest reaches of her heart, and unfolded the memory and there were the Boy's Golden tears
and his words of love, and she wept her own tears. For she loved him still and had truly loved
no other.

THE END

And then she dried her tears, laughed, and went off to become a feminist...

REALLY THE END...
At the end of the year, a boar is symbolically and literally brought to an end for the Duc. A huntsman, accompanied by his bloodhounds and boarhounds, all realistically depicted to show their fine breeding, watches the boar being torn apart as his fellow hunter blows the mort on his horn. Once again, the Duc's chateau is meticulously and flatteringly rendered, and it dominates the background. In my book, nothing so ghastly happens, although music, madness and muted merriment are a theme. As is financial frustration. The body is examined, and the preserved body of Bentham is offered as a spectacle, while I explain, among other things, how I did the research for the Tale.

Sound Effects Are UBOYWAUX
A Postcard From Hubbard's Hills, Louth, Lincs
dance the body and the books
A Postcard from the Panopticon To Jeremy's Children
body bits 3
How I Did It
UBC Is In The Toilet With Me, A Bathroom Story
Examinations, Counter Memories
I bought the Beatles "Number 1" CD today. Actually, I went downtown to the new Eaton’s store (I remember I worked for Eaton’s when I first arrived in Canada, and I remember Christmas presents under the English tree from aunts I didn’t know and my mother’s mother, always in Eaton’s boxes, tissue paper and pink and blue nylon nighties pretty beyond belief and never to be worn but kept “for good,” that never came...) to buy a Christmas lipstick for my auntie in England, then over to Virgin Records for a CD for my uncle (thought he would like the Virgin bag even though he’s just turned 80), and bought that... and the Beatles. Listening, now, living my early adolescence and my youth and college years all over again. The music opens up spaces, and doors into the past, memories, deaf and long gone, are newly heard...

I am a young 13, outside in the garden at Stotfold, with my mother, and Grandma looking on from the doorway, fretting that “we might catch damp my dear, from the wet grass,” mother has just bought me the new Beatles record, I can’t recall which one, and I am listening to it enthralled on the wind-up gramophone, and she is saying, “Well, was it worth it?” because it was expensive ... and I want to tell her, now, yes it was worth every penny and shilling and thank you, so much, for buying it for me, I loved it, and loved you and never told you, but I was embarrassed by you.... You were all wrong...

I remember Love me Do, going into the music shop in Louth to buy it, my first ever record. We had an old gramophone in the Common Room at Masson, it must have been in the 3rd form, and we played records 'til they wore out. Literally. They did wear out in those days. We bought singles. Each single had a hit song on one side and a B-side. Many of the B-sides also became “counter hits” too. We knew every note of every side.
I miss my mother; it’s *Hard Days’ Night*, I remember she took me over to Hitchin to see the film. I was so besotted with Paul. We used to fight over them, at school, who was best, the dirty Stones or the clean Beatles. *Day Tripper*, and it’s Fifth Form all over again, and O levels.

I get older, I hear the singles becoming about “real” young men, *PS I love you*, and the beautiful tall blonde son of a Naval officer aide de something in some funny South American country, George Chippendale, the thrill of getting a letter from him in the Post, boasting of it and condescending to all and sundry! *We can work it out*, Binbrook and a crush on Peter Westerman, who looked like Paul, unrequited, and my mother wanting it to work out for me, all excited I had a boyfriend, so pleased for me, and then that night at two in the morning she cried so hard, the call from her family in Saskatchewan, her mother had died, the only person she told me once, who had ever loved her and who had given her a beautiful doll from Eaton’s for Christmas, just for her, the only present she ever received, and then she left me and my father.

For three months. She didn’t want to come home, but he made her. It didn’t look good, he said. Also her mother had left her some money and they could use it buy a house and get out of Married Quarters, which *would* look good.

I don’t remember any Beatles songs especially from the Sixth Form, but I’ll never forget Thomas playing the drums on someone’s head in class, waiting for Cooper, and singing *My Generation* by the Who, and there was Spencer Tracy’s *Keep on Running* which kept me company on my “walks” with Dave.

And in Singapore, always *Lady Madonna* for Sue and her handsome US married officer who took her shopping to buy a baby carriage for his child and told Sue how much he
loved her, and dancing, and parties, and hot tropical nights scented with Tiger beer, Benson and Hedges cigarettes and frangipani... all those nice young men... and the cold of going back to UCL.

And being there, my first year with Oliver, some of the songs from the White Album in 1970, sitting in the Student Union Bar, *Come Together* and *Revolution*. Humming that, waiting and trying to be cool, when that law student stood me up. Letty and Jim and parties at Sherlock Road and *Sgt. Pepper’s*; all the records we had were Greig, Stravinsky, *Sgt. Pepper* and Cat Stevens—what a selection. My mother came to visit me, she was so unhappy and so sad and so cold, I was so full of being a student and we bought some food and she cooked it and we crouched over the gas fire. She was so sick, then. Of my father. We never talked about it. It wasn’t done, to talk.

Thomas came along, again, and it was *Sgt Pepper* all the way, and then *Let it Be*, and then I was off to take my final exams, dizzy with love/lust, and the Beatles split up, John and Yoko were so stupid, off to India to the Yogi, or whoever that guy was. LSD and *Lucy in the Sky*... cheap red wine, *Hirondelle*, ten shillings a gallon at the off license, much better than drugs. We were scornful of drugs. And then I was so unhappy with Thomas, the teacher training; all so awful; no music then. No music at all.

And then after teaching practice, and the contretemps with the harassing tutor, whom my mother thought charming when he showed up on our doorstep in Huntingdon, it was home for the summer and work at the chicken factory, and Bob and Joyce over from Canada, and going to Cambridge shopping and touristing, and then my parents off to Singapore, and my first Christmas at Hornsey School in the flat with Letty, when I got the news, some RAF man telephoned, my father carried off from a function in a strait jacket after assaulting the
American attaché, my mother going mad at the house, hanging up on me when I telephoned her, thousands of miles away, “Oh, I don’t have time to talk, I have to go and kill the cats,” and they were shipped home, separately, separate planes, and visiting them each night at different hospitals, my father in RAF Halton, and... where was my mother? Somewhere in London. Christmas.

She ended up after at the ghastly Three Counties, what an irony, the loony bin at the end of the cart track, Dr Green the family doctor certifying her and removing her from Grandma’s, Oh my dear, and it’s *Eleanor Rigby*, the saddest song I ever heard. I used to hear it, then, and know it was about me, so worried I would end up like my parents, mad, or lonely, like my mother, with my face in a jar by the door, and never be a friend, or have one; I remember drifting round like a self conscious ghost. No wonder I feared madness. Both my parents went mad.

And then off to Canada to see my recovered mother, where it was so hot and warm and full of food and love, wonderful, endless fields of wheat and smiles and rye whiskey and hamburgers and twenty bucks don’t tell your mother from Wallace her brother and that first Friday night at the wedding party in Delmas, a date with the man who would later keep cows, me a Limey him a rabid francophone with a nice smile. I remember a Beatles song... *Revolution*. I decided to never teach again, only to live in warm places and have summers with no exams and Septembers without back to school.

Musical countermemories, opening hinges in doors of the heart long rusted over... Imagine forgetting about going to visit my mother in that asylum, and my father in his air force hospital... over Christmas... *So this is Christmas*, asks John Lennon.

Is my body mad, waiting to slip into the family strait jacket?
Tame-wild, politely fecund, sedately wooded, town council controlled eroticism... yet....
the smell is nearly-greenly un-disciplined.

Saturday afternoon walks at thirteen, *Oh one duck’s killing another! No it’s not, silly, they’re doing it!*
And it’s sex/death/violence/humiliation.

Sunday afternoon walks at sixteen, growing up a girl, and it’s sex, death and humiliation, again,
it’s all first lovers in the long grasses, and panting up steep inclines, beech nuts roots tripping
ankles thin with desire, as Nature disturbs the path/soul/body.

Wednesday morning at forty-nine, shooting a Nike ad, running into the 21st century, sprint to
the mannered middle class mounts, nimble feet fly over duck goose dog shit, grass exactly 2
inches high, Round-ed Up weeds. A sad flower. Prosaic women cling to severely leashed
cockapoo’s, old men trail tired terriers. A new pair of mates at the duck pond, scratching,
preening; a public urinal and a depressed tea stand exude the same odour, piss.

Sex is not what it used to be.
... yet one old man gets an eyeball erection, ogles my Sugoi breasts, shouts out,
*Going swimming then, love?*

I run up and away, from him/it, up the winding and now safely-railed top path, where is the
stile? Legs, primed to leap the wooden barrier, to carry the body along the breathless path across
the cornfields and out to the Horncastle Road, stumble....

All golf course now, and it’s no sex here, please, we’re all past it. Fore!
dance the body and the books

need to dance my words

Key words:

dance of bodies, stillpoint, tension,
why binaries, no binaries
and or not either or
and but will do.

Dance the words and bodies.

Heterochronies
in interstices of time and space
the doorways and the points they intersect.

Dance.

Dance of the Hours.

Go to Main look for Book of Hours.
Cajole the librarian get a
good one.
Pick up memory book tomorrow
renew old books
turn in some
dance the volumes in an out.

Foucault and body doesn’t match
Doesn’t dance and
None of Foucault’s bodies have faces.
A Postcard from the Panopticon
To Jeremy's Children

Bees in the hive starve
when inclement weather steals away
their busy living.

A flowerless season is famine
for cheated of nectar'd honey
they surely perish.

What cold summers killed
my fervent swarm, robbed us of our
sweet combs of hope?
I had a thought tonight, here in Ditchingham; why not use the Church Parish as an example of the English body? It’s all-powerful, so present, but so erased, this sense of the Church in the geographical/human spaces, in everything. Names, locations, and yet so all so natural, so unremarkable, so unnoticeable, the way it just envelops the whole landscape.

In the Parish body, the old stone church is the structural or skeletal frame, just exuding pastoral prowess, all memories, of H. everywhere, imperial/churchy body’s military trunk and limb. His stained glass window shows the pyramids of Egypt and other writing in it even says body.” And the clock stands bells the body’s timed I love the ancient comfortable graveyard, the still part of the family, who come to see you as they go to church on high days and holy...
days... you are one with life and death. Walking around the corner to go in the church, I
looked down and saw I was walking on an 18th century memorial pavement... hello, old
friends.

.... and yet, it's a simple body, you think,
time immemorial and all that, this Parish body, just
as before modern times, a la Foucault... at least
until you see all the Range Rovers dashing around
like postmodern viruses in the bloodstream, and
realize rural simplicity is a clever illusion, this
Parish is really way postmodern, the landscape is all
floating signifiers and horizontal language and sign
vehicles.

What a good idea, though... and the land represents the stylized English body, I can
use the photo's of the overgrown and ploughed
over public footpaths, the Private Keep Out!
signs mute repudiations of Blair's body politic.

There's the dead pheasant squashed in
the middle of the road, death in life, and the sour
apple trees, and the corn fields, and heart of
Britain oak trees, all that good belly and gut
stuff... and the subservient peasants... like the
one who tipped his hat at Sister Pamela...
Good idea, with the village school, twinning pedagogy and pastoral power, both so
enmeshed, church and state and state welfare, look at all those things on the notice board in
the porch of the church...mothers unions, church fetes, outreach, day care...
...and the nun's old watering cans, their mobile nightly bathrooms, with "mortification" and
"courage" written on them, stern examples of the bathing habits of the body.

Oh, there goes the bell for
Compline, how do these nuns get anything
done, with all this praying, six times a
day? But they do, they run this
community, an old folks home, a hospital,
school, social services, day care, the retreat
and educational centre, and they're abused
animal rescuers too... good ladies, tough
as old boots though!

The busy bodies of England...
1996, early summer: I was writing up my thesis, working with the words and insights of five women’s stories of their schooling and its impact on their professional and graduate education, I began to think of my own school time as a child in Britain, and especially, how it might have shaped my experience at graduate school. Schooling, growing up generally, had been, for me, always a sorely remembered place.

**Bad Memories Linger, Like Tardy Weekend Guests Still With You On Tuesday**

Like a nagging little mouth ulcer, or a pain in a tooth you don’t want to even think of dealing with, because the ghastly dental cure is worse than the intermittent twinges... and so you leave it well alone, and eat on the other side, ignoring the discomfort, because facing up to it will be dreadful and much too painful. When pictures of my educational past (country village primary schools, the rural boarding house and its grammar school, college days in London) popped into my mind, they came with that same spiky piercing sting a bad tooth brings. Now, perhaps because I had put myself into my thesis study and had therefore brought to my own stories some of the criticality and objectivity I used in analyzing the five women’s narratives, some of what I had endured, hated, suffered, loved, began to form vague patterns in the back of my busy mind. It was like walking along the beach, looking down, seeing patterned ripples in the sand, but all wavy, glimmering underwater, underneath the dirty waves... realizing there’s an outline of something there, and if I can just get closer, or if the water were clearer, I could ... find something... significant there? Mind you, I wasn’t that
much interested in getting clearer about school, but I wasn’t quite as averse to it as I had been, I was even, a little, intrigued.

What had shaped me, what outline had been imposed on me, in those classrooms and dormitories, so long ago? Interesting questions, but not to think about now, no, definitely put them to one side, and scramble to finish my thesis by the deadline.

I had a paper proposal accepted for a summer conference in London in 1997, and, suddenly I felt excited, as well as fearful, about going back to England, and even considered, gingerly touching that ouchy education spot with a delicate tongue, if I might not go to see some of those places I recalled, still, so vividly... if I had the courage, or the desire... But I had no idea what had happened to any of my school friends, nor my college peers, and I’d lost touch with the last of my teaching friends in the late 70s. When a late night conversation, Saskatchewan talking to Hornsey, was cut off by SaskTel, I took it as a sign that I should get on with life in Canada, break the connections to my previous world. So now, how would I ever find anyone? True, I could easily visit UCL but it would be nice to talk to someone...

But I remembered the way things worked in England—my old boyfriend from school had gone to Cambridge and I bet his college would be able to contact him, and through him (he was always very practical, unlike me), I could find out more about our other friends and even some of my old teachers. I sent off a letter in February and we established contact; to my astonishment, (we hadn’t parted on good terms...) he was happy to talk to me and about our common experiences. When we reminisced about school, exams, the masters who had taught us, all the things we had done, and places we had been, I began to want to know more.
Toast and An Epiphany

When I went to London that summer, a penniless grad student, I wasn’t able to afford much—something I hadn’t expected was the enormous price increases, I kept questioning every cup of tea, “How much?? Two pounds!!”—so I stayed in Bloomsbury, at a University of London residence, Canterbury Hall. When I got there, I suddenly realized it was where my best friend Letty had been sent, back in 1968. Plus ca change… now I sat and ate eggs and bacon and cold toast at likely the same table she’d sat at for breakfast, 30 years before. I think it was likely the same toast, too.

One morning, just before going out to do a walk, I was sitting in the library in Canterbury Hall, body books and geography texts pushed to one side, trying to ignore the veterinary students swotting for Finals, and reading Morwenna Griffiths' autobiographical book about education, Feminisms And The Self, and I thought, “That’s it! That’s what I want to do my dissertation on, that’s what I want to find out about, how MY body got made, how MY experience, MY self was constructed all those years ago, at MY school!”

It was an epiphany. It seemed so simple, yet I had a feeling it might not be quite as easy as it looked… Mind you, it brought together feminist scholarship on the body and Foucault’s claim for the body as the site where discourses and practices construct subjectivities, with my own preference for critical narrative inquiry and autobiographies as a research tool, and it also gave me an opportunity to experiment with newer ethnographic methods. I could try to answer my enduring questions, the one I had asked in educational places at five, fifteen, twenty five and forty five, “What’s going on here? What are you doing to me? How do I resist you?” And the new one, sparked by three years of grad school—How do I change all this, for others?
As I progressed with my research, my interviews, my writing, I didn’t forget that one simple moment of faith and absolute conviction I experienced in June, 1997, in Canterbury’s dusty old library, with its broken chairs and painted-shut windows, my inspiration somewhat enhanced by the smell of frying food floating up from the kitchens; I never lost the sense that “This is worthwhile, this is good!” Several things, it soon became clear, were going to make the study difficult. Legitimating it, to the academy; funding it; finding participants, and then figuring out how to interview them, those old friends, lovers and enemies, with some objectivity, (or should that be with subjective insights?); writing it up in a way I liked, and which I would find aesthetically pleasing, whilst ensuring that the finished work did get on to a library shelf at my university, and that “PhD” got added to my, sadly, currently initial-less name; and, lastly, making it all legitimate to myself, in the light of my reading of post-structuralism and feminism—I dunno, really, would Foucault sit out in the sun and chat to a postcolonial woman?

Setting Up The Research: Making Maps

I used my two weeks in London that summer of 1997 to begin thinking about my work. I visited some places; others I found I could not visit. I was stunned to find out how deep the traumas of schooling went—it made it seem even more worthwhile, finding out why, even though I realized it might be more difficult, personally, never mind the academy, than I had thought. But by the time I returned to Canada, I had an outline in my head of where I wanted to go, who I wanted to talk to, and what I wanted to say to them.

I spent a lot of time thinking about methods and methodology; I’ve explained how I chose Mary Louise Pratt’s version of autoethnography, and why, and how it works with, not against, Foucault’s counter-memory and genealogy. Once I had written up a few hundred
scholarship and fellowship applications, got the hang of them, finally, and the funding I
needed—this took some time longer than I had expected—I made my travel plans and set off. I
want now to lay out some of the stories about actually *doing* an autoethnography.

**Time: Seasons Of Mellow Mist And Fruitfulness, And So On**

I wanted to visit the places where I had been schooled, to talk to my schoolers; I wanted to visit
the colleges I had learned in, and the professors I had been shaped by, when I was an
undergraduate and postgraduate teacher trainee. Mainly I wanted to go back to them *at the*
right time. I had envisaged visiting at each season of the school year, from the spring like
inception in September, through the scholastic planting and tending season of October through
March, on to the academic flowering of exams in early summer, and ending with the fruition of
educational harvest of July.

The time of "mellow mists and fruitfulness"... a scholarly reaping of all the proofs of
learned subjectivities, the plucking of certificates... not crunchy greeny-red Bramleys, nor ripe
yellow pears, nor black and golden plums, but instead, baskets of degrees... the season of the
bringing in of the sheaves... of dossiers of papery pedagogical worth, not fat ears of wheat and
whiskery barley grown golden in a hot sun... the gathering in of plump credentials of
educational worth and status... not luscious crimson strawberries nor hard picked juicy
blackberries... but the whole harvest-home of proven norms, of disciplined and well trained
minds, all the manuscripted proofs of a body honed to perfection and invisibility.

And so I planned to make time work *with me* in my research. This meant, for example,
staying, in September, at Nutford House, the hall of residence to which I had been
assigned/consigned in 1968, just off the Edgeware Road; it meant living through it all again,
over and over, déjà vu, always already, being again a new September student, all prickly body,
over/under/wrong shaped, this time too old, that time, too sophisticated, and always already not wanting to be here, resisting... It meant walking the streets of my school town as the harrowingly cold winds of early winter provoked visceral understandings of surveillant disciplining, the darkness of depression, and the icy chill of panicked memories, of “doing all the sums, all the verbs, getting all the grammar wrong,” being “stupid at games,” always in trouble, always already trouble. It meant eating strawberries in June in Louth, the taste of fruit and crunchy granulated sugar, topped with the heavy cream of breathless waiting, exam results out soon, Will I, won’t I, pass?

It meant wandering around the assembly hall of the school, looking at the Sixth Form Art Exhibition, roses in the summer gardened courtyard still fresh, not yet blowsy, all petally yellows, pink stamened, well trained beauty, climbing their trellises with civilized decorum... watching children watching the examiners examine them... It meant visiting village schools, grammar schools and the colleges of London at the right time. I had to re-establish the chronotope, feel it again, get back into the skin of a child, adolescent, young woman, try to shed the middle aged mind and body. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn’t.

Where the mind and cognition were faulty, (more often than not), a seasonal stimulus brought up material and pictures sedimented down through years of life; the sensual input of taste, smell, touch—of bare feet in sandals, of wearing two pairs of socks tucked into boots, yet still cold toed, hands gloved, or hat off, forehead sweating in summer sun; the sounds, sparrows hopping thin-legged and cold in leafless trees, tennis balls fat and hot and round hitting a scruffy racket, children’s squeals in the playground, swings rising and descending in the infinite leisure of playtime, teenagers giggling in the back rows at the cinema, undergraduate voices quavering on the phone to Mum, back in the country, hearing the words say, I am so
cool, I’m a student up in London for the first time, and the tears and homesickness strangle all bravado, and the “Don’t worry about me, Mum!” really says, “Oh, do worry about me, Mum, I miss you, it’s awful!”—All these things the body remembers... which body, discursive, performative, non-discursive? Does it matter? Yes, genealogy requires it.

Sites: Beds, Breakfasts And Bathrooms

Before I went, sitting at home in Vancouver in the rainy evenings, I used the Web, searching out the addresses and phone numbers of the institutions I wanted to visit; I wrote, and phoned and faxed when I had to; frequently, this wonderful electronic communication was not helpful. Bill Gates lies again. Village schools, long forgotten names of streets, (and who was that boy with the funny car and the bristly orange hair, and the tie which was too short, the one who never spoke to the girls, only the boys, blushing wildly when he had to walk past us on the steps, what was his name?), these queries required a physical presence. Would have to wait... (In Louth, standing in Schoolhouse Lane, looking down to Suffolk House, I saw him again, a phantom steering his grey 1955 Morris Minor around the sharp corner on two wheels, giggling... Martin Redford). I made what arrangements I could, set up stays and sent off credit card information and sterling money orders and for the rest, I waited until I was there...
Rural Roots

I began in Norfolk, where I first went to school at Coltishall Village Primary School. My father had been stationed, twice, at Coltishall, still a fighter station, and I had, twice, gone down the lanes, past the sugar beet fields, to that school, at 5 and at 10. I rambled and roamed on to North Walsham, and my first secondary school, the Girl’s Grammar School, now part of Paston School, Nelson’s alma mater (Nelson of Waterloo, and slowly, Nelson still as fresh in the current headmaster’s mind as if he were an Old Boy from decades ago), the school where we girls had not been welcome in 1961, in case we sullied the boy’s spaces.

But now the girl’s buildings do nicely to augment the new empire of “Norfolk County Council’s Further Education and Initial Education Combined in One Location for your Convenience, Paston!” Education for Norfolk’s brightest, or not so bright. Then I went on to Norwich, and childhood memories of the castle, Christmas teas at Purdy’s, shopping with my mother at Binn’s, the upmarket department store, and the commoner regular market, on Saturday mornings, and felt again early summer’s mix, a joy at having passed the 11 plus, and a hint of anxiety for the boarding school to come, in the Autumn.

Counter-remembering keeps power relations in play, keeps things unstable enough that the moment of total domination recedes. Ladelle McWhorter, Bodies and Pleasures, p.208

Genealogy is grey, meticulous and patiently documentary.... The world of speech and desires has known invasions, struggles, plundering, disguises, ploys. From these elements genealogy retrieves an indispensable restraint: it must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history—in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts; it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles. Foucault, NGH, p. 76
Urban Angst

On to Nutford House, Room 99, then 31 and then 111 round the corner, can’t get any light or warmth in any of them or any sleep, and the dirty bathrooms, fungus riddled bathmats, non-operative toilets, revolt me and I can’t believe how they get more carbohydrates in a plate of food than the gods of food ever intended... first the foreign summer stay students leaving, the MSU crowd and the Germans, then the Goldsmith’s girls and boys coming, King’s in next, LSE the day after, and assorted blackbags of medicinal and dental undergrads, a few international postgrads, even a few accounting types, and then only a few days before term starts, the UCL contingent, until every room is full, every shower busy every morning, not a seat to be had in the basement dining room, and a marginal improvement in the food is accompanied by stricter regulations on whether one can have salad and veg, or just one. Order a packed dinner, sandwiches and a brown banana if you can’t make it for 6 pm feeding time. Pick up at Reception before 10pm!

The new girls, dressing for breakfast, uncertain, make-up on and hair gelled and shoes and skirts; the older girls, suave third years, racing down in pyjamas at 8:55 am, just under the gun. The boys always looking like they need a good wash, or Mum to do the laundry, except for the few Greek and French students, very smart, and very cool; no one wearing jeans, passé here, and all the boys watching (are they all hetero here, I wonder? Or just having to be?) all the girls ... except the ugly girls, who are trying hard to be bright... oh yes, all so familiar. September fades, Fresher weekends and classes begin, October comes and it’s on ...
B and B’s

To Louth and the boarding school. A visit that comes with the first frost of October, bone chilling, deadening, the whole week is a harrowing of soul and body and mind and heart. A bed and breakfast, picked for its inexpensive status doesn’t live up to the charm of the line drawing in the Best Bed and Breakfast Stops, 1999, and is miles out of the town—no bus service!—not the short walk has said, lying accessibility

A warm welcome awaits you at Gordon House, an elegant country house on the fringe of the Lincolnshire Wolds. There are many lovely country walks from the doorstep which encompass the beauty of this unspoilt area of Lincolnshire. The comfort of our guests is our primary concern. Both guest rooms are individually decorated to a high standard, have tea and coffee making facilities, washbasins and colour TV. The ‘Gordon House Breakfast’ which includes local sausage and Lincolnshire plum bread must be tried. The large rear garden is available for guests to relax in. Bed and Breakfast from £17.50 per person; Dinner, Bed and Breakfast from £26 per person. No smoking, children welcome, pets by arrangement. Operated by the landlady about its accessibility because she wants my money, her husband is divorcing her. A week of cold rooms and hot domestic discord; enforced breakfast listenings to the landlady’s her heartbroken story of his dereliction and her struggle for self-worth. I don’t want to listen, but it sparks memories of my own time in Louth, and a familiar refrain from my mother on every exeat and half term holiday. Another counter-memory, a less than happy genealogical fact.

A week in Lincoln and happier memories, (I am surprised, there were some good times, I am glad I came! of term school exciting and stimulating debating sessions at an intellectual weekend. Evensong in the Cathedral, evenings in the Mathew Flinders Room at the Old Bishop’s Palace, a C of E delight, feeling very comfortable and imperial, sitting in the Sub Deacons garden in watery sunshine, and admiring the vines. The most northerly vineyard in Britain, fancy that! The Bishop did.
Coffee at Dillon’s, Tea At The Museum

Back to London, crisp October and leaves swirling around Gordon Square, nice to have a hot coffee at Dillon’s bookshop, and a quick trip down the Strand to King’s, staying in another residence, joining the Institute of Historical Research, playing at the postgrad experience, and in late October getting my card and security pass for the North East London Poly, that was, now a smart new university, all the way out on the purple Metropolitan Line, or take the green District Line, change from the red Central at Holborn, switch platforms at yellow Circle Line Mile End, take the dirty 168 Dagenham bus, 75 pence to the college.

Dead Pheasants Live Peasants

And Sites and Time, too, in the country, not all cities, a good time to be in Suffolk, bucolically redolent of countryside in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and Buckinghamshire. Too soft for Lincolnshire, too gentle, too civil. Churches every two miles, and little hills, and a stream or two, rural paths and common ways, and pheasants being raised for gentrified slaughter on the Glorious First, weekly bell-ringing practice, Wednesday’s 7:30 to 9:00, the peels sounding out over stooked wheatfields, disturbing rabbits in the hedges, rats darting across the lane with ears of corn in their mouth. Hedgehogs squashed in the road, crows pecking at carrion, Land Rovers speeding past, tractors chuffing over dead things, and live things. Class, class, and place.

Back to London, cooler now, into Bloomsbury, seminars at the Institute, and tea in the Refectory, interviews at UCL, lunch with the Department secretary, coffee at Dillon’s, tea at the British Library, “Eye-opener Tours” at 4 pm at the Museum, Saturday at the National Gallery, student discounts at the Festival Hall and a program of “school music”—the Pelotsian Dances, the Sorcerers Apprentice, the Dance of the Trolls. All our favourites, still favourites!
Runs around Regent’s Park, sad looking hyenas caged and tired, parrots watching listlessly, remember to take a pound with me and get a cup of hot Assam tea at the pavilion.

**Back At School, Miss?**

Up to Hornsey, a reunion with my oldest teaching friend, look at how trendy Crouch End has become, a walk through the Heath, up to the Spaniards, down to Highgate, and a whole day with her in her current school, and when we are both brave enough, after a bottle of wine for her and a bowl of soup for me (always cold), a drive past the Gulag of our old school, fenced and gated now, and shabby, and so small, but neither of us brave enough to get out of her little red English car, and then fleeing to the certainty of the tube station, Finsbury Park, in the November dusk. Northern and Victoria line to King’s Cross, walk back to my residence, London House, and its complement of Euro laden EC students, the days of the Commonwealth a bankrupt memory, with Anglo American relations at an all time low, let alone Canadian, even though one room on my floor has a plaque, “This Room Funded by the Imperial Bank of Commerce”, and as the Massachusetts student tells me in the laundry room, “It all stinks!”

**Day Visits**

To Cambridge, where I didn’t go, but wanted to. Oxford, happy childhood memories and a happier one to take away, tea at the Randolph with a charming man, my old tutor, couldn’t remember me from a hole in the ground, but “you’re worth a cream tea, love!” A weekend with the aged relatives, stories of my visits from Masson House, walks to Maid’s Moreton and Stowe School. Another cold day, a train from King’s Cross to Letchworth Garden City, bus to Stotfold, see my grandma’s house, the pub by St. Mary’s C of E primary school still painted violent pink but the water mill where Rebel used to swim burnt down, and my school,
demolished for a sextet of brick executive houses. And the toilets gone, too, as well as the Chair, but Spirella still employs the ladies of Letchworth, and the tea at the Bakery is as good as I remember, and the shopping arcade just the same as when my mother took me out of school for the day, and we made a pilgrimage to the shops... Back on the train, the names of the stations a litany of childhood visits for school uniforms (Welwyn, Stevenage, Hitchin), pantomime at Christmas with a maiden aunt (Harrow), picnics in the holidays and aunties and uncles (Baldock, Royston), and then into London, (Finsbury Park, Archway), and into King’s Cross, again, and tomorrow it’s the train again, the Express to Gatwick, and Canada 3000, late to Saskatoon....

A Last Visit

And June, again, warmer now, catching up the threads of the fallen memories, the places too sore to touch on the first visit... the Ally Pally, UCL and the octagon, Albany Street. And the ones which needed summer, not winter, Kensington Palace, Hampton Court, Covent Garden’s cafes, and Hubbard’s Hills (twice), the cinema I visited every Saturday night at 16, 17 and 18, pork casserole for dinner with my old teacher, coffee with my old Maths teacher and a warm room, maybe the same one, in Roger Jenkinson’s hotel, where I nearly surrendered my virginity, but got frightened at the last moment, and dashed away safe, and finally, a glorious Russian Slice from Hansen the Baker’s to take on the coach, the next day off to Heathrow on the ponderous Air Bus, and home to Vancouver. To teach, and to write it all up.

I needed a whole suitcase to carry the postcards, posters and pictures back.

People: You Again!

The people. I wanted this to be a dialogic study, polyphonic and Bhaktinian, an exercise in counter-remembering, a postcolonial reconstruction of the construction of the Other, the
body, the child, the pupil, the scholar, the teacher. I had to talk to others, and not to say, “Do you remember me”, that was immaterial, I wanted to hear their memories, their stories, be with them, 30, 15, 29 years ago, see through their eyes, hear with their ears, be their voice. I never considered that they wouldn’t want to talk to me, but some didn’t, and some shouldn’t have, and one or two I should not have talked to.

Finding Letty And The Others

How do you say to someone, “Oh! Hello, it’s me, I know I haven’t seen you in a few years, oh, gosh yes, 30 is it? Here I am now, though, and I’m hoping you’ll tell me all your inner feelings, and what you really thought of me...” Well, first find them, then worry about it. My old boyfriend was so easy to find, others, lovers and friends, harder to discover. Like Letty.

No sign of her, we’d last spoken in 1973, a year before I even left England.

But one person led to another. In London, I contacted the UCL Alumni Association; only one of my fellow students was listed with them, Oliver, the Angry Man. I was reluctant to speak to him, but bravery won out (all that schooling with Nelson and John Smith has an effect), so I wrote, observing all the ethical rules, and we talked on the phone, he was delighted, he said, to hear from me, and we met for lunch, and then an “official interview,” and, in turn, he told me about Rick, a retired teacher and active politician, who had been ahead of me, and was now, according to Oliver, “doing something with education.”

I wrote to Rick; we talked on the phone, he was thrilled to hear from me and remembered me well, (to this very moment he remains a blank in my recollections), and I met and interviewed him in his Mayor’s parlour. He said, “Try the Labour Party for Letty, she was always political,” and they contacted someone for me, who had heard of her, but it was two years before. Finally, in desperation, I called all the Chapman’s in the phone book for
Weston Super Mare, where her parents had lived... all 27 of them, and not one of them knew her, or her parents. Then, only then, did I call the House of Commons, to speak with Jeremy, well, his PA, Letty’s (first ex-) husband, now a radical Labour MP, and he was thrilled to hear from me, too, (I had been a witness at their wedding), and he called her second ex-husband, and got her mobile number, and she called me, and it turned out she was a Lecturer, literally around the corner from London House. We met several times, as did Oliver and I.

Rick told me about Tim and Mary and Dusty, and I called and wrote, but wasn’t able to set up a meeting, for they now all lived up in the north of England. She was a teacher and he a professor...
it all tiring, and exhilarating, too. The visit to my personal tutor was one of the best, he had
done very well since leaving UCL, had founded and now ran a Center for study in his area—
hence the chagrin of the Department Head who didn’t seem to want to acknowledge him, he
was always very clever and very rebellious—as was the meeting with my old political
thought Professor, who had been the brightest and most inspiring of all my teachers. Still a
great man, he journeyed in from the suburbs to meet me over tea, at 86 and nearly legally
blind, he was still the most astute man I spoke with.

Nan, my old teacher friend, was listed in the North London phone book, but only in
the last year, she said, she’d been ex-directory until then. Amazing we agreed… Finding a
phone book isn’t easy either—since the phone system has been de-nationalized, the
companies don’t provide phone books in public call boxes, or anywhere… I stopped in to the
local public library on my way back from a run in the Park one morning, and found a set. The
librarian was proud of their almost complete set—“You’ll not find these any where else!” she
said. And there was Nan! I called, we met, and it was a wonderful reunion, and she in turn
told me of two of my other teaching colleagues but time was running out by then, I was due
to leave in a week, and she didn’t have their numbers or addresses. I had hoped she would
know where some of the girls I had taught at Hornsey School had ended up, but she didn’t.
Where is Roma, I still wonder…

It was easier, really, talking to people I didn’t know, trying to locate anyone who
might be helpful. I interviewed the current heads of my old grammar schools—both school
Masters—and found both conversations useful. The Head at King Edward VI arranged for
me to be given (an escorted tour—so I went to the right places?) of the school, by two nice
Sixth Formers, who seemed so much like me and my boyfriend it was déjà vu, except I think we were more attractive.

Here at the school, I found countermemory worked to destabilize the myth of history; for I could offer the Heads different interpretations of their official history, and my counter-remembering disrupted what the Sixth Formers had taken for granted, thought fixed and settled... things like uniforms, elitism and favoritism. An ethical question arises here.... I deal with that, in Getting to the Truth, for it is something that troubled me at times in discussion and conversation with my participants/informants.

In Louth I talked informally to townspeople—the new owners of the Mason’s Arms, Roger Jenkinson’s old haunt, where I stayed in June; the rude landlord of the Wheatsheaf; a rather nice retired Army officer, who walked with me into the town from the school; a lady in the stationer’s where we used to buy coloured ink and where I was still buying coloured ink cartridges; the woman in the Tourist Office, who was an old Ludensian too; the man behind the post office counter who sold me stamps for Canada and comments for free; the usher at the Playhouse Cinema (I watched Gladiator and had a choc ice); the service person at Hansen’s, “Is this the same recipe for Russian slices?” Finally, Tilly, a treasure trove, at Tilly’s Tearoom, another old Ludensian, five or so years behind me, who remembered a great deal of her schooling. While she didn’t remember, her memories were contemporaneous. She set up a meeting with my old school teachers in her restaurant on Wednesday morning, telling them all about me before I got there, and setting the stage for me. I paid for their coffee. The Maths teacher was just the same, same hair and some iron will, sneered at the masters who thought the girls could do no wrong, treated them far too leniently, and the French teacher was just the same, dithering and dilatory and accentless.
And another find, Gillian, at the Art Exhibition, one year ahead of me and remembered me and I remembered her, a very sharp girl, "Didn't you used to go out with Dave Evans?" Oh no, not again, known not for myself, but always for the man next to me!

What constantly amazed me was their willingness to talk, the openness with which people shared their recollections, good and bad, and the intensity with which they questioned me about my life and my fortunes since schooling. For them I think I was an exotic—now living in a foreign land, an Old Girl made good, the colonial's return... It was interesting to be interviewed by them. What effect does a countermemory of one have on another?

Finally, what I had thought would be the most challenging task, talking to people at, and about, NELP, turned out to be much smoother than I expected. I am sure being a Visiting Research Fellow, and being introduced by the Department Head via the college email system helped too. I was able to interview three contemporaries, and three faculty members who had been involved in teaching in the PGCE program, or remembered it, contemporaneously with me. I was delighted—I had meant to "out" my harassing tutor, I wanted to, finally, tell the world what he had done to me, and to my gleeful astonishment, I discovered he had been fired immediately after I left—was there some other girl who had told on him? —but that he had been hired, without delay, by another PGCE program at one of the new universities. Damn.

I was delighted to talk to two female lecturers who had had the same kind of colonizing/training—both had been at a girl's grammar school, on to college in Swinging London, and then into teacher training programs. Nell and I discussed our schooling in sexuality, and I found her recollections so close to mine. She invited me to come to the PGCE class she was teaching, to tell them about my research, and my past, and I did, told
them my story, and we all had a great discussion. It was an affirming experience, as were most of the discussions and conversations I had at UEL.

And that’s the final point I need to make: what did the interviews, or discussions, deal with?

The Interviews: Enough About Me...

When I began talking to people in England about my dissertation, they all said to me, in one way or another, “What are you doing, what exactly is an autoethnography?” I had thought about this, but not prepared for it, and I hadn’t really understood just how it would feel to talk about myself, or my educational experiences, and I certainly never really considered how it would feel to talk about my body... so I didn’t talk about it. I thought, then, as I had when I set out to compose interview questions, and as I met with subjects, that it was just too hard to say, “So, what did/do you think of my body, your body, our bodies?”

My ethical aim, if you like, had always been to use my story as a metonymic device, to not claim any special status for my life, or my education, or my resistance. Quite the reverse. I felt, going into the study, that my life and my story should serve as the metaphor for others, so that people would be able to read my stories and think, “Yes, that happened to me, yes, that resonates for me, too, and yes, different town, or a different color uniform, or a different professor or a different degree, but all the same, it’s just the same.” I hoped their stories would resonate for me, ring out loud and clear, and they did.

So, although I wasn’t in Sue’s year, I was with her when she talked of the humiliation of lessons done wrong; I wasn’t at Catherine’s school, but I knew her experience of writing S levels exams and not being taught how to do so, was the same as mine; I had not been at Nell’s university, but the pressure to sleep with all the men in the same year had been the...
same one I felt, too; I had not been a boy at our grammar school, but I felt the irksome rules
as keenly as Dave did; and I had not been a lecturer at UCL, but I saw those staff meetings as
vividly, sitting there with Jeremy, as if I had just watched a video of them, drunk my tea and
eaten cakes with them all, thirty years ago.

"What kinds of thoughts did you have about my body?" sounded intrusive, to put it
mildly, and I certainly didn’t see how I could ask a question like that of people who live in a
culture that thinks it’s ok to feature bare-breasted women in newspaper stories, but not to
allude to any part of one’s own body. Remember Monty Python and the Naughty Bits? It
hasn’t changed much since then. I think, too, that class plays a part—because it’s only
working class papers that show the bare-breasted women. I know many other people take a
look, “in passing,” but generally, the British bourgeoisie is still very repressed—(or if not
repressed, according to Monsieur F., at least working with the effects of it). All the people
who taught me, for example, at UCL, were either upper middle class, or middle class
yearning to be more upper—except for my personal tutor, who was righteously working
class, but nevertheless earned his living as a model middle class lecturer. I doubt any of them
ever discussed a body outside of the doctor’s office, or art gallery. Except Jeremy, of course,
whose work is with clothing, but you see, all his bodies are still clothed...

How do you say to a man in his fifties, whose father was a general, and who has an
accent and tongue so English that it wouldn’t even be able to get its lips around words like
‘body,’ with an accent that defied the skills and talents of a professional transcriptionist back
here in Canada, that you are here to talk to him about what he thought of your body, back in
‘68? You don’t, of course. You say, instead, “Tell me about what it was like teaching here in
the 60s...“
Actually, one of my greatest fears was that I would have to sit there and prompt them to talk, but (except in the case of the Blair Witch), that was completely un-necessary. I couldn’t get them to stop. Starting slowly was a good idea, I had thought, and therefore I tried to insert a few words into their gush of opening remarks and questions that didn’t want answers, and I kept trying to slip in a few guiding remarks, steering my interrogation, like a foundering ship, only to see it tossed desperately around the whitewater maelstrom of verbiage... the interviewee’s thoughts, suggestions, long held-in anecdotes, all their previously unuttered comments, musings and decades worth of speculation on university undergraduate education in the late 60s and early 70s, the parts they had played as instructors, or ‘staff’ as they like to be called, rushed out of them in a wild stream of consciousness. Of course, I realized, they’re allowed, finally, to talk about themselves, to relive their life, reflect back on their youth, and they couldn’t care less about my life, my biography, because at long last they get to talk... about theirs.

In fact, most people seemed eager to talk, not of “Education,” (after the initial beginning fears that that was what I wanted to hear about), but rather, the daily business of their education. Perhaps they had all read Foucault on genealogy, but I doubt it. I think people’s reminiscences tend to the genealogical—as Foucault says, if you want to see power, look for resistance to it, stories of struggles. I realize, now, if you want to hear about your history and your body, look for other’s histories, listen for their bodies, see their spaces, and their struggles. Again, he’s right on immediacy. It’s the immediacy people remember, those who were close to them, in time and space, the good and bad, the powerful and the not, and is the pettiness that remains, the boring, daily, grey that sticks, the nasty comments, the ties
they wore, the tea they drank, the type writer they had, it wasn’t the profound, or transformative, or out of the ordinary events...

I found it interesting, too, that the one interview question I had thought would be provocative—"What is your most vivid memory of this time?"—provoked much less curiosity, or excitement, than did talking about their daily routine, what they did, how they got to college, what time lessons started, what day they did Art at school, what they had to eat, what they wore for games, or for parties, and what night the parties were, what pub they went to, what the English teacher looked like, what the head said to them in 1969, what they called students, how they dressed, these were the things that still provoked them. (I am happy to say one man said I was his most vivid memory—but he was always kind to me.)

When I talked to my old teachers, they were equally ready to tell me all about the politics in the staff room, the daily business of being a woman teaching in a boys school, the everyday details of learning to teach girls after a career spent teaching and beating boys. My old friends were happy to tell me all they could remember—of me, of themselves, of parties, of classes, of doing the laundry (laundrettes we had known was a big topic), of the food we ate, the huge amounts of alcohol we consumed on every possible occasion, how we walked, took the bus, or the Tube... everyone remembered their clothes, their hair styles and their lovers. Everybody had a body, and every body talked about it.

My UCL interviewees were happy to talk about how they became instructors, the kinds of classes they taught, the subjects they covered, the politics and arrangements of the Department. The everyday was what I got, mixed in with musings on the nature of the goals of undergraduate education, and also, in passing, the animating forces in the galaxy, the universe and the university, and the general meaning of life as we know it. I wanted petty
everyday details, I had agonized over how to prise them out. I needn’t have bothered, because that’s what they wanted to talk about. I realize now that bodies were in it, on it and under it. I didn’t even have to ask about bodies...

I am thinking in particular of two of them, Patrick and Jeremy, who filled both sides of the tape, and kept on going. I learned more from them in two hours than I ever thought I would, but it wasn’t what I expected. I was fascinated by stories of the secretary’s sweet mother who baked cakes for departmental meetings. Class, roles—and power relations in powerful spaces. I see, now, it was the time and place where the secretary got to arrange the professors to her liking, or did she just hand out fairy cakes? And sexuality. Jeremy doesn’t mind that his colleague has had a sex change, it’s the name she chose for herself after, that upsets him. Class counts, sexual orientation doesn’t... or, let me amend that, if you’re a man you can choose whatever orientation you like, now or then, but if you were a woman, then, in the 60s and 70s, it was still expected that you would dress as a woman, tweed skirt and twin set and all, and be a woman... or so the Blair Witch told me, icily.

Only at the very end of each interview, if appropriate, did I ask my participants, if it hadn’t come up naturally, if they did remember me and if so, what? I wanted desperately, at these times, to say, “What was my body like...” but I didn’t—class, reserve, the learned Britishness resurfaced. Some of them told me anyway—men and women—and nearly everyone had somatic memories of their own to contribute. Dress, styles, eating, drinking, and yes, elimination, and bathrooms, were eagerly discussed, as were routines, and techniques, daily habits, travel and dining practices, and social institutions and practices—friendship, family, sexual relationships—all were re-visited.
My Data: Going over the Edges

I did not intend to rely solely, of course, on my interviewee’s memories, counter or not. I had begun writing about my life and my schooling when I returned to England in 1997, and I kept on writing. I wrote through the planning stages, through the packing and “cleaning and getting ready my apartment to sublet to the student who would look after my cats for five months for reduced rent,” time, I wrote as I travelled, on planes, trains and automobiles (and National Express), and I wrote when I got to where I was going. I wrote in cathedral gardens. I wrote in cemeteries. I wrote in Fortnum and Mason’s as I had tea, I wrote at the British Museum, I wrote in the National Portrait Gallery and I wrote in Starbucks on the Edgeware Road. I wrote on my laptop, in my notebook, and on cards and pieces of paper and envelopes, and on the back of my hand. I wrote emails, field notes, letters, postcards, and literature reviews. I wrote in pencil, I wrote in pink ink, and gold. I wrote while I spoke on my mobile phone, and I wrote in the morning, and at night. When I came back to Canada, I wrote some more. I am reminded of my non-talent in art lessons at school…

“Valerie Chapman, you always go over the edges of the picture, why can’t you be neat and stay in the lines?”

“I just can’t Miss”

I filled up a hard drive—and my head and heart with writing.

I wrote poetry, prose, and lots of pretty awful stuff. I wrote some good things, and some brilliant things, and some appalling things. I cried a lot and I drank a lot of tea. Those seemed to be the two things I mainly did, drink tea and write. I listened to three CD’s on my laptop, while I was writing—Prokofiev, “Lincoln Cathedral Organ Music,” and Chet Baker. I stared a lot at the fishes on the screen saver, and I used up a lot of notebooks.
My counter memories filled the written world... and I fell right off the edge.

Analysis: Witnessing Pentimenti With A Soft Heart

How can I speak of what it is like to do this work, to try to analyze one’s life and one’s body, to don the white coat of the scientist, the classifier, to become a disciplinarian with my self? Well, of course, I have learned how to do that very well, these last seven years, that’s what the process is all about, becoming the University’s subject. Now, when it comes time to analyze, to be “with” my data—the words, the feelings, the stories, the pictures, the voices on the tape recorder, sitting here at my elbow—how can I? I am too hard minded... My data wants soft...

When I was growing up, I was a sensitive and emotional child. These are qualities I wish I could re-capture, as an analyst of qualitative data, a worker with words. But it was a “bad” thing, a not-done thing, a déclassé thing, a silly thing, to be “soft hearted.” This, I was told, over and over, was what was “wrong with me.” The body is soft-hearted and I must needs grow a harder carapace. It was not the terrifying teachers, nor the brutal boys with their violent games on the swings at playtime, nor the girls who didn’t want to be my friend, who were at fault—it was mine, and how would I ever learn to be a clever girl, if I was so soft-hearted?

My mother said it, my Auntie Barbara said it, Miss Snowdon said it, Dave said it, “You’re so emotional, so soft hearted!” I hear this today, too, when I talk to fellow facilitators about difficult or cantankerous adult learners in workshops, when I talk to the other TA’s grinding through 2 hour sessions with a class of 43 pre-service teachers who don’t want to be there with me, and I hear it when I talk to my committee members about why I—me, yes, me, not the 1200 words on the proposal—was rejected by a conference or a
You’re too sensitive, too soft hearted with those students, too emotional about it all, if you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen...

But what makes me good as a teacher and as a writer and especially as a researcher in “being with” my data, is to be softhearted. This work is about “becoming” data. Only when the heart is soft can it hear, and feel, “be with” the bodies of the researched. I am sure some would argue that NUDIST or Atlas could do just a good a job with the data, but I disagree. With this data, these sounds, these sights, these touches and these smells, tastes, only a soft heart can sense the body’s story.

And, too, feel the hesitations, the second-guesses, the intuitive re-wordings and re-visioning, the mis-steps, the stubbed toes on blind alleys and the wrong fingered word typed out, or is it the right word? These, too, come with to the soft heart. The soft heart comprehends the beauty of pentimento. Pentimento. Art historians and artists will tell you, one of the things that distinguishes an original from a copy in the art world is the existence of pentimenti, alterations done while the work was being painted. As it ages, old paint on canvas sometimes becomes transparent, and then one can see the original lines... This is called pentimento because the painter “repented,” and changed her mind. Often for the better, sometimes for the worst.

In this Tale, the body offers pentimenti to those who can witness them. It needs a soft heart to see them, those over-paintings and scratching-outs and painting-ins, all the bodies that the body has been... A hard mind can tell you about the changes, but only a soft heart can feel them, and this work has been about feeling the changes, running a finger over the curve of the bone, the texture of the skin where the scar puckers and pulls, sensing the gut changing colour from pale pink to dark pink blushing with pain and fear and tension in a
rainbow of distress that only the soft heart can see (did you know that a recent medical study showed that the intestine changes colour when the subject is subjected to stress?).

When I began my work in the academy, I wrote with a soft heart, and a gradually hardening mind, but still, it was a writing full of ease and comfort and pleasure, a language which was yielding and plump and pliable. Several papers and grant applications later, I can say, with Spenser’s Faerie Queen, *Whiles every sence the humour sweet embayd, And slombring soft my hart did steale away* (1590, i. ix. 13). If I had had a mind to, but I hadn’t. I do, however, notice the absence of my heart, soft or hard. My mind has hardened, *pentimenti*, putting away the soft heart. When Foucault said, “The soul is the prison for the body”, I understood the sentiment, the soul was of course, the construction of the disciplinary society, designed to keep the body in check, well regulated and well confined... well written and well observed. When did I lose the sense of the body as the soul-case? What a lovely word, a SOUL-CASE... Ancient and yet modern, like the hymns I sung in Church. The heart is held in place with SOUL-BOLTS. Dismantled at this conference, and that presentation, the bolts loosened and the case has been discarded.

Ah, but did I really lose it, the SOUL CASE? I think not, now. I think I have had to go SOULING, as the children used to, from house to house up in the North in England on All Hallow’s Eve, begging for SOUL-CAKES and pennies and singing songs. I have had to find the SOUL and the soft heart it encases/is encased by, to do this work.

This has meant (let me revert to academese), reading, and reading, re-reading, the transcripts of interviews, the field notes, the letters, and the poetry and prose I wrote, not just during the research trips themselves but from before I went, when the germ of the idea
started to grow, a little seedling putting down spindly rootlets and shooting up small
thoughts... And as it matured, through each re-writing of the proposal, each literature search.

I have also had to access body memory, research trauma, and how it writes its name
on the flesh, and thus I have done bodywork, accessed deep memory, tried yoga, exercise and
meditation. I've learn to run, and to eat no wheat. It's all been damned hard work. Much
easier to mail out a survey to 500 participants, go home at night and not think about whether
my body ached and why, and to question, was it sending me a postcard, maybe telling me
something, and when do I have time to listen?

Oh this is hard....

I have also tried to engage all the senses, to listen, to see, to hear, to touch, to let all
the sensual data roll over me as I read, and write. I transcribed all the interviews which I felt
reluctant giving to a stranger to do—I kept to myself the words between old friends and
lovers, but felt able to release the tapes and words of those with whom I was not intimate.
When I transcribed my tapes, I heard the tone and the nuance and the feeling, the heart of the
words. When I received back the transcriptions from the typist, I played the tape and read the
text, changing words and phrases. I had forgotten that upper class English is hard to
understand—and that words change their meaning as they cross the Atlantic, little travelers
and tourists that they are.

I did all the things that good anthropologists do with their field notes and data: I read
and wrote and read and wrote. When I didn’t understand, I wrote about not understanding,
when I didn’t want to write I wrote about not wanting to write. My field notes have become
precious to me and I understand, with a soft heart and anxious gut, what it feels like to worry
over their safety, like children who have been out too late playing. When I have had to
change computers I have made backups and backups. My notebooks and hand written texts are a constant worry—what if there is a fire, or another earthquake? When the quake struck Vancouver in early March, I was writing, and I panicked, and ran for my writing and my disks, stood clutching them to me as the room shook and the balcony of the woman upstairs tried to come to visit me. I am ashamed to say, I grabbed my notebooks and not my cats.

I have searched for themes and written about them, re-themed and rewritten. I have listened to music from the 60s as I read, and wrote. I have heard the Lark Ascending, many times, as I put myself, into the fields of rural walking up the cart-track while the larks spin out singing as they above the Lunatic fiercely turreted, in the He rises and begins to round, He drops the silver chain of sound and ever winging up and up, Our valley is his golden cup And he the wine which overflows To lift us with him as goes. Till lost on is arital rings In light, and then the fancy sings.

These lines by George Meredith preface Vaughan William’s score of The Lark Ascending with a soft heart, back England, see myself behind Grandma’s house of control, singing and disappear into the sky Asylum, which squats fields beyond. I heard the organ play, Bach and Faure, as I wrote and read about Evensong, saw the organist pumping the pedals at St James’, as he let his fancy soar during the introit and the processional.

And I have dialogued. I have talked and talked until I am sick of it, talked to the words, and then talked to theoreticians, arranged the/ir words and mine, rearranged them, engaged in the soft dance of words and theory; we are partners in a stately and baroque opera, voice and feet, my voice, their feet, back and forth. For example, when I wrote about being tired and fearful in England, for example, I read about the body, and particularly the non-discursive body, re-visited Clarissa Pinkoles Estes’ body-words, and then I read.
Foucault on pastoral power, and then I wrote again, about being tired and fearful, and noted how many times I felt frightened, and still feel frightened about my work... Fear of exposure, fear of being out of place, fear of being humiliated, fear of what? God or the Chancellor?

But I should put this into good words for the examiners/anxious readers... Soft hearts indeed! Not they, and a soft heart won’t get me a degree. Yet, my other readers may soften their hearts, by degrees...

Re-presentation of the Data and Conclusions: Struggle!

I analyzed the data; I read through the transcripts of my interviews, and the field notes I had written and examined the visuals. I teased out (they always “tease” out themes, these qualitative researchers, that’s an ok word to use, that and “weaving” and “threads”, usually red, which they “draw out”), several themes, and sub themes from the data. Weaving together the narratives, stories and words of poetry and pictures, I produced a text which simultaneously described the research and offered the findings of the study in a novel way. Some threads or themes, run through this text, bright red markers, (careful!), and I have developed recursive narratives to point up the conclusions I draw from the data. For example, one narrative interlaces “food” and “cold,” two sub themes, to illustrate the way the body learns to react to inappropriate emotion, and reframe it in a more acceptable (hard hearted) fashion. No chance, then, when this is learned, to hear?

The God soft-brushing, in his speed,

The taller grasses.

John Keats, Lamia i. 43, 1820

I also wove into the text the conclusions I drew from the dialectic of theory and experiences—my own and those of my participants. My key argument is, that if power
relations, as defined by Foucault, exist in educational settings, the "field of possibilities" open to the "active agent" offers the space for resistance struggles; the body also engages in its own resistance struggles which are sometimes expressed as consciously held performances or roles, but that the earliest, most profound, training of the body limits its ability to consciously subvert some subjectivities, such as gender and race, even though these are likely performative. Several stories illustrate the six types of resistance struggles as outlined by Foucault; many are spatially situated in what Foucault has called heterotopias, and others have termed "liminal" or in-between spaces. Other stories show that resistance to dominating power is less meaningful but that resistance to power expressed through communication is possible, through writing and learning about one's self, the meaning Foucault ascribes to "ethical care."

Finally, following Foucault, it is the effect of the discursively formed subjectivities that is crucial; the search for their origins or essential nature is far less important. Implications for practice include: becoming aware of the widespread use of pastoral power, as well as power relations in education, the possibilities for change inherent in resisting what 'we are,' and the tendency for those trained in the centre to swarm out as colonizers/disciplinary mechanisms, there to enact the same techniques and discursive strategies upon learners as have constructed them.

Educators, particularly adult educators involved in teaching and supervision at the graduate level, are encouraged to take up a practice grounded in an ethics of caring for the self, rather than caring for others—a discourse which cloaks pastoral power—for where the aim is self-knowledge through writing and counter remembering. Through a use of narrative, a device most likely to appeal to a wider audience than the more straightforward traditional
presentation of theory drawn from research, it is hoped more teachers and learners will become conscious of their possibilities for action in resisting educational inequities when power relationships exist.

I would rather say, Watch out for power, use it wisely, tell stories, write your life, practice daily with your Hupomnemata at being a good teacher and person... and polish your soul case...

I also hope none of my readers wants to become the operator of the panopticon, nor play the confessor ... and

my resistance struggle will have been worthwhile if even only a few readers have difficulty walking through a doorway into a toilet without thinking about some of this and admiring their bodies as they catch sight of them...

...the whole point of this methodology has been to reach and connect with those who would not normally read Foucault, or Judith Butler, but who love a good story.

And for me to persuade them to wear a soft heart as they go about their work...
UBC Is In The Toilet With Me

When she gave me the cheque, I snatched it and turned on my heel and thought how hard it is to make a dramatic exit in hiking boots. I was so angry I was near crying and near screaming. I turned left out the door of

| Payroll: Cheque Pickup, Hours 8:30 to 4:30 ONLY |

and almost ran to the end of the corridor. I knew there was a bathroom there, I remembered it from when we came to see a real PhD defense, back when I was in my second term at UBC as a lowly Master's student. Tom had told us the doors would be locked, and to be sure we were “comfortable,” his euphemism for making sure we went to the toilet before we went in to the Defense Room. All done across campus now, in the new Thesis Defense Rooms, Financial Services had ingested the old ones, and all their history.

The toilet was still there, through a swing door that angrily advised me,

| STAFF ONLY! NO OTHERS ALLOWED! APPLY FOR ENTRY AT RECEPTION, ROOM 329 |

but I pushed my way on in. Four cubicles, a startled looking woman brushing her hair, a pair of legs straining in one stall. I went in to the middle one and sat down until I had stopped shaking, and it sounded quiet outside. I opened the door and walked over to the washbasins and the mirror. I looked at myself.

What makes this body, this face, so obviously one to be ignored, one to be humiliated, to be despised? I couldn’t think of another word for the way the Women in the Glasses treated me. Seven years I had been going there, seven years of the kind of behaviour I had had to contend with today.
I could see me, jeans, sweater, hiking boots, thick red socks to keep me warm, old
white gloves, thick red winter parka, all clothes bought years ago, each a minor triumph,
prized deeply when I got them. The red parka with my grocery money in the January of
1995, or was it 1996? The first time I had a warm jacket to go to school in. The boots for my
trip to England and Denmark in 1999, the jeans three years ago... Money. If I had money the
body would be different. If I dressed like them, nylons, high-heeled shoes, no, pumps they
call them, what the hell are pumps? Nice’ blouse, a good skirt, a ‘useful’ cardigan, makeup
slathered on, hair clenched in the chokehold of ‘ultra firm’ hairspray, each curl neatly
separated and cleverly ‘highlighted,’ would they then acknowledge me? When I came up to
the counter, would they smile? What odor, what pheromone did students emit, what
inscriptions did they read, that told them, “Treat this one like dirt, this one can’t complain”?

The third time in two months I had been here, I thought, looking at myself in the
mirror. My face was flushed and angry looking. Angry, no wonder. The first time, I’d been
asked to teach out of town for a faculty member who was ill. I had gone, duly submitted my
receipts, 171 dollars, a lot of money for me. Six weeks later I was still waiting. At seven
weeks, I phoned Accounting in Education. The appropriate person hadn’t brought the
requisition up. She did. They could request a cheque, IF I needed it in a hurry. Yes. It would
be in Tuesday. Not Tuesday, Wednesday. Not Wednesday, Financial Services “had screwed
up the cheque run.” Thursday, probably, “but phone first.” I phoned. The credit card was up
to its limit and I needed to make the payment. I explained that. Why did I explain that? The
cheque would be ready Friday, but it was the staff Christmas party that afternoon, so no mail
pick up would be made, but did I want to walk over to Financial Services and get it? I did.
Another agonizing wait, the cheque finally relinquished.
And another one, just the week before that, the pay for doing that teaching, someone forgot to get me to sign a form, so I didn’t get paid for it when I should. My payroll contact confided, “They have to pay you in two weeks for the work you do, so they’ll do a manual cheque and backdate it to look ok,” (they did) and you can pick it up in few days, and I had, glad to find it there. So glad.

But today, the last straw. Work I had done in November; the pay requisition had reached Financial Services in early December, I was told, it’ll be on payroll for the 15th. It wasn’t. I phoned, the clerk said she would check. She forgot. I phoned my payroll contact. She left me a message—not her dept, but she had sneaked a look in the system and the requisition had been keyed in, but nothing to pay me. Phone So and So. I did. Her voice mail said she was away, to call Someone Else at... I called. I loved her, she was so nice. No way I would get a cheque, no more were being run til January. No, it wouldn’t make Dec 30 payroll, someone hadn’t keyed that in. I might get it in January, for the 15th.

She said, “Are you desperate?” I said, almost in tears, “Yes, it’s my grocery money for the holidays. I don’t have anywhere to go, but I still have to eat.” Why did I tell her that? She ordered an advance, “Only 65%,” she said, “90 odd dollars, you won’t get much for that.” I said, “The cats can get food and so can I, it’s a lot to me.”

I used to make what the NDP call an upper class salary, way back in the 80s when I lived and worked in Winnipeg. Now I might have to use the food bank, instead of donating to it. This is how I have to get my education? Is my education about learning to be a body that can be humiliated by ugly middle-aged women?

I had waited until 3:30 to make sure the cheque run was done. I ran over to the building, to get there before they closed. I prayed on the way up to the third floor, “Don’t let
it be Brown Glasses, who undoes your cheque and reads out the amount for everyone to hear, and asks you loudly, ‘Is this the amount you were looking for?’ Not her, oh goddess not her, not her.” At least it wouldn’t be the one in Reception, she was the one I’d had to get the travel cheque from. She wears blue glasses, I’ve seen them in Shoppers Drug Mart, “$19.99, for reading,” they say, and she is cruel. I want to ask her, did they train you to be so rude, or are you naturally gifted with this ability?

I rushed in the door, parka flying open, displaying my old black and red sweater, 12 years old, but warm, an expensive relic of my days in Winnipeg (I had blown 150 dollars on it in Intercity Mall, up in Thunder Bay, on a business trip, thinking nothing of it, what was that, nothing then, worth about 250 now with inflation, a month’s money to live on… the things that go through your head).

I got to the rope, and the sign [WAIT HERE UNTIL CALLED] and waited. Oh no, it was Blue Glasses, keying in some cheques. Where were the other people? Two women gossiping about their shifts, neither wanted to help me, they glanced at me and away. I waited. I shifted. I waited. Blue Glasses looked at me, curled her lip, sniffed. She went back to entering her data. I changed feet. I waited. Four minutes. Five minutes. No one else came. Were they going to make me beg, again?

This is how you learn to be a student, you learn you are “less than” a $12 an hour clerk. You learn you are nothing, you are dirt under their shoes. You learn this at lineups in Student Services to get forms, for student loans, for bursaries. Lineups that take over an hour to get through, to hear, “No cheques today.” You learn this as you ask if you can apply for an emergency loan. You learn the body that flinches. You learn not to be angry, because, like bad dogs, clerks like them can smell it on you, and they’ll make it harder for you, longer
waits, more humiliation. And you cringe and think, They can’t do this to me, I am person, not a student number, but they do, for this body allows them anything. This student body.

I knew Blue Glasses was not going to acknowledge me. I tried a joke, “Shall I ring the bell?” “What do you want?” Not, “Can I help you?,” no smile, only hostility. I went cold and then hot. I felt a flame building in my belly. “I want a cheque!” She sighed and said, something, under her breath. She stood up, walked over to the hourly payroll cheques, I said, “Oh, it’s an advance cheque, I don’t know if it’s in there.” She said, “Well!” And marched over to the Reception are, “It’s very important I know that, it means I have to look somewhere else, don’t you know that? Is it a travel cheque?” And I said, “No, an advance on a work cheque.” Work I did two months ago, work you should willingly pay me for, that’s your job, but I didn’t say that.

She fumed over to the other counter again, Why is she so horrible, I thought, what did I do? Nothing, said the body, it’s just me, the student body she reacts to…. She hates it. She has been trained to be rude to student body. She went through the cheques. She pulled one out. “Development?” Yes, I said, Faculty Development. She opened it and read out the amount, “91 dollars and 40 cents. Write this number down and sign here.” I wanted to say, Is it just me or do you hate everyone? I wanted to say, You can’t read out the amount, but I didn’t. I wanted to say, you humiliate me, you make me beg for my money, you make me grovel and I hate you for it. But I didn’t.

Instead I ran into the bathroom and looked in the mirror and thought about the pettiness of it, the malice, the nastiness, the bad temper. I didn’t need to read Foucault to know, it’s discourse, it’s not personal, it’s not me, it’s the body she’s trained to react to. And how do I react to her body? What power flows here? Not much to me, all the power is on her
side, her bureaucratic side, my written history... all in the numbers, the keying in, the power is in the anonymous fingers that key me in, key the body.

Seven years of women in glasses who control my body, who check/cheque me at every turn. I look at the body in the mirror of the room that used to be the toilet for candidates preparing to defend their life-works, and I think, I don’t want this body anymore. It’s a good body, but it’s a student body. I stood and cried in anger and pain. If Blue Glasses had come in I would have choked her to death on paper towels, or held her head under the tap until she drowned.

How will they treat me if I get a doctored body?
Examinations... Counter Memories

The success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 170

Normalizing was achieved by writing exams, proxy medical exams via the housemistress, being examined, table manner exams, and the examining of each other...

All the results of the various examinations were public. From the listings of those who came top of the form from primary school on; those who had passed the 11+, the marks of every girl in the class on each exam, the publishing of the yearly O and A level results in the local paper, the posting on notice boards around college of the names of those who had obtained their degrees, and with what class. The efficacy of examinations were enhanced by their spectacular quality. Thus the good citizens in the market town of Louth knew who had done well in their O’s, who only got two or three, what boys went on to Cambridge, and what girls to secretarial college.

In a town of 10,000 or so, our names were already known—from Eve and Ranshaw’s, where we were outfitted for our uniform, to the doctor’s office (he who never actually saw us, but knew our names), to the dentist’s, the Post Office, even the women who did the reservations for the Saturday night pictures, they all knew our names. Girls had accounts at different shops; all of us at Eve and Ranshaw, Robinson’s the greengrocer, for some—those whose parents thought they needed greens—some, indeed, even had an account at the chemist’s. We were all named and known. When our names were published, they knew us and commented on us...
So for academic and scholastic measurements, publicity made surveillance more intense, and more specific. We never questioned this. When Letty phoned me with the results of our Finals, it never occurred to me to think, “It would be nice to hear this privately.” One’s results were public knowledge—one’s brain and pen were public property. At times this was quite pleasant. Having one’s name called out in front of the whole school as the top girl in English or History was pleasurable. Seeing my name in print for the first time, when my Spanish O level was listed in the paper at the end of the Fourth Form, was quite extraordinary. But the humiliation of receiving the paper from my father in the Fifth Form, his comment written across the GCE results, in his thick point Parker pen, “No M, but more stars than anyone else, love Daddy,” was the nadir of the summer holidays.

And our visits to the doctor, made via our surrogate, Miss Snowdon, were also public. As was any illness. All of us who were off colour lined up outside Sick Bay in the morning after breakfast, and listened to the ills and ails of those in front of us in the queue.

“Constipated again, needs a tonic, spending too much time eating sweets, needs a good dose of castor oil, what do you mean, you want ST’s, you were here just yesterday for them, Valerie Chapman, what are you doing with them, you can’t be using that many!? How can a person use a dozen in a day, what do you mean you need them! Stupid girl.”

I always had to beg for them—my parents paid at the end of the term, the discreet account was under “Laundry,” listed as Misc. That was ST’s, the sanitary towels. By the time I had been at school a term, everyone knew my period was ‘wrong,’ as was I, just as we all knew Jean Reid was overdoing her asthma medication, Jane Reynolds was always constipated and Sue Green had adenoids, and so on, and so on. The very publicity at times worked against the principle, we became bored.
When I was 15 the ‘wrong’ periods seemed to get worse and before I knew it, Miss Snowdon was consulting the doctor for me. I didn’t ask. She communicated, too, with my parents. Sundry remedies began to appear, and in the Lower Sixth, when Sue Green and I were consigned back to the Junior House, not as prefects, but as two older (bad) girls more easily surveilled as we occupied the room between the upper dorms, previously the junior housemistress room, they had me on hormones. Miss Snowdon reported back to the doctor. “No difference in the period, but the girl is getting stouter.” Indeed. Sue looked at me one day, said, didn’t I know how fat I had got? I was mortified; I had spent all of my Fifth Form on that splendid reducing diet, achieving a quite satisfactory weight of 8 stone 4, and now, oh no she was right! I immediately stopped taking the hormones, ugly brown pills that they were, six a day.

Miss Snowdon came back from the doctor with a jar of granules. I was to take one tablespoon three times a day, to control bleeding. When I looked at the label, they were part of a recommended regimen for hemophilia. It was true I had a tendency to bleed copiously, witness my frequent and spectacular nosebleeds, but I didn’t think I was related to the Romanovs! The granules nauseated me and I fainted during breakfast one morning. The decision was made to perform surgery on me.

I was not asked if it would be something I wanted to do. At no point was I ever physically examined, even seen, by the doctor. All was arranged by the Housemistress, my parents and the hospital. It was all a bit bewildering, being 16 or 17, in hospital, to have a D and C. I didn’t even know what it meant. Needless to say, it was humiliating and hard to explain at day school. I didn’t care in the boarding house, we all knew each other’s organs intimately, had seen our secondary sexual characteristics sprout, and, contrary to what Miss
Snowdon believed, in my year there were no girls indulging in deviant behavior, no interest at all in what we saw everyday. We criticized our bodies and examined them minutely, but for social, not sexual reasons.

How we examined each other! We were merciless. We criticized each other’s bodies with dispassionate and specific cruelties. Jennifer Wellen had knock-knees and thick ankles. I walked like a duck. Sue Green had pop eyes and was too skinny. Jane Reynolds had lovely eyelashes. Diana Bower had wonderfully coloured hair, blonde, but it was too thin and greasy. Margaret Karslberg’s was even better, but she had a big nose. Lesley McColl was pretty. A bit plump?

It didn’t count if you were brainy, or stupid. Appearance, only, counted. We spent hours, and hours, looking at magazines and on our Saturday shopping trips into town, we spent the best part of our precious hour and a half in Boots, looking at makeup, or in Woolies, looking at cheaper makeup, debating Paris was really ghastly, or every shop that sold Ranshaw on down. The like hawks, but we never just looked. A trendy the Corn Market, near the had wonderful clothes. We when we were lucky, when it was a birthday or something special, we could take our money in there, or wait and go in

[Image]
on an *exeat* weekend with our parents, and buy something special. I had a wonderful striped orange and pink tunic dress, polyester of course, with matching hot pants. I loved it with a passion rarely matched since then.

Our examinations of each other were personal; we compared breast shapes and legs and leg hairs. We dutifully shaved and tried waxing creams, and, on holidays, even hair colors—"subtle rich highlights" were scrutinized with, literal, nit-picking patience. (My friend Anne always misread "subtle" and produced it as "subtile" and even now, when I go to get my hair colored, I pore over it, looking for the subtile reds.) Every change was explored and evaluated by our audience upon return to the boarding house.

In the Fourth Form, the ugly school summer dress was re-vamped a bit and we were allowed to choose it in pink, green or blue. It was cotton and had little herring bone patterns in stripes, convict style, with a gathered skirt, half-length sleeves and a button-up-to-the-very-top top. No one, not even Brigitte Bardot, could look good in such a dress, but we thought we looked wonderful. Rich girls had dresses in all three colours, most of us two. We also, of course, had to clothe ourselves in our boarding school uniforms. For weekends, on church and Sunday walks, a navy and white spotted shirt waister dress was to be worn, with ghastly straw boaters with matching blue bands. In the winter, we had to wear a navy two-piece costume, with felt cloche hat. Hats were always to be worn; we were reported if seen without the hat on the head. On the day I left school, in a screaming scrum of other girls, I tossed away that horrible straw boater; when I got home I tried to get rid of the hairy blue Harris tweed coat, but my family thought it "smart," as they did the "costume," and both languished in my wardrobe for a while.
In the Sixth Form, I purchased a blue-green Liberty print dress and this was my “best” dress, for going out to dances and things. Sue Green and I would spend hours before these dreadful events, getting made up, trying on new hairstyles, agonizing over the color of our tights… thank god girdles expired somewhere in there. We compared sizes of busts, and legs. We did mascara and eye-shadow and three different kinds of Mary Quant contouring shadow. We did blushers and lipsticks in those appealingly necrophiliac dead chalky pink colours so popular in 1965. We were desperate over our non-long non-straight hair, and wore our hair in huge rollers in all our free time, sat doing prep, and eating sweets in pink curlers. Slept in them, inured to the bristles impaling our scalps. Beauty is painful, we cheerfully told each other, but worth it.

There was no way we would move out of the boarding house for a social event without a full critique of each other. As I say, we were merciless. And then when we were finished, the housemistress had us all stand there, and did her own once-over, told us to remove this, wash that face and take that off, and we had it the exam all over again…

And all for nothing; most of the places we went were draughty school halls, populated by spotty youths who were terrified of us, as we stood in giggling gagglers, watching to see who “got off” with who. Disconsolately, most of us came back on the coach with the girls we had left with. It was grim. On Friday nights we went to the youth club run by the church, held in a nasty set of rambling and damp rooms, and watched more spotty youths play ping-pong. Most of them we knew from our lessons, now taken with the boys from the Grammar School, but now and then someone new turned up.

We always had to contend with the day girls, who were not subject to the housemistress’ cruel eye, and had really really really short skirts and black tights and tons of
makeup and really really really really long straight hair. We thought them glamorous and
free, and spent hours talking about their bodies, too. We knew their clothes and shapes, and
when Wendy James, the prettiest girl in the school got a plum coloured leather coat, AS
WELL as a brown suede one, we were in awe.

To this day, I scrutinize my body as carefully as I did then; now and then a faint
echoing recollection of those schooled days tickles the memory, nothing substantial, more of
a frown as I check out the hair and the makeup, a feeling of something familiar… some kind
of check up is missing, shouldn’t someone else be standing there, telling me how what and
when to wear it, do it, say it, be it? But internalized now, Miss Snowdon lets me know, “Too
short a skirt, and take off that silly lipstick, Valerie Chapman!”
This is the first page of the *Tres Riches Livre* and the artist goes all out to impress—the Duc is here, glorious in blue and gold, eating with his friends, courtiers and prelates; servants and pet dogs round out the opulent scene. It’s a day of gift giving, of feasting, an opportunity to show off the Duc’s wealth and learning. One of the figures in the background, a bit obscured by the tapestry, is Paul de Limbourg, the creator of the Book. In keeping with January’s prandial theme, I eat, drink tea and contemplate… power, shapes, faces, the pastoral, and send and receive postcards from exotic shores.

- **DOORS** And Spaces At Masson House
- All About Power …
- Shape Changing
- Steak and Kidney Pie, Learning “College”
- Schooling the FOO A Poem
- A Postcard From The Palm House At Kew
- Things I Liked About School 2
- There Is A Pastoral Theme…
- The Bathroom on New Year’s Day 2001
- Tea in Oxford
- A Postcard From The University Of Georgia
- WOUNDED TRAVELER’S, A FAIRY TALE
- Valerie’s Letter To Canada 1963
- FOOD
Doors were very important at school, and especially so in the boarding houses. Crossing the threshold of a doorway, stepping from one space to another often required a different kind of behavior, clothing, attitude and manner. I had to learn all this, my first term or two there.

One walked from the street, Westgate, to Masson Houses’ doorway, which sat behind a wall and gates. Set a little back and to the west side of the building, it revealed that this was a gentleman's town house. All good houses gave right on to the street; long approaches and grounds were not considered good form in the early Victorian era, and definitely not in Georgian times.

Masson’s door faced disapprovingly at the pub next suitably stout, with a large used. I am sure there were locked, perhaps at night, but I burglar knew this was not a place to trifle with. One walked up three small shallow steps, worn down from decades of girl’s feet, and stood at the black shiny door, and, if one was legitimate, turned the handle and pushed hard—it was a heavy wooden door, again a sign of wealth and prestige—and it would swing open slowly.

Once you entered, you left behind school, the town, the watchful gaze of teachers and passers-by, surrendering the eyes from outside. You also left behind, on the worn stone step any manners or ways of being and living that suited “outside,” or day school.

When you peered into the gloom, light not being at any time a premium in the boarding houses, it revealed a far from opulent or elegant interior. No sweeping staircase or
turkey carpets, just tile. Cracked and chipped; good black and white marble at one time, I am sure, but now scruffy and depressing. On the left hand side there were rows of iron coat hooks, with name badges above them, and while all manner of clothing could have hung on them, it didn’t. Only outdoor coats were allowed to hang on these hooks.

We were required to have two kinds of outer coats; a hairy Harris Tweed affair, largely blue and brown and black checked, with a single placket, buttoning up to the very top of the chest, and a navy blue raincoat, or Mackintosh. The ugly hairy coat was only for weekend or boarding wear; we promenaded into town on Saturday mornings, to church, and out for Sunday walks wearing them. The Mac was much preferred, but was really meant for to‘ing and fro‘ing to school, although we pleaded to be allowed to wear the Mac—it was less hideous than the hairy coat, and we foolishly thought no one (read boys), would recognize us as blighted boarders. These coats were allowed to be hung in the lobby, and, indeed, were only to be donned there and doffed there, the coats never trespassing past the large door to the House proper. Blazers we hung in our wardrobes in our dorms.

Under the coats were hanging large navy blue gym bags. We were to keep our shorts, bloomers, Aertex tops and socks for gym and games in these. Under the coat hooks stood sturdy shoe lockers two deep. In the pigeonhole under your coat, you stored your outside shoes. These comprised “Stout walking lace-up shoes in a brown or black—NO SLIP ON shoes allowed,” and indoor shoes, some leniency here, even slip on’s, if of a type that were sufficiently ugly, and, again, brown or black. But these were shoes to wear inside, only. Never into the town, or to school. Also one had to squash one’s plimsoll’s (white, of course, not trainers or runners, “plimsoll’s” and only worn for gym class) in on top of the shoes.
Of course, this whole entryway space was liminal, through which one entered, or left, dressed, for the outdoor world, and where, upon coming in, one immediately had to lower the voice, speak softly, and disrobe. Change shoes, hang up coats, and pick up satchels. This was an “airlock,” or decompression chamber. Some giggling was allowed, going out and in, but it was only allowed in this space.

If you looked over to your right, you would see another set of coat hooks, also a large utility sink, where we were to wash the mud off our outdoor shoes, and do our shoe cleaning. Another small shoe bag was needed to hold our shoe polish and brushes—brushes only, no dusters, dusters were effete—and this, too, hung on one’s hook behind the gym bag, and the ugly hairy coat, and the Mac.

For this was also a shoe cleaning space, but only on Saturday mornings, when shoes were cleaned and polished between 9:30 am and 10 am (in summer, we whited our plimsoll’s), under the eye of the housemistress, who then inspected for the quality of shine; using anything but real wax polish on our leather shoes was forbidden. One girl was caught with one of the new and improved scratch coverers, which dispensed liquid polish from a sponge tip, and it was confiscated and she punished. Even our brushes were checked for regulation size and quality of bristle. And if a girl was caught polishing shoes at any other time, other than Saturday, with the right brushes or not, trouble followed. So was the space timed, and dated, and the equipment scientifically specific and its taxonomies strictly adhered to.

A toilet lurked behind the sink. A place to go when desperately pressed, coming in, not able to make it up to the dorm area, or, when one was “caught short,” suddenly, before going out. Not a good toilet—everyone could see and hear. At times, it was the closest toilet
for those troubled during meal times, but its use was generally frowned upon. This was a toilet designated for transitional times—not meal times.

Like all the toilets, it sported a wooden seat, polished for years, decades, by girlish rear ends; a large chain of iron dangled, with a rubber handle, on the right side, to be pulled with gusto and expertise when the business was finished. The toilet paper was always the same, the shiny, harsh paper sort, which crinkled and scraped but rarely dried. We loved to go home if only for this reason—there the nether regions were kissed by Andrex, and when colour was introduced we used to actually talk about it, longingly, amongst the other things we missed from home, like television, ketchup, or brown sauce with meals, mothers and fathers and dogs, and lovely pink soft “bog roll.” (Never assume we didn’t resist—not “toilets,” or “loo’s” when we were on our own, always the bog, and bog roll.)

Passing from the hallway, now suitably shod in indoor shoes and divested of outer clothing, one pushed open another door, not as imposing, and faced with green baize to keep the sound down, to find oneself in The Lobby. A sideboard on the left hand side faced a pigeonhole rack, which held our duly wrapped and ringed serviettes. This was a “quiet area,” not a space in which one was allowed to speak above a whisper, if one was allowed to speak at all. Entering the lobby, another liminal space, one was, again, regulated by those activities which were specific to it.

The lobby had three purposes and three kinds of acceptable behaviors. Firstly, it was here we lined up, quietly, in front of the napkin holders, for meals—breakfast and tea seven times a week, and lunch on Saturday and Sunday. Each half term we were sorted into different groupings for meals, ages and forms and girls all mixed up, to help us learn from
each other the manners and etiquette our parents were paying for, therefore we lined up outside the dining room, in our correct table set.

The second activity allowed in this space was the picking up of biscuits from the cake racks after breakfast, (but not before), either shortbread or digestives, for our break time at day school. Two biscuits were allotted for each girl; we had to take the two, but no more. They were always stale and often inedible, having been stored for years in some ancient tins in the larders in the kitchen. The housemistress stood there, watching like a hawk, “Valerie Chapman, you must take only two biscuits, Sibyl Allen, you have not taken a biscuit, come back here this minute!” On occasion we were offered ginger snaps, which we loved, and there was no problem with not taking them.

Alongside the biscuits, the day’s papers were laid out, not for reading now, only after tea, and only if they were suitable for reading—during the Cuban crisis, all newspapers were kept from us, and our common room radio, which we were only allowed to play anyway between 3 and 5 pm on Saturdays and Sundays, was confiscated—but the papers gave a symmetry to the biscuits, and then, at times, became the props for the third activity.

This was our most cherished activity—getting Post! In those days there were three deliveries on most days, early morning, noonish and an afternoon one, which later vanished. And on Saturdays, just one morning delivery. If the Post came during breakfast we were not allowed to pick it up then, for the time immediately after breakfast was for sick-call and getting ready for school. If the housemistress was gracious, she would sort the post so we could look for our names, and take the letter with us to school, where we would read it over and over during lessons and breaks.
We would hover in the Lobby area, watching, and when she stood back and got into inspection mode, we would flock to the area, scanning the envelopes laid out on the sideboard, next to the stale shortbreads. Most days I was disappointed—some girls’ mothers, like Lesley McColl’s, wrote every day, others had brothers or fathers or sisters who wrote. My mother wrote at least once a week, sometimes more, but not often. I would search and search for my name, for her distinctive writing, not English, and not seeing it, droop off to school, but still with some hope that it would come, my letter, in the next post. At lunch we went back to the boarding house for a few minutes, mainly to check the post, after our school dinner and before afternoon lessons. Again, we walked quietly into the Lobby and searched the sideboard for our names. No talking, no laughing; silent smiling was permissible.

From the Lobby there led off five other doors, and one grand sweeping staircase, now sensibly covered in dirt brown linoleum, not carpet. There wasn’t a carpet in the whole boarding house, except in Miss Snowdon’s sitting room and we didn’t want to see that one, that meant trouble—I can still see its patterns and feel its texture, all mixed in with fear and anger and trepidation.

One door led to the Common Room, on the far left; one sliding door led into the alcove of the dining room which contained one table and the piano—hated by all those girls who practiced on it endlessly according to rota’s—and the tea urn and its milk jugs at meal times. The other door into the dining room was where most of us entered, for the alcove was a special table, where the “good” girls sat, and us bad normal girls found our places elsewhere. The dining room contained six or seven large wooden tables with benches, which sat four or five aside, with room at the ends for either prefects or the housemistresses.
There was a fireplace, boarded up—no coal fires had burned in Masson for years, there was a sparse electric fire in the common room but that was it, apart from two or three malfunctioning ornamental radiators. The windows in the dining room were not curtained, but wooden shutters could be pulled across from each side when it was dark. The lower panes were frosted, for they gave out on to Westgate and it was not seemly for girls to be seen to be eating, and it was especially forbidden for us to look out of the windows. If caught standing on the bench to see who was out there, it was a gating offence.

The dining room served two purposes. Firstly, it was for eating. Eating required all kinds of behaviours and equipment, which I won’t go into here. Talking was not allowed until all had entered, grace had been said, and we were allowed to sit. Similarly, after we finished we had to roll our serviettes back up, wait for grace, and then stand in silence and leave.

The other function of the dining room was for Prep during the weeks, before tea, from 4 to 5 pm and after tea, until 7 pm, or longer, if needed. On Saturdays, we were allowed to write letters there, or read books, as well as do prep. On Sundays, we were not supposed to do homework but only read improving books. Sunday afternoons, either before our walk or after it, were reserved for official letter writing times. One had to write to one’s parents, while the housemistress watched, and, at her whim, one had to bring the letter to her for reading, and censoring. Needless to say, we wrote our other emotional, desperate and longing-filled letters while at day school and bribed the daygirls to post them for us; these letters contained the stories we were not allowed to tell on Sundays. It was considered bad form rather, for a girl to write home too often, or to complain too much; after all, it was not meant to be all fun at school and we were there to learn all kinds of things, and one of them
was emotional fortitude. It was weak to be homesick and girls should get over it as quickly as possible; it was not done to make one's parents upset and worried. One lied, and smiled and said school was jolly good. It was just like a novel, *The Fourth Form Capers* or something, and we all knew what times and spaces were appropriate for what and when we could speak of pain and when not. Epistolatry resistance flourished, but the trouble was, as I found out, the housemistress often read the incoming post too, and if you alluded to her and how much you hated her and your mother mentioned it in her letter to you, well, watch out!

The Kitchen lay through a doorway, covered with a thick green baize, from the Lobby; it was off limits to us all, except when we were on kitchen duty for weekend meals. The Kitchen was for the “staff.” These comprised the cook, Mrs. Prowting, and the odd woman who came to help do vegetables and help cook. There was also a clear class distinction; those of us on this side of the green baize door were served by those on the other side, they were “staff” whom one could not offend, and whom we “helped” by clearing up and sweeping tables free of crumbs, but they were not like us, and even though we smiled at Cook, we knew, and she knew, we were the masters and the kitchen women were the maids. Even though we had to be polite to her, we knew we were above Cook. The green baize door kept the classes apart, and the deadening features of the baize kept them out and us out of our spaces.

Now, I think it must have been a real challenge to cook for 56 girls and four mistresses, on, I am sure, a really tight budget, to produce breakfasts everyday, to stew windfall apples and soak prunes and to make a hot tea every night. We also had cake, a heavy ginger slab, parkin as it is called in Lincolnshire, and rock cakes and other assorted heavy
delicacies made by Prowt. We didn’t have pies, or cookies, or fancy, or light, cakes. Heavy, solid food was what was called for, and what Cook provided us.

Breakfast and tea, Monday to Friday, about half a dozen girls were on dining room duty, putting out the dishes, setting the tables, and, after the meal, cleaning up, sweeping the crumbs off the tables, passing back through the hatch the margarine and jam, the milk, the sugar bowls and the cereal boxes which had come through at the beginning of the meal. We only went in the kitchen to put back the jam, and the heavy left over cakes and white slabs of bread. These went into large metal bins, and into the pantry. If we were hungry we could have swiped a piece of cake or a bit of stale bread, but somehow, no matter how starving we were, the food was so unappetizing we could only force down enough to assuage our first great hunger. After it was appeased a little, one noticed that the pips in the jam were bits of wood, artificial strawberry pips, and that the raisins in the cake grated on the teeth as it was chewed, what was it made that crunching sense? Dirt, insects? In those days, currants and raisins weren’t washed and cleaned, who knew what was in them… I had seen maggots and bits of things I didn’t want to know about. Rather like the stuff that comprised the inside of the sausages, or the fatty meat we had for Sunday lunch, you could get some down, but not all.

Every weekend when we were on kitchen duty, we would stare at Cook, who always had a runny nose, and watch, fascinated, for the moisture at the end of the red tip to drop off… into whatever she was stirring. Then we regaled the others, as we all sat down for tea. When we ate the stewed apples and found the little pieces of pips we called them Prowt’s toenails. It was hard, we were always hungry, but the food was so ghastly.
Snack time at 7 pm was the worst—it had been a long time since tea, at 5:30, and we were hungry and growing girls. Whoever was on supper duty had to go into the kitchen through the door and wheel out the trolley Cook had laid out. Milk, bread, chocolate spread (cocoa mixed with marge), and often, huge and ugly pilchards with all their insides still in them, in tomato sauce, straight from enormous economy size tins. And wizened apples and moldering rat trap cheddar cheese.

From the kitchen, led another doorway, into the Boiler Room. Here it was, on Saturdays, legally, (and illegally, when we came down the back (servants) stairs into the kitchen at night to get them), that we hung our “hand wash” clothes. Up on great drying racks we spread our grey underwear, vests and bras and pants, and, occasionally, the smelly blue bloomers and Aertex vests from games, our wool socks, our stockings (Sunday wear to church and if we could get away with it, Saturday into town, those stockings from Boot’s, and always in the most fashionable “American Tan” colour), illicit girdles and legal suspender belts—when we were in the Fourth Form, only socks until then.

Saturday’s was shoe-cleaning day, as I have said, and also hand washday and “go into town” day. Monday to Friday, the house had a different spatial composition, but on weekends we were allowed in the kitchen to get to the boiler room, allowed to be upstairs in the dorm area after 8:30 am, and before bedtime at 7:30 or 8 pm.

The one room off the Lobby, the only space which was “ours,” where we disported ourselves, where we talked, even shouted, cheered, played cards, ate illegal snacks and the legal awful pilchards at 7 pm, dressed in our civvy clothes, sat crowded around the one electric fire on cold nights, or stared out the window, yes, even standing up on chairs, to catch a glimpse of the boys from the boy’s school, fought (physically, with slapping of faces
and hair pulling), and argued, and made alliances, and broke promises, ganged up on each other, read Georgette Heyer and Arthur Ransome and gossiped, and wrote and rewrote illegal letters to "boyfriends," and other friends, and, now and then, even did some prep, especially near exam time when we had to swot up we had learned... this was ours, our space, the Common Room, the Junior Common Room. Ours.

This space was, of course, governed by as strict and mercilessly enforced rules as the outer spaces of Lobby, Dining Room and Hallway. The older girls sat by the fire, the youngest banished to the walls; only bigger girls stood up to look out the window, and if an older girl wanted your place at the table to do her prep, you moved. If the card players set up there, no one got that space. And although the radio was ours, it was never allowed on, except on Saturday and Sunday.

No TV of course. There was one, but over in the Limes, in the Senior House, and it sat in glory on the stage in the hall which separated the Limes from School House. We were allowed to watch TV on Sundays, Children's Hour on the BBC; we sat enthralled, from 5 to 6 and watched Charles Dickens and the Railway Children and Black Beauty. It didn't matter how old you were, First Form or Sixth Form, when it was TV time everyone was there on chairs lined up in front of the stage. In our Fourth Form and Fifth Form there was a slight relaxation of the rules (it was the mid 60s after all), and we were allowed to see Top of the Pops and Dr. Who on Saturdays, but the younger girls weren't, of course, they just had the radio over in the JCR in Masson. We sat and watched, imitating Daleks, "You will be terminated!" and yearned after the straight straight straight long hair as worn by Sandi on Top of the Pops, sighed when it was over and put our chairs back at the sound of the dinner bell, and walked over the road, laughing and talking, into the gate, and then through the
doorway into the hallway, quieting now as we saw the housemistress standing there like a thundercloud, and on into the Lobby taking down our serviettes and moving in silence into the dining room.

Even when I was 17, I did this, repeated the previously learned movements, painfully and fully articulated with time and space onto my body. I might have just come from a walk with my boyfriend, indeed might have had sex at 3:30 pm, but at 5 pm, on Saturday, I watched *Top of the Pops* and stood in silence before the meal, or helped put the food out, saveloys and parkin for tea. A trained body. The spaces and the doors controlled me and constrained me and enabled me—I knew just what to do in what space, and there’s a great comfort in that…
All About Power … Again

I think this café is all about power. Déjà vu, all over again: exactly the same words used by
the five women in my thesis (Chapman, 1996). All about power. They knew, and I know, all
over again, when power is circulating, and being used against/by us. We may not want to
acknowledge that. This whole story/dissertation is about power: It’s about power, but a
specific kind of power and the spaces in which it forms productive/or not relations. I see my
struggles for resistance, the characteristics of the power relation, sited firmly in my
educational spaces in Louth, and London, at UCL, and maybe even a little at UBC.

Actually, it is not so much that “it’s all about power,” as that “power” provides a
wonderful backdrop to all of the body’s café—it’s like a screen-saver that flickers into life
when you’re busy and you forget your work on-screen while you’re fiddling around with a
pen and paper, or brain-paper-clips, trying to link real pieces of thoughts to electronic
thoughts, when you sit and eat your lunch gazing off into the space beyond, where the posters
from the Tube splash gaudy flowers on the yellow walls and the cucumber and tuna tastes
really good… when you’re not thinking, here comes Power, looking a lot like Autolycus,
pockets bulging with mini panopticons and floating signifiers, sneaking up on to your
screen… sometimes it’ll even play you a tune, startling you as the silence is suddenly
shattered, if you’ve set up your screen-saver that way … out blasts Revolution, or Exile on
Main Street, or The Street Where You Live… but I digress, powerless over my language
again…

Let me explain a little more, and I am guided here by Foucault—but before you get
ready to space out (oh no, not more Foucault!), let me assure you, it’s not about power as
oppressive or dominating. I know there’s a tendency in all of us engaged in feminist and
critical pedagogy to leap to a "power as negative and crushing/must be opposed!" Dalek stance. And I also know many others have stalked down this path, power before, power behind, power to the front. (For a few feminist assays at Foucault and power, see, for example, Gore, 1998; Orner, 1998; McWhorter, 1999; Hartsock, 1990; Allen, 1999; Sawicki, 1994; Deveaux, 1994; Ramazangolou, 1994... the list goes on, and grows, daily). We feminists tend to react like we’re Star Trekkers meeting the Borg, fighting for our unassimilated lives... and ... yet... What if power isn’t all bad, what if there are other ways to see, and feel, and work with/against/around power?

The body’s tale has been about, is about, how the body manifests as a site of subjectification; the tale is the place in my/our story where power is articulated, and physically marked, on to the surface of body/subject. So far, that power has sounded oppressive, disciplinary, and weighty in this tale. Stories about surveillance, normalization and exclusion, about classifying, distributing in space so as to regulate and totalize obedience. I haven’t really differentiated “power,” nor classified, divided or distributed it in the story.

What I’d like to introduce is a contemplation of the kinds of power that might be articulated, and how we might read some of the resistance struggles the body has made against some forms of power. And about the way the body has (willingly) accepted, and (re)produced its own power/relations on to both its surface, and on to the surfaces of others. Dialogic relations, again. I’m dealing with the second half of my originating question... how can we resist or unravel or disrupt inequitable subjectifications?
Why Study Power: The Question Of The Subject

Foucault talks about power a lot; he spent a long academic lifetime writing about power, too, so that his view of power and his engagement with it in genealogies and counterhistories changes over his lifetime. Jennifer Gore points out, “The analysis of select passages from Foucault’s vast (and sometimes contradictory) work is a common form of scholarly engagement with his ideas. Rather than contribute further to these debates on the basis of claims to have read Foucault better than others, I have taken up…” (Gore, 1998, p. 233), and she goes on to illustrate how power relations are to be seen working in four pedagogic sites with some continuity, despite the very different students and teachers involved in each site.

Like her, I don’t want to add to the “what he really meant” literature; like Foucault, I want to play at being a “happy positivist” (1981, cited Gore), and so I will ground a contemplative narrative of Foucault’s thoughts on power and power relations with stories, remarks and comments drawn from those who were with me, and the body, in schools in Lincolnshire and London. I will also trust you, the reader, to keep an eye out for the Foucault Police, in case I stray too far from the hagiographic path. Most of the words I am taking come from his essay on the Subject and Power (2000, 1982, original publication), incidentally, a later-life disquisition, with a more clearly laid out and perhaps optimistic ‘grid’ for discussing power relations, than say, Discipline and Punish, with its overpoweringly gloomy/oppressive tone.

Foucault pointed out his work was about finding out how the subject becomes a subject, not about power. However, the subject becomes a subject as he/she is “placed in the power relations that are very complex.” He goes on to say, that, (for those of like me, who have to pursue power for a doctoral degree), unfortunately “…for power relations we had no
tools of study.” What was available to him were ways of thinking about power legally, or about its legitimation in institutions; what was lacking was a way of thinking about power differently.” He asks, “but do we need a theory of power?” and answers, well… “We need a historical awareness of our present circumstance… and a new economy of power relations—the word ‘economy’ being used in its theoretical and practical sense. Shall we try reason? To my mind, nothing would be more sterile” (2000, p 327). He says taking a more empirical approach might be helpful, because it will more directly relate to our present situations, instead of being more posturing about grand and universal views of “society.” Being happily positivist and empirical might also allow us to relate our theory to practice, and if we take the forms of resistance against different forms of power,” we can:

bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used...[thus] analyzing power relations through the antagonism of strategies... As a starting point, let us take a series of oppositions that have developed over the last few years: opposition to the power of men over women, of parents over children, of psychiatry over the mentally ill, of medicine over the population, of administration over the ways people live. ... what do they have in common? (2000, p. 329)

**Stories of Resistance Struggles**

Foucault suggests there are six characteristics of resistance struggles. Here are my scenarios for each.

They are *transversal* struggles, that is, they are not limited to one country, nor are they confined to a particular political or economic form of government.

They all meet on Wednesday mornings for coffee at her place, Tilly’s Tearoom. She said, “They’re all really nice, you wouldn’t believe they’re all schoolteachers,” but they make her feel like she’s still 11. She was about five years behind me, in the Second Form when I was in the Sixth Form. She remembers all of that. All of them. See, I am not the only one who thinks about their school days. *Field notes, October 1999.*
The target of these struggles is power effects, as such. For example, the medical profession is criticized by people, not because it’s a profit making concern, but because it exercises uncontrolled power over people’s bodies, their health and their life and death. It’s not the nature of the medical (teaching) profession that is so despised, but what it does to you.

Nobody, not one of those women teachers, encouraged me, just told me off. Huh! Isn’t that strange, I don’t have one good memory about a woman teacher, may be Miss James in Spanish. That PE woman, Miss Harte, shouted at me, called me stupid. Dismissed me because I didn’t play hockey. The science woman used to be sarcastic to me. Miss Denison in Maths used to throw things at me. I felt so stupid because of them. It’s not that they taught me, boring useless stuff, but what they made me feel about it all. Bitches.

Field notes, October 1999.

These are “immediate” struggles. People criticize instances of power closest to them, those which exercise their action on individuals. They look not for the “chief enemy” but for the immediate enemy. Nor do they expect to find a solution to their problems at a future date (that is, in liberations, revolutions, end of class struggle, oops…for the liberal humanists).

They are anarchistic struggles.

My boyfriend told me about when he came to Louth from Horncastle, when his parents went overseas. He’d been very upset about leaving there, felt very strongly identified with his first grammar school, but didn’t likely say anything, because, as he said, we didn’t criticize or get much of a chance for what they call “decision making” now. When he got to Louth, there was all that Horncastle Louth rivalry. He told me the gym master said to him as they were doing a cross country run, “Horncastle boys couldn’t do this, they would quit, they’re cowards, they’re gutless.” He was really affronted, even years later, about a teacher saying something like that to a fourteen year old. He remembered being really pissed off and saying, I’ll show you! And so he made sure he finished the cross-country race, and he won it! He laughed, because he’d really pissed off the master, he thinks he even said something like, What does that say about Horncastle boys now?

Field notes, October 1999.

They are struggles that question the status of the individual, they are struggles against the “government of individualization.”
Two sixth formers, William and Jenna, took me around the schools, firstly to the old boy's school and I saw the bike sheds, and I remembered the condom story my boyfriend told me. I can't recall all the details, but it went like this:

“I probably had no idea what a condom was but I soon learned; this condom appeared on the roof of the bike sheds opposite the matron's window, and everybody assumed it was thrown there to make a statement to the Matron, give her a vicarious pleasure. Anyway we were all assembled in the hall and told that who ever did it had to own up or there would be repercussions. There was much discussion, nobody owned up, nobody was willing to say who did it, I had no idea who did it. I said, Well, look, if we all own up, if we say we all did it, I mean what can they do? It struck me as a really brilliant idea, and that's what I convinced everybody. So we said we all did it, it was a collective act. But of course they got us in one after the other, they didn't let us talk to each other, and it soon became clear to them, everybody said, Well, this was his idea! So they said I did it, and I quite readily admitted I had come up with the ruse.

Field notes, October 1999

They are an opposition to the effects of power linked with knowledge, competence and qualification—struggles against the privileges of knowledge. But they are also an opposition against secrecy, deformation, and the mystifying representations imposed on people, they are not scientistic but neither skeptical, nor relativist. What is questioned is the way in which knowledge circulates and functions, its relations to power, “the regime of knowledge (savoir)” (p. 331).

I persuaded William and Jenna to take me down to the girl’s school, first into what was the gym then, the refectory now where they have school dinner, and they were cooking, the smells took me back years, and then we went out the back door of the gym, where we used to get weighed on our reducing diet binges, and hang about every morning, halfway between the boarding school and day school. I opened the door in the wall to get a picture of the back of the Limes, and its grass lawn; I told them about going over the wall there, in the evenings, to get out at. And then we went into the assembly hall, the same picture was on the wall, that picture of a woman, mediaeval, used to think she looked a bit like me. Bump on the nose. But the boards with the names on, the Honour’s Boards were gone.
I said I wanted to see the board with my name on it, the teacher told Jenna that they were in the small room off her office, back in the Hall, and we got the key—I made them, I insisted—and we looked at the boards, and my name was not there! There were some honours til 1972. BUT NOT MINE, THEY DIDN'T PUT ME UP THERE and I won that Lindsay Senior scholarship!! Came all that way to look at it. A whole bloody ocean I crossed to get here. Took pictures anyway. Mind you, I'm glad I made them take me to see those boards, it was confirmation of their refusal to make me a good girl. I'm still angry about it.

Field Notes, October 1999.

Finally, all these present struggles revolve around the question: Who are we? They are a refusal of abstractions, of economic and ideological state violence, which ignore who we are individually, and they are also a refusal of a scientific or administrative inquisition that determines who one is (p. 331).

I took a picture of the spot where my boyfriend and I sat that day. Revising our geography. He was so insistent that we study, he would say, how can you talk to me and still take notes? He didn't write like me, think like me.

Nobody thinks like me. Funny, I hadn't ever made that connection before, that's what alienated me in education, I was different from everybody. Nothing ever challenged me, nothing ever caught my interest. So plodding, so slow! I never knew I was bright, just strange.

I never thought I'd do well in the exams. I used to sit there when they were reading out the results, every class they read them out, used to start from the bottom, waiting for my name, waiting for my name. Get closer and closer to the top, and I'd think, Oh, I can't have done very well, I'll hear my name next, then when I heard it and I was top, that was good, second or third wasn't good, but I never expected it. The other girls used to call me brain box, and big head, so I wasn't about to let on that I knew what was what. I had to be like them.

Like the eagle in that story, growing up with the chickens. Trying like hell to be a chicken. Except I wasn't a chicken, I don't mean I was better than them, I was just not a chicken. Nobody recognized it or saw it, maybe David Cooper, Mr. Strong and Mr. Flagg. No wonder I got strange messages. Good enough, not good enough, too smart for your own good, so sharp you'll cut yourself. That was a good one.

Field notes, October 1999.
To sum up, the main objective of these struggles is not to attack an institution, or
group, or elite, or a class, but, rather, to attack a power effect, a technique, a form of power.
What is revealed, then, by resistance struggles, is not just the stories of struggle, but actually
power itself, working on people—power being applied to produce subjects.

**Struggles Against Three Kinds Of Power**

Generally, it can be said, says Foucault (ever one to talk universals as he says we shouldn’t),
there are three types of struggles: against forms of domination (ethnic, social, and religious);
against forms of exploitation that separate the individuals from what they produce; or,
“against that which ties the individual to himself and submits him to others in this way,
struggles against subjection [assujettissement], against forms of subjectivity and submission”
(p. 331). And this kind of power is:

>a form of power that makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word
‘subject’: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his (sic) own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to.
(2000, p.331)

That’s one of those famous quotes.

I think my school stories and field notes illustrate all three kinds of power at work,
but especially the latter. I see these stories as about power making us who we were/are/will be. My boyfriend a troublemaker, me a not-chicken; the struggles are not just struggles, they show how, and when, power was being applied to us, to make us subjects. In classifying Horncastle boys, not allowing me on the Honours board, in writing me up as a bad girl. “Like we all knew, standing there, in that forlorn store room, William, Jenna and me, that I was/am a bad girl, must be, or they would have put my name on that damned board.” I was being powered... into badness. We were powered into seeing my badness.
Foucault says that this form of power, the subjectifying kind, applies itself to immediate everyday life, categorizes the individual, marks his individuality (sorry about this his's, they come from the original, but I think a whole raft of sics would look even worse, just want you to be aware I am not keen on the him's, but "H" cometh from the text), attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize, and others have to recognize in him. But, and this is important, the mechanisms of subjection cannot be studied outside their relation to the mechanisms of exploitation and domination... they entertain complex and circular relations with other forms.

I take this to mean then, that at school we were indeed, dominated; there's no other way of thinking about my boyfriend's expulsion, it was simply and purely domination. But there was also, too, a mechanism of exploitation in that event. The school's job was to turn out future workers, middle class laborers in the fields of civics, government, the professions; it was expected of the school governors, the head, and the housemistress, that they would churn out subjects to work in the Empire's fields, as overseers, if not field hands. When we acted up, we upset the smooth mechanisms, so we were dominated and subjected. When all went I loved this snippet—what kind of subjects did Bloomfield help produce, and doesn't this work against romanticisation of the resistance struggle?

During the difficult hours between prep and supper, the boys who boarded were left to their own devices and trusted to amuse themselves by reading, painting or whatnot. Bloomfield, a senior master, held views that differed vastly from those of the somewhat progressive head, and he knew from experience that you never left boys to their own devices, whatever the circumstances, that if you did so the boys in question would disperse to private parts of the building to abuse, if not themselves, then certainly one another. Those who could find it within themselves to refrain from entertaining themselves thus could usually be counted upon to amuse themselves by inflicting petty cruelties on younger boys.

J. Wallis Martin, The Long Close Call.
well, when say, we wore our uniforms nicely, or studied hard for our geography exam, or
took the right entrance exams, then we were willingly complying with our subjectification
and all was well... for us and them.

**Power And Romance: Harlequin Stories?**

But don’t all these struggles for identity, these stubborn resistances, seem glorious? It all
sounds quite romantic, doesn’t it? The liberatory pedagogue in me is entranced. Condoms,
refusals to be represented, jumping over the walls at night... The happy positivist isn’t so
easily swayed. Consider these two entries in my field notes.

I had a chat to Jill the receptionist, she gave me Nescafe Instant coffee, to fortify me
for seeing the Head, a very nice man, talked to him for ages.
So intent about the numbers and everything. All about how the school had changed,
when the governors voted to go back to the 11 plus, and they got rid of the boarding
school, needed the room, and how well they are doing now, with 700 pupils, and 300
or 400 apply for the 100 positions they take in each year, and they are going back to
school uniform. Looks like it is very elitist again. I didn’t tell him that’s why Mr.
Strong said he resigned early. And we talked about the school’s reputation, I said it
had been a good school, god, listen to me lying again. They had arranged two sixth
formers to show me around, nice kids. Both doing sciences. They talked about the
school, said the kids are pretty good there now, nobody is really ever in trouble, and
they did seem very well behaved. Everyone wore uniform and was quietly working,
it was quite something, it was like they were pleased to be there. Hum. No rebellion
there. Jenna said she loved the school, she was really happy there, and she was really
worried about having to leave and go on. Wow.

*Field Notes, October 1999*

*Later:* I was thinking about my boyfriend. He said after he got expelled in the Sixth
Form, because of Charneaux, he’d been devastated, he’d never thought it would get
that serious. But later in the summer when we were 18, when he’d got his A level
results, the head called him in to see him. Old pompous Yardley, who hated him,
called him obstreperous plenty of time, now said he should be going to Cambridge
with results like his, and he made a telephone call to his old college, hung up, told
Dave he was in, he just had to sit the entrance exams and show willing. Dave said he
realized then what it could be like if he followed the rules; he had started working
harder to “show them” he was worthwhile, to prove he was really ok. Now he
understood that going to Cambridge, the Holy Grail, where we’d never even dreamed
we would go (well I had dreamed of going there, but maybe he was feeling Jude the
Obscure back then), getting in was his reward for doing it their way, that getting to such a magical place by doing what they wanted, accepting their patronage, was worth making some compromises. He says he never regretted it, joining them, says he still thinks he takes a principled stand now and then. Yeah... Guess he wouldn’t even dream of tossing a condom on anyone’s roof now... I wonder what I would have done? Accepted the place? But no one phoned for me.

*Field Notes, October 1999.*

**Another Kind Of Power**

Foucault gives us the Reformation of early 16th century Europe as an example of the form of power that makes individuals subjects, and the resistance struggle against it, an *assujetissment*. He calls it a great crisis of the Western experience of subjectivity, a revolt against the kind of religious and moral power that gave subjectivities their form during the Middle Ages. The Reformation was a result of subjects’ needs to take a direct part in their spiritual life, and in the work of salvation.

Here I get that sense of irritation felt by historians when they rub up against Foucault—having done the Ref. at school and UCL, I’d debate him on this point—true maybe for happy old Luther, and his cronies, and successors like Calvin, and Cranmer and all them, but the other subjects? Hmmm. Foucault likes to pick an event like the Reformation and use it as a marker, a disjuncture, what he calls a discontinuity, where there seems to be an abrupt switch to new, or newly structured, directions in politics, thought,


Since the 16th century, a new political form of power has been continuously developing. This new political structure, as everyone knows, is the state. But most of the time the state is envisioned as a kind of political power which ignores individuals, looking only at the interests of the totality, or I should say, of a class or group among the citizens. That’s quite true. But I’d like to underline the fact that the state’s power (and that’s one of the reasons for its strength) is both an individualizing and totalizing form of power. Never, I think, in the history of human societies—even in the old Chinese society—has there been such a tricky combination in the same political structures of individualization techniques and of totalization procedures.

Foucault, *The Subject and Power* (2000, p. 332)
or knowledge. This is what irks traditional historians, I think, the “thinking differently” about what have been taken for granted/discursive historical constructions—after all, the Reformation was all about Kings acting up, and merchants wanting political power. Right?

But he claims that since the Reformation, a new, political, form of power has been continuously developing in our society. And it’s one we have met before, it’s Pastoral Power!

**Pastoral Power**

The modern Western state has been integrated into a new political shape, using an old power technique that originated in Christian institutions, claims Foucault. As the nation states of the 16th century began to shape themselves, we can see the growth into political prominence of the individual, and his/her soul. The series of political treatises published at this time are wide in scope; they cover almost everything to be governed, not just how the prince will conserve or gain power, they are concerned not only with the nature of the state, but also with the nature of the humans who made up the state. “From the smallest stirrings of the soul to the largest of military maneuvers of the army.” These treatises expound on how to introduce economy and
order, *government*, from the top of the state down to the bottom cutting through all aspects of social, not just political, life. Society itself becomes a political target. Not to mention those of us in it.

Prior to this discontinuity, Foucault says, pastoral power's ultimate aim was to assure individual salvation in the next world. It differed from royal power in that it was prepared to sacrifice itself for the life and salvation of the flock, for it did not call for a sacrifice to save the throne. It's a form of power that looks after each individual during his/her whole life, not just the community itself, and, most significantly, "this form of power cannot be exercised without knowing the insides of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It implies a knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it" (2000, p. 333).

The old style pastoral power is *salvation oriented* (not political); it is *oblative* (not sovereign); it is *individualizing* (not legal); it is "*coextensive and continuous with life*", "it is linked with a production of truth—*the truth of the individual himself*." Foucault cautions us to distinguish between the ecclesiastical institutionalization of the pre 18th century, and "its function, which has now spread and multiplied" outside of the church. The modern state is a sophisticated structure; it shapes individuals in new forms, and forms "a modern matrix of individualization or a new form of pastoral power" (p. 334).
This new kind of pastoral power is not concerned with the next world but our salvation in this one, through sufficient health, wealth, well-being, and safety. This might be seen as a follow-on to the church’s role in medicine and welfare, a long established tradition. The officials of pastoral power have increased. This includes state apparatuses such as the police, as well as private organizations like charities, and traditional structures like the family. All took on pastoral functions, as did medical institutions, from the late 18th century onward. So it’s no longer only priests who can wield this power—fathers, cops, do-gooders, and doctors all have it, too. Not to mention teachers, counselors and school nurses.

The aims and agents of pastoral power are focused on developing knowledge of both the population, in a globalizing and quantitative way, and in an analytical and individual manner. These are the two forms of bio-power Foucault has talked about before, in the History of Sexuality.

What we see now is a linking of policing and pastoral powers, into an individualizing “tactic” of powers, exercised by the family, psychiatrists, employers and educators. Foucault regards the publication of Kant’s short text, What is Enlightenment, in 1784, as an indicator of the shift away from philosophical inquiry, which was universal, and unhistorical, to one which was aimed at finding out about “both us and our present.” In other words, our philosophical task now, is to take up the problems of the present time, and of what we are right now, here. We are placed and timed. The famous quote:
Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political “double bind,” which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures. The conclusion would be that the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state’s institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and the type of individualization linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality that has been imposed on us for several centuries.


**Pastoral Power In The Tale**

I see pastoral power as being a recursive element in this Tale’s screensaving/soulsaving narratives. It threads its way through stories of examinations—physical, spiritual, emotional and mental. It manifests itself in Miss Snowdon’s malevolent interventions into my menstruating body and Mrs. Charneaux’ machinations and manipulations of language and bodies, as she sought to exorcise teenaged sexuality. Pastoral power rears its heads, hydra like, to peer out of the dossiers my school circulated about me, and in the subjectivities they wrote for me. A troublemaker, defective in my reproductive capacities, a collection of statistics (12 O’s, 3 A’s with 2 A’s and 1 B, and 2 S’s, and one AO), a collection of habits and habiliments. Pastoral power marked my boyfriend and I as a (potentially) fruitful couple, but it also separated us, divided us into one who could learn the correct way, and one who could not, classified us as one who could proceed on the normed/approved lines and one who had fallen outside of the Limes/lines.

None of us questioned the pervasiveness of pastoral power. Not me, not after filing into, and out of, St. James’s Church; sitting under the eye of the all seeing god and his pretty blue angels four Sunday mornings and one Sunday evening service, for eleven months, for six years—I didn’t question god’s power at all. Not after some 45 sermons a year, not after prayers and hymns at the beginning of every school day, not after hearing, and saying, grace.
before and after food three times a day, not after four years of Religious Knowledge and getting a ‘1’ in my RK ‘O’ level—just what else would I be, except completely accepting of a pastoral power that had intimate and privileged knowledge of me, my soul and my body?

So, how come I still resisted? Ahh... good question.

**How Is Power Exercised?**

A Famous Quote Deserves Its Own Box:

> "How" not in the sense of "How does it manifest itself?" but "How is it exercised?" and "What happens when individuals exert (as we say) power over others?"

Foucault, *Subject and Power.*

... but he has to share it with Her...

What’s going on here! How dare you!

Girls, girls!

Miss Snowdon, 1962.

But perhaps it’s not “how come I resisted,” I should ask. Instead, if I want to see power functioning, and thus be able to track it back to its den, I should say, *How does it work?*

Asking ‘how’ doesn’t mean ignoring power, or not wanting to know its cause, or its basic nature, the what’s and why’s. Rather “the flat and empirical little question, ‘What happens?’ is designed not to introduce metaphysics or ontology, but the thematics of power” (Foucault, 2000, p. 337).

But what is power? We throw the word around so loosely and so often, but what is it? What are we looking for, what marks does it leave in the dust, and are its footprints in the snow traceable, still, through the mark of tin trays on a snowy slope in the Lincolnshire Wolds? Where can we see it in London, where are its hand-marks, there on the walls of the men’s toilet at UCL, or in the cozy cocoa parties at Nutford House? What are its shapes? Threefold: Foucault defines three kinds of power, capacitative, communicative and relational.
Three Kinds Of Power

*Capacity:* “that which is exerted over things and modifies, uses, consumes, or destroys them, either from aptitudes directly inherent in the body, or external instruments.” Foucault talks of strapping a smaller person, threatening fists to a partner to force them to comply, or when a smaller person uses a gun to threaten a larger. Using capacitative power could be:

We went into my old school house, saw where the old headmistress’ room used to be, where I was always waiting outside and in trouble. And then the teacher she showed me the head’s office and I took pictures of the tiles on the floor, I remember staring at them, and up at the stained glass windows, when I was waiting for Miss Hardy to come and get me, waiting. I should have considered myself lucky: it was only a few years since they stopped using the strap and the boys still got caned, I heard.

*Field Notes October 1999*

Or it might be:

He told me, years later, “I don’t know how I got punished, cross-country run I think. They made us do a lot of cross-country runs, which I quite liked anyway, so it wasn’t a great punishment to me. I said, *Let’s not do the run, because how would they know if we do it? We can do a short cut, they’ll never know,* and my idea was we would come up the long pathway to the boarding school, and link arms and sing the Marseillaise, I am sure we didn’t know the words, but we could do the rhythm, and the tune, which we did. Which really pissed them off! I think we got consigned to many more cross country runs for that, I don’t think I was particularly popular among the boys, cause all my stunts never worked!”

*Field Notes October 1999*

The communication relationship: this is the communicative kind of power, the one that works through signs, “transformations of the real,” or any other symbolic medium. Or easily deciphered signs like:
THEY DIDN'T PUT ME UP THERE and I won that Lindsay Senior scholarship!! Why would they though, put me up? I told Mr. Strong this morning, all the universities I applied for, all rejected me, sight unseen, because of that report, that character reference they called it then, Charneaux gave me, old cow, that piece of paper doomed me. UCL gave me an interview at least and then turned me down, they thought I was too pert, likely to be a troublemaker like it said I was. I never knew I was bright, just strange.

Field Notes October 1999

The power relation: Foucault’s claim to fame and his real prey, this is the kind of power which “designates relationships between ‘partners,’ where we suppose that certain persons exercise power over us.” It’s an ensemble of actions that induce others, and follow from one another; it might use objective capacities, or communication, and vice versa, because the three do not exist as separate domains, because it’s:

a question of three types of relationships that in fact always overlap one another, support one another reciprocally, and use each mutually as means to an end.... Power relations are exercised, to an exceedingly important extent, through the production and exchange of signs, and they are scarcely separable from goal-directed activities that permit the exercise of a power, (such as training techniques, processes of domination, the means by which obedience is obtained) or that, to enable them to operate, call on relations of power (the division of labor and the hierarchy of tasks. Foucault, 2000, p. 338.

There are always a diversity of places, forms, and occasions in which the three types of relationship—goal-directed activities, systems of communication, and power relations—operate. There are also “blocks” or mechanisms’ in which all three kinds of power are regulated and concerted.

Take, for example, an educational institution: the disposal of its space, the meticulous regulations that govern its internal life, the different activities that are organized there, the diverse persons who live there or meet one another, each with his own function, his well-defined character—all these things constitute a block of capacity-communication-power. Activity to ensure learning and the acquisition of aptitudes or types of behavior works via a whole ensemble of regulated communications (lessons, questions and answers, orders, exhortations, coded signs of obedience, differential markers of the “value” of each person and of the levels of knowledge), and by means of a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy). (2000, p. 338-339)
I've spelt this out because I think it's crucial to understand this for the reading of the Tale. These blocks constitute the disciplines; by reading/studying them, we can see their past and their present, read/see how all three kinds of relation work, at different degrees of saturation, and in different combinations. Reading and writing the Tale should reveal, and does to me at any rate, not simply how individuals like me and Dave, and the new kids at school and college, become more obedient, nor how our society itself has become like a barracks or school or prison, but about how productions, communications and power relations become adjusted to each other for the greatest economy.

In my way of "thinking differently," this means I can read/see what happens when, in my daily everyday life, the blocks worked to produce, most efficiently and economically, and without a trace of morality or badness or evil intention on the part of those wielding this power, who after all, were normal, everyday people just acting in their everyday capacity, just doing their job, to produce my body so it fit in the right places, moved the right way, or was still, at the right time, in the right gender, and in the right kind of work, and made me feel good about it—after all, remember this is a manifestation of pastoral power! Ok, longest sentence in this section! My observing power relations, and not asking "why," but analyzing "how," allows me to separate out power relations, and how they link to capacities and communications. What I have to do, and what I have to say, and what I have to be seen as—i.e. inscribed and represented as...

What Constitutes the Specificity of Power Relations?

Everybody throws around the term "power relations," but rarely define what they mean. I'm as guilty of this as anyone, but I've got it figured out now. Power relations are seen in a
relationship where one partner (not to imply equality or consent by this word) exercises, 
*through their actions*, power over another's actions, not on their body—this is violence, 
which is the primitive form of power. What defines a relationship of power is that it is a 
mode of action that does *not act directly*, or immediately on others. It's not about strapping 
me, or sending me on a cross-country run, or making me go without food. Instead it acts 
upon my actions: *an action upon an action*, on possible, or actual, or future, or present 
actions. "A relationship of violence acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it 
breaks, it destroys, or it closes off all possibilities. Its opposite pole can only be passivity, and 
if it comes up against any resistance it has not other option but to try to break it down" (2000, 
p. 340).

The Other And The Field

A power relationship has two indispensable elements; an *Other* over whom power is 
exercised, who acts because the power you have over them is only visible in their actions, 
and a *field of responses*, reactions, results that may open up, the actions of the other are a 
"field of possibility"—that's the way out, the space to move, to resist or subvert or just be 
bloody minded. Obviously the power relation doesn't exclude violence or consent, although 
both are often present in it, but as results, or instruments only, they are not the power itself. 
The important point is that there *is* a freedom to move, because the kind of power in this 
relationship "operates on the field of possibilities in which the behavior of active subjects is 
able to inscribe itself" (p. 341). This kind of power incites, induces, seduces, makes easier or 
more difficult; it releases or contrives, makes more probable or less; in the extreme, it 
constrains or forbids absolutely, but it is always a way of acting upon one or more acting 
subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action, to paraphrase Foucault.
Foucault uses the word “conduct” to explain his power relation; in the French, the term “conduct” can mean to lead others, and also is a way of behaving within a field of possibilities. So exercising power is a conduct of conducts, a management of possibilities. Power is less a confrontation than a question of government—there’s that pastoral power again. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others, this is governmentality. But it allows us to include an element of freedom. We must be free to act, in several different ways, or to take possible actions, only then can the power relation exist.

It’s a complicated interplay. One of those snappy one-liners sums this up: Freedom may well look like the condition for the exercise of power, indeed they can’t be separated. What lies at the heart of the power relation is the possibility of recalcitrance, and the intransigence of freedom. Foucault suggests we don’t speak of antagonism but agonism, “a relationship that is at the same time mutual incitement and struggle; less of a face-to-face confrontation that paralyses both sides than a permanent provocation” (p. 342).

(I see this as a characteristic of educational relationships, at the highest level, at any rate. Say, where I am now, in a struggle with the university, my committee for my degree, where they act upon my actions, my supervisor suggests a deadline, speaks, and I can say yes or no, or quit, or do what they expect, or not. And me and SamCat are in a power relation—he takes action to act upon me; he meows (with the threat of violence, or peeing on my stuff — communicative and capacitive power there), to require food; I act by giving it to him, he has a relation of power over me, he has led me to give him food.

Act and cat are the same word.
An aside at the computer screen, June 2001.)

How Is One/Me to Analyze the Power Relationship?

I could look for my ‘how’ in my stories of interactions with educational institutions, but this might be difficult. One of the important things an institution does is put in place mechanisms to reproduce it, so I could mis-read reproductive actions for power actions. Kind of like the
regulations that govern how to write a thesis or dissertation and the stages I have to go through to get that magic Dr. after my name. Or, I could be fooled into looking for the origin as the explanation, I would be trying to explain power by power—like when I get mad at the women in Financial Services and Payroll, and ask, not always rhetorically, “Why are you so rude to me!”, thus getting derailed from my original goal, which was to figure out how to get my pay-cheque. Similarly, institutions bring into existence rules and apparatus that I might see as actually being the relations of power, when in fact it’s the law, or juridical coercion. As in when the university cut off my registration, because I hadn’t paid them the extra tuition they levied me, but didn’t tell me about, thus rendering me unable to convocate with my Master’s degree...

While institutions are fundamentally implicit in power relations, I need to look first at power relations, because the anchorage of these relationships is found outside the institution. The institutions of society, and society, manifest power relations but neither are power relations; however, “to live in society is to live in such a way that some can act upon the actions of others” (2000, p. 343. To go to school is to be in a power relation, but school is not the power relation. Needless to say, Foucault has another taxonomy to sort out the whole business of power relation viewing...

“...We Can Look For Five Things”

As usual, a good little grid… let’s shift now to London and see what stories fit these five characteristics of power relations.

The systems of differentiations: these permit one to act upon the actions of another—juridical, status, economic, linguistic, cultural, competence, “every relationship of power puts into operation differences that are, at the same time, its conditions and its results” (p. 344).
That might mean, for example, sorting out students by ranks and grades, at an interview—a handy technique, which we will see, can be quite flexible in the power relation:

Do you remember your interview at UCL?
Very much so, my brother, a senior civil servant, took me out to lunch, and I went to an exhibition of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the BM, just before. Then came the interview, then the highlight of the day, which was shopping at a boutique in Carnaby Street. I remember there were three academics interviewing me, and one of the questions I still remember to this day, was, Who is your favorite historian? So I had to think on the spot and I said, Christopher Hill, which I would probably agree with 33 years later. I think the interview was about 30 minutes, it’s a marked improvement over the present system whereby A level grades predominate. One thing I do remember was that I was required to send a recently marked essay before hand so they could ask me questions on that, and see my writing style. And it had to be the real thing, corrections and all, not a rewritten and rephrased one. It was in January 1966, and I remember I went home on the one from last train, which was the mail train, took all night to get from Waterloo to Dorset, to my amazement, the following morning opening a letter offering me a place at UCL history dept, on two E’s “but from your interview we expect more”. So they’d moved, literally, that quickly. The letter followed me down on the last train of the day. The half ten out of Waterloo.

*Rick’s interview at college, 1960s*

**The types of objectives:** the second characteristic of the power relation, as pursued by those acting upon others; maintaining privilege, piling up money or profits, exercising trade or statutory authority. Up until now, I’ve concentrated on stories told by the ones we think of as being the lesser in the power relation. But let’s not forget those exercising power are also in relations of power with others more equal, or their peers. So the interview was a way of accruing power within the hierarchy, at the department level, and of competing with rival universities/institutions, it was not just a way of assessing or differentiating the students, but also the staff and the college itself—multiple objectives:

We’ve always attached a lot of significance to the interview. I enjoyed it a lot. It’s a very interesting thing, obviously one wants to have the best and the most suitable students, I think we’ve always taken the view that the interview helps us a lot, we don’t leave it to good A level results. You can meet the dullest students who’ve got A’s. If they’re terribly well taught and they keep their noses clean, sometimes they can do it, and some of the brightest students don’t keep their noses clean and don’t like that sort of teaching.
I notice that when we interview students they very frequently say that they’ve never been interviewed anywhere else. King’s, and, well, Oxford and Cambridge still do. But, you know, they say they’ve been to some Open Day at Manchester, or something! Well, that’s alright, but I think the intelligent interviewee realizes it’s a two way process, and that they’re casing the joint and picking up all sorts of messages, like how they’re treated, which, if they are sensible, reveal key things about the dept. You know, if there’s a corridor of people and somebody comes and shouts, Next! That’s very different to people coming in and saying, Miss Chapman, can I take your coat and did you have a good trip from Newcastle?

Now in your day it was terrifying, you were interviewed by three people, it was always Wednesdays, it was always the Admissions tutor, a senior member and the head of dept., and a junior member, chosen to balance the interests of the other two. We never paid any attention to gender on the panels, but we did to fields. You know, if there were two British historians, we’d have a Latin American. So that three people is a bit intimidating. I changed it, to panels of two, sitting still on Wednesdays, the two is rather, I think, important, partly to see justice is done. I mean, they go, and you chat, and you say, what did you think? And very occasionally you can run out of things to say, and it’s helpful to have someone else. But even that can be a bit intimidating. Especially for people, well, you know, from the comprehensive schools in the provinces, where they’re not used to coming up to London and talking to ...

The thing I would go for would be to demonstrate inquisitiveness, you’ve also got to make allowances for being nervous and so on, but you don’t try and catch people out in terms of knowledge. When I was admissions tutor, I had to blackball someone, my distinguished colleague, because he was so sarcastic. “You mean to tell me that you don’t know whether Baden Guttenborg was Catholic or Protestant in 1557??” And you know, really embarrassing people. “Do you mean to tell me you don’t know!” I remember that one, I couldn’t remember the geography of the Counter Reformation!

Interviewee, staff member.

**Instrumental modes:** the third characteristic, where we see whether power is exercised by the threat of arms, by the effects of speech, through economic disparities, by more or less complex forms of control, surveillance, archival, rules explicit or implicit, and with or without means of enforcement, materially. Now one of my favorite stories, the way power relations worked for those above us: while we were having tea and steak and kidney pie over
at the Refectory, violent resistance struggles were occurring not a few feet away, in the rarified atmosphere of the staff meetings over tea and coffee:

There were several of us, young members, younger than of course our equivalents have been since then. I don’t know to what extent we would have been thought of as being young Turks, but we were sort of youthful, irreverent, each of us quite good in our different ways, this group of young people who set the tone, to be set against the, not exactly stuffy, but the slightly traditional professorate.

The head was terribly good at making speeches, absolutely incredibly witty, brilliant after dinner speaker. Especially for someone who never drank. The trouble was that, of course, he used to make after dinner speeches at committee meetings in the morning, and it was a bit tiresome, but he was quite brilliant and funny. And in those days, the staff used to have coffee in the mornings, we used to go over to the South Cloisters at 11, and the head used to hold court and on the way to and from, you raised little bits of problems with colleagues. That was how it all worked you mentioned things at coffee in an aside, not formally, on paper etc.

Departmental meetings were a hoot, of course, we now have a student representative and we have to behave ourselves. But in the old days, they used to be very funny, bitchy and amusing witty occasions. They used to begin at four, with tea, there was fifteen minutes when we had tea. And our secretary’s mother used to make the cakes, and the secretary would pour out the tea, used to love it, because in those fifteen minutes people were dealing with little bits of business, squaring each other before the meeting, key little bits of gossip-come-business, as she was giving out her mother’s cakes. One of my closest friends, who died in the 80s, gay, very naughty, good fun, I miss him such a lot, used to pick up the plate and say, Would you like one of Mummy’s fairy cakes?

_Interviewee, staff member_

**Forms of institutionalization:** here is another key feature of how the power relation works. They may be mixed in with traditional, legal, habitual, fashionable, or hierarchical structures, in autonomous institutions like schools or military colleges, or within very complex, multiple apparatuses, such as the state “which is the distributor of all power relations in a given social ensemble” (p. 344). I see the examination, as ordered by the overall institution the University Senate of the University of London, and administered by the individual colleges, as being a
form of institutionalized power relation. The exam was legal, it was traditional, and very hierarchical—upon it depended lives, careers and livelihoods. Two accounts of the famous finals...

Val: I remember Finals and people talking about how stressful they were, stories circulated about how people killed themselves at finals, do you remember that?

Rick: All I can remember was that we took them on the upper floors of quite recently constructed examination halls in Upper Taviton Square. Archetypal sixties, glass almost down to the wall, I can remember it being a very, very hot summer and coming in, to carry my pens I had a jacket on, so the jacket came off, and then I ended up more or less with my shirt unbuttoned to the waist. It was that hot. Ten papers, that was right, four outline papers, where you had a two thirds choice, Mediaeval, Early Modern, Moderns—there were four of those, two British, two European. There was a fifth paper on political thought, which was taught entirely by lecture, without classes, there was the optional paper, my economic history. Two papers, I think one of them on sources, the special, and the language paper.

Val: I remember Finals as being horrendous, and they stretched through two weeks

Rick: Yes, they did, they were three hours each. Each paper.

Val: And on a dreadful day you had two.

Rick: That did happen yes. And they were all, except for the gobbets, the source paper, the other 8, were entirely in the same format as the A level. Four essays unseen to be done in three hours.

Val: I remember you couldn’t smoke in the exam hall, but you could smoke outside, so you had to weigh up whether it was worth it, desperate enough for a fag, going outside to smoke, but wasting five minutes of writing time!

Letty: I remember the exams at the end and that was a nightmare. Well, the trouble with it was, we had twenty-seven hours of exams in two weeks at the end of three years. There was no continuous assessment, there was no written assessment, like course work, no dissertations or anything, it was all exams. And there was nine three-hour papers. In two weeks, which was one hell of a lot. And so you really had to cram. The exams were all taken in halls outside of the campus. Coney Hall and the Friends Meeting House and places like this, and that was pretty awful. That was traumatic, but I was used to taking exams, so I managed to survive.
**The degrees of rationalization:** for the power relation and its exercise. These can be more, or less elaborate, more or less technological, about expense or not, and at what cost is there resistance; “exercising power is not a naked fact, a given institutionally, nor structurally, it is elaborated, transformed, organized and endows itself with processes that are adjusted to the situation” (p. 345). Thus, a change of regime and a change of the way power relation were to be exercised felled the ostensibly collegial and convivial jostling for place:

Later on we got little messages from the Xerox machine, circulars were sent round to everybody. And of course it must be years since one had coffee, I don’t know when that stopped. That was a real change, the pressure of business, and more and more things, and we stopped doing it and we stopped having any sort of identity. When we had a new head the tea was abolished before departmental meetings, they said, very properly, “Secretaries are not here to make tea.” But she missed it, so. And eventually departmental meetings were rescheduled for two, so tea has gone... and of course, our chair now is brisk and not interested in wit or bitchiness or anything, just brisk. It must have been something like 12 years ago that departmental teas were abolished. That was a very sad thing, if I did our history over the last twenty years, I will certainly do teas and emails, and so on, and why we stopped having coffee, and why we stopped having tea, and why we stopped having sherry.

*Interviewee, staff member.*

Each power relation is rooted in social networks, but they may be distinguishable by how they are institutionalized, differentiated, rationalized and objectified. Thus we can see that the state, or the educational institution, is not power, and while it does exist in power relations with its subjects, power is not drawn from it. We can say however that power relations have become “governmentalized, elaborated, rationalized, and centralized in the form of, or under the auspices, of [state] institutions” (p. 345).

**Relations of Power and Relations of Strategy**

Strategies come together in situations of confrontation, in war or games. Every power relation implies a strategy of struggle. A linking, a reciprocity, a link and a reversal, which can advance either the power relation or keep us in a stalemate. So sometimes resistance, that
working in a field of possibilities, can stalemate a power effect. Sometimes power doesn’t work.

So what was it all about for me? Passing the time? Dashing off an essay, doodling, revising dates? Suddenly, catching fire! Henry 4, or Othello, seeing things in Wordsworth or Keats. I was like lightning sparking from one bit to another bit and I could make the connection. Like it all joined up, like one of those puzzles, the dots connected. But I never had anybody to tell it to, to say, look, look! The dots connect! I remember getting a comment back from Cooper that everything I wrote was multi layered, multi leveled. “Dense and intense. And very good.” The only real compliment I got. See, I still remember it.

Education failed me, it didn’t give me an identity, that’s the trouble, I didn’t get one! I didn’t get the right identity, I didn’t get constructed properly. Education failed me and my body. I/It was ill-made/it failed me. I resisted, I knew I wasn’t the norm, I couldn’t be the norm. Examinations failed me, I never failed them. And my Sixth form was all about sex. If the mind didn’t work the body did. Another kind of power relation? Sigh. What could I have been? What should I have been? Well, it’s a riddle. I’m not going to solve it tonight. Time for bed.

Field notes, October 1999.
Shape Changing

Imagination bodies forth the forms of things Unknowne.
Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, v. i. 140.

Training/schooling/educating legs and illial tribals and pelvis; this marathon body is changing shape. Body regards its mirrored incarnations, 21, 31, 11, 31, not this space, all that time; little changes no changes still the same, acres of alteration.

Changing shape: metaphoric performance, shifting persons and bodies. Limning the boundaries, a metonymic body of shapefulness, style/d for every day and every occasion.

The theme of the Tale shifts to/from schooling into changing shape, is always performing, is always liminal, is always already no-shape, finding shape from spaces of containment-closing-embracing-opening. Change shape shift scenery.

Each of the Book’s 12 bodies is a heterotopia unto itself. 12 hours, 12 months, 12 spaces, time and space overlaid, shifting changing shapes. No firm shapes, just any shape that the space needs it to be. Heterochronies of staged space-times.

Spaces in/of education as crisis heterotopias. Foucault sees gardens/carpets heterotopic splendors, I see pastorals flowery landscapes liminal longing love’s labors lost sea changes gillyvors.

He says heterotopic cemeteries. I say empires of the dead of the year, death of time, death of a year, and the crisis of adolescence shifts cemetery from dead to animate, sex interpellates a new heterotopic fertility. Statues come alive. Angels, voyeurs all, survey live-overlaid-over-bodied tombstones cold/hard beds of lust.

Bathrooms are not heterotopias but can become them, when other elements are added in. Abjection, rejection, absorption, regurgitation. Spaces overlaid by other spaces, when time/need shapes them. Gateways and openings and doorways out of heterotopic panopticons. Bodies gaping and shaping.

Disciplined space, Coltishall and cabbage stalks.
Free space, Louth and tobogganing.
Sexual spaces, London and hearts of darkness.
Gendered spaces, Vancouver and “the real meetings.”
Classed and imperial/empirical spaces, the school, teaching for empire, striving for the John Smith effect.
Middle class manners.
Not rules of empire, rules of a middle class empire

Spaces of resistance, who needs to resist, if you can space out?
Steak and Kidney Pie, Learning “College”

Lower class meets middle class in the refectory, steak and kidney pies, shepherd’s pies, chips, brown gravy and peas; spotted dick and apple pies. Institutional staple food. The Cloisters and the Refectory, tea and coffee, endless afternoon discussions, sex, history, the department, sex, parties, the meaning of life, philosophy, sex, drinking, and food.

Heavy china mugs, thick plates, dirty forks, lining up to get food doled out by ladies in nets, sitting in long tables, rows of little Tudors and Stuarts, sitting for ever, smoke everywhere, endless cups of tea. Embassy cigs, Benson’s if rich that week, smelly ashtrays, butts stubbed out in the steak and kidney piecrust.

You’ve come a long way from Louth, the Officer’s Mess, silver cutlery, butlers and batmen and oysters and champagne... Which is best? This, for it’s now.

Waiting for my lover to come from King’s. Important. A first year girl with a graduate student, squinting through his ciggie smoke, making sarcastic and ironic quips, staring at me, staring at Chris, the weedy religious boy who always talks about sex, eyeing up Letty around the chest, she eats her chips with gusto, he looks sneaky, longingly. Phil and Adrian, friends, not like that, dead straight but really close, always Phil and Adrian in one breath, Phil an Egyptologist, downing his tea in hearty ginger-haired gulps. Adrian squeaky voice and weedy and spotty, but kind, smoking very awkwardly, fingers in all the wrong places and his cup held wrongly, too, as it if were his first fag ever, always as if it were his first cup of tea. Ryan, a black Irish boy from South London, and Victor the skinhead, sometimes. Claire, and sometimes Anne, always me and often Letty, now and then others, never the good girls or boys, they didn’t drink tea, inhaled only lecture notes not nicotine, sat in the History Library until it was time to go to suburban homes and kosher food.
We. We bad ones. Half from public schools, the rest from good rural grammar schools, only Ryan and Victor from rather “not quite” grammar schools in scruffy London. No class of course, but we all knew…

Sitting for hours in the Cloisters, moving in the late afternoon to the Student Union Bar to get crisps and pints, over to the Roebuck for more pints and more crisps, where the jukebox always played to sentimental drunk students, history and chemistry and engineering, never social scientists, no linguists, all singing along by closing time, still singing, finding our way out to the last buses and tubes, happy in a Worthington’s and Golden Wonder way…

My first two years at UCL. In my third year it fell apart, but for a while I was bright and clever and didn’t try hard and smoked like a chimney and ate steak and kidney pies and actually rather enjoyed myself.

We never did any history, an odd lecture, our tutorials, once a week essay classes, optional subjects and specials, and yet we talked history, argued about it, speculating on departmental romances, unfair marks on our essays, why didn’t Hurstfield teach us, could we get into AJP Taylor’s seminar, what’s showing in the Slade cinema this week?

I wonder why I always had steak and kidney pie?

| Val: We learned, I mean, we talked! That’s what I remember, is talking all the time, we would go for tea over to the Refectory, and we used to talk, we talked about everything under the sun! I learned so much there. I mean I may not have gone to the lectures but I learned huge amounts. |
| Letty: Yes, just through talking to people, that’s absolutely right, I really expanded my mind, it was, the people, the environment and being in London I think as much as anything. |
Schooling the Face

Learning the look at twelve is
hard to do
bite back the tears.
School the face.
A small smile is acceptable but not

Pain or dumb insolence
take that look off your face and
learn the way to be seen.

Never look hurt, angry, bored, tired, or clever.
It just isn’t done and absolutely not in front of the servants
nor in front of the wogs,
and don’t show fear, they can smell it on you
like dogs.

This is called Schooling the Face.

When I was 16 my English teacher told me he hated my
deadpan face
because he couldn’t see my feelings
and I was so proud.
A Postcard From The Palm House At Kew

The Empire flourishes
We stroll and saunter arm in arm warm
in our knowledge of the globe
as exhibited
"in the most important surviving nineteenth century glass and iron structure in the world."

Blooms and booty.

And in the long grass an
African god
peers at the passing plump
ones
licking his chops

Soon.
Things I Liked About School 2

One Saturday we woke up and it had snowed and They let us

Take tin tea trays from the dining room up
to the little hill above the rifle butts by the Hills
And we slid around wildly down and giggled
and trudged panting up
    and shrieked
down
wet feet tripping and
fell in rabbit holes
and steered into
thorn trees and
Laughed and threw snow balls hard even though
townspeople and day-girls were there
We were not little ladies and
They let us stay until we wore the snow out and
we were tired and cold and
it was the best afternoon we ever had and They
even gave us hot cocoa when we got back to Masson.

It never happened again.
There Is A Pastoral Theme...

...to much of what I write, read and see in the Ody's Tale. I am sure it derives from a
c真情的language, an adolescence spent in a small rural town, where taking a walk

We used to do a lot of walking. My boyfriend
said we did it everywhere, we would say, “We’re
going for a walk!” Well, what we called,
euphemistically, “walks” because they were
always preludes... Westgate Fields, Hubbard’s
Hills. He told me Westgate Fields had been
tarted up, and macadam paths paved over (our)
grass and flowers. When I went back, yes,
Scottie dogs and shambly Labs and women in
tweed strolled sedately, litterbins watching
suspiciously and yet...
The trees remained along the periphery, silent
marshals, shadowy chaperones...witnesses still
to wintery passions?

resonates, too, with the Winter’s Tale,
one of Shakespeare’s pastorals read,
and written, dryly, aridly, in a dusty
schoolroom and yet... a window
looked down to the river and the trees
and the flowers, and there was still
some wildness left in the world.

The Hours and the months and the days rolled over us. Daffodils and Easter, roses
and Wimbledon, honeysuckle hot and sweet waits for the summer’s exam results, and holly
and ivy and presents and shopping and snowdrops in the endless Lent term, and then Pancake
day and ... Not so now, in the cities of my teacherly world.

I want to give you a map, have you see the flowers, smell them, taste them... I see
you, my audience, as a group of dusty “valid academics,” worn out from trekking through the
wilderness of ‘post this’ and ‘post that’, and I hope, still, you’ll take your ease, guiltily, enjoy
the humor, the banter—even if you are waiting to hear if it’s all true—sunny afternoons,
honey bees, Rupert Graves and crumpets, clocks stuck at three... as you wind through the
long grasses, turning brown now, as the sun sinks, as the brambles drop black gifts at your
feet...
Someone said to Chagall his pictures were not true or realistic (valid?) asking, “How could the Street Vendor have a green face?” and he replied, “I had the impression that the old man was green, perhaps a shadow from my heart fell on him” He said, in his 90s, “I am a child getting on... If I create with my heart, almost all of my original purpose remains. If it is with my head, hardly anything is left. One should not be afraid of being oneself; of expressing only oneself. If you are absolutely sincere, whatever you do or say will please others. One must always be careful not to let one’s work be covered with moss”

I am also a child getting on, and shadows fall here, too, midnight blue, in these gardens of mine. Stooping now over a vivacious herbaceous border, I could say, “Well! What flower is this, this one called “my subjectivity”? Shouldn’t it be over here in the proper academic garden? It’s all head and no heart!” No. With Chagall, I am one. My subjectivity is written with heart.

I hope we meet on the last path, you coming one way, me another; we will greet each other politely, as we do in the English countryside, and then I will stand aside, and I will watch you walk away, flowers limp in your blackberry stained hands, striving for dignity, a postcard shoved in your top pocket. You’ve become, like Autolycus, a “snapper up of unconsidered trifles,” and like Perdita and Florizel, perhaps you found someone:

“To make you garlands of, and my sweet friend, To strew him o’er and o’er!”
“What, like a corse?”
“No, like a bank for love to lie and play on; Not like a corse; or if, not to be buried, But quick and in mine arms. Come, take your flowers.”

And like Perdita, I may call after you...

*Methinks I play as I have seen them do, In Whitsun pastorals...*
The Bathroom on New Year’s Day 2001

I couldn’t write.

When I was ready to leave for my run I went into the bathroom and used the toilet and then flushed...

It ran over the top and it was awful.

What a metaphor for the New Year.

I went running anyway and came home and got a woman in the building to help me, she came with a plunger and cleaned out the blockage and it ran free...

Where is my dissertation stuck?

It’s all shit, really.

Isn’t it?
Went to Oxford to interview my old tutor, got all dressed up, skirt and jacket and blouse and heels, cold, absolutely freezing, even though several layers, didn’t help. See, cold again. I needed something that looked good too, remembering Oliver’s comment about my yellow Vancouver jacket masquerading as British construction site apparel. When the coach got in, went into store, Alder’s, looked at coats, saw a lovely black one, too much money, had a cup of tea, thought a bit, went back and put it on my card... 192 pounds, lied about price to all and sundry, but lovely coat, and so warm. Warm.

Needed, and wanted, to look the same, do I mean, look good? How could I look the same after all this time? Wanting too, though...

Got there early, a nice secretary, he was late, so went to Ashmolean and bought some postcards, came back as he came in, said he had to make two calls, shook hands and HE looked just the same, how at 62? Still doesn’t remember me from... “No, not a clue,” with a lovely warm smile, “But it is nice to see you!” he said. I knew him immediately, even though I had forgotten him absolutely.

Short, 5’ 6” maybe, dark hair greying. Stands very close. I remember that, it was a body engagement with him, usually. Very good shape for his age, told me later he doesn’t exercise, dark jacket, dark cord pants, waistcoat and tie, very donnish looking, nice. He looks just the same. Same as when I used to go up the stairs at the beginning of each term to report in to him—reminded him I was a probationary problem student, and he thought me boring, as I never was a problem, “Ahh,” I said, “but you see, I never told you my problems,” smiling,
remembering his old colleague telling me I looked like his first wife, maybe that’s why he blanked on me.

Tea over the road at the Randolph, charming old hotel, he gets a table and service is no problem, masterful, donnish. I feel girlish. I note the teas are 9 pounds each. Hope he pays. Me on chintz chesterfield, lower down, and him on chair—note careful positioning, me at his metaphorical feet, and thank god, it’s warm, nice fire. Lovely. Lovely, I write, and mean it, and felt it. Lovely. Wish I had had this experience back then, oh dear, longing for Oxbridge still. Why not?

He talks a lot, hard to get a word in—funny, my fear was that none of them would talk, but the profs are rattling away, the students not so, they’re clams. Me Assam tea, he regular. I had a nice wholemeal scone, and cream and jam and then a fairy cake in honour of the secretary’s mother, felt awkward as he had only one half of a scone, he is abstemious, I feel. Says he has big dinner with Fellows afterwards.

He’s Director of his centre, and its fundraiser, says to get, and keep, it going, is hard work. He told me all about his career. He claims he is working class, mother says he refused to go Oxbridge, wanted only London, read there was great teaching there. Doesn’t think UCL second rate, first rate when he was a student, but agreed with me though, that it was not “engaging, or charming, or collegial,” he comments, “like here.”

Some men, he says, never ever leave Oxbridge, it becomes their life, their one golden moment, and for evermore it’s old boys and reunions, nothing else is ever good enough when held up to the bright and shining years punting, drinking, being “men up at Oriel.” It’s still like that, he says, still not good working class stock here. Reminded him of his famous line, when he became admissions tutor, “We will only admit working class girls from Comprehensives!” He
laughed and said he tried to make it work. Recall Oliver telling me, “He says he’s a real working class lad, but he wanted to make good, he pretended to be so laid back, yet he was really an academic, very brilliant.” Class such a thing here. Of course, Oliver was also telling his own story, except he’s never been brilliant—I think my tutor genuinely did care about combating class and privilege, just he was brilliant enough to get away with it.

Can’t remember me, still, he says. Finds out I am not in his field, oh well, rather dismissively, “Then I didn’t teach you,” so doesn’t recall me, but remembers Letty. And Oliver. At an alumni dinner, Oliver, trying to impress him, succeeded, he thinks Oliver has done well. Not a good judge of character then? Me, eating my scone, drinking my tea, wanting to impress, told him about the lecture in his field I went to at the Institute, said the woman was good, cold, but bright, turns out she’s a friend of his. Oops.

Says he hated UCL, dark and depressing he calls it. Says he was really depressed for years. Could be, he says (revealing all sorts of things), because of personal life, lives in a monastery now, he says, after two wives, really a monastery. Oh my, why is he telling me about being single, does he fancy me, no, but how one can tell these things, and he does this with women, that’s the effect he has, I remember, and others commented on it, he chats up women, unconsciously or not. We thought it really exciting. He never fancied me at college and not now, either, I think. Plus ca change, etc. For both of us.

Asked about me, but I felt he was just waiting for me to finish. He talked a lot, and he signed the consent form, but I didn’t get out the tape, too intrusive, did not fit with sofa flowers and scones and nice cozy feel of it all, and thus, of course, best interview I had. I wish I could tell all he told me, but my ethics’ll get in the way... no warmth he said, several times, for UCL or for colleagues or any of its institutions. I agreed. Cold unhappy place, we both said. Yes, it
was cold and depressing, no warmth there, for either of us, we said again, and I say, "But no one else sees it that way." I tell him he confirmed my experience for me. "Glad to," he says, "a horrible dark place."

Said he was a great scholar, swotted, got a First, best in university, had digs in North London, and he did well, published first book on his PhD, articles, began to teach, ended up with 25 years there. Says he is a workaholic. Like I wasn’t. I asked why he stayed so long if he hated it so. Resigned because change of policy, a great department etc, all of that, but he would have had to teach undergrads, and he quit. Went to the States for a while, to very well known institution as befits a man who published the best encyclopedia in his field. A star.

Told him about people seeing me floating above it all, air of disdain, relayed by several interviewees, says he is similar, loner, outsider, didn’t fit. I ask, because he is working class? He says, not really. Says he came up to UCL a virgin. (Why did he tell me that? Mind you, all the others did too, funny, what is it about that time, the 60s, that induces this confessional mode? Holdover from the compulsory heterosexuality of the day, recall Nell and I talking about how we had to do sex all the time, even if we didn’t want to, because discourse was to be free and easy, and it proved us women’s libbers in a reversal of what we actually wanted, well, was old Foucault ever right, and even Butler, there we all were, making like rabbits, and most of us women didn’t want to, yet it was incitement to screw around, a discourse of easiness, all fit for men’s pleasure, women’s displeasure... same old, patriarchy flourishes, now as then, yes, and see my body’s reaction to a charming man/teacher who stands close to me and buys me a cup of tea, learned responses from that era?) I ask if we are the only ones to see it, grasp that the happy UCL experience is a fake, a suit of emperor’s clothes we see through, we do not accept the
story, but he replies, It’s us, not the institution, the others are all happy and positive, we are not, therefore something wrong with us. I don’t agree.

Reckon we saw through it. Because we were outsiders and critical, and, perhaps, because we were both brilliant? Well, he was, not me, so much, but he swotted, I didn’t…

He had to get back to his work; lovely man, not sure why he told me the things he did, or even why he made time to see me… and it made me feel much vindicated and really good, and he even gave me a nice goodbye kiss and hug. Lovely man. Imagine, we were both so unhappy there…

Postscript: Ironically, the only other really dazzling scholar at UCL, my old Professor, confirmed my feelings too. UCL was, indeed, a disappointing fake, a copy of Oxbridge with its seams showing and “Made in Taiwan” on the back. Never lived up to its script. We had tea, too, at the Institute… just before I left, early November 1999.

The professors taught me more than the students, it seems, about the Empire…
getting it right at QUIG

I did a presentation to qualitative researchers
I asked: Who has to do the analysis
shouldn't reader and writer construct it together
can't I just tell the stories and the poems
and let the listeners find the meaning because
after all, the selection of the story to tell
is analysis in itself?
and a woman shouted out

If You Want Tenure, Do The Analysis!
Once upon a time, in a land very far away, and in a
time not so very distant, it was late afternoon. A weak
Autumn sun blinks and weeps over a moorland
wilderness; cloud-shadowed and chased by winds and
scurries of leaves, two travelers cross the wasteland.
Both intent on their paths they rarely glance up, for the
day is fading, they must stumble on, tripping over rocks and tufts of dying grass, hoping for
shelter. Fearful of a twisted ankle, or some other greater ill, neither notices the other drawing
closer. The Woman, sensing a presence, looks up.

She is a Sharp Woman, and where once all in and of her was round and bright and
soft and glowing, she now throws a harsher shadow ... angles and edges and planes, and if
there is still a brilliance, it is diamond hard. The Lost Man does not see her; fixed on his path,
he is stolid and determined, trudging onward... he emanates an aura of sadness. The Man
was once rock-steady, certain, now... he is on a journey he no longer understands and he lost
his sureness and his center.

The Sharp Woman calls out, “Where are you going? Can you help me?” The Lost
Man startled, sees her and answers, “I doubt it, but can you help me? Where am I, my map
has blown away and I am lost.”

They pause and rest, he on a boulder, she on a tussock. Both talk, of journeys, and
fears and the woman, who senses the man’s old certainty, asks him to tell his story, that she
might learn something of value from it for her journey. He tells her he is Wounded and Vulnerable, but she is too sharp to be taken in by that. All her life, men have wounded her, she thinks, but despite herself, the Sharp Woman is drawn into the man’s story. The Man tells her being wounded is an opening for the heart and the soul and the mind, but she hears his uncertainty. “Not for me,” she snaps. She has many questions, still, but her own journey is more important than this traveler’s tale.

She is Sharp, and has been given the curse of insight, tells the man he needs a better map, and offers him one she has used before in the wilderness, and one other. “An old woman gave me this; if ever I needed to transform my life, she said, I should bathe in cold water and follow this chart. The first will work for you as a bridge out of here—when you are ready to leave this desolate place. I don’t know about the second, I’ve never tried it.”

They stand, looking at each other, assessing. The Woman thinks, this Man might be of use on my journey… But I cannot linger here, I have to be on my way! And the Man, reeling from the Sharp Woman’s stinging speech, grasps the first map she has given him, and sets off. And there, faintly, in the far distance, he sees light falling on sheltering walls, hurries toward it.

The Woman sets off, her map, one she has carried for a long, long time, shows a long path across the swamps and moors, a path that twists around and through the “Bogs of Desolation and Desperation”, and she can faintly make out its name “TEARS AND FEARS AND MOONBEAMS” passage…

But where is the moon she thinks? Here, there is no moon…
Dear Grandma,

I hope you are well, and not feeling too bad in this cold weather, well, I don’t know if it is cold in Canada but I should think it is!!

Thank you very much for the lovely pants which you gave me for Xmas. They really are gorgeous!! I wore one pair of them on Xmas. day, (The bright pink one’s.) We had a lovely Xmas. Our turkey was very nice, we had a shrimp cocktail, and [p.2 begins] I made the sauce. It was lovely until I really tasted the sauce!! It was so hot!

I had a lot of lovely gifts, a slip, 2 pairs pyjamas, nightdress, a dress, a pair of slacks and some smelly stuff by Max Factor. They were all lovely.

I came back to school on the 7th of January. Apparently, the house mistress didn’t expect me to get back as Wiltshire was very hard hit by the snow. We had two blizzards. One was very bad. For England, at least. Many outlying villages were cut off. We were not able to get into Salisbury until January the 5th.

We are going to have exams in a few weeks time. I don’t know [p. 3 begins] how well I am going to do in them. I am hopeless at Maths so I don’t expect a good mark in that. Or Spanish. Spanish is not terribly interesting. Our teacher is Miss James. I don’t like her much.

It snowed again this afternoon. We went out yesterday afternoon but I shouldn’t think we will be allowed to this afternoon. Our matron is horrible, she has favourites and is so strict. I would leave if I dared. Anyway, she doesn’t agree with such things as us enjoying ourselves. One term she was so horrible to me I nearly Daddy was going to write to Miss Jones if she continued in the same manner. She didn’t however.

Well, I must close now as I have to write to Mummy and Daddy. I hope to hear from you.

Love From
Valerie (C.)
XXX
My grandmother sent the letter on to Joyce, my mother’s sister, in Alberta, and said:

This is Valerie’s letter to me from England. She writes so comical I can’t understand half of it. She is a good girl though Joyce and pretty to a Blond

When my mother died, I found the letter in her things; Joyce must have either given it to her, or she took it when they (her and Kath, her older sister) were looking after Joyce as she died of cancer, in 1992.

I have copied it verbatim, spelling mistakes and all.

It makes me laugh to read it, and sad too. I was so unhappy there, and yet the day I refer to is the one where we were allowed to take trays out to the Butts slopes, above Westgate Fields and slide down the hill on them; it was such a good afternoon. The chain of events whereby I recovered the letter are interesting—to me—and also makes me sad, so much death in the last few years. And heart break.

Mostly sad, sad that my mother, who never seemed very fond of me, kept the letter and treasured it.
Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy
the good of all her labour that she taketh under the sun all the days of her life, which God
giveth her: for it is her portion.
Ecclesiastes 5:18, King James Version

Just been reading Food by Deborah Lupton. Interesting. Lots of links.
Food is how we site ourselves, socially.
Example: when interviewing we talked about food, eating, socializing.
Food is disciplining: manners, school, becoming civilized, taste, and preferences
Food is colonizing—learning to eat the right things, ingesting the right foods,
Singapore, Mr. Lim’s fried rice, roast beef 100% humidity, mangoes not potatoes.
Food is liminal, links to liminal spaces, food goes in, becomes one, links the world
to the internal, and links nature to culture.
Food as a means of working on body projects: School, dieting at, Miss Snowden’s
reducing one’s; men, me/men, me/control, discipline the appetite; family fear of fat.
Food is part of bathrooms, it leads to elimination.
Food is gendered, classed and sexualized.
Food is integral to becoming the teacher, an apple for teacher, cookies for school,
food in class, sanctioned by the adult ed tradition is sneakily imposing
authority.
Food is love—always my mother holds, withholds, and me refusing it, and
relationship, and tradition, by not cooking for men, or myself when upset.
Food is classed, never shared food with staff at UCL, no food provided officially at
Hornsey, nor allowed to be eaten there.
Drink as food, sherry tea symbolic, its offering and refusing, coffee not so much.
Food is communal/collective life giving—at school, university, shared in
relationship.
Food is a demonstration of who we are, how we are educated, tea at the Randolph...
Food at all my interviews, eat and talk and tape, Oliver, Mr. Strong, Woodhouse’s
biscuits, Mayne’s fruit, Letty’s squid, Nan’s veggie curry, Rick’s bikkies, Nell
and I in the Pink Room at UEL and tunafish sarnies, Dave’s scone, the nice
secretary at the Refectory, no food with the Witch—she a poisoned apple
Food is spaced: kitchens, refectories, dining halls, studies, bathrooms, hallways
and eating areas...

Oh! what a feast of food and theory!
February

February is the coldest month of the year. In this meticulously rendered scene, the light feels bone numbingly cold, falling on the snow covered village. Even the animals are sheltered, unlike the freezing birds, who peck disconsolately in the snow. A peasant huddled in a blanket scurries for cover, while the lady of the house, on the left, warms her legs decorously at her fire, resplendent in a blue gown with a cat at her feet. If you look just beyond her, two peasants are not so careful, opening all their bodies up to the fire’s heat. In my Book, I go to the dentist, don’t get a Valentine, get cleaned, enjoy school, and learn all about sex at college while I take the Tube... and I’m still feeling cold... so I drink some tea to warm up.

PEEKING ROUND THE DENTIST’S DOOR

Body Hits IV
Postcards From Dangerous Locations/Safe Places 2
Sex At All Costs!
What Does It Mean, to Work With a Soft Heart?
A Postcard From (A Memory Of) The Tube... Body Smells
A Bathroom Story: The Kitchen Sink
Tea in London 3: Fortnum and Mason’s, A Participant Observation
Things I Liked About School 3
Have you ever noticed that when you go to the dentist there’s always an open door, showing the chair and a partial view of the instruments, an invitation, but still room for flight? I wonder if they train them to do that at dentist’s school? Is it part of fear management courses?

I was a tender five or six years old when I first saw the chair, and what was to be the torture chamber was then only the exotic landscape beyond infancy, where grown-ups went and said, “Now I’ll be back, just wait here and read your Ladybird book,” and then you sat there and the smell was … like nothing else you’d ever smelled and then the buzzing sound, different kinds of buzzing, and then a smell like when the dog got too close to the fire and the cinders flew out and singed her back and she still didn’t want to move over to the freezingest side of the room, that smell like sizzling and then a noise of chucking up, like when Daddy had been out a long time and came home and had to go into the toilet and get rid of the bad food he said he had eaten, and then long, long minutes went by and you had read your Ladybird book, and then it was still more waiting, and then someone else came in and they looked awful, a lady with a hanky and twisting it around and around and nearly looking like she was crying but grown-ups don’t cry, so it must have been raindrops on her from being outside. Then finally the door would open and out would walk Mummy, and she would be laughing and then we would see the lady in the office, and leave.

The Drs. Payne, two dentists. A lady dentist, very smart and forward for the time and Dr. Payne, the real dentist, the man, of course. My mummy wouldn’t see the lady dentist, she said she wasn’t strong enough to pull out teeth and ladies shouldn’t do that. I thought it was all very interesting, and then one day it was my turn to walk through the door.
The smell, the brown leather chair and the little basin and the thing in the corner, like the praying mantis my cousin Cheryl had, what was that? I was allowed to see the lady dentist. She was good with children. They said. Then I found out what Payne meant. Pain, terror, the pick things like we took brazil nuts out of their shells with at Christmas, now being used to dig and gouge in my mouth, and I can’t breathe and I am going to die I can’t breathe at all and my mummy says, “Don’t embarrass me now, you be brave, everyone has to do this,” and I don’t want my mummy to be embarrassed by me, I know what she will do to me when we get home to Grandma’s if I do that, it will be the switch and no tea and bed, so I learn, for the first time, how you can be presented with overwhelming pain, only two choices, both offering pain, one now, the other later and I know, I form the sense of it in my mind, this isn’t fair, but it is how it is. I must be hurt.

Then the praying mantis thing is swung over me and I hear what I think is the end, “Almost done now, aren’t we, just this little filling to do!” And then it bites me in the mouth and I try to scream and they all get angry at me and the lady dentist does it again and tells me to stop wiggling, or I will be hurt, and I am hurt, blood flows from my lips and they get even angrier with me and then she puts the thing in my mouth again and then she really hurts me, all the pain before was just getting ready for this one, as she says, gaily, “Oh, that’s the nerve, oops!” and the tears are streaming down my face and my nose is running, rivers of fear and snot and I am in absolute terror and I don’t understand any of this, no one has told me what is even happening, but I know it must be because I have been a very bad girl, why else would they do this to me? I know now what the smell is, it’s the smell of my teeth burning as the drill works, it’s the smell of the mouth-stuff they swill in my mouth and it’s the smell of blood and most of all, it’s the smell of fear.
In England, when I grew up, they didn’t give you injections, freeze you, you just endured. Later, my cousin Cheryl would get injections, but my mother said we couldn’t afford that, and it wasn’t too bad, I was just a little coward and she didn’t like cowards. I went to the Payne’s more times after this, but the first great betrayal was the worst. Five years old and the lesson is learned.

I go now to the dentist, see that open doorway, with its lying invitation, smell the singed dog smell they can’t disguise, and even though the dental assistant tells me they don’t use those silly sinks anymore, the bib is just as humiliating as the rinse and spit, which at least gave me the chance to take a break from the torture.

When I went to boarding school, I fell into the hands of the school dentist and my parents told me to just see him, it was on the National Health after all, and why should they pay? He was inept, smelly, and his stomach growled and gurgled. He did his filthy work in a caravan outside the office of the secondary modern school, Monk’s Dyke, and I trudged up there, week after week, to be “worked on.”

In later years, my suspicions were confirmed—there was no need for most of the work to be done, but the old man was paid by the body and here was my body, with no choice and no parents to show concern with the number of fillings and work he was doing, and so I went up there, time after time. My teeth had been in good condition before I went to school—my mother refused to let me eat sweets, and thinking of the payne, I took her at her word that my teeth would rot and decay, and I would have to have them all out and be like Cheryl, with a mouth full of bad teeth, and so I refused all the sweets offered me. After four years of the school dentist, I don’t think there was a virgin tooth left in my mouth.
The doorway trick was one of his, too. You went up the steps of the caravan, hearing
the drill all the way, inside to the woman at the desk, and then sat and waited, and you could
see, through the open door, the old dentist with his victim in the chair, and hear the drone,
rinse and spit, rinse, rinse, rinse ... then it was my time and by then I was in such a terror I could
hardly walk. It all hurt, all of it, from the first poke in the mouth to the last prod. The digging
out of the old filling, the drilling down and down and down, with the so-called fast drill, then
the slow, grinding one, the nerves shrieking and jumping, and the tears, to my shame, and my
only recourse was to dig my nails into my palms.

I could have been mistaken for a saint with stigmata; when the pain was unbearable,
and the blood began to seep out of my fists, I hid them in my pockets for the days it took for
them to heal. I was ashamed of my payne, and fear, and humiliated by the torments I
endured. I felt there was something wrong with me, for no-one else seemed to have to go up
there like I did, even the teachers said “Valerie Chapman, you’re going to the dentist again!”
So everyone in the form could hear, and look at me....

In my Fifth Form I rebelled, I just refused to go, I demanded my parents send me to a
private dentist like the other girls’ parents did, and so they did. My mother and I went to
Grimsby at half term, and the dentist was first on her shopping list. I was steeled for the
payne, and he must have understood—I was so terrified I couldn’t even speak—and he said,
“Well now, let’s just do a freezing there, shall we, and fix that one filling?” He was polite but
I knew he was horrified at my mouth—his task was in re-filling much of the filling that had
been done, badly. I thought the jab of the needle was another refinement on the payne, but
then the sensation of numbness began to spread and he went out of the door and said he
would be back when it had “taken,” to finish off.
I stared out the doorway, and by the time he came back I couldn’t feel a thing and he
drilled and poked and prodded and hummed and did this and that and I didn’t feel it. Not a
thing. After, my mother was angry and said, “He charged 3 pounds for that!” And I thought,
all my life, going through that payne and a bit of money would have taken it away! But I
didn’t say it, old fears die hard. We went to the nice department store and had tea, and I
spilled it down my face, as I couldn’t feel my chin or my tongue or my teeth, but I couldn’t
stop smiling…

Wouldn’t you think they would change their names, the Payne’s? They thought it was
funny. I’ll never forget them, nor their open doorway, the invitation to become a good girl
and not make a fuss…. To be brave and not silly, for after all, that wasn’t “done.”
Body Dice IV

So now I have been told not to eat any real food
Celiac disease means no real food
no bread cereals potatoes no milk,
angry at this, as can be expected

Feeling crummy, not sure how I feel
hot heavy itchy breasts much emotional turmoil
but is that natural or is it stress?

Have to teach all weekend, do not want to

What if I have what my grandma had, she died of it?
What if I have to do this gluten free thing for ever?

I can do it, if it helps.
Love and grieving really involved.
What to do, what to feel?
Go eat my homemade yogurt

See can’t even write these days.
Can’t think.
Doctor phoned to say what is result of the test, he doesn’t know?

Marlene helpful, take baths, cry.

Shit shit shit
abject reject project

Hate this angry angry angry angry angry
disturbed upset turned upside down,
fat bloated angry
floating in liquid
tears and pee

Hate this
miss my mother
much love lost but
no weight.
Too many fluids
drowning me
horrible body.
Postcards from Dangerous locations/Safe Places 2

down to where the cornfield and poppies watch
little girls in navy blue suits
pudding bowl hats
a crocodile-walks past
giggling,
What are they doing
Now, don't look girls, don't look!

At the couple flushed out for all to see
scarlet-poppy-shame-faced-dumb,
looking
at all the little girls looking
not looking
smelling shame, badness, dark things.

But, what, what are they doing?
You know! They're doing that!
Oh, says the little girl
not knowing she knows what that is
and they all walk on.

Crocodile bulging and teetering with
forbidden
knowledge stuffed in it's jaws,
can't get it down,
what is this foreign thing?

Summer, sun out up warm,
little girls in navy blue,
memories are made of this,
poppies in the corn field,
where dark and dirty deeds
are done for crocodiles to snigger at
and joyful love pleasure is lost
in pain and blood...

leaking down to
Sex At All Costs!

Foucault says in the *History of Sexuality* (first volume), that sex was something nice that people *did*, now and then, but it wasn’t the heart of their world, it wasn’t *them*, at least not until the ruptures and breaks of the late 18th century led to the emergence of governmentality, and the spread of pastoral power into the lives, bodies and souls of the populations. Biopower, as a power relation, relies on an entry point into people’s minds and bodies; there has to be a way to get active agents to listen and consider responding to you with the actions you want... sex is the way power gets itself into our heads.

The First Thoughts, The First Questions, The First Answers

After all, what’s the first question they ask you on applications or questionnaires or on the Census? It’s usually, “What sex are you?” What’s the most interesting gossip in the office? Who’s sleeping with whom? What’s the first thing we ask when someone gives birth? Boy or girl. Because we all mix gender with sex, sexuality with sex, and only us profoundly philosophical posties get picky over whether secondary sexual characteristics contribute to the construction of heteronormatively gendered differentiation of Labour—the guys who pin up the Sunshine Girl from page 2 in their work cubicles, the woman with the huge boobs, they all know she’s their dream secretary and no way she’s a lesbian, and no one could ever convince my Auntie Kath that Rock Hudson was a “homo,” because he looked so manly, and all Hollywood stars are straight, right?

With the growing importance of sex, and the normalization of heterosexual activity, it’s much easier (for those who need to), to see who is, and isn’t, doing “things” “properly,” who needs to be kept in line, or to get in line. For “things,” read life, sex, and the pursuit of appropriate leisure activities. As Michel has explained, now that we can divide everyone into
one of the four basic categories, as defined by the 19th and 20th century discourses of social
scientists, medicalists, pedagogues and psychoanalysts, we can see where we fit ourselves—
and where we fit others—because other people’s sex lives are always so much better than our
own! The four categories? The masturbating child, the deviant, the hysterical woman, and the
winning entry, the fruitful couple! Don’t know which one to pick? Not to worry, we’ll send
you to school, and you’ll learn!

**Sex Education**

If the school can control us from incessant masturbation, and its Miss Snowdons can make
sure we are not nasty little lesbians, then it’s done a good job. Unfortunately, while onanism
may be a problem in boys schools, it wasn’t an issue in ours, and as we didn’t know what
lesbianism was, Miss Snowdon had to teach us what it was first, before she could make sure
we weren’t doing it. A clear autoethnographical illustration of the incitement to discourse...
we didn’t know what it was, so we didn’t talk about it, but *when* we knew what it was, why,
we talked about it all the time, tried hard to make sure any deviant impulses in another, or
ourselves, were brought out into the open and thoroughly discussed, before breathing a sigh
of relief that there were “no nasty lesbians in our dorm.”

When we moved into becoming available, or intelligible, for heterosexuality, the
same process was observable. As soon as we were told not to touch or be in physical contact
with boys, any touch became a huge event in our lives—where it had been unremarkable to
go arm in arm with friends, suddenly arm in arm with a boy friend became ghastly and
exciting and surely a prelude to Other Things... The incitement to discourse prevails again,
everyone talks about who is going out with whom, who fancies whom, who kissed on a date,
who can be observed standing too close, who is looking guilty... and why? Whose bodies
reveal evidence of activity? Whose clothing solicits attention? Whose makeup announces them a tart? I am ashamed to say, us girls even had a list of which boy “dressed” on which side... If you don’t know what that means, I won’t tell you.

People like Mrs. Charneaux watched us like hawks, and assumed all of us were out courting teen pregnancy. I am sure we were. There was no attempt to help us with birth control, of course, because that would have meant we were “doing it,” and we were to be prevented from “doing it” at all costs—until it was the right time. We were not yet licensed to become fruitful couples, even if we were in training for it. Thus we should read my boyfriend’s expulsion for putting his arm around me differently... he didn’t get expelled for having sex with me, in actual fact we had been “doing it,” for some time, without detection, but for looking like he would. Again, it’s the effect that counts, not the “reality.”

Keep Them Busy, Keep Them Off The Streets

When I went up to college, the same sexual control was obviously at work. I would love to write here, now, that my interpellated identity was that of a brilliant, insightful, incisive, First class mind, housed in an indifferent body... Unfortunately for me and my friends, the identity called forth, and which marked us, was based on our use of bodies for unfruitful sexual activity, not mental activity. Where at school, I was not to look like fornication was top of my embodied form, at college I was known and rated for my ability to inspire lust, and consummate it. Paradoxically, in the late 60s and 70s, instead of restraint, the incitement to discourse focused on making us sexually active.

Swinging London Enforces Regulation
And if we weren’t having sex, then we should get busy right away; that was the ethos and culture of the times. After all, we were right there, there in Swinging London, and that was what it meant,

> It seems that the freedom to be completely relaxed must be culturally controlled.  
> Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols.*

sex, sex, sex. Better, swinging, it meant you see, that we should dissipate energy in musical beds than in student revolutions. Better that we women should be hopping from one man’s bed to another—while we were occupied on our backs, we couldn’t get into that Women’s Lib stuff and cause trouble. We were, however, encouraged to remove our bra’s and burn them; free swinging breasts were guaranteed to excite young and old men, but we were not meant to swing them for anything beyond superficially political reasons—male pleasure was all.

Thus, when most of us went up to London and stayed in residences, we met the incitement to sexual discourse, not to control us, but to power us—sex was the key thing to think about and we knew this, because we were suspected of being sexual at all times, and within specific spatial domains:

Nutford House, where you were, still a girl’s hall isn’t it? Oh, coed now is it? Well, huge differences of attitudes, then. I would like actually if someone did a Ph.D. on that, halls of residence attitudes, especially in girls’ halls of residence. I was very nervous, nervous enough, anyway, trying to have a girlfriend, let alone having this institutional, you know, and being looked at, and treated as if you were, you know, so dangerous, that you had to have very complicated rules. I think, even in the hall of residence where I lived—a male hall of residence, of course, I came as a student to London in 63, I lived in a Hall which is almost in sight of here. We had signing-in books and signing-out books, and I don’t think the warden actually came round to inspect, or look for girls. Though it wasn’t normal for girls to stay, and the boys that they stayed with had great status because of this, but I don’t think there were inspections. Instead there was some complicated signing-in and signing-out, thinly disguised as fire regulations, in some sort of way.

*Paul*

So we could have sex, of course. She had her sweetheart coming up from the country from time to time to see her, and I had Oliver, so we wanted the luxury of being able to be really liberated ... that is, of being available at all times in all spaces for compulsory heterosexuality.

We were not alone in sharing this preoccupation: we went once or twice on tame demo’s at the University’s main building, Senate House, or to LSE, before returning for tea at 4 pm with other members of the history department. But we went every day to the Refectory to talk... about sex. We stood around outside the women’s toilet, by the mail pigeonholes, every day, morning and afternoon, talking about who went out with whom, and what they did, where, and how. And down in the men’s bog, (as we all called it), the walls were a work of graffiti’d art. Political and philosophical aphorisms jostled with scatological diatribes about the department tutors and professors, sexual innuendo exploded in a fertile male clime to full blown pornographic slander. I heard all of us were featured on those walls... We talked about those walls, every day.

Every one I interviewed when I went back to London wanted to talk about this sexual atmosphere... it was what defined us. Our lives were marked forever by our “awakenings” into “freedom” and “liberation” in the hallways, doorways, toilets and student owned spaces of UCL. Now has this changed, well, what do you think?
Whereas now, of course, I make a speech welcoming students. I have girls and boys, and I say to them, I expect you would like to know what my attitude is to sex. Giggles and a little frisson goes through them if you get the timing right. You can milk it. I say, I’ve got a very clear attitude to sex, I’m in favour of it. And if you want to engage in sexual activity with your friends, you must do so. There must be no nonsense about creeping up the back stairs, or pretending you’re not. The only consideration you have to bear in mind is your flatmates. And I say, somebody can come and sleep with you, as long as they are respectful about the shower and so on, but we’re not having people moving in. That’s cheating, and if there is too big a queue for the shower in the morning, it’s not fair on people in your flat. And this is a very different line than that a hall of residence warden would have taken thirty years ago.

Paul

**London As More Liberating Than Other Places**

The urge to fit in, to be a good student, meant being relieved of one’s virginity, exercising one’s freedom to be screwed. Now, it wasn’t only the girls who worried about things...and if London was bad, it seems Oxbridge was much worse. So several of the people I talked to said...

I didn’t like London, so it was entirely accidental that I ended up here. But it was marvelous actually, because it is this great anti Oxbridge establishment, and it’s always suited me down to the ground, it’s completely, you know, chalk and cheese, the lack of collegiality and all that. My Oxbridge college was single sex, it was all very monastic, and with this appalling sex ratio in the university, sort of one woman to six men. That’s why they ended up marrying nurses and things, terrible. I hated it because you always had to sort of queue for a date, absolutely dreadful! I was scarred for life, you know, by that about the Oxbridge spirit. Being a shy heterosexual person, there were, you know, certainly no good-looking women. I mean you were lucky if you got anybody female. It was terrible! I just hated it! You know, it’s all the same, Oxbridge, dreadful, just fine if you were homosexual, I suppose, but hell if you were heterosexual.

*Interviewee*

As always, gender, sex, class and Empire mix in to produce the anxious identity that seemed/s to mark me, and my Others. Those Others of us who went through the experience. And so closely do sex and class intermingle, it is impossible I think to prize them apart—

dating is necessary but one might have to go down a class in order to sate one’s desires, or, if
one is lucky, one might go up a class in consummation. Either way, sex and class are
twinned. Each of my old lovers commented, favorably, when listing my attributes, my
class—that sex with me meant going up...

I might also choose to comment, too, on the erotic danger and the way the
interpellated but forbidden, illicit, desire to fornicate guiltily was spatially regulated and
induced by institutions at the time. For example:

I think there was unbelievable second-class citizenship in those days; girls were not
 accorded any degree of equality. I mean, girls went to Cambridge or Oxford although
 there weren’t many girls colleges, only three, so the odds are really very much
tougher, and Girton, which is the one that is way out, they put it way out because they
didn’t want the girls being contaminated. This is how it was set up in the early 20th
century. And you can imagine, if you’d gone to a college like that, there you would
be, having to bicycle in, a long trek, I mean you’re better off in London than going
there. I mean, Girton! The joke always was amongst the men that the library at Girton
was fullest on a Saturday night, that they would all be there working their butts off,
because they wanted to succeed so much. They weren’t interested in having a good
time. We were all working our butts off too, but not on Saturday night. Men used to
sort of traipse around, in a forlorn fashion, looking for a female, not generally finding
one. I remember a lot of fruitless dances and things I attended. Bizarre. You wouldn’t
have had that problem, but I certainly had it.

Interviewee

Only On The Weekends Though!

Coming up to London from the provinces was difficult, for male and female, and, as I’ve
said, I noticed when interviewing them, the first thing everyone mentioned was the sex and
social thing:

Yes, it was a very mixed experience, going to that first weekend retreat at
Cumberland Lodge. Remember I was a country boy let loose for the first time, other
young men were also let loose for the first time, and young women! So you can
imagine it was quite a scene, as we said in those days. It was very enjoyable, yes. It
was a very good way of getting people to get to know one, another to gel.

Rick

The college found me a place to live in a boarding house on the North Circular Road
in Wood Green. I remember getting off the train at Euston with my suitcase and my
briefcase and getting a taxi to Russell Square Underground and then getting a tube from there to Wood Green and then getting the bus and eventually finding this place. Actually it turned out very well, it was a great hoot all the way through, because we all got on well together. Our landlady was very nice. We had some weird people staying there, including one young lad who worked for the local undertakers and we had a pretty good time, we never did a stroke of work in that place, impossible, it was just mayhem.

*Oliver*

More than one person noticed the gender split. Always the first of all their impressions at college, not the courses or the lectures, it was instead, How many girls, how many boys and what class?

Oh, very exhilarating! It was the 60s, it was London, and the academic side was interesting, as well as the social side. Um, one thing which I did notice about UCL, there was a definite fifty/fifty gender balance, and also, obviously with an overrepresentation of London with home based students, there was a very good geographic spread. And of course, it cut across all the social backgrounds. Very diverse social backgrounds. But one thing we did tend to have in common, we were asking in the opening weeks, you obviously got to know people over coffee and tea, and, many of us, we all sort of came out on this one, to use a later phrase, had actually applied to Oxford or Cambridge and had been turned down! You know, it almost made you believe that there is a place second to heaven, which I believe that Catholics believe. But that was very noticeable.

*Rick*

I wasn’t the only one who resented being barred from Cambridge, then, each person mentioned it, and while it was probably a good job the boys didn’t go there if they were looking for sex, for us girls it might have been appealing. It seems we all had sex on the brain. Then. For most of us, as we reminisced now, and lived it then, there was an odd mix of history, socializing, essays, pub crawls, Halls, and anxiety in our first year, and bedsits and freer sex in the second year, and, while we worked or studied at times, during the week, in between drinking coffee and tea, it was the weekends that getting and having sex were so much a part of:
Val: I remember the sherry parties, and hanging around the notice board, that was like
the social meeting place, and the reading room, library area, there were parts where
we used to whisper and talk to each other. That was where you always met people.
Rick: That’s where you met people, yes. And exchanged where the parties were on
Friday and Saturday. One other thing I would add, whether it’s puritanical or not, it
was still Fridays or Saturdays were the social nights. It was very rare, unless it was
somebody’s 21st and they had it on the actual night, it was very rare for anything to
happen, people would go back to their halls or flats or digs, most evenings, mid week,
study in their hall of residence room or their bedsit, whatever. So, it was still very
much a Saturday and Friday night, and Saturday scene. Which I think showed that
people did work. As well as then just go mad at the weekends.

Valerie and an old college chum reminisce

Sex, It Was All We Talked And Thought About...
I hope this tape is working, sitting here in the sun, waiting for the William Morris Gallery to
open up. I’ve just had a corned beef sandwich on crusty white bread with mayo and butter.
All this fat, talk about obsession, at Tommy’s Tuck-in Café, a real working class caff, full of
men in work clothes smoking cigarettes, and eating chips and beans and sausages and
things. I’m really aware of the class thing, because I’m definitely not of that class! I am of a
different class. Snob.

I just interviewed an old college friend. Told me a lot of stuff off the record, didn’t
want to speak people’s names and things, and we talked about class, a big thing for him.
There were very few people from working class backgrounds, it seems to me, but he thinks
that they picked people for gender fifty fifty. I am not so sure. I see class so much—we were
so damned middle class, and the few token working class people wanted to become middle
class. Other students don’t agree with me on this, but the professor’s do, funny... Discourse,
can we ever think differently? I had forgotten about the money thing, too, but he reminded me
that everyone, even the people from public school, like ghastly Harriet, all the upper class
people, all got a grant and fifty pound maintenance money which was quite a bit of money in
those days. They took it, too! He says there was none of that nonsense about loans: “You
were given a grant and your parents made up the money, you topped it up by working on the
post at Christmas and in my case, working for two thirds of the long summer vac. And Easter
was normally spent in revision for end of year exams. Or Finals.” Well, he took work
seriously, but I know I didn’t. Did work though. For money.
We talked about what we did, people asked him was it sex and drugs and rock and roll and he said, well it wasn't drugs, and he asked me off record if I ever did drugs, and I said, no, smoked dope a few times, that was about it, cigarettes and booze of course, were always my drug of choice. And sex. Always sex. Could I have thought differently?

There are leaves running across the floor, skittering on my tape, and I'm also by the highway, so it's pretty noisy, but the sun is shining on me and it's not quite so cold as it has been, it's very green, and I'm in a bower.... I feel warm.

*Valerie, taping her own thoughts.*

Not everyone was happy with the crowd in the history department. They speculated about the real character of their contemporaries, just as Letty and I did, and all the other women, chattering away in the ladies loo and giggling in the lecture theatre over in the main building.

Oh well, we had an awful lot of people, I think, who were from sheltered lives, only children of older parents. None of them had ever farted in their lives. You know, whose parents lived in places like Worthing, or other proper genteel retirement, towns on the south coast. I remember an awful lot of them liked nothing but classical music, I mean I like classical music, but not day and night, 24 hours a day! I would sometimes wonder what an awful lot of them did, you know, after dark, to enjoy themselves. It wasn't terribly clear what they did do! Most of the girls were ugly and tweedy and twee, I mean, they came from places where you held cups like this! I made friends with one or two other chaps. But there were also various small cliques of people who were very barmy, immature, really. Very very school boyish. I had had a year out before I'd gone, so I was older and I had spent 8 months slogging away on northern building sites, and in the pub every night, where life was somewhat unrefined, and working in Liverpool when the seamen's strike was on, it was rough.

*Oliver*

**Missed Opportunities—For Sex Or Life?**

Letty lamented, when talking about her year after UCL at Cambridge, her attachment to her boyfriend, and not just because it meant her failure to take in seminars, or lectures, or participate in college life:

When I had my own car, my own flat, I could have been really independent, and I stayed with him! You know, and looking back on it, in Cambridge the ratio of men to
women was 12 to 1, I could have got myself Prince Charles, I could have got myself well, he was there, maybe not Prince Charles, but...

*Letty*

We had learned what was important. What a shame. We talked about our lack of awareness: Letty said, “I blew the time at Cambridge,” and I responded that we both had blown our time in London, “because we always put our personal life first,” instead of taking advantage of all the opportunities. Letty said, “We went to the theatre and cinema quite a lot, but we never went to art galleries, that sort of thing.” I said Oliver had taken me to the Imperial War Museum, but I had never even gone to the British Museum. Two blocks away. It strikes me, too, that even in conversation years later, I seemed to think I needed to be taken somewhere, or that the visiting had to be sexualized or sanctioned as a pair activity.

In a rather touching exchange, Letty and I, two wonderfully bright and intelligent and lively women, who had learned to put our boyfriends before our degrees, talked about the Institute for Historical Research—literally a five minute walk from Gordon Square:

“I don’t remember going to the Institute which is just down at Senate house, and which they say now they encouraged people to go to. I joined it this time.”

“Really, what have they got there then?”

“They’ve got seminars, every day of the week, about ten a night. Really interesting. It’s amazing. I suspect they didn’t encourage us that much.”

“I bet that was considered a postgraduate sort of thing.”

“Yes, it could well have been, for the serious students maybe. And I take your point that it was the two mature students who got the First’s while we didn’t.”

“It was purely because they were more meticulous, they took it more seriously, that was the most important thing! They were better organized, more efficient, and they did all
their assignments on time. They weren’t any brighter, but they were more conscientious and thorough and that’s why they got their First’s.”

“And they went to all those lectures at nine in the morning!”

“Yes, that’s right, they went to everything!”

“Well, if someone said to me, let’s go for a drink at the Roebuck, that’s where I went! I didn’t say, No, I’ve got to do my essay.”

We sat silently for a bit, contemplating what might have been... But I reminded her, “You and I, people have said, were incredibly fun loving and we have stayed in their memories. A real catch, someone said, about me. Compared to the people before us and after us, they said, we were really something to see. We shone very brightly, we were vivid, a real breath of fresh air. We were dazzling…”

“Oh, that’s good to hear actually! We were dazzling, wow!”

Discourse at work, or pleasure? What would you rather be remembered for, I wonder to myself, your brain or your body? Do I have a choice? It seems the body won, hands down... And wasn’t some of it fun? Yes, but I wish I had got a First, and so does Letty. I don’t know that we were, as I keep saying, available for First’s though...

“What Did I Look Like Then? Can You Remember?”

We were defined by our bodies, and our bodies were defined, and inscribed, as female, heterosexual, and sexual. Each person I talked to recalled my physical appearance first, from a professor who said his memory of me was my bright green eyeshadow and my air of disdain, which vanished when he saw me trying to persuade a spotty youth to come up to my room at Cumberland Lodge. I went into this wanting to know about my body, not sure how to ask about it, but I needn’t have worried, they all had read my inscriptions, understood my
established identity as revealed in my embodied language of availability, my normalization as a pretty girl who didn’t work hard. And they wanted to tell me all about me and my body...

I have a lot memories of you. Physically, I can remember what you looked like, and what you wore, you looked very good. You always wore heavy eye makeup, so did I, you were always well dressed and fashionable, and you had a great pair of legs, I always wished I had legs as good as yours, and quite a good figure, and you were very attractive. I think probably to men you must have been quite sexy looking. I remember your physical appearance very well, and in great details. Individual clothes. I remember your afghan coat, I remember your boots, and I remember your hair style, sort of makeup you wore, some of your individual clothes, I remember you working in the boutique in Camden town, Du Du’s, or whatever it was called. I can remember when we shared flats together as well, talking together, and you being a good friend... you were probably the best friend I’ve ever had. I think, academically, I mean you were popular, and we both mixed a lot, and you were quite gregarious and fun loving, and you were probably not as noisy as me, I think I was probably chattier, and more extroverted, you were probably more introverted. I think you should have done better than me academically, I think you certainly had the potential, but somehow I don’t feel you gave it your all, you know? You didn’t pull all the stops out.

Letty

Very attractive, very alluring young woman. And good company as well. When you weren’t being neurotic, which you could be from time to time. Smoked incessantly, waved your hands around, you know. You’d get terribly worked up about things going wrong, especially when there was no money around. Or you lost something. Yes, but you were also different, you seemed totally detached from this rather spastic place with this rather spastic student body. I mean, you weren’t a sheltered girl from the south coast dressed in tweeds, called Griselda or something. You didn’t wear much, that would be why you were always cold. The era of the mini-skirt, and I expect it was just a perfectly healthy way of dressing for a sexually attractive and healthy robust young lady of the time (laughing).

Oliver

We may have been well made up, Letty and I, and stylishly dressed in not much, but we both recall we did seem to be more politically aware and interested in changing the world than today’s students, another part of the era—even if our awareness was a part-time occupation, in between jumping from bed to bed and turning in essays on Hobbes and Aquinas. What Letty and I regret now was not taking up the opportunities available to us,
although none of the men felt this way. Most of them echoed Rick’s words, “It made me what I am today,” and as Oliver said:

I think, like a lot of people, education is, you can regard it as the key to basically bettering yourself in life, and that’s what I wanted to do. I cannot envisage what my life would be like if I hadn’t had the education I’d had, but I have to draw the conclusion that it would not have been as fulfilled or as successful, if you like. I mean everybody wants to get on in life. You must have wanted to get on in life at some stage? I know you say it was different for you, but didn’t you feel in your heart that you wanted to be somebody and get somewhere?

Oliver

Letty and I don’t recall ever being encouraged to expand our horizons, to get on, to get beyond turning in a good essay, as she said:

I think the biggest challenge was actually coming to terms with all the other things that were available. But maybe one wasn’t supposed to crack the whole system, college wise. I think we could have, if they had wanted us to, the staff could have helped us. I wish I had my time again.... And you and I did the classic thing, letting men get in the way. Both of us cocked it up at a crucial time, at the end of the third year, yeah. I think you contained it more in yourself than I did, you didn’t articulate it as much as I did, held it inside yourself more and that screwed you up. I think also you didn’t know what to do career wise. I didn’t either, I mean I only drifted into teaching because I thought it would be a good way of being with Len while he was doing his degree. I can remember Oliver’s friend saying that he’d gone to the Careers Service, because there was a very good careers service somewhere at UC in the main building, (I wonder where? Why didn’t we know?) and he said, Why don’t you go to the careers service, but we sort of pooh poohed that, Oh we don’t bother with that you know. Maybe it’s because it was full employment in the sixties? We didn’t worry about work we just sort thought well something will turn up.

Letty

I told her, “I’ve talked to the men and they all went to the Careers service and got very strong careers advice and also academic advice too, about continuing on and what they should do.” We wondered why we had never even considered it, fruitless really, to think, Why? Letty said we pinned too much on marriage and it was a good thing we didn’t end up with the men we were involved with. I wonder though, now, about the How question, about the effect that the discourse of the time had on us, our careers and our lives—and our now’s.
It was sex at all costs; as Letty said, “we just did what they said, we didn’t take our work seriously... we were very frivolous, very frivolous.” But could we have been any different, could we have thought differently? Letty said it well; “I mean society didn’t require women to be seriously career minded.” How would we have known differently?

**Role Models? What? Who?**

There was only one woman on staff, full time, a very fine scholar, but not one who worked with undergraduates. I recalled a dreadful first term experience at UCL and talked about the only woman instructor, a mousy mediaevalist, and, very quickly, my interviewee pointed out, “She was a part time teacher, she was never on the full time staff.” Maybe mousy women didn’t get a look in then? Maybe no women did. Oliver said he had heard one of the Big Names was misogynist and anti-Semitic, not naming names. The ironic thing was I never even noticed that until years later—full time or not, no women. Or Jews. I never thought about issues of gender. Or race or religion.

The only women we interacted with at college, apart from students, were secretaries and the ladies behind the counter in the Refectory. Letty and I did meet the Tutor of Women Students, but she did not impress us, simply told us off... too much like boarding school. No role modeling there...

There was a tutor for women’s students on a college basis and we said to her, we want to leave hall of residence and she said do you realize how many people have wanted your place, you know, how competitive it is and how lucky you are to have this place in a hall of residence, and we said we don’t care, we want to move, we wanted our freedom, you know, because we had to be in by midnight and that sort of thing.

*Letty*

It was very much political history back then. It was always about men and kings and queens and wars and things like that. But, at college, while we learnt about political history,
we didn’t do politics. Indeed, while we may outwardly have seemed to be losing social
controls in our willingness to surrender our virginity, and to then be available for as much
sex as one could get, in fact, the very way was as much a form of social control as if we had been kept locked up in our dorm rooms. As
women, our first social obligation was to be sexual objects, heterosexual objects, and that
preserved the ultimate social order. It’s pretty hard to be storming the barricades at Senate
House, if you’re sitting in the South Cloisters having tea and plotting strategy for Saturday
night’s sex adventures.

Ritual is a form of communication: each Friday night pub crawl, each Saturday night
party, each tea time colloquy, were rituals of undergraduate life which prepared us for our
middle class place and life in British society—for Letty and I, that was as teachers, or
secretaries. For the men, it was as teachers, vicars, civil servants or professors.

And there were cultural and social controls firmly embedded into that experience.
While it’s obvious we had (heterosexual) sex and exchanged all kinds of bodily fluids with a
reckless abandon, buttressed by the knowledge of penicillin to rebuff gonorrhea and syphilis
and the pill to delay fruitfulness, we had, still, a great modesty about other bodily functions.
We women were invited to visit the men’s bog to read the walls, but we were far too
embarrassed to do that. Farting in lectures would have been dreadful, while smoking in
cinemas was quite appropriate. We “went to the loo,” we “spent pennies,” and we
occasionally, if we had too much wine, “were sick.” We did not pee, we did not crap, we did
not puke—though the men did—and we never belched. Publicly. As Douglas says, “A social
structure which requires a high degree of conscious control will find its style at a high level of formality, stern application of the purity rule, denigration of organic process and wariness toward experiences in which control of consciousness is lost” (1978, p.111).

We learned our class and we learned about our projected futures, all the while we had highly formalized sexual relations. We thought we were having a good time, we thought we were trendy, we didn’t want to be anything, but what we were: good time girls, in good time middle class, well behaved bodies.

No wonder I tried to kill myself, when I was in my second year, with an overdose of sleeping pills. I didn’t know then what the hell it was all about, and was very ashamed of myself. I forgot the whole episode, until July 1997, when I visited London again, and walked over to Gordon Square. I, literally, could not put a foot into the college, I could not walk past the history department. A wave of nausea and shame and utter despair washed over me and I had to sit on a bench with all the office workers having their elevenses and think about what that meant, trying to kill yourself at 20, not wanting to live. Green eyeshadow notwithstanding, something was wrong there...

You had a good sense of humor, a good wit, I suppose I found in you as well a sort of kindred spirit, rather similar really. Because you were very brainy. You were a clever girl, very clever girl. Although you chose not use it at times. You chose to switch off, and you chose to brush it aside, you weren’t focused, if you like to use that word. You weren’t at all. But you were very bright, and it showed. I mean, it showed in your conversation, it showed in remarks you made, analytical remarks you made about various problems and things. I always remember you as very bright. But you just couldn’t be asked to get it together.

Oliver.

“... There Swarms A Whole Series Of Subsidiary Authorities...”
While on the one hand the disciplinary establishments increase, their mechanisms have a certain tendency to become ‘de-institutionalized.’ To emerge from the closed fortresses in which they once functioned and to circulate in a ‘free’ state: the massive, compact disciplines are broken down into flexible methods of control, which may be transferred and adapted. Sometimes the closed apparatuses add to their internal and specific function a role of external surveillance, developing around themselves a whole margin of lateral controls. 

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment*, p. 211

I was struck by the differing interpretations given to our education; all of us talked about the social life we led at UCL and the sex we had, either overtly or covertly, but the men were quite clear, as was Letty, that college “made us what we are.” Each person told me that, over and over. I’ll tell you that, too. For Letty and I, the making was as sexual objects who would, after due time, turn into half of a fruitful couple, and then train our children away from onanism. For the men, the call to service was strong. Rick called it “giving back,” Oliver saw it as “getting on, doing well,” and each talked about how well our group of friends had done.

Without UCL I wouldn’t be speaking to you now. I probably would still be on some council estate on the edge of a town. But I do think it has left me with a feeling of being, you know, anti-establishment. I still see Oxbridge as the establishment. At a personal level I thoroughly enjoyed both the social side and the academic side and I also found my interest in politics there. It’s helped, I think very much to make me, the person I am.

*Rick*

Many of the women had become teachers, as had the men; over 1/3 of us, people said, based on alumni reunions and news about each other. Many of the men went into the church—talk about pastoral power—my goodness, bishops, canons, missionaries, reverends of all shapes and sizes.

Do you remember that guy in my year? Had knock-knees and he came from a sheltered town on the Coast? He was one of the churchy set, he became a Church of
England vicar. Or at any rate, he became a career clergyman, the last I heard of him he was very high up, in a cathedral or somewhere.

*Oliver*

Several students became professors, at least two holding full professorships. Both men. One man is a well-known radical MP—he came from a very wealthy family. Letty and I wondered what had happened to our four working class lads. A number of our friends, including Oliver, went into the Civil Service. One woman achieved high rank there, he said and he had done “not at all badly,” serving in many foreign lands and inspecting the troops in full dress uniform (“white and lots of gold braid, cost 3000 quid, a sword and a hat with a bloody great cocked plume”). For him, and for others, UCL worked very well, trained them to take up the burden of service.

I think it probably equipped me more than I realized. In terms of so many things, ability to work on your own, when you’re isolated, under pressure, because there could be pressure there at times, funnily enough. And becoming adaptable. Because you had to make your own way, live on your own, look after yourself, and a lot of life in the foreign service is just about that, it is knowing how to be adaptable, to look after yourself, in strange, far away, sometimes very lonely and sometimes rather hostile surroundings.

*Oliver*

For Rick, it was a question of service; almost a swarming, a going out to the country to effect change—as missionaries or teachers?

A large number of people opted for teaching. One for primary, in the main though for secondary. We literally walked down the road to the Institute. I think that’s a great testimony to two things. One the idea that you wanted to pay back, not financially as young people have to do today, after university. But you wanted to give more opportunities to children and many of us did opt for the new comprehensive schools. But also where we chose to study was literally five minutes walk from UCL and our friends were people like yourself, at UCL, so in one sense we didn’t leave.

*Rick*

I can’t speak for all the women, but I do know I learned some of the same things Letty talks about below, as well as learning about sex. It may have been sex at all costs, but as I
mention elsewhere (often), the power techniques don’t always work. We had sex, but we got a few other things too, along the way, to serve us in later life. Some of us thought we could always be teachers and, for some women, teaching may have been a way of allowing their husbands geographical flexibility or career moves—in those days you could get a teaching job anywhere if you had a good degree from London, let alone a PGCE—and for others it may have been more.

Now, ironically, Letty and I are back in education, and some of the men too, with first or second careers in public service failing them. Many of us have come back to university adult education, sad about our failed swarming, melancholy about being forced from the hive by younger worker bees, we are trying now to get degrees and get another life. I wonder if we ever learn? At least this time, we are not having much sex... well, I’m not. What I am doing is putting to use the learnings that occurred while I was having sex...

It’s made me quick thinking, it’s given me a lot of thinking and communication skills. I don’t actually remember that much history, but it did give me a love for history and I would defend history as a discipline, eternally. What has stayed with me has been the analytical ability, the liberal education, the training of the mind, the critical analysis and also the research skills, the discipline of what historians need to look at, which is examining the facts in order to analyze and present the truth and interpretations of that. I think that’s really important. And that’s stuck with me. You examine facts, you need evidence, you’re looking for the truth, and history had held me in very good stead for that I think.

Letty

I may not be looking for the truth, but this time at UCL I’m writing up some good counterhistory. What I do regret is the disturbance my counter history may have brought to some of those I talked to.
The Swarm At Midlife

I’ve thought a lot about 68ers turning into 98ers, are we failures of the power effects or successes? I know my autoethnography changed them: they reflected on where their lives had gone, and what had happened to them. Oliver—never got to be an ambassador; Richard regrets his loss of history, his academic love, in the daily drudge of being a Headmaster; Derek never got his University Chair; Rick failed to get elected an MP, four times in a row, and then was made redundant; Letty gave up politics after two go’s and talks sadly of the failure of socialism; now, much more sensibly, she collects men and houses, rather than votes, looking for happiness; Fred, the fiery educationalist, left his post at UEL, disillusioned, and now teaches in the darkest reaches of FE… and Valerie? What about me?

Well, I have one big question for now. Ok, two. Firstly, Where does creativity and seeing differently come from? If it’s all constructed, how did I get resistance and rebellion constructed in me—but no-one else did? I know, Foucault says power works both ways, but that isn’t an answer, I can’t account for just power effects in my forlorn resistances; his view is that domination breeds resistance, and that power relations may, too. I am not sure. Where did my rebellion and refusal to fit in come from? I wasn’t the only one, I know, two of my professors questioned UCL too. Why us, why? I know, ask, How, instead…

Now second question, this construction of sexuality, this keeping us in line by using sex. It seems like it’s for young bodies, what happens to this construction when you get older? How do you keep old bodies in line—yeah, I know, old age is deviant, I’ve seen all the cute Hollywood movies, too, but we don’t live in Hollywood. Judith Butler says that it’s the reiterative power of discourse, to produce the phenomenon that it regulates and constrains. The key is reiteration, fixing the role. I don’t think we are all busy having sex
now; it's quite repulsive, actually, to even think about that, given the shape of most of the
bodies I interviewed. I wonder if, even though we are not all that happy with the places we
swarmed to, but because most of us have a little power there, it’s the power we don’t want to
give up... Every time we use our power it gets fixed in us a little more firmly, our identity as
mini disciplinary blocks, our notion of ourselves as one-person disciplinary mechanisms, as
body controllers. I wonder if we try to control our students, our children, our workers, our
subjects, by encouraging/forbidding them to have sex at all costs?
What Does It Mean, To Work With A soft heart?

For thousands of years “the heart” has held meaning and significance out of all proportion to what it “really” is—just a piece of muscle, a pump for circulating fluid through the body’s sixty thousand miles of veins, arteries and capillaries. The heart. Such a simple word, only one syllable and only five letters. And yet this organ has been construed as the seat of feeling, understanding and thought. It stands in for the person, as in dear hearts and sweethearts. Anything that occupies a central position, or is a vital part or principle of an ensemble, is a heart. Cabbages have hearts. It has taken up a space and a shape across worlds and cultures and nations and lands and languages out of all proportion to its size or appearance. If ever a thing were ugly, it would have to be the heart... Have you seen one, laid out in a butcher’s shop? I used to carry pieces of cow heart home for my auntie’s cats, Jenny the black phantom, and Emma the psycho Siamese—prime cat food and person food in many countries... Ugly. Or beautiful.

We hold our thoughts at heart, we take things to heart, we are heartened, we are hearted, we find things in our heart, some of us sicken with a “heart,” and some of us still think our stomach and our heart are one. For we say, our hearts are in our mouths, when it’s really the stomach that moves—the stomach is the seat of fear, after all—and in some remote parts of Norfolk a “pain at the heart” means the stomach-ache. In earlier times, we spoke of fasting, of having an empty stomach, as “next the heart.”

We also used to think and speak of the heart itself as having feeling, volition, and intellect, as having, indeed, ears, eyes, understanding, even, just imagine! a body of its own. So we still talk of the heart of our hearts, even if we don’t come “Vpon the knees of our hearts” to special or famous people (like our examining committee), as did Parliament to James 1 in 1604.
I liked that when I read it, back in the 70s, and I like it now—I’ve layed it to heart. And, this too, I have underlined in my copy of Sir John Neale’s Elizabeth, “Parry came back to have heart-to-heart talks with Mistress Ashley and to probe Elizabeth’s mind” (1936, p. 31). Now that’s a great euphemism for a bit of slap and tickle, as we all knew, and he couldn’t say. (Like Freeman at King’s, Neale was required reading. His Elizabeth, even if it was a bit outdated, still sat on the compulsory list, an example of the work of that “great hearted” scholar, for UCL’s hegemonic claim to be the British Tudor and Stuart arbiter rested on his bald little head. Which head and body we saw totter up the stairs at Gordon Square every few months in 1968 and 1969, we standing below him by the notice-board and the pigeon boxes, right outside the women’s toilet, all holding our breaths, hearts fluttering at his frail progress, he rising majestically to the fourth floor office, marked, simply, “Sir John.” Will he get there, will he take a heart attack and drop dead before us, oh god, fall down on us, limbs askew, books flying, shrilly squeaking?).

Some of us still know the heart has wings...as we know the heart is where our emotions live, such a long way away from our intellectual and frosty minds. Often we take heart, or we are faint-hearted, as our hearts fly out of us, and sometimes, like Freeman said of Æthelred, in his first volume of the Norman Conquest we “seem to have plucked up a little heart” (1867, p. 376). Now, as then, I all too frequently have my “heart at my tongue’s end,” being always ready to speak what’s in my mind. I have never learned to “carry my mouth in my heart,” to conceal my thoughts, to keep silence.

I have, lately, been in heart-agony,
in heart-anguish, in heart-grief, endured heart-hardness,
and I’ve had heart-hate, heart-heaviness.
I’ve been heart-ill, felt heart-sorrow, and the bliss of my heart-springs.
I’ve been heart-worshipped, heart-wounded, and often heart-heavy.
I have suffered heart-longing, heart-pining,
and the joy of heart-rising.
I’ve always been a bleeding-heart liberal.
Tennyson (remember that prize at my Sixth Form Speech Day) said of Queen Mary, she had “A fierce resolve and fixt heart-hate.” So it might be said of me, I have a heart-hate for all this having to conceal my heart, my passion, my softness. For having to always put out a false heart, be double hearted and double tongued, to be a sharp harpy, a pointy edged and angled feminist poststructuralist, when I (also) want to be brave-hearted, if not lioness-hearted.

Not all emotion, either, for a heart can soothe; we might do well to seek heart-balm, wrung from heart’s ease, of which little plant a 16th century herbal treatise says, “The Hart Trefoile hath leavees joined together by three on little slender foot-stalks, euerly little leaf of the fashion of a heart, whereof it took his name.” At the very least, we can eat heart-cakes with our tea, and as we hunch over our glowing computers, keeping our un-academic feelings close to our chests, hidden in a heart-bag, let us, on silvery mooned evenings daydream we (re)search Anorta cordigera, the moth known as the heart-bird, sit sipping, munching, lost in reverie, our heart’s content…

Why then, should I not call doing my history, my memory work, all this counter remembering of the body’s lives, this coming at things from about, this hard looking for those lessons I have learnt (by heart), why should I not then call it “doing soft hearted work?” If “to have them to heart” is to have things safely stored in memory, ready for repetition, for examination, then, is not finding them, bringing them forth from one’s heart, heartwork? I’d like us to remember the heart is also the seat of moral sensibility, of conscience. “Soft hearted research,” then would be ethical work, work of courage, work which required enthusiasm and ardor. It would be hearty work, central, intense and worthy. Above all else, Soft hearted work…
A Postcard from (a Memory of) the Tube

Oddly smells

Opening the door to smell February
Greyness turning to jade, damp wet earth
Mould and mildew and a faint hint of
green shoots.

Rain not quite raining misty a promise
Of something I can’t quite
seize in the nose
An aroma tantalizing a spurt of excitement

Nothing like this on the hot cold dry prairies wet
and heaviness, weighted winter’s water
In the air ground path head and heart.

Valentines.

Smelling the glue on the envelope and the stamp
The prickle of sinus tears when the postman has
gone hope with him
Leaving only snot on a wet lacey hanky

Freesias fragrant consolations at the greengrocers
tangerines and wizened Cox’s orange pippins and
the odor of
Old prunes infecting the Rice Crispies and look!

Rain again.

It’s February after all.
When I was five or six, I was sent to stay with my Auntie Barbara and Uncle Derrick, in Buckingham, at 28A West Street, in their lovely flat above the superior grocers, Cantell’s, where my auntie worked part time doing the books and generally running the office for Mr. Gilbert and Mr. John. She brought us up lovely food, ham off the bone, Canadian Cheddar Cheese, crusty buns from the bakery next door.

But on this night, she had said I had to take a bath. Well, that was ok, even though the bathroom was at the end of the long cord-carpeted hallway, next to “Jenny’s room,” the box room where all the odds and ends and Jenny the cat’s box was kept (a wraith like black cat, who seldom emerged when I was around, even though I loved cats and dogs). It was cold, no heat in Georgian residences, and the bathtub was very large, but that was nice too, it was like going swimming. Auntie Barbara had started the bath running and put in lots of nice pink rosy smelly bath salts; she had turned on the immersion heater two hours earlier, just for this treat for me, and the steam was drifting and obscuring her face, but I knew she was angry at me, even though I couldn’t see her too well from where I stood on the brown cork bath mat.

I think, “She is angry at me.” She says, “Don’t be silly, Valerie, just take your clothes off and get in there right now, I shall stand here and make sure you do!” I am paralyzed by dread and anger and shame. Bathrooms on my own are alright, not too fearsome, but not bathrooms with someone else, and not naked. I was not (Judith Butler would be pleased to hear), essentially ashamed, immanently gifted with a desire to hide my body, or possessed of a modest virtue. I had learned to be full of shame. I could not take my clothes off and expose myself to this kind woman, now so cross with me, any more than I could fly across the room and escape out the window, and over the roofs of the jumble of houses and flats and shop
backs which their flat gave on to, on up West Street, to the freedom of the hills and valleys of the Home Counties.

My earliest memory of my mother and me together is of pain, terror, water and porridge. My mother was a passionate, beautiful, vivacious and fascinating woman. She was also sadistic, self-concerned to the point, and beyond, of pathology, and she hated children in general. Me particularly, as I had ruined her chances of escape from my father, her husband, whom she despised and hated most of the time, too. One of her sisters told me, years later, she remembered my mother torturing kittens, making them run across the top of the hot stove, when they were children in the Big House in North Battleford. I knew about torture. The “tickling” sessions that were about giving out pain and “teaching me how to listen,” and the daily whippings with a switch that I had to first go out and pick from the hedgerows surrounding our cottage, house or Married Quarter, and the withholding of food, of love and any warmth, and the other things that happened...

I stood screaming with pain, terror and fear, and, I know, some defiance and anger. I hadn’t “learned” not to be defiant yet. My mother is yelling and pushing me down, under the water, the scrubbing brush in her hand, screaming back at me that I am so dirty, such a dirty child, and I must be scrubbed off and cleaned up. The fight was uneven, power as domination, and eventually the contest was over, and I was left to sob helplessly in the kitchen sink, while my mother went for a cigarette. They used to call her Cigarette Sadie when she was a teenager, her brother Sammy teasing her about how much she smoked.

I was left in the cold or hot water, depending on her whim that day, until she had calmed down and put away the brushes and the bleach, and had time to begin feeling a little concerned. She comes back into the kitchen and turns on the stove next to the sink, and I start
to scream again, promising anything, anything, if only... She tells me it's all my fault, I'm such a dirty little kid and she keeps a clean house and I need to learn about being clean too. She puts some stuff in the pot, and goes back to the porch, complaining about the heat, damned Florida, and has some tea and a few cigarettes. I sit frozen in the sink for another 15 minutes. The pot boils. She comes back and gets a dish, and a spoon, and doles out porridge from the pot and then hands it to me, “Here, you can have this for a treat, just this once.” I sit in the sink, goosepimpled, naked, bruised by the brush, eyes swollen shut, shaking, stinking of bleach, and I eat. It tastes good. My mother always gives me food. After she has finished with me.

There were many more bowls of porridge, and tears, but finally, I learnt my lessons well. I am dirty, and I am ugly. Only my mother is beautiful, only one beauty allowed in this house. I am not to show my dirty, and ugly body, to anyone. And we don’t want people to talk, so we don’t talk about it.

And now my Auntie wants me to undress in front of her. Some ghost of the little girl who used to say, “No!” animates me, or maybe it’s the clever mind coming to the rescue of the bad body. “I will, but you can’t look,” I say, and she thinks this strange, but loses patience and says, “Oh, you are silly!” And leaves. The bath was lovely, after that, hot and nice smelling, and I dutifully scrub my skin with the pumice stone, the sponge, and the face cloth, until it hurts and I am red, and raw, on the “bad bits where little girls get so dirty” and feel a bit cleaner.

I was “cute and blonde and pretty,” with a charming Southern accent, and not at all ugly and dirty. So I hear from aunties in Canada and England, in later years. But somewhere inside I “found” all the ugliness and hatred and dirt; it was there by the time I went to stay at
West Street, at any rate. Judith Butler’s cool and convoluted language pronounces my suffering an occurrence of embodied performativity, a calling forth of the expected characteristic of the body—in this case, its ugliness and dirty difference. All I knew was that, by a very early age, I was always so ashamed of my body, and myself, and dirty, always so worried about being dirty. While the dirt was inner, it expressed itself, I knew, on the surface of my body, thus the dirt and the ugliness were signifiers of the uncleanliness of my soul. Such lessons are always learnt onto the surface of the body; pain is articulated onto the palms, the backs of the legs, the arms, with a green, springy, switch of hawthorn, or onto the buttocks with a belt, but this doesn’t feel like a ‘sign vehicle.’ It feels like pain.

When I was twelve, thirteen, Miss Snowdon used to stand there in the doorway of the dorm at Masson, watching us undress, and I hated it. I felt so awful, dirty and humiliated, and ashamed and scared, fearful of what would happen when I was undressed, turning my body away from her and trying to hide my body/self. She would sniff and stare angrily with hard brown eyes, and glare at my back, my dirty back, and say something dismissive, and the glare penetrated, and I hated, hated it, who knows what will happen when people look like that at me… bad things…

I tried all the time to run away, from my mother, and my father, when we lived in the States, in Florida and Georgia, tried to run away from Home and from the pain, and the feelings. My mother always had an ability to reframe an experience immediately after it happened, and to take as absolute truth her re-worked version. In later years, she would laugh and say the only way she could get me to take a bath was to sit me in the kitchen sink and feed me porridge! And how I liked to wander, she’d laugh about it! They found me once on the end of the pier, over the ocean, several times hiding in the back of my father’s car, once
out on the highway, trying to walk in all the traffic, once on the edge of the Okeefenokee swamp, sometimes on the beach. They always found me, and brought me back. When I went to the boarding school, I knew it was pointless to even try to run, They always catch you. Instead, I just ran away inside, in my head, disappeared.

Neither of my parents were monsters. The way my mother “trained” me as I grew up was not uncommon, the corporal punishment quite a part of the normative discourses of childrearing, and the end result was satisfactory to both her and my father. As she said to me once, not long ago, “Look how well you turned out! Of course, I used to have to give you a whipping now and then, but not as bad as your father did. You needed it, to teach you things. Kids these days are spoilt rotten.” Social practices, techniques as power articulated on to the body. The dirty body. It’s all for y/our own good.

A postcard from the bathroom....
Rattan wicker work, ah, a colonial theme. Green carpet, damask linen cloths, pineapple decorations, and greeny pictures on the walls of India and Ceylon. Tree like pillars in the centre, painted panels all colonial tea scenes, women with things balanced on their heads, elephants and servants, green blue themes in the other panels, rivers, ports, tea plantations.

3 hostesses, and I have to wait 8 minutes to be seated. 6 knowing waiters and 2 sneery busboys. Black and white uniforms with ties.

My. They allow smoking here.

35 tables, 2 to 4 people at each. Me a 1. US and Japanese, and Euro tourists, a few lunching matrons, 3 or 4 groups of business men, and 1 man with his secretary or young female trainee, getting ready to bonk her or just taking her out for a treat, I can’t tell.

Ah the menu, 2.50 a pot of tea. 11.95 for high tea. More than the Randolph

Service is terrible, not patronizing, just rich tourist oriented. I must look like can’t afford it.

Maybe they can’t place me.

Papers to read, the Times and Telegraph and Financial Times. Money talks. It’s Euro time!

A Liberty’s matron putting on lipstick, well, the queen does it. Lipstick out at teatime. Quasi institutional. That’s it, bottled Empire, plantation scenes, those Euro’s should take note, these are colonizers, here, serving you your afternoon tea, empire goes both ways.
Good scones, eat both at that price, skip dinner in Hall, not as good as Oxford.

I feel very North American, like Tootsie complaining about the lavs at King’s Cross, not at all British, what a shame, looked forward to it so much, saved it up for the last days, not as nice as I thought. Well worth coming though.

London And Not, Teas I Have Known:

V and A, crappy, great ambience, then awful paper cups and stale cake. Vickie and Valerie not amused.

BM ok, UCL nice, B. Library super, the tea and the fruitcake

The Chelsea Physick garden, lovely, wish I had had the lemon cake.

Tea in Hyde Park at three places, never the Orangery, always closed.

Tea at Regent’s Park poor, Hampstead very good, Kew, bad tea, good soup

Tea at Kenilworth ok, tea in Norwich at the Assembly Rooms wonderful.

Tea in Bungay not great, but drinkable, tea in Lincoln in lots of places.

Tea in Selfridges didn’t have, nor crab sandwiches in Cromer.

The best tea? Sister Pamela’s in Ditchingham
Why so much tea?

Trying to drink my self English again, comfort, solace, ritual, ingesting the magic brown liquid makes me brown-not, English pasty-pastry-white, but it didn’t work, all that tea. See, here they knew I was a foreigner. So much empire, yet I’m a bloody colonial, I couldn’t put lipstick on at the table, they’d ask me to leave, like they won’t let you shop at Harrods in bike shorts.

And yet, Valerie woz here, she drank, and peed in every damned tea room in the country.

Liminality aside, Lupton notwithstanding, and Douglas in doubt, because after all…

Drinking tea still doesn’t make me one of them.

But I am one of them, I am more tealeaf than they think.

Identity is a tricky thing, I mean, if you could drink it in, all those colonials would have been…. 

What?
Things I Liked About School 3

Geography with Mr. Garbutt who knows where they make galvanized Buckets (Sheffield) and the seventeen different wine growing regions of the German Rhineland and all about the Taiga.

Oral composition Exams with Miss James an Hispanic thespian whose Every moustached syllable enunciated, articulated and adumbrated tricky foreign phrases and Si, Ay De Mi, E Perdida Mis Flores! became Oh yes, I have indeed lost all my flowers! and the pluperfect subjunctive with them.

The little sour smile escaping Miss Pilsey’s clenched lips a small fart of approval for an equation working out right.

Coming top in history.

“Rain Cancells Play” on hockeyless Wednesday afternoons means English Country Dancing in the Gym instead.

Stripping the Willow, Drops of Brandy and the Gay Gordon’s Miss Harte shrieking madly over the gramophone’s fiddled voice cheated of our nakedness in the showers.

Cutting up the frog in Biology what a stink of guts and genes Mrs. Young a dab hand with that dissecting knife.

The crumbly scent of dried poster paint azure and vermilion and verdigris Blobs and baubles and bubbles All over my hands and dirty Art overalls and long face and strings of mouse brown hair painted Blue.

Fifteen and sent for skirt measuring up the stairs waiting to be

A postulant on the Turkey carpet in front of Miss Jones’s study desk and her with a tape measure creeping too close to my knee caps my skirt pulled down over my knickers under my jumper legally 2 triumphant inches and so she got me instead for dumb insolence. It was worth it.
In the *Tres Riches Heures* of March pastoral themes again prevail. A shepherd and his dog watch their flock; peasants trim vines, plough, one looks in his bag... for what? In the distance, the omnipresent castle looms over all; as usual it's exquisitely executed to show all the new improvements the Duc has made, such as windows, and towers, and it exudes power... yet, above it flies *Melusine*, a fairy in her guise as a dragon... In my Book, we play a child's game, my beloved cat Heloise dies, I contemplate food, again, and its role in the making of the body, and I spend some time in London, thinking about history...

🌟 Snakes And Ladders And *DOORWAUX*
🌟 Things I Liked About School 1
🌟 "*WE PUT HER IN THE TOILET, AWAY FROM THE OTHERS*"
🌟 Adolescence Forces
🌟 Limning Food While Stuck In-Between Narnia And Kitsilano
🌟 London Stories The Grad School Letter
🌟 A Postcard from Gordon Square
When I was little, we sometimes played Snakes and Ladders in the evening after tea, at my grandma’s, 84, Norton Road, Stotfold, Beds. My parents may or may not have been there, but I remember my grandma and me, shaking the dice and throwing and laughing, “Oh my dear,” she would say, “not another snake! I shall have to slide down it!” And me rolling a high number, and winning a go at the ladder, up, up, and up, only to be dashed down the next throw when I got a snake, and giggling as I slithered down, down, down, on to my snake belly and off the board. It was lots of fun, and being a game of chance, totally unpredictable. No way to tell what the dice would say, whether they’d announce a slippery old snake or a rung or two up the ladder. That was all part of the fun. But I liked to win, though, and didn’t like sliding down the snakes that much.

Now today here in Vancouver, it’s a Monday in late March, 1998, and I am laying in bed, the alarm has just gone and I have listened to CBC prophetically hear an ascending gloriously and heartachingly sweetly to the few little white clouds, and the early morning dew still soaking the corn field, or the stalks all wet and musty smelling as I walk along the cart track at the back of the houses along Norton Road, in a wet misty drizzle.
The lunatic asylum looks like a fairy tale palace in the distance, no loonies breaking out from Three Counties today. Always my grandfather's constant fear for us, and our lives, and probably virgin bodies, as we played in the fields or in the orchard, that a lunatic would escape and come and find us below the Cox's Orange Pippin trees, or pull us out of the tree house we had made in the damson tree, or wrench us off the swing hanging from the greengage branch... the lark ascending to Vaughan William's sublime music, me dreaming of going to England to do my research, to hear the larks again, and suddenly realizing today is the day, the day the SSHRC results come in and my stomach drops, a big old snake is laying there across the path and the lark stops singing and somehow I know...

Two hours later I ask her secretary, "Is she there? And she says, looking sad, "Oh Valerie, yes, go on in," and I stand in the doorway and knock and I begin to say "Hello— and a man pushes me out of the way as he rushes into the room, saying, as he elbows past me, "My wife says you called me at home and it's good news about the SSHRC!" and she looks at me, standing behind the man, who I now recognize as the very mainstream guy from the policy area, the other student whose application who was forwarded on... his turn for the ladder, I realize, not mine. "Thanks," I say, "I'll come back later," but I don't need to, I know what she has to say. Later she says it, no, not this time, but adds, "I don't understand why, it was such a good proposal and you should have got it!" No, I got the snake again.

Another year of waiting, another year of wondering. No larks ascending, not this year, not without the funding, I can't do it. All through this work of mine, this attachment I have to poststructuralism and narrative and autoethnography, it has been snakes and ladders. Endless slow climbing and puffing and panting up the ladder, now and then, a pause to look at the view, a small celebration. Small rung. A snakey presentation at AERA, in Montreal, to
a room full of American educators who don’t have a clue what my supervisor and I are trying
to say, and who just look embarrassed at our stories. Then, finding the Foucault and
Education SIG at AERA the next year in New Orleans, at last, someone understands what I
mean when I say “discourse,” so it’s a real step up. A ladder.

Talking about the body in Texas, with one of the women I really admire, she says it’s
all interesting but I should have done a better literature reviews because I obviously missed a
lot of stuff about the body and emotion, and I realize she’s missed my point, about me not
looking for the non-discursive womanly body, searching instead for the snakey slippery
Lamia-like discursive body, and, smiling, I say, “Oh, good idea, I’ll do that,” because she
might hold a ladder steady for me one day, even though she didn’t listen to what I said, or
read the paper I wrote.

And another rung, winning the Killam and the SSHRC, and racing up the ladder, only
to have the dice loaded against me because of my age... finding out in England that with my
advanced and decrepit, aged, body, there’s no way the Goodenough Association even looked
at my application for a fellowship, “I mean, look around you, dear madam, our mature
students are in their late 20s! Besides we want to attract the EE crowd, your time was after
the war, when they were still big on the Commonwealth crowd,” and the Warden looks at me
with distaste... snakes again... “Oh, I see! You think I’m one of the “wrinklies”? That’s what
I hear you call us, us older people, one of the young EE boys told me that in the laundry
room the other day. Pity you don’t put as much emphasis on intelligence and wit as you do
on youth.” Being smart didn’t help, though, wrinkles won.

I think perhaps it is time to stop hovering in doorways in the academy, asking,
nervously, or pettishly, “Why do I get refused, rejected, when I write well, when other people
like me find it interesting and worthwhile,” and either go in the door, or out. Up the ladder, or
down the snake. All this is a prelude, of course, to Validity Cubed, Or, Why I Am
Idiosyncratic and Incontinent. Which is another way of saying this door is about me, still
playing snakes and ladders and larks, at my age, still slipping up and sliding down.

When I heard the lark sing in 1998 when the man pushed me out of the way, when I
get the letters that begin “I am sorry to advise you…” I wonder again, and again, what is so
disconcerting about narrative and auto/biographics? And my body? Why don’t they ask
themselves, these blind reviewers, “Where does this work go, what does it do, and does it do
what it said it intended to do?” And why is my language “jargonistic” and their’s not? I know
it doesn’t help me to wonder, I know it’s not the why, but the effect of the refusal of my work
on the part of the academy that counts. So.

What effect does it have when the academy refuses to fund narrative research, or
what happens when educational researchers reject autobiographical work because there is

| “still a lot of understanding about research, so you really plainly, | For whether or not a position is right, coherent, or interesting, is, in this case, less informative than why it is we come to occupy and defend the territory that we do, what it promises us, from what it promises to protect us. Judith Butler, 1995, p. 127-128. |
| uncertainty and lack of autobiographical need to spell things out particularly when it comes to arguing for significance to the field, methodology and analysis.” |

Of course, I am forced to justify myself, prove my validity, to those “who are charged
with saying what counts as true” (Foucault, 1972, p. 131), because as Wanda Pillow says:

It is the subject on the “other” side of the binary who has to answer to charges of
unintelligibility—the “native” who has to justify the validity of her practice or make her voice accessible for consumption, the feminist who has to justify her writing style, the racialised person who has to prove how racism affects her life. Each of the theoretical stances and resulting methodological practices arising from these positions has faced and continues to face scrutiny and demands to make itself available to
others, to prove its credibility, validity and legitimacy. The burden of proof lies with the theoretical stance under question, not with the asker of the question. ... Yet, what is the reader's responsibility in this burden? (2000, p.24)

I get as angry as I hear her to be. Women—especially smart women—are so often construed as unreliable, leaky and incontinent. Up down those bloody ladders and stinky again.

Foucault has it right when he says

Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, p. 131 1972, Archeology of Knowledge.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snakes</th>
<th>Ladders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autoethnography is an interesting and seldom used methodology; an inclusive and accessible presentation. I shall be most interested in hearing it.</td>
<td>One of my difficulties with the proposal was the lack of clear definitions. This idea is potentially of some interest, but its execution here is not polished. The ideas need more development and clarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't even like critical theorists but I would go to a roundtable to meet this author. This work is original and interesting, and deserves to see the light of day</td>
<td>I am sorry to report your proposal was not accepted for inclusion in the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This proposal is simultaneously intriguing, rich and confusing. Its multi-layered construction is at first difficult to understand but in the end is engaging and illustrative of the mode of inquiry.</td>
<td>I believe the core idea detailed in the proposal to be original and important, however, it is difficult to determine from the proposal the key goals and objectives of the paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autoethnography has many potential uses in higher education. Discourse of postmodern perspectives used in the proposal seems to overshadow that goal; an interesting proposal and well written. The topic and title may draw a small to medium audience, but one that would be very interested.</td>
<td>I am not sure that Division J5 is the best sponsor for this proposal. The emphasis on adult education is small. This is mostly about reflective teaching and autoethnography as a research method.</td>
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Of course, when women practice pissed criticism, they're accused of being incontinent. Lee Quimby

Lee Quimby
A Beautiful Snake ... From Keats' Lamia

Published 1820

And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice,
Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys
All pain but pity: thus the lone voice spake:

"When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake!
When move in a sweet body fit for life,
And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife
Of hearts and lips! Ah, miserable me!"

The God, dove-footed, glided silently
Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,
The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
Until he found a palpitating snake,
Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd;
And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
Dissolv'd, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries -
So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
She seem'd, at once, some penanced lady elf,
Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.

Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:
Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!
She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete:
And for her eyes: what could such eyes do there
But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair?
As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air.

Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake
Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake.

And she said, Give me a SSHRC, for god's sake!
Things I Liked About School 1

Treacle tart and tinned tomatoes.
Sunday mornings stale toast and Seville marmalade sourly slathered over butter thick and yellow.
Russian slices from Hansen’s Bakery exotic foreign and fruity never the same twice always already sweetly lumpy and forbidden.

Mutton stew and butter beans and hot mustard freshly made for Keeping Mr. Colman in funds with tears in my eyes.

Getting the skin off the custard
And no sultanas in the rice pudding and always Prunes in multiples of five for marrying the rich man.

Golden Wonder cheese and onion crisps and Greenly sour Granny Smith’s Saturday morning booty devoured in the afternoon Common Room.

Milky hot coffee at the Tartan café watching the boys not Watching us watching them one glance a Fifteen years old’s weekend shopping treasure.

Packed lunch to take on the train Spam and chunky chutney ambrosial Sandwiches musty fruitcake Going home, change at King’s Cross Express to Salisbury. Bliss in a brown bag.
"WE HAD TO PUT HER IN THE TOILET, AWAY FROM THE OTHERS"

When I was in my second term at grad school, things really got hard. I ran out of money the first week of February, my loan had come in, but it only paid off the debts I hadn't paid in December and November, so by the time I cleared them, and paid my mortgage in January, it was all gone. I could pay either my tuition or my mortgage. I was working two jobs, one, pet-sitting, was walking Winnie, a young retriever which paid me $30 a week, and I had started this GAA job transcribing a dozen interview tapes, and there I came undone. I had not even been able to type when I started grad school in September, and had had to learn all that plus how to word process, and I didn't have a clue about formatting or how to use any of the functions on WordPerfect.

I remember I would phone my friend Donna, a secretary, and say, How do I do this, that, the other? How do I shift among documents? And I would read the manual that came with the computer from Gary and Kaye, and the WordPerfect tutorial book they had given me, and I would try to figure things out. I remember it took me 2 hours to work out how to delete and move around text, and I sat there reading and keyboarding, knowing I had to write a twenty page paper next week and I couldn't even type more than two words without an error, and the panic would start to well up in my stomach and then into my chest and then I would feel a scream sitting in my throat, but I couldn't let it out I had to keep on and on and on... I had been a well-regarded working professional but I had lost a lot of my faith in myself by then, one term into the Master’s program. I found out that it takes hours to transcribe even if you are super typist, and I fell further and further behind, and my hands would shake and I’d go white when it was time for meeting the Prof. Finally I thought I should just try to talk to the Prof and clear it up, quit, be fired, anything rather than be there every night at 11 p.m. trying to hear what these people were saying, and crying with weariness. But the Prof didn’t reply to my messages or
emails, and after about 10 attempts I gave up. Anyway, the second week into February the Prof. finally contacted me and wanted the tapes that I had done. I had been keeping track of my hours, and had done a lot more than ten per week, but the Prof didn't care, just wanted those tapes now! I spent a weekend transcribing, frantic, frantic, my anxiety was so high I thought I would die.

I was also taking three courses, Research Methods, Ethnography and an advanced seminar in Program Planning. Then Avalon, the woman's centre where I had been volunteering, asked if I would work a few relief shifts at $10 an hour, and I said yes, because we weren't eating much at home, neither me nor the cats, William, Tizzy and my littlest cat, Heloise. She was often sickly. I had adopted her from a shelter the winter before I came back to grad school; she was about two, and she had been first owned by a woman the shelter owner figured was a hooker, she'd had been rescued, went to the shelter, then to a foster home, but the woman smoked and Heloise had a bad chest and got a respiratory infection, so the shelter owner had to take her back, and then she contacted me and said she had a little grey coloured Siamese cat and would I like her, because she wasn't going to make it in the shelter, so I took her. She was beautiful. She had fleas and worms and ringworm and, I suspect now, congenital heart disease. I loved her. She loved me absolutely and totally, slept on my pillow at night and purred and purred. She never meowed or made a noise—abused cats don't seem to, as if they know that making a noise will make it all worse. I know that from childhood—keep dead quiet and they'll often forget you're there.

So it came to the end of March, I was transcribing every night, and that just paid the mortgage, and working a few days which gave us food money, and then the papers all came due. I did the Research Methods one first, it was the shortest. Then the Prof. demanded the last
of the tapes. I didn’t know what to do, transcribe, or do the Ethnography paper. I had already
done four assignments for that one, two interviews, two observations and at 50 odd pages that
should have been enough but the instructor wanted a 25 page essay on coding and themes, and
because I had picked a topic “too close to me,” women in AA, I had already had bad marks. I
decided to write that paper and not do the transcription.

It never occurred to me to ask for help. Who would I ask? One old Prof. was totally
remote, my advisor didn’t seem to have time, and the other prof was not keen on me, either.
One was never there. Who would I have talked to? It was a hard place to be. I started on the
paper on the Friday night. Heloise didn’t look very well. On Saturday she looked terrible, not
breathing right and not eating. I watched her in her chair, I didn’t know what to do. I went to
MeowAid to do my Saturday a.m. volunteer shift, hoping Mandy would be there, but she wasn’t.
I went back home.

I spent hours and hours trying to do the coding. I had already done 26 pages and was
nowhere near to completion. Each typed word took me time, and my wrists and hands ached,
and then I started to panic, and Heloise was getting worse and worse and I had to hand the paper
in on Monday, there were no extensions she had said, I had $12.37 in my purse and I couldn’t
figure out what I could do. On Sunday I got up, exhausted after a long night typing, and Heloise
was so ill I thought she was gone. I put her in a carry case and called a taxi, and spent $8 to take
her to the Granville Island animal emergency shelter. I thought they might help, I could tell
them I would pay them in 9 days when my pay came in, I would miss my mortgage, what else
could I do?

I put her on the table and she panted and the vet said, “First how are you going to settle
the account?” and she didn’t even touch her, I told her my story and she said, “If you leave her
here we might call the SPCA and tell them to get her, but they won’t come til tomorrow, Monday, and she won’t make it. Don’t you have a credit card?” But I didn’t, and she said, “Nothing I can do,” and walked out, and I cried and cried. The receptionist just ignored me and the people in the waiting room watched me cry. I put her back in the carry case and we walked home together. I explained to her that if I had not had this stupid idea about going to grad school I would still be working and I could have paid the vet and she would have got better, but I had been thoughtless and I told her I was sorry.

I got home, and turned on the computer and put Heloise in her chair and cried again, and I tried to do the analysis for the coding but I couldn’t see the screen and then I called and left a message for Mandy at the Shelter and asked if she could tell me how to make it easier for Heloise to die, and she called me back from St. Paul’s Hospital where she was working until midnight and said she would come round when she finished work.

She did, and she hooked up an IV with water for Heloise, who looked better after the fluid, and Mandy said I could take her to her vet tomorrow and put it on her bill and I finished the paper at 3 am and Heloise was still alive. She made it to morning and I walked to the vet’s with her, 20 blocks, and they took her in and when I went to leave, she put her paw through the cage and meowed, howled for me not go. I had never heard her cry before. I told her I would come back, I just had to hand my paper in, but she still cried as I left. I walked home, used $1.50 to take the bus to school and handed in the paper. I had a week exactly to finish the other one.

By Wednesday Heloise was a little better, still at the vet. I had transcribed and transcribed, made my classes and had some hours to work at Avalon. I went to the vet’s to visit Heloise. The bill was up to $400 even with Mandy’s discount, and I couldn’t afford to have
them do all the tests they wanted to do, but she looked better. The next day, Thursday, March
30th, I went to the last Program Planning class course, and he reminded us to hand in our papers
the next day, Friday. At break I phoned the vet and they said Heloise was better, sitting in the
sun, out of her cage, they had had her isolated in the toilet, “We had to put her out of the way,”
he said, and out of sight of the regular paying customers. They said I should take her home that
night, and try to feed her, but bring her back on Friday, I said, Ok but thought of all the money I
would earn that afternoon going on taxi’s and the transcription I had to do and the paper I was
only a third of the way through, but I didn’t know what else to do, school was so important.
Then I went to check my mail, and there was a letter from the Department Head, I had won a
full University Graduate Fellowship. I thought, “It’s been worthwhile, Heloise is coming home
with me when I finish my work this afternoon and it’s all going to be ok,” and then I realised I
could quit the transcription job, because with the UGF I wouldn’t have to worry about any bad
references the Prof. might give me. I felt wonderful. I went off to work at Avalon.

I called home to check my messages at 3:30. The vet had called to say that they had
been trying to force feed Heloise and she had died. I couldn’t believe it, I thought it was a joke. I
closed the Centre and walked to the vet’s, from 41st to 16th Avenue, panicky and saying, It’s
not true, and they showed me her body, laid out on the table, and I thought, the University or the
universe took her as a sacrifice, in exchange for my UGF. The vet asked if I wanted to spend
some time with her alone, I said yes, and I spent a last half hour with her. Then I walked home
the 20 blocks with the empty carrier.

I phoned the Prof. the next day about the planning paper and he reluctantly agreed to
Monday for the paper. I cried so much all weekend I couldn’t hardly write and couldn’t see the
words. I did the best I could, but I was so tired and so grief-stricken. He gave me a lower mark
than I had thought it deserved, saying that he knew I had had some difficulties but the typo’s and mistakes marred the essay. I hated him. I hated the Prof. who wouldn’t talk to me, or deal with my struggles with those damned tapes. I hated the ethnography Prof. who said I was too emotional about my subjects, whose paper I had written while I listened to Heloise’s choking breath. I hated UBC for giving me a UGF. Most of all I hated me, because I should have told them all to go to hell, and spent the time with Heloise.

I dedicated my thesis to her. She has that, at least, her name on a useless piece of academic work.
bodies to the wall
pushes now! for absolute union,
on tiptoes, tongues tips
kisses deep hand
hands hot, slipping out and
in
tangled aching clothing
seeking flesh
forms to fill an emptiness,
straining to melt within,
made to match
soul body mind
heads hearts
breath hurts
breast to breast,
white on white
   blue on blue
sweet tears joy
and the match is made
the void is filled
in perfect pain
I have just stopped in the middle of washing and drying my dinner dishes to dash to the screen and put down some thoughts about food. It seems so obvious, now, that much of my identity was ingested and eliminated, three times daily, or more, from the time I can first remember, up to today, now, and what I just consumed. When I returned from England, and read back my field notes, I realized that, initially, I had been unaware of how often I spoke and wrote of food, or eating, and how often food, its intake or expulsion, tied into issues of control, subjectivity and discursive practices. Then I noticed the pattern: always the references to food, the cold, the tea I drank, the meals I refused, the meals I craved, the fat and lean I worried about.

My Stomach Is Growling

It seems, even if I couldn’t hear it at first, my body was telling its own story. Nestled in between the lines of my serious academic footnotes, the body’s real feet are planting themselves firmly in my disordered prose. It sends out messengers, with growls and gurgles and grindings; the body’s recipes/formulas for subjectivities fan out along my sentence/paths and byways...

Now I am seeing its toothmarks in my paragraphs of prosaic prose, and tracking its footsteps in my margins... the body has been composing its own story in a sotto voce counterpoint to my dense academic descant all along, just an everyday, two-penny opera of sandwiches, cakes and ale, pies and pecans and pineapples. The body’s alimentary clues littered my poems; I dawdled amidst the mysteries of arcane poststructural lingua, which
obscured the ðɔdɔɣ's (real) tongue; while I prattled on, in a mannered Foucaultian lisp, about paying attention to the petty details, the boring everyday, there was the ðɔdɔɣ, doing genealogy in the cracks of the lines and limns of my notebooks. Busy mind and brain didn’t notice stomach and esophagus and appendix sneaking in their little narratives. *Teas I have drunk, pies I have not thrown, apples I have peeled and oranges I have excreted*... food for thought, if you can think it.

Think differently, see differently, there’s a theory writing itself here in prune stones and cabbage stalks. I just didn’t see it... until lately. Behind my boring dissertation text/wardrobe door, a whole country has been in hiding, lions, witches and all manner of wonderful folk eating their heads off, drinking and gnawing and “going behind the bushes”; we first met when a child peed her pants in a Victorian school room, but they and their land still exist, if I can read it, see it, hear it... perhaps I/we need to be unhappy enough to open our heart and ear, all our orifices... food, food, food, breakfast, dinner and lunch, tea and elevenses and snacks, ðɔdɔɣ has been busy in my books. *Hupomnemata* full of food... how ignominious and boring, and how I overlooked it, full of Butlerian philosophy, belching out pithy pronouncements, my ðɔdɔɣ’s been storying... a hard pill to swallow, that one.

**Holidays, Feasts And Finding Oneself In Food**

So let’s consider food, and by the way, I really like Deborah Lupton’s sensible book, not too turgid, very readable, very, very... useful. So, the ðɔdɔɣ and food. She says food and eating practices are so banal, we tend not to notice them, and yet “food and eating are central to our subjectivity, or sense of self, and our experiences of embodiment... as such the meanings discourses and practices around food and eating are worthy of analysis” (1996, p. 1). Good. Me and ðɔdɔɣ have been running down the right path then. I had already figured out that food
was a medium of expression for my identity stories, and I knew, after Louth and UCL and all my other schooling sites, that food “structures what counts as a person in our culture” (Curtin, cited in Lupton, p. 1).

My mother knew that, didn’t she always say, “You are what you eat”? And, “What a difference a good meal makes!” If all else fails, we British know that drinking a cup of tea promotes the critical thinking necessary to solve any sociological or cultural conundrum. “Best to have a cuppa and think about it.” And there’s nothing like a feast, or fete, as my grandma, used to say. We’ve always known that, just as food mediates learning, food maketh the day jolly.

If discourse, practice and institutions work to construct the body, and its reception or representation, via its inscriptive surface, then food is a marker of boundaries of class, nation, geography, gender, sexuality, lifestages and cycles, holidays, festivals, rituals, time of day and night... in short, you can’t really do, say, or be anything, without food coming in to the picture. All my writing shows me, I’ve been using food to make an identity, to make a me. Institutional disciplining—in the family and school, where all my mother’s rules about food intake and expulsion mirrored the familial social controls she had learned, which focused on strong bodily control, combined with the housemistress’ proscriptions of lower classed foods. My subjectivity lies in the establishment of gestures, or...
manners, around the intake and expulsion of food—how to peel and eat an orange, how to be "excused," how to go, and when to go, to the "loo." Other subjectivities are to be noted in the inscription of my body's surface as simultaneously well nourished, well fed and well starved—only the affluent can afford to diet, after all, us middle classes and uppers, we can agonize over the pounds on the scales, while working class women agonize over the pounds needed to purchase food. Of course, too, there's been the normalization of my food practices. The latter is the most interesting to me.

Food is normalized. It's usually been divided into two camps—good and bad, masculine and feminine, powerful and weak (tea comes in both varieties, try that Yorkshire tea, it fights its way out of the cup and attacks, oh my), dead or alive (those poor oysters), healthy or unhealthy (Nott's the Bakers cream buns), comforting or punishing (cabbage stalks and grey poached eggs sitting on top of cold slimy spinach on Thursday nights), sophisticated or gauche (no chips for me, thank you, but I will have a few pommes frites, if you have them), a sin or a virtue (Valerie!), animal or vegetable (what about tuna?), raw or cooked (a big difference if you've been found to have IBS), and of course, self and Other. When it's in me, it's me, when it's on the plate it could be You.

I don't eat too much or too little—compared to the norm. I couldn't eat tripe if you paid me; I will never willingly eat brown sauce, even if it's HP, on my food; I don't like well-hung pheasant; I won't eat in the street unless I have to, and I won't ever turn down an oyster. All these foods are of course, classed. I can't eat out of my class, it won't work...

Even here in Canada, to eat fish and chips for dinner is, well, something one does with guilty pleasure, redolent with memories of days spent out shopping, fish and chips purchased on the way home, mother or auntie too tired to cook—and even then, they were taken home, all
carefully wrapped in their newspaper, and then emptied out and put on plates, and served in the “lounge.” Fish and chips, food *en dishabille*.

I also know I shouldn’t show how much I like red meat and potatoes—manly food—and, if out on a date, I fight my gendered impulse to order appropriately gendered food, salad, and soup or something “light.” Steak and kidney pie is not a good choice... Not unless one is still an upper middle class girl proving how “just like you” she is, forcing down rock hard pastry and unidentifiable animal parts to prove her status as classily classlessly de-classed.

I liked reading about Mary Douglas’ 1970s research on what constitutes a proper meal, in terms of class, in England—it made me feel nostalgic. A real meal for Oliver, say, as a child in working class Altrincham, would have had to have meat, potato and vegetable covered in a gelatinous sauce. I got by with exotic Spaghetti and Canadian meat loaf. For Mary Douglas, food categories encode and structure social events. Food works as a social boundary system. For me and Oliver and Auntie Barbara and my Grandma and Miss Snowdon, yes, a meal was predictable for it created order out of the threat of chaos. Nothing too bad can happen if you get pork chops for dinner. Meals are important, food defines our world, it brings comfort and predictability and tidies up our messy lives.

And I love curry, and feel happy to eat it, as I do Chinese food. I am conscious as I consume my vindaloo or fried rice that I am eating the conquered’s food, and that tinge of Empire adds even more spice to a food already exotic and yet, quite ... seemly... When they go in the kitchen and yell out orders or whatever, in Hindi, Parsee or Mandarin, I feel 19 again. I am in my full Imperial flowering.
Food And Family And Women

It's no wonder food is an obsession with me—it was for all my female family members. Mother, aunties, grandmother and cousins. Food and family and childhood and mothering and daughtering, always against the backdrop of dining and chewing and swallowing and my mother's laxative habits. My mother, no doubt, learned her disordered eating habits from her mother, and her five sisters; her sister-in-law, Gert, passed on some good tips—in 1945 she discovered she could lose up to 10 pounds in a week by living on Epsom Salts, long before bulimia was fashionable. (Had to get in shape for her husband returning from Europe, where apparently, he might have been ogling skinny French women.) My mother gave me equally useful advice, all of which I followed religiously—and it is a family religion, a woman’s religion—don’t eat too much when you’re out; eat before you go so you don’t look greedy; best to eat small meals, nothing big, not for a few days, so you look “nice and skinny,” with no stomach in your tight dress... or, if going out with friendly company, wear clothes with plenty of “eating room,” and forget the tight pants if you’re out with the girls for ice-cream.

My mother dieted all her life: when I visited her in 1998, when she was first hospitalized for cancer, she still worried about “not eating too much, I don’t want to look fat,” as she sat in her hospital bed, refusing a cookie. What a nightmare this disciplinary training—to be dying of cancer of the gut and still not allow oneself a “treat,” and for me to understand her too, implicitly, and viscerally, that is a double nightmare.

I was struck, just recently, by the stories and articles in a journal, Feminist Studies, which dealt with the commonality of women’s narratives about their illnesses and interactions with the medical establishment—I though my mother’s illness and my experience of it were, as usual, unique... but they’re not. The more scholarly articles were
concerned with race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation as markers of women’s identity. All very fancy stuff, except for the personal narrative pieces, like Mae Scoby’s, which were ones in where “physical and psychical states seem to overwhelm other factors that are usually viewed as important to one’s experience and identity.” In Scoby’s piece about her mother’s illness and her family’s reaction to it, she talked about how they all “hold their bodies,” in the presence of pain and imminent death. I remembered we did, too, and that my mother’s first words to me, when she was ill in the hospital in Saskatoon and I went from Vancouver to see her were, “Go get something nice to eat.” Even when we hurt, we eat.

Food is so evocative. If you want to do a counter-memory, just recall childhood foods, feasts, birthday parties, and for me, happy times away from home. My auntie in England has always been heavy, and always on a diet; my earliest memory of her is being hugged to her well-corseted figure, inhaling her lovely Yardley freesia smell, and seeing her Rycrisp sitting on the table—her “special” bread. Nan and I starved because we didn’t make enough to live on in England in the early 70s, but we turned that into a virtue and became really thin. The ascetic/disciplining effect—for us, it was about getting into the Dress. Now, too, even as we anxiously perform our identities as teachers, fat ladies in waiting, and fret over our interpellated genders, heterosexualities and ethnicities, we’re munching on “good” carrot sticks or “guilty” muffins... food, always with us. Against us, for us, always already there.

I’ve always been either on a diet, going on a diet, breaking a diet, or defiantly not dieting. My friends are anorexic, or have anorexic children, or they are bulimic—just a “bit,” as one said, as if one can be a “bit bulimic.” It’s too easy to say, this is all patriarchal disciplining, the panopticon turned inward, (Orbach, 1988; Bordo, 1993). There’s too much
willingness at work. And it's not new, this compulsion to weigh our worth in our girth. Even the Greeks and Romans and early Christians worried about food—too much is obscene, too little is saintly; what to eat, what not to eat. And food distracts from mental pursuits—Plato and the Greek spoilsports have made sure we don't allow any contamination from the follies of the body. Philosophy has become masculine and disembodied (unless its feminists poststructuralists we're talking about, and they are even less bodied than the old men—mind you I finally saw a picture of Judith Butler on a web site and she is not slim), and food and eating have become sinful, feminine and always embodied. Food as fetish and sin. As Foucault said, when he went looking for sex for part two of his History, "All this talk about food!" Sex wasn't the problem for the monks at Citeaux or Riveaulx, just food, not sodomy, not buggery, not copulation, but gluttony, too many jugged hares. Never mind the dainty maidens, it's the dainty snacks they have to watch out for.

Isn't there a lot of performative identity, too, about all this, in the media, the radio, the TV, the movies, the family, the doctor, all this calling out of the inner thin woman, or man? Is this a willing self? Food as civilizing, rejection of food as a control, religious or social or cultural control... let alone fasting as a fashionable pastime. Food as medicinal, food as natural or artificial, food as a border crosser, food as moral and food as, well pick anything. And let's not forget food is metonymic for carnality, the mortality of human flesh. Wonderful ripe food is but a moment away from rotten, crisp becomes slimy, and even in its intake we know it will be excreta. Sometimes it's hard to like food, it's too disgusting.
The body’s Tale is all about nice food, horrible food, and me. Or me’s? Food practices are, par excellence, central practices of the self, technologies of the self, and maybe, there’s some pleasure, as well as use, to be had in them? Just don’t tell the poststructuralists how much fun it is to eat a choc ice on a hot day, catching the drips with your tongue ... and what can compare with the feeling as you enter the cinema, with a large popcorn in hand, its smell up your nose? Middle class pursuits, of course. Where does subjectivity begin and nutrition end, and perhaps it’s too hard to say, just where the normalization begins, and the self-training ends?

And does it matter, who cares about origins when we can look at the effects? I’m here to tell you, food’s effect is me. Food is the medium that the body uses to express, expel and elicit identities. It’s so obvious, but so much a part of my own governmentality, that it’s too obvious to see, or note... Gosh, I bet this a discourse at work! Food, so much of my story is told through food, so much of life has been marked and measured by food, food that is good, food that is bad, food that makes me what I am... what am I? Or, how many am I?

All I know is that, all theorizing aside, taking food in was/is always for me part of taking in identity; as Bakhtin said, by taking in food we take in the world. And the movement of food into and out of liminal zones of my body, the body’s doors—mouth, lips, anus, urethra—is intrinsic to my claiming and expelling subjectivities. Food is a liminal substance. It bridges nature and culture, it connects the outside to the inside, while it is in my mouth it’s still outside but as soon as I masticate it becomes inside. Food is incorporation. I eat, organically and symbolically. I want smart, I eat fish. I want upper class, I eat asparagus and duck pate. I want female, I eat lettuce. I want 'proe, I eat chocolate cake. I want friends, I eat with them, I eat them. As I ingest food, it works as the sign vehicle, the bus carrying the
bodies from the outer social world, into my body. The body consumes a new identity, or
confirms an established identity. I expel food, I eliminate, I excrete, and I am abjecting the
Other, the bits I don’t want. Spit out the dirty crunchy currants, vomit up the forbidden wine,
shit out the working class ketchup... pee out the tea, damp down the imperial fires.

Hybridity, liminality, the “interrogatory, interstitial space” of Homi Bhabha, Ed
Soja’s Third Space, Pollock’s space-off, Ted Aoki’s in-between curricular spaces, Carl
Leggo’s these liminal this, not that, not there, here, between, stuck way Mae her body,” and Valerie finds 
Home-not-home

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| The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation...destroys this mirror of representation... this disruptive temporality of enunciation ...challenges our sense of historical identity...as being written in homogenous, serial time. It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of \textit{enunciation} (or ingestion, or elimination, homi?) that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew. | ecotones, all spaces, not nearly there, where, in-between the Scoby “holds the way her body in spaces, the

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heterotopic spaces.

The body is the biggest/most complex of all these in-betweens, not me, not you... and even within the body, there are liminal liminalities... parts that are me, parts that are you, parts that are society, parts that are family, and parts that begin in me and end over there in You. The mouth, the doorway to the body, the most liminal of liminalities. At once an orifice which emits culture, language and subjectivity, and simultaneously the passage through which food and other organic material enters to become transmuted into self and subjectivity. The mouth is a complex place. It’s in-between.

381
Here's a "postcard" from my body; greetings from another one of Valerie’s liminal space, a doorway, or four, hidden doorways. I like to sit and think... maybe when the clock strikes thirteen, the door of the stomach’s wardrobe will swing open and my “True” or “Inner” identity will be revealed, an interior Narnia... I’ll know who I am, what I am, I have a gut feeling I’ll know it. Or maybe I’m just feeling my gut. But I reckon I can see hinges here in this Polaroid, if I look closely enough. It’s my third space, my heterotopic possibility of making and eliminating subjectivities I don’t like... or not.

Anyway, I’m off now to make a cup of tea, Organic Breakfast Blend. I shall sip up my “Kitsilano-yuppie means well and supports fair trade and downtrodden women who work hard for their family, humanistic” postfeminist, tonight, reading silly books by my politics. Thinking passing through my bleeding liberal hearted subjectivity. I am just a minding my business, Ann Brooks, drinking in about the tea leaves mouth, making me ...

And as I look at my body picture, admiring its nice pink lines/lintels and its curly duodenal passageways, I contemplate Adrienne Rich’s words and feel good... sitting and sipping unrepentant feminist nourishment here at Home tonight. I am imbibing a good dose of militancy and critical passion tonight, and tomorrow is another day, a Scarlett heterochronie, and who knows what food will pass through my porticos, porches and portals, leaving something of itself (in my) “behind?”
Writing and reading and eating my body anew... easy for me to say, a privileged, white, overfed, woman. With a conscience. Damn, another subjectivity, by what confessional door did that one sneak in?

Across the curve of the earth, there are women getting up before dawn, in the blackness before the point of light, in the twilight before sunrise; there are women rising earlier than men and children to break the ice, to start the stove, to put up the pap, the coffee, the rice, to iron the pants, to braid the hair, to pull the day's water up from the well, to boil water for tea, to wash the children for school, to pull the vegetables and start the walk to market, to run to catch the bus for the work that is paid. ... This is the working day that has never changed, the unpaid female labour which means the survival of the poor. In minimal light I see her, over and over, her inner clock pushing her out of bed with her heavy and maybe painful limbs, her breathing life into her stove, her house, her family, taking the last cold swatch of night onto her body, meeting the sudden leap of the rising sun.

I had not even recalled the letter three months ago, my old boyfriend had mentioned it to me, said I had written to him when he was at grad school. I didn’t recall it. Some sadness, a sick feeling, for some reason, but no memory. But suddenly, in the middle of a session at the Learned’s in St. John’s a full blown flashback... For ten days, snippets had been trickling into my mind, pictures of cats, feelings of grey, green velvet, joy, sickness. Colors. No words. All ignored. Didn’t want to know. Then bang, the whole thing, in a violent completeness, at a session on critical theory and adult learning.

I can see it all, now, feel it, I am it/me at 24, school teacher, Miss, in London, in my second year at Hornsey School, hating it, and as desperate as I hadn’t been for some years... no hope, but look, a letter at last! I am hurrying up the stairs to our second floor flat—I share with Nan and her baby, they live there Tuesday to Friday and then over at her parents on the weekend, so I get some time alone—letter in hand.

Since the horrendous introduction to the world of education some three years before, I had been living in a grey daze. Long weeks of misery, short, sharp, acute blazes of agonizing anger, suffocating, suicidal longings. Teaching. Tutoring. Night classes. Some friends, Julie and Liz at school, well, until I stole Tony Something from Julie, who never liked me again. (This is a theme isn’t it?) I didn’t even like him. But it was something to do. Something for the parts of me that still thought there might be some redemption, or hope, in relationship.

No redemption. Liz’ marriage was destroying itself in front of us, Julie sat and looked daggers at me, the girls were sullen, fractious. Miss Jenkins, head of the History Department, and Miss Curtis, J. P., Headmistress (both holdovers from the days when Hornsey School had
been a “good girl’s grammar school,” before it became this huge, ugly holding tank for 2000 girls, of all ages, levels, races, abilities, personalities, a comprehensive and constraining jail), had told me I was too conscientious in writing my reports, and rejected my careful, precise, recitations of my girls’ work, telling me to stick to “tries hard”, “should try harder”, “much improved”, “needs improvement”.

Day in and day out, lessons, lesson plans, homework every night—40 or 80 exercise books carried home on the Tube, hands hurting, rain falling steadily, grey weekends with nothing much to do, just to worry about more lesson plans, holidays times to find extra work. Pay was not the word they should have used, 200 pounds a month for a teacher with a degree, and a teaching certificate... Sometimes a date on the weekend, double with Julie, on one of her endless quests for the right man who would for sure be at this club, or that dating service, or this one. Then Tony Something. Another teacher, one of the five men at the school.

Another smotherer, like Oliver. Lord, I was tired of men falling in love with me. But still, I spent weekends with him in his little flat, and we would talk, now and then. He told me about Toronto, where he had taught for two years, and he said, “If we were there, we needn’t even get out of bed, we could phone a Pizza place and they would deliver.” How exotic. Unlike the sex, which was pedestrian. Boring.

I wonder, how could I have had so much uninteresting sex? Granted, this was long before we had to worry about herpes or AIDS, gonorrhea was easily cured, pregnancy easily avoided, and this was the era of swinging London, when we all had sex just as casually as we had a cup of tea—and it seemed to mean just about as much. I wonder, was it because there was no love, after the Teacher? I wonder, was I just constructing my sexual identity, practicing for a lifetime of boring marriage, fish for tea on Fridays, sex on Saturdays, go for a drive on
Sundays... Was that why sex was so tedious? I did, however, take a craftsman/woman’s pride in making it seem explosive, and perhaps they didn’t love me, those lovers, just the belief my body gave theirs, that they were great lovers...

Then one weekend, enough, I said, somewhere inside. I didn’t want to do it anymore. I didn’t want to... I refused to answer the phone, the door. Nan was at her parents. I think, now, here in the Rabbit’s Garden, sitting in this rare English sun on this little hill, surrounded by bushes, daisies and dandelions, larks singing, a cow across the field calling to her calf, I think I had a break with reality, a psychotic interlude. What was I thinking, that I did not care to ever talk to Tony again, nor anyone? I went to bed that Friday, fully dressed, covered myself with the blankets, stared at my collection of postcards. Ignored the phone.

It rang and rang and rang and rang. I got up on Saturday. Late, I had managed to will myself asleep for hours of the morning, keeping out the sound of the phone ringing. I sat in my dressing gown, smoking, reading novels. The doorbell started to ring, I froze and then ignored it. I went to bed. Again. Hours passed. The phone rang and rang. I smoked. I slept. It was Sunday. I went out to the launderette, washing my three outfits for school. Watching the clothes go round and round. Went back. The phone still ringing. Again and again. A key in the door, Nan burst in, with Claire in her pushchair, panic, anger on her face. “God, are you ok? Tony is going crazy, he thinks you’ve died, killed yourself, something’s really wrong, you were supposed to see him Friday night, he said you were fine when you left school... What’s going on, you look ok! He finally phoned my parents, told me to come over. I came running over, Claire’s all upset, what the hell is going on?” I sat and listened; she was a long way off. I said, “I didn’t want to talk to him.” “But he’s phoned a hundred times” she said, “how could you do
that, not answer, and he came over, why didn’t you let him in?” I sat there, dumb. I didn’t know.

I went to school on Monday, ignored Tony. He was wounded, tried to talk to me. “I don’t want anything to do with you,” I said, and he left me alone, but stared at me for days, across the staff room, eyes following me. Then he got angry, started leaving me notes, rude notes, tried to talk to me again. I ignored him. I didn’t see him, hear him. But I was scared of that anger. Eventually, his passion faded to sullenness. Sometimes I would torment him by smiling seductively at him at coffee break, and then when he came over, I would get up and leave. I wonder at my cruelty. I wonder now at what the emptiness in me was all about. What was wrong?

Lesson plans, lessons, some good, some not, girls, teachers, school, some tutoring assignments, the evening classes I taught. Is this it, I wondered? School. What was I doing teaching at school, I had always hated school. How did I get here?, I would wonder, dazed. I remembered my old boyfriend; the Teacher had told me he was at grad school, in London. Letty was doing her doctorate at the LSE. She seemed happy. Maybe... this was something I should do? I thought, too, that it might be nice to talk to my old boyfriend, nothing personal, find out from him what grad school was really like, he was doing History, too, so he’d know if I could manage it. The Teacher had told me Dave hated me now, but I didn’t believe that. I wrote. I waited for a reply, faint stirrings of hope, maybe there was a way out of this endless grey life.

What did I want? Rescuing, I think. I don’t think I was conscious of the need, but it was there, a need for redemption, for reconnection to the world, a safe way back in, with someone I knew had loved me, cared for me, someone I had once trusted. It was a chance to find a path that led out of the wasteland of teaching, a chance to find my way back into the life and passion
I had known as a good student, as a good writer, one which I know now I had relished—I could thrive again, as I had once. Away from the hopelessness and despair of teaching in an Inner City school, teaching girls who were despairing, sitting daily with teachers who were cynical and despairing. “Abandon Hope,” was Hornsey schools’ Dante-esque motto for education, seeking to drive all hope out of all of us, taught and teachers.

I sent the letter to UCL, and waited for an answer. I never doubted he would answer. It was a nice letter, friendly, not personal, just saying that I had been teaching, didn’t care for it, and was considering grad school, what could he tell me? And then the letter came. I believed it was the key, my old lover would remember me well, would show me how to open the door of my grey prison, free me. I ran up the stairs, into my little bedroom.

Nan had the big one, she had Claire, and she was the tenant, I just rented from her, so my room was tiny. I closed the door, snug in my little cell, between the toilet and Nan’s room. I had tried to make it cozy, dark green velvet curtains, pictures, memento’s of my visits to the British Museum, postcard views of Glastonbury Cathedral, mediaeval stained glass windows, the Egyptian cat at the Museum. I sat looking at them, hope, joy rising in me. I looked at his careful writing, knew it as well as my own, it had been a Lincolnshire companion for years to my wild scrawl, and then ripped open the envelope.

No, it was all wrong. He didn’t love me or care for me or even wish me well. He hated me. The Teacher had been right. He hated me the way Oliver hated me, Tony hated me. He loathed me. The words crawled, wriggled off the page, dropping into my lap, ugly little writhings of royal blue ink, anger and vitriol spasming and rippling, writhing. He hated me. I only asked for his help when I wanted something. He never wanted to hear from me, or see me again. Most of all he wanted me to stay away from him and his grad school, but it had been my
Department, my University first... He wanted nothing of me, ever again, except my absence from his life. And he had a partner, a nice girl, not like me, there was no room for me, and he didn’t need me, really didn’t need me. No, no room. He was so far from helping me, so far from the lover I had known. So like the other men, and now this last betrayal, this last fling with hope, this “one more time,” with education, all traces of desire for learning, for love, for school. I tucked it all away. A minute or two, that’s all it took. I tore up the letter, got up, went into the toilet, flushed it and it was gone. But some part remembered, just enough to associate the prospect of “grad school,” Master’s degree, with pain, with sickness.

A few months later, I took my mother’s advice, emigrated to Canada, removed my degree from my resume, along with my teacher’s certificate, and went to work—to enjoy myself, and I did. I knew how to do it, I worked hard to forget... gray days, grey schools, angry men, and bad love affairs. I was very successful.

Until that morning in St. John’s, I’d never remembered the Grad School Letter. Now in the sun, it seems so clear, fresh, so poignant. A nasty little letter, written in pain, to give pain. A spiteful counter memorial to a once lovely love. Not so big a deal. But it was if you were raw, vulnerable, already wounded, reeling from other betrayals. Its effect was to cauterize the pain, excise the wounds that England, school, love, had inflicted. At the very least, its effect was to mix them all together.

No wonder I ran away, what else could I have done?
Swarms Move Out From The Centre

a stain of dark ducks moves sea bound
vees of shifting swirling bodies
diving in and out of water and air
shrill cries of longing belonging

why do they do that, says a woman near me
they’re swarming, I say.
In April, fields and woods turn green, and flowers begin to bloom. As do the courtiers at Dourdan, another of the Duc’s chateaux (how many did he have?); two maidens stoop to pick violets, while a betrothed couple exchange rings in front of proud parents. She is watching him, and he looks quite happy to be getting her (obviously a rich prize, as her clothing shows), but her mum looks on, weeping a bit... the girl looks slightly pregnant to me, but the clothing of the time made allowances for fruitfulness. Most medieval women spent their lives re-productively, and the most fashionable feminine silhouette showed a rounded, high belly.

In my Book, I assess my shape in mirrors, wonder about early goddesses, learn Shakespeare by heart, contemplate technology, run through several kinds of landscape and visit the Park.

Literture Opens DOORWAYS

A Postcard From The Shop At UCL

London Stories: The Angry Man And The Regent’s Park

Bathroom Mirrors

Great Men, a Poem

ARTEMIS, EARLY PASTORAL POWER

body bits II

Kaleidoscope
When I was at school, we “did” literature. We took it in, memorized it and then brought it back up at examination time. I used to think most of it went down the mental drain. Examinations and memorization are not the ways to appreciate literature. Imagine my surprise, then, to find how much I still resonate with phrases, lines and the beauty of those old texts. When I came across Perdita’s pretty speech to Polixenes, her father Leontes’ old friend,

Here's flowers for you;
Hot lavender, mints, savoury, marjoram;
The marigold, that goes to bed wi’ the sun
And with him rises weeping: these are flowers
Of middle summer, and I think they are given
To men of middle age.

I remember it as clearly as the first time I heard it (forgetting I am now as middle aged as Polixenes), read aloud by a stumbling, wooden-lipped Sixth Former, Jimmy Lingard, blushing and well-acned, but not well-acted. I had just come in the door of the classroom, downstairs in Suffolk House, looking over the garden. I can’t remember now why I was late—probably a being in trouble thing, maybe I had been over at the Limes, and not heard the bell.

A sleepy afternoon in mid Autumn; the master, Mr. Cooper, sits grimacing at his desk and glaring at Jimmy, who has a good Lincolnshire accent
and looks nothing like the beautiful virgin Perdita, but could easily stand in for any of the
country bumpkins in this scene. I am reminded of several things; Mr. Cooper liked to amuse
himself, cruelly, at times, with our naiveté; *The Winter’s Tale* is a long and tedious play and
offers a wordy challenge to even the most alert student especially when presented
immediately after a heavy lunch of cabbage, shepherd’s pie and spotted dick; “doing
Shakespeare” has certain moments of gratification, no matter how hard the Cambridge
Advanced Level Examination Board tries to strip it of any pleasure. Where possible, I have
tried to illustrate this Book of Hours with quotations from those works, learned to heart, so
many years ago, and so well...

**The Truth is Out There... Somewhere**

I also need to re-work a “truth” I have received, along with all the other knowledge I have
constructed from seven years of graduate work in this Faculty of Education. The “truth” as

<table>
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<th>You would come in, and the first five minutes, it was, how’s Cooper doing? Is he in a good mood or a bad mood? If he was in a bad mood he could be an absolute bear. You had to really watch him, but in his good moods, he was great. He had a sunny, but he had dark, he must have been a manic-depressive. Fellow Student</th>
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presented to me by a major research university and my department, a discourse that re-presents collaborative
learning, problem solving and critical thinking, and critical challenges to “traditional” pedagogy, as about as close to
godliness as you can get. Perhaps this is a truth I need to re-
visit, that rote memorization, didactic instruction and
disciplined discussion is far inferior to either connected
“womanly ways of knowing and learning,” or to individualistic, competitive, challenging
“masculine ways of learning.” (Of course, you say, and I think it too, I learned how to learn
as a girl. An English girl taking GCE’s. I know, I am caught in a whirlpool of diminishing
truths.) All I know is that those examinations worked: When confronted with snippets of

393
literature, with gobbets of poetry and chunks of prose, I can tell you (and me), Milton,

*Paradise Lost!* Or *Henry IV Part 1*, or *The Moor of Venice*, or *Ode to a Grecian Urn*! And
god forbid, when wandering lonely as a cloud, I can’t help but think “daffodil and
Wordsworth…” I can still recall William Cobbet’s boring *Rural Rides*; when I went up to
UCL in 1968, I thought this description of London—the Great Wen—wholly apposite, and
even more so in 1997, 1999 and 2000. I think of Keats’ lines “A thing of beauty is a joy for
ever, this is all you need and
need know,” when I read about
the body, or think of Foucault’s
explorations of truth and
knowledge and pleasure/beauty.

Northanger Abbey, *All For Love*,
The Importance of Being
*Earnest, Macbeth*, certainly
nothing modern. Let alone

postmodern…

*The Winter’s Tale* has remained with me, and, indeed, provided inspiration for the
title and some of the animating and representational strategies I have used to tell the body’s
Tale. For those who didn’t go to my kind of school, let me briefly summarize the plot.

King Leontes entertains his boyhood friend, Polixenes, and becomes jealous of his
wife, Hermione, suspecting a liaison between the two. Polixenes is warned and escapes
Leontes wrath, but Hermione is charged with adultery, and dies in childbirth, while in prison
awaiting her trial. Paulina, her servant, sends the baby away with her husband; he is
shipwrecked on the coast of Bohemia, Polixenes’ territory, and eaten by a bear. The child is found and raised by shepherds. After a lapse of 16 years, we find Leontes wracked by guilt, unable, and unwilling, to leave the tragedy behind; Perdita, the lost child, is wooed by a shepherd lad, Polixenes’ son, Florizel, in disguise. Autolycus, a rogue, a pickpocket and a peddler, disguising himself too, steals proof of Perdita’s royal birth and reveals it to her father. The two are reconciled, as are Leontes and Polixenes, and Florizel and Perdita will marry. At the end of the play, Leontes and his court visit Paulina to view her statue of Hermione, which she brings to life, seeing his remorse, with the words

‘Tis time; descend; be stone no more; approach;  
Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come,  
I’ll fill your grave up: stir, nay, come away,  
Bequeath to death your numbness, for from him  
Dear life redeems you. You perceive she stirs:

All embrace, and Leontes, king to the end, commands Paulina to marry Camillo, his faithful servant.

It is a story which draws on Greek myth, particularly that of birth, death and rebirth, and winter/summer rites of passage, and which seems to combine, as does my Tale. There’s a knowing post-modern tendency in Shakespeare’s Tale to question language, metanarratives and institutional structures, coupled with a willingness to believe in the healing and redemptive power of nature, in resurrection, and rebirth. Like my Tale, it’s in a state of constant tension between wistful whole hearted narrative and crisply dense and intellectually doubled meanings. Hermione, a recreation of Demeter, and Leontes, a dark and remorseful figure, are balanced by the sharp angled Paulina, a good feminist, I reckon, and by Autolycus, who for some reason reminds me both of Thomas, the Teacher, and of Foucault.
Foucault, like Autolycus, is not what he seems; Autolycus is a rogue, and sharp, as was Thomas, and, like Foucault, “He wears many disguises and speaks in various tongues. For him, language is duplicitous and he thrives on duplicity, able to impose meanings without being bound by them” (Laird, 1994). He is “littered under Mercury,” and, like Mercury, he is often an unwitting agent of change—the messenger from the gods who doesn’t really understand the message he carries or the work it will do. Like Foucault says, “People often know what they do; and they sometimes know why they do it. But what they don’t know is, what what they do does” (1986).

In this my Winter’s Tale subjects, like statues, can come to life, can be endowed with the power to refuse words, signs, or to conjure with them… crone’s curses and/or blessings, like Paulina’s spell of animation. So, too, can the body be redeemed, win its way to freedom, a resistance fighter winning by surviving underground; it can perform new plays, and dance new dances, when it finds “the still point” (Thrift, 1997). And if, like Leontes and me, both of us are shocked enough to exclaim, rather rudely, about a lover’s body, wanting again the fairness and firmness of spring and summer, “[it] was not so much wrinkled, nothing so aged as this seems,” and want to back away, Paulina might say to us, “Nay, present your hand:/When she was young you woo’d her; now in age/Is she become the suitor?”

If the body is socially constructed, or “natural,” what does it matter? The body’s Tale has not been a search for origins, but a study of how we work with what we know, how we take up or refuse the effects of the educated body. It’s been about “the effort to think one’s own history, [and to] free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think
differently. (Foucault, 1985, p.9) so that I, and perhaps the reader, caught up in the spell of my metonymic Tale, can understand that, “the target is to refuse who we are.”

“Becoming” A Gillyvor

Or, as I think David Cooper might have liked, giving me that chimera of a grin with the uplifted right eyebrow, his silent acclamation, and only comment on good thought, I can finish with an explanation from Shakespeare, and take up a new career as a “gillyvor.”

Perdita describes one of the flowers of the Autumn the gillyvor, as being too brightly coloured, variegated, too artful, and Polixenes admonishes her that all construction is natural... Why is it, as Butler says, that the social construction has to be viewed with so much distrust—is it not beautiful at times?

Perdita:
Sir, the year growing ancient,
Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth Of trembling winter, the fairest flowers o' the season
Are our carnations and streak'd gillyvors,
Which some call nature's bastard...
There is an art which in their piedness shares
With great creating nature.

Polixenes:
Yet nature is made better by no mean
But nature makes that mean: so, over that art
Which you say adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes.
...this is an art
Which does mend nature, change it rather, but
The art itself is nature.

Sex generates words
poems come
from plucky little
penises inserted into
manly monitors.
Screened electronic erotica.
London Stories: The Angry Man And The Regent's Park

Notes Written In Queen Mary's Rose Garden, Summer 1997

The Angry Man. The first time I’ve thought of him in years. I couldn’t recall him well, but tonight, June 15th, 1997, he is clear in me. Feeling restless, I decided to walk to a new garden, Coram’s Fields, but the woman at the desk said, “No, try Regent’s Park, it isn’t far, and the roses there are lovely now.” I set off. I didn’t want to walk on Euston Road, so I veered north. I ended up, by trying to go parallel to the main thoroughfare, getting lost in a strange area. One side of the street was council estate, poor and working class, and the other a row of elegant Regent Park town homes. And I see it is Albany Street and suddenly, I think, Oliver! A whole section of town homes is given over to a University of London residence, men only, well, it was then. 14, Albany St., Colosseum Terrace.

Cold, in the room he shared with Bob, a small well, Oliver, not, we stayed who was so shy even look at somewhere else. He and Oliver were friends. My arrival ended that; at weekends, Oliver negotiated with Bob and we had the room to ourselves the whole night, often until Sunday afternoon. We stayed in bed until 2, 3, 4 p.m., until Bob finally banged on the door, sick of hanging out in the chemist’s room down the hall. Oliver would get up and make me tea, and then cook for me. He did everything for me.
On Friday night, before I left Canada I remember remarking that suddenly I am encountering men who think I need looking after. I've never had that happen, I said, I've always been so independent. But now, I see, Oliver thought me dreadfully in need of love, tenderness, attention and great care.

I have let the final ending to the Oliver thing color my whole recollection of him. Funny. Denial, most likely; that, and a distaste for being 'looked after,' which I interpret to mean, 'controlled'. Now I am here in London, he suddenly exists again, the man who made me value independence over love. Jeans, brown Harris Tweed jacket, beige shirts, red hair, mustache, freckles and a pug nose, piggy eyes (Oh dear) and a faint air of bewilderment. Other people found him disturbing, angry, forbidding; he did the history of warfare and delighted in taking me to the Imperial War Museum, showing me the artillery and tanks from the First World War. I said, “Where can we get a cup of tea?” He wanted to be an actor, and applied to RADA, but was rejected. His great love (before me) was the Drama Society. He must have been quite good, he was cast as Iago when I met him; he was very convincing. I, of course, was as jealous as Iago, watching to make sure he didn’t spend time with any of the women, or “girls” as we still called ourselves then. Women was what we called working class females.

Oliver. All that hidden emotion, simmering, steaming. He settled for doing an M. Phil and then applying for the Foreign Office, with a sideline in amateur dramatics. He had a knack for languages. Not people. He smoked, we all did. Not much. He drank. Not much, not like me. I think he looked after me when I got drunk, but the memory fades. He was slim, we all were. We didn’t eat much in England in the 60s, not like now. No MacDonald’s or take-out then, just fish and chips and the cafeteria at UCL.
We joked sometimes, Bob and Oliver and I, that we would get some chloroform from one of the chemists, maybe the one who lived down the hall at Colosseum Terrace; we would sneak into Regent's Park and get one of the ducks, bring it back, drugged, find someone to kill it, and clean it, and then we would feast on it. We were hungry, often. But we continued to spend our money on a 10 pack of fags and a half pint each, sharing a bag of crisps over at the pub. A grotty pub, no atmosphere, bright lights, working class, and not at all gentrified. Bob and Oliver liked it, I hated it. Class again. The duck would have been tough, stringy, but we could talk about it, taste it, crisp, brown spilling grease, smell it... We never did get it. We went over at night, over the turnstiles, and stood looking at the wolves who ranged restlessly up and down up and down, around, up and down, in their cage. I was mesmerized by them, pitied them, but we didn't get the duck.

Oliver looked after me. I was adrift at UCL when I went there, wandering from residence to the department, to the pub, to the cafeteria, to the Student Union Bar. Rarely to class. I had no urge for academics. I had flitted through several men before I alighted on Oliver, deciding he looked strong. I had been with older men before I came back to college and found the young men unappealing. I detached Oliver, a third year student, from a nice girl in our year, who never forgave me. He fell in love with me. I can be charming, if I try. He took me under his care. He sent me off to tutorials, asked me how my essays were coming, told me how to find articles, books, encouraged me. Mercifully, he never worried whether I was as clever, or worse, cleverer, than him. He just loved me. What a bore.

We spent a lot of time in bed, but I don't remember him as a sexual being. Intense, stolid, always asking if I was happy, warm enough... He wanted me to be content. I was not. I
was hiding. I was lost. At boarding school I had excelled and been a troublemonger. At UCL no one cared if I was there, or not there, dead, alive, struggling, flying... But Oliver cared. I didn’t.

After a while, I was bored with Oliver, bored in bed, out of bed. I went up to see him at the Fringe in Edinburgh; he was in the UCL production, *Importance of Being Earnest*, I think he was the vicar. It was cold up there, and dreary, but there was a thrill in being the lover of an actor. We returned to London, and Letty and I moved into 105 Constantine Road, and Oliver moved in with two of our/my male friends, Adrian and Phil. He spent most of his time at 105, but there was no question, even if he didn’t live with me, Oliver lived for me. Anyway, we didn’t live together in those days.

Slept around a lot, but we didn’t live together, “not done.” By the time a year had passed, I was sick and tired of being loved, looked after, suffocated. I was still lonely, something wasn’t right, inside, but I was beginning to feel physically sick with Oliver. One night I went to the Student Union with Phil and Adrian. I got drunk, then got home to find Oliver waiting anxiously for me; in an alcoholic rage, I threw him out, screaming that I hated him, to get away from me, to leave me, never touch me again. I didn’t explain, just screamed. He eventually left, Letty talked him into going, she was really distressed, I was just relieved. So much for an adult discussion of our differences...

I found I could breathe again, speak, have emotions, mainly grey ones, there was air around me again, not a stifling cloud of sickly love. The deadening ennui lifted. I had also, I confess, begun to feel what I called “creepy” around Oliver. Hinting at loss of love had not worked and I had thought of trying harder to get through, but he was deaf, blind and just... “wanted to look after me”... And then I would look at him, thinking I should try at least to talk about how I was not sure that I still cared for him, but then I would see his eyes, something not
right in his eyes, and think of his mother, a victim of mental illness, as he had told me sadly, prone to violence and psychotic breaks, rages... Just like mine, but I didn’t say that. Somehow I think the drunken scene was a good idea. Shameful and cowardly but a good idea.

Nowadays we have words for all these things, psychosis, neurotic attachment, unhealthy, obsessive. Then, it was just how he loved me, and how I was supposed to be flattered that this man suffocated me. That was what women wanted, after all, to be loved and cherished. My friends told me I was stupid, weren’t we getting married, he just adored me, he thought the world of me. All the platitudes came out, and, uneasy, because I had no language for how I felt, felt that there was more to love than being controlled and looked after, feeling that I didn’t want adoration, I smiled and said, Oh well. But, what did I want? I wanted, wanted... I didn’t know. Independence, respect, the right to my own life, my body, my feelings? Choices.

Nowadays we call it stalking. That’s what he did. He phoned me pathetically and desperately for days, tried to see me at UCL. Then he began to come around to the flat when we were out. He knew we kept a key on a string just inside the door, you could reach through the mail slot and grab it, and he still had a key to my room. He would go through my underwear, my makeup, touching things, leaving notes. The notes were angry at first, then sad, then vile. I was scared. My friends tried talking him down, but it didn’t help. Then they just didn’t mention me to him, and him to me. After a few weeks the harassment stopped, but he grew a real anger for me, a hatred. Poor Oliver.

One afternoon, and I remembered it just today as I was walking the same way, I was in Dillon’s Bookstore near Gordon Square, and he saw me there, muttered at me, then I felt really scared, my heart pounding, knowing I couldn’t talk my way, laugh my way out of this situation,
the eyes, eyes were wrong... and I left and he stood on the street corner opposite me, screaming obscenities after me. I walked away. I was so embarrassed, so fearful. A year later, at a party, me wearing my best Dress, blue with silver moons and stars on it, he accosted me, just as the record changed, and into the silence he screamed again, *whore, bitch, whore!*, and I turned and fled. Someone told me later that he had completed his M. Phil and was going to the EU. I hope he governs better than he makes love.

Tonight, as I stood on the pavement at Albany St., looking at the sign that said, Colosseum Terrace, I felt pity for him. I call him the Angry Man, but I was angry too, and never knew it. I wasn’t educated to be angry, just to be a lady. I could be a brain, a bluestocking, as I had been at school, or a social butterfly, a young lady, as I had been in Singapore, at parties, out in the sun, with young officers, drinks with cherries in them, or...

There was no “or.” I wanted or’s, but I didn’t know how to spell them. I tried to follow the script, be loved, be looked after. If UCL wouldn’t care about me, then some man would. In my dis-ease, in-between only two lives, two subjectivities, academic or flirt, I didn’t have the alternate knowledges I needed to find myself another life. I had not been trained in choosing, but Oliver was where I began to find out, trial and error, how to choose. He suffered because of it; I, too. I was unfeeling, grasping, brutal at the end, complacent in the middle, accepting his adoration as my due from the beginning. If it had not been 1970, if Letty had not brought home the *Female Eunuch*, had not insisted on reading bits of it to me, would I have married him? If there had been some compassion, interest, guidance, showed us at UCL, would I have showed some to him? I doubt it, on both counts.
ARTEMIS has nothing in common with bucolic sentiment and kindly nature. If bread and mother's milk are what one seeks, it is to Demeter one must pay attention, not to the dangerous idealism of ARTEMIS; for those who imagine a benign matriarch the 'dark and cruel side of ARTEMIS' is shocking, says a commentary on goddesses. No, not shocked.

She is one of three—SELENE of the full moon, HECATE of the dark moon and ARTEMIS of the crescent moon—Moon goddesses. ARTEMIS (and HECATE) represents the bloody, terrible and mortal aspects of feminine divinities. Sacrifices, willing or otherwise, were offered to ARTEMIS and while they may have become symbolic, by say, 500 BC they linger today in our dark side memories.

I am ruled by the moon, apparently.

We can construe the desire for an ascetic life, a surrendering of a connubial and family existence, in exchange for a life of the spirit, as an act of martyrdom and self-sacrifice, says Ginette Paris. Sort of like becoming an academic? Or at least a graduate student?

But I like the good old fashioned, notion of sacrifice. I have no doubt that many went willingly—martyrdom and religious ecstasy all have their place—but I'll bet a lot didn’t...

And does the taunting and teasing and “sacrificing” of one child by the class, in order to buy a respite from the teacher, emanate from a lot older, and darker, tradition?
hen I was in Denmark, on the last day, 

Friday, I went into Copenhagen with Karin 

from Finland. We had *café au lait* in an 

outdoor bistro, watching the ships and 

people, and then I went to the display on the 

Middle Ages at the museum, which was 

super. Really well done. I also bought a pair 

of little bee earrings, which came to have 

more significance, later, in London. 

I found a section on the body in the 

exhibit; all the pictures of people contain body language, literally. It was an illiterate 

society so people had to be able to look at pictures, and murals, and icons, and read the 

message from the way the bodies were painted, sculpted etc. Like a hand pointing one 

way meant one thing, one another way another. A body facing this way, or that way, 

indicated treason, or trust or value... and so on. 

Fascinating. 

The body speaks... has spoken, why do we not hear it?
I’ve just returned from my longest run ever. I’ve done two halves/ halves (And why not, it’s like the English saying in the pub, can I get you the other half—of that pint? I needed to get the other half, just so I could say, “Hey, body we did it!” I could afford it, I’d phone up Miss Harte in Louth—I know where she lives, ironically she bought one of the flats when they renovated Masson, my old boarding house into up-market accommodation—and say, “Hey, you old trout, it’s me! The bad girl! I just ran 14.6 miles, not bad for a clumsy girl who couldn’t run, throw, hit a hockey puck or a tennis ball, swim across the baths twice, or climb up those bloody ropes in the gym. See how me and my body have re-learned a way to be in the world that involves conscious, gracious, elegant movement?) but I’d never run longer.

We needed to go a long way in the city, to get our mileage in, and so I had time to see where we were going. Through industrial and commercial spaces, through forests of skyscrapers, mushrooming leaky condo’s, through old time family housing, through new shopping districts, under the Skytrain, over the Georgia Viaduct, along False Creek, up that bloody hill at Burrard Street, and I thought—Look at all these different spaces and places, and look at me running through them, how am I shifting identities as I shift spaces? (I’m happy to report we also made six bathroom stops and large numbers of water breaks, hence the larger number of bathroom stops—that, and Frank’s leaky prostate…Mary Douglas and her oozy identities again)
I think I/we know we don’t need Judy B to tell us we don’t have an essential identity, that identities are called forth, as needed, by nasty hegemonies of race, gender, sexuality, class... or even by those nice hegemonic folks, like my run leader today, to whom I/you give temporary authority to assume an asymmetrical power relation with me/us and my/our body. Albert knows more than me, he’s run 56 marathons and if he wants to act on my running actions, wants to interpellate the identity “marathon runner” out of my tired out stressed out essentially sedentary body/ nature, he can, no problem. Of course, as soon as we get back to the Y, the power shifts, he becomes an old cab driver, and me an academic with an English accent who can tell him where to go...

All The Colors Of The Rainbow

This subjectivity or identity thing, and the question of refusing or changing who we are... I thought about that, too. Goffman talks about being front stage and back stage (1959), and how we manage identity. Penelope Deutscher (1997) is afraid for the feminist cause, because if we miss/read Judy, we’ll all think we can shift any time we want, and then where we would be, still underneath men in the gender stakes! Nigel Thrift (1997) thinks we can play or dance and find the stillpoint, the space between, a Third Space where we are neither discursively made flesh nor non-discursively embodied. How much is conscious, how much not, in this performativity/performance thing? Not the right question, of course. A righter question might be, What would the effect be of thinking you could/not shift identities?

Well, you think about that question, and I will too, and, after we’ve read/written this Tale, we’ll talk. I don’t have the answer to the question, sorry to say, if you think I should have, beyond thinking it’s all locational and contextual. More questions: what relation of power I am in, is it a power relation, what kind of power, pastoral, capacitative,
communicative, what field of possibilities do I have, what discourse is constraining/enabling me? And here’s my thought from this morning, what space/place am I in, right NOW, and how does that space/place act on me? For, of course, me and place are in a power relation too, and that might be the key to the whole thing.

I have a hunch that while some subjectivities remain with us, more or less constantly, like gender, race, class, ability, age, from the days of our childhood schooling, their intensity changes. Clarissa Pinkola Estes says, in her reading of the Tale of the Ugly Duckling

Self, to be the same all the way through...colour saturation, the same colour all the way through. Identity, in classic psychology, means to know who you are today and to have the reasonable expectation that you will be the same tomorrow... the idea of self, selfhood, self esteem, is to be the same all the way through, saturated all the way through with what you are. Your identity is how you live your life, saturated, not what you do.

I think we would like to be saturated all the way through, I think we yearn for it, to be "the same," but in our anxious living, we know this is not so... We think, perhaps, that others are saturated, but are they? I don’t think even the Homed are so secure. I think the place we are in changes our hue, our colour density, subjectivities blush, fade, mutate pink to green to mauve, to gold to silver to black... I think, maybe if we can recognize what spaces and places call out our colours, we might be able to think differently. I don’t think we can always move spaces—life isn’t that simple, nor are there always choices, slavery exists in many places, in many states—but can we be aware that our colours are fading, deepening...

Too easy? You want dense academic verbiage and polysyllabic posturing? Not today, my legs hurt too much. Why don’t we contrast two different views of space/place instead, and see which one we like best, which one slips over the body better, which one fits like a Sugoi running vest, which one pinches like an ill-fitting Nike shoe? Relph versus Foucault. Humanist versus social constructionist. Phenomenology versus poststructuralism. Discourse
versus just hanging out talking. Lived experience or made lives? Better get your Power Gel ready, it could be a tight race.

A Pretty Toy

Just before we do that, a story and a thought… My friend Johanne took me for lunch, it was my birthday on Friday, and she told me about all the summer camps her two daughters are enrolled in, bike, swimming, wording, walking, tennis, and so on. Did we do all that? No, not at all. When my birthday came, as a child, it was as signal, Summer begins on Monday! On that first Monday in summer, I would wake up and think, sort of like Bill Gates, *Where do I want to go today?* We just went out and played, all day, day after day and week after week, and the fields turned golden, the combines came out, and we knew that meant the school uniform would come out the week after, but not for a few days yet, still so many wonderful places to visit.

One day, when my mother came home from work—we were living with Grandma again, at 84, Norton Road—she brought me a toy, an unheard of thing! Her workmate Renee Robinson had got one for Wendy, her daughter, and, I think, shamed my mother into getting one for me… a Kaleidoscope! Wonders, miracles, hours of colours, shapes, sizes and patterns, not one ever the same from minute to minute… Hold it up to your eye, shake a little and the world becomes “like in palm of hand,” as Skookum, the old trade language of Vancouver, says…

410
saw that on a trendy pomo monument to the early settlement in False Creek, while I was out running and it brought this all back to me.

The Kaleidoscope is so pretty; its patterns change, like identity and subjectivity shift, it’s the same as bodies, all surface, no depth. What you see is what you get, beauty or not. I’ve often wanted, as I’ve been writing along, to go into great detail and spend all my dissertation money, so to speak, on one thing, whether that’s sex, or empire, or class, or gender, or food, but it all changes, moves. My embodied (self) representation has been true to life and the Kaleidoscope. It’s inscription I am after, after all, not depth. And if the theory is right, there is no depth, just endlessly shifting configurations, colours, shapes, hues, nonsensical but gorgeous, new patterns each time the shaky hand is nudged by power or place or the reigning hegemony. We get a shift and move on... It’s nice to think of this kind of body as being like Keats’s serpent Lamia:

...a gordian shape of dazzling hue,  
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;  
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,  
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr’d;  
And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,  
Dissolv’d, or brighter shone, or interwreathed  
Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries -  
So rainbow-sided, touch’d with miseries...

Now the miseries could refer to the frustration I feel at not pinning myself down, (and perhaps, to your annoyance, too, for just as we get into something, I shift and move off, dashing away into some other shape/story/tale), striped or freckled or barr’d... but that is the body, that’s the process, that’s its tale, its life...

moving/altering/representing/relocating/renegotiating/traveling...
I think. So, in this writing here, we have only the child’s toy, the Kaleidoscope to guide us, shifting, moving, from place to place...

"Place Places [Wo]Man"

I went to the library to see what else there was about heterotopias, and found Edward Relph’s book *Place and Placenessless*. It was just what I needed, the other side of the story, all about lived experience and a humanistic geographical approach to my question—a humanism which I yearn for, in loose moments, when I am feeling more “myself,” more poetic, and less Foucaultian. This book helps me extend the battle of the quotes

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{the body is the answer to the world's question. Merleau Ponty} \\
\text{versus} \\
\text{The soul is the prison of the body. Foucault}
\end{array}
\]


to the placement of the construction and regulation of my schooled body, as it roamed the spaces of pedagogy: halls, corridors, toilets and bathrooms. As it stood in doorways, framed by time, deeds and words, looking for a way in, a way out, of irksome and wounding identity traps.

What Is It To Be Fully Human In A Place?

Relph’s aim was (probably still is), to examine the concept of place, and to understand the significance of place for humans: “To be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and know your place,” he says, and he quotes Heidegger, “Place places man [sic] in such a way that it reveals the external bonds of his existence and at the same time the depths of his [sic] freedom and reality” (Relph, p. 1, original quote from Heidegger in 1958). For Relph, “a place is not just the ‘where’ of something; it is the location plus everything that occupies that location seen as an integrated and meaningful phenomenon” (p. 3), and it’s not a notion that can be expressed in precise
and arbitrary geographical definitions. Instead, it must be “sought by examining the links between place and the phenomenological foundations of geography” (p. 4). The phenomenological approach recognizes that a “geographical epistemology is founded on personal geographies composed of direct experience, memory, fantasy, present circumstances and future purposes” (p.4). You can see why this might appeal to someone writing a counter history.

Relph’s argument is that we “live, act and orient ourselves in a world that is richly and profoundly differentiated into places, yet at the same time we seem to have a meager understanding of the constitution of places and the ways in which we experience them.” He proposes that places are fundamental aspects of our existence in the world, and are sources of security and identity—I’d like to reword that a bit and claim that identity can create place and place identity, or subjectivity, but in a complex and always fluid way. I truly do believe that we exist in a power relationship with places—they can have us take actions, work, or live, or sleep, or run, in a myriad possibility of ways... and so, too, our actions act on places.

Relph distinguishes between what he calls authentic places and inauthentic places; he notes a disturbing trend—and this was in 1976, how much worse is it now? —toward placelessness, “a weakening of distinct and diverse experiences and identities of places” (p. 6). I agree with him. I noted on my travels back to England just how less “placed” the people were with whom I interacted. It’s probably just as noticeable here, in our North American “globalized” world, but when you return to places once profoundly enmeshed with your own sense of self/place, places saturated all the way through with your childish selfhood, and find them pale, wan, translucent and humanly transparent, it’s distressing.
I need to point out that, in a modernist way, Relph’s spaces and places are not split by those pomo axes of difference which we are compelled to offer up (bulimically, I sometimes think, obsessively, anxiously, furtively, lest we be caught out in a disordered academic mode of writing our living), to wit—gender, race, etc, etc, etc. Instead, he speaks of the universality of the human experiences of place, and asserts that “meaning defined by human intentions is central,” to our existence, and to his idea of what the “human consciousness of place” and identity is all about. I appreciate this straightforward rendering of space as place infused with human intention; it’s like the Rilke poem,

Ah, not to be cut off,
not through the slightest partition
shut out from the law of the stars.
The inner—what is it?
if not intensified sky,
hurled through with birds and deep
with the winds of homecoming.

Beautiful. Ok, white, middle class, well educated, colonial, middle aged, beauty...see, my dilemma again—beauty or the poststructural beast?

Now, Foucault talks of “spaces”, and Relph of “places”, so just to define those terms: Space is amorphous and intangible, it’s the places I ran through today, city, seascapes, buildings, the landscapes of urban Yaletown, the sight of cruise ships at the dock, and nature (well, a Vancouver Parks and Rec. nature), but there is always “some associated sense of or concept of place.... space provides the context for places, but derives its meaning from particular places” (Relph, p. 8). (A textual aside: Bakhtin always talks of space as timed and placed and time as placed, so that we have chronotopes...)
The Kinds Of Space My Body Inhabits

Relph divides space into different kinds: pragmatic or primitive; perceptual; existential, including sacred, geographical and structured spaces; architectural and planning space; cognitive; and abstract space, the different kinds exist in relationship to each other, but their meaning as lived space—places—comes from immediate experience.

Chronotope, An English Summer Afternoon, Sometime In A Child’s Day/Life

I finished dinner with Grandma. A nice dinner, just her and me, we had pork bits or things, in her nice, greasy gravy and lumpy mashed King Edward’s (Trans: potatoes) and I was careful about the maggots in the peas (Daddy said to keep an eye out, DON’T make a FUSS, ladies don’t shriek, push them to the side of your plate, Grandma doesn’t see too well, my dear) and we counted up how many we each got—I had three and she had four—and then we had a lovely after’s, lumpy custard over Mr. Nott’s apple turnovers burned up when we reheated them in the too hot oven. I had fetched them earlier in the morning, still warm, and we thought we would like them like that and they were nice, and then Grandma said I could go and play, she would put Mummy’s dinner on a dish and steam it up for her when she came home on
from
“I’m sure the five and five, dear, sure you’re and I off.

It The sun the bus Spirella,
was hot.
was nice,
and there was tons of blue sky, and the hens up in the orchard cackled and grumbled—I
hoped we didn't have the pretty brown one for dinner on Sunday, although Grandma wouldn't promise we wouldn't, she just grabbed the ones she could catch, and wrung their necks quick as a flash, but they still ran about a bit until they fell over dead, and I did feel funny eating them the next hour. I couldn't wait for Mary to come and play. Her mummy made her take a rest after dinner, and Josie couldn't come out til later, she said this morning when she got the cream buns, so I thought, I'll be brave and go down to the werewolf spinney.

"The spinney has always been here," said Grandpa, when he was still here with us, "and it's very old." There were trees and bushes and a pool in the middle and a lot of things lived in it. It was actually a scary place. When you went in there, it was too quiet, and it was all ... still...and it felt at you, and you wanted to run away. Sometimes you got carried away, looking for tiddlers in the pool, and the mud squishing under your Startrite shoes, really nice, and then it would go all silent and the sun would stop shining and we would look at each other and run. Mummy told me the story of how she and Daddy had gone to the pictures down in the village, when the werewolf film came out, and they got really scared, Daddy smoked up all their cigarettes, and they had to walk back because they missed the last Norton Road bus and she said when they got to the spinney they realized that was where the Stotfold werewolf lived, and so they crossed the road and walked on the other side and then they ran all the way home...

She said to stay away from the spinney, but I went there anyway, and became an explorer, like the film with the man on the boat in Africa and then I said to my navigator, "The natives are restless tonight," as I hacked with my machete through the spinney-jungle and he said, "Oh, now they've gone all quiet," and I was me again and I ran out as fast as I could and walked down the cart track to the loony bin...

Pragmatic or primitive space: is the space of "instinctive behavior and unselfconscious action in which we always act and move without reflection... the environment in which animals survive and function...structured by basic individual experiences, associated with the movement of the body and the senses..." and it has fundamental dimensions of "left and
right, above and below, in front and behind;" even animals and insects "display a deep and presymbolic differentiation of and attachment to safe places which are best understood as homes" (p.9).

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**Chronotope, The Cart Track And The Corn And Being Alone**

I wandered up the cart track, being sure to check out the whereabouts of the bull in the field, sometimes he got out. Grandma was up the cart track one afternoon with Rebel, our dog, picking dandelions for the rabbits and the hens to make their eggs nice and yellow and she heard a noise and she looked up and "My Dear! The Bull Was There, Staring At Me and Pawing the Earth!" She picked up her feet and ran as fast as she could and she could hear him snorting and puffing behind her, and she told us how Rebel barked and barked and the bull took after Rebel who ran as fast as she could as well, and then Grandma was back to the bottom of the orchard and shut the gate and the bull just stopped even though it could just walk through wire and Grandma my dears, my my mouth, I was my Mummy said wasn't. I shedgerow Tonto and the Lone Ranger, looking for arrow heads in the furrows next to the cornfield and found flints and stones and then I found bits of bomb, and became the brave English Bomber Pilots, then a braver fighter Spitfire pilot, and looked down from my dogfight and saw the German bomber limping for the Krin, ready to drop its bombs on Mr. Edwards as he did his bookkeeping at his desk there, and saw him look up at me and think, "My time has come!" and then I shot down the bomber and it dropped all its bombs on the hill here by the cart-
track, and the next day, Grandma and Grandpa and Uncle D and Auntie Joan and my Daddy all came up to look with everyone else at the big craters and laugh about how Daddy never heard the bombs come over and they all hid under the table and he slept on in his bed.

I noticed the corn was getting riper and I knew that meant that the farmers would get out their combines and come and cut the corn and the foxes and rabbits get shot, but maybe it wasn’t ready yet, and so I picked some, being Pocahontas, and showed my stupid Pilgrim how to shuck and eat it, and then I thought it was time to see if Mary was coming out to play so I walked across the tops of the fields and over to the other end of the orchard and through where our orchard became their orchard and knocked on their back door and asked if she could come out and her mummy said yes, but first we had to go and get some tomato’s for tea from the people who had the greenhouse next door so we took her two shillings and went up Norton Road two houses and

Perceptual space: If animals are superior to us in primitive space, in perceptual space, humans compensate with their ability to reflect “systematically on space and experience it self-consciously” (p. 9). (I don’t know, those foxes were pretty smart, Mr. Relph.)

Perceptual space is a space of action “centered on immediate needs and practices, and as such it has a clearly developed structure.” Here individuals group the world around them and assign significance and meaning to places within the space they perceive as being shot through with their intentions and imaginations. The personal experiences we bring to perceptual space make meaning of the built or natural environments and landscapes, and, for “children in particular, places constitute the basis for the discovery of the self” (p. 11). This means that “both remembered and currently significant places are essentially concentrations of meaning and intention within perceptual space,” and, because these places are intersubjectively linked to culture and experience and intention, the individual is not
necessarily isolated, but can hold places in common with others. We recognize that others hold places in our perceptual space.

**Chronotope Of Whales And Horses And Tomatoes And Paths**

Mary and I walked up the greenhouse people’s driveway and up to their greenhouse. We hated coming here—how did we find them, the red-faced silent woman who always wore a flowery pinny and never said a word as she went into the greenhouse, making sure we didn’t go in there. We always wondered what was in there, why couldn’t we go in, too?

And then she would come out with a brown bag of tomatoes smelling all warm and red and puckery up your mouth, put them on the scales on the table outside, pick up the big heavy iron weights and take them off until she measured out a pound or two and then held her hand out til we gave her the shilling and then with a twist she flipped the bag over and did it up. Sometimes we got the cross man and he went in to the greenhouse and glared at us from the door, and the same routine all over, tomatoes in bag, scales, money, flip, leave. But sometimes we couldn’t find them, and we didn’t dare go in that greenhouse and so we had to hang around and wait and waste all day. Today we were lucky, the woman came out as we arrived and we did the thing and went back and gave them to Mrs. Tookey and then we walked down to 82 Norton Road and knocked on Josie’s door and her cigarette mum let her come, always she had a fag as she called them hanging out of her mouth, and curlers in, but we never saw her with her hair curled up, only ever with curlers in, and an all-over pinny and she was nice but common.

We went over the field to see if the big carthorses were there because Josie said we would be Tonto and High o Silver and the Lone Ranger but I wouldn’t be the horse so we thought we might get a real one. We brought them some apples and stuck them all along the barbed wire fence and the horses came over and ate the apples off but they had huge teeth and they were very big so we left and I said I’d be the horse after all because I got bit by one of them once and I’d rather be a horse than lose a bit of my back again and Mary said I shouldn’t have run away. We walked on down to the river and we could hear the traffic on
the Great North Road, and see it up on the hill. My Daddy always called it the EY WUN and got cross at Grandma who always called it the Great North Way but she said the Romans called it that first so she wasn’t wrong, my dear. We were not allowed anywhere near the EY WUN and so we hung over the bridge looking for the swans that lived there, ready to run if we saw them because Mummy had told us one wing could knock you over and break your arm. We looked for one wearing a human arm and a shirt, so we would know that was the prince in disguise, but they all looked like swans.

We walked all the way down the towpath to Norton and then we had to stop at the stile while we looked for the Big Bullocks. Mummy said we shouldn’t be frightened of bullocks because they weren’t bulls, the farmers kept them and the cows together in his milking field here, but they were Angry Bullocks/Monsters and whenever they saw us they all ran over and charged us so we always had to judge our distance and work out if we could make it across the field—and we had to run and stay on the footpath or the farmer got angry even though the cows didn’t pay any mind to it—without falling in a cowpie and tripping on the thistles and and we shrieked scared ourselves. a cattle drive and with John Josie and then John round and looked and yelled, driving the chuck terrified I would get turned over but we made it in time and leapt over the next stile and turned round to the stampeded Bullocks and yelled at them, til we noticed some more in the same field with us, snorting, getting ready to pay John Wayne and his gallant cowboys back, and we ran like the wind along the lumpy path, jumped over the gate and found our way to the stream by the old Hall. “Private!” signs all over but they never minded us and we took off our socks and Startrites to paddle in with the fishing rods we (pretended we) had and got ready to catch whales and things really big. Josie had even remembered to bring a jam jar to carry the whales home in and Mary and I had got still a biscuit her mummy gave us so we
used it for bait and ate some even though it had pocket fluff on it and we put our poles in the river and

Existential or lived space: Relph says existential space is “the inner structure of space as it appears to us in our concrete experiences of the world as members of a cultural group;” the meaning of existential space is intersubjective, for all members of our group have “been socialized according to a common set of experiences, signs and symbols” (p. 12). This space is not a passive thing, it is constantly “being created and remade by human activities,” including the sacred, which is “differentiated and replete with symbols, sacred centers, and meaningful objects—like greenhouses” (p. 13) and which are culturally and ethnically defined. Sacred space, says Mircea Eliade, is a “manifestation of something of a wholly different order, something that does not belong to our world” (cited, Relph, p. 15).

Geographical lived space is desacralized, but fragments remain, “reflections of man’s (sick) basic awareness of the world, her experiences and intentional links to the environment,” and are humanized by the naming of places, by mapping, myths, the orientations of buildings and pathways and the EY WUN, and of buildings. Landscapes, and the buildings in them, are the essence of human intention and presence: Heidegger suggests that dwelling is the essence of existence, the very manner by which man and women are on the earth. Relph believes that space is molded and possessed by building, and authentic places evolve with an organic quality. (A man ahead of his ecological time?)

These places have the character of what Heidegger calls ‘sparing’—“the tolerance of something for itself without trying to change or control it” (p. 18). When space is a fusion of dwelling, building, earth, sky, gods, and mortals, then geographical space is essentially
sacred. Built spaces have the possibility for, but restrict, experience. Relph classifies structured spaces into verticals (home, apples on a barbed wire fenced paddock, street, city, landscaper or region, geography or nation) and horizontals (paths and the Great North Road, districts, significant centers or places, and major centers of significance). “Places in existential space can therefore be understood as centers of meaning, or focuses of intention and purpose” (p. 22).

Chronotope: A Child Goes Home For Tea In The Late Afternoon One Summer

...then I started to feel hungry so we decided to go home and have tea. I got a bit worried, I never knew how far it was so short a way to know where flowers best butterflies flitted, when you had to walk there, or there to much further to go.

We went without Bullocks, home with our whale to the Norton Road, while to pick some Ragged Robins and vetch for Grandma in me, and we were and his mother in the the flowers before the didn’t want to be the me, and then we trudged down the Norton Road and the green double decker bus from
Letchworth passed us panting up the little hill to the bus stop by the tomato people, and I thought, “Oh, that must be the five and twenty past four bus,” but in the distance there was Mummy getting off, so I knew I was late again, but I hoped she wouldn’t notice. If they went on at me I would be Helen Keller, deaf and blind and beautiful and long suffering. I ran in the gate and round to the back door and there was my Mummy, but she was smiling and said, “I have a present for you, but only if you’ve been good!” I ran in and even Grandma was smiling so I didn’t have to be Helen Keller, I could be me, and I said...

Architectural and planning space, and cognitive and abstract space: While existential space combines experience, with often unconscious space making, architectural and planned space is a deliberate attempt to make conscious spaces. Such attempts are about function, efficiency, order, maps and land-use. Place in planned space is usually a location where specific interactions are to occur. Cognitive space is an object for reflection and theory—mapping and theories of geography derive from it, but it has little do with direct human experience, like why the road is always longer coming back than going. Abstract space “is a free creation of the human imagination and as such is a direct reflection of the achievement of symbolic thought” (p. 26). Place, then, when associated with space, has a multiplicity of interrelated meanings; it’s not a simple undifferentiated and constant phenomenon of experience, but is as full as the world of human experience and intention. The pond is the ocean is the world is the afternoon is the meaning of lived space, which comes from existential and perceptual “places.”

Chiaroscuro Placed Carefully In Space

Places, says Relph, are “sensed in a chiaroscuro of setting, landscape, ritual, routine, other people, personal experiences, care and concern for home and in the context of other places”
(p. 29). The essence of place is found in: its location and in its physical, visual form of landscape; in its persistence—even as it seems to be changing character through time; in its mutual reinforcing of community and identity where its landscape expresses commonly held beliefs (such as class) and of which we can say, “A place is its people”; in its private and personal nature for individuals within that community, and especially in their memories; in its ongoing ties to individuals, as expressed in their rootedness and “sparing” care for the place; in its profundity, as a centre of human existence, as “home, an irreplaceable” place that is not just a house, city or nation, but is foundational in man’s being; and lastly, in its drudgery and commonplacedness, as being where we do the “‘misery of everyday life’ with its tedious tasks, humiliations, preoccupations with basic necessities, its hardships, meanness and avarice... for drudgery is always a part of profound commitment to a place” (Relph, p. 41-2, citing Lefebvre).

I think we can see from this list, that for Relph, and for humanistic and phenomenological perceptions of space and place, the basic meaning of space or place does not come from its location or its purpose, instead places “involve a concentration of our intentions, our attitudes, purposes and experiences... places are the basic elements in the ordering of our ... world” (p. 43). The ordering of the world into summer afternoons and home and play and the knowingness of where the Bullocks are and where Grandma is.

Chronotope: The Kitchen And Garden At 84, Norton Road One Summer Tea Time

...A present for me! I went to take it out of its brown paper bag, and Mummy said, as her dinner that was now her tea simmered on the plate on the saucepan on the cooker and Grandma plopped three “nice boiled eggs for our tea, my dear” into the one of water next to
it and as I saw, with a sinking heart, the jar of fish paste on the table with the bread, on its bread board, all ready for Grandma’s slicing and buttering and pasting, yuck, she said,

“Were you good today? What did you do? Was she good, Mum?” Grandma said I had been very good and when Mummy asked me again what I had done all afternoon, I said,

“Nothing.” And then she handed me the bag and I opened it and found the Kaleidoscope and I squealed with joy because Mary Tookey had one and she would not let me see through it anymore because I was so fond of looking at the patterns in it she said I would wear it out and now I had my own, and I ran outside to the garden, stood by the water barrel with the snails in it and next to the jar where Grandma caught all the wasps before they came indoors and held it up to my eye and the world changed and shifted and I became old again, writing away a warm July afternoon, writing about the time and place and location of magic and wisdom and Home in my childhood memories...

A Specific Place Where Identities Are Arranged And Adjusted

I’m sure you’ve picked up the narrative trickery I employed, to use as illustrations of the sacredness and yearning for place and ‘sparing’ and authenticity, the memories of a golden summer childhood; one that likely never was and never existed. What I would like to do now is put us in a place that has figured prominently in my stories and Book of Hours, a favorite place for the body—the toilet. After that, I want to see if this leaky place might be one of Foucault’s heterotopias and contrast this notion of space with Relph’s humanistic understanding. I want to conclude by asking if changing spaces, and places, phenomenologically or poststructurally, allows us to play in different fields of possibility, or
if resistance and the shifting of power relations are as ephemeral as the patterns and colours swirling in a child’s kaleidoscope.

**Back To The Toilet**

When I started writing and thinking about and photographing places where my body had lived and been regulated and changed and had been the same, I realized how many were located in toilets and bathrooms. It seemed clear to me that such places were liminal—between public and private—and crucial in the ways that I thought I was re-presenting myself, or managing my identity, as Goffman would say. I say, “I thought,” because I recognize management as an effect of power and discourse and so you understand that when I say I think I am managing my identity or subjectivities, I might be, and I might not be… someone else might be or no one might be or the body might be or the mind might be. Effect, that’s the ticket out of relativistic space.

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*I was talking to Editya after dinner, another great feast of meat and potato, obviously Vikings are not “Green” why the heck did they call it Greenland, when they had no dietary conception of green? Anyway, we were talking about how feminists struggle in similar ways around the world. She was telling me how she works to get better facilities for students, like more toilets for women, and I laughed and told her that was important. It’s the kind of space that shows how they value men and women, I said. I told her my story of my first year as a publishers rep and how I had to go calling in Electrical Engineering where I was sweating enough about trying to fake it on linear progressions and circuits, and as I trudged up the four floors of the EE building on campus I thought I was missing something because, there was a toilet on each floor, at the north end, but they were all men’s, and I was getting desperate.*
I finally made it up to the office, and went in to the secretary and asked, “Where are the women’s toilets?” And she said, “Only one, down in the basement. But you can use ours, up here, the faculty and staff one.” Why only one? “Oh you’re just like those silly women students—when the building was put up in the mid 50s or 60s that was the ratio at UBC, four men to one woman, so they built four men’s toilets and one women’s in here, and they won’t change it. The women students protested but we said they can’t use ours, that wouldn’t be right, they’ll just have to line up down there.” I was stunned, I went out, peed, and combed my hair, and sold a few books, and in each older building I entered after that I looked, and sure enough, there were never enough women’s toilets, it was really bad in sciences, why the hell couldn’t they take out a few urinals and make some of them into women’s??

Editya said, “Just like in Warsaw!” Toilets, who knew we had them in common....

I found out I am not the only person who thinks toilets and spaces are important in not just personal, but cultural, gendered and classed identities. The historical provision of toilets in New Zealand, and Vancouver, showed how were gendered, and how spaces for women opened up when public toilets became available, initially in fine new department stores, but later as provided by the town authorities (Cooper, Law, Malthus and Wood, 2000; Andrews, 1990). Similarly, Law and Kitchen examined the provision of accessible public toilets in Ireland to argue that social justice and citizenship rights of disabled people are limited by ableist power geometries (2000). Lack of access, the poor design of those few public toilets offered, the misuse of the
disabled toilet spaces, and the resulting severe limitation of spatial behavior for the
disabled—I mean, just imagine not being able to go anywhere for longer than three hours
maximum—reinforce the partial citizenship experienced by disabled people, but a theoretical
position which understands that public toilet provision is shaped by individual and
institutional socio-spatial processes, would afford the disabled the political strategy of a civil
rights approach in dealing with policy makers.

Feminists and planners have shown that women suffer from inequitable provision of
toilets today, and the regulation of activities allowable in those spaces; it seems, for example,
that in Britain men are required under current statutory law to be provided with almost twice
as many toilets as women, and that “women’s toilets” don’t come under the jurisdiction of
either medical or municipal authorities; their need for better facilities is not taken seriously
by the predominantly male committees who plan public toilets (Edwards and McKie, 1994;
Greed, 1995). Ironically, research has shown women
take twice as long to urinate as men, and often must
use the toilet for other activities, such as
breastfeeding, but they only get half as many toilets
as men...

An international conference was held in
Hong Kong in 1994, on the toilet, so to speak, which
would surely have delighted Lawrence Wright,
whose lovely book called *Clean And Decent: The
Fascinating History of the Bathroom and The Water*

*Closet and of Sundry Habits and Fashions and Accessories of The Toilet, Principally In*
Great Britain, France and America, was the only text on the toilet available for years. Hundreds, nay thousands of planners and sanitation people, flocked to talk about toilets. Nod Miller’s autobiographical pieces on her class and her education (1989; 2000) contain some writing about the classed nature of the bathroom; Dreams of working toilets, she talks about the culmination of a climb to the middle class, of having an inside toilet and a fancy bathroom.

The toilet as a site for research and study was made famous in Laud Humphrey’s ethnography on gay populations’ use of the public toilet as a place for sex (1970); recently, a similar study focused, to some extent, on the toilet as a location for gay sex in Russia (Essig, 1996). Two other essays site the regulation, disciplining and organization of dirt—in general (Gurney, 2000), and on infant bodies in particular (Murcott, 1993)—in toilets, a vital part of the embodied home. Many accounts exist, now, in feminist, literary and social scholarship, of girls’ entry into menstruation and its association with toilets and bathrooms. Janet Frame’s (1984) description of the trauma of her first bleeding in the mid part of this century—her shame at having to use the girls toilet at school, with its attendant dilemma around the disposal of sanitary pads sets off a personal resonance in me—and a new study by Sue Prendergast (2000), show that disjuncture,
at the very least, still marks this rite of passage for girls.

And of course, most British teachers and administrators would concur with Brenda Simpson’s (2000) study, which noted the prevalence of the scatological and the use of the toilet as a means of contesting discipline by boys and girls in their secondary schooling. In the North American schooling of existential space, as Stinson (1995) tells us, most educators appear to want to suppress student physicality, not early grades, teachers enhance it; even in the attempt to train students to sit still and delay bodily inclinations, even ones so basic as going to the bathroom. Most often, as something that must “be obtain the best academic

The classic on performance, management of bodies is, of course, Mary Douglas’ Purity and Danger. Not specifically addressed to the toilet (quite a nice turn of phase), her work is founded on the premise that socially constructed attitudes toward dirt and the association of some spaces with seepage and leaky bodies (bodies, that is, leaking repulsively disordered menstrual blood, faeces, urine, semen, spit, vomit and mucus), renders those places as negative, and even taboo, and the bodies which employ those places as being, themselves, liminal zones, whose orifices and margins are dangerous threats to order and civility.
When I was writing my stories, and listening to other stories, one kind of space in particular seemed to figure prominently—the bathroom. Or toilet. Cultural differences abound in the naming of spaces, and the bathroom is no exception. Bathrooms, then, as now, in England, were gendered and sexualized spaces, and in them and about them circulated Imperial and raced narratives (see McClintock’s *Imperial Leather*, 1995). They also offer an opportunity to examine issues of power, and surveillance. I note that Foucault, too, takes careful note of bathrooms...

Discipline, he claims, presupposes observation. It must be able to see, and to be seen. Discipline needed an architecture of transparency rather than force, bulk, or opacity, thus hospitals in the classical age, “where a calculation of openings and filled and empty spaces passages and transparencies made the occupants visible” (1977, p.172). Similarly, school buildings were erected where pupils in their solitary cells could be observed through openings; a raised platform in the dining room allowed for observation, as did latrines that were installed with half doors, so that supervisors on duty could see “the head and legs of pupils, but those inside could not see each other” (p. 173). Such “innumerable petty mechanisms” formed a “microscope of conduct” (p.173), and the perfect disciplinary apparatus made it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly.

However, this was perfection, and realistically, discipline needed relays. Hence the intense, continuous surveillance that was instituted in workshops, schools etc., where clerks, prefects, and assistants had two duties, material ones and surveillant ones. In teaching, surveillance became an integral part of the relationship, and thus, through “hierarchized, continuous and functional surveillance disciplinary power became an integrated
system...supervisors, [themselves] perpetually supervised” (p. 177); disciplinary power was at once indiscreet and discreet. It is everywhere, always alert, but it functions in silence.

The bathroom spaces in my boarding and grammar school, and in my College were not so constructed. All the buildings had at one time been upper class residences and their educational functions were secondary. One of the College’s founders was Jeremy Bentham, the inventor of the Panopticon, and he certainly liked to be looked at... we used to go and see him often, stuffed and waxed in his box in the South Junction. In interviews about College, nearly everyone remembered the toilets, as well as Jeremy:

I can remember inside of the history department very well, it was this Georgian building with lots of stairs. And how we used to hang around in the corridors, you know? We sort of would circulate where the pigeon holes were on the first floor, by the toilets, and we would jam the corridor because it was narrow, with groups of us chatting, and lots of staff would have to squeeze past us to get by and up and down the stairs, you know?

*Letty*

Oliver recalled there was a common room, but that we didn’t use it. I said, “I remember hanging around in the hallway, the mail boxes used to be there and we used to stand and smoke, that was the hangout space, that was where you met people and” and he interrupted me, “Near the loo’s!”

And Rick said: “Oh my, yes. That’s where you met people, yes. And exchanged where the parties were on Friday and Saturday.”

The hallway was ours, it belonged to us, the students, and staff and faculty were not welcome; we constructed the space outside the toilets, by the pigeonholes, as ours. As Rick remarked, we planned our
social events there, we met up with people there, and just over a foot or so away, in the
toilets, the women used the mirrors, and discussed the men, and the men used the walls... to
write.

We were told their graffiti was a real work of art: in the student newspaper, the
*Sisyphus*, there was a
will shortly be available
couldn’t wait. Several
guided tours, but we all
the wall was scatological,
was about us, and about
professors and we wanted
we were just unable to
men from women. These
and sexualized, and we
could go and where we could not go...

One evening Letty and I were both working late in the department, and we were the
only ones there. We debated for fifteen minutes, whispering in the Reading Room, whether
we should go down to the men’s bog, but we thought we might be ‘seen’ and so left, in
regret. I wish now I had gone down there...

Perhaps I’ve insisted too much on the technology of domination and power. I am
more and more interested in the interaction between oneself and others and in the
technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon
him/herself, in the technology of the self.
A Heterotopology

It is necessary to notice that the space which appears today to form the horizon of our concern, our theory, our systems, is not an innovation: space itself has a history in Western experience and it is not possible to disregard the fatal intersection of time with space. (Foucault, 1986, p.22).

A statement which points up the contrasts between Relph's sacred spaces and the poststructural spaces of constructed subjectivities. (I must, because I like it, and because it's making a point to me, too, quote David Harvey, here, “It has become a serious game in academia to hunt the covert modernists (if you are a dedicated postmodernist) or to hunt the decadent postmodernists (if you happen to be in favor of some sort of modernist revival).” 2000, p.11-12. Ooops). On to Foucault and his heterotopias, which might be the body's space for resistance, or at least, its opportunity to “think differently.” First I’d like to consider the humanism which animates Relph’s work and present Foucault’s thoughts on humanism: “the little whore of all the thought, culture, morality and politics of the last twenty
years” (Foucault in Curette, 1999, p. 87). Foucault says it’s not so much his descriptions of humanism which are provocative, as that it is “precisely the use of humanism which constitutes the provocation.” He says:

I believe that the human sciences do not at all lead to the discovery of something which would the ‘human’—the truth about man, his nature, his birth, his destiny: in reality, what the variously human sciences are dealing with is something very different from man: systems, structures, combinations, forms etc. Consequently, if we want to deal seriously with the human sciences, we will need above all to destroy those possessive chimera constituted by the idea we have to seek out man. (Foucault, 1999, p. 100)

For Foucault humanism has come to be a matter of politics; here morality is reduced to politics and sexuality, and the moral has become the political. This has meant those in politics are dealing with political problems about demography, or industry, or consumption; at this level one does not encounter “man.” His conviction is that the idea of man has done us all a great disservice for many years; he’d like to think “one can define the best conditions for the functioning of society” through obtaining them, thanks to a certain relationship between demographic growth, consumption, individual freedom and the possibility of pleasure for all,” without ever relying on the concept of man.” He asserts that it’s the technocrats who are now humanists, and they consider they’re the only ones who can allow a definition of what the “happiness of man” is, and its realization (1999, p. 101). I pick this up in Relph’s writing—a humanistic view of space, which asserts that space must be organized, authentically, for the happiness of man, and the sparing of his places.

Foucault would see this as a use of the “myth of man,” a humanism that considers the aim of politics as being to produce happiness” (p. 101). Happiness, he avers, does not exist, let alone the happiness of “men.” Right. But it’s like the old 19th century dilemma over the non/existence of God, the fear that if god did not exist ‘everything would be allowed,’ and
the appalling realization that man could, but shouldn’t, function without God to keep him in line. Relph’s concern with the increasing threat of modern placelessness needs the myth of man, humanism, to justify its control over the functioning and creation and maintenance of authentic “place.” And of course, it was hard to read Relph from my chronocentric, feminist, early 21st century place; I constantly noted the absence of any one but “man” in his places. No women, no black people, not even many animals… No room for a disabled person who needs to go to the toilet, either. I am sure a humanist geographer writing today would address these issues, but would the myth of man, and the desire for his happiness still result in a technocratic politician being given the political right to determine what that happiness is? What I want to keep from Relph is his phenomenological perception of space and place, which sees place and space as being infused with intention, counter histories, and counter memories… Well, on now to heterotopias, places of poststructural possibility.

Foucault rehearses, in his typical way, the history of space—from mediaeval times, through to Galileo, and on to the present day. He notes that space is heterogeneous, and that “we live inside a set of relations that delineate sites and which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another” (p. 23).

However, he is interested in other sites, sites “which have the curious property of being in relation with all other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect.” These spaces “are linked with all the others, which however contradict all the other sites” (p. 24). There are utopias, sites with no real place, where society is presented in perfect form, and heterotopias. The latter are to be found in every culture and civilization, as counter-sites, which are outside of all places, even though we can actually pinpoint them in reality. Where are they, and how can
we read them? “As a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space,” and he offers a heterotopology. As we know by now, Foucault likes nice lists and here he gives us another, six descriptions of heterotopias.

*The first principle:* they exist in all primitive cultures. We can divide these into two main categories. *Crisis* heterotopias, privileged, or sacred, or forbidden places where people in a sort of transitional, but not permanent, crisis (menstruating women, adolescents, pregnant women, etc) could go, and which still existed in the 19th and early parts of the 20th century—places outside of society, like the young men’s military schools and the place of the honeymoon trip, where young wives were deflowered. (I see 21st century old folk’s “respite for their family” homes and juvenile remand centers here, but I could be wrong. Mind you, Maureen Hogan (2000) has suggested an alternative middle school for troubled or failed adolescents is a crisis heterotopia.). The second kind of heterotopias of crisis might be, he says, the heterotopias of *deviance*—here he names rest homes, psychiatric institutions, prisons and so on. (I can’t help but think of my mother in Three Counties Lunatic Asylum, in crisis, and deviant…

I see schools, heterotopias, and boarding school. In outside of time and family’d nor excluded, neither real day pupils nor real private pupils, neither young ladies nor tomboys. I think there were very few spaces in that heterotopia for us to “think
differently”—until we found hallways, toilets, spaces out/off on Saturday morning shopping expeditions to try out differing ways of being, thinking, doing...

The second principle: each heterotopia has a history and a precise and determined function within a society. Like the cemetery; unlike ordinary cultural space, the cemetery has links to other social spaces, like the family’s, and was once situated right at the middle of the pastoral power/centre of church and state. Now it usually lies beyond the bounds of the city; no longer nestled to its sacred and immortal heart, instead it’s the “other” city, where each family has its resting place. It’s interesting to note that cemeteries function quite happily in the body’s tale as places outside of culture, where a variety of activities like procreation, recreation and contemplation can occur.

The third principle: heterotopias are “capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, sites that are themselves incompatible” (p. 25). Foucault suggests cinemas, carpets and gardens... Now this, it is true, resonates for me... Here is a picture of the pictures, the place where I went every Saturday night when I was 16, 17, 18... it didn’t matter what was showing, we went...magic.

I went to London. I was vulnerable, I was open; I hurt. I need a reason, I thought, all panicky, a theme to get me through this next 17 days, something to keep me alive, focused, so
I don't drown in all this dark, horrible stuff that's already lapping at my feet. Gardens, I will do GARDENS.

And I did. I visited gardens, went out of my way to go into squares, into manicured parks, into rough fields. I found I could, sat in it I drifted Westminster couldn't stand the though they all want to yell at more about this cathedral than the guides do! My degree, (as if I only have one, or as if the other one is an impostor, a Canadian illegitimacy, a colonial MA) is in mediaeval history!!” I wandered around, found a gate, read the sign, “For the first time in six hundred years, we/I could go into the monk’s private garden, but only Wednesdays, please.” Lo and behold, it was Wednesday, so I went in and sat there in the monk’s garden... Edward’s monks, there before the Conquest, the ones who built the first Abbey... those of the second Abbey, William’s... and the few monks who survived the Reformation..., maybe Cromwell, had sat here, disapprovingly, in this garden overlooked by ghostly papist monks. Time is telling itself, I look around at the honeysuckle, the hollyhocks and the lupins and think, “How can I think of going back to the Canada I have lived in? I am all wrong. Personality is place, too. Place is lived, breathed. I need place, but where?”

The fourth principle of heterotopias: they are linked to slices of time, they open out into heterochronies. Some heterochronies accumulate time, like museums and libraries; opposite these are temporary
heterochronic spaces, such as fairgrounds and vacation villages, places of festival. The two are linked by their history of experience.

One of the things I have not written about, (and don't have space for, probably, as this dissertation has to subscribe to the “normal”/ized UBC rules of time and space and page lengths), are the joyous, sometimes painful, visits to the Stotfold village fetes, the survivors of ancient feast days, as a child and a teenager, held down at the Village Green. And at the school. Hot, summer term-ending-time; we combined that fete with a sports day and exhibitions, egg and spoon races, three legged hobbled races, jumping games, spelling contests, proud parents throwing coconuts at silly faces, hoopla rings over jam jars, sited on church land and overseen by the vicar—we were a C of E primary school, after all, and pastoral power vested us... I remember a fete day when we got to dress up and do a Spanish dance, and I was loaned one of my mother’s ball gowns, a flaming orange and red taffeta affair in which I thought I shone, and I left normal space and time... until my mother told she heard several parents and disgruntled children saying I was showing off... a spoiled identity and nasty little memory.

The fifth principle of heterotopias: they have a system of opening and closing that isolates them while it makes them “penetrable... [but] not freely accessible like a public place” (p. 26). Sometimes it’s compulsory to go into the heterotopia, as in going to jail, or to submit to ritual, like women who had to be cleansed of birth blood, who had to be “confined” before being allowed to go out into society. Some heterotopias are “entirely consecrated to activities of purification,” YES, TOILETS, for religious or hygienic reasons. Some of these
heterotopias, however, have only entries, and allow no access to any other areas of space—Foucault suggests the guest bedrooms in large hacienda's in South America fit this type, and surmises the motel room might function similarly in our society.

Certainly, when I traveled in my sales jobs and stayed at motels, most of the rural ones had rooms that could only be accessed from the outside, with no way to get into the main building from one’s room. In my schooling, and bathroom stories, I see Miss Snowdon’s bathroom as a heterotopia—one could go in for sick call, a ritual and purificatory activity, but one could not access any of Miss Snowdon’s other rooms. Thank god.

_The sixth principle of heterotopias:_ “They have a function to all the space that remains.” Inside them, their role is to create a space of illusion which exposes real spaces as illusory, or to create a space as perfectly organized as ours is messy and dirty. Foucault suggests the colonies of the Jesuits and the Puritans in the America’s in early modern times; I think of the illusory space that the school governors at Louth held in their minds, the space of the perfect school where we were perfect children, with no defects, no bodies and no problems…

Foucault ends his survey of heterotopias by giving us brothels and colonies and ships as “floating pieces of space;” he concludes that the ship is the heterotopia par excellence."
civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates” (p.27).

Just as humanistic as Edward Relph, hey? Of course, Foucault still hopes, even if he has given up the myth of man: “It must surely be possible to engage in a left-wing politics which does not exploit all these confused humanist myths.” (1999, p.100). David Harvey, who is rather critical of Foucault’s heterotopias in his book *The Spaces of Hope*, also entertains a similar thought... his aim “I hope, is to redefine in a more subtle way the terms and spaces of political struggle open to us in these extraordinary times” (p.18). I think Relph, Foucault, Harvey, and me, all might share the same hopes, diverse as are our experiences, genders and backgrounds, and our varied standing in the academic spaces we in which we place ourselves.

Last word to a woman, my teacher friend, Nan, “You’ve got to find your shape for your place.” And a story in which she retold my life and gave it power, meaning, and recovered for me the conviction that I could act to oppose other’s actions, a story which reinforces in me the desire to keep mowing the grass in my field of possibilities, so I can see which way to go, what paths to take across it, and which cowpies to avoid.

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Chronotope 63 Hampden Road Sometime In The 70s

A friend of Nan’s came to see her and stay with us. He’s a vegetarian from a commune, she said, so let’s be nice to him and he’ll cook for us. We were bemused at what he served up, big messes of stuff... well, we ate all his stewed beans, and waited for him to move on. Our bowels, happy with our diet of cigarettes, coffee and celery soup, certainly moved. We tried to cope with flatulence and the enormous amounts of roughage. Our bowels were
unaccustomed to this, yet we suffered politely, even though we went through lots of bog paper.

But he stayed forever, "did his thing," a veggie and vegan and peacey thing, as Nan recalled. I didn't like him, he made me feel guilty, I'm not sure about what, probably for wanting meat, and he also invaded my space. I said to Lyn, sotto voce, "He's really getting on my nerves!" In response, maybe he heard, and she reckoned it was a power thing, he said to me, "Are you getting your period, your aura today is such a bad colour." I was enraged, Nan says I actually GROWLED at him, informing him my aura was none of his business. I think I was so angry because he came into my bathroom, my body space.

I did however resist his attempts to create a network of power relations in MY home: I got out the Hoover, which I had never taken in hand before, and used technology to shift him. I waited til he started his daily omming and ahhing meditation in Nan's big room, and then I went in there too, and Hoovered all around him, behind the back of the settee, all round the cushions, up the back of him and down the front of him, til I Hoovered up his arrogant aura and he left...

A Last Look Through The Kaleidoscope

I began this reverie on spaced subjectivities by reflecting on how it might be that identities, places and bodies shift and move like the wheeling and careening shapes in the child's kaleidoscope. I think as I have written and read my way through the body's tale that this is one conclusion I must draw.

My subjectivities—white, female, heterosexual, imperial, middle-class, able but ugly, same but different—are in constant play; power relations act upon my body as do the child's hands on the Kaleidoscope, tossing me now this way and now that, ever moving, ever in transit, never arriving, longing for Home, for a place to shape, a space of hope and finding, instead, tempest tossed, I am thrown up on rocky shores, my many lives crimson pieces of flotsam drifting into odd yellow spaces, scarlet places, all the hues of gentian purple indigo
heterotopia, watery aquamarine shapes of resistance, darkly fluid places, bluefused with green intention and violet experience, lit by the pink of heartcolour. And nothing is ever saturated all the way through, for I can never stop long enough to take on a full hue, all the way through, shifting swirling colour...

Now, I've learned a lot about space, deep and constructed, about space as existential and perceptual, I've learned that ritual and the sacred, symbols and signs shift me, and are shifted by me, as I move... restless, anxious, sometimes knowing, sometimes unknowing... I can say, “Place is about knowledge; a practical, everyday superficial knowledge as well as a knowledge that is existential and of great personal experience.” I can say, “Space is about hope.” I can say, “Which play/ce is it now?” I can say, “I don’t know...” I do know that the effect of thinking I can shift, into heterotopias like my bathroom, your toilet, and our cemetery, the very thinking that I have a space/place where I have rootedness, where I am spared, and where I am cared for, these effects of space and hopeful place give me a personal heterotopology, my own locations of hope. It’s not important if it’s a real or true or essential or ontologically sound place or subjectivity or shape or identity, it’s my thinking that counts... effects...

Mind you, of course, I can always argue the other way too! It’s all in how you (re)present (yourself) isn’t it? Or not?

The Ugly Duckling doesn’t know who he is, doesn’t have any self worth, but at the end of the tale he capitulates to his heart, he follows his heart, one more time, and even though he feels he will be killed for wanting such a thing, having such a high hope (and we all feel such things, for wanting this, for having such high hopes, I am surely going to be punished for this,) but he goes ahead anyway. And there is something responsive among those who belong together, for he finds a familiarity, an affinity, a person, or a practice, or a work style, or life style, or a place to which you truly belong and something clicks, that’s it! But, ah, to identify it is one thing, but to merge with it, and become part of its psychic family, is a whole other thing. Clarissa Pinkoles Estes, The Ugly Duckling.
May, the beautiful month, as the old song goes, when young men wear green, or else risk ridicule. Even the Duc’s courtiers put on their vert, as they move out in rich glory to take the air. The finery of the women’s costumes suggest they are princesses, at the very least, and there are musicians serenading them as they ride. As in most of the Book’s pages, animals are as carefully rendered as the spires and turrets of the chateaux. In May, I find some things I liked at school, eat food, cry peeling onions, meet a farmer, and feel distinctly imperial.

They Appeared Suddenly In My Doorway...

body dtcs v

Things I Liked About School 5

Getting To The End/Truth Of It... Researching/Knowing One’s Onions

The Man Who Kept Cows For Company

Cabbage

Postcard Stories: Women, Deep Spaces And Gardens

Dreams Of Victoria Sponge Cake: Empire, Class, Gender And Sexuality

Bathroom Beginnings And Toilets Ending
Hi Valerie, We are back on campus on Thursday (tomorrow) and we were thinking that we would like to come visit you. Hopefully you will be on campus tomorrow. When will you be in your office? If you get this email soon let us know when you will be around. We have a bunch of workshops throughout the day so hopefully we will get a chance to see you. If not maybe next time. Things are going good with us and we hope everything is going good with you.

Take Care, Ariadne, Anna, Jennifer, and Angel look forward to possibly seeing you tomorrow.

While I was waiting for them I thought I’d tidy up my messy shelf on the bookcase. We don’t get our own office up here, we share, up to four TA’s or Sessionals in a room, with desks crammed in, and chairs, and when all of us are teaching and our students come to see us, we take turns going out, and sitting in the kitchen, or the empty classroom across the way.

I had finished teaching 314 in early December, marked like a mad thing and got all their papers finished on time. I had really quite enjoyed this class—even though it had been a grueling term. Receiving an additional cat half way through and seeing one of our faculty, a mentor of sorts, diagnosed with cancer, and visibly failing, was totally unexpected. He asked me to go up to Castelgar on the 2 week break to teach his class and I was pleased—actually, I was really touched—he wanted me to do it. I had planned to write but this seemed better.

When I called him to discuss the topics and resources, he sounded good and quite jolly. He told me about the reading he used to introduce gender, and he started to cry.

Professors don’t cry, they are not supposed to do that. I’d been quite harsh about him when I first met him, thinking he saw his philosophy of ed. and foundations of ed. background as so superior to my adult education one, and then I found him warm and human, and we used to sit and talk a lot about England and how he did his PhD at the Institute and where he used to eat around the Square, and now he was dying, and I couldn’t bear to hear him cry.
I enjoyed this course, it made me less ignorant of certain issues. Some of the articles were interesting and useful (actually most of them were). I liked not having to do an exam (they don’t assess much anyway). On a few occasions instructor seemed to favor one group over another (elementary vs. secondary) and there was also a few cases of unprofessional behavior.

His terminal cancer and my mother’s last legacy, all in one month, midpoint in the course. Poor SamCat. He had been tossed from pillar to post, foster home to foster home, from the time of my mother’s final illness, through her dying, my packing up and selling her/his house, her burial, and the mournful day when the moving men came and started to carry out the furniture from his/her only home. I had driven him up to Saskatoon, and he had spent the year farmed out at my cousin’s. He had not done well; finally, I paid to fly him from Saskatchewan to Vancouver, and he came a week before I went to Castlegar. I had a nice family wanting him, but it didn’t work, they didn’t take to him, too neurotic, they thought. Which of course he was; if I’d had five homes in one year I would be psychopathic.

I had to take him to live with me, in my 565 sq feet... his arrival precipitated a frenzy of territoriality amongst the other cats. Sam lived in my bedroom and William and Bert had the living room, and sprayed everywhere. Sam literally bounced off the walls, the bed and the furniture, and I finally left him the bed and came out and slept on the cat-peed couch in the living room for a week. I had to get up and go and teach every other morning. It was hard.

Thank you for the enthusiasm you displayed on most days.

Every time I looked at the cat I saw my mother’s face, at Christmas, in 1998, the last time I visited with her in her home, “I worry about him, who would take him if something happened to me? He’s sure good company. I get so lonely, but he’s here.” How could I not keep him? How could I keep him? I considered moving—my strata is quite strict about pets and the numbers it allows, not four for sure. But where would we go? I spent two weekends
looking for accommodation, with no luck. Sam lived as an illegal alien for three months in my bedroom, before I finally confessed about him. I would go to UBC for 8:30 classes and try to teach about gender and homophobia and not try not to worry about what the place would smell like when I got home, or whether my mentor would make it to Christmas, or how much was still to be done on my dissertation.

Work load was disrespectful to how much we have to cover in this term in all our courses. You said this was a graduate level course, if this is so where are the credits to my masters?

I enjoyed the sessions up in Castelgar. A very different group. Not as tough as my Vancouver class, more open it seemed to me.

Valerie was very open to different perspectives. She consistently challenged us to think about different issues. I learned a lot from this course.

When I came back, the secondary teachers returned from their first short practicum and we all moved into high gear. Assignments came thick and fast; some of the class, as I see year after year, began to crumble under the pressure. Someone in the TEO explained to me that when you take 800 into a program each year, some are bound to be ‘wrong,’ and not to fret too much. Is that ethical? I don’t know. I don’t get paid to think about that; how little they pay us for the privilege of teaching and prepping and marking 20 to 30 hours a week...

Excellent use of email... encouraged multiple viewpoints / provocative ideas.

Emailing students with positive feedback and encouragement was nice. Complimented us on being a “wonderful” class makes us feel good about ourselves, that is a good teaching strategy.

Emails should be limited to those that are very necessary.

As the term drew to a close, I had come to know some of the students well. I usually make an office hour visit mandatory, but I didn’t this time. I thought they had enough to do, but I missed getting to know all of them. It doesn’t seem like much, but a fifteen minute
conversation alone with a student gives them the chance to say a lot about what is going on for them, what makes them happy, and what makes them sad. I wished I had had the office hour assignment after all... I might have been able to understand some of the comments on their evaluations — most were fine, but a few had been outright hostile, and some puzzling.

You made inappropriate comments... I appreciate your warmth.

This course was more abstract, it would have been beneficial to have more practical applications.

You made it all very “real” to me. I loved the different instructional strategies you modeled for us.

I found the articles themselves more useful than the activities in class.

I looked up from my sorting of 1998’s summer term assignments (I can’t bear to throw them away, the students go on-line to get their grades and most never even pick up their papers, and I know this, but I spend an hour on each paper writing comments and attaching extra bits of paper and poetry etc... throw them out! Can’t!) and saw Vic and Ariadne standing in the doorway, looking a bit nervous. How wonderful! They came! There were some, there are always some, in the class who are just so... engaged and provocative—they label me provocative, but I simply respond to them.

She is very passionate. Commands attention because of her passion and knowledge. Cool purple shoes. Her lessons were thought provoking... I would gladly take another class taught by her.

Vic was there the very first day, when I walked in early, and he looked just the same then, as if he had just climbed out of bed, bedheaded and sleepy. I’d found out that he had a pretty sharp mind under that exterior. He looked as if he would always be late for everything, but he never was once, even when they get to that stage in the term when they begin to go all passive-aggressive, and start coming late and sulking and pouting, as if I/we/instructors are the ones who designed the whole ghastly mess. Vic had made his project a CD of rap music, demonstrating its usefulness in illustrating the course issues and content.
Ariadne re-discovered language and came to thank me after I handed back their first assignments, because, she said, no one had ever given her so much feedback. I thought she was going to complain about all my red writing. She found the term transformative, she said and produced a book, as well as a paper and poster, which explored the concept of learning through quotation, reflection and narrative, for her final project.

Anna, who floored me the first class by coming in late, telling us all about having to wait at the dentist, or something, as if we were interested and cared about what had happened to her, as if we all already knew each other. And who continued to ask the kind of questions that stump you and puzzle you and, finally, you look forward to them and wait for them, a challenge! She did a final project that examined the new Ministry assessments to show how slanted and biased they were; she used potato’s and toothpicks...

...and Angel, who had loved “story” and the interview assignment, had originally wanted to do a genealogy about her family and the women in it, but in the interests of time “just” showed video clips and wrote a paper on poverty, and how it affects learning... We had exchanged a few terse words on email, at one time. She didn’t like something I said, and told me so. I was glad for her forthrightness.

And Jennifer, quiet and thoughtful, who completed a project on gender, and was a calm presence in the classroom; she’ll make a good teacher, I often thought. She sat on the desk by the door, now, watching us and listening, and taking it all in...

Treats everybody equally.

They didn’t have long to spend with me, they had a series of workshops all day, then back to their practicum schools, but they told me all about the kids in their schools, Anna was upset by the way a special needs girl, gifted, was being treated, and one of the others talked
of being used to play "bad cop, good cop" with the kids and so on and so on... it was all scary, funny, exhausting, horrible, tiring, wonderful... It was teaching. I was so pleased they had come to see me to tell me all this. I told them I was pleased, too. Enough of this keeping a cool professional distance. My mentor had told me I was good, and I wanted to do the same. I encouraged them to keep on trying, to remember it's all worthwhile. I thought how badly I had felt when I read some of their evaluations. And how good about some others.

You have not done one thing I find useful or worthwhile. You are the worst instructor I have ever had.

Hi Valerie, It is Vanna from your EDST 428 class last summer 2000 term. I hope things are going well. I just wanted to say a couple of things. I received a continuing contract teaching Kindergarten (half-day) and grade 5 in the afternoons. It is great. I feel that EDST 428 was the most influential and useful course that I took in the program. Most of the things I learned in the program are not the things I needed to know. I enjoyed your class and your teaching. How is your research and thesis going? I look forward to hearing from you.

They gathered all their stuff and rushed off. Before they left, one of them, Angel or Jennifer, asked about my dissertation and what conclusion I had reached about it all. I told them, "I've figured out it's all about power, how education tries to mold us, it tries to bring down this grid, like a big waffle iron, over top of us and make us fit in the little squares, and it doesn't always work because there are spaces in between the grids and we can ooze out of them," and Ariadne laughed, and said, "I ooze out right over the edge and fall on the floor, I'm so far away from fitting!" and I may have laughed, but I wanted to cry, and say, to all of them, "Go over the edge, over the edge, that's what I wanted to teach you in 314!"

But they had to get back and I had to keep sorting my things and then go home and see what SamCat and Bert had done, and finish my educational philosophy statement for a job I was applying for. I wished I had had time to tell them the story I put in it... but they heard lots of my stories in class. I hope they remember me as I remember David Cooper, or
Mr. Strong, as provocative, and cruel at times, but oh, so memorable... Here's the story I didn’t tell them—maybe it will be one of those bits in the dissertation, you know, the implications things or conclusions, or not...

On October 26, 1999, I went along to the history department to interview the last person on faculty who had agreed to talk to me. All of the other’s I’d interviewed were people who had taught me, or who had been on the staff as lecturers or administrators, people I knew when I was there. This person, a senior faculty member, I didn’t know, but I’d heard a lot about her. She had been an undergraduate and postgraduate, just before my time, moved on, returned to lecture, and eventually became chair of the department. Everyone told me she had really changed things... She was the only woman ever to reach such a senior position (she was one of the only women faculty, at all!) and I had it in my head that, taking into account the time frame and new social movements that percolated through higher education when she was making those changes, she was likely a feminist. I couldn’t have been more wrong; she was only interested, she said, in making things work efficiently, and run smoothly. I found her cold, and difficult to talk to, which was likely also a response to my North Americanisms, my attempts to have her talk about herself and her experiences, to see how those contextualized and illuminated and prompted my own counter-memories. She thought I was only interested in "gossip," and demanded I tell her what I was "up to." I got a bit flustered.

I said, “My own experiences here were so mixed, so disappointing, and so unpleasant, that when I heard about the changes you made to the dept and the curriculum and so on, I thought it might be linked in some way to that, that perhaps you wanted to make things better for women, or minorities.”
I'd like to think she got better, more open, at that point, but she didn't. She told me instead about the changes, quality assurance, surveying students, streamlining things, renovating the physical spaces and so on... She said,

"You're foolish to think one person can change anything, no one person makes a difference."

I stood up to leave, and said (bravely, because by now I was totally intimidated and I could see what it must have been like to try to stand up to her, and all of a sudden I remembered that she was the one who stopped the business of giving "free dinners," as she said, or, as we all fondly remembered them, the lovely sherry parties and teas where we all mixed up, faculty, staff, graduate students and undergrads, in a formal, and yet really pleasant hour-long gathering in the History Library, laughed, and talked, to professors we didn't normally even dare approach, where even the secretaries were seen to smile and giggle... )

"Well, thank you so much for giving up an hour to see me, and I think we'll have to agree to disagree," I was starting, finally, to get angry, "because if I didn't think I could change things, me, just me, doing some things, any thing, to make things better, I would have to kill myself! Goodbye!" I think I got myself out of the room in one piece, but it took me three cups of tea to thaw out, and even now, when I read the field notes I made afterward over at London House, I feel angry and dismayed, all over again.

So if I have to say what my educational philosophy is, this story sums it up, in a narrative and affective way.
body dies five

I have never had a good relationship with my breasts. As a child they were the first bit of me to start changing; horrifying me, dismayng me and, I felt, betraying me. Secondary sexual characteristics, they called them in Biology O level class, but to me these traitors meant I couldn't be a tom boy, couldn't be ungendered, meant I had to be a girl, and worse, a grown up girl. My physicality and my lived experience of it as sexual and alarming was, I suppose, quite in line with Mary Douglas' theorizing on the sexed body, and its menacing nature... my boyfriend even called me a threatening female... when the breasts first started to grow, around the time of my first ghastly period and its attendant parasitical infestations, I am sure I associated them with the disorder and the unruliness and the dirtiness of “it” all.

My mother made things worse by mocking me; she was five foot two, petite, and beautiful and she could have modeled for those Goddess bras. She had a large “bust,” at least a 34DDD and it was wedged firmly into Spirella brassieres (she always wore a brassiere, never a bra). She laughed at what she called my little fried eggs, and I was even more humiliated when she demanded money from my father so we could buy a container for them.

When I went to boarding school I was the only girl who had such a holder, and a need for it, and I envied flat as a pancake Margaret Karlsberg who wore only a liberty bodice until she reached the fourth form. Brassieres in the early 60s were mammoth and ugly
constructions, rather like the ones Madonna made mock of a few years back, with pointy
ends and straps that were engineer designed. Most of the other girls didn’t get anywhere near
the ends of their points, but I did, and I hated having to keep going up a size. 32A, 34A, 34B
oh no, 36C. If I could have removed my breasts, I would have done. They seemed to be a
doubled sign of...something... what I wasn’t sure of, but I didn’t like the messages they
were giving off.

In photos of me at the time, I am always standing, or posing, hunched over, usually
with my arms crossed to hold myself in/back/away from the sexual world and its gaze. This
was always at odds with the message to “Stand straight Valerie Chapman! Ladies should be
straight, don’t slouch like a shop girl! Chest out, shoulders back!” But that made the pointed
symbols of ...something... stick out and I was not going to do that!

Years later, in London, the swinging 70s city, we literally were expected to swing; a
combination of a misread women’s lib and sexual freedom I for one didn’t really want to
have, meant we were to doff our brassieres and let all hang loose. Jane did, at her boyfriend’s
urging, but I noted she looked uncomfortable. For me it was both a class thing—ladies don’t
let it all hang out—and a personal distaste for unfetteredness. I remember a sexist male comic
of the time making a joke about a well endowed young lady running for a bus and knocking
herself out, and how the boys at college repeated this joke endlessly, sniggering in the
hallway outside the loo’s, eyeing us as we came up the steps and in the door, to see if it
would be something we would have to be careful about... I refused to doff my containers.

When I went to Canada, I compromised and started to wear minimalist Dici bra’s. I
even sold them at Eaton’s in Saskatoon, when I was in training for managership of the
lingerie department. But the majority of women wanted the full figure Playtex models and
some sneered at me, disparaging my flatter than normal chest (it was during one of my
thinnish anorexic like time zones and I was weighing in at under 110 lbs) and wondering out
loud if I was any use to them in the fitting room, because how would I know, they said, what
it was all about, to be needing firm support? My current boyfriend accused me too, of making
my nipples show to attract male attention, as if it were something I could do at will—I tried
explaining I was always cold and asexual, but it didn’t seem to be heard.

As the years passed, we became more used to each other, me and my breasts. But it
was a long time before I could actually shop for a bra and take some pleasure in it...

When I was running in London every morning, for an hour or more around Hyde
Park, during the horrible summer days just before my mother died, trying to pass the waiting
days, expecting her doctors to call and to tell me how ill she really was, trying to decide if I
should cash in my ticket and return, four and half months short of my official date, just call
the research thing quits, because it was much more important to be there with her than
interviewing silly people at UCL, I found a little goddess in a garden one morning.

She stood on her plinth, aiming a small bow, and gazing out over the roses, ignoring
the traffic in the Mall behind her, disdaining the Japanese German Taiwanese Dutch
American cameras shooting her. She looked to some horizon beyond us all. She had a lovely
rounded stomach, *Just like mine!* I thought in delight, not a flat one, oh, and she had lovely
little breasts that somehow were beautifully part of her, not things stuck on her to advertise
her utility as a female sperm receptacle... I was mesmerized, both by her serenity and her
beauty. I left the next day to return to my mother, but I didn’t forget the little goddess.
In September I was back again, at Nutford House, and every day I ran along Brown Street to the Edgeware Road and then to Albion Gate and into and around the park, dodging felled tourists, homeless men and daft Labradors, round the ponds, fountains and Horseguard’s parade, waiting for my first glimpse of her, and there she was, still there, still drawing back her bow, still so fine and still....

I knew she was a Victorian goddess, someone’s 19th century conception of Diana the Hunter, but I thought her much older and much younger... I stood and stared at her every day, and gradually, as the days progressed, acorns falling on my head as I ran under the oak trees, avoiding Rolls Royce’s and Irish beggars, I began to think my stomach and my breasts, though not as gracefully rounded as hers, were ... acceptable. When I left, I took with me her memory and my body’s relation to her roundedness and I felt as beautiful as her. My breasts had become part of me, and even my stomach I patted with love and humor, for it was as curved and as protuberant as hers, and after all, what could be better than looking like a goddess?

I returned in June of the next year, armed with my Canon, ready to shoot her shooting at the distance. Unfortunately someone had decreed it time for her to be bathed and renovated. There she stood, proud and stunningly oblivious of the scaffolding and signs and
men crawling over her. Her breasts and belly contained within iron and wire and regulations about hard hats to be worn.

I wonder now, as I scan her picture and put it here if it was a sign? Last week my breasts hurt and I went to the doctor who muttered something, hmmm, yes, something there, but it’s good when it’s bad hurt, let’s see wrote out the clinic, asking about my family’s cancer, two aunts dead of breast cancer, three of her siblings and herself dead of lung cancer, her remaining two sisters both saved from tumors by surgery in the last year, my cousin’s recent death of bowel cancer, and I wondered, have my breasts been, all along, the traitors I first thought them? Was the Goddess lying to me?
Walking hand in hand down the lane by the school on our Nature Walk and *dents des lions* will make you wet the bed.
The sun and the clouds make patterns in the sky
and May flowers brought home are unlucky.
Green-burred wooly socks falling down, follow Miss, our teacher
through the fields of
Ragged Robins and Queen Anne Lace and Speedwell and
Tansy and Bindweed and Pimpernel.
Clinging tight sticky palm to palm in case
the cows come over and we can’t run fast enough
or we get lost in the vastness behind the school and
we are six.
GETTING TO THE END/TRUTH OF IT: KNOWING ONE’S ONIONS

How hard it is to cut the threads that tie us to others, how hard to get away from my participants, to listen to their words, not as the lovers they were, not as the friends they were, nor the teachers, professors they were. I want them to be... not that, I want them separate, I want to be objective about them, and what they said and felt about me, I want to be a VALID researcher. I don’t want to worry about them.

I keep thinking of that silly phrase, he or she, (usually he, it’s an English phrase), he really knows his onions. And I see those bags of onions you can buy at Safeway, the ones you buy when you don’t know your onions, which should be bought one at a time with much scrutiny and peeled with care, lest tears flow. My participants are like those bags of onions.

The onion skin bags, anyway. Nets, close woven orange bags. My friends/lovers/teachers are the bag, in the bag, and I with them. Hard to get out them out of the bag, the onions, have to snip each strand, very hard to do when you are in it, getting an arm out to wield the scissors. Cutting each thread is tedious, all that effort, squeezing out a limb and digits, and the sack shifts and you have to start all over again, in a different spot, annoying and frustrating.

And then when you’ve made a big enough hole you can climb out, but the damned bag drops on the floor, sticks to your foot and comes along with you. With all the onions in it. Get off me! So you decide to leave the onions in their bag; some are mouldy, some are bad, some are sweet smelling and good, and you know them all, they may be smelly but they’re your smells and your roots are their roots and it’s just as hard to leave a smelly old bad onion, or throw it out, as it is to keep a nice little cute one... monster adults or weeny crisp shallots, one knows one’s onions...
Hard to do, to leave them, and first I had to pull their skins off, down, and down. Is it fair to do that? Why don’t they have a space for that on the form, *Does your research involve peeling the skins off your onion participants, exposing their tenderest middles? If so, explain how you will live with that.* Part of doing my kind of autoethnography, I said at the beginning, very smugly, was going back to the centre and telling them, showing them what I had become, exposing my skins, layers of skins, the skins they grew on me. Far from being a self-indulgence, it’s clearly a bit of action research, I said, and I had thought, as I was doing it, I’m shaking some up, jolting others, making them think about where they are, what they are doing. I noticed this especially in conversations I had with onions/people who thought they were successful.

Richard, Oliver, Rick, sad skinned men. Letty—in transition. Different jobs, different men, two marriages, houses all over the country, back into teaching, pulling off those skins, peeling that onion, I cried.

But the other, smaller sweeter onions like Mr. Strong, and Nan, for them, I peeled my skins and watching me, realized they were very satisfied with where they were, were fascinated with my process, and me, and the telling of their lives to me... even so, they reflected at length, saying I remember this, I remember that, and I wonder if more skins were shed than needed to be... And what is true, which onions can I say I know, whose skin shall I peel now? That damned bag is still stuck on my foot, I wonder if I can get back into it?
THE MAN WHO KEEPS A FEW COWS "FOR COMPANY..."

Harry asked me to meet him at the farmers market at 15th and Victoria, and I did. Lovely sunny day, lots of wind, when I was running in the morning it was all I could do to keep going into its teeth, and sure enough, it was gamboling around the parking lot where all the stalls were set up and it chased me into the middle of the stroll where I stopped to see organic garlic, and wooden boxes with cats on, and then right across from me a little stall, green and white cloth and organic grains or something written across the banner and a woman talking to a man in a hat, Larry!

He looked just the same, or as well as any one can, after, how many years? 1975 to now, 26... short, still with a little moustache—how my uncle Wallace hated men with moustaches, said men who wore them were up to no good, sly, real mountebanks, at the very least, a Saskatchewan Douglas Fairbanks—and he had indeed lost most of his hair, as he had told me, but he looked sprightly and still so good-natured and his blue eyes glinted with humor.

He looked up and saw me, we both said “Oh!!” I went behind the stall and we hugged as I said to the lady buying wheat, "Sorry but we haven’t seen each other for 26 years!” and she said, “Oh, that’s nice, imagine that!” Larry said he would have known me anywhere, the lady paid up and left and we had a chat. All his stuff looked so neat, in little bags, which said Novaterra or something. He looked so nice, he always was so nice, and he was busy telling me he had put aside some stuff for me, and he grabbed one of his canvas bags and started putting into it flax, green peas, rye, barley, all certified organic.
Who would have thought that the conservative young French farmer, who had
courted me when I came to Canada, would turn out to be one of the few organic farmers in
Saskatchewan? He told me all about his wife, Laurieanne, and his three kids, two of them
‘store-bought,’ and one his natural child. He loves them all, and his life. Imagine, going
organic back in 1990! (Imagine, he had wanted me to marry him and live on that farm!)
Waiting 4 years for transition, and then no-one to sell his stuff to, he said guys were waiting
on the corner in town, laughing at him, “When you go broke Larry, we’ll buy you out,” but
he said, “Who’s the one with the new truck now?”

He was smiling at me and it was altogether the nicest thing that’s happened to me in a
long, long time. He told me I hadn’t changed, and how much he had liked me, how my
cousin Shelley had given him my number and so he had phoned me.

After the market we packed up and we looked at my mother’s car and he wanted to
fix the door for me, and then we put my bag of his stuff into my trunk and went off in his
new farm truck for a bite to eat at the Island fish place; we talked and talked, about back
then, and his family, and the farm, how I was so English when I came over, and he so French.
I told about going to school, and even about Heloise, and about my mother dying, all sorts of
things. He said I was still “so good looking,” classy. Lovely man.

We both remembered that I had not gone to bed with him; he said he always
remembered me as a “nice clean girl,” and had nothing but good memories of me. I think I do
of him. He gave me roses. I told him I still have the bowl they came in. He said I had turned
into a fine woman and that God puts things in our path to teach us things, and I should be
proud of myself for what I had done. Right. I forgot he was a staunch Catholic.
He held my hand in the truck and I thought about him doing that all those lifetimes ago in Delmas, driving around in the summer and winter, how nice he had been... but I just didn’t love him. My mother said he was just crazy about me. I remember that. I was embarrassed by it. He kissed me goodbye and my body reacted exactly the same way; it cringed, how strange, things don’t change, are we sure there are no essential elements?

He has 500 hens, and did have organic cattle, but he sold them, all except a few he keeps “for company.” He wants to sell the farm, move to Edmonton where his wife is living while his girls go to the U of A, buy an apartment block, and run that. “How will you live without the land,” I said? How will he, without the sky and the fields? And the cows?

Oh, and he cut down a billboard on the highway at Delmas and nearly went to jail... they wouldn’t let him put up a pro-life sign, so he chopped down the Austin’s saddlery sign with a chain saw, to make his point.... He always had spirit. And he always liked me and my body...
Cabbage

When I was five I went to school for the first time. My father was stationed at RAF Coltishall, and with all the other airforce children, I went to the village school. It was outside of the base, down a lane that seemed endless, and which required us to take a bus.

I was not happy there. I was happy at times. Little children don't sit around and think, Am I happy? I went, I did lessons, I learned spelling and I was good at that, and we had reading, and I was good at that, and we had sums and I was good at them—for a while. We did art, too, made pictures with all the lovely powdery poster paints. When we finished, the pictures were put at the back of the room. On Fridays, oh, I began to not like Fridays, we had tests. The teacher went to the pile of pictures, poster painted glories, now stiff and dusty, and tore them into neat little strips. We all got a strip of paper, with glorious colours on one side and dirty white on the other. We got our pencils ready, sharpened and poised. Then the teacher read out the questions and we had to write the answers down on the back of the paper, flattening it out, and we had to do it fast. She didn't wait for us to finish. So I learned speed. Good for words and spelling and remembering the names of countries and rhymes for the months, thirty days hath September, April June and November... but then we had sums questions too, and I learned panic, I could not do them... not fast.

In the summery time, we went outside and along the lanes and did a nature lesson, but that wasn't very often. Mostly we did reading and sums and learned our times tables.

At playtimes we went out into the playground and found our little groups and played. We skipped and did hopscotch and played jacks, but not much. Mainly for the little ones like us it was running around and having fun and screaming or sitting huddled up and scared. The boys played in their bits of the playground and we played in ours. There were separate toilets,
too, for boys and girls. Cold and dank, and dripping wet, and open top and bottom like cattle stalls. It was hard to remember to go at playtime.

We had a little bottle of milk at playtime, which I hated. I never drank mine. I didn’t like milk. At lunch we went to the canteen, in the building next to the infants classroom. We could smell it cooking all morning. I loved food, and looked forward to dinnertime, but I learned it was not nice food like my mummy’s, and so I didn’t eat much of it. I especially hated cabbage and Brussels sprouts, and more than anything that thing they called “greens,” a hard and tough and dark green kind of cabbage. I always left that, neatly, pushed to the side of the plate. I had good table manners and didn’t make a fuss, just moved the greens to the side, ate what else was there and then put my knife and fork together to show I had finished and then sat and waited for pudding.

The teacher, a Teacher, what teacher, a horrible teacher, came pacing along. “Eat that up!” She said.

“No.” I said.

“What do you mean, who are you? Eat that up, you can’t have pudding until you eat those greens!”

“No, I don’t like it. It’s all stalks.”

I should say that eating stalks was, to me, like nails on a blackboard, like having pins under my nails, I was absolutely incapable of biting down on stalks. A strange aversion, but all children have similar phobias. And it was a phobia. I could no more bite down, chew a cabbage stalk than I could chew grass, or straw, but that doesn’t tell you the nausea that flooded me even at the sight of greens and their stalks. My mummy knew, and my grandma and my auntie Barbara, they would never insist I eat them — they knew I could not. Now this
horrible terrifying monster woman was standing huge and angry, screaming at me, “Eat those greens! Immediately!” I sat, and said,

“No, I can’t eat them. I can’t eat stalks.”

She grew taller and angrier, “EAT THEM!”

“No,” I whispered, “I can’t.”

She stared hard at me, squinched up her eyes, and said, “You are not leaving this room until you eat those greens!”

We stayed, locked in combat. I was not angry, just sick. She was angry. The pudding came and went, the other children gradually fading away. Still I sat, mute, looking down at the plate with the cabbage stalks. She prowled the canteen, coming back to me again and again, “Eat those greens! You’re not leaving until you eat them.” Eventually, there were just the two of us—and the pile of greens on my plate.

“You stupid girl!” she screamed, “EAT THOSE GREENS NOW!”

“I can’t,” I whispered.

I was like a rabbit before a stoat. I could not move, nor think, nor even feel, so paralyzed with fright was I. I could not even comprehend, or even form the thought, why is she being so mean to me, the terror and the nausea and the closeness of the stalks their smell, was all I could be… fear, smell, no noise, the two of us. Silence. “At least try,” she finally said. She was, I suppose, realizing that it was time for lessons again, and she needed to be gone. “I can’t.” I said. Not out loud, I was carved of stone, but for the tears that were now sliding down my face.

In a final effort of monstrous will, she said, “Pick up your fork!” Like the rabbit, I trembled but I managed to, huge though it felt in my hands, which were shaking. “Put some
greens on the fork!” I did. “Put them in your mouth—at least get some in, then you can go.” I heard that—put some in. But stalks, sick sick sick. I put some stalks on the fork, and raised it to my mouth, Sick. Sick smell, smell, sound of them crunching, teeth in the stalk can’t do it, rush of vomit, and all over the plate and me... tears, tears and the smell of cabbage stalks, for ever.

I don’t remember her cleaning me up, nothing. Just the smell of cabbage stalks and the lesson I learned. Eat the food, do what they say? No, hate them, trick them if you can, pretend, never eat the cabbage stalk ... look like you’re eating the stalks, but don’t.
Postcard Stories: Women, Deep Spaces and Gardens

In 1864 John Ruskin, an illustrious figure in British post-secondary educational history, delivered a speech at Manchester Town Hall, "Of Queens’ Gardens," which came to embody Victorian sexual and spatial politics. Ruskin spoke to the white, bourgeois women in his audience, the Queen’s of his lecture title. He reminded them that it was Man’s destiny to stride out daily into public space. To wage labour and war, to create, to discover, to conquer, and perhaps, to get an education? Their destiny, however, these “flowers” of Womanhood, lay in the Home; in their gardens, private, domestic, feminine spaces, they could bloom—passively, piously, peacefully—relieved of harsh educational rigours.

Understanding Educational Space

Men of the ‘good labouring class’ were welcomed into adult educational spaces; the history of adult education in Britain is the history of the workingman. When University Extension lectures began to be offered around the country, they were delivered in both afternoon and evening formats. “In the case of the afternoon lectures, probably 70% of the audiences are ladies of leisure and older school girls.... The great majority of courses are delivered in the evening to the professional classes of tradesmen and their families, and of artisans” (Kelly, 1962, citing Roberts, p.131). The afternoon lectures were usually offered at a much higher cost, so that the needy men in the evening could be helped via a lower fee, even though the fees were still too high for the men who most wanted to attend. The university extension was thus taken over by a new class—the suburban lower middle class, and mostly as Carpenter, an Extension lecturer, remarked wearily, ‘by the young lady class’” (cited in Armstrong, 1988). It may not have served the urban proletariat for whom it had been wishfully designed, but women profited from it.
immensely, as did female Pupil-teachers, one of whom said, “I feel the extra-mural lectures were a turning point in my life” (Kelly, 1962, p.26).

In 1903, Mansbridge and his wife Francis formally convened the Association for the Higher Education of Working Men, the WEA; he borrowed 2s and 6d from her housekeeping money to finance the new venture. But women were not admitted to the WEA, nor to the Labour Colleges—they were as unwelcome there as they were at Oxbridge and at the new universities (for non-conformists, Jews and Catholics), like University College London. A Mrs. Bridges Adams founded the women’s Labour League in 1906, and pushed for a Labour College for women. As women were not welcomed either in the Cooperative Movements’ educational activities, Margaret Llewellyn Davies founded the Women’s Cooperative Guild. One of the women who attended there, a Mrs. Layton, said:

Sometimes my husband rather resented the teachings of the [Co-operative Women’s] Guild. The fact that I was determined to assert my right to have the house in my name, was, he said, against the Guild. The Guild, he said, was making women think too much for themselves… It is impossible to say how much I owe the Guild. It gave me an education and recreation… from being a shy nervous woman, the Guild made me a fighter.
(Llewellyn Davies, 1977)

After a split amongst the men over what counted as curriculum and ideology, women were finally allowed into adult educational spaces—as long as the classes’ content could be guaranteed to “enhance the home comforts of the working man.”

Vera Brittain caught a glimpse of the landscapes of learning that lay outside her narrow, sheltered provincial “garden.” She found the path out, and spoke glowingly of the opportunities afforded her by the WEA. When she attended the Summer Extension Institute at Oxford, she found her “inconvenient thirst for knowledge and opportunities” slaked, and awakened again. She says,
There was a light on my path, and a dizzy intoxication in the air; the old buildings in the August sunshine seemed crowned with a golden glory, and I tripped down the High Street between St. Hilda’s and the Examination Schools on gay feet as airy as my soaring aspirations.
(Brittain, 1989, p. 64)

But as Virginia Woolf recounts in *A Room of Her Own*, getting out of the garden is one thing, being fully admitted to public educational spaces is a different story. Surely things have changed now; women—and Others—we are not simply hothouse flowers, exotic blooms, walled in to fecund and floral homes/places/gardens... or are we?

At my university, only 13.3% of the full professors are women; this is better than fifteen years before, when there were only 35 female full professors as opposed to 678 males, but there are still 676 male full professors... (UBC Reports, April 5, 2001, Equity Office Report: 2000). In Commerce there’s only one female full professor out of 40; in Education we do better at 14 out of a total of 46, but in Arts, wow, only 32 full professors out of 164 are women. Needless to say, female assistant profs are well-represented—new hires or never made it’s... the figures don’t tell you that of course. In 1995, my first year at grad school, 40% of women graduate students reported great dissatisfaction with their supervisory and dissertation experiences (Guppy & Trew, 1995). I deal with three kinds of adult women students. Women pursuing graduate degrees in adult, higher or administrative education, women pursuing professional degrees in education (pre-service teachers) and women who come to my Faculty Development workshops to learn instructional skills. I hear many stories of inequitable spaces... and I have my own stories. If “we teach who we are” (Palmer, 1998), then we need to continue telling our stories of who we are—even if they aren’t stories of gardens fit for Queen’s.
Deep Space

Many of those working in the humanities and social sciences have recently become interested in questions of place, space and landscape—in the ontological significance of what Neil Smith calls deep space. "The twentieth century has ushered in the discovery of deep space, or at least its social construction... deep space is quintessentially social space; it is physical extent infused with social intent." (Smith, 1990, p. 160.) Studies of deep space have multiple origins, but they treat the production of social space, of human spatiality, in new and immensely productive ways. So, "The geographies written into many of Michel Foucault's histories of the present..." (Gregory, 1994, p.4) are a starting point for educational researchers, as well as geographers (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). Indeed, Foucault said in his essay on Other Spaces (1986), "the great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, with history... the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space" (p.22).

Foucault has shown that the disciplining of bodies proceeds from their distribution in space, and that the school first perfected the production of disciplinary and transparent space for "supervising, hierarchizing and rewarding" (1977). Feminists have linked spatial structures with the production and reproduction of masculinist societies, making clear that "behaviour and space are mutually dependent" (Rose, 1993, p.12). They are concerned with the everyday way that women live their lives, and the spaces that they traverse, inhabit or occupy each day for, "The everyday is the arena through which patriarchy is (re)created—and contested" (p.18). Schools, whether for adults or for children, are comprised of such "everyday spaces," where such space works to inscribe power relations, and frequently, to maintain that oppressive binary, public/private, which is so imbricated in masculine/feminine spatial metaphors. Cultural geographers have shown that space has no prediscursive ontological status, but is in fact
produced (Lefebvre, 1991). In that space of (re-)production, oppressive categories such as race, heterosexuality, gender and ability continue to flourish. David Harvey underscores the spatiality of politics, “the assignment of place within a socio-political structure indicates distinctive roles, capacities for action, and access to power within the social order.” (1990, p. 419)

I wonder: What places/spaces are women and Others assigned within university/adult education? Are we still supposed to occupy our own enclosures, stay in our own gendered and raced spaces/gardens? Here is a little snip from a recent text:

I am a fat, old, silver haired university student. Using the library intimidates me because the entrance boasts very small entry and exit turnstiles. When I am in the library, I miss meals rather than embarrass myself entering or leaving more than is absolutely necessary. I survive meal times by sneaking in sandwiches and juice in my backpack, and consuming them furtively or hiding them behind computers and large piles of books. The hateful turnstiles are designed for six-foot, flat-chested, slim-waisted males with 60 percent of their body weight in their upper torso. I, on the other hand, am all of five foot five inches, have breasts and am an ample-waisted female with 60 percent of her weight in her lower body. I try to squeeze through the thirty-five inch library gate featuring rapier sharp, windmill like protrusions aimed directly at my pubis. As the turnstile’s arm rotates relentlessly it imperils my right breast. Wriggling sideways to avoid the impending attack, I thrust myself through the barrier by centrifugal force. I stumble, regaining balance, but not dignity. With heavy backpack and arms loaded with text, pre-requisite environmental coffee mug and umbrella, I pause. I consider the devilish device as a young male and slender female slip successively through the turnstile. I approach the obstruction with caution, hoping I am sauntering nonchalantly. I am immediately poked in the stomach by a gate appendage. Undaunted, armload precariously balanced shoulder high, I will myself out of the other side. Problematically, my generously proportioned body is abruptly halted by the gate’s assault upon my coat pocket. A young man, never imagining someone could not slip effortlessly through the turnstile, fails to negotiate his stop and we collide. I do not fit university turnstiles. (Bobbi Sparks, 1998, p. 86.)

Bobbi Sparks relates her struggles with the mandatory backpack, designed for another species, as are the lecture hall seats and the old-fashioned grade school desks that open on one side—too small to accommodate her. Nothing at her university fits or is designed for her—including “high steps, long walks, snow banks, steep stairs, breathlessly tiny bathroom stalls,
long slow lineups, unsafe stacks in the dreaded library, petite school clothing, contact sports, student dorms, rowdy social events, rock concerts and loud pubs.” Bobbi Sparks feels deeply insulted by her university; she was not the right shape or size or age for her classes, and she sounds angry and she sounds like me, when I came back to school. She sounds like a lot of women I know in educational spaces.

Postcard Stories

How to tell the stories of women in space? I have pondered this question as I write my dissertation, The 6ody’s Tale. It’s a counterhistory, and I think that’s why I favor the everyday, petty little postcard, with its news from “away,” greetings from other spaces. Postcards are ubiquitous; wherever you go, you’ll find postcards. Aesthetic, naughty, banal, bland, pretty, ugly, cheap or expensive; usually, you’re expected to send them back “home” with comments about the “foreign” spaces that they depict. But postcards are also cultural artifacts. Feminist critiques of visual representations of landscapes, built or “natural,” helped me decode the discourses which produce these postcard pictures. I have scattered throughout this text both “real” postcards and photographs—photographic postcards of spaces I have been… of gardens (queen’s and others!), buildings, educational institutions and their inner spaces, hallways, bathrooms, bedrooms, doorways, all provocative “views” (Kitchin & Law, 2000). The views from away are juxtaposed with ‘postcard stories,’ which I try to make complete and compelling, but sized to fit on the back of the postcard—petits recis (Lyotard, 1984) from the “contact zone”. Using this idiom allows me to make the familiar strange, and “re-vision” the deep spaces of my English childhood schooling, and my undergraduate and graduate education, all of which bear the freight of their colonial heritage and notions of “service.”
I have included postcard stories from initial education that surface the schooling of heterosexual subjectivities; postcard stories of spaces at UCL which provide in/sight into the gendering and equalization of so-called “public” spaces in that institution; postcards of churches and their pastoral power; a few stories which draw on themes in the text, flowers, cold, heterotopic spaces like cemeteries, doorways, hallways, and so on; and, lastly, some recent “snaps” that reflect on my current educational space, and discursive construction of the University body at its upcoming defense of its life… (Chapman and Sork, 2001).

I need to make one point here; in the photographic spaces I tried to ensure there were no bodies in view… I wanted the spaces/places to speak for themselves, with no bodies to do the talking for them, could power relations be seen in “just” the empty spaces? I think so.

Give Us a Leg Up!

As I discovered in these postcard stories, the geographical spaces where teacher/colonizer and taught/colonized meet, schoolrooms, dormitories, tutorials, seminar rooms, coffee shops, lecture halls and supervisor’s offices, are deep spaces marked by “coercion, radical inequality, intractable conflict and asymmetrical relations of power” (Pratt, 1992). Here, places are assigned, access to power is measured out … and sometimes, room is made for action. What action? That is the question that the work poses… Do we still linger in our educational gardens, us university women, the other 89 % of us ‘Queens’, safely cherished, privately immured/adored, or do we make a break for it, up over the wall, and down into the dangerous, unsafe spaces of the ‘masculine public’? Send me a postcard if you get there…. Here’s a one pager to be getting on with while you think…
“What Are You Looking At?”

“Looking” is as much a social construction, as much a discursive practice, as language. The eye of the beholder may be as skewed as his/her speech. A landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolizing, surroundings and landscape; “looking” affords the male gaze knowledge and desire—it gives a narcissistic, sexual pleasure. Women are constituted as (hetero) sexual objects in that landscape, where a specific masculinity is the norm and through which visual knowledge is accessed. Scopophilic gazes constitute women as Woman... but a feminine resistance to hegemonic ways of seeing could destroy the fiction of an unmarked, distanced, masculine spectator. How about a “space from elsewhere,” a feminist spectator’s position, located outside the frame of the picture?

Then we might look at the classroom from this “space off”“and see... how the teacher is constituted, regardless of her espoused or unconscious perspective on teaching, as the centre of the landscape of the classroom. Even if the teacher chooses, or believes, the learner is central, it is still the teacher’s gaze that constitutes the subject, “learner.” The teacher gazes at the classroom, and fashions a landscape that represents the hegemonic culture.

Or, alternatively, we might consider the teacher as Woman, arranged in the landscape of the classroom, surrounded by a bevy of learners, as Mother, Virgin, Other. But she is constituted, still, by the male gaze.

Women watch themselves being watched. Women have internalized the gaze; have even perfected the teachers Look... they Look good or not, and they Look at others and themselves Looking good/right/fitting in/appropriate.

How about a challenge, then, how about grabbing the binoculars from the man in the Renoir picture, and looking back?
Dreams of Victoria Sponge Cake: Empire, Class, Gender And Sexuality

I’ve been dithering around for weeks, thinking, I must write something about the construction of imperialism, or, I must go through my HUPOMNENATA again and distill out the words around learning to be a girl, or, learning to be middle class, or learning about being sexy. But I just didn’t get to it.

Life’s A Slice...

I tried and tried, and wrote a little, but, as usual, the body/mind/intuition trinity did its own work and I woke up today, Victoria Day, thinking of those lovely, light, English sponge cakes, which I am sure were called Victoria Sponges, and suddenly I see that all those things are so intertwined and entangled, it’s impossible to say when I knew I was a Daughter of the Empire, when I knew I was not a boy, when I first felt the effects of sex or gender in the lives I had to live out at school and at home and abroad. I had thought, there must be roles ascribed to me, it must be role-playing, I should get Goffman out and see what he has to say, and obviously it’s ritualized, so what do my feminist folklorists say, and what about performance, and Peggy Phelan and Victor Turner? Well, of course it’s all of that, but the surplus of sex + gender + class + imperialism + education is... an effect of all of those. Here it is, my anxious little identity, just a well-battered mix of colonialism, heterosexism, classism and racism. All of them reinforce each other, all are needed in the “receipt” (as Mrs. Beeton called them), none of them can be un-made from the mix.

For those of my readers who have never experienced a true sponge cake let me tell you, it’s one thing you must do before you die. Travel to England and find there a good plain English cook (my auntie for example) who understands a Victoria Sponge, and ask her to
cook it for you (I am sure it will be a her, it has to be a her to make it right—cooking is a
gendered thing, we’re not talking about cheffing here).

Walk out into the garden, on a nice summery day, (oh, by the way, second best china
for tea in the garden, likely a Royal Albert design),
find your chair, get settled, turn to the tea tray and …
pour a cup of Assam tea, admire its golden light and
sip its golden taste, redolent of plantations and fast
clippers and indentured labour, then gently cut into
the confection with the silver cake knife, and put
upon your plate one perfect slice… then… just look at
the cake for a while: First, a bottom layer of light and
fluffy sponge, a divine mix of real chicken egg and
self raising flour and rich yellow butter, then comes the middle bit, a layer of, oh my, real
double cream; next, a layer of pure certified homemade strawberry jam, (with real bits in it
not wood chips), on top of that; then, the final interior layer, real from cows in meadows
yellow butter; then, another layer of that delicate sponge; finally, the whole topped with a
surface of yellow buttery icing, a light dusting of icing sugar on top.

Take a bite, wipe your lips, savour the delicacy and texture. Know you are eating
England in all her glory. That powerfully evocative taste is the distillation of English
identity—probably one long gone, but the effects linger still, in people like me, exiles in
colonial lands, who teach others and re-produce their identity in their students.

Let’s see, a bottom layer of good girl, made in early childhood, well beaten into a
light golden colour, and of course, creamy white. Then a deep layer of heavy cream, sensual
sexual synecdoche, all the sexual fluids congeal in this sinful site. Lathered on top of sex/cream and butter, pure (as in pure as British identity), strawberries from the sun lit middle class garden at Home (as Imperial as you can get, redolent of a time that never was that always is, that keeps us going in the tropics and the depths of Empire as we ignore the sharp snouts of intrusive native mosquitoes, the dirty feet of palmetto bugs and tropical cockroach pattering in our cupboards). On top of this, another layer of light and spongy, resilient, golden, womanhood, whipped to a perfect smoothness, laying underneath the rich masculine buttery topping, for this cake takes its genders seriously... And on top, a sweet topping of flirty flyaway icing sugar, as if we might fly out of our identities and melt ...
Eating Empire, eating England, eating elegance and etiquette, eating ennui, eating eternally classed, raced and sexed effects...

What effects can I catch in my hand, my net outspread, what effects had solidified into good creamy layers by the time I was 18 and left school? Did my parents get their money's worth? Was I set for life? And by the way, does this fit with what Theodore Schatzki, a metonymic social constructionist has to say about identity—if ever a body needed a face and the rest of the body to go with it, his/sociologists body does... Let's munch on our cake then, and see if we can find his four bodies incorporated into this narrative. (A memory jogger? Try the physical body, the acting out, or bodying forth one, the lived experience one, and the surface one.) If you recall, he said those bodies/the body are molded for society in discourse, practice and institutions, using discipline, establishment, inscription and normalization. My cake is a better analogy....

Class
When I read back some of my writing, and especially when I listened to my interviews and perused notes I had taken after I had talked to people in England, who knew me, or knew the system of schooling, I was suddenly confronted by class. A true inhabitant of Britain and its discursive class structures, I can't see or hear class, because I am in it, even though it configures my talk, my walk, my actions, my thoughts, my intuitions, my perceived essential reactions. A few decades away, now, with a colonially tuned ear, I see and hear it. When you’re in it, it’s like the sky, it sits overhead and covers everything, darkens and lightens scenery and landscapes, but you don’t notice it—no one goes out in the morning and says, Oh, I’ve got to keep an eye out for the sky today, unless they’re sailors or gardeners or hikers. I imbibed class at the breast—my mother’s colonial breast, which was not as good as other children’s mother’s secondary sexual characteristics, apparently. But as she was beautiful and foreign, she was indulged. My grandmother compensated here though, for she knew to the T who was lower class and who not; the daughter of a country gentleman, she must have passed this on to me.

Discoursing With Voice

I knew, we all knew, accents, and behaviors, and actions, told the class story. We read it, heard it and acted on it. Uncle Dick was a bit common; Great Aunt Mary Jane had been upper class; my father’s accent was “good;” his brother Derrick’s, too; and mine was… mine, a clear classless English. BBC speech. Chastised and corrected, I never lapsed into working class solecisms, until as a teenager, they became “put on” and acceptable. My parents feared I would acquire a Lincolnshire tone when I went to school, but not to worry, Miss Snowdon and Mrs. Charneaux took care of that. Us boarders sniffed a bit when we heard the daygirls speak, unconsciously I am sure.
It’s funny, too, how when I was interviewing people, their accents changed, starting off carefully and correctly as quite nice and upper class, then when they were excited, things slipped, like skin suffers gravity, and just as the mind can hold in the belly, the body has to let it go... accents slipped out, all over... Oliver went from plummy Foreign Office, all Land Rovers and my boys are away at boarding school, to Lancashire lad in a flash. Even my personal tutor’s lovely voice got a bit working class when he talked about his time on the interview committee, repeating his dictum, “From now on, we will only take working class girls from comprehensives!” Rick’s neutral London voice took on rural Dorset intonations, and Letty and Nan both had good, teaching-classless-middle-class-upper-class accents, which lapsed into their real/middle class voices when they got talking... while one of my professor accent went from ‘trying to be determinedly middle class’ to irrevocable totally absolutely upper class as he began to relax.

I began to be able to tell, all over again, who was really upper class and who was, shall we say, not, but trying? Mine goes the other way, like the lecturer’s, and I would try to be colloquial, especially when I wanted to seem friendly, and “just like them,” but my accent slips upward when I am angry, or affronted. When I transcribed the tape of me and the prof talking, it was hard to say who was higher than whom... When I went back to Louth, I was aware of class, as it is spoken, in that unconsciously conscious way, antenna unfurled. Hearing Tilly speak in her teashop, and the shop girls (oh shit, do you hear that phrase?) in the chemist, the woman in Eve and Ranshaw’s who sold me my gloves, a trace ... of ... common? As Carolyn Ellis says, we don’t always find out good things about ourselves, do we?
Practicing Significance

The *practices* (doings and actings of signification, "organized activities of varying space-time extent" Schatzki, 1996, p.7), in my schooling were all about classing us/me. From daily, family eating practices—ah ha!—to transportation, personal grooming—another ah ha!—to negotiations and banking and religion. Discourses are components of practices, too. (Oh yes, as in the discourse of the pretty girl and the examination of her body by her friends...all these are counter memories of being discursively constructed). *Institutions*, which includes "government, schools, marriages, economic systems," incorporate interwoven ways of schooling acting, practicing and signifying, in writing, speaking, and representing. Institutions are "sites in both built and natural environment where individuals engage with and are subjected to nexes, or nodes of discourse and practice" (Schatzki, p.7). In the institutional aspects of schooling the in-corporealisation of class occurred especially strongly. School institutions, yes, but also in social institutions too, like the romantic school sweetheart one...

My boyfriend recalled I was from a higher social station; because England was "riddled with class," he characterized his own as a kind of lower-middle, and me an upper-middle. To my consternation, he thought I may have on occasion condescended to him, actually rubbed it in a little, making it all the more galling. I may have condescended to him, but I am sure I was also in the nature of a trophy girlfriend and worth the odd bit of patronizing... An officer's daughter, after all, with a good accent.

I had invited him to visit me at home, when my father was stationed in Binbrook; we had a very big house in married quarters (my father having attained a fairly exalted position then, thus ensuring my mother had plenty of housecleaning and keeping up to do). It was the first time he had ever been in an officer's house; he had never even played with officer's
kids. He didn’t say so, but I wonder if he was intimidated by the house? More likely just wanting to get something similar out of life.

Because he also reminisced about the importance his father placed upon education, and its role in improving one’s place in life, about how proud his family were when he went up to Cambridge. Now, while my class was upper-middle, my station was to be a wife to someone who did well with education. I don’t remember anyone telling me at school that my education would assure me of a better place in life, I just heard a lot of stuff about it being a way to catch a good husband (up to and including UCL). But others mentioned this over and over in my interviews with them. Not the women. Though Lyn did remark that, now, her daughter’s having been to Cambridge made her, always, “one of them.”

**Establishing Class**

Thus, gender was class, and classed with gender, and sexed. All in the same receipt, in about equal proportions. I think my class was taught me with my table manners, and the way to wear my clothes—I may have had to wear those ghastly hats, but I didn’t object to hats per se. They were indicators of my station in life. It was the colour, texture and shape of them I hated. Similarly, I continued to wear gloves, at all times, for years—ladies wear gloves. I still do. I still feel a bit uncomfortable when I eat in public, and I never did smoke on the street without feeling a bit common. I reckon my parents got full value for their money. I got A levels from the grammar school, but I got breeding at Masson House. In “techniques” where discipline, and *establishment* (the correct way of experiencing, living, and acting with the body) work. Also, of course, we see inscription; surface presentations of discursive practices—the way I hold a knife and fork, present my body to the world in my posture, gestures and emotional displays—crying or not, sadness, rebelliousness and correctness.
I think I can safely say, I probably condescended to my boyfriend, and I probably still
do condescend, I've learned to. When my landlady's father gave me a lift into town to see
Mr. Strong, I was uncomfortably aware of his racism, and more so, of his rather common
accent and style... I didn't want anyone to see me with him, I was glad he left me at the
church to walk from there. I doubt I will ever be free of class. And I was angered by truly
upper class people who condescended to me.

Just as my boyfriend was angered by Mrs. Charneaux, who had cultivated what he
thought was a very high class and nasty way about her; he used to say the bloody woman
made him feel like he was one inch tall. She used to look down her nose as if one were a
disgusting person. Normalization, the way he was made to feel not-normal, "not the right
boy" to walk up the driveway to the front door of the Limes on Thursdays, asking permission
to take me out to the
pictures, there to be
being left standing for half an
hour in the hallway, until
she deigned to notice him, all
the while being giggled at
by the younger girls, and then
to be "given the eyebrow."
(He resented the fact that I
could also do an eyebrow
discursive effect.) She
wouldn't have done it to a
boy whose surface presentation was the right/normed class.

And what about Empire? My boyfriend's father was the salt of the earth, the good
trooper, and all that, serving in foreign fields, Gutterslow, Malta and other exotic locales where
the Union Jack flapped about on flagpoles. Mine, of course, flew over his, literally and
figuratively. But we were both Empire, good golden sponges... And the buttery icing? No just
me, that fluid and sticky icing is female. But for sure, not a trace of brown, no tar brush in either of us in our spongy layers!

Empires Of Chalk And Cheese

Empire, now there’s a tale. It would have been hard to not be a Daughter of the Empire. From my earliest days, I lived in accommodations built exclusively for the dependents of fighting men, men who protected and defended England’s shores and skies. I could sing along to the Air Force March Past long before I could hum Mother Hubbard.

A Fly Past: Imperial Institutions, Squadrons and Families

My father went to work each day ready to kill for his country. He had a scar which ran diagonally from his left side to his right, across the eye and cheek, a trophy of one of his two plane crashes. He was a rotten father and a brilliant aviator. A leader of men who adored him, headhunted by Hawker Siddely, who wanted him for a test pilot, he was worthy of my pride. My mother and I had a complex relationship with him—the sarcastic sociopath who lived in Married Quarters with us was not the charismatic, funny, decorated brave war hero we both worshipped outside the home.

When he went to Gan we were sad, a six-month tropical posting, unaccompanied, but good for his career. We were thrilled when he was selected to be one of the witnesses of the A bomb tests at Bikini Atoll (which might account for his very early death from cancer, now I come to think of it), and we waited anxiously for postcards to come from San Francisco and Cyprus and Aden and Malta, when he made the first long distance transcontinental trip in his #23 Squadron Javelin, entirely refueled in flight, never touching down, for days and days (I wondered what they did about the toilet but I didn’t ask), and when he came back from
Singapore or Hong Kong or somewhere, with gaudy silk dressing gowns for us which were cold as sin to wear in unheated English houses, we clutched them enthusiastically to our goosepimpled skin. We never spoke outside the MQ about what went on within—my mother explained to me several times that men needed to let off steam, they were involved in such exhausting work, flying around and killing people.

I expect the Duke of Wellington was hard to live with, too. Many of the Empire’s Great Men, as featured in my schoolbooks, and all those Old Boys, John Smith, Nelson, Matthew Flinders, were, I am sure, just as ghastly with the staff and their families. Look what happened to Pocahontas, after all.

When I went to North Walsham Grammar School with the other kids from Coltishall Air Force Station, we were suitably impressed to be spending time with Nelson, so to speak, at his school, and we all knew the *Kiss Me, Hardy* story by heart within a week. Funnily enough, us girls liked the Empire as much as the boys, although even at 11 we knew our role differed slightly. At 12, when I went to Louth, I was still proud of my father, who had been promoted and sent off to do something at RAF Boscombe Down with a new prototype plane, and I told the other girls about how close we lived to Stonehenge—we did, and we went often to see it, because my mother was fascinated by it. A colonial obsession with a history that exceeded fifty years, as my father said, and we went there often for a Sunday drive. I never doubted my father was responsible for all the glorious deeds my mother attributed to him and forgave him his nastiness; I knew he had been a Spitfire pilot and done hard things for his country. I pitied girls whose fathers were boring and did office stuff, for I knew I was not one of them, nor a part of their (rather less than upper) middle class tedious lives.
When I arrived at Louth, I was put into a House, one of four, Nalder, Calder, Stewart and something or other, named after Mary Queen of Scots' brave ladies in waiting. We were told how they held the chamber door closed against the bad soldiers who were coming to get her; one of them put her arm through the rungs on the door which normally held the bar of wood to block entry, and her agony gained her mistress a few minutes grace, even though her arm was snapped in two... I thought she sounded a bit stupid, but kept that to myself, because we were supposed to learn how to be brave, and to “serve.” Scepticism was always a strong trait in me, but even I got caught up in it all.

In the boarding house we learnt how to eat Empire and how to deal with the staff, and how to clean our shoes and how to hold up under the strain of running a house for a man who ran an empire, even if the empire was to be a bungalow attached to a stone school in deepest darkest Yorkshire. We sat and walked and ate and did things at day school, especially games things, by House. We sallied forth on Wednesdays in our nascent imperial bodies, ready to tackle the heathen where it counted, on the hockey field.

Miss Harte would yell out, “Nalder girls, what are you doing, you’re last AGAIN.” I’m sure you’ve guessed, I was in Nalder, with its ugly sicky green house colour. Nalder never did well, I was in the right house, that’s for sure. Bottom in netball, bottom in hockey, bottom in tennis, bottom in Girl Guide knot tying, even though some of us were clever like me... except, academics didn’t count, that was “putting on side, being bigheaded,” what was really important was one’s athletic ability and earnestness, and *trying hard*, even if you were useless. Even though I mocked, I yearned to be just once, in the winning house... still yearning.
Every morning we had prayers and sung hymns, then had announcements, and John Smith’s head watched us from his alcove. I sat and stared back at him, daydreaming of how good I would look in Pocahontas buckskin dresses... way ahead of Disney... When I saw the refectory, in 1999, old John still sat and glared out at the feasting fourteen year olds.

Food And Verse Fit For An Empire

It’s interesting to note that in the boarding house we “ate Empire” daily, with our tea (from Indian and Ceylonese plantations), in things like curry on Mondays for tea, kedgeree for Wednesday breakfast, English roast beef on Sundays for lunch, and various assorted puddings and purees which symbolized Empire, or ruling classes, and which we ingested readily and willingly. We were not allowed lower class food—ketchup, brown sauce or Branston pickle—although upper class mustard seemed ok. We didn’t get the same kinds of food for school dinners in the canteen—there it was solid English food, a bit lower class, actually, spotted dick, lots of cabbage, butter beans and so on. We ate ourselves into Imperial fancies... but only before 9 am and after 4 pm...

Oh, and we listened to stories of Tennyson, and his wonderful poetry, the Empire’s inspiration. On Sunday’s we were allowed our “good” television, the BBC children’s classics, so often featuring tales of derring do and glimmering glamorous lands, the Woman in White, or the one with the soppy brother who had been a missionary, St.John, or something, and David Copperfield and the Railway Children. They all flourished in a world
where the maps were pretty nearly all pink with empire, and we lapped it up. We read Kipling, and understood that the whole point of the great grey green greasy Limpopo River was to provide an exotic nursery. We read novels where noble men went to be missionaries and brave women went with them—except I noted most of the noble men were either black-sheep upper class fools, or earnest lower class Wesleyans. Being a missionary was a bit dodgy, not quite what one did, a bit extreme, so to speak. It was sufficient, really, to go to Church on Sunday, enter C of E in the appropriate box on all the forms, and be a good supporter of the Vicar’s fetes and rummage sales.

In the Sixth Form, we had Speech Day up at the Boy’s School; in their hall with its huge mural of Miss P saving the gallant Captain Begin, though, not with a continent or a country or a house, but with the geography closest in—the body. Here at least I know I exist, that living human individual whom the young Marx called the “first premise of all human history.” Everyone clapped, I do recall having to keep everyone clapped, I do sitting there, staring at it.
It was not so much assumed that Britain was meant to rule the world, or at least school it, or that we were to be good girls who modeled good Englishness, (hat would have meant being outside the text or discourse, which we know is not possible, it just was never questioned, it was never even thought that it wouldn’t be so. As Foucault suggests when looking for discourse, ask, What is it that is impossible to think? It was impossible to think one was not better than anyone else in the world.

One just knew one was at the centre of the world, of civilization, that all the savage coloured people looked to us to “set the tone”; after all, England was at the middle of all the maps, and brave men like Nelson and the 500 Light Brigade officers had died for us, so we just ... knew... we lived in the middle of the world. We were the centre, culturally, and see a black person in not until I went to London, and I never saw a Chinese person until they opened a Chinese restaurant in Salisbury, and we went there one holiday. But I knew I was, not so much better than them, but, duty bound to behave better in every way. The White Man’s Burden was taken very seriously in rural grammar schools in Lincolnshire, and I am sure, elsewhere. I always knew I had to be a good girl; I collected golliwogs when I was five, had nigger brown shoes, tried to dig to China when I was eight, and, at 16 I learned all about the Empire, and was taught to rule the world... properly.
Imperial Inscriptions

I was discoursed, practiced and institutionalized into Imperialism, my surface presentation was imperial; well established, inscribed in perfectly shined shoes, impeccable table manners, and represented in the paper I chose to write letters upon (only ever white, cream, grey or a discreet blue—any other color or decoration revealed less than perfect taste, as did the use of an ink not blue or black). I fit the norm. Even when I was being a rebel, I was doing so in the proscribed fashion—acting up at school meant I would be a strong woman of character, and a fine mistress of a large household... Pity it’s all so dated, and all that schooling had to go to waste... Or did it? Is my corporeality not wholly imperial, colonial still? Can one ever shed one’s layers of Victorian Sponge? Don’t I still stand at the front of the room, the Leader, colonizing the learners?

In terms of the social constitution of my body as Imperial, and the effects upon it of the sociocultural discourse “Still Rulers Of The World, Or Ok, Well, Not Quite Rulers, But Still Good Managers Of The Old Colonies,” which ignored the long slow post war slide into postcolonialism, how might we see my body’s surface inscribed? Let’s look at the four modes of inscription suggested by social scientists, linguists, etc, (typical of the kind of theory that drives Adrienne Rich crazy). Schatzki (1996) suggests, firstly, that culture institutes bodily signifiers, then delimits what they signify in discourse and practices; a phenomenological or psychoanalytic reading of the body would mean, then, that what was appearing on the outside was signaling what was on the inside. Thus, the good girl/good wife will declare on her surface the goodness of her interior, as in my gestures and my accent and my way of standing even my way of speaking and, of course, my way of lifting an eyebrow signifies that inside, I am a perfect lady. That eyebrow is a perfect bodily signifier... My Imperial sponge is unflawed.
Secondly, body parts are named and classified, and their conditions are described, serving as metaphors for personality. (I love all the “heart” phrases, of course, he suffers “with a heart,” goodhearted, stouthearted, hearts and oaks of England, and so on.) Well, we were expected to have good skins, which meant unmarked by the sun or wind, well protected by our gloves and hats, and well covered by longer dresses and skirts. Obviously, we were meant to be “white,” not brown... so much for Coco Chanel. And we were not to be lily-livered, nor cowards. Nor were we to be, of course, faint-hearts, sickly, watery, wishy-washy, or bloody-minded, liverish, bilious and so on.

Thirdly, bodies can actually be inscribed on their surfaces with badges, symbols, signs of family, race, gender and so on. Imperially, this means that every schoolgirl wore a hat with a badge, uniform, but announced our house colors. Our hair was kept short, and trimmed and our bodies had perhaps we need a moratorium on saying “the body.” For it’s also possible to abstract “the” body. When I write “the body” I see nothing in particular. To write “my body” plunges me into lived experience, particularity: I see scars, disfigurements, discolorations, damages, losses, as well as what pleases me. ... To say “the body” lifts me away from what has given me a primary perspective. To say “my body” reduces the temptation to grandiose assertions. Adrienne Rich, Notes... p. 215. on it, not just a one which school, our Our hair was our nails well tended—to look both ladylike and leader-like, no nail polish, nor lipstick. You could tell boarders apart from daygirls, even if the uniform was the same, by the lack or use of makeup, and by their longer hair. Bodies can be “done up” on the surface to show race, status, gender, sexuality, a sense of style, morals and the like; we were re-presented as good girls, dressed to show our status as ladies in waiting, good white girls. Inscription can encompass tattoos, jewellery, body painting, makeup and scarification, literal body markings. What’s important to note is that
we did not have those markings, for their absence was a marker of class and imperial-ladies-in-waiting—pierced ears signed lower class girls, and jewelry was limited to watches, makeup was not allowed, and tattoos were... well, my goodness, only sailors, (not midshipmen or lieutenants, but real sailors) had tattoos, and any scarring was limited to skinned knees.

We all did have one
our TB injections were fierce
arm; unmistakably, I am
white British girl—who

got a TB “jab.” It’s

The politics of
location. Even to
begin with my body I
have to say that from
the outset that body
had more than one
identity.
Adrienne Rich, Notes

significant scar however—
and left a cicatrice on the left
marked as a middle class
attended school in the 60s and
discomfiting to realize that in
developing countries, on First Nations reserves, and amongst the poor, TB is still a vicious disease. Ladies-in-waiting-for-the-Empire carry a mark to show themselves as not of that group.

Lastly, bodies are normalized in a conscious, and unconscious, self-attending; we are always molding ourselves with an eye to sociocultural paradigms and idealizations. This is apparent now, say, with one’s presentation of a good body, developed courtesy of one’s personal trainer, tanning beds, facial cosmetology, dermabrasion and so on, but we managed then, too, to manage ourselves.

Unconsciously, we walked tall, shoulders out—the years of being hissed at to Stand Straight! had molded us—and we didn’t giggle or titter in gaggles like shop-girls, rather, we talked “well.” We shaved our legs, plucked our eyebrows, wore our American Tan stockings and discreet eau de colognes, like 4711, and, when we could, we curled or straightened our hair, dieted, and did sit-ups to improve our “tummies.”
It’s easy to see how much class and imperialism are interlocked—not that shop-girls didn’t go to the colonies, but they went steerage and went to *be* shop girls, we were trained to go cabin class or, at the least second class, and to be ladies. I always think of that lovely BBC TV series, *Tenko*, when I look back on my boarding school days. We were being trained to be the ladies in the two story houses, not the bungalows; we were the ladies of the club, not the nurses in the hospital. One of my lecturer’s at UC had a father, an Army General, who lived in Singapore when my parents were there—his parents’ house was the one used as the location for the one where Marion and her ghastly husband lived, before the Fall—it was just like my parents last MQ. I think, too, of the *Tenko* prison camp, how the women still held to class lines; those who collaborated with the Japs were, not surprisingly, of the lower middle class... So our training lingers, doesn’t it?

**Do Any Escape The Imperial Cage?**

When I look back at my body, it’s too easy to see it fit itself into the categories of social science; discourse, institution, white, upper

Begin with the material. Pick up the long struggle against lofty and privileged abstraction. ... Abstractions severed from the doings of living people, fed back to people as slogans. Adrienne Rich, *Notes*

impacted by practice and inscribed as middle class, healthy, sexual—discreetly to be sure, female and C of E. What about resistance? Is there no chance of a less discursive body slipping out? But from where and in what shape? In terms of the Imperial imperative, could I have escaped it? I don’t think so. I do think so. *Did I want to?* A question impossible to answer—discourse makes it unthinkable that I would think I didn’t want to be what I was, a good girl, from a good family, at a good school with a good future ahead of me... which way freedom?
Many body theorists suggest we should dispense with the enforced relation of constitution to determinism, and also abandon that secret hiding space, of creativity, or transformation, in which we apparently long to find ourselves outside of the sociocultural. Discourses, practices and institutions do not determine the body, rather, my Imperial middle class body, but they may, however, make certain kinds of corporeality appear, as they shape and invest my corporeality. They also enable activities, experiences and surface presentations. If we work within a field of possibility, we can see it’s not necessary to go outside the sociocultural. From a Foucaultian perspective, the “seeds of transformation and resistance are always present in discourses and practices in the form of possible corporealities that are submerged by current prescriptions and enforcement of other ones not yet articulated” (Ted, page 9). Maybe.

He suggests finding the marginalized and unexplored fissures of individual discourses and practices (ok, I think it’s jargon, too); making the multiplicity of discourses and practices, plural and diverging, actions, experiences, values, surface presentations work for us (getting deliberately lost in the woods while looking for solid oak trees?); we can try working with nonstandard and unfamiliar uses of standard normativized activities to destabilize the standard normal meanings (that’s Judith Butler drag suggestions); or, we can try alternative economies and pleasures, as Foucault suggests, in bodily possibilities that are unexplored or closed off—this might allow for Thrift’s use of play and dance, and, say, Susan Foster’s choreographies; lastly, we can pay homage to the self consciousness of agency, enshrined in Marxist and Freudian lore. I am not so sure, how could I have thought the unthinkable—then? Now, yes, that’s what this work is about, but then? I was an unhappy,
happy schoolgirl, who, occasionally, was able to think differently, step out of line, and got in
trouble for it...

**Inscribing Gender and Sexuality**

Let’s consider inscription or surface presentation from a different perspective, one that takes
account of sexually different bodies. Liz Grosz (1994) claims while the work of male theorists
like Nietzsche, Foucault, and Lingis, is useful, especially when it investigates how the body is
constructed in social institutions, discourses and practices, their work assumes a body which
exists *before* social construction, one that is pre-discursive or ‘natural,’ and that body is
universal, that is, id est, male...

I think she’s right; when I look at the making of my cakely body, I can see how
different was my embodied sexualized and gendered experience of power, and the way it
marked me as classed and imperial AND gendered, than, say the experiences of my boyfriend
or my friends who were boys at school. Class and Imperialism intertwine, and so do gender and
sexuality and class and imperialism. Where I can see the (male) sociological categorization of
embodiment applying fairly well to the construction of my classed and imperial subjectivities,
it just doesn’t seem to sit with my gendered and sexual subjectivities. I feel like I am wearing a
nice, big, warm overcoat—borrowed from a handy man one day, when it got cold… It covers
me, it shrouds me in fact, but the weight, the shape and the cut are … not mine. It’s as if I tried
to put together a cake out of layers of sponge and jam and then chocolate and black cherry—
what I will end up with is an abominable fake Victorian Black Forest Cherry Sponge cake…
A Sexy Topcoat

Lingis’ work on inscription is quite powerful, and valuable. If sexed. Even reading it feels like I am working with soft porn written for a male academic audience. In his 1984 *text Excesses*, Lingis talks of inscription:

> The savage inscription is a working over the skin, all surface effects. This cutting in orifices and raising tumescences… extends an erotogenic surface… it’s a multiplication of mouths, of lips, labia, anuses, these sweating and bleeding perforations and puncturings, these warts raised all over the abdomen, around the eyes…
> (Lingis, 1984, p. 34, cited Grosz, 139)

This doesn’t sound a bit like my cake. It sounds wrong, too sexy. Now, female bodies, my body, are not raised, nor are they scarred or raised surfaced—men’s are, tumescence and outgrowth is a male signifier, female sexuality signals interiors, darkness, guilt, doing it under the covers with the lights out, well, at least, to the Men and Women of the Empire.

And that’s what I learned my body was, not a thing of beauty to be celebrated, or punctured, even, but something to be managed, concealed, kept out of bounds. The surfaces that showed must be clothed, bound, and white. At school, and before that, at home, I was trained to keep myself/body out of sight, lest it get out of control, cause damage. Even though it was normalized, established and surveilled, it might get loose… My boyfriend believed his football coach, who said the team should stay away from girls before a big match, lest they get exhausted, drained… Girls were naturally sexual, apparently, but also naturally leech like and should be treated with the same respect and caution one would show a leech; good for drawing out ill humors, even medicinal at times, but best kept in a jar and at home…

Leaking all over, watch out!

Mary Douglas points out “There can be no such thing as a natural behavior. Every kind of action carries the imprint of learning, from feeding to washing, from repose to movement, and, above all, sex.” She goes on to say, happily supporting my arguments;
“Nothing is more essentially transmitted by a social process of learning than sexual
behavior...” She maintains that one can’t consider the body without social dimension.

Interest in its apertures depends on the preoccupation with social exits and entrances,
escape routes and invasions. If there is no concern to preserve social boundaries, I
would not expect to find concern with bodily boundaries. The relation of head to feet,
of brain and sexual organs, of mouth and anus, are commonly treated so that they

The correlation is obvious here to my mother’s (and my other family members concerns, too,
like my grandmother’s refusal of my need to work, “Oh my dear, that’s not ladylike”),
concern with maintaining rigid social boundaries of class and hierarchy within the Air Force
setting in which we lived, all part of controlling my body and theirs and our social places. I
see, too, the concern of my boarding school staff to maintain and further train our sense of
social boundaries of class and Imperial identity, and the obsession of both family and school
with cleanliness, elimination and organization. As my mother’s anxiety about her colonial
Otherness increased, and as my father urged her to behave as an officer’s wife—one who was
not overtly beautiful, lively, or well endowed with bodily appetites—her attempts to control
me increased. As her exits and escape routes closed, one after another, so too did mine. At
Masson House and the Limes, our ordered conduct related directly to the inspection of
physical bodies, and our egress and ingress to the Houses, our possible escape into the town
for shopping, or to the pictures with young men, all were as rigidly controlled as our bowels
and lungs. My adolescent cleanliness, my teenaged bodily health, and my young body’s
inscription as either ugly and dirty or clean and good, are examples of “bodily control as an
expression of social control.”

What really resonates for me, though, is Douglas’ work on dirt, and its threat to chaos
and disorder; dirt is a way that dangerous social imbalances can occur, purity means
maintaining cleanliness and order in life and society; purity and danger are settled firmly too, into sexually specific bodies and the relations between the sexes.

There are beliefs that each sex is a danger to the other through contact with sexual fluids...what goes for sex pollution also goes for bodily pollution... the process of ingestion portray political (or relational?) absorption... and sometimes bodily orifices seem to represent points of entry or exit to social units (1966. p. 4).

Douglas talks about the dangerous nature of bodily fluids, which betray the permeability of the body, and it’s tendency, if unchecked, to flow from inside to outside, and vice versa, so that a horror of the unknown, or the unspeakable, lurks, and lingers, and leaks out of the body, if it is not maintained as clean and neat and orderly and in “proper” conditions.

Women are particularly leaky—they are especially repellent in that their fluids are viscous, sticky, clinging and soft, yielding... where the stickiness is a “trap,” and to touch that “stickiness is to risk...” (1966, p. 38). The body, as marginal, is a site for pollution, vulnerability and danger. All it exudes from its liminal orifices, blood, vomit, saliva, phlegm, tears, pus, sweat, menstrual blood, seminal fluids, all are to be feared, and especially when the body they leak from is female. Its abject offerings, excreta, are to be feared, true, but it’s the sneaky, leaky things that must be policed, cleaned up, forbidden, hidden....

When I was growing up, my mother trained me to constantly monitor for leaks; Miss Snowdon took over when I was twelve, and when I became available for sexuality, my boyfriend inherited the surveillance and prohibitive functions they had performed. What was especially ugly was that these fluids were sexual, to be desired, but feared. My lovely creamy icing couldn’t be seen to be seen—it must be hidden, tastefully between the sponge layers and the jam, but that jam suddenly, looked, yukky...
Clearly, the relation to the Imperial is obvious—darkest Africa, the dirty and exotic interior, the perverse landscapes of the colonies, seductive but polluting. A true Daughter of the Empire will join with her husband, following her long years of training in appropriate sexuality behavior, in making sure none of this leakiness contaminates her white Englishness. Only rosy complexions allowed, no glistening, no sheen, no oils, no exudations… Dave trained me well, there wasn’t a hint of my fluidity to be seen on my surface, not a one, after a couple of years of intense schooling.

Of course, when I got to the Tropics, the year I turned 18, that all changed, but that’s a different story, isn’t it? Boarding school and my mother and my boyfriend. All my colonizers, all my relations.

A Postscript: Picnics Are Dangerous For Your Health
When you bite down into that cake, and I hope you aren’t too nauseated by all this talk of fluids, think of all that went into the making it, and if its layers suggest essential interiorities, or hidden depths, that’s just an effect. By the time I was 18, I was beautifully made, classed, gendered, Imperial, white, glistening snow like and luminously, yet as wholesome and as Homelike as that Victorian Sponge cake, and as cunningly wrought… all surface, no depth, or all depth, no surface, who cares, it just tastes wonderful… Enjoy!

And while you were reading this, your tea went cold and a fly dropped in it; you’ve got to be careful, bringing food and liquid outside, it gets dirty, and it’s just not as neat as inside eating, is it? Best to go back in now and clean up…
I was going for my run today, thinking about bathrooms. I first became interested in them when I heard a woman comment on them at an AA meeting at the Alano club, one Sunday morning back in 1995 or early 96. Men always dominate the meeting, white men, middle to working class, spouting off. I felt they saw women as prizes for the drunks who had made it. They looked you up and down and were very nice, but never seemed to take what you had to say seriously, just listened enough to say, Well, what you need to do is, and then give great gobs of advice, contrary to all the literature. There was a break, and the women all went into the bathroom, people/women talking to each other, discussing events and life, and being and living sober all that sort of thing, and a woman came in and said, “It’s busy in here, this is where the real meeting is!”

I didn’t forget it.

In the early summer of 1996, Brent and I presented at the Narrative conference (how we sweated about that, our first one, a rite of passage), and Wanda Hurren did a charming but low key presentation, visuals and words included, and talked about being a teacher in rural Saskatchewan, and how power and authority worked out in the design of schools, especially in the siting of bathrooms. She talked about working with kids and bathrooms, how these were important moments, but we tended to overlook them, getting lost in curriculum and instruction. She showed pictures of sunflowers, grain fields, and school buildings; she read a poem about baking for school festival days and the sound and taste and feel of it was all so real. I remembered my own school bathrooms.

When I was over in England, I was asked to do a presentation keyed toward technologies of the self. I said sure, but what to do? Then it came, in a flush, (ooh) Bathrooms!
That's where “the real meeting is,” the one between the body and Foucault, and me and education, we all end up in the bathroom, doing things to each other...

Over time, this flippant and humorous whimsy turned into a solid and workable academic idea. The more I thought about bathrooms, the better they got. I think, too, being away I was struck by cultural differences and distinctions on a very embodied and personal level.

After all, it was my body freezing, or overheating, or getting dirty/clean in ghastly residence bathrooms, ugly bedsits; together we had stood in a bare room in Denmark, shivering, trying to shower in a room like a cleaner's broom closet... not much cleaner, just bigger and smellier.

And investigated public loo's and unisex urinals...

I realized, too, when I looked back, that so many of my school stories and university stories focused on events and encounters, on meditations and ministrations, on political and personal close shaves, all occurring in, on, and around, spaces designated for ablution, ablation, abjection or ejection, not to mention rejection... Too often rejection of my body, not the body I wanted, or thought I should have... Things seemed suddenly to take on different meanings...

how we were always standing outside the bathrooms and loo's at UCL, or me sitting on the toilet in Masson House and the Limes, thinking and yearning and hating and crying and wishing, wishing... for release from prison, wishing for a different body, wishing for my period to stop, wishing for my period, to please god, start, wishing for all kinds of things, wishing and hoping and looking out the windows.

English toilets are much more civilized, they have windows you can see out of... I have sat and looked at gardens, at calendars, little blue bits of sky, and cloud. My uncle Derrick bought his house especially as it had a separate bath room from the toilet room, he likes them separate, and he puts up calendars with planes on, good reading, and now he has had his stroke
and can’t “go” that well, there is an extra seat on the toilet, and you sit up really high.

Looking out the window right into next door’s loo.

In toilet/bath/rooms the world over, I have preened and probed and palpated and pressed and prodded and pruned and perambulated... watching the body, not looking at the body, raising eyebrows and arms, examining and uplifting, and doing pretty nearly every verb you can think of.

Sometimes other people are with you in a bathroom; always as an adolescent at boarding school, or in residences, or in intimate relationships... and in less than intimate ones... lots of relationships.

I was happy to see Foucault write about bathrooms, in *Discipline and Punish*, but he didn’t get it right; he talks about the spaces above and below the door, where legs can be seen, but there wasn’t much of that in my childhood and schooling. Except for the toilets at primary school at Stotfold, of course. Where I had lined up, queued up, I should say, and played as a little girl, where the teacher waited outside for us to finish in that freezing outdoor building, going in and out of there and exposing our little rear ends all winter, never really considering toilets could be contained in a building, that was just where they were, outside. It was nothing important, just a part of learning to be stoic.

Seeing myself running out there, navy blue cardigan, navy blue gym slip, clodhopper shoes, Startrites or Clarks, brown, heavy and ugly, we were always running into those toilets, always in a hurry to get back to the classroom, to sing, or paint, or do our times tables, or to spell, or to listen to the teacher tell us about things, and one dreadful time, we expected singing but the Other Teacher came, made us all sing a song *on our own*, how humiliating, and me squeaking out something, terrified and scared and pathologically shy, a laughing stock already
for being different, not a village girl, and having her say, "Valerie Chapman, a nice little voice, not too bad. But flat. Sing along with the others." No "dear" on the end, no dears at all at that school or others. Another examination...

Imagine my distress when I returned finally to Stotfold (leaving it til the very last on my research trip, too many painful moments) to see those toilets, and found them gone—along with the school—there was, instead, a development of ugly new middle class houses on the very spot. I stood there, freezing in my new coat bought in Oxford, camera at the ready, but the toilets, the whole building, all the school had gone. I was so disappointed.

But relieved. I had been dreading looking at that school, I had had to spend a week there the summer before I went up to teacher training, and I recalled feeling how awful it was, still, at 21, and after all those years since I was 7 and 8. I didn’t think continents and mountains and valleys and oceans and lakes and terrors in between would help to ease the wounds.... and so I was glad to go back up Murrell Lane and wait at the little bus stop late, and not to briefly think of cemetery to my grandfather’s grave but it was raining and I was so cold, so I didn’t. I just wanted out of there, back to the train station, and back home to Canada, just three days to go...
It is harvest time in the Duc’s fields and barelegged peasants mow the wide meadow. One peasant is quite, quite bare, but the women are fairly decorous. No little animals in this rendering, but a truly magnificent palace! The river, and the scenery, is suitably bucolic. In June, I sit in the British Library, thinking of my body, wishing my mother would send me a letter, as I recall a life as a daughter of the Empire…
I got off the Airbus at Marble Arch, walked my suitcase on wheels up the street, turned the corner, trundled up Brown Street and reached the front door of Nutford House.

I'd been here a few times in the last year or so, but each time, as I walked up the steps and rang the bell to have them let me in, it was like I was 19 again, coming from the railway station, Marylebone, with Auntie B and Uncle D, bags and suitcase and a packed lunch. Me exasperated at their concern, their worry and fear over me going up to London to college had conquered their timidity and alarm about leaving their flat in Buckingham to accompany me on this journey to the Great Wen.

How could I tell them I was all of 19, not a virgin, a lover indeed, of several dashing young officers and pilots, completely sophisticated, and stylish, too. I had traveled around the world, Louth to Changi, Brize Norton to Payar Lebar. I did not need an escort to this ghastly place, which I knew, as soon as we got in the door, was just the Limes all over again. A girl's Hall of Residence. In London.

I was being forced to go to dirty old London University to study History. I had wanted to do English, at Cambridge. Right now, I didn’t even want to go to college. I had written off academics as a waste of time, all
those years at school, for what? I had found life, love, and champagne, and it was comely. I did not want books, lectures and more bloody Tudors and Stuarts. I was beyond all that, I was grown up and ready for marriage.

I had told them that on the train coming up, how Mummy and Daddy had forced me on that VC 10 at Changi, ten days ago, forced me, when I was practically engaged to the handsome pilot (whom my father hated, because he flew transports not fighters), and whom my mother thought rather charming... Made me, forced me up the steps, told me, I had to go. Well, no way I was going to enjoy it!

I had time to note the rather attractive Art Deco doorway into what was obviously the common room and then they were carting my stuff up the stairs, along the dirty corridor, just like Masson House, and even girls giggling in rooms, and there was my door, number 34, a charming view over the dirty noisy street, a thin window, a desk, a cupboard, no carpet, a sink by the window, and that was it. How the mighty have fallen! From frangipani outside my window and servants down the hallway, to this!

After a suitably decent length of time, filled with Auntie B telling me to strip my bed each morning, open the window to air it all out (what “it,” I'm not getting an “it” now), and Uncle D anxiously checking me at his insistence, on my memorized route to UCL. Tube from Edgeware Road, the Brown Line, to Euston Square, only two stops (but not within
walking distance I complained petulantly, again) to UCL, they finally they left me and I found the toilet, ghastly as usual, inspected the baths, and found the hole they called the kitchen, with its rancid toaster and hotplate.

I unpacked and smoked three cigarettes. I was lonely and scared and not going to show it, whatever happened. I thought of Dave, up in Cambridge. Glad I had dumped him, he would have been crowing over me again, “Oh what a pity you didn’t get in, just not quite up to it.” I pined over the pilot. Oh, dear. I heaved myself up and found the stairs down to the basement and went in to have tea or whatever they called it here. I couldn’t believe how awful the food was.

I didn’t speak to anyone. I was too cool, and too nervous. They all seemed to know each other; it had been a bit scary to go into the full room and be looked at, but I just stuck my deadpan face on and moved as if unawares. One of the girls said, “Oh, you’re UCL, we’re all Imperial or King’s.” I swore at her in a ladylike way, lifted my eyebrow and she shut up and I sat and drank my tea. It was a long way from the Casuarina’s and tea with the men and Tiger beer and my mother’s cooking and my father’s drinking and the amah and Henry my cat. I missed them all so much.

In a few weeks I had a routine. Arise at 10 or so, have a leisurely bath, dress carefully, make up, take the tube to UCL in time for 11 o’clock coffee, and stay there all day, tea, coffee, the odd lecture, essay class… and Oliver. By this time the pilot’s face was a bit fuzzy, but Oliver’s was clear, a catch, a third year, and in the Drama Society, actually playing Iago to rave reviews at the Bloomsbury Theatre, and Letty and I were firm friends and it was all ok. Even though I kept getting locked out for coming back after 10 pm. Stupid. When I was back in time, the silly girls were sitting in their dressing gowns in the common room,
drinking cocoa, not cocktails, and not smoking... I would go up, smoke a few Benson’s, and turn in.

One dreadful night, I came in the door and the girl in the porter’s desk—the senior girls lorded it over us all in the evenings when the porter had gone home—said, “Oh, you’re Val Chapman!” Yes, I said. Snottily as ever. “Oh, there’s a MAN waiting for you in the common room and he is DRINKING WHISKEY!!” I walked into the common room, through those lovely art deco doors and there was the Pilot, drunk and tanned and, rather nice looking usually, but dreadfully angry now.

Oh, I said. He proceeded to tell me, drunkenly, that he had waited and waited for me to write, and when I got worried then he the Sick Quarters like glandular fever, yesterday, staggered on a Hercules coming it took 24 hours and all the way and now all my fault, oh god, to do about it all? didn’t, and didn’t, he got sick and was in with something awful so he had got up out and found a place over to Brize Norton, he drank his duty free here he was, AWOL, and what was I going Waving the now empty bottle at me. One of those turning points in life, I suppose… Did I pick the romantic pilot, rushing around the world to find me, and settle for a life of leisure and brainless activity and fun and cocktails and overseas postings and and and ... or, the funny, sarcastic,
skinny, actor-student whose bed I had just left, promising him I was going to write my essay for the crazy medievalist mouse woman, on Citeaux and the monks. I wish I had chosen....

It all comes back doesn’t it? Now I see the door...

_I remember:_ waiting in the common room for the minicab to come on July 18 to take me to Heathrow in time to seem my mother die.

_I remember:_ coming again, in September, the funeral over, and reclaiming a nice room, 113, for the month, living “coming up to London” all over again, a new student, except now I knew what they did to us, I told Letty, they let all the other girls come up first but not the UCL one’s, not til last, so they never fit in, they’re too late to bond...

_I remember:_ sitting in 113, interviewing Oliver. The clever young actor now the fat middle-aged diplomat with a dirty raincoat and four large sons and a wife he won’t let go to work, silently giving thanks for sparing me from that fate. He was still angry at me, too, an Angry Man.

_I remember writing:_ Cold dirty noisy empty full of stupid students threadbare carpets plastic broken toilets showers not working never cleaned semen stains on my counterpane don’t they wash things here filthy kitchens big bathtub, buy some cleaner at Safeway and scrub it before getting in get a kettle tea milk spoon knife cup from Woolies, lumpy saggy mattress smelly musty damp washing mildew seedy sickly stinky drain smell.

_I remember writing:_ Food all carbohydrates institutional not cooked here delivered daily student classless food teenaged what they all love and eat but not me white lettuce tomatoes toast fat peas chips jelly some dead animal matter boiled stewed frozen, _instant tea my god._
I remember writing: students all giggly pimply silly arrogant anxious prissy pampered preening self-conscious egocentric stupid one fat ugly girl very bright talking about doing media studies having to be funny to be accepted she'll get a First the rest as dumb as dumb and they'll give over makeup at breakfast by November and be in their pyjamas for February.

I remember feeling: all over again, the alien different outsider ostracized ignored 19, 49, 50, all the same.

I come in the door, and Dan the nice Physics student who lent me the heater in the Fall is in the Porter's office and he says, "Oh hello Miss Chapman, back with us for a while?" "Only 3 days, Dan," I say, "how are you doing and did you finish your finals yet, what are you doing for the summer vac?" Nutford House, home away from home, all of me hate it here, know it here. There's that lovely door again....
A Postcard for Marlene from a Daughter of the Empire

I am glad it was you I sat next to in the computer lab
Because you showed me how to work Word so I could
Publish my thesis and be a doctor in waiting like you.

I am glad you took me to Yum Yum's and bought me
An egg roll and told me to write myself Home.

I'm glad there wasn't a morning when I felt
Sickeningly green melancholy indigo ragingly red
That you weren't there on my screen to tell me:

Keep hoping keep hopping keep hip.

I am glad you made it first
Because you can show me how to be a doctor
I know you will wait
Gladly for me to catch you up.

I am glad I can tell you to
Keep walking up hills to look for Follies and to
Keep your eyes peeled for
Strange gods with sharp Teeth.

With love from Valerie

512
A Letter to a Student

Dearest V-Lee,

It's 6:30 a.m. and I'm sitting out on the deck. The birds are singing and it's so warm and quiet. Sam is out somewhere, and God sure looks after us. I wondered how I could send you the $100 and then the power bill came and I have a credit of $75 so I can scratch out the 25.00 with no trouble and send you the $100.

When I get the car back I'll stick this in the mail, and Valerie I'm going to try to start saving something towards Christmas. I'm writing this on my knee so that's why the writing. Please spend this wisely, it's so hard to keep finding it. I love you very very much.

Mother

XXX

OOO

(x) <-- Sammy
down to....

The girl and her lover, tense, tender, ready
for secret love in the cornfield
already tainted, why does
the smell of corn ripening
(blood dust from crocodile feet)
fill her with dis-ease, her lover touches her
fear, says Hurry, get done, this is wrong!
The day of love, the hour, stolen poppies
waving
and blood singing calling,
bittered poisoned
rolling and fumbling too young and scared to
take love's sweet time
to feel desire poppy red sweep and cover them.
The boy finishes. The girl just beginning.
To think about what should be happening.

Nothing-voiced, not-spoken-feelings-passions-
fears,

the girl feels (death,
sees blood, hears screams) sick
drowns waves of
guilt, shame, dark and dirty. Silent with disgust
they stand, brush each other down straw sticking
prickling legs semen smell strong
frustration, tension.

Is that all there is?
so ugly so sad so bad?
Poppies wave and nod, Yes, all there is

Someone sees their pain, rearranges girl/boy memories,
Bloody images to red-blooded poppies
Death to promises, hope and sunshine,
Pain to love, sour breath to sweet.... to
"body dict vi"

Stagger throbbing up Pipeline Road
runners
surround me I talk to them I answer them I am
all alone in pain.
Legs chest left foot right foot heart hurt toes knee back.
Trees far overhead. Green black needles. Chilled .
Will this hill never end another turn no summit.
Passing bodies
walkers, even runners.
I cannot walk. Keep on keep pushing keep running
stupid word keep and
make way keep right
elite runners coming! Where?
A pack of five men
brown black shoots up the hill one pasty white trailing
a bullet after cheetahs
Speed beauty elegance no words to say how they
look. Goose pimples. A gift on a Sunday morning
a worshipful spectacle
such bodies so
astonishingly agonizingly beautifully
inhuman.
Gone.
Pain hasn’t.
I am nothing like them everything like them
we will end this pain in the same time just over
two hours
they run 26 miles and me 13.
body comprehends we are
inside out inscribing outside from the inside
making an effect of men and a woman running up a hill one deep wooded
morning in May.

we are runners.

Miss Harte
trampled under six thousand feet.
flattened amidst
dead water cups and Power Gels.
I smashed her whistle, cut her vocal chords with its
old effects.
Old bodies.
New effects. New body.
2 16 28
The Sun Sets And It Also Rises...

Field Notes: Edward King House, the Old Bishop's Palace, Lincoln, October 8th, 1999

I found a book about Mathew Flinders in the little sitting room they call the Flinders Room—amazing how many colonial icons come from Lincolnshire, maybe they were all secretly searching for somewhere warmer, trying to escape the flensing knife wind which slices across the fens, and all the icy cold rooms—because he was from near Lincoln. Extracts from Flinder’s diary and notebooks. A great explorer, lousy husband, what a way to treat his wife, déjà vu, he left her for six years after saying he loved her, and then came back, persuaded her to meet as lovers, married her secretly, and then left her again. Set off on his voyage to the unknown with this found-poem of items to appease the natives...

Hammer all sizes—100
Scissors—300 pair
Files of sorts—200
Looking glasses of sorts—500
Bluebeads—50
Redbeads—50
Earrings—100 pair
Red gartering—500

Pictures all over the walls, done by his lonely wife, probably valuable, and bookshelves all filled with lovely books about New Zealand and Australia and exploration and stuff. Will read Bruce Chatwin’s Lines book tonight.

Vancouver Notes: December 20, 1999

Felt like a huge insight today, first thoughts on analysis, now I am back from England and rattling around here again, was asked to do a poster for an Adult Education evening, and
what I might say about my research and where does it fit with the program I am supposed to be in... a thought that over here in North America, the old empire is the old ADED. Actually, any old man’s empire, meaning not necessarily men, nor old, nor adult ed, just meaning, those who have risen to run the empire, the bureaucrats and doorkeepers... in my area they just happen to be, all whitish, maleish and oldish... Same as when you go to AERA, who knew the old empire had “so much old blood in’t”, to misquote Lady Macbeth...

All the white old men with their own style and way of running the empire, all with definite views on who is colored, or not, or native or not, or ok or not. A hope that postcolonial movements in Adult Education might come from those of us who are not old empire, and who never will be, no matter how much we/they talk the same language and wear the same clothes and hide our/their origin... but will we still be natives, all dressed up in western clothes ... When they give out their prizes it’s like being given red beads and hammers and nails, being patted on the wooly head with “Good boy, good girl,” good boy/girls all dressed up in ridiculous, cheap trade goods... is it all about becoming one of them, an administrator a governor or a clerk, a trainer, a professor, whatever, about becoming part of the old empire/menpire?

But look at me and a couple of the others, and it might show that resistance is not futile. Valerian tones to the contrary. Nor is it unheard of...Rebel resister terrorist guerilla fighter and all that. Writing back the empire to the centre, ah, but it’s still the old boy’s network, no hope of being let in... perhaps... I hope the sun is setting on their
Empire, hope its their flip flop going to be laying in the middle of the road very soon.

All back to the failure of education, and not making me what I am ... Adult Education Didn’t Work For Me. Title of my new book...

Vancouver Notes: June 25, 2001 The Old Menpire Again

Well, the sun has set on the old men, but they’re just turning on all the lights to keep the dark out. Reminds me of being in Singapore in 69, 70, everyone still going to the Club, talking of “them” taking over all our “lovely buildings,” not wanting to concede things were changing. Like the loss of Adult Education departments across the field; like our Toronto Road space, such a viable and vibrant community, well, among the students at least, where we all believed in what we were learning, and doing, even if it wasn’t perfect we thought it could be, and we could make it better. Me, my study group... all of us.

They moved us out and over. Inter disciplinary is too inter and not enough discipline. Yes, me, a Foucaultian saying this, but if we want to be able to question, support, educate, adults, we need to be able to tell the difference between training them to fit in the machine-space-time-body of knowledge blocs as they become well-made adult bodies, training for part time work, training for a life in a global and deadening economy... or training to survive and question that world? We need to work, to pay the bills, but we can question—for that we need to be alive to the possibilities of new thought and new scholarship, what can Foucault and Deleuze show us, what can people like dense Judith show us, what can queer and postcolonial theories show us? We train the swarms to move out from the center, but we need to know what we are doing, how are we tending the swarms when they’re still in the hive? If we muffle ourselves up in our sting-proof suits and let the smoke obscure us as it calms the
swarm, we lose our way and our purpose. If we don’t watch out there won’t be a centre for us to send the swarms from.

The old men sit drinking their gin and it’s. Lights blazing out, fans swirling overhead. They are alone in the jungle, and the heart of darkness is closing around them. There are signs of life, though, in the kitchens, behind the bar, as the servants pad around on soft feet... departments close and become merged, and shuffled, and the Club gets renamed, we get to be more Educational and think new theories, and some of us try different ways of thinking—like the new Adult Education 2000 Handbook.

I like Wilson and Hayes’ honesty and their hope that the new handbook (the old ones used to be “How-To Survive In The Jungle” guide books), with its “overall theme of critically reflective practice,” will produce a “critically self-reflective process” (p. 1). They talk about their understanding of:

Adult and continuing education as a social practice and prudent action, not just an applied technical science... once we can reconstitute our understanding [of adult education] we can then begin to take seriously our roles as ‘cultural workers’ and begin to acknowledge and take responsibility for our educational complicity in the ‘construction of power and identity and the distribution of symbolic and material resources’ through our educational process and product. (p.30)

They solicited and selected chapters which fit with this view of adult education, and although many remain which reflect the traditional “applied science viewpoint,” I am happy with their concluding statement: “Understanding adult and continuing education in such a way demands a different epistemology of knowledge and practice as well as a clear politics of professional identity and action” (p. 30). Hah! Identity!!

On a last hopeful note, how nice to see their end-piece, How A Handbook Got Made: a little narrative, a dialogue on their process as they worked with its writers and reviewers, and themselves, to produce the handbook. When I presented a dialogic piece with my
supervisor (I put myself first there, as a way of saying it was my idea, see? I want to explain why I didn’t put him first, it seems the old empire dies hard, first rule, men first, all others later), at an adult education conference in 1997 and at AERA in 1998, all about our evolving relationship as woman/feminist student and male/non-feminist supervisor, and my struggle to get through the program and try to change it all at once, and his struggle to get me to do it so it would work for me, not destroy me (and him?) in the process, (he wouldn’t agree with this summary) we shocked a few people and upset others—there were a lot of, Oh, so brave, so silly, so navel gazing, comments—and now, look! Adult educator researcher/scholars are doing the same thing all over!

I am especially fond of one of their last sentences: they had urged all their writers to “conclude with a tidy summary of key ideas and recommendations for the future,” but they didn’t, instead they “end on a note of uncertainty and ambiguity. This uncertainty, we feel, is quite appropriate given our own view of adult education in this current set of social and historical circumstances” (p. 674). Like our refusal to end our article with the nice summary our reviewers wanted...

Field Notes. Louth, June 2000

Visited Tilly at her tea room and she said she has all the old school magazines somewhere, the Old Ludensian—pity didn’t know, could have looked through them. Remember talking to boyfriend about the story of the school magazine, what was that? Said he thought David Cooper, our teacher-publisher, was a hero, a great guy, and really respected him, but then I wrote that story and Cooper was very nervous about it and told me he couldn’t publish it. It was one of the few times Dave spoke up for me, saying he thought it was really good, and we should publish it. Cooper said it was too provocative, my boyfriend said was a really good piece, it had been about breakfast time, (food story!) where the schoolgirl announces that she is pregnant, all very cleverly done, very good. Now it would be considered tame but in the 1960s it was way too avant garde. My boyfriend was more upset than me, I was used to being turned down/away, but he said if Cooper had been a hero he would have published that thing. I wrote other pieces for the magazine the year we were editors, which were quite good. But not what I wanted to write.
Another rejection, another young boy picked by the old boys for a nice job, déjà vu all over again, the article not published in the Ludensian in 1966, my rejection by the first of the old empires, the school, then the menpire of Cambridge, all the old other feelings. That stupid Eleanor Roosevelt comment, *No one can make you feel inferior without your consent*, easy to say when you’re rich and powerful and married well. All my worries about the future: one of my committee saying to be careful when I said I didn’t want to live and work in the old men’s empire. Me thinking, as if they wanted to even talk to me about a job. I do not want to live in the empire, I am tired of trying to change it, it doesn’t work, I get changed, not them.

Yet, I remember the story of another rejection: My committee member and I both applied for a conference over in the UK, I really wanted to go, it sounded so exciting, she and her team did a really neat abstract about their project, I did one about my work, and I put it in the same envelope as theirs, hoping theirs would rub off on mine. I got a rejection letter, and went to see her, all down and depressed, she said, “Oh, I got one too,” and fishes in her garbage can and pulls it out and says, “Here it is, I read it and threw it away. Any conference that doesn’t want me to present isn’t one I want to go to.”

*I wanted to go and wear bluebeads and redgartering… If they ever ask me to come and talk to them, at the Club while the fans whirr above us maybe I can tell them this story?*
A Bathroom Story: Parasites And Periods

In the June of 1961 I turned twelve. In the September I was going to boarding school, but for the summer, I was living at my grandma’s, back to Stotfold village. My father had been posted to RAF Boscombe Down, but there wasn’t a married quarter available so my mother and I took up residence again at 84, Norton Road. We left Norfolk in late June, and I missed the last month of my first year at grammar school, which was just wonderful for me, I had not liked it at all.

One day, I went down to the village with the girl from next door, Josie Bevan. (“Not our class, of course,” as my grandma would say with a sniff, “my dear, it would be better not to get too close, they’re not the kind to mix with. It’s bad enough we have to live next door, and I know Mr. Bevan is good to us, helping with the orchard but really, not, not....” Wringing her hands, she was off to “slip down to the orchard and get us an egg for tea, the hens are laying better, my dear.” Mr. Bevan grew dahlias, huge shaggy headed monsters, they towered over the heaps of rubbish and concrete in his front garden and festooned his back garden, red, orange, white and multicoloured, spiky petals, dark green leaves; they were full of earwigs. His daughter, Josie, was “common, my dear” and three years older than me, but her, Mary Tookey up the road, and me, were the only children in this straggly row of large semi-detached homes and bungalows on the Norton Road, so we spent time together now and then.

We wandered down Norton Road to the village. They were older than me and interested in boys. I was still completely uncaring if I were near boys or girls; I was glad if anyone paid attention to me, and I didn’t care what sex they were. Boys tended to hit you more, but girls pinched. We found our way to the Green, and came across a group of boys,
huddling around something by the swings and the roundabout. Josie and Mary wanted to talk
to them, and flirt.

We walked over, and I looked. They had a ginger kitten and were hurting it, laughing.
It was terrified, and I didn’t stop to think, I pushed through them to the front and pounced on
the little animal, and grabbed it as it bit and hissed and spit and clawed me. I ran to the side
of the field with it, howling with tears and something else. The kitten was beyond terror
really, it’s limbs rigid and its claws locked into me, and it voided all over me, brown
diarrhea, and I cried even harder. I was as full of fear as it was, but I had not even thought of
that as I picked it up. They were really big boys, hard and old, fifteen sixteen.

I can’t remember what happened after this, whether I found a place to put the kitten
safely, or not. I expect it’s best not to inquire. I do remember getting home, desperate with
tears and rage and feeling so badly I couldn’t speak, to find my mother furious with me for
getting dirty. She told me I would pick up diseases and bad things from playing with animals
and I tried to explain, but she sent me up to change and then went on at me all day, as she
boiled up my dress in the copper which stood in the corner of the kitchen, my grandma
standing there, wringing her hands, as my mother ranted, “Oh my dear, Maisie, do you think
you should do that, oh dear, my dears…” whined my Grandma, but all I could think about
was the kitten and wonder what had happened to it, and if it had reached safety.

A day later, scenes of the boys’ horrible games with the kitten still fresh, I ran up to
the toilet. My grandparents had an indoor toilet, but the toilet itself stood in the same room as
the bathtub, no basin, but a ewer on a stand that one could fill with boiling water—usually
from the kettle, the immersion heater being too expensive—and bathe in. At times, with
money being hard to come by, newspaper was used, rather than toilet paper. If we were
lucky, it was toilet paper, but the cheap kind, all shiny and un-porous, which you had to use loads of to do any good. I was going to stay with my cousin Cheryl that evening, and it had been at Joan and Dick’s flat in Letchworth that I had first found soft toilet paper, Andrex, on the roll and I’d been so overwhelmed. (I can recall even now as I sit here, the feel of the paper, so soft, so smooth, so luxurious.) I pulled down my pants to sit and pee and discovered something terrible had happened. There was blood on my pants, I was sick, something awful had happened inside me and I was being punished for getting dirty and into trouble over rescuing the kitten from the hateful boys. I was too scared to do anything but try to clean it off with the hard crackly toilet paper. I must have gone white, I was so sure I was dying, my grandma said, “Oh, my dear whatever is the matter?” When I went back down stairs. “Nothing,” I replied, determined to keep silence, under no circumstances was I going to tell my mother.

I was very quiet as we took the bus to Letchworth and walked to the new housing estate where Joan and Dick and Cheryl now lived. Sometimes on a weekend when my father was home from wherever he was that week, we would go over for Saturday tea and watch television. Joan was his sister, a year or two older and we thought them fabulously wealthy, but they did boast a great deal. Cheryl was lauded as a beauty, even though she had lots of spots, her hair was blonde and curly, and she was going to the convent, for a “good education,” and was very, very clever, as she told me, showing me her Winnie the Pooh books in Latin. When we went to bed, up in her pink wall papered room with its twin beds, pale pink candlewick bedspreads, and kidney shaped dressing table with a pink skirt made from the same material as the curtains, I told her something terrible was wrong with me, for
the bleeding hadn’t stopped, even though I had used half a roll of the Andrex to mop it up.

"Am I dying?" I asked.

She laughed, and said, “Oh, you’ve got the curse,” and yelled for her mother to come up and talk to me. Auntie Joan explained it all to me; it would happen once a month, and I should wear these things, (giving me white sanitary towels), and put them in the brown paper bag in the toilet when I had done with them. Cheryl chimed in to say she wore something called Tampax, but I wasn’t old enough, and Joan continued; I shouldn’t wash too much, nor run around during this time, which would last a few days, and when I got home I was to tell my mother, and she would buy me a sanitary belt, which I would use once a month, fastening the towels to it, by their looped ends, securely. “Don’t let it move around,” said Cheryl, “or you’ll lose it and have an accident.” I interpreted this to mean I would be run over if I ran, or walked fast while having “the curse.”

When we got into bed, Joan came over and gave me a hug and a kiss goodnight, an unusual event for me, warmth and love, but the whole day had been unusual, following on from the day of the kitten and the dirty business the day before. I was terrified, and asked her, “Can I turn over, or shall I lay on my back?” I didn’t know if laying on my stomach, the way I usually went to sleep, would hurt. She laughed and said I could do what I wanted, but I lay rigid all night, fearful of falling asleep and in some pain from the cramps.

When I went back to Grandma’s I told my mother, who was angry. She was angry at everything, so this was not unusual, but because we were at my grandma’s I knew I wouldn’t get too bad a whipping, it was when we were at home alone that things could go on for days… She bought me a belt, and after a day or so, things seemed to just dry up and I was
thankful to put it all away, thinking it was all over. She told me it might not come again, when you started it was not regular. But worse was to come.

A few days after the end of the first period I started to find myself very itchy, and kept scratching "down there." It drove me crazy, but I thought it was just the aftermath of the whole event. One day I went up to the toilet and when I used the paper, I found a worm, a white little wriggly thing on it. I screamed and screamed and screamed. My mother came running and I showed her and she screamed too. My grandma came panting up the stairs, she was a heavy woman, and said, "Oh my dears, that's just a worm, they all get them, children do, she'll have picked that up from those common girls, Josie or Mary," and my mother screeched, "She got it from that damn cat, that dirty thing, or she's just been dirty, not washing good enough, no child of mine would get worms! We don't have worms in Canada, no one in my family ever had worms, you people over here are so backward, so filthy!"

We went in a whirlwind of shame and panic to Doctor Green, my mother saying to me all the way up Norton Road, "You've just humiliated me, a daughter of mine getting worms!" When we left, complete with doses of worm medicine for me, the doctor's bored, "Yes, children always get these," still not calming my mother's horror and wrath, we raced back to Grandma's. Into a great boiling of clothes and towels and underwear and sheets and all things that could be washed, were washed, and wrung out on the mangle and then boiled in the copper and then wrung out on the mangle again and then hung on the lines in the garden. She washed all my clothes and my underwear and I had to sit inside with nothing on but one ragged towel, ("Now that's your towel, and don't let anyone near it, the doctor said we can all catch these damn things if we get too close to you, or your things come near ours"), with nothing on til something was dry enough to put on, and for weeks after I had to
stay apart from them, and never go near their towels or face cloths, and flush twice, and I
didn’t need to be told to wash, wash wash …

In my own mind, the horror of the kitten’s torments, the worms and the period all
merged, I found the act of menstruation dirty, acutely embarrassing, and shameful. When I
went to the boarding school, I was the only girl out of the 12 of us in my year who had
“started,” and, even worse, other things were growing too, so my body didn’t look like theirs.
I was an oddity, a freak; Margaret Karlsberg told me, “Girls don’t start til they’re fourteen or
fifteen, there must be something wrong with you!”

When I read or hear of the joy surrounding some women’s access to puberty and
womanhood I am amazed. But for the times and the place, my rite of passage was normal—
menstruation was a secret, not discussed even among women, and certainly not ever with
boys or men. As a chapter in the biography of body’s Tale, it has remained as one of the most
disconcerting, surrounded by much shame, and it stands as a marker of my un-normal,
deviant body. For many women of my generation, it’s a familiar story; the disgust and
nastiness of the whole business of menstruating is, also, of course, consonant with fixing us
in our gendered roles of embodied uncleanliness, monthly pariahs who must be isolated, or
treated with great care in this time of their flawed fragility. It wasn’t until I went to UCL and
talked to Letty, that I realized the nasty business didn’t need to be so secretive nor so
shameful… but that’s a different story.
Wanderings...

Contestatory expressions from the site of imperial intervention, long ignored in the metropolis; the critique of empire coded ongoingly on the spot, in ceremony, dance, parody, philosophy, counterknowledge and counterhistory, in texts unwitnessed, suppressed, lost or simply overlain with repetition and unreality...

Mary Louise Pratt. *Imperial Eyes*

What Is Discipline? A Foucaultian Meditation

It uses spaces. Discipline works by distributing bodies in space, through enclosing bodies in a space, partitioning that space, making it functional space, and serial space where the bodies are interchangeable elements... Cellular spaces.

Miss Snowdon, Mount Snowdon

I couldn't stand it a second longer. "Shut UP" I screamed in a whisper, "She'll hear you, she's probably watching us right now through the door!" I sometimes felt I had not had a night's sleep in the year and a half since I came to this prison, a 12-year-old latecomer, thrown in with a gaggle of girls who had already bonded and chosen up friends. There were actually four of us new Second Formers, Jennifer from Kenya, Diana and Elizabeth from local farming communities, and me, but we didn't bond with each other either—we took our role and rank as "last in" seriously. We were rejects, abjects. Naturally, we were treated badly, excluded, ignored, teased, taunted. After all, what's the point of being on the inside if you can't make fun of those on the outside? So tonight, again, 2 or 3 of the girls in the dorm, the in-crowd were giggling and talking after lights out, stupid stuff, not funny, not clever and they had kept me awake for some time. And they had already got Snowdon in on us once.

Miss Snowdon, Mount Snowdon, we called her. She seemed a fat and raddled old witch then; maybe she was in her forties. Dyed blond hair rolled up like Betty Grable's, crusted lipstick, stale makeup, ghastly short skirts to show the legs that she was proud of, she
stunk of Tweed perfume by Lentheric, and psychotic. I didn’t know what psychotic was, but I knew she was “wrong.” If she took against you, as she did me, that was it, no appeals, nor
repeals. For some reason, probably because my Mother cried the day she delivered me, not done, and was Canadian, and was so, so, exotic. Mount Snowdon liked normal, not abnormal, not exotic.

Once tonight already she had tiptoed up, waited to catch someone speaking, lurking outside until she thought she recognized the voice, then stormed in, always saying, stupidly, “Who’s talking in here?” No one ever answered her. We didn’t like each other but we liked her less and we had read enough of those boisterous girls adventures stories to know that one didn’t tell. After a time or two, she would get really angry... and if I was angry at being kept awake, she was worse.

Just as I said, “She’ll hear you!” the door was flung open, the chair she had wedged in there on her previous visit (so she could hear us if we transgressed, from her room in between the two dorms on the middle floor), came hurtling into the room with a crash. “Valerie Chapman! I thought so, out of bed, all of you, because of her you can all suffer!” Oh, great! I thought, sending hateful looks to Lesley and Sue, who had been the ones talking. One more bloody point on my report!

Then came the worse part. Tonight it was the whole thing. All six of us were led out, across the landing. One was left in the farthest bathroom, door closed; one left in the Common Room, downstairs, door closed; one left in the Dining Room opposite, door closed; one more left in the kitchen proper, door closed; and me, me she saved the best spot for, and locked me, key in lock locked, into the pantry within the kitchen. Then she carted off Margaret, whom she “liked” to her sitting room.
To feed her chocolates and find out, hand on Margaret’s knee (or worse? Margaret just giggled when she told us, and the term before when Miss Snowdon had gone on and on about unnatural acts, we really didn’t know what she meant, but “Lesbians!” said Margaret. Although even she didn’t know what they did. We didn’t know it was to do with sex…) as she prised out of her all the details of who was really talking, who it was called out rude things on the Saturday walk, who had been late for breakfast, who had hidden tuck—crisps, sweets—in their dirty laundry bag (we all assumed she didn’t know about that hiding place, it was the only private spot any of us had, everything else was always open for inspection, ready for her lustful eyes to sweep over), and so on and so on. We all knew after she had had Margaret, most of us would be gated, not allowed out for at least a week or more; worst of all, we would lose our Saturday morning shopping privilege in the town.

There we all stood, separated from each other, in our little pools of darkness. Because, of course, that was the point, to stand us there for a few hours of total blackness, no other human around. Just the odd mouse running past or over our feet in the pitch dark of a 300 year old mansion, spiders spinning poisonous webs across the face. Shivering. It was cold, no heat. Cold, always cold. Thin dressing gowns in the dark. So dark. I stood there, and didn’t dare move. I could smell the bread in the giant bread bins, the apples wizening in their barrel, whiffs of that white, ugly margarine, marmite, cocoa, All Bran, all the other sundry smells of a larder full of stale, cheap food. Food for 60 hungry little girls... I was not hungry. And standing there in the dark, I got more and more frightened, nauseated by the smells, knowing I would never ever be able to eat stale bread and white margarine without feeling a flood of that sick fear. *What if she forgot me?*

Punishment, nasty punishments, petty punishments, that was my lot, and it seemed
that the more I got, the more I needed, because I got angrier and more defiant. Splitting us up, that was a master stroke. Reduced us to tears every time, but not me. We stood there shivering, some crying, for hours. Not me. Sick, scared, but not crying. She came back for us, and then we fell into our beds, tired, terrified, isolated still from each other, still in our cells of shame.

**Empire Builders**

"Pulls you down dreadfully, this confounded malaria. Ah, little woman, you little know the strain it puts a man under to be an empire builder," said Harold to Millicent, as he stood on the verandah, swaying slightly, but still dignified. She looked at him with angry eyes. "You're drunk," she said.

W. Somerset Maughman. *Before the Party*, From *Collected Stories*.

When my father was posted to Singapore, I discovered Somerset Maughman’s tales of the Far East and the imperial misfits who ruled there. I brought all of the stories with me, to Changi, and read them in bed, lying under the fan, late night insect noises, wondering... Why did Harold accept his role as empire builder? Why did Millicent not question her role as his? Why did she kill Harold? Not, it seems, because of the strain of being wife to a patriarchal, abusive empire builder, but because he *failed* in that role, let them both down, bringing to them, with his drunkenness, a shame and ignominy Millicent could not bear.

Now, years later, I wonder how these two colonizers were colonized, persuaded, trained, to *become* colonizers? How willing were they? How did disciplinary power construct them as empire builders, "swarming out from their enclosed spaces" in schools, barracks, hospitals. We know panopticism worked in the Empire, even if imperfectly. Reading Foucault's remorseless prose, it’s hard to remember that his is a gendered story and that (most
of) his subjects are men. Not women. So how did panopticism work to construct women?

Discipline creates narrative/story, body, identity. In kitchens and bathrooms, spaces of engulfment, absorption, elimination; and it creates the activities to be done in those spaces, schedules the times to do them, appoints the Others to do them to. Space, time, activities. These are how disciplinary power inserts itself into the life of The Empire/body/colony.

Imperial subjectivities, female and male, are constructed through discursive educational practices, schooling and discipline....

Uniform

Dressed in my school uniform
Plaits in military precision, lined up SQUARE! SIR!
Closed mouth, no wide-open-smile
(Broke my front tooth riding wildly on my bike
Never show your teeth again, my mother said
Sent me back to find the missing smile/piece of tooth
Lost somewhere on a
Two mile stretch of pebbly, white, stony track
Crying wildly, too scared to go back without the tooth
Waited until dark

And got whipped anyway for missing supper)
Crested school gym slip should make me uniform
But I look different

My body doesn't wear its uniform... uniformly

Maneovers With Oranges And Learning To Tell The Time...

It wasn't the uniform I hated so much. After all I had been learning in uniform, with uniform, all my life. From the first day I started school at the age of 5 years and 2 months, I wore a uniform to learn in. And always navy blue. (To this day I do not wear blue, willingly.) I grew up with uniform, only rarely seeing my father out of it, knew to wear a uniform declared a body as part of the herd, and knew, too, its exact gradations and subtle marking of status. I
could spot the number of gold rings on an officer's arm from a hundred yards away, and by
relating those to the number worn by my father, knew exactly how to behave. We were
disciplined in body and soul, us little Service children; it was normal to don my uniform to
do my schooling.

Not just the uniform, then. I think it was the way my whole life was parcelled out in
blocks of time, hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly... I would lay awake at night, depressed
and unable to sleep. Seeing a long corridor, my life, grey and ugly stretching to infinity.
Every day, every hour timed, every activity, for every hour, for every day, for ever... I could
see my life disappearing into a total sameness, blandness, controlled always by others. Truly
forever, for I still strip my bed every morning, I still do my laundry on Sundays, I still shop
on Saturday mornings, I still do my prep after my tea... A disciplined body, unable to stop
maneuvering.

Oranges. The correct way to peel an orange. Hold the orange in the left hand (never
eat with the hand that does the peeling, cutting, spreading), knife in right hand. Score the
orange in 8 vertical lines, decapitate it, peel the orange by removing, from the top down, the 8
segments. Lay the orange on the plate. Remove one segment at a time, eat individually.
Apple, peel in similar fashion. Cutting one's toast reveals lower class origins. Toast: never
cut, always tear into pieces, spread with butter, then jam, eat one mouthful, place on plate,
spread next section, and eat, next section, repeat and eat. At home, dining alone, no one but
myself watching. I hold the orange in the left hand...

Never ask for the milk, sugar or bread. It will be passed to you and offered. If you
want some, ask someone else, Would you care for milk, sugar, bread? Never use ketchup or
sauce, it is an insult to the cook and it is lower class. Never hold the knife and fork for longer
than it takes to cut or put food in mouth. Never talk with the mouth full. Always leave a
portion on the plate. Always leave the napkin, crumpled, on the table.

Even now, in gracious solitude, I perform perfect alimentary maneuvers...

**What Is Discipline? Foucaultian Meditations**

It uses times, activities... It uses timetables... It correlates the body and the gesture... It arranges a positive economy... Making Subjects

The history of the Imperial body is not just that of the colonized, but of the colonizers, too. Gayatri Spivak has said, “What remains useful in Foucault is the mechanics of disciplinarization and institutionalization, the constitution, as it were, of the colonizer” (1988, p. 294). Laura Ann Stoler remarks that much of the anthropology of colonialism has taken as given the categories of “colonizer” and “colonized,” but that we must see that these are constructions that need to be explained. Stoler deftly laces class and race, and gender, into a reading of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, to show “how Europeans imagined themselves in the colonies and cultivated their distinctions from those to be ruled” (1995, p.98).

This daily running of Empire is not an upper class affair. It is true that the leaders of the great armies, the Wellingsons, the rulers of countries and great provinces, were drawn from the upper class and the aristocracy, but the middle class—upper, middle and lower—staffed the Empire, wrote the letters, drilled the troops, washed the officers’ linen, planted their gardens, ordered the goods that filled the shops they owned, that came on the trains that ran on the tracks they laid, over the bridges they built. The colonizers were the engineers, the stationmasters, the middle ranks, the schoolmasters, the cricket players, captains of the tramp steamers, the everyday life of Empire was theirs. They were not the first sons, not the second
sons even, these were the last sons, the extra men, the men who at Home never would have had a servant, and now had a dozen. Stoler’s reading of Empire classes Foucault’s, “We are just beginning to identify how bourgeois sensibilities have been coded by race, and, in turn, how finer scales measuring cultural competency and ‘suitability’ often replaced explicit racial criteria to define access to privilege in imperial ventures” (1995, p.99).

Colonialism was a middle class project, and many middle class colonizers were not men. The colonial project depended not just on a fixed identity as a colonizer, but as a fixed identity as a male or female colonizer. Colonial power rested on men, and women, who had been trained and disciplined into their roles as middle class men and women. The colonies were just as much a dumping ground for women who were de trop as they were for extra sons. Women were shipped off to the colonies, ostensibly to visit aunts, uncles, cousins, friends of friends, but in truth, they walked down the gangplanks of ships in Bombay, Calcutta, Singapore, Penang, Sydney, Auckland and Halifax in search of husbands. Thus was Millicent lucky in snaring Harold when he was Home on leave—at 37 she was well past any hope of matrimony in England; in turn, it was to be her duty to host Katherine, her equally plain sister, on a visit to the Federated Malay States, and to help find her a Harold. But, of course, Harold got his throat cut one afternoon and that was shelved.

Watching Mrs. Charneaux, Watching Me...

That bloody woman, I remember hating her.
She didn’t like me.
No, she hated you, wanted you to be this prim and proper little person, she had an airy fairy manner about her, as I recall, but I just did not like the look of her.

I thought nothing could be worse than Mount Snowdon, but then, in the Fifth Form, Mrs.
Charneaux arrived. With her nosy old mother and her demon son. All eyes those two, wandering around the Limes, lurking in corridors, springing out at you from doorways, “back stairs workers”... She was exotic. Married to a Frenchman, a crocodile hunter, back in darkest Africa, and who ran away to Paris with his secretary (so we heard from her old mother), left her, evil-eyed, bitter and in need of money, hence the job. She was a snob. Very upper class accent, thought she should have been at Roedean, not Louth. But she did do one good thing, she tried to improve the food. To our (British Empire) menu of curry, mulligatawny soup, kedgeree, tea or char, and good boiled cabbage, she added muesli... but it was made by Prowt, the cook, so it came out like porridge mixed with stewed apple, which is what it was. And we got butter everyday. On the whole, I would have preferred the margarine and no demon child. He was only 6, but always peering at us as we dressed and undressed...

Mrs. C. seemed to take exception to me, and in the Sixth Form I earned her undying hatred by acquiring a boyfriend she hated more, and they acted out their mutual hatred weekly, in agonizing and awkward meetings each Friday before each Saturday outing. My reputation as a bad girl had been made, long since. Each of us carried home at the holiday break not just one school report card, but two, one from the academic staff, and one from the boarding staff. My boarding house reports alternately cast me as a devious leader, a born troublemaker, or, when I was having a quiet term, as a passive follower, weak and “easily led.” I used to laugh at them, but with the coming of Mrs. C. and the boyfriend they acquired a tone of malevolence. So I learned...

Learning sexuality, repression, bodies; “the education of desire,” as Laura Ann Stoler calls it, not desire as an essential nor pre-discursive part of my nature, as I thought at 16, but “patterned discursive incitements and stimulations that facilitated the penetration of social
and self-disciplinary regimes into the most intimate domains of modern life (p.3).” To make me middle class, to make me desire Empire.

I did not have to work hard to excel at school, and in my A level subjects I cruised along. But those other reports weighed heavily against me, and my every activity was suspect, as was my boyfriend’s. He was always in trouble too, and was expelled from the boarding house. All because Mrs. C. watched and noted.

I don't think I ever shed that dossier. It followed me to University, where I was given only probationary status, and yet I ended up with a passable Upper Second. Because I was good at exams. After all, I had written them every year of my life, summer after summer. From age 6 onwards, summer was Wimbledon, strawberries and exams.. But the light had left me by the time I got to London, I hated learning, school, education, the whole of it, rejected it absolutely. I wonder, now, if I was a success or failure, in terms of discipline, training and surveillance? I think a success, for in the end, I was disciplined enough to write those final exams...

What Is Discipline? Foucaultian Meditation

Finally, the examination is at the center of the procedures that constitute the individual as an effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge. It is the examination, which by combining hierarchical surveillance and normalizing judgment, assures the great disciplinary functions of distribution and classification, maximum extraction of forces and time, continuous genetic accumulation, optimum combination of aptitudes and thereby the formulation of cellular, organic, genetic, and combinatorial individuality. With it are ritualized those disciplines that may be characterized in a word by saying that they are a modality of power for which individual difference is relevant.

Constructing, Acting, Self and Other

Homi Bhabha reminds us that the “postcolonial perspective... insists that cultural and
political identity are constructed through a process of alterity. Questions of race and cultural difference overlay issues of sexuality and gender and overdetermine social alliances..." (1994, p.175). Race was imbricated in the construction of self and other, not just gender, class or social status. Even in the heart of lightness/whiteness, England, the metropolis, race was a significant factor in shaping identity and purpose.

I've already spoken of my sense that subjectivities are not settled, but shift, like grains of sand in an hour glass, running endlessly from one place to the other, but always tied this place, to that place, so we/I move from discursive space to discursive place. Similarly, it seems, identities were not fixed, but wavered, hesitated, when Empire was enacted. Class, sex and race, all have to be constructed, all must articulate with each other, and all must become second nature, so ingrained in the body, the mind, there can be no question, when it is necessary, when the rules need to be shown to be working, that there will be no hesitation.

I wonder if Kearns’s (1996) thesis, and mine, that imperial subjects took up differing notions of duty and identity at different moments in time and space, that there were various discursive strategies that “Imperial subjects drew on...to sustain themselves in their imperial duties and desires” (p.453), is not too confident. True, imperial identity served to “inoculate its subjects against disturbing experience...[and] the sordidness of empire” (p.453). Mary Louise Pratt (1992) suggests European bourgeois subjects used anti-conquest strategies of representation to both deny and affirm their hegemonic status—is this a more plausible reading? Isn’t it too pat, somehow, to think of the “imperial subject being shaped in the core against the threat of likely dismantling on the periphery” (Kearns, p. 452), in a process that seems total, monolithic, and which carries with it no trace of ambivalence? As if these were subjects shaped knowingly, complicitly, complacently, who chose to shift... This fluidity
might imply imperial subjects had a touch of lycanthropy; at the first sign of the waxing or waning of a colonial moon, they would transform. But what strain was involved, what creaks marks the passage from one identity to another?

Foucault says discourses are not imposed from some central apparatus, but are the products of discoursing people; the power of discourse is that it operates so seamlessly as to appear ordinary, commonplace, these things we do and say. We may not question the discourse publicly, even consciously... but in our hearts, psyches, I think we watch anxiously, unsure of our roles, our identity, convinced that o/Others identities are so secure... As if the o/Others “get” the discourse, but we don’t, quite... Almost the same, but not quite...

Homi Bhabha claims the construction of the Other is necessary for the security of self, one of the defining features of colonial discourse, the stereotype, is this attempt to fix the self. However, “the stereotype is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always in place, already known, and something that must be repeated” (1994, p. 66). The constant need to repeat, reassure, reclassify, rehierarchize, reindividuate, this is what drives colonial discourse. Why assume that the stereotype is that which lies outside ourself?

Do we not try to take on the stereotype, become the stereotype?

The construction of the colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference—racial and sexual... the body is always simultaneously inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power. (Bhabha, 1994, p.67)

We try not only to fix the Other, but also to fix ourselves, and if there is no Other immediately present to array ourselves against/with, we will fix against an imagined Other. This is the stuff of which identity is made, uncertainties, not certainty.

My contention, which stems from Foucault’s premise of self-regulation as the fruit of
the surveillant imposition of classification, individuation and normalization and Bhabha's psychoanalytic reading, is that there is a self-knowledge of performance, for there is anxiety, a sense of having to get it right, this time, of trying to fix the stereotype on oneself first, and then on the Other.

Judith Butler says, “The reduction of performativity to performance would be a mistake” (1993, p. 24), but is there a possibility of anxiously misreading performativity? Gender performance is “a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer's 'will' or 'choice,' further what is 'performed' works to conceal, if not to disavow, what remains opaque, unconscious, un-performable” (1993, p. 24). In the requirement and space of iteration there might be an area of slippage, the point at which resistance might become an effect of a miscued or mis-stepped performance. Might resistance come from perceiving the flaws—would slippage show performance to be an effect? I think sometimes we suddenly see that flaw and panic...

When the performance is perceived at some level to be incoherent, defective, when we get our lines wrong, or find ourselves wearing the costume for Act 1, Scene 2 in Act 2, Scene 1, when someone doesn't 'get' our performance, when we're given a new part and don't have time to rehearse before going live, then we get anxious, contradicted, our inner sense of ourselves is in turmoil.

Homi Bhabha says “It is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (1994, p.86). He goes on to say:

The discourse of mimicry is constructed around ambivalence; mimicry must continually produce slippage, its excess, its difference. The authority of that mode of colonial discourse that I have called mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry
is thus the sign of a double articulation: a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which appropriates the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both ‘normalized’ knowledges and disciplinary powers. (1994, p. 86)

I think the anxious performance, lapsing at times into mimicry, is the key to understanding how the colonizers functioned/function.

Daily, they acted the ambivalence of mimicry. Almost, but not quite, a ruling class. Almost the same, but not quite, white enough. Almost the same, but not quite, masculine enough, feminine enough. Almost the same, but not quite... It’s not just the way MacCaulay’s “class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood in colour, but English in tastes, opinions, in morals, and in intellect...[constructed] through our English School,” must have felt. Anglicized, but not English, not quite, and it’s how the colonial man and woman must have felt too, mimic man, mimic woman. Such anxiety, such fear... Such effort, such strain... and this is when the training, the discipline must hold firm, just when it is being questioned, threatened. For what is the unthinkable alternative? The giving up of what one has learned so well, to be/true/safe? Is there not, at some stage, some fundamental anxiety, some need to be secure, some need to belong, without having to change? Why else do we long for the certainties of essentialist categories, of race, sex, gender, place and time? We feel fear, and phobia, as Homi Bhabha suggests.

Out of this may come fetishes. Anne McClintock has shown how the rules of performance can become internalized into obsessions, which then produce fetishes: Fetishes can be seen as the displacement onto an object (or person) of the contradictions that the individual cannot resolve at a personal level. These may originate as social contradictions, but are lived with profound intensity in the imagination and the flesh (Imperial Leather,
1995, p.184). What performances were ritually staged by the colonizers, for the colonized? How were their anxieties displaced into fetish? I think their ambivalence transferred into obsessive routines, conscious performances, styles of the flesh (Butler, 1990) the soul, and the mind, front stage work for back stage workers.

Eating, drinking, at/and having a Home; alimentation, elimination and habitation are fetishized into identities to be fixed, daily, at table, at the bar and in thoughts of Home. The trope of Home was a discursive technique, used Imperially, nationally, and within the family, to construct white, middle class, secure, bourgeois colonizers. Home sets itself up as a theory or concept, offers an allowable knowledge of a place to aim for, to be in, and out of, amongst a prescribed field of objects—colonizers and colonized, and of course, the colonizers learned about the spaces of home and not home...

Educating for Home, Learning Home

Education. Colonizers learnt the rules of Imperial performance in novels, the newspapers, in the commonplace, humble, modalities of everyday life. And at schools and in colleges. In the 19th century, Halford Mackinder, a WEA star, campaigned to have Geography accepted as a discipline; in his optimism he was sure that geography would be able to “arrest the decline of British power, and renew the idea of empire” (Geroid O Tuathail, 1996, p. 86). By the use of geography’s panoptic eye, and its complicity in producing maps, lectures and textbooks, an ideological assault could be mounted on the minds of British children (and their parents) and they would be freed of insularity. By the turn of the century, Mackinder had been successful in placing geography on the educational map. (I know, I had to do that geography, some 60 years later...)
Mackinder's efforts were aimed at 'national efficiency,' extending into the daily life and habits of the population, whose health had been revealed as deplorable, mentally, and physically, when the British Empire had been unable to send healthy, fit British men to defend itself against the Boers. The new knowledge of the Empire and Home was to penetrate into the nutritional, recreational, and sexual spheres of the population's life. Added to the discourse of national fitness, which combined social Darwinism and eugenics to produce gendered scripts for citizenship performances (Vertinsky, 1997), and to the discourse of domesticity that marked the bourgeoisie from mid Victorian times on, this use of geography to prop up, propagate and procreate British Imperial power continued well into the 20th century. In the afternoon and evening lectures of the WEA, the novels of Rider Haggard, the popular press, the theatre, photographs, Sunday sermons, Women's Institute Magic Lantern Shows, exhibitions, museums, adverts—and postcards. Empire was learned, constructed. The Empire of the middle class. And on to me at Louth, in 1963…

Anne McClintock writes, “Imperialism is not something that happened elsewhere - a disagreeable fact of history external to Western identity” (1995, p. 5). Her contention is that “imperialism and the invention of race were fundamental aspects of Western, industrial modernity,” and race was central to the self-definition of the middle class and the “policing of the dangerous classes.” McClintock claims domesticity was, as a cult, not simply an interesting facet of Victorian life, but an essential element in the “dimension of male and female identities,” and an indispensable element in the industrial market and imperial enterprise. And where a discoursing subject equated gender with race, black men were feminized, and women, were, with natives, deemed foolish, childish, natural liars and sentimental (Coombs, 1994)
While there is a move to examine the 'private' spaces of Empire, the home, the kitchen, the bathroom, the bedroom, this is still a classed and raced reading, for women and men experienced the imperial project differently. Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose (1994) emphasize that the private spaces of women of colour, for example, often the spaces where white racism does not penetrate, do not necessarily replicate the safety of the private spaces of white women, such as the kitchen, where power has traditionally been given over to the 'lady' of the house. Just as bell hooks tells us, white people travel differently than black people, so do white people live Home differently.

I use the word 'safe' in combination with 'private' and 'Home' to draw attention to the paradox of domesticity and empire. Angelika Bammer reminds us that Home has differing semantic dimensions: it can refer to a familiar or to a foreign place, it can be a referent, it can be indeterminate. It at once demythifies 'home' as provisional and relative; its meaning discursively produced by a particular speaker in a particular context for particular ends...on the other hand, its very indeterminacy has lent itself to the continuous mythification of 'home' as an almost universal site of utopian (be)longing. (1992, p. vii)

'Home' was constructed at home as a space to be defended at all costs against the raced barbarian who threatened Empire, be that the black African, the Boer, the working class woman, the Jews, the Irish, in short, all the 'natives' of the Empire at Home and abroad. Stoler (1995) has suggested that the constant fear of miscegenation, of colonizers going native, of the recruitment into governing apparatuses of Bhabha's mimic Anglics, meant racial purity abroad was always in doubt, hence the need to shore it up in the centre. At 'Home' in Britain, as McClintock (1995) tells us, the cult of domesticity, expressed itself in tropes of purity and cleanliness, gave hope, promised to all who purchased Pear's soap, a
clean, white Home. By the vigorous use of this Imperial soap, and by cleaning the home spaces, the national population could sustain, nurture, and create a Home that was safe. A Home where one belonged, where the correct performance of gender, sexuality, class, consumption, race and status ensured its continual existence. (Obviously this spread to the colonies too, hence my mother’s faith in soap...) 

For those abroad, on the periphery, Home was not where they were—unsafe, unhomed, abroad. Home was a space they produced discursively. There were mimic Homes—the Hill Stations of the British Raj (Kennedy, 1996), for example, but Home was where one would retire, live. Home was what kept one going as an Empire Builder. There was a recognition, often, that that Home was a myth, but it had the power of Myth. It was a place to yearn for, a place to be always working toward, a place to protect, and, for those anxious performers abroad, it was what one practiced, performed, daily.

In Somerset Maughman’s story about Masterson we learn why he refuses to marry his Burmese mistress, even though they have been happy together. He says:

If I married her I’d have to stay in Burma for the rest of my life. Sooner or later I want to go back to my old home and retire, I don’t want to be buried out here. I want to be buried in an English churchyard. I want England. Sometimes I get sick of this hot sunshine and these garish colours. I want grey skies and a soft rain falling and the smell of the country. I shall be a funny fat elderly man when I go back, too old to hunt even if I could afford it, but I can fish. I don’t want to shoot tigers, I want to shoot rabbits. I want to play golf on a proper course. I know I shall be out of it, we fellows who have spent our lives out here, but I can potter about the local club and talk to retired Anglo-Indians. I want to feel under my feet the pavement of an English country town. I want to have a walled garden at the back of my house and grow roses. That’s the sort of life my people have always lived. It’s a dream if you like, but it’s all I have, it means everything to me, and I can’t give it up. Sometimes I ask myself if it’s worthwhile to sacrifice my happiness for a dream. It is only a dream, isn’t it? It’s funny, one of the things that holds me back is the thought of a muddy lane I know, with great clay banks and above, beech trees bending over. (p. 263)

Masterson wants a homebody... How could his Burmese mistress offer him Home? How
would a European woman offer him a Home?

Stoler remarks on the proliferation of manuals, books and educational tools, which gave the stage directions to those on the periphery, texts of household tips, instructions for managing the servants, for dining, for gardening, for daily comportment. They were voraciously consumed by white, anxious, bourgeois subjects. How to make a home away from Home. And the same discourse circulated to control women's sexuality, exalting maternity, breeding Empire builders, and it prevailed both in the metropolis and at the periphery. Domestic space is crucial to the maintenance of 'proper' morality and identity. The family, at h/Home, is the site of production—of sexuality, of civility, of the future of Empire. A European women’s mission was to preserve the space of home; through controlling, discipling the spaces of h/Home, the kitchen, the bedroom, the dining room and the bathroom, women colonizers performed their roles as Imperial subjects.

Robinson's, Club Sandwiches And Afternoon Tea At The Casuarinas

On Tuesdays and Thursdays the RAF Transport Command VC10 touched down on the runway at Changi, just a few hundred yards from our bungalow. I arrived on it, reluctant, unhappy, rebellious, one Tuesday in January in 1968. I had wanted to stay in England, close to my boyfriend, (who didn’t seem to much care where I was, as he read busily for Cambridge in the Autumn, thrilled at last to have shed his rebel performance), and not be here, in this smelly, steamy, hot, boring place. Even though I did like the watermelon for breakfast, the exotic pineapple for lunch, and some of the Chinese food that my mother cooked for dinner.

My mother had to give me lessons on living in the tropics—you can’t wear a girdle,
or stockings, just too hot, but no one will notice, and no shoes, because the leather rots, and no petticoats. How awful, I had been used to layers of clothing, all of the above, plus blouse, tie, pullover and blazer, now, to walk around so curiously light... it seemed indecent...

And she had to learn how to manage the servants. For the first time we had servants living in. Always before, with cleaning ladies, my father's batman, they left in the afternoon. Now the amah slept next to the kitchen, and every other day the gardener came with all his family, and they gossiped loudly outside my window, waking me in the early morning.

It was not an easy thing to watch, my mother trying to be a colonizer. She was a colonial herself, from Canada, and uneasy with this power. She argued with the servants, and distrusted the amahs, pushing them out of the kitchen, always the space that had been hers, the only one my father didn't rule. She insisted we eat roast beef, heavy dinners, and we sat, silent (we were not a happy family), sweating and working our way through the courses. It kept her happy. She fretted constantly, about the cockroaches, about the ants, and she had all the food stored in cabinets with legs which rested in little dishes of kerosene, preventing the insects from climbing up into the food. My parents slept each night in an air conditioned room (me sweltering under a sheet with the ceiling fan on high), their room freezing, and still my mother complained about the heat.

She tried to grow roses, to cultivate flowers that were not so ugly, so tropical, "I want something that reminds me of my garden at home," she said. But they all died. As did the cats we adopted as strays, beaten, abused and maltreated, I was always coming home with more, and then had to watch them suffer and expire. Tuffy, Daisy, Henry, Alfred... We longed for a cool day, a good decent rain, not the monsoon.

The bougainvillea grew well.
We went shopping into Singapore itself, leaving the enclosed and fenced safety of Changi Station, braving a pick up taxi, the crowds, the not very nice natives, ending up, in relief, in the air conditioned Capitol Shopping Centre, and on to Robinson’s, where we had club sandwiches for lunch. We shopped, looking at fabrics, makeup and perfume, but didn’t buy. My mother sent Home to England, to the local chemists in Letchworth for her makeup, preferring the ‘best,’ not the ‘tropical kind.’

At least once a week we went to the Officer’s Club or the Mess for drinks, a night out at the Bar. Everyone drank, most to excess. My father was always silent, sullen, my mother either complained or sat in silence too. We went on a special occasion, an anniversary, to the Coq D’Or, the hotel out on Changi Road, and had the “best Chinese food in the city.” I was mesmerized by the cockroaches, bigger than my foot, and the rat that sat on the parapet of the hotel, watching me eat.

It was a ghastly place, all of it was ghastly. I wanted to go home.

I got a job at the Officer’s Club, began to make some friends, and to go out. In the Air Force, young officers could only go out with officer’s daughters, or civilians of equivalent rank, so my arrival meant the infusion of new blood. I began to enjoy myself. I put away the Russian novels I had read for light entertainment before sleeping, the Thomas Hardy stories, the Somerset Maugham collections and read, instead, glossy magazines. With my best friend Sue (her father was Australian, one rank below mine, not in Fighter Command, but she was acceptable), went shopping, swimming, ate bacon sandwiches every day for lunch at the Club, and went for afternoon English tea at the Casuarina’s Hotel, just on the beach, with dashing young officers. In the evenings we went out to the Club, or to parties, often just to Mr. Lim’s in the Village for fried rice at 2 am. Sometimes to Dining In Nights at the Mess,
guests of officers in white dinner jackets, medals showing, brass buttons polished and even if
I didn't wear a girdle, I thought I looked good. It was a heady life.

Of course, I had spent my time learning how to do it. It was the life I had been
educated for, what my parents had spent all that money on... I knew how to peel an orange,
how to make conversation, how to dress, how to order the servants around, how to not make
my bed, how to be a lady. It was a good life. It was a world away from Miss Snowdon, Mrs.
Charneaux and Mr. Strong and Mr. Cooper and Mr. Flagg, but they seemed to be there, too,
just over my shoulder, watching, and listening.

Dining in the Empire

It wasn’t just the women who observed the rules, worked for a steady performance, fetishized
food, and the everyday. Men also observed stylized rituals, performed the ceremonies of
Home. Thus, in the Outstation, one of Somerset Maugham’s most honest and unappealing
actors, Warburton, changes for dinner every night into a “white dinner jacket, a boiled shirt
and a high collar, silk socks and patent leather shoes, dressed as formally as though he were
dining at his club in Pall Mall.” Every night, dining alone, he reads his menu, written in
French, by the best cook—a Chinese—in Borneo, and then eats his way through eight
courses.

“Even when you're alone?” Especially when I'm alone. I make a point of having a
proper dinner served to me every night. It keeps the cook in practice and its good
discipline for the boys. (p.341)

It’s not just that Warburton is a snob, which he is, it’s the fetish of dining, the fetish of the
dinner jacket, these calm the inner turmoil, the contradictions of being a colonial subject. It’s
not surprising that Warburton arranges for the demise of his new assistant—after all, the
fellow doesn’t know how to dress for dinner, nor how to eat it.

When Jack hears of Violet’s infidelity in *The Letter*, he sits to eat his six course dinner before he deals with her; safety, courage, rightness, these all come with dining in and out of Empire’s Home. Harold lets Millicent down by getting drunk, by not dining in sober dinner clothes... until one day she can’t stand it, and going in to his room, cuts his throat. Passing off his death as a result of fever, he is buried quickly, and Millicent returns Home.

McClintock (1995) links the commodity chain of soap and of food to Empire. She shows how not just how the cleaning of Home is obsessively ordered—at home, through the use of advertisements that tout the Imperial Home—but so, too, is the consumption and elimination of food in the clean Home. While servants, nurses and nannies are all anxiety producing elements, safety and security can be found in consuming Colman’s mustard, Parkinson’s Pills, Bovril... and the health of Empire resides in good bowel movements. “If Pears could be entrusted with cleaning the outer body, Eno’s was entrusted with cleaning the inner body,” says McClintock, and cites a colonial who swears, “I believe Kandahar was won by us all taking up large supplies of Eno’s Fruit Salt and so arrived fit to overthrow half a dozen Ayub Khan’s” (p. 228). My mother felt the same way, as long as one had one’s laxatives from “home” nothing too bad or too tropical could get into one’s system and remain to pollute it...

**Visioning Empire: The Need To See Ourselves**

How do we/the colonizer know the performance is right? We can see ourselves, we can use vision to map our Empire, our Home from home, we can check our reflection against the mirror of the manuals, and we can use the Gaze of others and ourselves.
Much has been written on vision, and the part visual representations played in the Imperial enterprise. We can attribute the impulse to classify, map, paint, and represent imperial landscapes (Mahajan, 1988), to the panoptical, surveillant eye of the conqueror. Visual representations of the Empire allowed the colonizers to know their colonies, to use that knowledge to assist in the exercise of power; they were creating not the "real" mimetic, India, for example, but British India, *almost the same, but not quite*, a "constant, timeless, 'natural', uniform geographical entity, political state and cultural nation" (Edney, 1997, p. 334). Martin Jay claims modernity privileges the visual in a "resolutely ocularcentric," if contested manner, (1988, p.3). Representations of colonial space claimed to either capture the world as it "really was," from an objective and transcendental site, or they offered an uneasier, more subjective attempt to show the colonial landscape, yet they still gave back to the metropolis a spectacle, a map, a painting, a photograph, of a space or place that was knowable, mappable, collectable, governable, a space that could be contained, framed, and hung on a wall, a visual proof that the knowable colony, or landscape, existed, as depicted.

Gillian Rose cites (1993) Daniels and Cosgrove, "a landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolizing surroundings" (p. 89), and elaborates on the cultural codes of the society, those for whom the landscape was made. Those codes are "embedded in social power structures," landscape becomes ideology, reproducing the hegemonic culture; looking affords the male gaze knowledge, and desire, for it's a narcissistic, sexual pleasure. In a counter move, Griselda Pollock (1995) offers a feminist spectator's position located outside the frame of the picture, a "space-off." An "elsewhere of discourse here and now, the blind spots, the almost invisible centre...the space off, yet always already inscribed within existing representations" (p. 33). Voyeuristic looking,
vision, renders whatever it looks at as “feminine,” and tries to keep secure the boundary between spaces, between viewer and object (Deutsche, 1996). Vision is a process, however, that mutually constitutes image and viewer—and Home. Can we ever occupy a space off, get outside the text/picture? I don’t know...

Pictures of Home. The photograph. Duncan (1993) and Gregory (1998) suggest the camera and the microscope facilitated the mimetic representations of Empire. In *The Photographic Experience*, Heinz and Bridget Henisch link travel, tourism, Empire and photography; “Blown by the winds of opportunity, photographers settled like seeds into the [transport] system, and where conditions were right, began to sprout and flourish” as a “mutually sustaining relationship between the camera and the tourist began to develop” (1994, p. 397).

Photo opportunities. Empire, capital, sites, and sights, and most of all, the marking of place. Photography is Empire. Photography makes Empires real. The tourist, either through making his own images, or by buying “a series of views...so that however hurried may have been the visit, its reality for many years afterward is recalled in all its freshness by a glance at the photograph” (Henisch, p. 410), has, with the aid of the camera, viewed the world as thoroughly as any East Indian Company man. Mary Kingsley's father, who had been previously contented with his journals and notebooks, wrote home from Jamaica in frustration to his wife and family in 1870, “We can get no photographs, so that I know not how to make you conceive it all” (Henisch, p. 410).

We need photo’s to make it real, make it happen, confirm the view inside and outside of the frame. Susan Sontag has said that “to collect photographs is to collect the world,” but for most of us, collectors or not, photographs just furnish evidence, for the “camera record
justifies, the photograph offers us incontrovertible proof that a given thing has happened” (1979, p. 5). Photography has become a “social rite, a defense against anxiety and a tool of power” (p. 8). Photographs help us to establish the family, make it real, see Home; they help “people take possession of space” and, as they do so, there is the appearance of participation, of experiencing it. If the colonial identity is so fluid, so slippery that even the years of education and training cause the colonizers to feel those “threats to their normalized knowledges and disciplinary powers” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86), well, the photograph can be a way of checking that slippery slope, fixing one’s Home, making sure the parody has no visible flaws...

If the photograph can create space, then could that allow us to knowingly, (or unknowingly), participate in a visualizing process that mutually constitutes image and viewer, s Imperial subjects? In a kind of doubling, the photograph justifies, faithfully replicates, the colonial performance. Even as we know, in our anxiety and ambivalence that we are almost, but not quite, the photograph shows us to ourselves, as quite. Shows us ourselves as Empire builders, glorying in spectacle and ownership; and all the while we know we are but anxiety ridden actors, checking to see if we've got it right, if the performance is holding up, not slipping. So the spoils of Empire are not just the diamond mines, the shipping lines, the armies, the hill stations and the extravagances of fancy fairs in Annandale, the loot of centuries, but also the photographs of colonizers.

When my mother died, I inherited all her photo albums, anxiously preserved in boxes and plastic. She had loved them all and looked at them daily. It’s hard for me to turn their pages, my belated recognition of her sadness and unease in the colonial Far East, all those years gone, makes me reluctant to look, but when I do I see us all...
Photographs of my Mother in Penang; the one of me in my pink chiffon dress at the Summer Ball; me and my cats on the verandah; the picture of me with my friend Sue in a garden of bougainvilleas, moonflowers and banana trees. These photographs make it real. Identity is fixed in the camera. We finally exist, we are real. We are Daughters of the Empire.

Advice For The Photographer:

From Wallace Nutting, whose selection of Beautiful books, on England Beautiful, Ireland Beautiful, included his own photographs of the best views to be emulated and some practical advice. Always carry a hand axe and never forget the needs of the inner man. Every county offers sustaining consolations to the photographer who has to chop down obstructions to the views... in America, doughnuts, in England, cherry cakes, in France, croissants, all designed to nourish the inner photographer.

The Setting of the Sun: Oysters at the Summer Ball

In late May the Summer Ball was held at the Officer’s Mess. It was the social event of the year, social death not to be invited. I could have gone with my parents, but the most handsome of all the young pilots asked me to go with him, an officer and a gentleman who drove a sports car! Bliss. I had a beautiful pink chiffon dress made, my hair done, nails done, and I set off in a haze of pre-party vodka (my mother believed in getting me ready). I had a magic time.

The Mess was a huge colonial building, white pillars, hard wood floored ballrooms, retiring rooms, painted ceilings, and plush rosey pink carpet in the Ladies Room. I was introduced to champagne and oysters. It was a long way from bread and margarine. We danced, ate, drank—I was in love, wanted to live this way for ever, with servants, drinks and opulent meals. At 3 am we left and my partner, Norman (not the most romantic of names, but it could be changed) took me home along the beach drive, and we parked by the Hotel
Casuarinas. He suggested a stroll along the beach and I left my shoes and walked in the sand in the moonlight. Then he raped me. It seems there is always a price to pay, one must always watch for the watchers.

I never told anyone, why would I? But I learned that identity is not fixed, that the outer constitution of the body is not a signifier, that subjects are both officers and gentlemen, and middle class men who didn’t learn the rules. I learned that performances are deceptive. He could have stepped out of the pages of Somerset Maughman, maybe he did...

Some weeks later, my friend Sue and I, with our new boyfriends, stopped for a snack at one of the roadside stands out on the Changi Road on our way into town to the Raffles for drinks. As we ate our fried rice, we looked at the huge new high rise that was being built, part of Lee Kwan Yew’s new Singapore. One of the men said, “The Chogs (Chinese Oriental Gentlemen, a little joke) hate those places. Lee’s dragging them out of the kampongs, and into the city, but there’s a suicide there every week. They already miss us, we never treated them so badly.”

We all looked, and then I said, “Oh, look, there’s a flip flop in the middle of the road!” One of the men said, “Oh, probably came off the latest suicide diver as he jumped!” The others laughed, but I felt... something. What right did we have to sit there and laugh about them? Getting raped had made my brain start working again. I fretted over that flip-flop for weeks.

Back at Home, my mother decided the amah was poisoning her and refused to eat anything, and worse, refused to go and play Bridge. My father was at home, waiting for me one afternoon when I got home from the Club. Strange, he usually had his half dozen beer at the Mess. My mother he said, had gone mad. “Her gyro’s have toppled,” the MO had told
him. She remained in the hospital for another month. I continued to go out, learned how to
smoke, the amah cooked for us, and my father worked, drank, and sat home, silently.

In August my parents took me to the VC10. I didn’t want to go. I had long since
dumped the boyfriend from school, and was madly in love with a pilot. I did not want school,
ever again. I had learned all I needed to know. I was desolate, I had begun to desire an
engagement ring, and a life as a Daughter and Wife of Empire. But they put me on the plane,
and the discipline paid off, for I went.

Moving On, Or Getting A New Life, New Home

What to do when the sun sets on the British Empire? For some, for many, Home still lingers.
For the mimics, the Anglicized Indians, the displaced person, Home works to construct the
diasporic identity. Masterson and I, where do we go? Masterson, at least, had a notion of
Home... Me?

In 1947 my father watched King Kong on an outdoor screen in an alley beyond the
market in Changi Village. In 1967 I ate Mr. Lim's fried rice at 3 am with my best friend Sue
Wittmer in Changi market. In April 1997 I discovered Changi Market is gone, sanitized, and I
feel loss, I have lost another place, I have had a multi-generational family memory socially
engineered away. I am dis-placed again.

And still too anxious... Did I get it right this time? And what about the lives I touched,
the colonized, the locals, the natives, those who made my performance possible? I can salve
my wounds, write my stories, look at my pictures, but what do they do?

And, so, finally, back to Changi, and Fried Rice. Nationalism (looking for Home) is
persistent in this age of global culture. Would Foucault find this a strange dilemma, this
“anachronistic” blossoming of nations? I don't think so... Isn’t this a swarming of disciplinary mechanisms? Do not technologists of the soul, having been (imperially) trained, require (homes or nations of) souls to work on? A “multiplicity, whether in a workshop or a nation, an army or a school, reaches the threshold of a discipline when the relation of one to the other [increasing the usefulness of the multiplicity as the inconveniences of the power of controlling it] becomes favorable” (Foucault, 1977, p. 220). Does a discipline, say the Indian Civil Service, disappear when the sovereign power changes, from King to Gandhi? No, it goes back to school to get retrained...

Arthur Yap, a poet, is rewriting the discourses of nationalism in Lee Kwan Yew’s multiracial, socially engineered, cosmopolitan, metropolis of Singapore. By “drawing on a vernacular and informal sense of history and the subjectivity of everyday life,” he takes the tropes of ethnicity, family, and culture, rendering them performative and fluid, where each generation re-invents that ethnic identity, and performs it nationally in private and public spaces. His poetry explores the theatre of everyday life, and in one poem, the skyline itself is the high rise, the suicide home, which has become

a shipwreck is a tall shore of humanity.
with an island background, it had been composed
on sad, dry inland, crafted by hand.
it can be seen in the city, daily,
neatly.


A kind of grass roots nationalism, an alternative to the discourse of Lee Kwan Yew, which has turned Singapore into one of the most humorless, planning conscious countries in the world.

I am just glad, finally, to know that someone is happy in the high rise, found a
h/Home... I feel as if... Yap might wear flip flops, and perhaps he runs too quickly across the road to the beach, anxious to get that poem written up, and smiling, looking down, he realizes he has lost a flip flop in his rush to paper...

I don't think there is any Home, nothing beyond performance. But the trick is to feel at Home on the stage. Believe in its effect, check your lines, watch yourself, and always keep your camera ready, and your flip-flops firmly on your feet.
I am sitting here in carrel number 1205, looking at all these silent scholarly bodies. Scholarly-shaped pretzels, mute and mangled, twisted and contorted, hunched and stretched over their work. Stooped, hooked and bent, peering at books, journals, papers, and my god, even laptops. I seem to be the only one looking up and around. I obviously haven’t got the right body role here, nor my correct performative script. And my laptop made that disgustingly loud beep when I turned it on, followed by all the glub glub fishy sounds... I like the Underwater Desktop Theme, but it’s a pity I didn’t turn the volume down before I plugged in and got going. Heads snapped up like turtles disturbed, wizened, grey, male, female, indeterminate, young, old and all sorts of identities in between, and 88 sets of eyes bored right into me, but not one said a word. Glub glub glub! said my laptop, cheerfully processing its lunch...

I finally got the courage up to go over and order a book. I wanted Freud’s *Mourning and Melancholia*, but I couldn’t get the hang of the search engine so I ordered Judith Butler’s body instead of Freud’s, well, her *Body Matters* more. I am sitting here waiting, watching for the little light to go on, blink, blink, to tell me my book is here. Up from the bowels of the Library, carried reverentially by an unsmiling maroon jacketed custodian. Or maybe, down? from the attic, where Judith has been keeping company with the First Mrs.?  

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*I started to write, it was terrible. I’d been collecting for a whole year, collecting, collecting, collecting, never really written anything. I had you know, masses of stuff, but I how did I organize it all. I spent a long year, figuring it all out [at the Library, every day] not having much luck, writing chapters and being happy with them and getting very little feedback.*

_Fellow Student_
Then I'll have to walk through this forest of silent bodies, embodied, bonsai-like academics masquerading as the poor pine trees that try to root and grow on stormy cliff-tops, sculpted into hideously deformed shapes by the prevailing winds... it looks like a prevailing wind's got to this lot. Actually Dryden said it better, in 1697,

"Cucumers, with crooked Bodies, and with Bellies deep."

But they can stare, alright, bellies and beards quivering in a shouted mime of distaste and outrage, (those damned fish), even if they won't speak... The Look ... I don't want to think surveillance, but I am sure I've been under observation for some time, friend or foe? Or just ghosts from the past?

The only lively humans I have seen here were on the desk when I came in. I queued up with my letters of introduction and finally arrived at the "Apply HERE for letters of introduction the “Apply HERE for the “Apply HERE for

He was young and only a moment at my only a moment at my only a moment at my

my examined and my examined and my examined and

right to have a body right to have a body right to have a body

doing research in this country, and took me to the Polaroid, snapped a quick picture to add another layer of evidence to this academic body-building, with its layers of papery flesh, sediments of degrees, scholarships, grants, candidacies, and its general certification that THIS body, captured in the flash, is ok to be in this august institution, and smiled at me, winked, and said, "There you are, not a bad piccie, you look alright, and you’re all set to go, yes, you can get a cup of tea upstairs, love, but it’ll cost you an arm and a leg, best go over the road to the caff!”
Oh! The light’s on, Judy’s here, but they leave it on for an hour, so first I’ll go to the Readers’ Eating Area, up the stairs past all the clear walled storage racks, crammed with ancient yet cool books—always cold in here I notice, must be the air conditioning they have on to keep the tomes happy—and there I’ll have a bite of my bagel, exchange more stares, they don’t even talk when they’re allowed to, get some fuel into the body, and then a bathroom break, come back and get into the body Matters. Tough going, I’ll need some buttressing.

So, the body matters. “Sex is normative,” it comes from Foucault’s regulatory ideal, ok I know that, and “sex is the norm and a regulatory practice, that produces the bodies it governs power to produce, demarcate, circulate, differentiate,” says Judith on p.xi.

Ah, did having sex with my boyfriend make me sexed, regulate me, under him then? Did sex norm me, discipline me, produce me? I’ve always said, since then and over the years, that sex, for me, is not about love, but about control. Where did I learn that, if not from the first time, times?

reiterated by the norm, reiteration is necessary because the materialization is never complete...” Not gender then, what role does gender play? “Sex works in a performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies, to materialize the body’s sex... in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative.” Judith, on page 2. I wonder if she field tested this theory?

“Perform, that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomenon that it regulates and constrains. Sex is a cultural norm which governs the materialization of bodies.” How does that work, then?
So every time we had sex at school, it reiterated, fixed me, as the lesser gender, one who could not initiate, ask for it, only accept it, one who was ‘bad’ for provoking it evil, un-noble, unworthy. Reinforcing my subservience, disciplining me into a girl, with less than equal chances at a university place, less chance of being published in the school magazine, no one to pick up a telephone for me.

Well, all this daydreaming, the men in here don’t have bodies. I wonder if the women do? I wonder if any of them are idling away the afternoon, looking like they’re reading and making notes, while they ponder deep sexual questions. I have a bad case of body memories, here, today. What about you, Jude? “Then the subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces a constitutive outside subject, an abjected all inside the that the persistence of equally crucial to the democratic hah!

And so I became a woman. Judith asks if “sex is to gender as feminine is to masculine”? My dreadfully unrepentantly, non-discursive body wants to ask, “but what about love?” is that a performance too? The divine spark… the miracle of love… Judith has a word to say about that too, Page 7, make a note of that, when she talks about the divine performative issue—the question we all want an answer to, “If gender is constructed, who is constructing it? How can there be an activity, a constructing, without presupposing an agent who precedes and performs that activity?” But there isn’t one, no
being, no Being, just a doing that creates the doer, as she said in Gender Trouble. No agency, then... but why write her book, she is a feminist after all, because it doesn’t matter about origin, only about effect. Foucault again.

But, here is that breathless tension again, for me, between the beauty of the body and the sharpness of the mind, some days I am

“All heade and veri fitel body”

like the Countess of Southampton, back in 1600, but more often I am guilty of believing

“Imagination bodies forth the forms of things Unknowne.”

I love Shakespeare, performing away for me here in my carrel. All this seventeenth century stuff, see how long we have had this fascination with bodies, until Descartes came along and ruined it all.

I can’t reconcile them, these two bodies. Do I need to, though? I understand how I was made what I was, I see the genealogical descent, what Foucault says Nietzsche says, “Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body.” And he continues, “‘We believe, in any event, that the body obeys the exclusive laws of physiology and that it escapes the influence of history, but this too is false. The body is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythm of work, rest and holidays; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws; it constructs resistances.’” (p. 87, NGH). But what resistances? This desire for love, this resistance to Butler and her clever sterile ideas, this
resistance to Foucault and his lack of essence. Anthony Giddens said Foucault’s bodies have no faces, I wish I had said that. I want to put my faces on the bodies. When I read him and Butler, I understand the point they make, that we want historians to tell us it all has meaning, that the present rests on “profound intentions and immutable necessities,” but really, we exist among “countless lost events, without a landmark or a point of reference.” (Foucault, NHG, p. 88)

But there are landmarks, markers of the miles along my path to where I am, what body I am, here, today, sitting here, at 3:15 Greenwich Mean Time, in the austere British Library, just off Euston Road, new brick and ancient volumes surrounding me, bladder pressing, legs aching from this morning’s run, head beginning to hurt and heart, heart is in pain...

If I follow Foucault, then this rambling reading I am doing here today is a countermemory: it’s parodic and farcical; it is Dissociative; and it is sacrificial, “directed against truth, and opposes history as knowledge.” (p. 93 NGH) Isn’t this “a use of history that severs its connection to memory, its metaphysical and anthropological model, and constructs a countermemory—a transformation of history into a totally different form of time” (p.93 again). I think so, but really, the text of the body doesn’t match the body of the body. Foucault talks about the three kinds of power arising from domination, relations, and communication. Is my body in a power relation with this discursive body, my body memory is constructing, endlessly, an embodied subjectivity that wants both ontological and non-ontological status? Or is it a struggle over communication, a naming, a making a body/subjectivity out of language and signs and signifiers? A body signs and sings...if we name it is it then real? Or is it more ‘real’ “to learn to what extent the effort
to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently.” Foucault in the second volume of his History of Sexuality.

A last word from Judith: a good one, this time! “Why is that that which is constructed is artificial and understood as an dispensable character?” (p.xi). I guess I can agree with her and myself, live in this sexed and gendered body, performing my little routines, all (un)conscious of my lack of being, of being what? Resistant!

And it must be time to shut down the screen, I just wish I knew how to turn it off without that beep! As if I care what all these old bodies think! Surveillant disciplining only works if the one being watched agrees to it, knows it, enters into a relation. See power relations again, there’s always also, always already, resistance struggles, stories of bodies and sex, and love in all sorts of educational spaces.

BEEP!
In the Duc’s Book of Hours, harvest is in full swing; some peasants reap the wheat, golden and heavy eared, others shear sheep. Flowers abound in the fields, and it’s altogether a busy, pleasant scene. Overhead, Apollo pulls his chariot across the sky, and the Crab and Lion look down on another one of the nobility’s great castles. In my Tale, pastoral themes are similarly lush, buzzards make an appearance, and bees and swarms are also storied; I drink tea, write postcards and try to understand what Home might mean.

- The DOORWAY Of My Mother’s Room, St. Paul’s
- Home Is
- THE GODDESS OF SMALL THINGS
- Pastoral Themes Again, Some Last Thoughts
- Death Of The Swarm
- Tea In London 4: The Hampstead Tea Room
- Postcards From Dangerous Location/Safe Places 4
- BUZZARDS, A FAIRY TALE
- A Postcard From Denmark About Small Things
- Things I Liked About School 4
- The Bathroom And The Deadly Geyser
- “The Sick Rose” Re-Inscribing Identities
Summer 2000: I begin to teach a section on fear in 428 next week, and maybe I need to do some writing on fears in my life, especially around writing this dissertation. Why is it so hard for me to get into the writing, and, am I frightened? What of? Of beginning work, because I may have to actually write it, I may have to finish it? If I finish it, I have to end my time at UBC. And am I fearful of facing some of the old things lurking in my bathrooms, in my hallways and my cellars, what's in there?

Many things. I am frightened of writing, because what if I can’t write, and it doesn’t come, and I don’t get it? What if I am not brilliant, just average, and just boring, and what if my committee hates it, what then? What if I discover I love it and never want to do anything except write poetry? Some fear is about money, and fear about finishing... What other fears do I have... a fear of writing my childhood, a fear of feeling grief and pain again with/over my mother.

Just a year ago, today, a Saturday then, too... what did I do on that Saturday? I went to the travel agent’s on Regent Street, and stood in line, I was there at 9:15 and they didn’t open til 11, I wanted that ticket so badly. I went to an Internet cafe and had tea, and wrote to Tom, for some reason, and friends, and then I went back, first in line and got a really stupid man who didn’t know what he was doing and then had to pay 250 pounds and a change fee, and it was too late to get the 1pm flight that day. It was warm. I can’t remember the rest of Saturday, I think I sat in Hyde Park, I knew she was dying, knew it. I couldn’t get there.

I left early Sunday morning, at 7 am, for a flight that wasn’t til 1pm, booked a minicab from Nutford House, and the nice young man on duty at the desk helped me out with all my
bags, brought them all for five months, returning after two weeks, and then the driver wanted a huge tip when we got to Heathrow, although it was agreed it was to be 17 pounds.

I was there three hours early, sat and waited, and waited. I went and bought a tin of Harrods’s biscuits for her, I thought we could share them, I thought she would be able to talk to me, and I would tell her about England, about all the places she had lived in and where she had spent her 27 lonely angry sad English years as my mother, and my father’s wife, the good times, and bad, and then I went and sat and waited again.

I can’t even remember whom I sat next to on the plane, if I did, and I got into Vancouver, but I wasn’t staying, I was flying on to Saskatoon. I had to check in again. I went to the phones near the arrival level, phoned the hospital, my heart was shaking, my body too, and I didn’t think I would even be able to hear, I thought they would say she had already died, the phone rang and rang on her ward. I asked for the nurse, asked how she was, and she told me my mother was all alone and so frightened and in pain and needed someone with her, but none of her family had come, and I felt so awful and I told her to tell her I was coming, that I was coming, she had to wait. I phoned Sonia and she said, “You thought it was about you, your dissertation, but it’s about your mother.”

I nearly left my jacket in the boarding area, she had bought me my jacket and my suitcases to go, she helped me so much at the end. It made up for all the pain of childhood. I got on the plane, it stopped somewhere, and then it was in Saskatoon. I was so tired and so scared. Arnfinn was there and he said she was ok and I knew she wasn’t; he tried to persuade me to stay with them, I said no, I would stay at the hospital and I went up to her room, I stood in the doorway, afraid to go in, so terrified, only me and her in the world, all the family either of us has, no one else, and she looked so old and so thin and all the tubes and she was breathing so
hard, and the nurse said, "She's resting," and I knew she wasn't. The nurse said, "Maisie, you
have a visitor, it's your daughter," but she didn't hear, and then I said, "Mother, it's me," why
didn't I call her Mummy?

I sat; it was so quiet, it was midnight, but she was breathing so loud, and the plane
noises and all that were going in my head. I had been up for how many hours, six am London
time, it was over 24 hours, so tired, and I should stay with her, but the nurse said, no, someone
was with her when I came, a volunteer from her church to keep her company, she was still
there, she'd keep her company and talk to her, even though my mother hadn't talked since early
afternoon. She never talked out loud again, but she talked in her head to me, at midnight, I
heard her, she said, "Look, nurse, this is my beautiful daughter, my beautiful daughter is here,
my beautiful daughter."

She knew I was there, but I still left her the whole night to be on her own; she called me
her beautiful daughter, she had never ever said that to me, and she said she was so proud of me,
I had turned into a beautiful woman, after all. She died, badly, hard, in agonizing pain at one
o'clock the next day. She never regained consciousness, but she did wait for me to get back, and
she squeezed my hand at the very end.

I think I will dedicate my dissertation to her; good and bad she was my mother, and I
was her beautiful daughter. She always encouraged me at grad school, but she didn't know how
to love me. I can hear say, "Now Maid, that's enough of all that bawling, remember I love you, I
really do, and you just stop crying now, and get out there, and get working on that PhD and get
done!" So I had better do that.
Four cats make a home

Three cats make a mess

Two cats make a tuna nervous

One cat is probably not enough.
THE GODDESS OF SMALL THINGS

When I was in London, the second day I was there, I could not sleep well. True, there was a rave going on in the street outside, but still... I finally got up in the night, at 4 am, the hour of dying, yet my mother died at 1:04 in the afternoon, but still, the hour of watching grey light come, sometimes... the hour of absolute aloneness. I got out my journal and wrote in it:

June 7, 2000: Middle of the night at Nutford House. Friday night and Saturday morning. Big party noises/rave music/no sleep. Finally, surrendered, got up, went down the hall and made a cup of fine tea, purchased just today/yesterday from Selfridge’s Food Hall. Assam tea. Williamson and Magor. And a few gluten free crackers. This is a good moment. A small one, but very good...

I worry: How will I get up tomorrow to run? How will I manage my time ‘til I meet Nan at 2? How will I deal with my suitcases? What will I do? None of these are large worries. Nothing compared to my last visit, with the ghastly dread of my mother’s dying. What’s a suitcase...

I am hardwired to worry. But I can change. Make a new habit in just 21 days. It’s all in what I think. There is nothing ‘til mind forms the thoughts. How would I phrase this—not worrying?

Habits to change, one at a time?

ONE LIGHT AT A TIME.
ONE NIGHT AT A TIME
ONE DAWN AT A TIME
ONE STEP AT A TIME
ONE HABIT AT A TIME
SURRENDER TO THE GODDESS OF THE LITTLE MOMENTS

THE MOMENTS OF WEALTH COME FROM LOVE

THESE SMALL THINGS ARE WHAT COUNTS IN A LIFETIME
THE TEA IN THE CUP, DAWN IN LONDON
THE GIVING OF OURSELVES IN A WAY
MONEY CAN NEVER REPLACE
WHAT'S A SUITCASE?
WHAT'S A LOVE?
Pastoral Themes Again, Some Last Thoughts

Nature and femininity and the desire to return or be again in a state of nature, when I know that is not “real,” Home as a Garden, Home as a flowered bower, and Rupert Brooks poetry and Keats’ odes to autumn and really, none of it was ever ‘real,’” just an “effect,” but an effect that had power, for it produced in me a sense of home, belonging. Now I question it, while I accept it. For I see from this Ethopoietic self-writing that flowers represent both the maternal and the longing for home, and they signal sexuality and forbidden fruits, and they stand in for florid and passionate acts.

Flowers: They are a signifier for an Imperial Home that never was, an anxious combination of the flowers Mr. Bevan grew in his front garden, massive dahlias that stood on guard for Labour and the labouring man, the prim flowers Mr. Edwards on the other side grew in decorous and delightful ranks and files... discreet in their columns of wallflowers and staked raspberries and climbing floribunda, the flowers of a bookkeeper’s soul... and my mother’s roses, bought anew at each location, each Home that was not home, whether they would grow there or not, Singapore or Saskatchewan, English roses grew next her door...

...and when she died, I ordered all the roses the florist had, to drape the coffin in red velvety buds and flowers, and the nasty woman who had moved in with odd job man across the back alley, Robert Man, who helped my mother with all kinds of things from cat-sitting
to basement cleaning to lawn mowing—for a hefty fee—came over the day after the funeral
and said, “I'm making Robert’s patch of ground look better and you’re mother won’t need
them now, so I’m going to dig those roses out from by the front step and take them.” I can’t
recall what I said, I know I felt she was trying to pull my mother’s rose heart and roots out of
my body, I know I was very, very rude to her.

On my window sill grows a Christmas cactus that flowers all year, despite four cats
chewing it and peeing on it, and it turns its bright blooms to the window and looks out at the
dogwood tree in blossom and they nod at each
other, like good old neighbours across an urban
alley. For I am a city dweller, I know this Home
with a Garden is a cultural construction, one that
soothes me in my 565 square feet, my home in a
building that homes 46 other souls, and more, in a
city that homes the homeless not, but the yuppie
Kitsilano twenty-something’s very well, but… I
like it. I don’t care that this space I take up with
flowers is a wo/man made one, I don’t care at all. It
is the effect I crave, the effect of a flowered home… and why not? As Butler says, why do
we think the social constructions must be ‘wrong,’ and natural ones ‘right’?

I understand my floral subjectivities—the substitution of blossoms for unspeakable
sexualities, the falseness of the flower-bed in my Home, the mis-taking of an essential place
for mine, the yearning for a Nature that isn’t, a rural sensibility that wasn’t ever mine. Like
Wordsworth, I yearn to look on Nature and find
that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
(Lines above Tintern Abbey, 1798)

but I can’t… except, sometimes I can.

I know why Marianne North painted, so lovingly, all those bright flowers of the
Empire, brought the
them to Kew Gardens, I
collection of flowers
Empire, a chance for
stake his claim to the
in the acquiring of
petals. It’s why Sister
photographs of the
fields around the
visitors from London
that are all paved over,

It’s ok. It may be immoral, but as an ethical practice, growing flowers is to be preferred over
taking moral stances on trans-nationalisms and their deleterious effects and sending out
Microsoft messages…
Death of the Swarm

The disciplines swarm. On the one hand, disciplinary establishments increase, but simultaneously, their mechanisms emerge from the fortresses to become flexible methods of control, thus timetables are used widely, schools also examine parents, hospitals monitor the population outside them. The use of such mechanisms is marked in religious and charitable groups... technologists of the soul, and having been (imperially) trained this "multiplicity, whether in a workshop or a nation, an army or a school, reaches the threshold of a discipline," the small techniques of discipline, "those apparently insignificant tricks" endure, for power relations is about the intimate, body to body of multiplicity to multiplicity... flows of knowledge, trained, partitioned, classified, move from one to another, reproducing disciplined subjects. Another power, another knowledge...

Inspirited by Discipline and Punish

Old Habits Die Hard.

Today is March 1, 2001. When I was at school, in Lincolnshire, we incorporated a rustic superstition into our town lives. At the end of the month, on the last hour of the last day, just before going to sleep, one had to say, Black hares. The first words on waking were White rabbits. I don’t know where this came from; a folklorist would know. Parts of Lincolnshire had been, and still were, remote and removed from any “civilizing” influences; dialects traceable to the Norse men who invaded, and then stayed, mediaeval immigrants, were still spoken in some Wolds villages. The blonde hair, blue eyes and sturdy Viking build of many, surely now devout parishioners, embodies the story of their Herkunft, the “equivalent of stock or descent; it is the ancient affiliation to a group, sustained by the bonds of blood, tradition, or social class.” (Foucault, 1984, NGH, 80-81), who came from what is now prim and tidy Norway, Denmark Sweden and Germany.

We laughed at these country bumpkins; yokels they were, to us sophisticated town dwellers. We had a few in our classes, daygirls who came in on buses each morning, whose signs bore the names of their hamlets, and revealed the Norse, barbaric tradition. I longed for one of these girls to go berserk, fly into a blood rage, to seek to disembowel the Maths
teacher, or behead the Religious Knowledge drone with a sharpened ruler when their exam results were read out, but they didn’t, of course.

Instead, we absorbed into our boarding house and school room culture their rural culture; stories of boggles—a kind of goblin or troll that mixed things up, made things come out wrong, like your crocheting, or your sums, or your conjugations—and words you had to say, or do, at certain times of the day or month or year, like White rabbits. It brought good luck, and warded off evil.

Last night being February 28, I said Black hares, and went to bed secure in my safety. This morning I forgot the white rabbits though, and I suspect that might be why my mood is darker. The black hare’s melancholia has claimed me. Not Freud’s, or Judith Butler’s, clever use of mourning and melancholia, their claims for a psychoanalytic function of loss as the creation of a dissatisfied, or dislocated gender… but a gender, nonetheless. No, I’m with Michel on this one, “so many precautions in order to contain everything, with no fear of “overflow,” in that safest and most discrete of spaces, between the couch and discourse: yet another round of whispering on a bed.” (Foucault, 1990, HS I, p.5) Sometimes sadness just … is. It’s not coming from anything, it’s not going anywhere, it simply is.

**Sadness Simply Is..**

Today, looking back over the words of my participants, my fellows, ex-lovers, friends, tormentors, teachers and testers, I see so much disappointment. In their voices on my tape recorder, sitting on the corner of my desk, echoes of London, the North Country, sounds of the failure of hope, even at times, the hope of death, pervade. My swarms all sounded so sad, so defeated and so …

And me…
They, at least, had all wanted to serve, in some way. Well, maybe not Nan. I didn’t know what I did want, except it wasn’t what I had. I had never wanted to be normal, I knew I wasn’t, too ugly for that. But they had believed in all the training, wanted to give something back, and be good at it, have a place in the hierarchy, be rewarded for being normal, or just a bit better than normal.

The Swarm At Mid Life.

I am very reluctant to even consider lowering the grid of developmental taxonomy over my life and theirs, I don’t want to even think of trying to make us fit into the norms, but when I spoke with them in their winters of discontent, it was hard to maintain faith. It was as if we all felt, with old Professor that,

It was the last time that I can remember in my life when I really felt that there might be, like you know, Cromwell saying in the bare bones parliament, something is at the door? And I really felt this might be it, this might be a real revolutionary moment of change. And since I’d been in one sense or another looking for that for about forty years, well, thirty years before that, it was momentarily quite uplifting. But of course it all went wrong, it went flat it went sour.

I am also noticing how we turned again to education as means of reviving ourselves. Were we looking to re-construct our subjectivities, or re-tool our grids? Were we searching for an enclosure, a partitioning, that contained that which we thought we had lost? Did we want to be re-re-constructed, confirm our subjectivities, of being the right class, the right colour, and for some of us, the right gender? Of being “right” for our lives? I don’t know.

Rick went back to do his Master’s; Nan went back for more training; Letty went back to the world of college education running from the world of media and journalism, finding higher ed a more accepting world for those over 30; I went back to school, like Rick, full
time... to recapture the ecstasy of learning? No, I just wanted to find out what I really wanted
to do, be... Oliver, alone of us, seemed reconciled to his subjectivities, his life as a drone
coming to a close, pension time 7 years away, his reproduction of himself assured in his four
strapping boys and his Land Rover, and his upper class accent. A long way from a working
class boy who spent the year before UCL labouring on a building site and then had to tell his
middle class peers he was in "landscaping."

Of all the goddesses in the daily religious lives of the women and men of the world,
I've always been most drawn to Hope, Spes, Elpis. Not to wise Athena, or savage Diana,
or majestic Juno. Just little Hope, the thing that remained behind in the jar after Pandora
opened it and let all the evils out into the world. A world become boggled needs Hope. What
hope is there for us, the swarm at mid life?

The surveillance worked, and even now, when there's no-one watching us, we have
given up hope of being free. This is indeed a black hare conclusion.
Tea in London 4
The Hampstead Tea Room

# 168 Bus to South End Green
A hundred two hundred times to college and back via Eversholt Street
to Parliament Hill and the Heath Sunday trips for workers from Camden and Islington daily trips for me from Learning to Living.

The Curry Paradise. Oliver mango chutney madras and pub nights.
Hampstead Tea Rooms and Haverstock Hill
Letty and me and Jim at the pub the Journeyman
up the hill from the bus stop.
Roslyn Hill. Sunday lunch drinks talking history exams.

Pond Street Cinema. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid and dirty raincoats on old men who sat next to you when you went alone we never dared to say a thing would take their throat out now but they don’t still do that surely.
Hud and the one who got away. Easy Rider
New Orleans cemeteries and dinner at the caff after greasy fried food good for hangovers.

The Deli. Costly things for when mother visited to impress she was so horrified by the mouse who lived in the kitchen under the bathtub and the cold going to bed when we ran out of two shillingses for the fire she never noticed the deli-cacies.

The fabulous boutique still here. Letty’s best green brocade and my crushed red velvet trousers and the Dress.
Trendy pseudy shops up at the Village too rich for us laughed at them scorn.

The Railway Line. Where do the trains go stoned at two in the morning reading reading John Peel on the Beb now all endlessly commuters flying officemen.

Entrance to the Heath. Cold flying kites drizzling boring deadening Sundays grey grey grey grey grey grey grey grey grey grey grey grey.

I had friends and wore a red silk kimono and watched films read books lonely no one to talk to a handful of pills at 20 wanting dead woke up instead.

Has it changed.

# 168 to South End Green. Not at all, but all changed
Tea in the tea room a soup and latte and organic bread roll.
I miss the fry-ups and the hangovers and my friends who didn’t understand me
and loved me.
A good second class degree no more no less.
Postcards From Dangerous Location/Safe Places 4

On an island flowered
mouths and eyes
poppies nod
sun warmed swaying
the woman sits
on wheat stalks
birds bees gulls noises
wonders idly
who crushed the poppies?

Faint-sharp-urgent
odours frowning
poppies? wheat? death? fear?

Questions?

Run rabbit. Run rabbit.
Rabbit, run, run, run from
guns and blades
and dirt and silent screams

fade into red pink
orange yellow black hot
fragrances of love
blossoms of sweetesses
unspoken,
eternally unfulfilled promises
held in the arms of

LOVE AND DEITIES,
A MIND'S CORNFIELD
IS A SAFE PLACE...
Poppies smile, they know
she is in a

DANGEROUS LOCATION.
UZZARDS

Once upon a time, in a land called Hollywood, way to the West of here, they were making a cowboy film. Starring Paul Newman. Paul had to ride up to a tree, have a conversation with another man, then turn around, and all the buzzards sleeping in the tree were to fly up and away in an ominous, and less than subtle, fashion. The bird wranglers brought their buzzards out and put them in the tree, but the birds kept flying away long before the scene. Paul was getting annoyed, the buzzards were upstaging him. So the bird wranglers brought string and they tied the legs of the buzzards on the tree, and then they filmed the scene, but the birds were frightened now, and they did what buzzards do when they get scared, they passed out, but because they were tied in the tree, they didn’t fall out, just fell upside down, swinging unconscious in the breeze. Paul swore and the director got madder. Money was being spent.

They did this a few times, the buzzards got the message and learned, and they didn’t even have to tie them in the tree, as soon as they were brought out of their cages and put in the tree, they fell over, hanging like dirty icicles from the branches. So they made the film with stuffed buzzards in the tree, filmed some wild buzzards flying, spliced it together.

A professor told me, that’s the moral of the story. After you’ve been humiliated in enough grad school seminars, and have learned how to fall unconscious at the first signal, then they’ll figure you’re ok. But you’ll never fly again. So remember the buzzards, keep telling the stories you do, the ones they don’t like, and fly as high as you can, be an eagle, leave grad school for the old buzzards like me who don’t remember how to fly...
A Postcard From Denmark About Small Things

July 28 2000: After my meeting with Carl, I took the bus home, got off instead at Macdonald and went back up Broadway, past all those veggie stores, how do they make money, and all run by Asian families, down past the beer bar, and then to Blenz. I ordered a chai and took out my miserable temper on the girl doing the chai’ing. She asked if I wanted sprinkles, well, you don’t put sprinkles on chai do you? Much prefer Starbucks, sigh, big company but it doesn’t worry me as much as some, like that man who wouldn’t drink with me because I wanted a latte at the evilly empired Starbucks. Their mermaid logo used to have nipples when I came to Vancouver, only a few of their coffee places then, so trendy and so West Coast, but someone complained so down in Seattle they fixed up the mermaid to be breastless. I sat at Blenz, just exhausted and thought.... not much, two things remain:

1. postcard stories, small stories. Begin with what I want to write, not at the beginning nor for someone else, begin with postcard stories that hone my talents and skills
2. focus in on a small, small thing, a poem, work on that, day by day, not a big thing, but one small lovely thing. One little thing that speaks to the reader, and me, tells the story... like this? A story about governmentality.

This is a story about the body, and when and if it ever gets out of the cupboard. Do I hang it up at night, rummage around at seven, late for class, what flesh to dress in today to teach about? And how to govern it?

I went to Denmark and took the train to the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art. With five other students from the summer school. And a madwoman.

The passengers didn’t like her body, it was gross, dirty, spilling out of her lines and bags and she shouted and smoked cigarettes in a non-smoking compartment, a terrible crime, so undisciplined and not the care of the self, or of others, but maybe it was, just so, care for herself, anyway they called an ambulance and halted the train, made us late, a signifier of their socially engineered/sneered concern, tardiness triumphing over DSB’s timed soul, and carried her off.

A body left us, a space and a seat was empty. I liked this Magritte picture. I think the madwoman would have liked it too.
Things I Liked About School 4

Every time Grandma opened up a new Robertson's Jam
I got the black golliwog sitting on the top
and when I got enough
She put them in the post and I got a
Shiny coloured golliwog brooch to wear
On my school blazer and I was a
good girl.
The Bathroom and the Deadly Geyser

When I moved in with Nan, at 63 Hampden Road, over in Hornsey, I was quite impressed by the accommodation. Much closer to school, walking distance, and some shops nearby, even a launderette. Much better than I had been used to over the last two years of lonely bedsits in Stoke Newington, Swiss Cottage and Highgate/Archway, miles from tube stations and buses, where it had taken me 2 hours to get to and from the school.

Like the flat at 105, Constantine Rd, this house faced the railway line at the back. It seems like every flat in London I ever lived in was only a second away from a railway line—but one didn’t notice the noise, it was a comfort of sorts. On the ground floor of the house lived a noisy and dirty family, working-class, with a number of lively, runny nosed, feet pounding children. They had access to the garden out the back and I think they had their own toilet, but they came up and used ours when they wanted. On the top floor of the house lived an old grey man, who crept down once a day to use our toilet. I don’t think he ever used the bathroom. We were up on the second floor, my little room just off the stairs, with Nan’s bigger one facing the front road, and a common back room with kitchen and dining area looked over the garden, with the rabbit in the hutch, and the railway. Next to the kitchen was the toilet, and next to that was the bathroom.

Years later in London, Nan and I laughed about bathing... The only hot water came from an ancient and lethal gas heater—put in your money and the gas roared, heating the water trickling into the bath. A few shillings paid for an hour’s luxury—hot, hot water, and a long soak, with a view out of the frosted glass right into my room, if one cared to crane one’s neck. There was only one drawback—the gas heater had been condemned as unsafe and we were not to use it; one day the landlord might put in a new one, or I suppose we could have
done. Nan said, “That old geyser, it went through the window once, blew right up, but god, we had some good baths anyway!” I laughed with her, but I remember how desperate one had to be to take a bath. I used to put my money in, light the gas with trembling hands—would it blow now, or in a minute?—and then run like hell, up to Nan’s room or the far side of the kitchen, as far away as I could get. Then came the half hour wait as it filled the tub—which I would have scrubbed and cleaned before hand—and the penultimate, delicate, task, tiptoeing into the room to turn off the galvanic geyser, the heater of death, the bath destroyer of all time. Miss Snowdon had never inspired fear in me like that bloody geyser did.

What we did usually was to take a strip wash in the kitchen. Nan had paid to put in a little gas heater over the sink, and if it was out of money we would boil up a kettle on the stove and tip it in the sink, taking out the dirty dishes first. First thing in the morning, Nan’s trying to heat the kettle and get a bottle for Claire, and I’m trying to wash myself to go to school to teach. Falling over each other, dashing around and trying to get a smoke in, and a cup of tea if we could, that was breakfast, and lunch. When we talked up on the Heath, years later, we recalled how little we ate. We must have starved—but there were two reasons for that. Firstly, we couldn’t afford to eat, and secondly, it was the swinging London era, Twiggy, and Biba on Ken High Street, where you went and rummaged through the trendy dresses, none of which was sized, you just tried them on in the communal changing room and not a one was over a size six. Thin was in. We both thought we were fat, and I knew Nan got a good feed when she went to her parents on the days she didn’t teach, but she stayed so slim. I was jealous. Nan reckons she was about seven and a half stone, 105 lb at 5 feet 6, and I was eight and a half stone, or about 115 lb. She remembers one time going to the shop and seeing a leg of lamb on the counter, priced at 2 and 6d, a mistake of course, but she bought it and
they let her take it and we fed off it for a week, oh we feasted! But that was unusual. I usually
got by on a sandwich a day, at night and Nan scolded me, told me I should eat proper meals,
but she reckoned a tin of celery soup was a meal...

We wore each other’s clothes, not that we had many—I had my one school skirt, two
blouses, and a couple of jumpers, one pair of shoes and that was about it. Nan had some arty
clothes, flower print dresses and that sort of thing. We used to wash those out in the kitchen
sink, too, and hang them over the clothes rack. We spent all our time in the kitchen—it was
warmish. Nan painted and did some school stuff and I marked exercise books and planned
lessons. Claire crawled around on the coconut matting, and gurgled. We were a bit worried
about the mice—or more to the point the mouse traps. Nan had set them, but when we caught
a mouse we had to wait til her Dad came round and disposed of it. Which was worse, if
Claire got a mouse bite, or one shat in her food, or ours, or if she got her fingers in the trap?

I reckon I probably had a bath once a month—we did try and heat water in the
kitchen and carry it in, but it took so long and the water was cold before you got in. Bath time
was a time of terror and only entered into when it was an occasion of huge importance. Once,
for me, it was the Christmas Carol concert and I remember shaving my legs (must have been
worried about Roma Johnson) and cutting them, and saying, “I am going to look good for
this, if it kills me!” And Nan said, “Just don’t bleed to death before you get there!”
Sometimes the bath was for a party and then I would wear the Dress. Sometimes Nan had a
bath when her lover Robert was coming up from the country, and I lent her the Dress.

The summer term of 1974 ended and I arranged to go to Canada to visit my mother
for a month. Actually, I tried to, but had no money, went to the bank manager, and asked for
a loan. He sent a letter which was rather cruel. I sent it on to my mother and apologized—“I
can’t come,” I said, “I have no money.” I made 80 pounds a month. She wrote back that her brother Wallace thought the letter was the funniest thing he had read, and would give me the money for the ticket, and she would work for them to pay it off. I found out later she worked for bloody years to pay for that ticket.

But it came, and I got my passport, and used the last of my overdraft to get a couple of things to wear—a dark brown velvet top and a pair of cream trousers, which I wore to the wedding dance later in Delmas, shocking the French Canadians with my London clothes, and a wool trouser suit in beige. Nan approved. I went for my smallpox shot a week before I was due to leave. The family downstairs had heard I was going and the woman talked to me one day, “Have a nice trip, dear,” she said, “our boys are all ill at the moment, hope you don’t catch it!” I did. Chickenpox. At 25. I went to the Doctor. She said, “Aren’t you supposed to be traveling somewhere?”

“Canada to see my mother, she moved there a year or two ago, and she’s desperate to see me.” “Well, you can’t go! You’re contagious!” “Oh,” I said.

“They’ll see you’re ill—just look at you!”

I had sores all over my face, and body, and I itched like crazy, but the worst was the high fever and hallucinatory feeling. I went back to Nan. I told her, “I can’t go.” We decided I could go. I wore the beige trouser suit with a scarf around my neck, and gloves, and socks, and shoes. I looked sick but that could have been the excitement. I even took a bath the night before. I had made another conquest—a man who had a car, through Julie’s London Village thing, and he offered to drive me to Gatwick, and so he did. I itched all the way but I was clean.
When I got to Canada I had to change planes in Winnipeg and by this time I was so sick I didn’t know where to put myself. I tried to buy some codeine, but they didn’t know what I was talking about and so I got some aspirin instead and sat and waited for five hours for my plane to Saskatoon. Before that, Immigration had interrogated me for an hour. Why was I entering Canada, where was I going, and I did know (even though my grandfather and my mother, not to mention my five aunts and two uncles and 36 first cousins and several second cousins, lived there), I could not stay? I told them, in a withering tone, “I live in London, why would I want to live HERE?” There’s nothing to beat a good British upper class sneer... but they still went on and on... it was the chicken pox, of course—I knew I was guilty of spreading the disease, I was highly contagious, and must have looked sneaky and desperate—no wonder they thought me an illegal immigrant in the making. But I just wanted to see my mother and it had been a long, long flight.

Finally I arrived in Saskatoon. She was there to meet me with her sister in law, Gracie, Wallace’s wife, and my cousin Shelley. They drove us to North Battleford and it was like coming home. I had listened to my mother’s tales of Canada all the years I grew up and as we passed the names of the small towns and went over the New Bridge into North Battleford it was as if I experienced deju vu... But I had been here before. In my lonely childhood, I had been transported by my mother’s own desperate longing for her home, and the people she thought loved her. She was as alone as me, marked by her accent, her looks, her voice, everything proclaimed her “non-u,” as they said then.

When we arrived at her house, she apologized for its smallness. I loved it. My grandfather was living with her then and he got up to see me, we had never met, and she showed me the tiny kitchen, the basement where she had an old bed set up, Dad’s little
bedroom off the kitchen, the small living room and then my little bedroom off of it, 10 feet square and baking hot. And then she said

**THIS IS THE BATHROOM**

and opened the door and I started to cry.

It was all white, and warm and so clean, it had a toilet that sparkled and wasn’t shared with everyone in the house, and a bath, a *whole* bath, full sized and so clean, and *taps*, a hot and a cold, and no bloody geyser that I could see. There were yellow towels hanging over the towel rail, and a window which was open a little and the breeze of a perfect Saskatchewan summer night blew the frilly curtains ever so slightly to and fro, and the mirror over the sink shone, all so clean, so white, sparkly white linoleum and even a bathmat, *my god a bathmat*, I’d not seen one, not even a cork board in years, and I said, “Can I have a bath? Oh, but you’ll have to turn on the immersion won’t you?” And she said, “Mald, you’re in Canada now, we have hot water here *all the time* and you never have to ask, you can take a bath every hour if you like!”

So I had my bath, and wept quietly in it for an hour. Then I went to bed and slept for 12 hours. When I got up, the sun was shining in under the blind, and I walked through the living room into the kitchen. It was very quiet, and a note sat on the table.

*Gone to work at Wallace’s. Dad is at Tootsies. Will see you for lunch.*

*Mother, XXX.*

I stood there, barefoot in my nightie, imagine being able to go barefoot *anywhere*, the sun bathing my face and a golden light filled the ordinary little kitchen, reflecting off the yellow curtains, and the white stove, and I walked in to the living room and into the bathroom. I thought I might have dreamt it all, but it was still there. White, clean, and the
breeze still fluttering the curtains. The bath smiled at me, and the toilet said, “Sit down and stay.” And so I did.

Home, I was home.

and a little postscript...

when I visited England in June 2000, I stayed with Nan and she gave me an upstairs room which looked over the garden and up to the alley pally (alexandra palace) and in the morning when I woke up, the white, gold-starred curtains were moving and dancing decorously in the English breeze....

In May 2001, Nan emailed me to wish me luck running the marathon, Claire had just done the London one; she said, in passing, that the stories for my work sound wonderful and she’s thrilled that “they” like it. She adds, “it’s a life... and a privilege to read.” She wondered what I had told about Hampden Road; the last time she passed by, she saw that, just where the road leads up to the Hornsey railway bridge we crossed walking to school, a mosque had been built. Nan says she’s so pleased we spent that time there, awful as the mice were, because “it’s lasted us for life.” I realize now, there is always more than one home.... but we must be openhearted to see it.
I have been living like the Ancient Greeks and Romans, the first old grey men—or at least, the first we know about. I have been “caring for myself.” I have my Hupomnemata and my epistolary writing, and I diligently see to both, several times during the day. I am “attending the body” and its sickness, and its wellness: I am training for a half-Marathon (Oliver would be proud, he’d call it a “fuck you!” gesture toward Miss Harte... he liked my nose stud), and I have been forced into declaring a truce in the long, long civil war between my will and my ugly body. I have even been administering triage for the “foe.” I didn’t know when my hatred started, but at least now I know the genealogy of the enmity; I have an autoethnographic account, a counter history of this internecine battleground.

“Care” For The Enemy

In my attempts to make amends I have taken action, demonstrating an ethic of care, who knows if it’s the practice of freedom. I have visited the podiatrist for counsel on my feet, and received orthotics. I have visited the optometrist and renewed the lenses in my glasses. I have even been to the dentist. There are clear parallels here—as revealed in the life-writing—with early markings/makings of the body; dental visits and torture, “showing/not showing” the ugly feet; acknowledging the squinting shortsightedness of youth. All these are obviously and significantly signed/encoded/displayed on the surface of the body; I have chosen to re-inscribe some of the planes of my body’s existence. Finally, I have tried to tackle the hard thing—the inner illness, sickness, dis-ease, whatever you want to make of it. All the uproar
in the stomach, gut, intestines—I have become willing to try to alleviate the suffering in the
miles and miles of curly twisty distressed tubes and pipes, soothe the capillaries and
networks along which have run my displaced feelings.

Did I mention that it wasn’t until I was 41 that I found out that “feelings” aren’t
things that occur in the mind, but in the body—so good/effective has my disassociation been,
I really believed that saying, and thinking, “I am worried, anxious, frightened,” was the
feeling. It was revelatory for me. Feelings are those strange things in the body that you
translate into words. It’s a new life’s work, ethical practice, to first detect the physical
sensation, and then link it to the apposite words… still a cognitive process, but I am training
myself to locate “feelings.” And I’ve found some.

They most often manifest themselves in my stomach and guts—have done all my life,
apparently. Celiac Disease? Gluten enteropathy? Food intolerance? Rice, wheat, oats, yeast,
legumes, what makes me sick? I began the allergy elimination diet I hadn’t wanted to submit
to before—I mean, who wants to spend a few months of living on rice-cakes and water? Me.
Time to locate the inner secrets, ‘fess up, bring out into the light, the failure of the (still not
“my,” I note, still “the”) g.i. system… With the help of the “expert” of course, Dr. Pilar. He’s
drawing it all out of me.

Writing It Out Of Me

Now, like an ancient, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, (I wonder if any women did this? Perhaps
Penelope wove her “care” into her fabric every day, and at night un’ravelld it…) I have been
noting my symptoms in a daily food diary—the doctor requires it, and who am I to withstand
his demand for all the information possible about the/my body? Upon awakening, I prepare
an account of my emotional and physical state in my “morning book.” For later, I have a
“writing book” for poetic or mannered thoughts, and, course, “My Documents” sit humming, waiting for their daily, hourly exercise, a ready electronic repository for all the day’s already-said’s.

As I write, I read—

Foucault, 

Sleep that knits up the ravell’d sleeve of care, The death of each day’s life, sore labour’s bath,

Balm of hurt minds, great nature’s second course, Chief nourisher in life’s feast

Macbeth: Act II, Scene ii

McWhorter (wow, what a great piece on her connection to her body, line-dancing), Butler, Shakespeare, Keats, Wordsworth, Cobbett, the Oxford English Dictionary, and on and on and on... I read, I write and I run, and I visit the allergy doctor, and note my symptoms. Or the physiotherapist to have her sort out my “twisted hip,” or the chiropractor for manipulation of the “problem leg,” and I have faith in them that they will “cure” me. Note the malevolence of the body I am inhabiting, the discourse of my dis-stressed physicality, the infirmness of my daily “bodifying forth.”

“Turning To Poison....”

A few days ago I taught a full day workshop (on Stress Management... ironically) and my co-facilitator ordered our lunch—lots of cold meat, veggies and dips and cheese and bread. And fruit. After 48 days of rice, tuna and cabbage I ate, and ate... not the bread or cheese, because Ingrid caught me and told me to stop, but the meat... Rather like a shamanic quest for inner or tribal knowledge, I ingested what I surely knew at some level was poison.

Perhaps I thought it might help in my quest for inner knowing? I reckon I was just hungry, but who knows... For four days after I suffered. The whole range of effects—bone-ache, inability to think, write or enunciate words (allergic reactions have a neural component), upset guts, chronic and utter weariness, water retention, headache, irritability etc. I ran my first race at the same time, 58 minutes of agony, but I did it—a testament to the strength and
longevity of early educational training... (running and the body remembering the early punishments of cross country runs and wet games days and cold hockey pitches) and the more recent training-in-competitions/graduate education (only the top five make it, only number one counts, “nearly” doesn’t cut it).

“Then Glut Thy Sorrow On A Morning Rose”

Five days later I was still unwell, but able to run, and actually derive some pleasure from it.

Perhaps the combination of intense intellectual activity, hard physical effort, concerted attention to the body, an overall toxicity which made somatic re-connections to the earliest and hardest memories of body/schooling, all these things, mixed in with the recall of the earliest disciplining of my sexuality, gendering and acceptable appearance, maybe all this stuff triggered the feelings of despair, hopelessness and utter discouragement. In shamanic terms, the dark night of the soul...

As I ran along the sea wall, past the pool, look at the ducks trying to nest on the lifeguard’s perch, out at sea a calm day, watch out for that dodgy looking Doberman, what came to mind was Keats’ Ode to Melancholy. I was certainly feeling a “wakeful anguish of the soul,” and I ruminated on the young man’s advice—glut your sorrow, wallow in it, stay with the melancholy and allow it to run its course. Good idea, wasn’t that what I had been
doing... the kind of knowledge I was accessing, recovering, in my search for what melancholy mars me....

I recalled, thinking of Keats, how I had gone to the school library one day, Dave was always doing extra reading and I very rarely did, but I had a hankering to get to the bottom of Keats and was uneasy with Mr. Cooper’s interpretation. I found a book there, “12 Poems Reconsidered,” my first lit. crit. I looked for Keats and found William Blake, the Rose. I read the poem and felt sick to my stomach.

I realized Blake was describing me, how did he know about the ugliness inside, the canker, the nastiness, the ugliness? I was nauseated and desperate—I read the critique, it’s all about sex, that’s what it is, oh god that was what was wrong with me, why Dave always blamed me for our “feeble” attempts at sex, as he said later. It never occurred to me, then, that he was as much a construction of the age as I, it was a discourse we both lived, the one where “bad” girls were tarts and made men do things they didn’t do with nice girls, but “discourse” was no more in my vocabulary then, than “healthy sexuality.”

I never showed it to Dave, it was the first time I didn’t talk to him about a poem, essay or interpretation. I hoped he never found it, I felt “found out,” ashamed and deeply stigmatized. I flinched when Mr. Cooper mentioned Blake and even years after, if I saw a Blake etching—they have some in the Fitzwilliam in Cambridge, I saw them in November, 1999—or heard someone go on about “Tyger Tyger,” I felt ... something... in the bottom of my stomach... I forgot it, of course, and the only thing that remains is the twinge now and

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The SICK ROSE

O Rose thou art sick, The invisible worm, That flies in the night In the howling storm:
Has found out thy bed Of crimson joy: And his dark secret love Does thy life destroy.
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then, or a funny feeling of revulsion when seeing a blighted rosebud. And a pathological fear of earwigs.

As I ran by the benches, nice brown Chesapeake Lab, there’s that weird guy again, and the woman with the funny walk, I thought of Blake’s rose and in an instant, I understood at a visceral/gut level what I had been reading, and now I was “feeling,” performative identity. I got it. I thought:

*This is revelatory, it truly is, I never got this, I had it intellectually, but thinking about melancholy, just wallowing in it, is producing first this insight about the death of hope and now this, about the sick inner core, oh yes, that’s me, and then it came into me, No it wasn’t me, I was told it was me, I learned it was me, but there wasn’t anything there, I was made into it, and I GET IT, right by where the benches are, with part of me thinking the orthotics are working ok, and there’s a big dog off leash, I hope it’s tame, and then the stunning realization, not fast, but slow and easy and so obvious, I never saw it before, I am not ugly dirty different... and of course, it is all linked to sex, from the very beginning, from the abuse at home, being “dirty,” I never got that, was it my mother’s fear of me being a masturbating child, then I was a bad/sexy teenager at school, but not as bad as being a deviant teenager, though in Louth, we didn’t have those, yes we did, Miss Banning and Miss Hardy, but that was different, that was ...just was... And all the years as a young adult, shaving the legs keeps the darkness down, not visible, and the years as a non productive woman, wrong because not half a couple... Is there something wrong with her, Uncle Sammy asking my mother when I came over to Canada, and then confronting me, with enough rye in him, Is there something wrong with you?*

*“The Invisible Worm Has Found Out...”*

I came home to think and feel it some more. Blake’s rose was the darkness and inner ugliness, which they had “found” in me, training and education reinforces the parental message of ugliness, and this nastiness, to be disciplined and eradicated, but not spoken of.
Repression operating as a sentence to disappear, or at least, an admission there is nothing to say, see, or know—don’t say it, don’t see it, don’t know it! Ok, so when I was two, and even three I was not “sick.” Tough and defiant, yes, my mother (I fought her in that kitchen sink with body and soul outraged, I knew I was not dirty) and everyone else said it, too, such a little fighter! But somewhere in there I was made into a subject, with a dark and rotten core, so by six, or even five, I knew I was bad. (Of course I engaged in it too! Why not, they were the ones who knew me, my mother would say, No one knows you like I do, but I still love you... and because I loved them, we wrestled with it together, trying to get me clean enough, not pretty, I couldn’t be that but I could be clean.) The shame of it all, never to let anyone see it...

I don’t know what “it” was, but my teachers saw “it,” too, like my mother, and that’s why I wasn’t good at school, and then when I became a teenager, Miss Snowdon linked it for me to sex, (with her vigilant fear, fear of leaving us alone, for what would we do, get up to? First it must have been about onanism and then it was about deviance, being a lezzie...) and Dave wanting to make me responsible for his fall from grace, well, that seemed absolutely natural, he knew I was bad too, he saw the core, but not always... I read the poem and felt so dirty and ashamed, I didn’t want to discuss it with him or anyone, for fear they would know I was the rose—if they hadn’t already guessed. (Pastoral themes, see, always the desire for the innocence and the beauty of a flower but after all, they’re all about sexuality aren’t they?)

So Foucault was right, there is no inner essence, I wasn’t bad or evil or nasty, I was just... was. Until I became, was made, into a dirty and ugly little girl—and this must link to the fear of a masturbating child, I am sure, and then to the pastoral control of “no sex outside
of marriage,” and the weight of the school’s regard forcing Dave and I to reject our healthy appetites, for shame, because the sex wasn’t on the marriage bed, wasn’t for production.

I could ask, why do some not feel this, why do some say, rubbish, like Thomas? *(He was full of it, sex, for him sex was ok, but still a dirty thing, no, not dirty... fun, and naughty.)* But that isn’t the point of this, it’s about finally finding today *that there is nothing wrong with me,* there is no secret ugly inner sickness. I am ok, I am just ... there is nothing, it *is* all a manufacture, a body doing body things, and a soul mind, trying to control it. Yes, I see, the *soul* is the thing that made me find the sick inner core, in the body, of course, not the mind. Hence my fear of cancer, the cankerous worm? And the soul was “discovered” for me by my parents, teachers, friends, lovers and all the Others in the world with me. Truly, the soul is the prison of the body.

The effects—all my life I have felt ugly, dirty, different, an exile and a rebel—because an offense is often the best defense. I have attacked, rather than be found out... again. I may not have “revealed” the inner core, but I put it on my body, anyway—in my ugly nose, my feet, my stomach and my whole way of carrying myself. I “knew” I was ugly inside, so, of course, I was ugly outside... and dirty. And greedy. And ... fill in the blanks. Reading about performativity and identity is very different from feeling it. I can feel the effects. It’s not so much about choosing which identity to perform, it’s about understanding in the body, on the body, that an identity has been called forth, a figure on a ground—an ugly figure on an uglier ground. A dark and secret inner world has been “found” out. I can’t say it as well as Judith and Foucault, but I *get* it, now, all I can say is that I am not a sick rose, I don’t know what I am, but I’ll work on it...
Stripping Away The Veils

How will it be to live feeling ok, not essentially sick? How is it to be a rose, if I want, but not a sick rose? I know this is likely sounding mundane and so what, but I can’t even explain how it FELT, to know it was all a lie, all a lie... I expect this will come and go it will be easy to fall back into the dark core, the canker, but I don’t need to stay there, or hide the secret for all to see... Thank the gods for the practice of freedom, the care of the self, the swarm’s gift to me, melancholy, and Keats’s words and Blake’s darkness—which shows my light.

It was all a dream, I can do a Bobby Ewing and walk out of the shower...

I can stop and smell the roses and feel ok...
The last of my book’s chapters... In the Duc’s Tres Riches Heures, richly dressed courtiers set out hunting on a golden warm morning, falcons at the ready, dogs at their feet. The omnipresent chateaux sits heavily, glowering, but the peasants pay it no attention, frolicking in the river. One warm body is unclothed, just getting ready to dip, while other hot looking serfs are binding sheaves and harvesting. In August, I close some doors, write, perhaps get a bit singed around the wings and animate a chair... It’s been nice to be with you, enjoy this last part of our common performance... and the body has the last word... its tale after all!

**Closing The DOORS**

**A Bathroom Story: The Chair**

**ETHICAL PRACTICE, WRITING AND IDENTITY...SOME CONCLUDING WORDS**

**A Postcard From UBC**

**Karl Marx Said**

**THE SCAPEDRESS, A FAIRY TALE**

**what do you mean?**
My candle meditation is going well, as is my image of the self, caught in the onion bag, the net, freeing itself from the bodies of the past. Each time I go “snip,” I cut one more thread, thus allowing more of me to arise from the net. I am about 75 percent out now I think, at least a shoulder, and arms, and a leg, and the rest is still struggling to get out. Letting go of my father and mother and other negative childhood messages, leaving an old body behind, a shed skin. I will continue to do the candle meditation on closure; there are other things, too, that I want to shut the door on.

Many more I want to keep doors open on… My dear friend, Nan, in London, emailed me today. How nice to hear that I am strong and capable and truly remarkable and courageous and beautiful and strong and so clever. Not ugly, not different.

What else helps to close the doors? A visualization… I am walking out of the door at Suffolk House, turning back, looking into the dark interior, seeing in the gloom the shoes and the lockers and the coat hooks and the mirror on the wall, reflecting back a little light from the open door, and I see ghosts. Val, and Dave, and Thomas, and my teachers, Mr. Cooper and Mr. Flagg, and Mr. Strong, and Sue, and Diana, my friends, and a host of others in the dark, more shadowy figures, dark hallways opening off the main lobby, but, standing looking over my
right shoulder, the one that always hurts, I'm saying, "I am going now, I did so love you all, but am off into the world to find a different way to be."

I turn, and walk through the door and the light is much brighter and I am starting to smile, giggle actually, and then I pull the door shut behind me, holding on to the iron flowered doorknob. I let it go and it closes with a nice solid bang!

I stand, laughing, on the doorstep, hands on hips, and think, remember the day Thomas and I stood there, and a red E type Jag came round the corner, a blonde woman, driving, downshifting along Westgate, and he saying, "Oh, look at that, I wish I could be like that, go away," and then I say out loud Bill Gates' mantra, Where do I want to go today? And the sun is shining, the birds are squawking, the world is warm on my face and my arms, and I know, I am not just "good enough," I didn't just survive education, I resisted it, and made it into something else, I am bloody great!!!!!!! And I'm off, down the steps, and along the lane and into the world....

in memoriam: a body or two, a childhood, a past....

in anticipation of

a future....
Now I have come to the end/beginning of this story's Tale, I have some suggestions. For educators and teachers and students and regular people, arising out of this autoethnographic counter-practice. A lot of people I've met over the last few years—in doing my research, taking courses, teaching courses, giving and listening to presentations and seminars—want to be more "reflective," or more self-aware. But how? Well, I think we need to begin an up close and personal ethical practice, not to take moral stands—at a safe distance. We need to self-write for our own ethical health, and for our body's sake; we also need to write from a political position; and we need to make writing work, and write things we think we can't, or won't, like, or don't like. You'll have noticed these things all have to do with writing. And the work that writing is, and does. Let's think about our (writing) work as:

That which is susceptible of introducing a meaningful difference in the field of knowledge, albeit with a certain demand placed on the author and reader, but with the eventual recompense of a certain pleasure, that is to say, of an access to another figure of truth.


Ethics Not Morals: Askesis

I believe that we want to aim for an ethical practice, rather than a moral one, a practice that helps us figure out what constructions we are working with—in ourselves, and in those whom we teach, and in those with whom we have relationships. Foucault suggests in his 1979 essay, "For an Ethics of Discomfort," (cited Rabinow, 1997, xli) that who one is emerges out of the problems with which one struggles. He proposes that identities are defined by trajectories, not by the taking of positions—it's experience, not engaging in discussion about it all, that counts;
he grants this is uncomfortable, because it’s much easier to pontificate (as he thought of Sartre’s engagement of the "committed intellectual") from perfect hindsight, or universal position rather than the uncertainty of one’s own trajectory. This thinking carries forward into the History of Sexuality and especially the Uses of Pleasure; one must always question what seems to be evident about oneself, one must engage in a re-examination of knowledge, the conditions of knowledge, and the knowing subject. Most of all, this means that one’s work and worth “has to be rooted in an ethics, not a morality, in a practice rather than a vantage point, an active experience rather than a passive waiting” (Rabinow, 1997, p.xix.)

Foucault returned to the work of the Greeks, not because he admired their society or wished it recreated (because it was inequitable and “we must find it intolerable”), but as a source of information on how to write oneself into an ethical way of living. It’s important to understand that Foucault re-coupled the care of the self with “knowing oneself;” in ancient times the two were joined, but the Enlightenment un-coupled this sense of care as an ethics, so that “knowing oneself” became prominent over caring for oneself—and of course, the Protestant ethic makes care like that, well, rather sinful. Many today misread or mishear “the care of the self,” and “technologies of the self,” and take them to mean Foucault was giving us permission to take an hedonistic or individualistic approach to life, where one should, at all costs, avoid being “disciplined,” seeking instead only to “care” (selfishly?) for oneself by creating (consuming and sculpting?) oneself. This is far from what Foucault meant.

What he did was to examine the ways in which the Greeks “took care of themselves,” or came to know themselves; he identified in their work a way of thinking about ethical issues and
practices, and a form of practice, *askesis*, “a training of the self by oneself.” *Askesis* is undertaken by abstinences, memorizations, self-examinations, meditations, silence, and listening to others, and also writing, which came “to play a considerable role.” (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1997, p.208).

**Ethical Examination As A Relationship To The Self**

Foucault saw ethical analysis as the “*rapport a soi,*” the free relationship to the self, and he thought this relationship could be examined in four ways.

- **Through ethical substance**—the will to truth: “The way that the individual has to constitute this or that part of himself (sic) as the prime material of his moral conduct” (HS2, p. 29).

- **Through modes of subjectivation**—self-stylization or form giving: “The way in which the individual establishes his relation to the rule, and recognizes himself as obligated to put it into practice” (HS2, p. 27).

- **By ethical work**—critical activity, and thought experience: “The work one performs to attempt to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one’s behavior. What are the means by which we can change ourselves in order to become ethical subjects?” (HS2, p. 27).

- **By telos**—disassembling the self: “The place an action occupies in a pattern of conduct. It commits an individual to a certain mode of being characteristic of the ethical subject” (HS2, p.28). I am no longer willing to say, as I used to, that we need to be moral in our dealings, (1999a).
My writing of myself, my ASKESIS, has fallen particularly into the second and third categories; by investigating the modes of my subjectivation and through the writing-work I have done to uncover my schooled experiences, I think I am beginning to come to an ethics of practice. In taking say, teaching, or researching, both ways of being and doing in education’s contact zones, I think writing this counter history, and continuing to write it, has made me more cognizant of the role education has played in the construction of my identity; daily writing practice alerts me to the field of possibilities that exist in my power relations with others... fields where I might try to do unto them as was done unto me...

Writing As ASKESIS

Secondly, based on my own experience with this project, I believe that an ethical practice, ASKESIS, as a questioning of one’s subjectivities, can be accomplished by “writing the self.” Not in a general or fuzzy or future sort of sense, as in, “Oh, that’d be nice to do—some day,” when one has time—but a writing that is placed and timed, situated and immediate. That means, every day, in specific and concrete forms, and following Foucault’s propositions.

He suggests that writing can take two forms in its association with thought. Firstly, in a linear form, it goes from meditation to the activity of writing, and then on to training and labor in real situations, becoming a labor of thought, a labor through writing, a labor in reality. The other form is circular, where meditation precedes the writing of notes, which enable the re-reading, which in turn reinitiates the meditation. However one goes about it, in a line or a circle, “writing constitutes an essential stage in the process to which the whole ASKESIS leads: namely, the fashioning of accepted discourses, recognized as true, into rational principles of action” (p.208).
I can write to produce a self-discourse which will guide me in practice; I might also reflect or meditate, and will certainly re-write and re-think my practice through writing. In writing my autoethnographic counter memory, I have used both forms of writing, linear and circular—and more. Foucault continues, “writing has an ETHOPOIETIC function: it is an agent of the transformation of truth into ETHOS...This ETHOPOIETIC writing...seems to have lodged itself outside of two forms that were already well-known, and used for other purposes: the HUPOMNEMATA and the correspondence” (1997, p.209. It’s strange, but not surprising, how much both of these forms figured in my body’s Tale.

**THE HUPOMNEMATA**

In the technical sense, hupomnemata could be account books, public registers, or individual notebooks serving as memory aids. Their use as books of life, as guides for conduct, seems to have become a common thing for a whole cultivated Greek public.... “[consisting of] quotes, extracts from books, examples and actions one had witnessed or read about, reflections or reasonings that one had heard that had come to mind. They constituted a material record of things read, heard, or thought, thus offering them up as a kind of accumulated treasure for subsequent re-reading and meditation” (p.210). They also presented raw material for the drafting of more systematic treatises, in which one presented arguments and means for struggling against some weakness (such as anger, envy, gossip, flattery—or over-managing classrooms), or for overcoming some difficult circumstance (a grief, an exile, ruin, disgrace—a tenure refusal). When requested for advice on agitations of the soul, for example, Plutarch, not having the time to do a proper treatise, sent off the HUPOMNENATA he had written on tranquility of the soul to a friend.
Ad Manum

Hupomnemata are not just "aides memoires," they also serve as a framework for reading, re-reading, meditating and conversing with oneself, and therefore one needs to have them always to hand, ad manum, and in promptu, meaning "that one should be able to use them whenever the need was felt, in action" (p.210).

(I agree. When I traveled in England, and when I go to conferences, talks and lectures, I take with me my writing notebook; the material in it is invaluable—I buy a new one every so often, taking care to get a good color, and when they're full, I stack them on the shelf. It's like a Stone Age palm pilot, I expect.)

The Hupomnemata is a "logos bioethikos" for oneself, and must be "deeply lodged in the soul, where the soul must make them not merely its own, but itself. The writing of the hupomnemata is an important relay in this subjectivation of discourse."

But even though they are personal, the Hupomnemata are neither "intimate journals," nor (Christian) accounts of a spiritual journey, nor are they a "narrative of oneself," where the aim is to produce a confession and to become purified. The Hupomnemata seek to bring about the reverse of that: "It is not to pursue the unspeakable, nor to reveal the hidden, nor to say the unsaid, but on the contrary to capture the already-said, to collect what one has managed to hear or read, and for a purpose that is nothing less than the shaping of the self" (p.210-211).

My Hupomnemata, then, as they can be for others, are notebooks about things read, seen, heard, done, reflected on, doodled on, eaten on and leant on, combining the already-said... say, fragments from teaching, listening, reading, with my hopes and fears and lived experiences, serving me as a framework for ethical action, and kept close to me. Because Greek culture—like our modern academic culture—is citational, honours tradition, and values the already-said;
I believe a 21st century HUPOMNENATA would, in an easy and familiar way, help one to take care of oneself, to produce a relationship as adequate and accomplished as possible with oneself.

Three Ways Of Forging The Self

The aim of the HUPOMNENATA is to forge a self, one which links a “timeless discourse” with one’s own historical and situated self. This process of shaping the self is done through three modes.

Firstly, by coupling writing with reading. One can’t draw everything from one’s own stock, but it’s not a good idea to go from book to book, (collecting a hundred photocopied articles and marked passages of largely unread texts), without absorbing meaning; therefore, one should counteract the effects of dispersal among too many texts by “writing as a way of gathering in the reading and collecting one’s thoughts about it, an exercise of reason” (p.211). This also allows for a measured detachment from concern for the future, with a contemplation of the past.

Secondly, the writing of the HUPOMNENATA, while it counters dispersal, also deliberately cultivates the disparate, “a selecting of heterogeneous elements.” The notebook is a purposeful way of combining the traditional authority of the already-said with the singularity of the truth that is affirmed therein, and the particularity of the circumstances that determine its use” (p.212).

But, thirdly, “this deliberate heterogeneity does not rule out unification,” which comes by gathering all the fragments together in a subjectivation through the exercise of personal writing. The ancients liked their food, and so Seneca compares this part of the process to the
bee's honey gathering, or the digestion of food, for, as Foucault puts it: "The role of writing is to constitute, along with all that reading has constituted, a 'body.'" This body should be understood not as a metaphor but literally; a veritable body constituted by transcription, "writing transforms the thing seen or heard 'into tissue and blood', a principle of rational action of the writer..." and one whereby "the writer constitutes his own identity through the recollection of things said" (p.213).

If I were to put this into my own words, I would say: Keeping HUPOMNENATA would mean snapping up the considered and unconsidered trifles others have said and written, re-writing their meaning for myself in a dialectic of my recollections about their past, and mine, and my future, combining their words and thoughts with mine in a certain wildness and wideness; it would mean making a local sense of the spoken-written words of myself and others. By having them work in a specific utility for me, in action; and in the wholeheartedness of all this writing, I would create a written-body, clothed and girded for action, and re-action. Through the interplay of selected readings and assimilated writing I'll be able to form my identity "through which a whole spiritual genealogy can be read" (p. 214). Sounds like what I have just been doing, for the last few years. I can recommend the process. Also, all this Greek stuff gives it a rather legitimate aura...

Correspondence

But let us not forget the second kind of writing the ancients used in their care-full construction of the self—correspondence.
More Personal Writing... In Letters

The ancients used their notebooks, ἡμομνηματά, as the raw material for letters and missives to others—those letters also afforded an occasion for more personal writing. "The letter one writes acts, through the very action of writing, upon the one who addresses it, just as it acts through reading and rereading upon the one who receives it" (p.214). The letters, in their writing, aid the addressee, arm the writer—and possibly any third parties who read it. If the addressee writes back, an egalitarian exchange of advice and views can flow, thus rendering this a more symmetrical relation.

(Often such letters emanate from the retreat to the country, where meditation exercise and conversation and reading are recommended. It's interesting to me, with my interest in folklore and myths, how the idea of the retreat as self-care or quest or time-out circulates endlessly throughout human existence—Banyan Books here in Vancouver now carries a book on Best Retreats in North America; the dissertation process is just such a rite of passage through empty territory to a new country).

Presenting Oneself... Gazing

"But letter writing is not just about training oneself by means of writing, through the advice and opinions one gives another: it also constitutes a certain way of manifesting oneself to oneself and to others" (p.216). Correspondence is about presenting oneself almost in an immediate physical presence to the other. "To write is to 'show oneself,' to project oneself into view, to make one's own face appear in another's presence." The letter is a gaze that one focuses on the addressee—as she or he reads one's letter she will feel herself looked at—and it is a way of returning the gaze by allowing oneself to be looked at through the reading of the letter. (How
lovely! I am reminded here, of that lovely question, How do I know what I feel until I see what I have written?) Writing then is a two-way mirror, it’s a way of breaking out of the panopticon, with some humility and humanness.

Foucault finds, within the ancient’s words, two strategic points from which one can engage the body in the correspondence. Offering it up, too, to the gaze of self and other.

“The Interferences Of Soul And Body”

Health reports are constantly part of the correspondence. Comprising discussions of impressions rather than actions, deliberations about bodily sensations, and even descriptions of illnesses, are recorded in the correspondence as “a question of recalling the effects of the body on the soul and... remedies of the soul” to cure malaise or illness. The letters retrace the movements which lead to subjective impression, and thus to the exercise of thought.

The Body And The Days

Letters became, for the Greeks and Romans, presentations of the unfolding of everyday life. “To recount one’s day not because of the importance of the events that may have marked it, precisely even though there was nothing about it apart from its being like all the others, [is a] testifying in this way not to the importance of an activity but to the quality of a mode of being—[these are] forms of epistolary practice” (Rabinow, 1997, p. 218). Thus, of one of Seneca’s accounts of everyday life, Foucault says, “Its value is owing to the very fact that nothing has happened to him.” The idea is to attend, to wait on oneself, but also, by way of reviewing one’s day each evening to the addressee, to undertake a self-examination. It was in the “epistolary relation—and consequently, in order to place oneself under the other’s gaze—that the examination of conscience was formulated as a written account of oneself.” (p. 219.)
Foucault suggests the two forms of writing—the tending of the HUPOMNEMATA and letter writing—are part of the “conscious practice of freedom.” For “the care of the self was the mode in which individual freedom—or civic liberty, up to a point—was reflected as an ethics. “What is ethics, if not the practice of freedom, the conscious practice of freedom?” We need to remember the corollary that Foucault added here: “Freedom is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection” (Foucault, in an interview, 1984, cited Rabinow, 1997, p.281)

I think at the time Foucault was talking about all this, in the early 80s, the notion of writing letters might have not resonated strongly. Letter writing, it was widely lamented, particularly by my relations overseas, was a dying art and one to be missed, but after all, who has time in our busy, busy lives? Ah, but now we have email! And nearly everyone I know writes email letters. No need to go out and buy paper to write, ink or pens, stamps or envelopes, just sit down at the keyboard and connect...

Four years ago I had a conversation about this with a friend, Wanda, who said her husband believed email was for terse, factual communication, whereas she thought it was for long and thoughtful, ruminative discussion. Since then, I have seen email correspondence move away from this gendered site to one where parties often feel absolutely free to say or write emotionally, brutally, at length, pithily, piously and plaintively. Back them, our other friend, Sonia, agreed that many in the academy wanted conversation, though in her case, she said, the email system had become a way for her friends to “bother her”... Later she ended a friendship
by email... and I have done the same, too. Some are shocked at this, but in the “old days” of
writing letters, there were many “Dear John’s” penned...

In the last four years I have had relationships via email—with friends in far away lands,
in England, Nanaimo and the
Valentines by email. I know the
computer and seeing, “No new
heartbroken (just as in the old
when the postman passed by
off a love letter), as well as the
“Receiving 29 of 58 new

We have all been

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States. I have had cards, and
feeling of turning on the
mail” and being devastated,
days... I remember how I felt
our house, not stopping to drop
feeling when one sees,
messages.”

non/combatants in email wars,
witnessed ill-considered words and thoughts springing on to the screen, seen writers scorched
and scarred, falling off our screens, Icarus lives in academe... Surely, I can’t be the only person
who has wanted to reach through the screen, grasp a nasty throat, strangle a letter writer? All of
us send emails that detail our days, what we had to eat, and what we think about ourselves, how
we feel today, what we did, and didn’t do, how we filled our world, today, and what we thought
last night when we went to bed. We don’t need Michel de Certeau or Pierre Bourdieu to tell us
about the importance of the everyday, we construct ourselves, and tell ourselves, and write
ourselves into being every day, as soon as that little icon comes on at the bottom of the task bar,
there isn’t much to distinguish us from the ancient Greeks, or the colonist settling down to read
letters from Home, or the old women spreading their knees comfortably apart, skirts draped
over them, shielding the arthritic joints from the too fierce blaze of the fire, as they settle in to
tell a story... or to gossip, as my grandma did with Mrs. Edwards from next door, over a cup of tea at four o’clock, a good half hour spent picking over the day’s events.

My suggestion is, then, that an educator’s ethical practice might include the use of writing in the two forms: The *Hupomnepata*, “where it is a matter of constituting oneself as a subject of rational action through the appropriation, unification and subjectification of a fragmentary and selected already-said,” can be complemented by the epistolary account of oneself, “as a matter of bringing into congruence the gaze of the other and that gaze which one aims at oneself when one measures one’s every day actions according to the rules of a technique of living” (p. 221). As academics we probably already keep some kind of *Hupomnepata*, and we engage in electronic correspondence every day. Perhaps we just need to do this with more a conscious, and deliberate, attempt to make this an *askesis*.

*Not Just Old Greeks: Maybe Some Young Turks, Too?*

Thirdly, I think Foucault’s writing practice needs to be augmented by a *political* and ethical sense; each person will need to derive this politics from their own struggle—in my case, that means a feminist and postcolonial arena. For others, say for you, that could mean writing out of a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered site; it might mean writing out a sense of de-stabilizing your own privileged position—whatever that is, white, coloured, able, First World, religious, medical, bureaucratic, male, imperial, verbal-linguistic or mathematical-logical. It might mean destabilizing yourself as a teacher, professor, principal or school board trustee. Above all, it means questioning what you say that emanates from the location which is for the “speaker’s benefit” (HSI, 1976, p. 6).
I have already laid out elsewhere in this Tale the important contribution feminist autobiography has made to poststructural auto/biographies, both for research and inquiry purpose, but there's no reason we can't use the same (research) strategies to direct our ways of living in the world. We tend to think we go out to "do our research," and then come home or back to the office to become someone else... lecturer, partner, professor, student, cat-owner. Aiming for ἀσκήσις, but using the kinds of writing we employ in our "professional research/teaching roles" could also help us in our reflections about our practice. Think of it as having to account for your day to an Ethical Review Committee... this is not a stirring proposition is it? More bureaucracy... so how to make the writing more pleasurable, while maintaining its focus?

Curiosity is a vice that has been stigmatized in turn by Christianity, by philosophy, and even by a certain conception of science. Curiosity is seen as futility. However, I like the word, it suggests something quite different to me. It evokes "care;" it evokes the care one takes of what exists and what might exist, a sharpened sense of reality but one that is never immobilized before it, a readiness to find what surrounds us strange and odd; a certain determination to throw off familiar ways of thought and to look at the same things in a different way; a passion for seizing what is happening now and what is disappearing; a lack of respect for traditional hierarchies of what is important and fundamental. I dream of a new age of curiosity. Michel Foucault, the Masked Philosopher.

Getting A Few More Happy Endings In Your Life

I think the effort of selfwriting will be made more pleasurable if it also encompasses wordmaking out of one's zone of comfort or allowed scope—so, if you like prose, try some poetry; if you like the real, try fantasy; if you like plain language, make it flourish, blush and shine; if you like true life stories, write some fiction...
For me, for example, one of the most revelatory forms of writing I have undertaken in my autoethnography has been trying to see life, my life and its intersections with others, as a Fairy Tale zone. Try putting yourself in the third person, removing the whole scene to a land far away and very close, and conjure with the mythological. Long before we had logos, we had mythos...

I can’t presume to assume that everyone likes to write—but that’s not the point. My point is, that after completing this project, I am more than ever convinced about the importance of writing—as a way to research, yes, and writing as a way to theorize, yes, and writing as a way to carnivalse, yes, as a way to dialogue... as a way to live an ethical life. For myself, that has meant combining the discomfort of writing, with the pleasure that derives from making a difference; mostly, though I think self-writing can be a way to “an active experience rather than a passive waiting” for things we find intolerable to change.

But....

But.... I wonder what the body thinks about all this writing, cramped over the keyboard and eyes straining staring at the monitor...humm...
A Postcard From UBC

The Candidate's Defense

I know you must be a Mama Long Legs. Why else this blazing suttee dance on my candled academic flame?

But why call your sisters witness through my open window?

Who demands this cindered polygamous "passing"?

Isn't one funeral pyre enough for any male god?
Karl Marx Said

*We don't tell stories about ourselves for reasons of our own choosing.*
What does he know that I don’t?
He must have been talking to Stuart Hall, because he said
*Diasporic is the quintessential postmodern identity.*
Valerie said
*Something equally smart.*
Clarissa Pinkola Estes works with wounded women; she has them make a scape-coat on to which they sew all the pains and hurts of their lives, which is then worn with a flourish, or it may be sacrificially burned, releasing the wounding, redeeming the woman’s life. Many choose to keep their scapecoats, knowing they are works of (he)art. Writing my dissertation is the marking, the tailoring, the sewing, the so-ing of my scapegoat, scapecoat, scape-dress. My coup-coat, my coup-dress, starred and scarred. It will bring tears, it will spill out into the light all the dark pains, the navy stains... but better tearstained rather than fearstained. There is beauty in scarring, not scaring... my dissertation is my scapedress; a two versioned dress, one for me, one for UBC... and there is a real navy yellow and blue and moons and stars dress, my scapedress. It waited for me in England, we were reunited after an absence of 26 years, and I can’t wait to wear it again... at my defense. I will prick up my ears, and open my eyes wide, and smile with my teeth showing, and look to see which bodies look nice and inviting, toothsome and juicy and I will dance through the defense. I am happy. I have written and sewed a new Once upon a Time....

The Scapedress

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful woman who wore a blue, and gold and starry dress, and counted coups and had clustered on her belt many stars of hearts and many more scattered on her dress from those she had loved, and she had many scars, but they were beautiful scars, and the skin over them was very strong and flexible, and she wore a blue jewel in her nose and a
smile on her face and on her heart she wore an “open” sign... And she set her face to the West, where the sun was warming its way to the afternoon... But she realized that she had some souls dangling at her belt; she no longer needed them. It was time to give them back. So she sat down and wrote a letter on heartfully coloured paper, and it looked just like a book, and the letter said:

My dears

Redemption heals a once open wound. Scars form. With changes of weather the scars can and will ache again. Long-term grief, the only kind, comes back, like geese go south in the fall and return in the spring; grief has its seasons. Lilacs perfume spring, leaves fall and dance, and conkers and new terms begin... grief has surrounded me, I needed to say out my secrets. Now it is done, I am scarred and healed. But scars are stronger than skin.

It is time for me to journey on again. I do not flourish in the East, I pine, I droop, become dis-eased and dis-established. I do not do well easterly. West has always been best for me, so west it will be, not the cold old North sea coast, but the west, in the sun coast, not the east in shadow coast. Soon. I fear I still have your souls captive. I thank you for them; they have kept me warm and given me comfort on many cold nights and colder days. They have given me hope... new dreams... your souls seek to return to you... And here they are, sewn all over with blue and gold and full of stars and moons...

Blessings!
What do you mean?

What do you mean, there should be a conclusion? I’ve written enough for several books, I’ll be lucky if the examiners even read it all, and don’t you think they’ll get it by this point?

well, this is my tale you know, and I want to make sure you’ve done it right, they always want those conclusions don’t they?

But the last poem, the Marx one, that’s my conclusion, and the bit about writing and ethical practice, and the sick rose piece and the sponge cake, those are all conclusionary!

but you didn’t say anything really rousing about resistance or what people should do, did you, or about me being constructed wrong?

You haven’t got this have you? I said, sometimes you can resist, if it’s a power relation, but not always. I said you can write, and see what you’re doing, if it’s ethical, and you can write to find out who you are and see if you want to be that way. I said you have to keep hope up and never lose heart. I said you can remake the constructions—look at you, you’re ready to run a whole marathon, if that isn’t about resisting or remaking, well, I don’t know what is! And I said about using spaces, like the cemeteries where Dave and I went, or the hallways, or all the toilets I’ve been in, to make a little revolt, now and then. And I said about how it’s anxiety that gives a way to keep doing it differently, not to be the way they want us to be, but most of all I said we are They. Did you read that bit?

no. it was boring. it was one of those theory bits, wasn’t it? I don’t know why you put those in, the stories about me were much better and easier to read. all that bloody foucault too, and he was a man, you know!
Well, in words of one or two syllables (Descartes was right about you, you know), how about:

- Watch out for Empires, don’t swarm if you don’t have to, and keep on talking.
- Look at the petty stuff, everyday, food and toilets and mirrors and see what it’s doing to you.
- Keep on writing and tell other people what you are writing.
- Have fun—pleasure and play are elusory (what?), ok, ways to make new bodies.
- Be perverse—look it, act it, and find perverse spaces and places. Keep on leaking.
- Most of all, be “sparing” of your places and your shapes, and find the holes to squeeze out of when the grid comes down.

Ok?

I guess, but you know, you never even put one picture of me in this whole book! You started out with some cute baby snaps and ones of me in my school uniform, and then in working clothes, why did you take them out?

You really don’t get it, do you, or are you just vain? This was never about you or me, or us, we were just a way for other people to think about their bodies and subjectivities. If there were pictures of us, it would be about us, wouldn’t it, and they couldn’t feel it was about them.
not even one?

Ok. How about this one of us running our first Half? Marlene’s granddaughter saw it and asked, “Was she the winner,” and Mar said yes.

hey, there’s three women in this shot, they won’t know which one is me!

Right.
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### Appendix A

**The δούδι's Tale: Narrative Genres**

#### Bathrooms
- Bathroom Story: The Limes
  - September
- Bathrooms And Toilets At Masson
  - October
- A Bathroom Story In Three Time Zones: Roma Johnson
  - November
- UBC Is In The Toilet With Me, A Bathroom Story
  - December
- The Bathroom On New Year's Day 2001
  - January
- A Bathroom Story: The Kitchen Sink
  - February
- "We Put Her In The Toilet, Away From The Others"
  - March
- Bathroom Mirrors
  - April
- Bathroom Beginnings And Toilet Endings
  - May
- A Bathroom Story: Parasites And Periods
  - June
- The Bathroom And The Deadly Geyser
  - July
- A Bathroom Story: The Chair
  - August

#### δούδι δίκα
- i
  - November
- ii
  - December
- iv
  - February
- v
  - April
- vi
  - May
  - June

#### Doorways
- A Doorway Poem
  - September
- An October Doorway: 29Westgate
  - October
- A Doorway With A Soft Heart ... A Body Tale
  - December
- Sound Effects Are Doorways
  - December
- Doors And Spaces At Masson House
  - January
- Peeking Around The Dentist's Door
  - February
- Snakes And Ladders And Doorways
  - March
- Literature Opens Doorways
  - April
- They Appeared Suddenly In My Doorway
  - May
- The Doorway At Nutford House
  - June
- The Doorway Of My Mother's Room
  - July
- Closing The Doors
  - August

#### Fairy Tales
- Folk Tales And Fairy Tales
  - November
- Wounded Travelers, A Fairy Tale
  - January
- Artemis, Early Pastoral Power
  - April
The Man Who Kept Cows For Company
Buzzards
The Scapedress

Fencies In England, Dainties In Canada
Steak And Kidney Pie, Learning “College”
FOOD
Limning Food, Stuck In-Between Narnia & Kitsilano
Cabbage
Dreams Of Victoria Sponge Cake: Empire, Class, Gender

METHODOLOGICAL TEXTS
A Book Of Hours
Histories, Genealogy And Methodologies
Autoethnography And Fairy Tales
Fieldwork In Yellow Rooms With Ginger Cats
How I Did It
What Does It Mean, To Work With A Soft Heart?
Getting To The Truth/Researching/Knowing One’s Onions
Death Of The Swarm

NARRATIVES
A Map Of The Heavens
Upwardly Mobile
Cold In Louth 1
Cold In Louth 2
Cold In Louth 3
Cold In Louth 4
Playing Identity
Guy Fawkes Night
Examinations, Counter Memories
There Is A Pastoral Theme
Valerie’s Letter To Canada 1963
Shape Changing
London Stories: The Grad School Letter
London Stories: The Angry Man
A Letter To A Student
The Goddess Of Small Things
What Do You Mean?

Other Nice Pieces Of Writing
Speculum/Ations, A Meditation
Field Work In Yellow Rooms With Ginger Cats
Examinations, Counter Memories
There Is A Pastoral Theme...
The Sun Sets And It Also Rises
The Body And Judith Butler And The British Library
Pastoral Themes Again, Some Last Thoughts
The Sick Rose, Re-Inscribing Identity

Poems

Autumn And The Year Begins
Lovers
Saturday Afternoon At The Opera
Postcolonial Fieldwork
Home Is 1
Dance The Body And The Books
Schooling The Face
Things I Liked About School 2
Things I Liked About School 3
Things I Liked About School 1
Adolescence Forces
Great Men
Things I Liked About School 5
Home Is 2
Things I Liked About School 4
Karl Marx Said

Postcard Stories

A Postcard Story: To The Old Gods
Postcards From Dangerous Locations/Safe Places 1
A Postcard From Norfolk: Listening To The Light
A Postcard From Academe's Garden
A Postcard From Hubbard’s Hills, Louth, Lincs
A Postcard From The Panopticon To Jeremy’s Children
A Postcard From The Palm House At Kew
A Postcard From The University Of Georgia
Postcards From Dangerous Locations/Safe Places 2
A Postcard From (A Memory Of) The Tube... Body Smells
A Postcard From Gordon Square
A Postcard From The Shop At UCL
Postcards From Dangerous Locations/Safe Places 3
Postcard Stories: Women, Deep Space And Gardens
A Postcard For Marlene From A DOE
Postcards From Dangerous Locations/Safe Places 4
A Postcard From Denmark About Small Things
A Postcard From UBC

Tea

Tea In London 2
Tea In London 1
Tea In Oxford
Tea In London 3: Fortnum And Mason's  
Tea In London 4: The Hampstead Tea Room

Theoretical Murmurs
Bodies In Libraries  
Foucault, Perambulating In/Out/Around Adult Education  
All About Power ... Again  
Sex At All Costs!  
Kaleidoscope  
Wanderings  
Ethical Practice, Writing And Identity

February  
July  
September  
October  
January  
February  
April  
June  
August
Appendix B

The Fonts

When I was in London, doing my research, I found a set of fonts in the British Library’s bookshop, from the P22 Foundry, Kells. (For those who can’t go to the Euston Road to pick up theirs, try the website, p22.com.) I loved it, and decided to use differing (colored) fonts for the differing ‘voices’ in the Tale. I’ve tried, therefore, to use:

**kells round** for the body

**KELLS SQUARE** for the doorways

**Victorian Swash** for the Imperial subjectivities

**De Vact** for a thoughtful, Renaissance touch

**London Underground** for London Stories and Postcards

**ACROPOLIS NOW** for folk tales, goddess stories, & methodological writing

**ARTS AND CRAFTS**, when it seemed appropriate

- all the bullets, figures, signs and symbols come as p22 extra’s…

- I’ve been particularly fond of the rabbit which has marked my progress as a runner and the little owl reminds me about getting a bit wiser before I write anything else…

- I had to use Bill Gate’s font, *Blackadder*, for medieval and poetic fancies, and some of his *handwriting* ones, but only now and then…

The Visuals

I wanted to use black and white photographs to capture the sense of the spaces I was schooled in, and lived in; I wanted to be able to look at a picture of a place, with no people in it to distract me, and be able to trace the power relations at work in constructing that space. I had to learn how to shoot, develop, enlarge and print… Welcome to Fine Arts 201, me and 33 undergrads and a bored sessional, who kept giving me C+… I loved my old 1971 Canon SLR, but I had to sell it to pay for some printing… All of the photos are mine. When I become Dr. Chapman, I will take up photography again, for pleasure. Finally, I bought postcards wherever I went, and I still do… What a view!

All of the Book of Hours illustrations come from Les Tres Riches Heures du Duc de Berry: Calendar (1940), published by Editions de la revue Verve, featuring the artists Pol de Limberg and Jean Colombe, with text by Henri Malo, translated by Robert Sage. This beautiful text is held on reserve in the Rare Books Section of UBC’s Fine Arts Library; it’s hard to get a look at, but well worth it when you do!