

"ALL THIS TALK!": STORIES OF WOMEN LEARNING

by

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Abstract

My own experience as a mature woman student led me to question how women learn. A review of literature on adult learning theory, feminist scholarship, postmodern thought and educational program planning was undertaken and a research question synthesised. I asked five mature women program planners who had returned to formal graduate education, either as part time or full time students: How has your experience of learning as a woman affected your program planning practice? The organizing methodology for the study was narrative or *storying*, infused with the principles of feminist research practice.

There were three individual interviews, and then a group meeting. An initial life story analysis was given to the five women and we discussed interpretations. The study was then written up to include my own learning experiences, and the whole text analyzed to see what our personal narratives revealed about the larger educational discourse.

The women's stories of learning fell into three categories of experience: In the first, the metaphor is **talk**, in the second, the metaphor is **opposition**--from the "old, male model", in the third, the metaphor is **power**.

Some conclusions: The women's stories validated much of the feminist literature on women's ways of learning; women struggle to learn under the "old, male model"; learning at school was more challenging than learning at work; good teaching is as important as how learning is designed; power-knowledge structures in higher education are well hidden, but still regulate and discipline women learning; that these women resisted regulation; that while men and women are often alienated, seeing their opposite sex as the Other, there is "another way", and, finally, that the

(male) use of planning as a metaphor for negotiating power and responsibility is not sufficient to describe how the women plan. Rather, their metaphor might be that planning is *creative modelling*, an embodying of good learning experiences in planning practice. Their suggested model for planning focuses on **intention, modelling, courage** and **creativity**. Implications for practice include making gender visible, making power visible and honouring feminist work.

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I would also like to thank my Committee for being so patient, for letting me be "outrageous" and "unconventional", and for letting me write, talk and learn subversively.

PROLOGUE: SCRAPING CARROTS

I stood in my kitchen scraping the carrots I had just bought at IGA. At five o'clock, just five hours away, five women would arrive at Room 308A in the Education building up at the University. They were coming for a group interview, taking out time from their lives, sandwiching in a research session with me to help me complete my thesis research.

When I started out, back in late December, I had thought this session would take place in March, April at the latest, but I had not reckoned in to the design the complex scheduling it would take to set up just the three initial, individual interviews with each of the five women, let alone getting them all together in one room at the same time. Feminists argue, as do many good educators of either sex these days, that theory and knowledge produced collaboratively is more equitable, socially authentic and valid than that constructed in isolation or individual encounters. So I had been very excited about getting my five participants together, after our individual engagements, to see just what they would come up with as a group. But now I was really nervous....

What if they didn't like each other? What if they didn't come and I sat there like Charlie Chaplin in the Gold Rush? At least I would have more to eat than a boot--I had promised them food, coming as they were straight from work, hungry and tired and frazzled as I was sure they would be....Hence the carrots. And the zuchinni, celery, apples, oranges and grapes, dips, mineral water and juice, bagels and cream cheese--from Benny's of course--and the guilty carrot cake that I was sure the two nurses would frown upon...No body would go hungry and no mind either....I just hoped they would have something to say.

I wondered if a male researcher would feel the need to feed his participants, and then chastised myself for construing every act, every thought and whim as part of my thesis analysis. (That was something else the text-books didn't tell you--that your life is not your own when you are fully immersed in research, even the most private thoughts and moments are scrutinised,

theorised and analyzed. There should be a place on the Ethics form for a declaration of care and support for one's own self, a precaution against self-deception, invasion of privacy and non-ethical treatment of self as subject).

I arrived two hours early, bags of food, two tape recorders, two table microphones, five little packages for them to read and comment on, six--one for me--agenda/ers with the three questions I wanted them to address, water, signs up on the door "Research Study: Private", what else, what else? I arranged the room with the food at one end of the long table, the tape recorders and mikes set up at the other end. I decided we would have snacks while we were waiting for everyone to come--Oh God, what if they forget? I had only phoned them all twice to remind them, I should have called again this afternoon--and then they would talk and then we would finish up with another snack.

I only put out the healthy stuff, the carrot cake I kept hidden in its Safeway bag. Time for that at the end. Shouldn't I be thinking of the research questions, the design or something? All this obsessing on whether they would be comfortable, have enough to eat, drink, and where were the bathrooms in this building, anyway? I knew no man would go through this--or was I stereotyping? No, I knew several male grad students who were researching, they didn't do this....One bought a super sharp \$150 microphone....Well, I had settled for what I could get free from the University's Audio-Video Services, but I had Benny's bagels and carrot cake!

At ten to five, I looked up and there was Yolanda. Carrying a tin of cookies her mother had made and thought we would like....And then Lana came in, introductions, and as we spoke in walked Jane, "Oh, of course I know you, you're in this too?", and then Sonia, more hello's, introductions, and where was Lee? I just knew she had forgotten, but no, here she is, hello's to all, and Sonia and Yolanda have never met but have found already a common acquaintance, a male friend of both, a student, and Lee and Jane are catching up....We ate, they all ignored the text, the microphones....The bagels were a hit, not enough cream cheese, where's the water, and

then I said, "Maybe we should move to the other end and start?"

"No!" they all said, "bring the tape players down here, we'll sit and eat and talk here", and so we sat among the Safeway bags and the carrots, the blue-berry cream cheese and the orange juice and the text, and they started to talk about women learning at work and at school, about planning programs, about what it means to be a feminist, about betrayals and triumphs, about power, about models, about being involved in the "Val Study" (Sonia), what it had been like for them and how it had altered their practice....

They talked from five o'clock to seven forty-five, and I said they could go, but they talked until past eight, Lee had to leave, and then Jane...but Sonia, Yolanda and Lana were still talking as I locked up at nine, standing on the stairs, moving to the doorway, still talking, down the sidewalk, me with them, still talking, talking, talking....

Here's what got that talk going....

THE SIXTH WOMAN

Well, do you want to introduce yourselves? Shy?..Words of one syllable? Anybody want to start? Keep on eating, please! Oh, you've all gone quiet! Where are the microphones?

(HERE! and HERE!)

Should we move that one a bit closer to us and the food, Sonia? Thanks.

(SCREECH as microphone slides down the table).

I'll start, I'm Jane

I can go next, my name is Lana

I'm Yolanda

And I'm Lee

My name is Sonia

Oh, I have a mouthful...I'm Valerie.....(G1:1)

And I am the sixth woman. This study is about the experiences of five women learning and planning, but of course, it's about me too. So here I am, wearing my Academic Voice....

A few words, a commodity I never seem to run short of, about Voice and Fonts. This is the first of the personal asides, narrative time-outs, that you will encounter in the reading of this text; if we were talking, one of us would say, Oh, yeah that means.....or, Oh, you don't get that? Well, what it means is....Because we are having a conversation, the two of us, reader and writer, and so at times I will pause, realising that in my desire to produce a writerly text I may be forgetting you, the reader, so I will need to jump in and tell you, Oh well, this means....

Also, it allows me a space in the writing, a "Refuge Area" like those you see in newer buildings and shopping mall parkades (what should we be seeking refuge from? I always wonder, but the signs don't say that, just state, curtly, "Refuge Area", perhaps if you are a shopping mall refugee they make sense to you?), a space to linger in, one where personal reflections insinuate themselves into my writing mind, and then lodge in the text, known to me, but now to you. So, when you see this font (and it took me a long time to find one that looked like the kind of hand-writing my computer would use if it could write in my Voice), you'll know it's time for an explanation, or a rumination, or just time to take a poetic break....I'd also like to suggest you might like to cast your mind into your own spaces, reflect perhaps, on where your own story and our stories, the Five-plus-one Women's stories overlap. Or is that too uncomfortable? At any rate, it's a narrative tea-break, so take advantage of it. In a more conventional thesis, I think these would be footnotes, but this isn't a conventional thesis, so take a sip of tea, pause and think about life....

And a word about Voice. Later on, in the next chapter I will talk a lot more, and a lot more academically, about the development of voice as a metaphor for women's intellectual, ethical and personal development. It's a phrase often used in the literature of personal growth, or of transformative learning, but for me it represents as well the development almost of another personality, one with a Voice of its own, a life of its own, and, disconcertingly, a

Voice that is critical of much that it has encountered in its education. I have struggled to mute it, to stay within the accepted academic bounds, but this Voice has grown louder and louder, and it has finally earned the right to Capitalise itself. After all, it has a lot more courage than most of its colleagues, academic mimics that they are, and it has a lot more fun too. It can take on Academic qualities, or be Serious, or be Sad, or Angry. Over the last two years, from timid beginnings, small interjections, tiny interlocutions, it has grown big enough and loud enough to take over this thesis. My thesis committee capitulated before I did, giving the Voice permission to talk and to write....I still try to muffle its more outrageous comments, hence this Refuge Area.

Similarly, other words have taken on their own lives, become language embodied; you will note their appearance throughout this text, for they, too, have clothed themselves in Capitals. Honour them when you see them. I feel compelled to tell you this because the Academic Voice has noted the words of one of its Teachers--he tells us his story of the growth of Voice and how he has encountered those who condemn him/it, attempt to exile him/it, with the phrase, Well, this poetic stuff is ok, but can he write ACADEMICALLY? So, before you even say it, Yes! I can write academically, I can punctuate, I can be more grammatical than you, but often my Voice is better heard in its own language, constructing itself in its own conventions, defining its own existence independent of the academic strictures....But sometimes the Voice becomes

Academic.....So, on with the story! What was I talking about? Oh, photocopiers and stories....

Personal Experiences, Or, What Happened at the Photo Copier....

My own experience as a mature, female student returning to post-secondary education to pursue a graduate degree in Adult Education led directly to my research question. A personal desire for a change in the quality of my life led, in turn, to a desire for a new career that would reflect that change philosophically and practically. This meant a transition from a financially secure, professional social status to a marginal existence as an adult student. I was prepared for dislocation, having read Bridges' book on life-transitions, but anticipated few real problems that my own enthusiasm and innate intelligence could not overcome. I enrolled in a program which values its students' life experiences and abilities, consciously striving to do so in a learning environment that offers a hospitable climate to all its adult learners, regardless of age, gender, race or cultural and ethnic background.

But to my dismay I still felt left-out, even silenced, as I struggled to learn. Often in class, and too, in small group discussions, I literally had to shout to be heard as other voices overlaid mine, drowning out my comments and observations. Some instructors either ignored, or didn't notice, it seemed, the quieter or more reticent learners: they also mandated learning activities that some, including myself, found distasteful or unhelpful. Other students disparaged truly collaborative methods of inquiry, preferring to offer a collection of self-directed learning projects in group assignments, or have a leader direct tasks.

One of the more humiliating experiences came during a group presentation. The three male students on our team, all strong personalities, had fought each other to a standstill to see

who would control the group. They made the arrangements for the team presentation, refusing our help. Each spoke for an exact third of the total time allotted; us women students were assigned non-speaking roles as "facilitators" of the small group discussion which was to follow. We stood there at the front of the class, three womanly bookends, not sure where to put our hands, whether we should smile or look stern, mutely supporting the male presenters. We were a dumb female Chorus, reflecting bodily back to the audience a sub-text on inequity in education--we were there to be read by all, or none, in that classroom.

The most revealing experience came at the end of that term, and although I knew it was important at the time, now it really underscores Yolanda's story, Sonia's words as they talked to me about what they think about men and women learning....But I'm getting ahead of myself....Here is the Photocopier Story, based in part upon my writing for an assignment on personal learning experiences.

*

A Story:

What was Said and Done at the Photocopier....

As the term wore on, our case study group had begun to fray apart and the dynamics within our group had become aggressive and confrontational. It was so far from the supportive learning climate I had looked for. I felt alienated, dis-empowered and disillusioned. I often drew upon me the wrath of the man who dominated the group and had, unilaterally, decided to appoint himself leader. One of the others in the group pointed this out, remarking that whenever I spoke, the Leader, even if he had nothing to contribute, would simply begin talking over my words, louder and louder until I surrendered and became silent. The worst of this situation was that I had no support from the others, who were prepared to commiserate after our meetings but not to intervene at the time.

I began to leave campus on Wednesday's after an all-morning class and all-afternoon study/case group meeting in an increasingly hopeless and despairing state of mind. I was disillusioned at what I saw as an antithesis of good educational practice. My sense of worth as a person and as a beginning scholar sank to a point lower than I could have believed possible. My sense of moral purpose was diluting too. In my other classes I was beginning to think about what kind of philosophy would guide my practice. I had read about the need for an ethical foundation (for example, in Barer-Stein and Draper, 1993), and had thought my future work as an adult educator would be so founded, but within my group value was placed on the bankability of the degree to be earned, the monetary results of practice. There were no social activists or even moralists in my group, no critical theorists....

Three broad questions concerning learning and purpose remained unanswered for me as the term drew to a close. Why, even though I now understood that we all construct our knowledge as individuals, did some of us seem to share more similarities and more shared conclusions than did others? Why did our group seem so differentiated? And why was I so ambivalent about an articulation of a personal philosophy--was my disillusion so total? Would I accept expediency as an ideology? Troubled, I wasn't able to celebrate with the others the completion of the Case from Hell, nor its decent burial (in the re-cycling pile for some of us--a fitting interment in non-consecrated ground).

But the answers came, and from an unpopular source, feminist theory and research, a sea of words I was just starting to dip my toes in....

Ironically, the critical incident occurred at the photo-copier where I was copying a piece of MacKeracher's (1993) writing, all about women's learning, reading parts of it to the other woman from the study group as I went along. The Leader and one of the other men from the group walked up to wait their turn at the copier. The Leader turned to the other, and in total disregard for us, silenced our discussion by telling the other man they should set a time to meet to

study, elaborating (for our benefit?) that he meant just the two of them.

It was then that I realised that while we women had agonized about what we should do--should we leave the study group, or re-format it so that we could all benefit from each others learning styles, how should we be valuing the connections and relationships in the group--the separated knowers had judged our style, our "ways of knowing" as irrelevant, or wanting somehow, and excised us. We, the two women, felt the abrupt dis-connection, the cutting loose; later the other men would confirm our dismissal.

At that point I knew that my sense of disjuncture in the group was real and that I had learned a great truth for myself. MacKeracher's work had suggested that most men, most often, would not learn as I did, nor would most men value my way of knowing. There was a certain comfort in finally understanding the jangling disharmony.

Ironically, I had received my formal education in just the kind of academic setting that Perry (1988) had researched and until that moment I had always rejected the "emotionalism" of feminism, seeing myself as a genderless learner in an equal environment. As I stood there I realised I had never been viewed as that by the Others, the gendered learners.

Luckily, I have always had a sense for the absurd and it was a relief to laugh with the other woman later on over lunch at the Funky Armadillo, about the totally different construction placed upon one learning experience by the several persons involved in it. Somehow it also freed me of my doubts about a personal philosophy--now I felt quite cut off from the rational and logical position which had argued for adopting a pragmatic expediency and taking what our degrees would offer in the business world. I decided then and there to take a different path.

*

Not all my learning experiences were this difficult but there were a sufficient enough number to cause me, and other women students, to question the decision to return to formal

education. For my study of the research about adult learning theory confirmed that, as a woman, I was not alone in my experience. Although other factors may influence women's feelings of self-worth, leading them to a sense of alienation and exclusion from the academic community, my own struggle had been especially intense in classroom learning contexts, as it was for other adult women learners. These discomforts were much better understood when I examined them in the light of what several researchers have referred to as gendered learning (MacKeracher, 1993, Burge, 1990).

Three epiphanies¹ (Denzin, 1989), two of the cumulative, one the minor kind, occurred in my personal story as a student. Each shed light upon my own and other women's struggles in the academy, and even intimated at a remedy for them.

Firstly, in a cumulative epiphany, I discovered how gender affects learning, the gradual sense I had crystallising for me that afternoon at the photo copier. Then another cumulative epiphany, as over two terms and two courses on program planning theory, I learnt how power is vested in those who control the design of learning experiences. And finally, in a minor, but illuminative, epiphany, how the old cosy, male-stream, scientific, well-ordered world of certainty and finite knowledge is now being challenged by those it previously Othered. Those Others whom it had presumed muted and disadvantaged by class, race, ethnicity or gender. Sitting reading bell hooks one cool March day in my ethnography class, I thought, Oh! Now I see! I can challenge them too!

1. Denzin refers to four kinds of epiphanies. Epiphanies are "interactional moments and experiences which leave marks on people's lives...in them personal character is manifested. They are often moments of crisis...and alter the fundamental meaning structures in a person's life" (1989, p.70). They may be a) the major event, which "touches every fabric of a person's life", or, b) the cumulative or representative kind, "reactions to experiences which have been going on for a long time", or c) the illuminative or minor epiphanies which "symbolically represent a major, problematic moment in a person's life, or d) the reliving of an experience as a relived epiphany.

The first starting point for this research study becomes then, the whole notion of gender as it affects adult learning. The next question that then came up for me was, if gender was a significant factor, why hadn't my learning experiences been designed to recognise that, or at least validate my way of learning? The (mandatory) courses on program planning theory and practice in my degree program clearly demonstrated to me that diverse learning styles could be accommodated, and should be, in designing the learning and instructional components of any educational activity. Surely gender and its effects on learning could be recognised too? And if not, why not?

So, the second area of curiosity for me was about the nature of the planning process in adult education and how the newer theories that have emerged over the last ten years might be influencing program planning practice. A browse through this field of study revealed how issues of power, interest and conflict are now being recognised by planners like Forester and Cervero and Wilson as fundamental to their work; they write that the planner must negotiate these issues, with social responsibility, during the design process. My understanding here was helped by memories from my years in the world of business, of Company Board Meetings---no matter how omnipotent the Directors on the Board appeared to be, the secretary who wrote the agenda for those Board meetings wielded the real power, and most of us knew it. Because it's she or he who decides whose project is brought up, whose darlings are discussed and whose pet gets left out. And so, too, does the planner in education hold the key, for it is she or he who decides whose interests are to be served, and whose voice will be heard and whose knowledge honoured when determining the structure, goals and design of learning activity.

Another epiphany had come for me, as I have said, when I could connect my legitimate right as a gendered individual to have my way of knowing and constructing knowledge validated and not scorned as "different". In readings, in class-work and through the life experiences of those first two terms came the awareness that I, and the Leader, too, had the right to our own worlds of

learning. This right is now recognised in part, because of the battles which have been fought over it in the "paradigm wars" (Guba, 1994, p.116). These wars have broken out in all research arenas, but they are especially fierce in the social sciences. Both learning and planning theory have been irrevocably changed by the first paradigm shift, from a positivist to a post-positivist epistemology, and in some cases, to a subsequent shift to one of the three alternative, interpretive paradigms--critical theory, constructivism and the twins, post-modernism and post-structuralism.

As a woman, and as a mature one at that, my personal knowing or meaning-making system should be as acceptable now as any other human's. But was it? Was I, as a female still living and learning on the educational margins? In good company to be sure, with people of colour, of non-heterosexual orientation, with those of a different size or class or ethnicity, but still out there on the edge? Do we now have as much legitimacy as the white, middle-class male, who, under the shelter of the modernist, positivist paradigm of the Enlightened, Euro-centric educational world, has always had his interests and needs met as that paradigm's only legitimate knower? In the post-modern world, He is now being dethroned, by the crones and slaves, the Colonised, the Others.....

Newer theories of learning, as being constructivist, socially situated and collectively mediated, have brought back to education the possibility of humanness, and of subjectivity. Long missing during its domination by grim, behaviouristic instructors, doggedly transmitting a body of "correct and right" knowledge to passive students, diverse adult learning theories now give more license to the individual. It is now theoretically possible to honour knowledge constructed in contexts more familiar and comfortable than those traditionally found in the colder, formal institutions and methods of education. Thanks to Kuhnian paradigm shifts and those newer ideologies that challenge the old Enlightenment ideals, neither learning nor planning will ever be quite the same in adult education.

And perhaps the ideology that informs the planning process is all that may distinguish a gender-equal model or design for education from one which reproduces old inequalities? New directions for framing and justifying the planning process are emerging that allow ideological space to plan for women's learning as different from men's learning. But is this happening?

Problem Statement, Or, Does This Pain Have a Point?

I believe, with Brookfield, Mezirow and Jarvis, that until a personal experience highlights a theoretical or abstract belief about our world and our place within it, we can not make the necessary transformational shift in our thinking to take us to another level of perception. So, for many women in educational practice, it is only a traumatic or intensely "lived experience" that can provide the "disorienting dilemma" (Mezirow, 1991) or "disjuncture" (Jarvis, 1992) that precipitates the perspective transformation necessary for them to move to praxis--the unity of reflection with action. As Gilligan phrases it:

to disrupt a tradition in which 'human' has for the most part meant 'male'...a phenomenon must occur to block the conventional (story) and...transform their lives, to oppose the only narrative available to them. (Cited in Clandinin, 1991, p. 71)

My own painful shift in views led to this desire to investigate the lived experience of women planners, to hear from them stories of how they made personal meaning of, or conceptualised, gendered learning, if indeed they had, and how this had shaped or transformed their planning practice.

The primary research question is, then:

What lived experiences have helped form the beliefs that women planners hold regarding women's learning: have their experiences as women learning shaped their

practice?

Purpose of the Study, Or, Who Learns from Our Learning?

The purpose of this study was to describe the personal learning experiences of five women planners and how they felt those events had shaped their practice. Using narrative or "story", in a blend of phenomenological and interpretivist inquiry infused by the precepts of feminist research practice, I collected from five women their stories of learning and planning. As the common themes and patterns emerged from the women's stories, they blended with the "stories" gleaned from the literature and with my own life story.

During this melding, I have come to believe that gender does affect the personal learning experience, but that this can be positively enhanced by incorporating feminist values and feminist instructional processes into the design of educational activities. A new Story--a union of the stories of the Five Women, my story, the literature and the story of the research project, took on a life of its own.

This new Story answered many of my main research questions; it also answered questions I had not even thought to ask as I began. As a feminist I had hoped some personal and social change would result from the involvement of researcher and participants--the Five Women, and me the sixth--in this project, and it has! The "Val Study" has, for me and for them, achieved significance in our lives. But how does it contribute to the greater Story, the grand narrative of Education?

Significance of the Study, Or, Does it Matter at the End of the Day?

Adult education has been historically shaped as a discipline and a profession by male actors, male thinkers and male values. In the last few years a feminist critique has made possible a more gender-balanced, less andro-centric, approach to the education of adults, but there is much work still to be done. Payeur, Taylor and Warren (1994) identify four areas of concern: 1) that women are not fairly represented in, or seen as contributing to, the field historically; 2) conceptualisations of the field in epistemological and research practices do not consistently acknowledge the realities and interests of women; 3) women are not equitably included as learners in adult education settings; and 4) women are not equitably included in their adult education work settings. This study addressed each of these four areas at some level.

Specifically, there are two areas of scholarship which have been strongly influenced by male hegemonies: adult learning theory and program planning. Both fields of study are considered fundamental and are required core courses in most post-secondary institutions offering credentialed adult education programs of study (Burstow, 1994). But the female position and perspective has been overlooked, or ignored, in these two areas of scholarship and practice until very recently. Here, in this study, is a beginning attempt to restore a gendered balance in these two powerful discourses.

All research should contribute to knowledge, illuminate the policy arena, and be useful to practitioners (Marshall and Rossman, 1989, p.31). This study was exploratory, but it increased my understanding of learning and planning in adult education; it also affected the lives and practice of the five women who participated in it, and I hope, will enlarge the understanding of all those read it. Through this understanding, our Story may then touch other lives--for we have come to see that women's gender does affect the way they learn, that this experience should be communicated to other women, and to men. How they or others might then use this knowledge in program planning practice in educational settings is now up to them.

If, as Foley (1993) states, "our task as adult education researchers is to find our feet in the worlds of adult learners and adult educators and to communicate those worlds to those with an interest in them" (p. 77), then I hope that these stories have communicated "worlds of learning". Those of us involved in this study were female, but I hope our stories will resonate and cross borders--of gender, race, ability and class--and that the five women's reflections on how best to plan learning for women will be of value to any educator.

Theory, that is, the production of a form of knowledge, should illuminate the practice of adult education, wherever that occurs. This study has implications for many classrooms, training schemes and organisations, and, I hope, for policy and future directions in the area of gendered learning. I was pleased to see, as a beginning to the work that can be done, a draft for a "Gender Lens", an initiative from the B.C. Ministry of Women's Equality, that indicates that studies like mine have begun to make an impact on policy and analysis.

TÊTE À TÊTE WITH THE LITERATURE

Yolanda: You see, I think talking is everything and I'm coming to realise that I'm really looking at conversation, and what happens between people in conversation, because that's where it all occurs. Even if it's conversation with yourself that's where it happens. And it's the only way we can come to any sense of meaning between us...and I think there's non-verbal discourse that happens as well and I think that that's part of talk, that's part of conversation. And that's touch and looking, and writing...and sometimes it's just being in the room. (Y3:7)

I like Yolanda's description, of conversation as meaning making, and I have linked it with the notion of tete a tete....it conjures up two heads together, but also head to head, a combative situation, and this characterises the nature of my conversation with some of the literature....

In the year preceding my data collection, I began to put together a draft, a proposal for a thesis, anxiously couched in an impersonal, oh so passive, academic voice. Somewhere between then and now, my own Voice developed, but in the Fall of 1995 I was writing still according to the "Regulations and Guidelines for Research in the Faculty of Graduate Studies". In my conversation with the literature I did not trust myself or my Voice to be more true, or right, or active even, than all those other voices....Much of this next chapter is still spoken/written in an academic voice, but I am secure in my knowledge that my Voice returns now and then, offering comments, disputing the dry voices of the

literature, but energised now and then by a more subjective, personal, piece of writing, where I actually hear the author's voice holding a truer conversation with my Voice....It is hard to know how to animate, how to de-construct the passive, in writing about others writing, but I am content to let this issue rest-- after all, it is the knowledge I am after here, not the language. Language I'll talk about later.

I completed a broad literature review to determine what research had been carried out in linking gender to traditional learning theory. I now present, firstly, an overview of that research and then follow it by outlining some of the feminist scholarship and pedagogical theory which re-evaluates women's place within the traditional perspectives on adult learning. I will then examine these perspectives in the light of what effect postmodernism has had on feminism, educational research and adult education. A summary of the new directions taken in program planning will be offered, and then linked to the literature on the "Learning Organisation", to show how this has impacted on program planning in the work place. At that point, I draw some conclusions regarding the limitations of existing research in the area of planning for learning, and interrogate definitions of key words and terms which bound the study. I then use the summary to frame secondary research questions; these questions influenced the conversations I had with the women participating in the study, sometimes being supplemental to the main question, at other times helping to frame it more precisely.

Perspectives on Adult Learning

Adult Learning as a Distinctive Process

Adult learning has been seen by most theorists as distinct from children's learning and is often further characterised by them as having other distinguishing features. So, for example, it has been cast as voluntary (Cross, 1981, cited in Cranton, 1994); a way to complete self-awareness (Rogers, 1969); self-directed (Knowles, 1980); participatory (Rogers, 1969); practical (Dewey, 1916, cited in Cranton, 1994); related to self-concept (Knox, 1977; Brundage and Mackeracher, 1980); having distinct learning styles from children's (Kolb, 1984); being a sharing of experiences or resources (Kolb, 1984; Knox, 1977); and as anxiety producing (Smith, 1982 and Wlodkowski, 1990, cited in Cranton).

The emphasis on a particular perspective of adult learning is often a product of the social context of the time in which it dominates educational practice (Jarvis, 1992). Thus, in the 1950s the perspective was behaviourist, in the 1960s humanistic-personal development, in the 1970s cognitive psychology dominated. Adult learning was therefore alternately defined as: a change in behaviour, attitude or skills; as individuation; and as a developmental process. In the 1980s and 1990s constructivist and emancipatory perspectives have helped to define learning as a process of constructing meaning or interpreting reality. Mezirow, building on Habermas (1987), used the three domains of Habermasian knowledge, and calls them instrumental, communicative, and emancipatory. Cranton (1994), following Habermas and Mezirow in the belief that adult learning can be transformative, suggests a re-categorisation into subject-oriented, consumer-oriented and emancipatory adult learning (pp. 14-16).

Recent Learning Theory

A survey of research into learning theory in general, and how adult learning differs from children's learning, is offered chronologically and analytically by Merriam and Clark (1993). Their conclusion is that a phenomenon as complex as adult learning can not be adequately explained by one single theory. Therefore, an holistic perspective of adult learning, which incorporates behaviourist, developmental, humanistic, social, andragogical and transformative components, is proposed. This work illustrates the recent departure from the scientific, or positivist paradigm, which had previously proposed only one "right" way to perceive phenomena; most of the newer research on learning in adults has taken a multi-layered and constructivist, or post-positivist, paradigmatic approach to providing new insights into adult learning.

Guba (1990) defines this shift to a new epistemological paradigm. A paradigm is distinguished by its ontology, methodology and epistemology, claims Guba, and he describes the movement from an objectivist, positivist and modernist stance, to one in which "the ontology is relativist, with the view that realities exist in multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them" (p. 27). The epistemology is subjectivist with the inquirer and inquired interacting to produce the findings, while the methodology is hermeneutic and dialectic, where individual constructions are elicited and refined to generate a construction for which there is consensus (Guba, 1990; Candy, 1987).

In other words, individuals construct their own reality, using their prior experience and social setting to do so, arriving at knowledge and meaning-making through social interaction. Knowledge is made by the person--it cannot be handed on, or down, to them by someone in authority such as a teacher. There is no objective, scientifically measurable reality that can be passed from one to another, no neutral or impersonal "right" way to learn or to teach. This

paradigm's perspective on adult learning sees it as individualistic and value-laden, and it respects and legitimates personal motive, intention and reason and morality. Flowing from phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, this constructivist paradigm validates personally much of my own world view which had been challenged by the rational, logical objectivity encouraged in my earlier educational experiences. The constructivist approach to adult learning makes gendered learning theoretically possible.

Constructivism and Learning Theory

An emancipatory theory of learning would be the most likely to include a consideration of gender, and it has as its foundation, a constructivist base. Constructivism is found in the paradigm of philosophical concepts opposing the positivist and post-positivist meta-theory. In simple terms, positivism is concerned with scientific or instrumental knowledge, where such knowledge is composed of invariant laws and objective data derived empirically. Positivism sees learning as a process of accumulating this information. On the other hand, constructivist perspectives see knowledge as constructed by the individual who perceives the world, and asserts that there is not an objective reality. Learning is thus a process of constructing meaning and transforming understanding. Mezirow (1991) describes the constructivist assumptions that underlie his theory of transformative learning as "a conviction that meaning exists within ourselves rather than in external forms such as books and that personal meanings that we attribute to our experience are acquired and validated through human interaction and communication" (p. xiv).

Candy (1989), a leading researcher into constructivism, describes its assumptions as including these elements: a) people participate in the construction of reality, b) this construction occurs within a context that influences it, c) commonly accepted categories are socially constructed, d) given forms of understanding depend on social processes, e) forms of negotiated understanding are connected with other human activities, f) the subjects of research in the

constructivist world should be considered as knowing beings, g) locus of control rests within the subjects themselves, h) people can attend to complex communications and organize complexity, and i) and human interactions are based on social roles with often implicit rules (p. 321). This embracing definition would allow for diversity in learners, would also recognise that learning has commonly negotiated understandings that are reflected in the similarities of the process as it occurs for people, but would also recognise the individualism of the experience. Constructivism is a foundation for emancipatory learning, but it also recognises the socially embedded nature of adult learning, whether the learning is for everyday living or for transformation.

Learning as a Social Construction

In terms of social constructions, has research, then, been undertaken to show that gender, whether socially mediated or biologically driven, is a variable in personal learning? Socially situated learning theory seems to offer this possibility, as Jarvis and Elsey, for example, report. They contend that even if learning is constructed by the individual it "rarely occurs in splendid isolation from the world in which the learner lives...it is intimately related to that world and affected by it" (Jarvis, 1987, p. 11), and both sit learning centrally in a social context. Elsey (1986), offering a sociological perspective on adult learners, foregrounds the marginality of adult learning to most social structures, touching on difficulties adults face with status passage and adjustment, with being perceived as deviant, with being perceived as requiring adult education to remedy social deficits and as becoming alienated from the family. This research on such societal disapproval of learning, for its disturbance of the balance of relationships and its condemnation of individuation, resonates in my own experience. But gender as a factor in adult learning is covered only peripherally by Elsey; for instance, in a discussion of family dynamics being upset when the mother returns to education.

Jarvis (1994), building on Kant's work in The Critique of Pure Reason, discusses Kant's claim that there can be no doubt that all knowledge begins with experience. He then defines learning as a process of transforming experience, either primary or secondary, into knowledge, attitudes, skills, values, emotions and the senses. Learning then, is the process of taking the experiences of disjuncture with the external world, transforming them, and then internalising the outcomes into a part of our meaningful biography...by so doing we are constructing our own biography. "Learning is the process by which we become, and we keep on becoming for so long as we continue to learn (p. 8)."

This, says Jarvis, is a pre-requisite of social living, that we live in a learned community of socio-linguistic patterns and with learned places within social structures.

Jarvis (1992) also sees learning as one of the great paradoxes of society. The individual is socialised by education and seeks the comfort of belonging to the community, only to be triggered to learn by "disjuncture" from experiences arising within that community. Disjuncture is Jarvis' term for that which people feel, with varying degrees of discomfort, when their personal biography fails to intersect with their experience--no previous learning can be brought to bear on that experience to understand it. Jarvis' definition of learning as the transformation of experience into knowledge, values, attitudes and beliefs, leads to his proposition that there are three categories of response to experience---non-learning, non-reflective learning and reflective learning. Learning, he states, occurs only when an experience fails to fit into our previous understanding of the world, our personal meaning system. If the experience is congruous no questions are asked and no learning takes place. Similarly, if the disjuncture is too great--between the meaning system and experience---no learning occurs and the individual may react with anomie. If anomie is not reached, then the discomfort will provide the motivation to learn. The learning may be non-reflective, and simply enable the learner to make sense of the new experience and to fit it into the current meaning system, or if it affects a deeper level of the learner's

biography, it is likely to be reflective. Jarvis ultimately draws the conclusion that self-directed learning may be the preferred method for the individual to resolve this conflict, but he acknowledges that society allows little private space for this to happen.

Jarvis, like Elsey, fails to analyze in any depth the effect of gender on learning, even though the experience of gender must be a huge part of a personal meaning system, and experiences of a gendered nature are reported by women as being highly significant.

Many other researchers cite experience as a key component in adult learning. Merriam and Clark (1993) state that,

For learning to be significant, it (1) must personally affect the learner, either by resulting in an expansion of skills, sense of self, or life perspective, or by precipitating a transformation, and (2) it must be subjectively valued by the learner (p. 129).

To validate the importance of experience in constructing meaning, they cite Carl Rogers, "A person learns significantly only those things which he or she perceives as being involved in the maintenance of, and enhancement of the structure of self" (1951, cited by Merriam and Clark, p. 131). They continue with two quotations, one taken from Daloz, "Learning involves taking apart and putting together the structures that give our lives meaning (1986, p. 236), and one from Mezirow, "Learning is the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience" (1990, p. 1).

Current research is clear, then, that experience does play a major role in the learning process of adults. But what part does a gendered experience play? The issue of gender is not addressed in the work of the scholars cited above.

Emancipatory Learning

Emancipatory or transformative learning, where we might expect to find reference to gender, is a topic addressed recently by many scholars and research seems to fall into two camps--that which takes a personal empowerment approach, and that which has as its goal the transformation of the learner's domination from oppression. To consider the first, from a human perspective, it would seem that gender and its effects on personal conceptions of power or powerlessness should be covered.

Indeed, many writers argue that transformative, or emancipatory learning is painful, as are the experiences which precipitate it, and it is not usually a kind of learning that is sought. Resistance to it comes from the self, or from social structures of the individual's life-world, including family, work-place organisations, friends and state bureaucracies. Brookfield (1988) talks of the comfort and appeal of routine, habit and familiarity, and of those whose life is a "quest for certainty, for a set of beliefs and values they can commit to for life" (p. 150). He goes on to describe learning,

it seems as if there is a perverse psychological law...in which the strength and commitment to beliefs and values is inversely correlated with the amount of evidence encountered that contradicts the truth of these. The human capacity for denial knows no limits. (p. 150)

Brookfield (1988) presents emancipatory learning as having the same stages as critical thinking--a trigger event is followed by a self-appraisal, exploration, the development of alternative perspectives, and finally an integration occurs. Mezirow's (1990) ten stages of transformative learning clearly serve as a foundation for this work on critical reflection and critical thinking; his ten stages begin with a disorienting dilemma, then a self-examination is followed by critical assessment, the relating to other's experiences, an exploration of options, the development of a plan of action, the acquisition of knowledge and skills, a provisional attempt to try the new,

and finally, re-integration. Although both Brookfield and Mezirow suggest valid models, an aroma of commodification, a step by step, do-it-yourself, popular culture kind of personal development training, clings to them--indeed, their work has been transformed into the "transformative learning techniques" now espoused in corporate 'HRD'; it has become a staple of re-engineering the learning organisation. Despite this popularity, often sufficient to guarantee death in the academic world, their theories of transformative learning still carry weight, and are relevant to this study.

Transformative learning often results in alienation, which, as Mezirow's fourth stage suggests, can be countered by seeking out others in the same situation, as we see in the social phenomena of self-help and support groups. Community or connectedness seems to be an ameliorating factor. This seems to partially lessen the alienation for some, but not for all. Much of the trauma of emancipatory learning comes from upsets in the person's life-world. In some levels of society adult learning is regarded as deviant (Else, 1986); in all levels of intimate society it is regarded with anxiety by learners and their intimates (Brookfield, 1988).

None of these researchers alludes to gender or race or class or ability as being a trigger for learning transformatively, although there is much literature of a practical nature concerning the manipulation of learners into a transformative state. But still no direct references are made to gender. I thought perhaps that research which examines the role of context or social settings as they affect adult learning might address gender, which is, after all, socially constructed.

Context as a Factor

Indeed, the effect of context in which the learning occurs is a rich area for research. Most of the research still focuses on learning together or alone. That is, whether learning is more effective if undertaken collaboratively, or at least in collective situations, or as individuals; the debate focuses on learning in work settings and learning in formal educational institutions.

At this point I decided to limit my literature review to formal learning situations, although I am aware that informal or non-formal learning is significant for most women, and most men.

My study would focus on formal learning, that is "formally structured, institutionally sponsored, classroom-based activities" (Marsick and Watkins, 1990, p.6) as opposed to informal learning or incidental learning. Informal learning is "predominantly experiential and non-institutional" (p. 6) and may include self-directed learning, networking, coaching and mentoring; incidental learning is "often unintentional, a byproduct of another activity" (p. 6). I decided that if my participants wanted to offer reflections, stories or anecdotes about informal or incidental learning these would, of course, be welcomed, but the study's objectives would be to examine women learning formally in academic institutions or within training and development programs for work. I recognised, though, that incidental learning, as it internalizes meaning construction about the actions of others and produces tacit, taken-for-granted assumptions about the learning environment, may reveal the hidden curriculum in formal learning, if surfaced. But in the interests of the time available, and my chosen direction, I would have to draw some boundaries. The impact of gender on informal and nonformal learning would have to be another study.

Collins and Brown (1990) believe learning must be sited in socially authentic situations, that it should be interactive, affecting the affective and cognitive domains and that it can be modelled by a master using scaffolding, mentoring and fading techniques. For example, a Math teacher can model the steps taken to solve a math problem, help the learner take the same route (scaffolding), and then fade (allow the learner to perform the procedure alone). The effect of the gender on learner and master--a value laden label if ever there was one--is not covered, although questions of social roles are addressed.

Lave and Wenger (1992) have built upon the work of Collins and Brown in their studies of learning as cognitive apprenticeship. They wished to restore the credibility of working apprenticeships as a way of learning. This led them, they say, to explore modes of learning in a

situated context, as in traditional craft apprenticeship in tailors in Africa, midwives in the Yucatan and butchers in Mid Western American supermarkets. They believe learning is located in the process of co-participation, not in the heads of individuals, thus moving constructivism into the "fields of social interaction" (1992, p. xxi). This siting of constructivism in social practice theory, "the view that agent, activity and world mutually constitute each other" (1992, p. 33), differentiates their notion of situated learning from others. They insist this is not a pedagogical theory or method of instruction but a social practice theory of learning. It is a view in which social practice is the primary, generative phenomenon, and learning is one of its characteristics.

They have also proposed a theory of limited peripheral participation, where the individual learner, instead of gaining a discrete body of abstract knowledge, which is then transported and reapplied in later contexts, acquires the skill to perform by engaging in the process of legitimate peripheral participation. Legitimate peripheral participation is a key notion in their theory, meaning that learners move gradually from the outer fringe of the community of practice to its centre through task performance and language and value acquisition. They also tie together the ideas of language and learning in communities of practice, and communities of discourse. Lave and Wenger see the learning of a work language as part of moving to full participation in the community, not as a Foucauldian attempt to exclude those who do not speak the language of discourse, (a view I contest in "Denouements").

My sense of their learning theory, however valid it is in putting learning into the authentic social context, is that it still sees learning as gender neutral. Further research on gender, as perhaps an expression of community of practice, or gender acting upon language would be useful. The case studies Lave and Wenger present are situated in work contexts--their work does therefore offer direction in planning learning in work settings. In some respects their learning theory is similar to the relational learning style proposed by some feminist researchers as being a woman's way of learning, but they do not draw or note this parallel.

Having examined most of the theorists and scholars working with questions of adult learning processes and finding most did not even touch upon gender as having more than passing relevance to learning, I felt it must be time to turn to those who start from a position that gender is the most important factor in any kind of societal relationship or social activity--including learning, I assumed.

Feminist Learning Theory: Gender and Liberatory Models

New Directions?

The literature stemming from social practice advocates or critical theorists, that is, those concerned with education for transformation, whether it be personal (Mezirow, 1990) as addressed above, or societal (Freire, 1972), sees learning not simply as a cognitive process but also as a means of addressing the inequalities that stem from oppression of the learners by hegemonies of race, class, ethnicity, political belief and gender. Liberatory pedagogy (Kenway and Modra, 1992) sees learning as a tool and a process. Now I began to see the research address, at differing levels, the impact that gender has on education and learning. If, to paraphrase Freire, we say, There is no such thing as a neutral educational process, then can there be a gender-neutral educational process? Feminist scholars believe not.

These observations from a social action or critical theory perspective are echoed by post-modernists, and are critiqued by Bagnall (1993). He believes that an increasingly post-modern cultural context has implications for adult and continuing education. He defines post-modernism as

contemporary culture that is informed by: 1) a belief in and commitment to the interpretative nature of all perception, the contingency of all belief, and the ontological

contingency of being: and 2) a profound scepticism toward all claims to the privileging of knowledge. (p. 47)

The voices of those from the margins are encouraged to be heard, and "ironical, deconstructive, skeptical, even cynical, criticism pervades...as postmodernity requires of all individuals that they construct their own identity" (Bagnall, 1993, p. 47). This is an offer to those whose gender has marginalized or Othered them in education to give voice to their criticism and to act for change.

The fundamental questions of whose voice is heard, whose interests are served and whose power is confirmed or denied in an educational activity, have driven post-modernists and critical theorists alike, but it is feminist researchers who have tried to ask and answer those questions for women. The clash between postmodernism and feminism will be detailed below, following a discussion of feminism and educative practices.

What Is a Feminist?

Acker (1994) defines a "feminist as someone who believes that women suffer from systematic social injustice because of their sex...and feminism is the movement opposed to such injustice" (p. 28). She discusses the development of feminist theoretical frameworks, and her own use of

middle range theories...to consider particular aspects of gender relations and specific sectors of social life such as education, the family or politics...without a feminist perspective I would have been unlikely to have initiated this hunt for gender. (p. 69)

Both Acker (1994), MacKeracher (1993a), Hayes (1989) and Burge (1990) have very complete summaries of feminist research and scholarship, and all augmented my understanding of what gendered learning could be.

Tisdell (1993) examines the impact feminist research has had on both theorizing women's learning, and on adult education. She suggests two categories of influence, one--dealing almost exclusively with issues of personal empowerment--is based on gender, and the other--dealing mainly with pedagogy and its ability to challenge social structures of power--is termed liberatory. Tisdell makes the point that there is considerable overlap, and that feminist emancipatory educational research of the gender model (Belenky, et al, 1986; Collard and Stalker, 1991; Gilligan, 1982; hooks, 1989) and feminist pedagogy, or the liberatory model, (Briskin, 1990; Kenway and Modra, 1992; Weiler, 1988, 1991) have significant contributions to make to adult learning theory and adult education practice.

Feminist Educational Research: The 1980s

Synthesising this body of work, it is clear that feminist educational research has taken four lines of enquiry into a) women's self-development, b) women's experience in the educational system, c) the context and process of education, and d) education for women per se, or "women-only" education. From these inquiries have come the development of the disciplines of feminist education and feminist pedagogy.

In considering these lines of inquiry as they relate to this study, the most significant for me was the work around women's development and how it differs from men's in moral and in cognitive ways. The researchers who most illuminated my sense of women's learning as perhaps being different from men's, were Gilligan (1982) and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986). Indeed, their work has been foundational for most researchers in the fields of feminist research.

Gilligan's work began as an outgrowth of her re-evaluation of Perry's original 1968 study of cognitive and intellectual development among Harvard students. Two of her findings seem

crucial in constructing a concept of gendered learning. The first is that she showed that men and women do construct learning differently, at the very least in how they arrive generally at different positions on Moral Reasoning. (I would wish to point out that although these differences are gender related, they are not gender specific. I draw upon personal experience to validate this; I have seen some men construct knowing in ways more common to women and vice-versa. It might have been closer to the mark to label these styles of learning as masculine or feminine, but the researchers involved did not do so, using instead male or female. I believe that ten years later we are much more careful about essentialising¹, but when Gilligan and Belenky were working and writing in 1982 and 1986, the postmodern notions of communities of difference, or politics of identity were not yet common academic currency.) Women tend to develop a Care model of moral reasoning with a focus on connected-ness and the value of responsiveness to others; it is very contextual in its definition of morality. Men tend to develop a Justice model, which focuses on justice, equality and immutable laws; it honours the value of fair rules for all.

The second point Gilligan makes is that so much of what is understood about human behaviour rarely includes reference to women, 51% of the human race. For example, previous research into morality, and she uses Kohlberg's work as an example, was based only on male examples. Such an approach also dominates Piaget's model of cognitive development, Freud's model of sexual development and Erikson's model of psychosocial development. Gilligan (1982) writes optimistically that

a recognition of the differences in women's experiences and understanding expands our vision of maturity and points to the contextual nature of developmental truths...which could lead to a changed understanding of human development and a more generative view of human

¹ Essentialism here means the assumption of some kind of unique "essence" of womanhood is generalizable across all women, regardless of race, ability, sexual orientation, class and ethnicity.

life. (p. 174)

Belenky et al (1986) expanded this research, also starting originally with intentions of replicating Perry's study, but found it only reported on men's development, used only the male interviewees in the group of students involved in the project and then assumed that the model would fit both sexes. In an effort to redress the balance, Belenky et al interviewed many women from many social and educational settings. They report that women develop at a different pace and with different ways of constructing knowledge.

They offer an alternative to Perry's stages, and demonstrate the difference between men and women in "ways of knowing." So Perry's dualist stage is in women the stage of silence, when they listen to external authority, which knows the truth and is all-powerful. When women move in to the received knowledge and procedural knowledge stages they hear other voices and truths prevail; there is no sense of an authentic or unique voice, little awareness of a centred self. At the position of subjective knowledge, quest for self is primary. This equates with Perry's critical reasoning stage. Along their way many women have been using relativist constructions of knowledge, Perry's final stage. But it is as if they understand that "to learn to speak in a unique and authentic voice women must jump outside the frames and systems authorities provide and create their own frame" (Belenky et al, 1986, p. 134). This is the stage of constructed knowledge that begins as an effort to reclaim the self by integrating knowledge learnt from others with what they feel is intuitively important. This is a gender different view of the constructivist perspective. To this can be added two other insights from research into women's development (Belenky et al, 1986; MacKeracher, 1993a).

Firstly, the metaphors that women tend to use to ground their epistemological premises suggest speaking and listening. This is at odds with the common metaphors that are used by scientists and philosophers to express their sense of mind. The scientific metaphors are visual and encourage standing at a distance to see an object. Unlike seeing, speaking is suggestive of

dialogue and interaction. Additionally, those who use the visual metaphors seem to value an impairment of that sense, for example "blind justice" and "double blind tests". Women's constructivism puts the knower back into knowing, while the scientific, more often male, epistemology separates the two. This analogy is used by most feminist writers when they refer to Voice. Voice is not simply spoken language, in fact as Belenky et al (1986) put it, voice is

an academic shorthand for a person's point of view...We became aware that it is a metaphor that can apply to many aspects of women's experience and development...[an] endless variety of connotations, all having to do with sense of mind, self-worth, and feelings of isolation from, or connection, to others. We found that women repeatedly used the metaphor of voice to depict their intellectual and ethical development; and that the development of a sense of voice, mind and self were intricately intertwined. (p. 18)

Yes, indeed. I see and hear, again from my own educational experience, that women's voices are often silenced by those who value distance and do not believe that "all this talking" will help frame the "really useful knowledge" that women should acquire (Thompson, 1985, p. 89; Westwood, 1988).

Secondly, two different "ways of knowing" are suggested to be gender related. The way most commonly identified as being masculine is the separated way of knowing that embraces "the doubting game", challenge, being tough-minded, and which is opposed to subjectivism. It is often centred in argument and reasoning. Many women tend to resist and dislike these games which silence (female) voices. They more often learn in a connected² way, where the best knowledge comes from personal experience, where there is capacity for empathy but also an acceptance that one individual can only approximate another's experience. Learning through talking is honoured over challenge and debate; form is central, not content. Connected knowing is non-judgemental,

². Noddings (1988) has called this "caring"; in feminist literature caring and connection have often been taken to mean almost the same thing.

and often occurs communally, for group and collaborative learning is preferred. However, "separate knowers" will drift into individualised learning projects even when placed in collaborative groupings, preferring isolated knowledge acquisition. "Separate knowers" do not link thought to feeling, or personality to perception, whilst "connected" learners select the opposite approach.

According to this research, most women, as connected learners, feel alienated from higher education which stifles the voice of connection, and exposes them instead to the harsher tones of logical, separated knowing. A question arises here that may be relevant to the research problem--is "knowing" and knowledge construction "learning"?

Both Gilligan's and Belenky's works are fundamental to the feminist research perspective which often characterises women's learning as relational. Relational learning is occasionally used synonymously and perhaps inaccurately as being women's learning. This study will do no more than touch upon the question of whether "relational" is an accurate description of one kind of gendered learning. I prefer the term "connected", and will use it consistently.

Following scholarship on women's moral and cognitive development, and the ways they process knowledge or learn, came research undertaken to understand the experience of women in adult education. This is well described by MacLaren (1985); such experiences are also vividly presented by Thompson (1985) and Thompson and the Taking Liberties Collective (1989). Their work validates the feelings of alienation from peers, instructors and family that many women experience, even when good adult education practice is observed. MacKeracher (1993) points out that good adult education practice should enhance "different" ways of learning. This is echoed by Kerka (1993), who says in a review of the literature in this area,

The approaches that have been suggested for enhancing women's "different" ways of developing are remarkably similar to the central principles of adult education: teaching and learning that are collaborative and reflective, social action and social change, and validation

and use of the life experiences adults bring to the classroom in the teaching/learning process.

(p. 1)

I am disquieted to read that, although a case may be made for not providing "different" ways of teaching or learning for women because this could re-inforce stereotyping, or even the de-valuing of one gender of learner, the "safe" answer seems to be to stick with "good adult education practice" and make only a little space for some critical teaching as required. (Should we do more, I wonder?)

Women's Education

It seems for some educators, those working from a feminist or critical pedagogical view, that establishing a climate for learning, valuing each learner's experience and ability and contract setting with each learner, all defined as elements of good andragogical practice by Knowles (1980), are insufficient to accommodate women's needs. Such a belief led Coats (1994) to advocate women-only education, feeling with Thompson (1985) that andragogy only celebrates individualism, and a white, male middle-class one at that.

So Coats (1994) defines women's education as provided by women for women; [it] focuses on the needs of women; [is] designed for women and about women; and removes barriers and improves practicalities. Education for women may encompass all or some of these characteristics but the notion of ownership is not included. "For women" implies that external providers are in control, deciding what is appropriate for women, recognising what women have traditionally wanted or appear to have wanted, what women are thought to want and what appeals to women...Ideally all education provision for adults should include women and recognise the needs of women...but the underlying difference is not.. so much subject matter or method of delivery, in the type of

education provided or the structure of that provision, but in its intent. Women's education starts from a feminist perspective. *The focus of education for women is on education, the focus of women's education is on women.* (p. 1-2) (Emphasis mine.)

Coats feels that gendered education is a corollary to gendered learning, and is the best way to enhance women's education. An excellent guide is given for planning women-only education, easily applicable for work or school environments.

A similarly useful handbook has been developed by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, U.K. (1991) to help educators at a very practical level in designing re-entry or training programs for women. It is a very comprehensive and pragmatic guide, offering many suggestions for the provision of good women's education; for example, it includes a checklist of good practice for planning educational provision for women, a selected reading list of 47 references on women's education, a list of supplemental resources and materials for women's education--self-help groups, child care, course materials for educational work with women, useful books for women learners, and guidelines for good practice in women's education.

Would such a pragmatic guide work in planning programs for women in Higher Education, or continuing professional education, here in North America? Most probably. In fact, a model for gender fair teaching has been developed by Rosenberg (1989); stemming from practitioner knowledge, it is useful and workable. But how do such texts, aimed at gender-fair or woman-friendly education, work their way into the academy, or become incorporated into theoretical as well as practical training for adult educators, say in a graduate program?

Feminist Pedagogy

Some feminist scholars, including MacKeracher (1993a), Hayes (1989), Kenway and Modra (1992) and Burge (1990) believe it is possible to incorporate feminist pedagogy into adult

education practice. This might mean including a "women's curriculum", vital when planning for course content and teaching and learning strategies (Coats, 1994; Pravda, 1991; Thompson, 1985). Coats (1994) defines this women's curriculum as

a curriculum that uses subjective experience and affective processes: locates gendered experience in a wider social context: recognises the importance of group support and collective action: uses methods and strategies that encourage participation: [and] continuously evaluates and develops. (p. 2)

Feminist pedagogy, that is, the line of inquiry taken in feminist research to find the best ways of teaching, or facilitating learning, for women, is well delineated by Hayes (1989). She makes the point that women are increasingly seeking a voice in continuing education and that while stress has been placed on increasing women's participation in continuing education through provision of child care, flexible scheduling and changes in course content, it is time now to examine teaching strategies. She states that new scholarship has led to the development of an alternative approach to teaching.

She, too, names this as feminist pedagogy, and like others (MacKeracher, 1993a) emphasizes,

a collaborative, participatory teaching-learning process that engages learners in the creation of knowledge based on personal experience that can be used as the basis for individual change and social action. (1989, p. 64)

She cites a number of common elements that can be found in descriptions of feminist pedagogy, even though there is no standard model for a feminist teaching style. These may include collaboration and cooperation in planning and communicating, a holistic approach to learning, strategies for theory building and action projects. In common with Kenway and Modra (1992) and Weiler (1988), she believes that praxis--the integration of theory and action--should be the ultimate goal of feminist education, "...the educational process is not considered complete unless

learners take concrete steps to apply what is learned toward change" (p. 63).

Hayes (1989) stresses that these elements are not unique to feminist pedagogy. What is unique is that it "concerns understanding and vision, not teaching tricks", and that feminist pedagogy is

a model for...all teachers and learners...both men and women are limited by traditional sex role stereotypes and that everyone might benefit from education based on an expanded conception of positive personal growth and ways of learning. (p. 64)

The findings of feminist scholarship can therefore be linked to adult learning theory to show that gender, as well as societal, biological and experiential factors, when added to the more profound roles that power, privilege, authority and purpose play, is key to learning.

It is appropriate to emphasise that, as Caffarella (1992) says, "Women's voices are not just gender related, but also rooted in class, race, age, sexual orientation, and family status" (p. 13). Other factors than gender do, of course, influence learning. However, this literature review was undertaken to search for studies or research that looked at gender as it affected women's learning. And indeed, a theoretical perspective of gendered learning has now been established and provisionally defined by the literature.

Interestingly, in a paper delivered in 1995, Flannery and Hayes (1995) report the results of a literature review into women's learning in Higher Education. They concluded that very little empirical research beyond that of the gender or female emancipatory model has been done since Gilligan's and Belenky et al's research in the mid 1980's. They call for more research on gender and learning in higher education.

Women Learning at Work and at School

While this literature review did find more research than the case above, little addressed the context of learning, be that school, home, work, or in community. No research or literature found so far has adequately or fully explained the effect of context on gendering of learning.

MacKeracher (1993b) has produced a report of research on the "way of knowing" that women seem to use in work settings, that is, procedural knowledge, but she calls for further research. No other relevant literature was located that looked specifically at the effect of gender on learning in the work place, although several authors touch peripherally on this topic. For example, Burge (1990) alludes to the gendering of technology at work.

Also, most of the research into gendered learning has been conducted in formal educational settings, be that higher or adult basic education. Even the research by Lave and Wenger and others into work place learning had investigative goals other than gender to drive it. The gendering of learning which is sited in employment contexts of paid-work training and development has not been fully explored. Yet Tom (1993) claims that it is in-authentic to compartmentalise women's experiences into work, family and school: a study or investigation should be informed by an holistic approach to women's experience of learning and it should not just focus on one aspect of learning. Gaskell (1992), discussing issues for women in Canadian education, states that

a series of questions...need to be asked about how education articulates with the work place differently in male and female sectors, and how men and women have differential access to learning in their jobs. (p. 28)

Thus the final question emerges from this section of the literature review: To what extent does the context in which the learning occurs affect its gendering, and how is this experienced in

academic and work-place learning situations?

Feminism, Research, Education and Postmodernism

More On Feminisms

It is surely necessary, in the mid-1990s, to examine postmodernism, whose currents of thought are surely one of most important developments affecting scholarly research, in whatever area that is located. New currents of thought that have been labelled postmodern have, especially over the last 10 years, impacted all fields of study in education, including adult education, and feminist and critical pedagogy (Lather, 1991).

Within the field of adult learning theory, feminist perspectives in adult education and epistemological conceptualisations have all been affected--frequently to the great irritation of many involved in research, who try to relate abstract postmodern or poststructuralist currents of thought to a field of practice permanently marked by its pragmatism.

Griffiths (1995), in a very useful categorisation of recent theory and research, examines various forms of feminism, how feminist reactions to post modernism differ, and how the debate impacts educational research. She concludes, as does Westwood (1991), that action research is the preferred form of research for herself as a feminist and postmodernist. She examines the similarities between feminism and postmodernism, finding the unifying strand to be in the questioning of traditional/modernist epistemology. That is, the questioning of epistemology deriving from the Enlightenment philosophers such as Descartes, Hume and Kant. This epistemology is founded on a quest for certainty and has sure foundations, derived either through empirical (sense) data, rational thought or clearly perceived ideas--but it does not reference politics, that is the deployment of power, either face to face, or in large groups.

Feminism and post modernism refuse to ignore politics, and both draw attention to the indivisible connections of knowledge and power. In feminism this perspective is focused on the oppression of women. In postmodern critiques of supposed neutrality of "truth" or "knowledge", the perspective is focused on the recognition of ambiguity and complexity and the saturation of all constructions of epistemology with politics.

Both feminism and post modernism also share a common time span but this is not an easy or natural alliance. Jagger's original (1983) definitions of feminisms as liberal, Marxist, radical and socialist still have validity for some women today, as does her fear of valorising a femininity created by masculinity. Whether the femininity is stated as a desire for separation or equality, it could strengthen the traditional gender dichotomy. As a demonstration of how diverse have feminisms become today, in 1996, that in a recent article, Williams (1996) is able to list 12 distinct varieties of feminism, existing under three broad umbrellas, universalizing theories--feminist sociobiology, feminist materialism, radical feminism, lesbian feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, equality theories--liberal feminism, radical ethnic feminism, men and feminism, and constructionist theories--social constructionist feminism, postmodern feminism, feminist queer theory and feminist political theories. Over the last twenty years, feminists have sought, and continue to seek, to define themselves--for most this is a necessary task, dictating as it will the stance they then take in working for praxis, within or without the dominant social structures, or hegemonies.

I, too, in conducting this literature review, felt the need to identify a feminism that would frame my research study. I knew I needed to clarify what had been a rather vague beginning notion, of "doing feminist research" into a theoretical feminist position from which I could launch a practical study--I

wanted to match the way I talked to women, the way I constructed knowledge from their answers and the directions that I would suggest for action to a personal feminist belief. I've always wanted my actions and thoughts to be congruent--poring over this often dense and frustrating feminist writing I had to remind myself frequently that it was all in a good cause...but I admit I have had a surfeit of polysyllabic posturing. "Keep it simple" is now my motto--if your participants can't understand what you're saying, or the women you want to reach wouldn't even begin to comprehend all these \$25 words, then what kind of feminist are you?

Instead of freezing into the three divisions drawn by Jagger, feminism has continued to evolve into a rich, often divergent, often combinatory set of ideas of 'difference'. This concept draws on the Derridean concept of difference/ance but adds to it: difference relates to diversity conceived in experiential terms, difference refers to competing constructions of meaning in a poststructuralist or postmodernist sense.

Young (1990, cited in Griffiths, 1995, p. 222) has categorised three differences. An equality in difference, rather than androgyny; differences among women, including race, age, class, disability; and a postmodern identity of difference. (Griffiths (1995) believes the new Italian feminisms adds a fourth difference, **a difference between women unrelated to external factors but to internal power constructions**). In the category of difference as analyzed by postmodernists, feminists such as Flax³ and Davies acknowledge their debt to post-structuralism

³. Cervero, a program planning theorist, is impressed by the work of feminists like Flax; see his thoughts regarding feminisms and postmodernism as they relate to planning theory, p. 61.

and French feminism, and make global critiques of modernism.

All of these feminisms offer different suggestions on improving knowledge and defining a different epistemology. Griffiths (1995) offers an overview of current feminist scholarship in this field, citing Irigaray, Code, Haraway, Walkerdine, Harding and hooks. Irigaray, of the French post structuralist movement, has developed a theory of sexual difference in knowledge construction, with a male imagery focused on identity, non-contradiction and binarism and a female imagery which is more fluid and uses touch as an organising metaphor. Code argues for epistemic responsibility, and sensitivity to the particular and concrete; Haraway argues for 'situated knowledge' and offers a combination of post-structuralism and socialist feminism; Sandra Harding argues against postmodern fragmentation, and for a standpoint epistemology which understands that a researcher's subjectivity refutes objective certainty; there are also epistemologies that are founded on democracy and communities of resistance, in female embodiment, in resistance to the dominant discourse (Walkerdine, 1990) and in choosing to speak from the margins (hooks, 1991).

Lather (1991) examines the questions of the various forms of feminism, and especially those of the French postmodern feminists, Irigaray, Marks, Jardine, Moi, etc. She comments that Jardine makes clear that the term "feminist" is problematic given that many of these women define themselves as beyond a feminism which is seen as "hopelessly anachronistic, grounded in a (male) metaphysical logic which (post)modernity has already begun to overthrow" (citing Jardine 1982, p. 64).

Maynard and Purvis (1994) discuss the issue of the varying forms of feminism, and cite Sandra Harding's work (p. 18-19) on the evolution of feminist epistemology as occurring in three phases. The first is "feminist empiricism", which added women in to existing frameworks. In the second stage, where Harding believes we are now, the "feminist standpoint" seeks to understand women's lives from their experience of oppression as a way to produce more complete and less

distorted knowledge. The third phase is, or will be⁴, feminist postmodernism. Harding is uneasy about this, for while agreeing with the postmodern critique of science as a doomed project, the danger is that that very critique deconstructs and demeans gender--as a universalistic grand theory. Harding makes clear that these three phases may overlap, and often do, especially in the first two instances. Her own work has been criticised for failing to recognise difference or diversity, such as Black feminist and lesbian feminist points of view; Stanley and Wise argue for a range of different, but equally valid, standpoints (cited, Maynard and Purvis, 1994, p. 20).

These are the differences; what are the commonalities in feminist epistemologies? The one thread is, of course, that they are all feminist, all concerned with women and girls' constructions of knowledge. Secondly, all have a moral/political stance with values and power as organising concepts which precede any analysis. Thirdly, a thread of importance of self and subjectivity is found in all, either as "experience", subjectivity or "positionality". Fourthly, all reject a "God's eye view", or objectivity, as a starting or foundational point, instead assuming the self or subjectivity as a beginning. Almost all feminisms then move on to argue that individual "experience", "consciousness" or "position in the discourse" merge into a collective enterprise, to form a new feminist perspective; this can be seen, for example, in Irigaray's, Code's, Harding's and hooks's writings.

⁴. After I had completed my literature review, I was amused to find, as I walked past the notice-boards outside the Women Student's Office on my campus, a display of recent writings on what Feminism(s) is/are. Included among them was the article by Williams (1996) in which she summarised the 12 kinds of feminisms presented at the Beijing Women's Conference in 1995, by Judith Lorber. In this latest round, I was able to identify myself as falling into at least 3 of the categories outlined. I'm beginning to think that my brand of feminism depends on what I had for breakfast, who I had lunch with, and whether I have enough money left over from tuition to pay for dinner.

Feminism Meets Postmodernism

There is even less agreement on what constitutes postmodernism than there is regarding a conceptual organising unity for feminism. One of the characteristics of postmodernism is its appropriation by any number of fields or disciplines, who then attach their own peculiar meanings to it. Thus, language, social theory, politics, art, culture, and now education have co-opted the term "postmodernism".

Feminists like Hartsock (1990) and Skeggs (1991) have noted the overwhelmingly "male pantheon of proper names" (Skeggs, 1991 p. 256) and have seen it as an attempt to re-establish a male academic hegemony. Says Skeggs (1991),

Postmodernism represents a hegemonic war of position within academia. It seems to be an attempt by disillusioned male academics, who feel they are no longer at the 'centre' or have authority and control over knowledge, to win back credibility and influence. (p. 256)

Many have benefited from an engagement with the postmodern, even merging/marrying into it. Griffiths (1995) notes, "I am interested in postmodernism--but only so far as it is relevant to my wider values" (p. 224)

The debate about postmodernism is fragmented by differing perspectives, ambiguities of meaning, and endless re-descriptions of it by those wanting to impose their own interpretation---but this very debate is the essence of postmodernism. Bordo (1992) says, "The 'postmodern' has been described and redescribed with so many different points of departure that the whole discussion is its own most exemplary definition" (p. 159).

Probably any simple definition of postmodernism is impossible, and is, of course, rather modernist in its reduction. But there are certain unifying themes which can be found in postmodern thought including, a challenge to the Enlightenment; a challenge to positivism and empiricism; a discernable cultural condition produced by the decline of late capitalism; irony,

skepticism, playfulness, and a celebration of the superficial; local or micropolitics; rejection of grand theories; multiple legitimacies; a politics of difference; a politics of identity; a post structuralist view of language as being modified into a discourse rooted in local, cultural, contextual epistemologies; and, a huge site of contention, the relevance and relation of postmodernisms to emancipatory goals.

In this latter argument, for example, Lather (1991), a poststructuralist feminist, describes Habermas, a critical theorist, and his struggles against postmodernism. Habermas has argued consistently over the years that only the grand narratives of modernism can legitimate the emancipatory project and therefore rejects the postmodernism of Lyotard as ending only in futility and incoherence. Habermas identifies post-structuralism with neo-conservatism and argues that the Enlightenment project is not done, nor failed, but is still unfinished. He defends universalism and rationality as necessary for the praxis of universal values and rational consensus, against Foucault's and Derrida's nihilism, and against Lyotard's challenge to the "great ideological fairy tales." Gender, of course, is one of those great ideological fairy tales, and some feminists--as well as Habermas--are very uneasy about the dismissal of such tales (for example, see Hartsock, 1990).

On the other hand, postmodernity's relativism glorifies no one discourse over another, even if it trivialises and allows the tyranny of the local. Bauman argues that the postmodern celebrations of diversity and contingency negate the uniformity required by modernity, the uniformity that saw its ultimate expression in the Holocaust. Bauman (1994) argues that without any meta-narrative, the survival of the postmodern tolerance of diversity is not guaranteed, but that while "This makes it exceedingly anxiety prone...it also gives it a chance" (p. 355).

Some theoreticians of multiple differences and multiple oppression look to postmodernism to provide a politics for the dispossessed. For instance, Walkerdine (1990) holds this optimistic view, as does hooks (1991), who says, "Radical postmodernist practice, most powerfully conceptualised as a 'politics of difference' should incorporate the voices of displaced,

marginalised, exploited and oppressed black people" (p. 25).

Griffiths (1995) makes the point that any postmodernism has to be seen in the context of whichever modernity or modernism it hopes to break with, and therefore no one characterisation would meet with assent, for there are different modernisms too. She does, however, give a useful list of what she feels are the key ideas of postmodernism,

There is no foundational narrative. All human ideas are situated. There is no neutral universal reason to arbitrate knowledge or truth. There is no empirical, knowable object called the self, waiting to be discovered. The self is a subjectivity produced within the discourses in which it is positioned and in which it positions itself. (p. 35)

And there are, according to Griffiths, five feminist responses to postmodernism, which I have summarized as being:

1. A fear that they are trying to shut us up.

Just when feminists are beginning to find a voice to articulate their call for liberty, justice and equality, men are turning to postmodernism, which denies those narratives, of equality, justice and liberty, as universal theories. Hartsock (1990), and Skeggs (1991) think feminists should leave postmodernism severely alone, feeling as has been stated earlier, that postmodernism is a male hegemonic coup.

2. Trying not to get seduced.

Recognising the validity of these fears, some feminists caution against being seduced into a (male) post structuralist debate, as "the male texts...either ignore or minimize the importance of feminist theoretical work" (Braidotti, 1991, cited by Griffiths, 1995). In particular, the work of Foucault and Lyotard, while deemed seductive⁵ philosophically is androcentric at its heart and

⁵. Oh yes! I found that out when I began to write up my analysis...but I managed to counter the siren voices by turning to Walkerdine's Schoolgirl Fictions.

thus inimical to feminism.

3. We are all post modernists now.

Griffiths (1995) believes the work of Flax and Butler exemplifies this position: their writing maintains, she says, that feminism that is not postmodern is only essentialist and self defeating. For example, they say, the debate around differences in women could make good use of post-structuralist methods for a better understanding of the topic. A feminist post-structuralism would position itself actively rather than passively. Other feminist writers and scholars, such as Walkerdine, Weedon, Davies and Jones take this position (Griffiths, 1995, p. 229).

4. Having your cake and eating it too. Why not?

hooks (1991) is in favour of a recognition of the tensions between feminism and postmodernism, "As a discursive practice it is dominated by the voices of white male intellectuals and/or academic elites who speak to and about each other with coded familiarity" (p. 24). But she believes that it is possible to make a cautious use of postmodernism as long as it remains subordinate to feminism and social justice.

5. What's Postmodernism?

Even when educational research is addressing issues and questions common to both feminism and postmodernism, the latter is usually ignored. As an example of this attitude, Smith (1992, cited by Griffiths, 1995, p. 230) argues that although postmodernism has its uses, feminists should ignore it, because its debates neither improve the lives of women nor contribute to their survival and growth. The most disturbing feature for those feminists who take this fifth position, is the negation of (Enlightenment) goals of justice, freedom and equality. Educationists and critical theorists also decry the loss of some of the values and ideals of the Enlightenment, and like Griffiths, they see two forms of post modern educational thought. The first extends and redefines modernist principles such as democracy, reason and equality, and the second deconstructs and

rejects those principles.⁶

At this point in the literature review, I concluded that: there are many different forms of feminism, that although I found postmodern thought intriguing, I should be careful when playing with it, and that I needed to be clear in my own mind about where I stood with respect to both. One of the main questions thrown up by the reading of the literature in this area was, To what extent would postmodern thought liberate or invalidate feminist attempts to plan women's programs?

New Directions in Program Planning

Rational Planning is Challenged

Much of the practice-oriented literature stemming from the adult education field has laid out general suggestions for incorporating the concept of gendered learning and teaching into course designs. Some philosophical suggestions are frequently offered for inclusivity of all kinds, as a worthwhile goal in a late modern world. Will this suggestion fit with the current theory and research into program planning, the area that Burstow (1994) has defined as the most male dominated? Certainly, a bounded, linear approach to planning (see, for example, Langenbach, 1992) would probably leave little space for those from the margins to interact or impact upon its process in anything other than a token way.

The recent literature reporting on theory and research into designing and planning

⁶. I had a sense, while working with the literature review, and long before I got into data collection and analysis, that postmodern thought was likely to be crucial in answering some of the research questions. A further reading in this area was undertaken during the analysis of data and thus, a further examination of postmodern thought as it relates to power-knowledge structures is offered in "Denouements".

programs for educational activities in formal, institutional settings, or for training and development at work, notes that planning has also been assailed by the post-positivist challenge. The rational approach traditionally favoured by planners has been called into question.

Postmodernity, as a cultural phenomenon, arose in one part of the world, Western Europe, where its whole *raison d'être* was a beginning challenge to the concept of Eurocentric modernity. Modernity is founded in the belief in linear time, a progression to a better world, social evolution, empiricism and the belief in empirical knowledge. The Enlightenment society and its world view originated with the birth of Protestantism and its concepts of individual salvation, the work ethic and a whole-hearted endorsement of capitalism; it rejected the Catholic view of the community of saints, and a community of human souls. The Enlightenment project continued to evolve with the industrial societies of the 18th and 19th century. And so Europe dominated and brought to the world capitalist and utilitarian salvation, instrumental rationality, reason, science, and the explanations of a knowable universe.

In Europe the postmodern movement in art and architecture, when combined with the economic decline of the last 20 to 30 years, has led to many attempts to question and deconstruct the truths and scientific meta-narrative of the modernist age. Postmodernity and its impact on instrumental rationality has been felt very strongly in planning. No utopian dreams were fulfilled, and so the Garden Cities were deconstructed as failures. If society cannot be planned rationally, then instrumental rationality is a hollow and baseless ideology. There is beginning to be felt the same criticism of rational planning in North America, whether that be for education or community.

One reaction in Europe has come from those like Ulrich Beck (1992) who pose a new kind of modernity, and as he explains in the preface to his work, The risk society, which has had a profound impact on European popular and academic culture:

This book is sustained by the effort to understand the meanings that the historical development of modernity has given to this word over the last few decades...this can only succeed through some no holds barred wrestling against the old theories...this book is based on the assessment that we are eye-witnesses of a break within modernity, which is freeing itself from the contours of the classical industrial society and forging a new form, the 'risk society.' (p. 9)

As with other Europeans, Beck is fearful of the fruits of modernity,

The horrific panorama of a self-endangering civilization...and a new perplexity that has lost the organizing dichotomies of an industrial world which was intact even in its antagonisms...Modernization has consumed and lost its other...At the centre lie the risks and consequences of modernity, which are revealed as irreversible threats to the life of plants, animals and human beings, and which exhibit a tendency to globalization, which spans production and reproduction as much as national borders, and brings into being supra-national and non class-specific global hazards, with a new type of social and political dynamism...the patterns of classes, nuclear family, profession and work, the understanding of sciences, progress, democracy, their foundations begin to crumble...the axes of gender, family and occupation, the belief in science and progress, shake...and a new twilight of opportunities and hazards comes into existence, the contours of the risk society. (p. 11-15)

So says Beck in Europe.

How has this apparently enormous challenge to rationalism and instrumentality been felt by North American planners? What impact will this challenge have for the accounting of gender in planning for educational activities?

Previously, much has been written on the application of learning principles to program planning (see, for example, Brundage and MacKeracher, 1980) and on incorporating cognitive strategies, affective and cognitive domain engagement, experiential learning designs, and so on,

into adult education practices. However, I was unable to find much research or literature on how to apply some of the suggestions regarding gendered learning in the design of programs other than that found in feminist pedagogical texts. Plans and models for women-only education are beginning to be offered (Coats, 1994; Pravda, 1992), but they are often found in areas or journals not read by male academics, but in feminist publications. Similarly, while the popular press has taken up the notion of men and women as different in learning styles, (see Moir and Jessel, 1989), there is not much solid or even credible material there to use in planning traditional, formal educational programs.

Models in the classical sense of a rational, linear kind for planning gender equal education are still elusive. Even the illuminating study by Lewis and Dunlop (1991) on the reasons planners give for program success and failure does not address ideological issues, or the extent to which gender or power considerations affected the planners perceptions of success, beyond the superficial "Stake holders were satisfied" (p. 19) response. (A similar study which asked the learners to evaluate programs they participated in might yield more interesting information as to gender and appropriateness of models of instruction.) Will the challenge faced by planners from post-structuralist, postmodernists and critical theorists to now begin to include factors such as gender, race, sexual orientation, for example, be accepted?

Power and Interest, and Feminism, in Program Planning

Perhaps the ideology that informs the planning process is all that may distinguish a gender equal model, or design, for adult education. In fact, new directions for framing and justifying the whole planning process are emerging in North America that will allow space for ideological considerations. In the 1960s the first formal program development models began to appear and they continue to appear, often refined, re-produced and re-defined in very utilitarian and specific

ways. But to quote some of the newer thinking in this area, for example, as offered by Mills, Langone, Cervero and Wilson (1995),

Program planning as outlined by those models is a comprehensive rational process of decision-making, involving a similar series of steps for assessing needs, developing objectives, identifying resources, selecting models and evaluating outcomes...but recent research about how...agents actually plan programs provides ample evidence to suggest that...planners, especially those considered exemplary by their administrators, do not adhere to the prescriptions of the classical models. (p. 6)

If this is so, how does planning occur, what directions do planners follow, how do they really construct programs? And what relevance will that literature have for this study?

Mills et al (1995) summarise the recent work that has been done to determine what actual planning practice is, and they show the consistency in theoretical focus that this research has with recent adult education research. An understanding of the social context is sought, and this is linked to critical theory. Citing the work of Forester in urban and regional planning, they claim that organisational and social context matter because "ignoring the opportunities and dangers of organizational setting is like walking across a crowded intersection with one's eyes closed" (Forester, 1989, cited by Mills et al, 1995, p. 7).

The work of Cervero and Wilson (1994) builds on this and inextricably links responsibility to the plan to "improve some situation in the world" (Mills et al, 1995, p. 2). This is quite firmly centred, not in the mundane sense of "objectives based program planning" (R. Cervero, electronic communication, March 15, 1995) but in social action.

Cervero (1995) ably expresses this desire to recognise the realities of practice but to not lose sight of

the fundamental issue facing program planners [is]: What is our responsibility beyond innocence? Once we recognise that we live in a world of power relations that actually

structure whose knowledge counts and what kind of world will be brought into existence through our educational programs...(then) this is precisely the task we have set...a vision for how planners need to act in the face of power. (R. Cervero, electronic communication, March 15, 1995)

This echoes the central theme of planning as being a socially responsible act stated in Cervero and Wilson (1994). They also advocate the socially critical perspectives to be gained by seeing planning as a metaphor for negotiating power and interests.

Bagnall (1993), experimenting with a postmodern approach to planning, is critiqued by Cervero, who feels that issue can be taken with Bagnall's models of contractualism or open marketeering as postmodern alternatives to classical planning models, because "he treats all learners as some generic entity, instead of recognising his own argument that all people have multiple shifting identities and multiple interests" (R. Cervero, electronic communication, March 15, 1995). But Cervero applauds Bagnall for underscoring the concept of the boundaries of planning as limitless, "I found it interesting and exciting to see the fusion of Cervero's thoughts on planning and responsibility with feminist thought", and he writes on,

I have spent a fair amount of time over the past 6-9 months with a book "Feminists Theorize the Political" (sic) edited by Butler and Scott. In particular, I have found useful the final chapter by Jane Flax, "The end of Innocence", whose themes seem to me to resonate with what we are trying to do. (R. Cervero, electronic communication, March 15, 1995)
He reflects on the roles that feminism and postmodernism can play in illuminating program planning, and how planners cannot be complicit in

what Nietzsche calls the "longest lie", the belief that outside the haphazard and perilous experiments we perform there lies something (God, Science, Knowledge, Rationality, or Truth) which will, if we only perform the correct rituals, step in and save us. To take full responsibility is to firmly situate ourselves within the contingent and imperfect contexts, to

acknowledge differential privileges of race, gender, geographical location, and sexual identities..we need to make claims on our own and others' behalf and to listen to those different from ours, knowing that ultimately there is nothing that justifies them beyond each person's desire and need--interests--and the discursive practices in which they are developed, embedded and legitimated--power relations. (R. Cervero, electronic communication, March 15, 1995)

Such stirring words! I find that there is now ideological space to plan for women's learning as separate or even different from men's learning: perhaps a recognition that there could be differences in preferred ways of learning, or of constructing knowledge, might be the first step in planning for a truly hospitable learning environment, which would recognise all learner's rights.

The Learning Organisation

Lastly, one interdisciplinary area of research and theory has emerged over the last few years which has made an impact on both the world of education and the world of work. This is the body of knowledge that is being produced on the learning organisation, or the fifth discipline. As adult educators, practitioners in training and development stand squarely in the midst of the debate over the meaning and nature of this mythical beast, and are often charged with making it real and tangible. The cult of the learning organisation has come to have much meaning for planning practice, whether the planner is male or female.

Preskill (1994) states that organisations have grasped the major tenets of the learning organisation, and understand that it represents the best chance for survival in the turbulent world of business, but that they have not linked the sense that "continuous improvement requires a commitment to learning" (p. 292). Organisations must be skilled in five main activities: systematic problem solving, experimentation with new approaches, learning from their own experiences and

the best practices of others, and transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently throughout the organization. Human resource development and adult education theory merge as one. It is interesting that only recently have the parallels between the development of people and organisations been drawn and remarkable that their parallels in terms of learning needs are only now being linked. It is falling to planners to design learning to meet those needs in their practice.

As an example of the anthropomorphizing of organisations, Morgan (1983) has outlined the application of human psychological theory to organisational theory and has proposed the view of an organisation as a living entity. In two of the images he paints, an organisation can be an entity which is patriarchal or it can serve as a psychic prison. A question which might be addressed to the women planners is whether this conceptualisation has ever matched their experience in their own organisation. Would they see their organisation as having a gender? What metaphors would they use to describe their organisation?

Definitions and Questions

Definitions Bounding the Study

Learning. The 1994 edition of the Collins Dictionary of English defines learning as:
 Learning: n) knowledge gained through study; instruction and scholarship. v) the act of gaining knowledge. Psychol). any relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a direct result of experience,
 and to learn

v): 1) to gain knowledge; to acquire skill in, 2) to commit to memory, 3) to gain by experience, by example, etc. 4) to become informed

This definition of learning could be useful if this study was to look at learning in terms of strictly educational goals, but to it I should like to add an extra definition.

Jarvis (1995a) defines learning as "the transformation of experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes and values" (p. 70) and this is a better frame for learning when it refers to a larger experience than the strictly pedagogical. He describes three categories of learning, all resulting from reactions to primary or secondary experience, which he categorises as non-learning--occurring because of presumption, non-consideration and rejection of experience, non-reflective learning--as in preconscious skills-learning and memorization, and reflective learning--as contemplation, reflective skills learning and experimental learning How meaningful are these categories to women learning?

Gender. The formal dictionary definition of gender, as "one of three classifications into which English nouns and pronouns naturally fall, masculine, feminine, and neuter" (Collins, 1994) is now also accorded an informal definition, "the state of being male, female or neutral" (Collins, 1994). Recognising its changed usage, "gender" has now come to be accepted in sociological and feminist scholarship as an adjective and adverb (Acker, 1994, p. 67; Pagano, 1994, p. 253) and may be applied to learning, education and teaching. Originally, this was the definition I used in setting up the research study.

But as my study progressed, as I listened to the stories of the women, and I began to piece together some preliminary meanings to what I was hearing, this definition just wouldn't do the work it should. I found Measor and Sikes' (1992) explanations of gender much more politically useful and relevant to my study; I have paraphrased the following definitions from their work, going on to use these to frame my analysis.

Sex refers to the most basic physiological differences between men and women--the differences in genitals and reproductive capacities. All differences other than these are seen as

being produced by society.

Gender refers to the differences between men and women other than the basic physiological ones. It refers to specific social and cultural patterns of behaviour, and to the social characteristics of being a man and a woman in particular historical and social circumstances: gender is made by society.

Sex-role refers to the patterns of behaviour and aptitudes and attitudes society expects from people simply because they are male or female.

Gender identity refers to a person's self-concept, that is, their own sense of being female or male.

Planning. A plan can be defined generically as, n) a detailed scheme, a method for attaining an objective; a proposed, usually tentative, idea for doing something", and planning as, v) "to form a plan, or make plans, or to have in mind as a purpose" (Collins, 1994). In adult education terms, Langenbach (1992) offers a sturdy and utilitarian definition of "a curriculum model as the plan that creates access to education and training...(it) will include the decisions and activities necessary...and may be simple or complex" (p. 3). As such this is a workable definition for this study, but again, I felt the need to expand this precise and inorganic definition, to put some humanity into the word, and therefore when I spoke to the women, asking them about "planning", I had in mind a definition that is more embracing, Cervero's perhaps, that sees planning as a negotiation of power and interests. In the end, I decided to let the language of the conversations define the word, "planning".

Summary

In certain areas the literature was inconclusive or fragmented, and did not contribute to a better understanding of the problem statement. After voluminous reading, and with reflection back to my own experience, I concluded that a study into **gendered learning** would probably address questions around general adult learning theory and how gender affects the process of learning; it might ask how learning is experienced as gendered; questions could be posed as to whether the learning context affects the degree of gendering, whether women learning as women learn in academic and work situations the same way (MacKeracher, 1993b), and finally, whether adult educators can **plan** for gendered learning, just as they plan for other kinds of variables to be incorporated into good instructional design.

The literature also threw up some new notions for me to consider, and as I read, some supplemental questions began to attach themselves to the initial ideas I had hoped to examine. For example, to what extent had the experiences of the women as adult learners been similar to those mentioned by feminist researchers in learning? What effect does the gender of the planner have on programming learning? To what extent did the women planners subscribe to the views expressed by Cervero and Wilson and Forester: did they see their practice as an extended metaphor for negotiating power and interest, or was this a masculine analogy? If so, what metaphor would women planners' stories of practice reveal? Have Morgan's conceptualisations of organisations ever matched the women's experiences? Could an organisation have a gender?

And lastly, would the planners recognise or have even used, consciously or not, the framework proposed by MacKeracher (1993a) for designing "women's learning"? That framework includes:

1. The focus on an individual and her personal experience as a beginning for, and as ongoing in, learning activity, and that that experience would include talk as a major factor.
2. The recognition that individuals should self-identify their personal connection to what is to be learned.
3. An holistic emphasis placed on connecting thinking and feeling, experience and ideas, theory and practice, and reflection and action.
4. An emphasis on cooperative and collaborative learning, with a recognition that self-direction is a goal, not a process for novices.
5. The use of cooperative evaluation techniques which empower the learner to take responsibility for her learning.
6. The recognition that learning has as its goal a transformative dimension and this, while difficult to implement, should never be devalued. (pp. 79-81)

After completing the literature review I felt both daunted and excited. I could see that there was something happening in the staid theoretical world of "curriculum models", and that the feminist breeze blowing through the academy was reaching gale force as it approached the learning and teaching areas....Something was afoot. I knew I was not the only person asking awkward questions, nor the only one demanding changes in the way the educational world had been wont to mold its learners and plan their lives. I was daunted, however, when I looked realistically at the centre, and saw how far away we feminists, critical theorists and "radicals" were, still living and working on the edges, foraying out now and then to do battle with those sitting so smugly and securely in the middle. And most discouraging of all, I saw how many of my peers, fellow students, fellow workers were happy with the way things had always been, not many wanted to take a good look at the Emperor naked....

So, now I had had my tete a tete with the books, the next task was to figure out how to begin asking my questions, and what to do with the answers I got....

PLOT LINES....

Valerie: How helpful have you found the Research Methods courses you have taken? And as a qualitative researcher too?

Yolanda: Well, you have to remember that in my Master's of Nursing primarily it's a quantitative focus, so the only research course in Nursing was a Qualitative and Quantitative [survey], supposedly! Laughs!! It was just useless, it was just..there was nothing of value, nothing of value related to qualitative research. The qualitative research model that's used is consistently grounded theory, and it walks a line that is so fine between quantitative and qualitative research that, you know, on a good day you could call it one and on another day you can call it the other...that model just didn't sit with me, and it didn't suit me....to really begin to understand (what) phenomenology is all about, that's what I'm interested in. But you know, I doubt that they could say phenomenology there!..it just was useless, it was boring, it was a waste of time, and it was anxiety provoking, I do remember that about it, because it was team taught, and we had this strong proponent of quantitative research and a strong proponent of qualitative research arguing amongst themselves all the time about which paradigm was better! I don't care! You know, just tell me what you want me to write, because that's all I'm at at this point! The two of them would fight! While we're trying to write our proposals! My first proposal was actually to investigate the use of restraints on older adults, but, you know, she (the instructor) just ripped it apart because it couldn't be quantified, and it just, it was horrible. But it was just a waste of time. I got nothing out of it, absolutely nothing, except an understanding of what grounded theory was...(Y2:38)

Plots and Sub-Plots

When I listened to Yolanda talking about her methodology courses, I wondered if I was experiencing *deja vu*. I had originally thought the methodology section would be the easiest part of my thesis to complete. And yet here I am, three courses later (I guess I don't catch on as quickly as Yolanda), and on my fifth re-write of this chapter. I think if I had chosen to walk a methodological path that was well-trodden, not necessarily a quantitative way, but something safe and sound, like survey research, or grounded theory, or ethnography, I might not have had these difficulties. Difficulty in locating a methodology and language that was congruent with my take on life, and difficulty in "writing it up" when I did find the methodology that I wanted--a way that let me ask questions and a way that let me answer them. One member of my thesis committee remarked that it was fun working with me, because I was making it up as I went along.... Not too far from the truth either!

I had decided, for this fifth re-write, to tell the story of how I found story, and then segue into the story of the research study, but I find, as always, there are lots more stories writing themselves here--some on paper, some inscribing my bodily subjectivity, some working themselves out still, in some space of their own, a Refuge Area in my head for orphan stories, where they wait, not yet ready, not yet full grown, to come out and claim a place in my writing....

So this chapter has many Plot Lines. There is one that follows my progress in finding my place in the community of academic research practice. There's another, nestling into the first, about how my cognitive development has unfolded. And another that tells the tale of how clearly I see my Voice develop in the iterations of this chapter. Too, there is the story of the Five Women, and the Sixth, how I found them, what we talked about, and what I have made of "All this talk!" There is a story about finding out what kind of research is feminist, and what kind of feminist I am to be doing that kind of research. There is a harder story for me to tell, about the resistance I have

felt in myself to my methodology and purpose, the self-imposed blocking of my writerly voice, through physical and emotional means. The most difficult story was one I overlooked--the part I myself would play in affecting the research, and my analysis of what I heard when the women talked.

I began to realise that this would not be an easy piece of writing, academically, last Spring, when I was in the first of my methodology courses. It was not until this early Spring, of 1996, that I had an inkling of what it might mean for me personally. My friend Carol had asked me over to brunch on a lovely Saturday morning, over in West Vancouver where she lives, and as we sat eating our omelettes, she asked me how things were going. I told her how excited I was as my first attempts at analysis began to reveal so much more below the surface than I had imagined, and went on to tell her some of what I was seeing come through the women's stories.

"Wow!", she said, "Do you think you would have looked underneath, or even wanted to, if you hadn't been doing your own personal work, you know, on yourself? Like now you know how much of your life had been hidden?"

And then I realised--how could I tell the women's stories if I didn't tell mine? Because the plot lines were so tangled, one story without the other made no sense--I was going to have to talk too, and about things that were difficult for me to deal with among friends, let alone putting myself under the harsh and unforgiving academic spotlight. Oh dear! So I resisted, trying instead to write my words about their words without telling my real words....It didn't work. So here I am, coming clean, getting it straight, finally, on the fifth go round.

So settle back, more stories, more narratives, more plots, more lines to follow up and down the page....

*

A Story:

Becoming A (Narrator) Researcher, Or, Chapman, V.L. (1996)....

During my first two methodology classes I think I was in the cognitive stage Belenky et al (1986) call "received knowledge," or listening to the voice of others. While I usually have opinions about pretty well everything, I knew I was on the periphery, and probably illegitimately to boot, of a community of practice about which I knew nothing. I sat and listened, read, gradually learned how to say the right words, while frequently and completely misunderstanding their meaning, and I'm sure mispronouncing most. I started to feel more confident--after all, I had known what my topic would be half way through the first term, women's learning, right?--and tentatively set out my first attempt at a proposal for research. It was not well received, probably not well written, and I had a heck of a time figuring out just what a conceptual framework was. Everybody, well, faculty anyway, tossed their conceptual framework questions around like they were juggling sixteen balls, and weren't about to drop one. But most of us students, and I know because I asked them first, wouldn't have known what a conceptual framework was if it followed us home. Most of us hoped one would follow us home, then at least we would have one.

I got the worst mark of my graduate career in that course, despite seeking out the professors, checking my assumptions, and theirs, and asking questions, questions and more questions. I was bitterly disappointed because I had so much wanted to get it right, to learn. The next year, when I read Norman and Leggo's piece on gendered experiences (1995), I began to wonder if it wasn't my topic that was faulted, not my ability.... I still wonder.

Then it was that, when I thought I had a handle on some of the knowledge I needed, I moved to Belenky's third stage of cognitive development--using "subjective knowledge" or the

Inner Voice "attending to my infallible gut, instead of listening to external authorities" (Belenky et al, 1986, p. 53) to continue my search for my methodology. I wanted one that came from my personal experience, my experience as a woman learning. I felt intuitively that such a methodology would sit much more comfortably in a room with me, and my participant and my tape recorder--it would have "racing form", it would have been validated at least once as a way of constructing knowledge for one woman, me.

So I wrote the second attempt at a Chapter 3. And I got a much better mark! I also had managed to find some academic props for my choice--narrative, or storying--and some \$25 words about feminist research and epistemologies. And the frameworks were there again, newly furbished and not looking at all like what they really were, as insubstantial as chipboard, and I think that helped the mark. I was getting closer to the community of academic practice!

By the third iteration, another few thousand words had accumulated and my vocabulary, my language, my very style was so academic I could have cried with pride! I had arrived! I certainly could talk, argue, write turgid prose, bore any one in sight, and occasionally had flashes of brilliance that I squelched as quickly as possible, putting them out of their frustrated misery. My thesis committee accepted the proposal, on the condition that I re-write Chapter 3; one of them even suggested I should begin to trust my own Voice, and write up the methodology section using it.

Well! I smiled politely, and said, Of course! Inwardly I was seething--hadn't I just showed them that I had reached Belenky's fourth stage? Look, don't you see, here I am, demonstrating my use of "procedural knowledge", using the/your Voice(s) of Reason? I had not realised yet, to paraphrase Belenky et al, that although I could speak in "measured terms", and I was "objective", and I "knew how", and I could "take a perspective", this still wasn't a guarantee that I could call myself a fully legitimate member of the community.

I re-wrote the passage they wanted, disturbed and elated at how much more comfortable it was to use less expensive words, to dispense with elegantly entwined subjunctive clauses, to shed the pluperfect tense--but was this alright? Would I be able to "fit" if I wrote it this way, thought this way, my way? I was nervous, but they approved my proposal!

Ironically, it was at this stage, when I was almost, but not quite, invited into the heart of the academic community, that I began to have heretical wisps of thought--if they asked me, would I go? I got on with the mundane business of ethics forms, wrestling with the Jet Form Filler, sending out my contact letters, devising interview guides, and then in December, began pilot interviews. In January, and February, and March I talked with the first three women, and I began to feel the "small room" of the academic community stifling. I liked what I was hearing from the women, I was making critical judgements about what they were telling me about traditional learning environments.

In April I used my own Voice for the first time--at a thesis committee meeting where I talked about my preliminary analysis. For, *mirabile dictu*, I had had a proposal accepted for a paper to be given at a University Conference on Narrative, and one for a paper to be presented at the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. I needed to tell the stories of what were coming to be the Five Women, but, paradoxically, I couldn't do so in the language of the community of practice to which my papers' acceptance now gave me a valid membership.

I see now that I had crossed two lines. Firstly, I had stepped into the realm of what Belenky et al (1986) call the final stage of women's cognitive development, where I now used "constructed knowledge" to integrate all the voices I had heard into my own Voice. Secondly, I had decided to reject the more traditional mores of my community of practice, and opted instead to live on the edge--a very uncomfortable place. I tested fragments of my fifth "Third Chapter" as I presented my two papers, astonished that no-one leapt up to the front of the room to drag me off stage for speaking heresy. My committee also surprised me--once again, they encouraged me

to continue with writing in my own Voice, even though one called it "outrageous", one "unconventional" and the other remarked that my work was "invitingly poetic, and strongly feminist in ways that I have seldom seen in a thesis" (C. Leggo, personal communication, August 14, 1996), but agreed with me that it was "biting". How could I refuse those invitations?

So my own Voice has developed, and as my acceptance into the community is guaranteed, I find myself writing my thesis up again, beginning the overhaul in a Summer Session class (and you're going to hear a lot more about that! If Mae West hadn't said "Buckle your seat belts, we're in for a bumpy ride", I would) that was supposed to help me with the last stages of drafting and editing, not the birthing of a new one.... As I say in some lines from a journal kept in that class....

July 23, 1996.

Today, the Guide said, Answer this question, *Why do I write....*

Most in the class nervously using writerly earnest language, me NOT, of course, straight to the heart, Descartes....Unless I eat I die, so when I write a shopping list, I know I live, I write to eat, to shop at Safeway....

In a poem it might be

Why I write

to learn--to tell, me and them, to know what to buy at Safeway

to show--me to myself, me to my committee

to teach--publicly, to communicate outside of me

--privately, to communicate within me

to fulfill--thesisly demands of FoGS

to make--words and sense of words

to live....

You know, it's hard and lonely being a feminist? No. I didn't know, then. But now I know.... Almost through my thesis, having more than second thoughts about going on to Doctoral work in this often inimical environment. The funny thing is, it's not when I struggle with professors or sexist instruction that I feel so assailed, it's when my fellow students and the young ones at that, say, Oh god, you're not one of those FEMINISTS are you? And they accuse me of stereotyping and say, We don't need that kind of stuff these days, we're equal now. I notice usually they are white, able, always pretty or good looking, never having experienced the pain of rejection, Janis Ian's 17. So I get awfully lonely, but the mind goes haring off again....

I am confused, my senses tell me one thing, my nicely tuned academic brain--and haven't I just had the Gold Seal of Approval? This brain warrantied good for another five academic years but Caution!: Only valid in the Ph.D program--says, Now, keep an open mind, listen carefully, ponder before you reply and so on, and inside I scream, Why the hell should I? So they can go inside and yank out the bits that don't fit the male stream mould? "Oh, um, that part

there needs replacing, better get the pliers out....yes, that's it, just tweeze out that strand of critical thought, it's strangling the voice of reason".

So now I have a Narrator/Researcher, A Feminist at that, a Voice to tell the Audience what's going on, what the Plot is....

*

A Story:

How I Found Stories, Or, Yes, There is a Methodology

This is a double voiced story: an experiment in mixing two languages, two tongues, two kinds of writing, two hemispheres of one brain. Enjoy both my Voices, both have worth.

I was still not sure about those frameworks, but I was moving close, in the Spring of '95, to staking out one, if not two. I knew, thanks to the (back)lash marks on my back, gathered over several encounters with students and professors, that others recognised me as a feminist even if I wasn't brave enough to say it out loud--who puts their hand in a blender willingly? So I gathered my courage, said, under my breath, I am a feminist, I need a feminist framework! and went off on a Quest--to the Library, to find one.

There, sweltering in the heat of the stacks of Main, I found a nice work by Maynard and Purvis (1994). They told me what I was beginning to come to know--feminist research practice is now academically in a more acceptable position than it was even ten years ago as a method of enquiry and/or a perspective, and that there is a wide body of literature which debates exactly what feminist research practice looks like. It seems that feminists agree that there is a distinctly feminist mode of enquiry but there is little agreement on what this is or what it might involve. Maynard and Purvis' (1994) discussion and use of Sandra Harding's (cited, pp. 10-12) clever

distinction between method, methodology and epistemology helped me to clarify what I could use as part of my study.

One of the most pressing issues facing feminism today is its problem in reconciling the abstract analyses and recommendations made at the epistemological level by those engaged in the modern/postmodern debate, with the production of a workable model for practice. As bell hooks (1988) has said :

Without liberatory feminist theory there can be no effective feminist movement but...this framework should be directed out toward society and the masses of men and women, not confined to the university which is the site of privilege and elitism--both in terms of gender and class and race. Unfortunately some feminists have only gained legitimacy for theoretical work if it is produced within the academic community...which is Eurocentric, linguistically convoluted and rooted in Western white male sexist and racially biased philosophical frameworks...This reaffirms hierarchy and renders the work inaccessible to those not in the community. (p. 35)

For those, like me, who are ready to actively engage in empirical research there is a frustrating lack of attention paid to concrete matters of method and methodology.

Method here refers to techniques for gathering research materials. I needed to find out just how a feminist would do that. Feminists of the second wave popularised qualitative methods, especially those that maximised the ability to explore women's experience, such as listening to, recording and understanding, in their own words, women's own descriptions and accounts, rather than having them try to meet the externally defined structures largely found in quantitative methods such as limiting answers to questionnaires and surveys. Interviewing in depth, face-to-face, has become the 'orthodox', paradigmatic feminist method, enshrined in Oakley's classic work (1981).

But not just women or feminists have espoused the interview; phenomenological sociologists of the 1970s and educational phenomenologists (Van Maanen, 1990), of both genders, have also advocated the use of qualitative methods and, particularly, the interview. The interview is one of the most useful ways to inquire of people how they structure their day-to-day lives and make meaning of their lived experience, while not distorting, but rather reflecting, those meanings. Similarly, observations, participatory research, case studies and ethnographic research methods have been used in many social science studies, especially anthropological ones, and are not exclusive to feminist research practice. Feminists have found them valuable (Reinharz, 1992); many have appropriated these techniques but they did not create them. So, it seems there is no one official feminist way (Oleson, 1994). Perhaps I can choose my own?

While some brave feminists have always maintained that there is a place for quantitative methods--such research has made significant contributions to our knowledge and understanding of women's experiences, and it has been useful and politically effective in drawing attention to areas such as the feminization of poverty, innumeracy, illiteracy, and the ghettoization of female labour. A number of feminist researchers have now begun to advocate a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, or multiple methods studies. Ironically, these can be especially useful when interviewing is too distressing for the researched. A questionnaire guarantees anonymity and, paradoxically, sensitivity to the researched (Kelly, Burton, and Regan, 1994). But I am still not comfortable with the quantitative.

And, of course, the choice of method should be determined by its usefulness in answering the research question; it seemed sensible for me to select the interview as the best method for getting to the heart of the women's learning experiences. I decided not to go for the therapeutic, in-depth, completely open-ended interview, (especially after hearing that some feminists advocate marathon style interviews that ramble on for four or more hours--I refuse to subject myself or others to such a tedious and draining process), but an interview which would be guided by some

stage setting questions. I would define the topic of the interview and would try to make sure certain questions were addressed consistently across each interview. (See Appendix B)

So....Now I had a method for getting information, or collecting data, but I still needed an organising concept, a framework. I needed a methodology--and preferably one that was feminist-friendly. *Methodology*, I felt, should include some kind of theory and analysis of how my research should proceed, how I could best address the research questions and some kind of criteria for evaluating the findings.

I read ferociously, almost wearing out the new Handbook of Qualitative Research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Interpretivism looked promising, but what was it?

I found out. Interpretivism is about contextualised meaning, where social reality is embedded in social constructions, where "'reality' resides neither with an objective external world nor with the subjective mind of the knower, but within dynamic transactions between the two" (Barone, quoted in Greene, 1994, p. 536). Interpretations and re-interpretations are constructed between the researcher and the researched, always arising from lived experience and the standpoint of the researched. This would be consonant with my feminist perspective, which foregrounds gender not just as a social construction, but a foundational characteristic of social life. Research within interpretivist feminist perspective would also have to deal with issues of power, quality, reflexivity, politics and the outcomes on both researcher and researched of involvement in the study. That sounded appropriate, but so....polysyllabic, so academic, so linguistically convoluted....still.

Ethnography didn't fit--it wasn't culture I was after, and while phenomenology might work to capture the lived-experience of my women participants, it still seemed too prescribed, too far from the everyday, too academic--I mean, if I couldn't understand its linguistic convolutions, how would I explain it to them? I tried to put it clearly and came up with something like this:

Phenomenology is an ancient human science. It seeks to understand the essence of lived-experience, and to make connections and patterns within a personal meaning system. In our late modern world language has assumed an importance for the analysis of lived-experience, being both the vehicle by which we declare or make meaning of our lives, and the means by which we interpret our reality, or define our world as it is mediated to us through technological, cultural or social constructions. (This is an extract from my fourth iteration of Chapter 111, 1995).

Not what you would call everyday conversational topics, except maybe in a graduate classroom--but that wasn't where I was going to be siting my research.

At the same time I kept falling over "stories". In my personal life, in my paid work with women alcoholics, in my preliminary talks with women, with planners, with learners and with teachers. They would say, "Well, let me tell you a story about that...." or, "The story behind that is...." or, "The official story is...." or, "That's a story for another day....", and so on.

So one lovely Saturday I was sitting, bored and irritable, at an ERIC terminal in the Library, and I thought, "Oh why not?", and I entered "story" as a search term. Bingo! 27 hits! Other educational researchers had been using stories! They might call them personal experience methods, interpretive biography, narratology, narrative analysis, storying and so on, but I knew they were stories! The literature claimed what I already knew intuitively, that language defines meaning, that stories are ordinary people's ways of meaning-making, a way to make sense of their experiences; they are lived-experience (Goodson, 1993). Stories offer interpretations of reality, capturing values, feelings and judgements about the world, helping us to understand the patterns of our lives within it.

For me, stories represent the intersection of phenomenology and interpretivism--in lay terms, people tell stories that illustrate the events or phenomena that have shaped they way they live their lives, how they make meaning of those events and their lives in general. And it is

intuitive--we all know the important stories we need to tell, the ones that in their telling and re-telling, each time teach us what our life is about, who we are and why we are.

But as a feminist, and perhaps too, a post-colonialist?, I didn't want to become a story-thief, collecting snippets of my subject's lives and souls, excusing myself as the old anthropologists did, as just "a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles" (Autolychus, *A Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare). I wanted my story-tellers constructing knowledge with me, sharing their reality as gendered learners, and, I hoped, coming to some kind of action after our common reflection.

I did, of course, honour the conventions and find academic support for this gut decision to sit and listen to women telling stories. Also, I still didn't trust my own instinct well enough to say, Here is what I am going to do. I still needed to bolster myself with others/ (academic) words. Here are some of them, the best first.

Carl Leggo (1995), a post modernist, a poet, teacher, writer lays claim to story:

The world is not given to us. We write the world. We write it individually and we write it corporately. Always the world is an overwritten text like a palimpsest, stories written in the margins and spaces of other stories, stories written across other stories, seemingly obliterating the other stories, but only obscuring them, stories written in and off other stories. A plurality of voices and desires. (p. 14)

And stories have an ancient pedigree. Long before written language crystallised culture, history and knowledge, people used oral methods to ensure that information vital to personal and tribal survival was preserved. Chinen (1992) writes about the difference between myths¹ and stories, or folk tales as he calls them, and their uses and meaning to us, privately and publicly. Folk tales are the private histories of men and women, told around the fire in the evening to

¹. When I began to write up my analysis, I found I did not like the word myth. You can check that out now, in "Five Women: Honouring Voices" or increase your reading pleasure by letting anticipation build.

inform, amuse, teach, comfort and caution, and they contain the common-sense wisdoms and values of the ordinary person. They are the essence of the common experience, or the life-world of the everyday, they are lived experience. They offer us interpretations of reality, capturing values, feelings and judgements about the world, helping us to understand the patterns of our lives within it.

The qualitative, and especially the post-modernist paradigm, emphasises process, meaning, interactivity, descriptive narrative, induction and, above all, local and contextualised personal experience. Not surprisingly, various qualitative methodologies are re-focusing attention on the stories that people tell each other. "Story" as representative of personal meaning making is gaining currency in fields as diverse as program evaluation theory and educational leadership studies. So Weiss (1995) says,

Theories represent the stories that people tell about how problems arise and how they can be solved. Lay people as well as professionals have stories about the origins and remedies of social problems (poor people want to work but the jobs have disappeared: services make people permanently dependent). These stories, whether they arise from stereotypes, myths, journalism, or research knowledge, whether they are true or false, are potent forces in policy discussions. Policies that seem to violate the assumptions of prevailing stories will receive little support. Therefore, to the extent that evaluation can directly demonstrate the hardness of some stories (theories) and the frailty of others, it will address the underlying influences that powerfully shape policy discourse. (p. 72)

And Irwin (1995),

Recounting stories of experiences touches the mind of reader or the listener in unpredictable ways...education has begun to use stories, or case studies, as a way of reflecting on and transforming practice...stories allow communication of the particulars of experience while allowing for varying personal interpretations of events...Through

narrative, language organises experience...stories and narrative become interpretations of experience...finally, stories and narrative have the capacity to define and create community, socially constructing meaning through the use of telling stories, reading stories. (p. 10)

And Clandinin and Connelly (1994),

The noting of experience in storied form...stories are the closest we can come to experience as we and others tell it, a story is...full, it comes out of a personal and social history...people live stories and...stories lived and told educate the self and others, including the young and those such as researchers, who are new to their community. (p. 415)

Clandinin and Connelly's work on personal experience methods as a research methodology (1994; 1991; 1990) is probably the most well-known in educational research. But this is a very new field, and methods are not prescriptive. Interestingly, and fun for me, debate is dynamic and vital; researchers and scholars of feminist and other perspectives (D. MacKeracher, personal communication, March, 1995) are beginning to investigate story/narrative. I am pleased to be here, living on the methodological edge...sometimes. At least I am in good company out here, with storytellers ancient and modern.

I was particularly pleased to find storying, or narrative, so well-used by feminist researchers, (for example, Chanfrault-Duchet 1991; Gluck and Patai, 1991; Hale, 1991; Krall, 1988; Middleton, 1993; Sacks, 1989), and especially delighted to see the broad range of "story" they presented. What a smorgasbord to choose from!

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So now I have a Narrator, A Feminist at that, a Voice to tell the Audience what's going on, what the Plot is....And now I had an idea of how to shape that Plot, because I had a Methodology, a framework to call my own....But I still needed to find an Epistemology to keep

my Methodology happy, how to decide about what constituted knowledge, and what didn't? And who would decide?

A word or two about epistemology....

*

A Story: Get Me an Epistemology While You're Up

What is an *epistemology*? Guba and Lincoln (1994) try to make accessible to social science researchers the philosophical foundations for the "new", alternative paradigms of constructivism, post-positivism and critical theory. They pose questions, How do we know the world, What is the relationship between inquirer and the known? In feminist research practice, this definition is augmented; other questions need to be asked: Who knows what, about whom, and how is this knowledge legitimated?

Maynard (1994) defines epistemology as being "concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate" (p. 10). It seems feminist philosophising about epistemology has evolved through "feminist empiricism", to "feminist standpoint" and on to "feminist postmodernism". Which would suit me and my study?

All three varieties of feminist epistemologies generally begin by confronting the male epistemological stance of positivism, which Lather (1991) defines as having four basic assumptions:

- 1) the aims, concepts, and methods of the natural sciences are applicable to the social sciences; 2) the correspondence theory of truth, which holds that reality is knowable through correct measurement methods, is adequate for the social sciences; 3) the goal of social research is to create universal laws of human behaviour which transcend culture and history; and 4) the fact/value dichotomy, the denial of both the theory-laden dimensions of observation

and the value-laden dimensions of theory, creates grounds for an "objective" social science.

(p. 172)

Here is the binarism which elevated rationality over emotion, mind over body, subject versus object, objective truth versus "ideology", and the distortion of "interests".

Simply adding women in to this positivist science is not as valued now as it was, in the 1970s, by the early feminist empiricist and standpoint epistemologies. They sought, by elevating women's experiences from the subjugated position that their gender had condemned them to, to create knowledge based on women's ways of knowing. Lately feminists like Stanley and Wise (cited, Maynard, 1994, p. 20) have argued for a "feminist fractured foundationalist epistemology"; this epistemology recognises that there is no social reality "out there", nor is "truth" out there waiting to be discovered. They say all knowledge and truth claims are relative. Pluralism, communities of identity and communities of difference are the more positive expressions of this epistemology, but some negative expressions may include essentialism and so much fracture as to be politically useless.

There is also debate growing around postmodern currents of thought, very similar in its issues to the debates I found swirling around elsewhere in other academic fields. So this debate sees postmodernism advocated as the worst/the only approach to research, and is most contentious around the role of discourse analysis in feminist research. If we lose ourselves in analyzing discourse, I hear, we negate the challenge to patriarchal structures and the move toward social change which is the one major goal of feminist research. Lather (1991) notes the "unambiguous condemnation, unambiguous celebration and deliberate ambivalence [about postmodernism]..and the view that post-structuralism is a 'virus' which threatens the coherency and effectivity of feminist work in the world", and goes on to say that she believes that

the seductions and resistances to postmodernism can help us to 'get smart' about the possibilities and limits regarding, specifically, political work through education, and more

generally, a basis for critical social theories less ensnared in phallogentric and logocentric assumptions...Rather than 'how to' guidelines...is the need for intellectuals with liberatory intentions to take responsibility for transforming our own practices so that our empirical and pedagogical work can be less toward positioning ourselves as masters of truth and justice and more toward creating a space where those directly involved can act and speak on their own behalf. (pp. 163-164) (Emphasis mine).

Once again I see the familiar issue arise, this division between politics and the academy, where both sides feel they have contributions to make, but where some such as myself, doubt that "those directly involved" can speak and act on their own behalf. If they could, would they not have done so? But if their social reality has been constructed so that resistance and speaking out have no place in that reality, then feminist research should allow the researcher to interpret research data and thus create useful knowledge which can be used to make a difference in society.

It is this that defines feminist research practice, that there is a practice to follow the theory, and one which uses the theory created. For myself, I hope to create knowledge working with my participants that will benefit both of us, researcher and researched, and will work toward de-constructing the inequalities we as women suffer in educational settings.

An epistemology should go beyond describing knowledge, or concentrating on distinctions of lifestyle, culture and women's practices, because such an epistemology can exclude how knowledge of practices such as racism, classism, homophobia are constructed and omit structural explorations of how specific forms of oppression are legitimated and maintained. Also, an epistemology which implies that knowledge of race, class, ethnicity are limited to those of one ethnic group, or class or sex, is to miss the point that these things structure all our lives---to be white, for example, is to also experience an ethnicity. A feminist epistemology that will "allow us to use our theoretical knowledge to address some of the silences in our empirical work", is one to

be sought, says Maynard (1994, p.24), for it will add the dimension of praxis to experience. It will produce an epistemology that is useful politically not just academically, nor one that is ghetto-ized into a category of difference/ance.

Finally, Maynard (1994) tells me a feminist epistemology must still be sound and reliable, even if it rejects positivist terms like validity, reliability and objectivity. If feminist work is to be regarded as intellectually compelling, politically relevant, policy-relevant, and meaningful to anyone other than feminists then it must be seen to be "rigorous". Researchers must be clear about theoretical assumptions which underlie their work, about the nature of the research process, its ethical bases, the criteria that will be used for the valuing of "good" knowledge and the strategies that will be used to construct this knowledge from the interpretation and analysis of the data. "In feminist work the suggestion is that all of these things are made available for scrutiny, comment, and (re)negotiation, as part of the process through which standards are evaluated and judged" (p. 25). So I am right, I do have to tell my story, show my biases, my strengths, even my weaknesses, and I have to tell, honestly, the story of the research.

And to return full circle, I need to keep in front of me, (perhaps when the siren song of discourse analysis is luring me away?) the fact that I started all this with a question about gender. Feminism has been described by Gaskell (1989) as

insisting on the importance of gender...as being fundamental to the ways we interact with each other, and to the ways that our private and public lives are organised...that gender is historically constructed and that it gives men power over women...that the forms of gender inequality are many and...no simple reflection of biological differences but...an integral part of the complex social arrangements that constitute a society. Feminism attempts to redress this inequality. It is directed toward change. (p. 6)

From this sea of words, these linguistic convolutions, I have extracted several life-jackets worth of conclusions: just describing women's experience will not change it as gendered and

unequal; doing a discourse analysis will not confront structural oppression; I should not make too few generalisations; nor too many; and I should be respectful and honest about how I go about collecting my data, analyzing it and writing it up. Now, just in case anyone asks me, I have a theoretical explanation--an epistemology--for what I already knew from my own common sense. Ah! But this is the requirement for being an academic feminist....not!

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So now I have a Narrator, A Feminist at that, a Voice to tell the Audience what's going on, what the Plot is.....And now I had an idea of how to shape that Plot, because I have a Methodology, a framework to call my own, and an Epistemology....! Now I need some actors, some participants....Dramatis Personae and some lines for them to follow....

*

A Story:

My Dramatis Personae, Or, Five Women

So now I had a research study proposal: I sat and thought, who was it I wanted to talk to? Who would want to sit and tell me stories? They would have to be women who enjoyed reflecting on their lives, women who liked to talk, women who valued their education, women who felt they had something, perhaps, to pass on to others. I didn't especially want to just talk to feminists, I wanted to talk to "just plain folks/women", although I certainly would be happy to have a feminist or two involved....as I have found out, it's lonely being a feminist, but I didn't want that to influence my choices.

I needed women who had worked, understood what working was all about, but who had also been students again, as adults, and knew what that was all about. I also thought I would like to talk to women in traditional "female" roles--like nurses and teachers, but also women in less traditional working roles.

I felt I could comfortably cope with interviewing and transcribing talks with up to five women; I would have loved to talk to a hundred, but there was only me to do all the research work, and on a full-time student's income, I had to watch the dollars I spent. Next time I'll talk to a hundred and fifty, I thought, but this time a half dozen is the maximum.

Eventually, the very writing up of the mandatory Ethics Form for the University's "Behavioural Sciences Screening Committee For Research and Other Studies Involving Human Subjects"² resulted in this listing of desired qualifications:

Women will be asked to participate who meet these criteria, by

- * having initial schooling up to and including undergraduate degrees
- * being over 30 years of age, and having some years work experience
- * having been involved in personal learning, after some years away from formal education, either in graduate study or continuing professional education
- * having been involved in designing, delivering or facilitating or training learning in other adults as part of their professional practice
- * and having the desire and ability to reflect critically on their own and others' learning experiences. (Excerpt from Request for Ethical Review, November, 1995)

When I had set the criteria for participation, my first thought was to figure out which women I had met and studied with who were program planners or designers of education might be interested in being involved in my study. After some informal discussions of my research with seven women, four who seemed amenable to talking with me further were sent the formal Letters of Introduction; happily, all agreed immediately, and with enthusiasm, to be participants. They

². The whole process involved in doing up that Ethics form was unnerving and quite overwhelming. On the one hand, I felt like a real researcher, but those questions on the Form about Deception, and Access to Data, made me shudder. I wonder if I have ever been a Subject who was Deceived--all in the Best of Causes, of course...Stand aside CIA, CISIS, MI5, you're outranked, because here comes a social scientist!

were Lana, Lee, Jane and Sonia.³

I had wanted to ensure a really rich and diverse collection of stories, and felt the four women I had "signed up" would give me just that. Also, most were mature, with a good length of time in practice. I am (according to those in formal educational institutions) "mature" too, and I wanted the interviews to be comfortable for both of us; it was a bonus that we were within the same life zone. All the women had the ability to articulate, or narrate, their life story, and all could talk knowledgeably about service within an organisational system in which power, conflict, negotiation and interest was present. I knew some of the participants did not hold the same views as myself, and felt this made for a more interesting dialogue. I turned to my Committee for help in recruiting one more participant, preferably a nurse--that was Yolanda.

So let me introduce the Five Women....

Jane: Is the Director of Training for a large urban Municipality.

Lana: Is a program planner with a large health organisation.

Lee: Is an Educational Consultant in Family Violence, and program planner, with a national non-profit organisation.

Sonia: Is completing her Doctorate in Education, and will eventually return to her work, teaching English Language and advocating for Tibetan nuns, refugees now living in India.

Yolanda: Is a nurse educator at one of the community colleges, and a published author of nursing texts.

³. Interestingly, in that it points out inequities beyond, or in addition, to gender, not one of the women was a person of colour, and all were of heterosexual orientation. On reflection, I see that this points up the lack of women of colour within my department, within my acquaintance, within the profession of planning, and within the range of women known to my Committee members, for I asked them to recommend a participant from one of the so called feminine occupations....It makes an absence, a silence in my study, which is deafening. It is disturbing and troubling that even I did not see this until it was pointed out by someone not involved with my area of study.

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So now I have a Narrator, A Feminist at that, a Voice to tell the Audience what's going on, what the Plot is....And now I had an idea of how to shape that Plot, because I have a Methodology, a framework to call my own, and an Epistemology....! Now I have my Dramatis Personae....these were the plot lines we followed.

*

A Story:

These Are The Plot Lines We All Followed....

Each woman had three individual sessions. We began our work in late December, meeting throughout the winter and in to early spring. At the first session they offered me a brief life story and then we talked about initial schooling and undergraduate education. In the second session the women told me about learning as women, and as mature women at that, in graduate school, in continuing professional education sessions and, of course, in private and personal spaces. Thirdly, they told me stories of learning at work, and of planning for learning. This process took some months, as we all tried to fit in research sessions to lives already crowded with work, school, family and friends.

By May, 1996, I had completed a very preliminary analysis of their stories; we all met for a last group session to talk again....about what I thought they had said, about what they now thought women's learning was, what they had experienced as women in education, and how they thought we should plan learning for women. They also shared with me and each other the impact that being involved in the study had had on their lives and practice as planners and teachers. Together we came up with some key components we would like to see in a feminist model of program planning and what implications that, and our work together, had for their own practice and adult education in general.

I continued to write and analyze their words and stories and lives, and by July/August I offered each woman her own story back to read, and for her to comment on as she would, encouraging them to have any differences in interpretation included in the final draft of the thesis, alongside my own interpretation. Final, not-so-final it often seemed, informal conversations were held with each woman, from May when we held our group session up until the research was presented to the world, on September 30th, 1996⁴. All the women were invited to attend the Research Presentation. And then we all promised to keep in touch--I hope we do....

*

A Story:

Resistance to Research, Or, My Hands Hurt....

At the beginning of this chapter I said I would talk about my own difficulties, physical and emotional, around doing this research. Now I can't put that off, so here it is. I have talked at some length about my own baggage, and how it might have affected the way I planned, carried out and analyzed my research in the Postscript to the next chapter. At this point, though, I need to say a few words about the physical ills that befell me....

As I sat and listened to the Five Women, in our sessions and as I sat night after night, transcribing their words after, I began to realise that much of what I would have to say (interesting phrase, it never occurred to me that I did not have to say it....) would be severely critical of the formal educational system, including, especially, the one I was currently enrolled in.

Ironically, I had expected that much of the talk would focus on the difficulties women faced in learning at work, but it soon became clear that the hardest place to be a woman learning was in higher education. At times, work-learning sounded almost like fun, kind of like a holiday

⁴. I created a new poem for the Defense, and offered some new reflections about working with Story. See Appendix B.

from what the women were going through as they pursued graduate degrees. While I was excited and honoured by their gifts of words and feelings, I was becoming really scared about where this talk was going.

I had planned to apply for doctoral work--now I was not sure if I wanted to go ahead with it, nor was I sure how my work might be received. It had become clear that my topic, already contentious at the start, had become more so, and that my methodology was still viewed as new and questionable. What kind of reception was I going to get?

I began to fall ill, and that's when I started to ask Yolanda for advice. I had several email conversations with her in the early Spring. She is a nurse with a great contempt for modern medical knowledge but she has lots of time for the more traditional, holistic, alternative medical practices. I had been diagnosed, variously, as suffering from diverticulosis, diverticulitis, allergic reactions, irritable bowel syndrome, an ovarian tumour or an ovarian cyst....I spent hours in examining rooms, had ugly x-rays, humiliating physical and painful ultra-sound procedures. I was prescribed all kinds of medications, given lots of stupid advice (take a month off, go to Hawaii, lose weight, eat only vegetables, eat no vegetables) and was pretty well desperate. Yolanda read my messages, and emailed me back that my symptoms sounded like I was suffering from fear, blocked creativity and excessive stress--brought on by being a graduate student researching in an unpopular area. She encouraged me to continue, she believed in what I was doing, and said I must continue. I confronted my feelings, and fears, and saw she was right about one thing: I was afraid. I went to a Committee meeting with my preliminary analysis, ready to repudiate it, but I was brave enough to talk about it. To my surprise, my Committee liked what I was doing, and I received support to continue---the symptoms of dis-ease evaporated over the following week.

Later, as we moved into the early summer, my hands and arms began to hurt. It seemed I had developed Repetitive Strain Injury in both hands as the result of long hours of transcription and writing, night after night, weekends and days, at my keyboard. This time I took a few weeks

off from the research, guilt plaguing me, and confronted my fears again. Now the fear revolved around how I wanted to write up my thesis, and how I thought I should do it to satisfy the academy. I knew I wanted to use my own Voice, but was unable to do so. The more I tried to write academically the worse things got--I developed Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, and was threatened with Thoracic Outlet Syndrome. I went for physiotherapy, had splints made and signed up for a Writing Class with one of the University's best teachers, still unsure of what to do.

I made the decision to "speak" my thesis in the (biting) Voice that emerged over the three weeks of that Writing course. But what an emotional chaos I was in! My hands really started to act up, my allergies rendered breathing uncertain, and the old troubles from the Spring returned. I told my physiotherapist, "Just you wait and see, as soon as I've handed in this draft, and had my Committee meeting, I'll be fine". I was right.

Luckily my Committee gave me a few miles of rope, let me (hang in the breeze, how often I wished they had said, No! Use that Academic Voice) write what, and how, I wanted; coincidentally I had a paper accepted for a prestigious qualitative research conference. And my hands got better....

The whole saga has provided me with another layer of analysis. I believe my body was trying (in it's mistaken Foucauldian way) to prevent me doing the research that I wanted to do, trying for self-regulation, disciplining me as I tried to speak out, with punishing physical symptoms, keeping me in line, bodily, with the Regulations of the world it thought I should inhabit, the community I had sacrificed for, daily, over the last two years....Or, maybe it's all just stress! But I don't think so. Doing this work has been hard, it has taken great courage, and if it hadn't been for the memory of some of the wise and encouraging words given me by the Five Women, I would probably have capitulated, walked the straight path to graduation.....

Lana: Well I think that's what struck me, that you are taking some risks here, as you have Sonia, and I think it's knowing that there is courage and that, and yeah..It will probably take you down some pretty scary alleys. But I commend that, and I thank you, for my sex, my gender, laughs! (G2:33).

Sonia: It promises to be a really important work and, you know, book material. It really needs to be said.

Valerie: Well, I think it does and I'm going to say it. And I will put some of my own stories in. (G Tape 2:34)

Now I think, that even without that support, I would probably have gone down this "scary alley". As you will find out later, I've never been one to deck myself out in the Good Girl's clothes; I wear the Rebel's rough rags more easily....My thesis supervisor says he is waiting for the stampede back to quantitative methodologies now that us qualitative researchers are discovering just how physically punishing this kind of research can be. I hear him! I acknowledge that wisdom, but I know, too, that my troubles are a combination of over-use of the hands and wrists, and over-use of the brain. And mouth. And subversive words....

*

A Story:

What Did You Say My Name Was? Or, Whose Ethics Are These?

I had determined to treat my "subjects" with great respect, if not reverence, and diligently sought to put them at ease, working hard to tell them all the things they had to know. Like, you can drop out any time you want to, everything you say will be completely confidential, no-one will know who you are, I'll not use anything you don't want me to, you'll have the opportunity to

comment on my interpretation, and so on and so on.

Two things happened that caused me to stop and think. Firstly, Sonia came to me after our first session, and told me she didn't want to be anonymous, or Una, the name I had suggested for her. Instead she wanted her real name to be used. She said she wasn't ashamed of anything she had to tell me, and that she wanted her words to be heard and acknowledged as her own. I was stunned!

I consulted my Supervisor, who said, Well, you can't change your study now! And, of course, I knew he was right, I was half way through the data collection, I had filled out all the forms, been judged ethical---I couldn't begin over. My participants would just have to remain anonymous. But next time I do research, I'll remember Sonia, and I'll give my participants the choice--to own their words publicly or privately....And really, does the use of confidentiality give the researcher an easier way to expose more "findings" or "conclusions" or lives and souls, than they would if the participants were named? Who is protected? A lot to think about, indeed, and thank you Sonia, for making me think, making me challenge the regulations and rules. Sonia reiterated her request and, after a consultation with the office which oversees the ethical conduct of research within the university, Sonia was "allowed" to be called Sonia....

Secondly, I had glibly followed the "new" qualitative rules, giving back my interpretation of their words and stories to my participants, letting them contest or deny my words about them. But I have to say, that when it came time to work on their individual stories, I knew the women I was writing about would read my words, and I felt very self-conscious. Sitting at my computer in my living room, with the sensation of being surrounded by their five figures, almost glimpsed if I turned my head quickly enough, but never really quite there....not in bodies, but in minds.

Well! I wonder if it made me more respectful, this knowledge that I had to "account" to the Five Women themselves, they who really knew their lives, before I accounted to any one else--self, Committee or University. That approval coming only after the Five Women had approved

my writing--I could not write as a story-thief like the old observers and researchers did. I can see now why they glorified objectivity. It makes things a lot easier to discuss and analyze if you can pretend it's not a real life person you're talking about, one you'll have tea with next week, meet for a talk the week after.

I wonder if my analysis would have changed if I did not have to give it back to them? I am sure it would have been different, but not necessarily better. Awkward and intrusive as I have felt about writing about women I know and respect and whose regard I still value, it's kept me honest and respectful. Only two of the women requested changes to the life story I wrote and they were over matters of confidentiality, and editorial suggestions. Three of the women want me to write a book....Jane said she laughed and cried when she read my story...not her story, my story.

I didn't know any of this when I filled in the Ethics form, that it would be so hard for me, so uncomfortable for them--imagine reading what someone else has made of you!--such a journey for the six of us.

*

And just to finish up,

*

A Little Story:

On Analysis, Or, Couches in Two Voices....

I had originally droned on academically about how I would analyze the "data", looking at what other academics had said, sometimes wisely, sometimes profoundly, but always just this side of boring, and came up with some suggestions from them, as I outlined here in an extract from the third incarnation of Chapter 111.

Spoken in The Academic Voice:

Clandinin and Connelly (1994) suggest the following steps for collection of data and its analysis:

1. The field experience, where life-stories are collected using oral history, annals and chronicles, family stories, photographs and other personal artifacts, research interviews, journals, autobiographies, letters, field notes and conversations
2. the synthesis of all these into field texts which can be deconstructed and analyzed
3. the conversion of field texts into research texts, where voice, signature, context, inquiry purpose, audience and the inter-relatedness of the researcher to the co-researcher, or participant are considered.

The final analysis, or research text should demonstrate how the researcher has been permitted, through the use of personal experience methods or stories, to "enter into and participate with the social world in ways that allow the possibility of transformations and growth" (p. 425). This goal, transformative change or praxis in understanding teaching and its practice, is what sets the Personal Experience Methodology apart as separate from phenomenology or ethnomethodology. I shall use this framework for my analysis.

Spoken in the (Biting) Voice:

Well, of course, it didn't work out that way! I did end up with someone's framework for analysis--one by Marie-Francoise Chanfrault-Duchet--but it underwent a metamorphosis in the middle of the analysis. I had already done some preliminary coding with the Five Women's Stories, or I should really say, the Stories just seemed to tell themselves again to me, but in three ways, using three different metaphors for learning.

But when I sat down to do the analysis of these "Findings" I found a new persona had taken over my writing. And it didn't matter where I sat to write, at home on the computer, in a field, on the beach, in a dreary little room that claimed it was a student office--things went the same way. I would have wonderfully turgid academic prose just ready to roll off my fingers/tongue/pen/pencil and out would come this Other angry, sarcastic, cynical, colloquial Voice.

I knew the reason why. For three crucial weeks, the time I had set aside to write up my findings, my conclusions, my "Implications for Adult Education", I was sitting every morning, 8.00 am to 10.30 am, in a Writing Class, and leaving that class at 10.31 am, battered and pummelled. It was an extraordinary experience. Not since the first, rather awful, class I had taken, when the Leader had challenged me, my life, my views, my (little) voice, had I been in such a situation. This is when I begin to subscribe to a view that holds that we are all but playthings of the gods--what a cosmic joke! Just when I had sufficiently academicized that early hurtful experience, when I had deadened the pain and unpleasantness with several handfuls of objective aspirins, up came gender again, like stepping on a rake in a silent movie, smashing me in the face, savagely reminding me what had started this whole process, this study, this writing. And I couldn't ignore it.

The Professor of the class, a good Teacher, later confided that it was the

most difficult class he had had to teach in his career in the University. There is some comfort in knowing that others suffered, that the hostility and anger displayed by a few white, straight men (as they labelled themselves) was felt by other men and women in the room, but I seemed to draw the (friendly and unfriendly) fire. One of only 3 women, and the only mature one, in a class of 11, it was like a bad movie. I couldn't believe it was all happening again, the hatred directed toward "you", as one young man always called me, never using my name, not able to humanise the Other; the jokes and anecdotes told to punish and wound; the minds completely closed to any kind of "Diverse Discourse". Others in the class felt unsafe, both men and women, and their voices became muted.

But not mine, like Frankenstein's bride, it took on life! Not able to articulate or express what I had felt in that very first class, the fates had given me a chance to try again....A second chance. Ironically, the same phrase is used to describe adult women's educational programs in Great Britain; Jane Thompson describes a similar blooming/flowering of voice and consciousness among the women enrolled in one such course in Learning the Hard Way. The same kind of transformation afflicted me. And it was an affliction; I didn't have any faith in the system to protect me, or to let me speak out my truth--not after hearing the Five Women's Stories, nor after writing up my own past stories, this autobiographical work encouraged in the class by the Professor. But the story of me, them, men, women, gender, Othering, resisting, growing up, growing

feminist, growing conscious, the story of what it was all about, and of course, the Analysis, wrote itself in that three weeks.

Life repeats our lessons until we learn them, so I hear . Well, I think I finally learned the lesson in July and August of 1996. Gender counts. Gender matters. Gender should be made visible. I needed to stand up and say, This is wrong! There has to be a better way! And to offer one....

And so I offer excerpts from the story of that Journey taken over three hot weeks. It is the sub-plot that runs beneath, around, over and under, the main Plot of the Research Story. It has three faces, three themes, as do the Women's Stories. It mirrors, too, my journey through my thesis, for it begins, as I did, with hope. In its middle passage the journey falls into chaotic conflict, battles are fought and wounds inflicted. And as did the Five Women-plus-one, as does this Narrator, so did those who wrote and lived that journey of three weeks come to some kind of end, some conclusions.

*

I offer you some Extracts from that Journey's Journal, a bright red thread running through the tapestry woven by Five Women-plus-one.... Here is the First Interlude.

INTERLUDE: THE JOURNEY BEGINS, WITH HOPE

The first day of the journey....

July 22, 1996, the weather warm but pleasant, we begin our journey today from the grounds of the meeting place, under the guardianship of our native Guide, and translator.... What will the voyage bring, what will you hear daily, dear diary? What choices will the party make? Will we stay on the well travelled path or will some of us dare to essay the harder climbs and hazard even, our very lives?

*

The Guide says, What kind of a writer are you? Write me,

I write like....

What an exercise, a sorter of the sheep from the goats, or to sustain the colonial metaphor, the sherpas from the tensings....

There are 9 of us, and, incredibly, 6 are men and only 3 women. Most seem young, nearly all practising teachers, apart from one Doctor of Philosophy trying to become a teacher, and one sad wanderer from 1945.... I feel as usual like I will draw lightning, but am determined to keep that mouth firmly closed, not say a Valerie word, no Valerie jokes, no stirring things up, Don't dominate! (From the latin, dominus, master) No, but I mighthmmm....no female alternative....first task, find one! But of course, not talking is so hard, I am the most optimistic pessimist I know, my good intentions die at the hands of my impulsive "chatter".

After introductions, and some throw away comments, I can see that the thread is becoming brighter, this journey will be about how to tell the men from the women, or, what is masculine, what is feminine, and more to the point, when and how do I know what is feminine and what is masculine.

And so here's the first clue. In the exercise I note that the men chose for themselves images or symbols of hunters, slayers, carnivores, busy, killing things, or at the very least, impossibly powerful behemoths.

The women chose the hunted, the quivering, the prey....even me, I chose--a hare? Well, it came from the inside, not the head, so I know it was called out by some instinct. Of course, hares run like hell, so there is a way out.

*

The second day of the journey....

July 23, 1996. From somewhere in the foothills....

We are joined by a poet, how lovely, but it's another man.... On our way, talking about our destination as we go, where we are going, the Guide walking with us, telling of Ecotone, a place of tensions, fecundity, richness, liveliness....

The reaction of the young men was to ignore the theory, the abstract and anchor their feet in "What I know! I know about teaching!" So, they spoke from their experience, and quite aggressively too, the other women are quiet, one timid, the other, a little more out there, but very gingerly, nodding her head to agree with the men, but she is thinking, thinking, thinking....

*

The Guide asked us, Tell me, write me....

Why do I write/journey?

Part of what I wrote: To prove my existence, to find my existence, to confront my existence, to comfort my existence, and....to win money, to get published, to influence people, in short, to know I exist.

*

The third day of the journey....

July 24, 1996. In my reading last night, I discovered that women's writing has, in the past, only been acceptable if shown to the public in a diary, a day book, a journal. How interesting then that I should have picked you, dear diary, when we began this journey....but I find there is nothing like a conversation with oneself to keep one sane. As we march on I note how emotions and feelings are beginning to show themselves.... Will our Guide steer us through the most difficult terrain, or will it break us into fragments? All depends on the skill of the leader, his mastery of the trail, his knowledge of tasking, how he teaches us to become one.... For the first time, discord today, one man, who has been so silent, bestirred himself to challenge me.

A colonial poem....

*I hear thunder rolling in the ranges around us,
lightning will strike me soon,
the rod of feminism is irresistible, it draws
that Godly Anger at the
Upsetting of the Right Way of Things,
Don't you know,
God is on His Throne and all is Right with His World?*

*

The Guide asked us, What is a Poem? Write me....

A poem is....

One of the men asked me, What do you mean by masculine? and I fell into the bottomless pit, trying to explain, oh so non-confrontationally what masculine could mean and what feminine could mean. Oh dear, just, like Alice, falling down the hole again. And then remembering I don't have to justify myself for using feminist language, but what a struggle to always check the words, halt the thought, hold the tongue. I don't have to educate men into what is feminine and what is masculine, but there must be a more substantial ghost of the long ago teacher, MISS! there after

all. I just hate this--always struggling for room to breathe.... and isn't it worse when they ask you, so nice and softly, "What do you mean by masculine, and why is war a masculine metaphor?"

Then I heard the challenging man read his "A poem is" and there it was, the perfect example, what is masculine, what is feminine, so here juxtaposed, his-a-poem-is and mine-a-poem-is, and I think they tell the story of what is masculine and what is feminine....

Valerie: A poem is a thing that reaches inside me and tweaks the large intestine; maybe when I learn the academics of the thing it will stop doing that.

The man: A poem is the arrangement of words to produce an effect not principally, or explicitly, "intellectual".

These two poems shout to me, this is masculine, the first is feminine....the one is in the third person, no I/eye there, a cognitively pleasing arrangement of words and abstractly cold and clear..Mine is an I (found?) poem, very personal very subjective, embodied, gut-full of what I feel poems are....

So if masculine is combative, warlike, challenging, cold, objective, separate, pure mind and God given intellect then is feminine peaceful, passive, retiring, warm, subjective, connected, pure body, emotional, NOT! I wonder though, how we come to inhabit the same world, we are so different? The Guide says it is a big world....

I must, apparently, maintain the academic language, "most men" say or think or do this, "most women" (all those 12 varieties of feminist woman?) don't do this or don't do that or say that or.... I don't get it at times.

*

The fourth day of the journey....

July 25, 1996. *I feel too tired and dispirited to converse with you tonight dear diary, my heart is too heavy, what's left of it, and I have no spirit to prattle on.... I will tell all tomorrow. I see the*

Mountain Range looming over us, blocking our way to community. I fear I will not be among those who make the climb. I will stay in my tent, and have the servants bring me some refreshing tea....women were not made for this kind of struggle....

*

A hard day. I presented the article on diverse discourse, written by a feminist, Bridwell-Bowles. So much violence in the room, I feel I sit there like Woman, and using all the lessons I have learned as Other, turn the cheek, slip in a thought, speak soft, apologise with my body, listen to the fear and anger and hatred from all of you, smiling slightly, this is an intellectual debate, but their anger so hot, the violence the rage at being challenged, and the fear from the other women coming off them in primitive perfumes, saying to them, "I'm not like her, don't look at me, don't include me!" and to me, "Don't get them angry!"

Today I am sad, embattled, feel I have to defend every feminist/woman who ever dared to question God, the Father. Where is the great Goddess when you need her, sulking in some Etruscan cave? If I ask for help who will hear me, will it come? Or will it be, Batten down those hormones, steady that mood swing?

A postscript, later after writing these words, I checked my email, and one of the other women had posted me a message, wanting to talk about the ugliness showing itself in the class. Is this a message, was the Goddess sitting beside me when I wrote, after all?

*

The fifth day of the journey....

July 26, 1996. A good journey today.... Our Guide in fine form, displaying proudly for us his creations, leaving us to trail dusty behind in his running footsteps.... How many of us travellers will secretly attempt the same poesy? I for one, dear diary, but only in sand, shyly tracing out some small attempts--for I am too well schooled to think I might emulate my elders and betters, as my teachers told me, after Keats and Wordsworth, all else is just spent breath....

*

I saw some of the men laughing today. Including the Academic Challenger, the Doctor, who presented, very well, a nice heady philosophical article, so much more comfortable for him? He looked a lot less formidable and grim with his arms uncrossed and smiling.... Men should do it more, it becomes them. Of course, they look a lot less dangerous then, so doubt they would care to keep it up for too long. My, I must have been cut deep yesterday, all the old cynicism coming back....old wounds, old fears, old betrayals, old classes, old teachers, old men.

I wonder how it will be next week? Old men again, or new?

FIVE WOMEN

Honouring Voices

Sonia: I would call it dangerous, for me to have been encouraged or to feel, to assume that I could, if we are going to talk about personal narratives and experience, then I can say what they are! (But) it wasn't safe...It is women usually--most of the research done on personal experience in education, invariably they're women...and all the women are opening up themselves and that's then used in some way against them. It was so discouraging. This is one thing that bugs me around the issue of personal narrative. Like there are all these new students out there that are women, all interested in personal narrative so (academics and researchers) people write about personal narrative, and you will never find a line about their own life in there, right! Even Madeleine Grumet, how much does she reveal about herself? She reveals her students...I had dinner with her one day, and I mentioned that to her! You just never find it, here Dr. So and So writes something, he takes the fictional view of a child to deal with his project, but never himself! They're not revealing themselves, no way! Students can reveal themselves, their personal narrative is included in a thesis, no problem, but when people get in power they're not doing it! These researchers! And what does it communicate? It communicates, No way! You give information, information is power right? So if you're really going to invite (it) you have to model it, you have to be willing to be up there and say, This is my childhood. I did hear a (visiting) professor, from a very working class English background, he even had been put in an orphanage by his father, and he talked about it, wonderful! That invites trust.

Jane: Right, Sonia, and see that's when I connect most with my instructors, when I find out something personal about them. Because then they're no longer The Instructor, then they're personal, they're somebody you could interact with. Their experience somehow mirrors your own, or doesn't at all, but it somehow sparks your interest. That's when I find the classroom experience really valuable.
(G2:26)

In searching for a way of analyzing the five women's stories I wanted to honour them, their voices and their individuality, and I also wanted to recognize their existence independent of my research study. I need to set these women in front of you, the reader, let you become acquainted with them, begin to recognize their voices, anticipate what they will say, so that when you read their stories it will be like hearing a known and dear friend talking.

I offer you two different analyses, two different ways of looking at the stories the Five Women told me. The first, in this chapter, gives an overview of each woman's learning/life-story, using an analysis derived from the framework suggested by Marie-Francoise Chanfrault-Duchet (1991). Secondly, I have taken these very personal, private narratives, these *petits recits*, and have held them up to the light, looking through them, beyond them, to the public or grand narratives that lurk in the shadows, those other stories that animate educational practice, feminist scholarship, in program planning, and learning. How do the Five Women's stories integrate with the grand narratives, what text(uality) results? Is it a text that I/we/you can read/write as adult educators? What are its plot lines, its *dramatis personae*...and is there a moral to this text/story? I interrogate this larger multi-storied text in *Denouements*, the next but one chapter, offering my version of the fable; I invite other interpretations, other endings...

I offer two perspectives because women's (life-)stories deal with their subjectivities of self and their own social sphere, but also with woman's collective representation. Their life-stories re-present a meaning system complete unto themselves, a text. But to just take out the content that answered my research questions is to miss essential information---so this is not a content analysis but a textual analysis, a life-analysis and a hegemonic analysis.

Sonia waxed lyrical at the group interview about the way academics call for self-revelation by learners in educational practice but do not self-reveal. Therefore I have included briefly, my own learning/life-story, in a Post Script that follows the Five Women. I chose to do this for two reasons,

firstly to honour *Sonia*, my participant, and secondly, because my own biography dictates what I see and hear in the texts. So at the end of *Five Women* I have appended a Post Script, "I packed my bag and in it I put...", a story about growing up, my boarding schooling, uniforming, rebellion, and subsequent undergraduate and graduate disciplining, for these are things I carry in my autobiographical bag, my tools, my texts....

In searching for a way to analyze/present the *Five Women*, I was drawn to the work of Marie-Francoise Chanfrault-Duchet (1991) who proposes that there is a clear difference between life-story and life-history. The life story is a personal reconstruction of experience; the life history begins there, but builds on this by considering context. The life history is often collaborative, a dialogue that produces a story of action within a theory of context, seeing the actor in the social world, embedded within the power structures and inequalities and general messiness of that real world.

Chanfrault-Duchet emphasizes that women's life stories, unlike men's, do not just deal with the relation between self and society, but also with woman's condition and with their collective representations of the status of women in that society. I was intrigued. The *Five Women's* stories had conveyed some of that in their telling. She proposes a framework for life history analysis, demonstrating its use by de-constructing the research text produced from the life-stories told to her by two women in France. Like my *Five Women*, their lives had taken a very similar course but their self-narratives differed widely in their interpretation. Her analysis of the narrative structures, her search for socio-symbolic information, showed two very different meaning systems shaping the two life stories.

Chanfrault-Duchet (1991) suggests the taking of five steps. Firstly, locating key phrases that define the relationship of self and society, expressing for example, harmony, conflict, indifference; Secondly, finding their key patterns of response to social models, for example, identifying anecdotes which show how the speakers always behave when confronted by hegemonies, using compromise, defiance, acceptance etc. Thirdly, identifying one of three narrative models--epic, picaresque, or Romanesque--which reflect the speaker's quest for authentic values in society; she amplifies,

The epic model reveals an identification with the values of the community; the Romanesque expresses "the quest for authentic values in a degraded world", and the picaresque model reflects an ironic and satirical position in relation to hegemonic values. All three models are manifestations of a particular quest that contributes to the dynamics of the narrative and gives an axis of meaning and coherence to the life experience and to the self (p. 80).

Fourthly, their use of collective and individual myths, or systems of representation and shared knowledges, reveal value-judgments of their life experiences. A collective myth might be The Golden Age, or Motherhood, and an individual myth could be The Contented Woman, the Girl who went Astray and The Rebel. Lastly, the researcher should attempt to link the women's status and image to the speaker's ego.

This framework offered me an opportunity to honour each woman but to also locate her narrative in a broader canvas, one which showed how context, gender, class and power structures shape our lives. For this brief analysis, I used only the life-story told to me in the first interview, looking for the key phrases and patterns of response to demonstrate the women's views of their relationship to society, and how they generally behaved when confronted with hegemonies. Where there was sufficient personal data I attempted to classify the narrative model used by the woman as representative of her search for values, and to identify some individual or collective myths the woman may have subscribed to. I made no attempt to introduce the fifth stage of analysis, finding this inappropriate for this study.

At this point I began to diverge in spirit or in language or even world-view, from Chanfrault-Duchet. I was beginning to find an incongruence in the language around "myths". Regarding "myths": I have never felt comfortable about using this word in describing my research participants (or my) learning/life-story, or for

marking where that myth/story mysteriously intersects with hegemonically scary societal myth/stories. If language writes us and we write language, then someone has written "myth" into a world view that doesn't match mine.

"Myth" has an almost derogatory tone--it implies "not correct in fact", not "objectively" correct; there is, too, a tone of the past, as if these mythic events or interpretations have occurred, but could not possibly be taken seriously today. Even if the teller believes the myth's truth wholeheartedly, the listener knows it for an untruth, or at best a misled, mis-said view of the facts. When I hear myth I think of "mythical" proportions, "mythical" beasts like minotaurs or centaurs.

And indeed myths are the stories of gods, larger animals than us, who play with planets; gods stop the tides, halt the sun in its tracks, turn dross to gold, women to swans, men to stone. And there is the clue--none of these droll amusements are feminine. (How do I know they aren't feminine? Trust me! I know! With my body, my senses, my feelings...)

Women had, I am sure, little time or patience in mythological eras for nonsense with swans and gold. With children to care for, men to bear with, families to make whole, old people to tend, food to harvest and prepare, what woman had time to leave that crowded private world for the public domain of men and gods? Only those of mythical beauty, mythical skill and, oh yes, always mythically virginal accomplishment--not real women these, too ethereal and too stupid to be real. Only men could invent these maidens....

My misgivings, my emotional antennae registering "Wrong!", I find my feelings validated, echoed in Allen Chinen's (1992) charming book about folk tales at mid-life. Myths he says "represent the official, public ideology of a society, and are typically used to justify patriarchal authority--kings typically used to claim descent from gods or legendary heroes" (p. 3). Chinen reminds me that fairy tales were originally told for adults, not children, until the grim Grimms changed the rules, and relegated fairy stories to the uneducated, the peasants and the young.

Chinen has just published another book, this time on Women's Stories, called Waking the World (1996). He searched out, he says, over 7000 stories that women tell, across cultures, continents and classes, and found five things in common, distinguishing them quite clearly from men's stories:

women tell stories that are not linear, they are concentric, spiral, ongoing;
 women tell stories that are multi-charactered (men's stories have many less characters); women tell stories that are multi-generational; women tell stories that are subversive; and women tell stories that are commentaries, often acerbic, on social and political mores. (p. 3)

Men's stories are mythological, full of heroes, and gods and devils, with a good plot line, and a clear ending: Women's are another matter! I am amused at Chinen's tone--surprised, almost querulous, but I know he is right, for I have Five Women's Stories to tell!

But as time passed, Logos replaced mythos. We became Enlightened and had

no need of stories or narratives that dealt with souls and dreams and drama...or so the men say. Lyotard argues in The Postmodern Condition (1984) that the scientist classifies narrative knowledge

as belonging to a different mentality: savage, primitive, underdeveloped, backward, alienated, composed of opinions, customs, authority, prejudice, ignorance, ideology. Narratives are fables, myths, legends, fit only for women and children. At best, attempts to are made to throw some rays of light into this obscurantism, to civilize, to educate, to develop...(p. 27) (emphasis mine)

Judith Herman, the feminist psychiatrist, has a thought or two on that topic. She asserts that the incest taboo was reinforced in pre-literate or oral societies with stories or fairy tales. Like the archetypal Cinderella tale, known and told in many cultures and across the ages, (not the Westernized, declawed version that Disney brings to us). Cinderella

warns little girls that it is dangerous to be left alone with a widowed father, for a widowed father must re-marry...the daughter suffers because the father replaces her mother with a stepmother, or because the father wishes to marry her himself. (p. 1)

Echoes of this are found in the legend of St. Dymrna, who was killed by her father, beheaded, when she refused to submit to him. Dymrna was canonized by the people and only begrudgingly by the Church--who still question her existence and protest such contamination of hagiography by folklore. But the old Slovenian folk

song contains the same warning

Deep water has no ford,

The broad field has no end.

Small stones have no number,

A pretty girl has no kinsmen. (in Herman, 1981, p. 2)

Such stories, or folk tales, represent one of Scheler's (original 1926, cited in Jarvis, 1995) seven kinds of knowledge, but this is not the kind of knowledge construction a patriarchal society wants it's womenfolk embedding into culture, popular or private. So Freud discovered.

In 1896 Freud "the patriarch of modern psychology" revealed the incest secret, one he had stumbled on to in his early years of practice, in two works published that year. But within the year he had repudiated his unwanted knowledge, and along with the folk lore, the legends, the warning tales of sexual abuse of girls and women...the overt knowledge of the use of children by men was discreetly re-interred, and the Myth of the Seductive (Female) Child, the Myth of the Female Hysteric, the Myth of Damaging (to men and fathers, especially) Emotionalism was told into the language of psychology and the Modern Psyche.

In 1933, Freud, who had by then obviously suppressed or out-lived his own "awareness of his own incestuous wishes toward his daughter, and suspicions of his own father" (Herman, p. 10, citing Freud's correspondence of 1896), was able to incorporate into his Introductory Lectures of Psychoanalysis in 1933, the following

statement,

Almost all of my women patients told me that they had been seduced by their father...so (I) came to understand that the hysterical symptoms were derived from phantasies and not from real occurrences...this phantasy of being seduced by the father is the expression of the typical Oedipus complex in women (cited Herman, p. 7).

There's one of those gods again, a modern psycho-analytic one, and when a god speaks it's a sure sign a male myth is being written into the public or Collective unconscious. So Freud speaks for the patriarchy--women's knowledge is dismissed as hysterical, their development as never-to-be-quite-men/human is established...And so it has been for most of this, the Freudian, Age. In adult education, probably just as much in initial education, psychological theory has been foundational in establishing the basis for most learning theories. But what if the foundation is cracked?

In the last decades, feminists and women scholars have begun to de-construct the myths of modern psycho-analysis; women's stories are being told again, by Judith Herman, Carol Gilligan, Mary Belenky, Lana, Lee, Jane, Sonia and Yolanda and by Valerie Chapman. What wrath will it bring upon them? How will this thesis be read? "Just another male-bashing manifesto, a feminist polemic". Or will women read the Five Women's stories and say, Oh, Yeah! Right! I get that! I remember that! Yes, I felt that too! And echoing Yolanda, will they say, "There must be a better way!"

Perhaps...if my writing can cast as spell, weave an enchantment.....

I decided to still use Marie-Francoise Chanfrault-Duchet's framework for analysis, but stripped down to it's skeleton, re-fleshed it in a kinder, cronier, way. I still looked for the key words and key patterns that they used in their life/learning stories, but I also looked for the personal dreams of self, the narrative each woman holds Privately for herself in her own Self-story, the petits recits of our/their inner Private world that power existence, that fuel the daily struggles with the whole of their world, private and public; how does that Self-story weave its way into those of the Collective, Public World?

When and how does the woman's self-tale meet and deal with the Mythological Beasts that tell the World outside the garden gate? What new Fables are these women creating? Will they be able to re-claim "Myth", make it present in our world, make it a woman's story too? Surely there must be some new legends and new stories to tell of society? If we write the world, then how much more do we tell/talk the world into being? How are these Five Women (and the Sixth) reclaiming their world?

Stories, and especially fairy tales, "offer adults a clear conduit to the unconscious" (Chinen, p. 2), a path of direct access to the deeper layers, the older two thirds of the brain--and they do it so casually, so hypnotically....triggered by that phrase that invites and warns listeners to suspend belief and rational thinking, "Once upon a time...."

So now I invite my readers to settle back, let the stories of the Five Women trickle in to the dream layers of mythos, touch the soul and begin to script new feminine Myths of learning, being and living in the world....

So. Once upon a time there were Five Women who came to talk to a Sixth Woman and this is what the women were like, in the order in which they came, and these were some of the stories they told her....

Yolanda

I'm Yolanda and I'm a nurse educator in one of the colleges here (G1:1).

A Life Story.

She is small, blonde-going-a-bit-grey and very brisk and efficient, professional; her hair is very neat, well cut, and she wears no jewellery. Very pleasant--but why do I feel....intimidating? She looks in good physical shape; later she tells me she runs, (marathons !), lifts a few weights, works out--her colleagues tell her "When she grows up, she'll give that sort of thing up", she comments scornfully. At our first meeting, wearing casual but beautifully pressed brown pants, cream sweater, no makeup and a Christmas pin--I wondered why, she doesn't sound at all sentimental, for her students, then?--she really surprised me by saying, as we walked to the cafeteria for tea, that she goes to a homeopath and won't go near a doctor.

I was nervous and a little intimidated; meeting in a college setting was too reminiscent for me of calling on faculty when I was a sales and editorial representative with an educational publisher. We did the interview in one of the Faculty of Nursing rooms, set up like a ward. I noticed how neat and tidy it all was, with hospital corners on all the beds, very clean and cool, efficient, a bit like Yolanda herself. After a disastrous start--I had not brought the microphone with me for my recorder, even though I had had everything laid out for two days beforehand--we ended up sitting on one of the pristine beds, a borrowed tape player on the bed between us, getting along quite well, and my awe of her accomplishments growing. During that first interview I realised how smart she is; but I sensed life has been a struggle for her, not because she isn't capable but because she is so capable.

Our second interview, on December 31st, was held in her home, a lovely townhouse, 3 bedrooms, in a really nice part of town, a complex with lots of trees and immaculate grounds. She opened the door for me and I was struck again by how very small she is. I was late, arriving by haphazard suburban transit, and she said, "I was ready to start looking for you!" Dressed in jeans,

purple and white Christmas sweater, again no makeup. Her house is beautiful, painted by her, all pale blues and with some delicate sponging in the hallway, which I said I liked, and she asked me almost anxiously "Are you sure, I'm not quite happy...." and then showed me the room downstairs painted a lovely pinky lilac, called First Light. Really a lovely effect. White and beige carpets throughout, light furniture and a white computer that looked at ease, sitting in the middle of her working room, her living area, upstairs; all so cool, clean. I commented on how clean it was, and said I had seen the same effect in other nurses. Was it too cool, and maybe lonely?

She is very strong willed, but there is a fragrance of sadness, fragility about her. I am reminded of her, her Polish heritage, when sitting reading her interviews and listening to Gorecki's Symphony No. 3, (Symphony of Sorrowful Songs), I notice with no surprise the coincidence; the symphony's haunting second movement frames a song based upon the prayer of an 18 year old girl written on the wall of a Gestapo cell in Zakopane--Yolanda and the girl share the same name. I sense under all her words this fugue of sadness, loneliness....

Or am I imbuing her words, her drive to succeed, (two masters degree and a doctorate under way) in the face of opposition from colleagues to her feminist views, abandonment by her family, with my interpretation? I think not--at the second interview she tells me her pursuit of education is not for the credentials, and not for family acceptance, but as a way of "knowing she is ok". She tells me she doesn't fit, doesn't know where she belongs, in the educational world....or the other worlds she inhabits?

She is very sparing of emotion as it pertains to herself, telling me, laconically, that being abandoned by her family, once when at 17 she chose to stay on at school instead of finding work and then marriage, and again, when no-one in her family would come to her first graduation.

Because they think that what I have done is wrong. And they think that I have stepped out of my place in the world, and that I should not have done this. (Y 1:1)

This had "created a lot of hardship" for her. Similarly, she ascribes a lot of her success to "fortuitous" happenings; I suspect she has worked hard, taking advantage of any opportunities coming her way. In our interviews she rarely spoke of feelings or emotion for herself; it was if all the objectivity and distance that is educated into doctors and nurses, the distance that she deplors, is used as a defense....but she feels and speaks passionately about her students and her kind of nursing.

She is a complex woman, that hint of sadness belied by owning a lovely home, a brand new car (her baby, she called it) and working hard and well at a rewarding career. Yolanda had completed her Baccalaureate in Nursing, a Master's in Nursing, a Master's in Education and is now embarking on a Doctoral Program in Education. She is a published author--including two chapters in a major nursing text book--is on the faculty of one community college, teaches at another and also does a distance education course for one of the Universities, on informatics. She is active in professional associations, supports her mother and is it seems, always busy. I was delighted to find that lurking below the cool, competent surface was a quick witted humour--now and then it would flash out, a robust connection to her "peasant" heritage, deflating pontificating professors, mocking medics and laughing at doctors, the aristocracy of the hospital culture.

Our third interview took place on my campus, where we ate bagels and cream cheese, companionably, and continued our conversations. Yolanda was always reflective, treating all my questions seriously, answering them thoughtfully and with dignity. It was a rewarding experience for me; many of her comments and stories formed the foundation for my analysis. I feel almost impertinent "analyzing" her words and stories, but the regulations of the thesis demand it....

Yolanda's Narratives

The key phrases that were easy to locate in some of the other participant's stories were not so easy to detect in Yolanda's interviews. She speaks well and articulately, not using slang. But I began to see a pattern arising mid way through the first interview--when she makes a statement about something of importance to her, she says it twice, as if to underline it for effect. So, "you're doing this because you care, because you care about social justice, because social justice is important, that's why (Y1:10)", and

....they label it, but they don't have anything they can do for the label, that they've done to the body. So why bother? It's, like you know, if you can't do anything with the information, why bother? (Y1:16)

and "My grandmother had a root for everything, you know, I mean, we never went to doctors, because you had to pay so we never went to doctors. (Y1:17)

These emphases most often mark passages where Yolanda is talking about the development of her own belief systems, or enunciating her personal philosophies. For example, talking about her lack of faith in medicalized knowledge and competencies and her belief instead in homeopathy, or common sense wisdoms of caring. They also occur when she announces, very firmly, what she wanted and what she didn't want, as she was growing up, moving through the educational system, away from what her family wanted for her and decreed was right and proper.

The double emphasis became a clue for me, a marker of a battle, or struggle against what the family/establishment/hegemonies of power wanted and what Yolanda wanted. So, too, did the very clear statements about what "they" wanted and what she wanted; the sense of her standing very firm and saying, this is what I want, resisting great pressure, is strong,

their view of life is, you know, that you should be married by 16 or 17, first child on the way, and that kind of, and I don't want to live that life...I knew very young. (Y1:3)

Several key patterns of behaviour emerged, mainly in reaction to, and around, what was expected of her, by society, by family, by colleagues, by doctors, in short, all the hegemonies of the everyday which compel us all to behave as others wish. For Yolanda it seems, if it isn't what she wants, then she resists; in large or small decisions, Yolanda does what she wants, not what is expected.

By the time I was 17 years old not only was I ready to enter University, but I had completed the first year secretarial course, from Ryerson Polytechnical through High School, so people just thought I should go be a secretary, because I had all those skills. I mean I had shorthand at 140 words per minute, and typing at 80, and all that business stuff, I knew how to manage an office, the school had gotten me a job in the summers, I had been working for a local newspaper, so, it was, you know, that was just what I was supposed to do, and then I didn't do what I was supposed to do. (Y1:7)

At times she has chosen paths which were more acceptable to social hegemonies, such as choosing nursing, a womanly profession, but I still have the feeling that nothing will dissuade Yolanda from what she wants. Of course, she has paid a price for this resistance, as when she says,

Valerie: How did you get the [grandmother's] knowledge and how did you keep it?

Yolanda: I don't know the answer to that question, and I wish I did. But it's my grandmother's knowledge I know that. I do know that. But I don't know how I've kept it. I think for a while I put it away because I was told it was wrong, and I believed the people that told me it was wrong. And I tried very hard to function in the system the proper way, but I didn't fit. I really didn't. So, and I kind of well, people tried to fit me and it just wouldn't happen..But in part that's what makes me such a good nurse when I'm on the floor, because you know, I can understand people, I can form a relationship with them that is connected, and I can understand what they need. I don't know, it's so hard to explain, it's like, it's like the knowledge is in my fingertips, that's where it really lies...and it also comes because I don't rely on just pain medication, because I know there's other things I need to do to make you comfortable. Maybe because we never had anything for pain, so we know that

there's other things that you do when people feel uncomfortable, it's those kinds of things. (Y1:19)

And, about teaching,

Well, you know, I show (movies), and I try and get people around here to use things that are different, but you know I'm batting my head against the wall...I try and do stuff here in the faculty. I find that as a woman who is still relatively athletic I get a lot of criticism about, you know, "That's not a mature thing to do. When you grow up you'll find we stop going to the gym." Laughs. So..but I talk, I try and remind people here that that's part of health, that they need to do that, and to watch what they eat and that sort of stuff...we're not good as a faculty at being connected with one another. And supporting one another, but see, we were raised in paradigms that told us not to do that. (Y1:21)

Little Narratives of Self

Yolanda characterises herself as coming from the **Working Poor** (Y1:1), and maintains her sense of being working class, even though her status and profession now would be labelled middle class. This narrative, of **Class**, runs through all her talks with me. She is proud of her class, I think, believing it gives her an added sense with patients or students or other people. Paradoxically, she rebelled against it,

I went to school with normal, middle class kids...in this lovely middle class community. And it was very different, and so I was exposed to lots of different things...I didn't have the usual culture of that working class poor...I saw that there was another way to live. And another way to be. (Y1:2-3),

but now celebrates her working class background, as in

It's just a way, of being with people. When people from a very consistent middle class background go in and talk to someone, they bring in their conceptions and they make judgements

about people and, I mean we all do it, but when I go in and talk to the same person, I can talk to them at a different place. Cos I know what happens in their world. I have a much greater understanding of it, because I've lived in it, and I've seen it, and, so often what I can do is, I can draw on my own experiences and I can move into their experience with that. So, I know I know how their husbands treat them, and the way they're spoken to, and I know what they're watching on TV, and I know that that's their life, and, I, I just, I just have a sense of what to say and how to be with them, that's different from what others would have. Cos I know. And that, so it's been helpful there. (Y2:5)

Yolanda sees herself and the world as classed. It is one of her foundational narratives, and it of course, intersects with the Grand Narrative of Class in society.

One of the other self or foundational narratives that comes through her words strongly is a belief in **Work as a Good and Necessary Thing**. Again, her family background influences her story, as in,

My mother always told me that going to school was my work, that's how she, she said, That's what you do. So when I was a little kid, and I was six and seven and eight years old, "This is your work, this is what you do, and this is how you contribute to this household, by going to school and by doing well". And so school was my work. And that's how I saw it. (Y1:5)

and even now, grown up as she is, Work is crucial,

V: And yet you've worked so hard, and you've got degrees and..

Y: I'm driven. (Y1:2)

and, talking of not being able to enter a Doctoral program because "they had a two year residency requirement and I do have to work. So. I now support that little old mother! So not working is not an option (Y1:3)", I wonder if, even if she didn't have to support her mother, she would still declare, Not working is not an option!

Yolanda's stories reveal her self-story, her knowledge that she is a **Good Nurse**. After listening

to her, I would have no hesitation in calling her an excellent and possibly, unusual nurse. Unusual in this medicalized and engineered nursing climate, because she has empathy, connection and a strong intuitive sense of what to do for people who are sick, derived in part she feels from her grandmother's tradition as a healer. If I were sick, I would want Yolanda to look after me.

But like I said before, my grandmother had a root for everything. Everything was handled through mustard plasters and linseed poultices, and you know, you ate properly and you ate certain foods when you were sick.... Medicine, it will only weaken you. And I've seen many, many people die from the side effects. And I see many, many people have surgery that's needless, and I'm just, you know, get away from me boys! What you really need to do to be healthy is to drink lots of water, to make sure the water's clean, to get some sleep, to get out and to get some exercise every day, and to eat right. And I talk about those things all the time, and those are the things that keep you healthy... You have to not be afraid to let people be sick sometimes, because they're sick for a reason. Like we might not want to stop everything. So, I don't know, some it's good common sense, I think. And some of it comes from my grandmother's knowledge..there's an understanding I have... We just have to get people back to good solid healthy living. I mean I tell the students, I say, "Now you spent a whole 8 hours in this hospital, when you go home go for a walk! You've gotta breathe some fresh air!" (Y1:17-18)

And of course, she is also a **Good Teacher**. This rings true in her stories of interactions with students, patients, other nurses, other educators and, quite poignantly, in her tales of daily teaching experience dismissed in the theoretical doctoral classroom, where "They have a little problem some of them as seeing Nurses as professional educators" (Y1:4).

Yolanda knows herself to be a **Feminist**, and like the roles she plays in Good Nurse and Good Teacher, her expressed views often place her in opposition to others who are not receptive to her views, to students who tell her "I don't want to hear all this stuff, you're all just man-haters" (Y1:24), and to faculty:

V: Do you tell people you're a feminist?

Y: People just seem to know that. It's like I have it on my forehead! I make people around here very nervous. The word feminism actually appears in the philosophy of the Collaborative Curriculum, and people here would like it removed. Of course they always say that with hushed words when I am around...People are very nervous about it (feminism), they don't understand it, they view it very negatively. (Y1:26)

Perhaps one of the self-stories that motivates Yolanda most often in her work as a nurse-educator is her belief in **Social Justice**. It is a foundation for her work, often referred to, and often in relation to feminist thought, or reform of the old paradigm of health care to reflect the needs of all, not just the middle classes.

Lastly, in common with several of the women, Yolanda has a strong belief that education is a **Way Out**, of the working class, of ill health, of poverty, of injustice...In short, her narrative echoes the Grand Narrative that sees **Education as Liberation**. Often disparaged now as one of the founding beliefs of the Enlightenment Project, it has very real, and very personal, power in the lives of the Five Women, and particularly shapes Yolanda's Story.

Collective Narratives

As has been noted, Yolanda's story intersects with some of the more powerful Grand Narratives, and her self-story intertwines with those of Society--as in **Education for Liberation** and **Feminism against Oppression**, but she resists the Grand Narrative of **Medical Authority**, has no faith in Lyotard's **Big Science** nor in **Patriarchal Institutions**. Resistance, subtle, but solid, to many hegemonic narratives pervades her story, from her refusal to leave school and get married at 17, to her refusal to allow doctors to treat her as a handmaiden, and her refusal now to bow down to the "old,

male paradigm."

Narrative Model

Yolanda is not easy to slot into any one of the three narrative models that illustrate the quest for values--just as it's always really hard to fit any living being into rigid categories, people are too fluid to fit the boxes we academics try to cram them into. But I would classify Yolanda's Story/ies as having the most in common with the Romanesque--"the quest for authentic values in a degraded world" (Chanfrault-Duchet, 1991, p. 80). She still works and lives in her community, but searches I believe, in her Work as Nurse and Teacher, for new ways to instill different values in her students and patients.

Lastly, I would like for Yolanda to tell one of her Stories, one that gives you Yolanda's essence. Her Voice rather than my voice about her Voice, so here is a poignant tale....

A Story:

Not a Green Garbage Bag....

When I came here to BC and started teaching, I found that people don't do that kind of learning in High School, they don't talk about abortion or euthanasia, they didn't explore any of those kinds of ethical issues that have a societal impact. That's why in all my senior classes, when I have students in clinical, one of the things that I always talk about is death. You see, we had talked about life and death and social issues in my high school in another province, we had talked about what death meant and what it was, but many students here haven't. And part of the reason why I wonder if we don't see some burnout, and some hostility, and some anger and all that sort of stuff is because people haven't thought about their feelings or acknowledged them and they haven't said, It's ok for me to feel this way!

Especially now, we're getting more and more palliative care patients on general wards and often the first time a student has to give high dose morphine well, there is panic. So I hear,

"I can't give this!"

And I encourage them, "Well, yes you can."

"What if the patient dies when I give this?"

"Well, they're going to die sometime".

So that's why it's so important. I talk about is death. And what death means and what it's like. And I try but, you know, as hard as you try, people are very quiet and you can tell it's almost their first exposure, because they won't participate. Because I try and get people, especially students of different cultures to talk about customs and rituals surrounding death. I try and get people to talk about it,

"So in your culture, and in your perspective, in your religion, how is this viewed, what happens, what do you think is happening when someone dies?" People are really reluctant to share that information. A tremendous reluctance to share it.

I think they're getting better and in part I think that's because of the new curriculum. The students are more in tune with these notions of personal meaning and sharing and what that's all about. The students I had in palliative care in first year actually did quite well, we talked about death a lot. A student was asked to take vital signs on somebody who was dying, and she came back to me and said, "This is an inappropriate task for a student. We shouldn't be doing this."

So we sat down and we talked about all the different things that were going on. This man was dying; she didn't think the vital signs should be done, so she went to the nurse and said,

"I don't think these vital signs should be done, family's with him, he's in his last hours."

The nurse said, "He's on the sheet, he's got to be done."

Well, I agree with the student, she was right, there was no need to get that information because we weren't going to react to it. However, she also was on a cardiology unit and sometimes a little bit of lasix, a little bit of digoxin, and presto! Everything's fine! So, there was a distinction that she would

have had difficulty making and I had to give that to the nurses, but I do think she was right, this man really was in cardiac failure and the end was coming. But then it's as we talked about it, and as we sorted through it, she finally came to say to me, "I didn't realize how many levels I was concerned about this". Because what I brought her around to look at was, not that she didn't really think this shouldn't be done, or that she shouldn't do it as a student, but that she was afraid to be in the room with him if he should die while she was there. And that's what she didn't want to witness. And so that's what we finally dug our way through to and then talked about.

When discussing death, I think it is best on a one to one, but in a general conversation I just want to try and get the students to talk a little bit about it, and share their thoughts about death. I tell them, You know, when someone dies, at that moment we all experience denial. The first thing that goes through your mind, you'll feel it in your body, will be this sense of NO! Because you don't want to lose someone. There is always a sense of loss. But this feeling goes very quickly, it passes by and then you can carry on, but you will feel it, that shock, it's there, and it's just part of what's happening in this process. Because as much as this person has died, it is part of the process of living, and that's part of what you're feeling. And so that has to be understood and acknowledged.

And then, you know, you may feel angry. And you may be really upset and you may not be able to care for this person now. You may not be able to care for the family. So then we talk about, What do you think the family might need? What do you think they would want to hear?

And I tell them about how to anchor people and to... It's just horrible in hospitals what they do, they take all the individual's belongings, they put them in a green garbage bag, and they give the family the green garbage bag, Here's the belongings! So I say, you know, don't do that, please don't do that! Get a patient garment bag from ER or Admitting, put the person's belongings in that, and then take out something that you can see is special, whether it be an afghan, or a teddy bear, or a picture, but something that you can see is special and before you give them the bag of belongings, just give them that one special thing and say, I'm sure this is something this person always really held dear. And give

that to them and then give them the rest. And it just lets people anchor and settle down a little bit instead of, Here's their stuff. You know, which is kind of so reminiscent of the jail thing, Here's your stuff and go!

Somehow in this world we've lost our sense of manners, just how to be nice to people and how to care for people, how to stop and think for a second about how to be nice to people. And ask, What would I want? And so we, we kind of....but it's very hard. And the room will be very quiet and then sometimes I feel like I'm alone, because it echoes....(and she laughs sadly) (Y3:3-5).

Sonia

My name is Sonia, and I'm a PhD student, and I'm looking at comparative curriculum issues and I did set up some educational programs for Tibetan refugees in the Himalayas. (G1:1)

Sonia's Life Story

"Shhh!!" says Sonia, leaning forward, cupping her hands over the tape recorder's ears so it won't hear her whisper, "Well, actually, I'm a bit psychic! Better not put that in! Anyway, never mind!" and laughs uproariously!

Vintage Sonia, at our first interview. I wondered, sitting with her, two days after my interview with Yolanda, Is she as sad as Yolanda? I don't think so, she has gone different ways, but she is, like Yolanda, not happy with her graduate education, both seeing it as a "way out", using the exact same words to me to explain why they continue.

Sonia's room is in the new graduate residence, shared with another woman, but Sonia's influence is quite strong; there are Greenpeace stickers on the front door, large Tibetan wall hangings in the common area; it is a clean space, with a touch of Eastern austerity. Sonia's room-- beautiful Chinese rug on floor, orderly desk, three bookcases (full), and a CD player with lots of discs, piled very neatly, a tidy, sparse but not unlived in look. Mementoes of the Dalai Lama on the walls, photographs....

We sit just outside on the landing, her on a bean bag, me on a chair, a scenic view out the window behind Sonia, enough to distract a saint, let alone me, the tape recorder sitting on its own cushion between us. We begin our two hour talk.

Sonia wobbles between brilliance and eccentricity. As always. One moment, I'm ready to write her off as the "weird duck" she tells me, and everyone else, she is--forestalling us, softening

our disapproval of her flamboyance?--and then a flash of genius and I am awed, then swinging back to dottiness and then back to brilliance. It's an invigorating and disconcerting time--but I am as weird as she, duck or not, and we enjoy our company.

She is large, curly blond hair, lovely laugh, given to unusual statements, unpredictable in her reactions, very bright, sensitive, wears richly coloured tops, Oriental bright, with leggings, minimal makeup. She looks like a typical grad student, but she is smarter than that. She is a lovely person, but single, feeling and sounding family-less at times, like Yolanda, like me, but she has family and friends. I wonder if we three are a species....

She does a lot of "Tibetan things", meditation retreats, lectures, and is an environmentalist, a Buddhist, friendly with activists, monks and nuns....and me. I worry that my knowing her may affect my interpretation of her story, but I need not fret, her stories come to me fresh and unheard, new ideas, new tales, new feelings....

Sonia was born, ("a breech birth!") the second of four children, into a middle class family. Everyone had degrees, she told me, mother, father, aunts, even her father's aunts had degrees, so education was highly valued--but not so marriage. Sonia's aunts were not married, but were all professional women in good situations. But she says,

I always used to worry about them being lonely, you know. I used to think either you're lonely, it always seemed to me they must be terribly lonely, or else you're sort of buried beneath people, you know. So I think I was struggling with that.... (U1:2)

and she chose to pursue learning. Her family was

not extremely wealthy, it's just, you know, a high emphasis on education. And like my mother, when we were kids, always, "There's no question you're going to go to University". Even though by the time we went, they were falling apart, not offering very much financial support, but you have this inbred, you know, that you're no-one if you don't go to University. I mean my grandmother had got an MA! I think around 1905! (U1:10)

She loved school, did very well, even during a difficult period when family problems intervened.

My family's fairly high achievers, too, on my father's side especially. But then my father was, around learning, funny, like he was one of those fathers that everyone complains about, who says, when you say, "What did you get, 85?" He says, "What happened to the other 15%?" (U1:4)

During this difficult time she saw learning, doing well, as an attempt to impose control on a chaotic life,

And it really scared me, I thought with my parents splitting up, my father drank too much, I know why my mother left him, but still it makes you feel really unstable, then, you know, I thought my brother's going to fall apart, someone has to keep things together, I decided, someone's got to pull it together, so I will. You know? And so I just decided to do really well, study well and do well, and I did really well. I got the highest mark in the high school Christmas exam in history...I think I looked at school as a way out, you know? As a secure path out of instability, unpredictability. It was a place that I could succeed well at, could control it a bit, you know? On a more subtle level I may have been afraid of society. It's like overcompensating? That so long as I could do this and do well, then they wouldn't, uh, you know, it's like, do you understand? Like controlling, a safe way to maybe ensure that society didn't come knocking at my door, or wasn't cruel or something. It always seemed to be in response to a perceived threat. (U1:8)

She felt unwelcome attentions from some teachers because she was pretty and smart. She went on to Undergraduate study, spent her first two and half years changing subjects at University, from Journalism to Economics, "I could NOT make my mind up about what I wanted to do! This lasted until I was about 35. I kid you not! (U:11)", and abruptly quit University in the February of her final year.

At about the same time she became involved with a professor, "not my professor, but a professor!", who was interested in meditation and Buddhism, eventually travelling around the world with him. I asked her if the relationship had precipitated her dropping out of university, but she denied it, saying she had learnt a great deal from him, but she knew it was an unequal relationship, and eventually refused to marry him. But still, leaving University, refusing to follow a middle class, bourgeois path,

It took a lot of courage. In fact my father freaked out, he freaked out. Do you know he arranged for the President of the University to send that professor, who had nothing to do with that decision, right? To send that professor, a letter, threatening letter, threatening his position! (U1:12)

She spent several years, practising Buddhism and meditation, studying with various Lama's (including the Dalai Lama), working in various positions, including hotel book-keeping ("The boss loved me, he called me the Hippy!"), returned to university to complete an undergraduate degree in Psychology, found work with brain damaged children, travelled again to India, working with Tibetan refugees on two projects and eventually decided to pursue graduate education, so that eventually she can return and help them professionally--and be funded!

Sonia's Narratives

Sonia speaks fast, pausing often for dramatic emphasis, laughter, rhetorical phrasing and gesticulation. It is a delight to talk to her. She uses many **key phrases and word patterns**, but some stand out as having more emotional impact than others. When she makes a provocative statement of belief or an outre comment, she quickly deflects attention, almost disowns it, with "Anyway, Never Mind!" and then goes on quickly to another topic. In a sense this a marker often to **key patterns of behaviour**. It is as if she dares to be outrageous, and then tries to cover her

tracks. I sense a history of being found different, an outsider, disapproval, out of bounds. It is as if she has developed a verbal hit and run defense, throwing out a statement or explaining her actions, and then saying, Anyway, never mind! to confuse and derail comments, so I hear

Psychology was dry, I found the professors very narrow minded, I find it a pseudo-science, like a wannabe science, that makes no sense, I mean you talk about anyone interesting, and they'll immediately talk about them about in pejorative, if not scandalous terms. Like they spent, in abnormal psychology, they talked about Jung, who I was quite interested in at that time, for only five minutes, and the professor concluded that he was psychotic! Laughs!! So I thought, God, I am in the wrong place here! You know, I'm always in the wrong place it seems. Anyway so you there you go! (U1:10

And,

I decided if I wasn't going to get stuck working in joe jobs, I thought "Oh, I'll travel with Ernie." So it wasn't maybe the best motivation but I'd actually had a vision you know? That I would go away with him. Like I'm a bit psychic! (Shhh! Down tape! Laughs!! Anyway, never mind! You didn't hear that, No no!!!) So I actually knew but, then you think, just because you know, doesn't mean you have to right? Laughs! Amazing?? I don't know! Anyway! But I did! Even knew I'd go to Greece with him, weird eh? But.... Anyway. And we did! (U1:24)

And,

Then he decided he wanted to marry me. Laughs!! So! Anyways! I thought, Well, maybe. I didn't feel very good about it actually, I thought it was a mistake, because he was too, you know he was older than I was, he had more money, he had more prestige, PhD, I thought I don't have a chance for an equal relationship, but I don't know. Anyways! Never mind! So I went around the world with him (U1:2).

One of Sonia's most dominant patterns of behaviour, and one of her most striking Narratives is her rejection of the expected, the safe, the usual and the normal. This includes her

refusal to embrace the Middle Class, the Bourgeois; instead she favours a Spiritual path. So she says, disparagingly,

But like you have goods, like your talents, our gifts, are like things you exploit to make money, you know? That view, you know, of really prostituting my gifts for a salary and prestige? And that's where I was really, that's where my friends were, quite boringly middle class, very bourgeois, really, you know, and I knew they weren't my values. My friend would tell me quite straight faced she didn't love the man she was with, but she was going to marry him anyway, because he was an engineer, good looking, he'd have a good middle class life. Like I thought it was stupid, to me it made no sense. I decided to stop University. Just quit. I knew what I was doing, I've never regretted it! I was within three months of getting a degree then. I think I was right, either I do this now, absurd as it is, quit school, or else I'm always going to be compromising, you know? Too much doubt in me, too much scepticism, that faith in there being an inner, internal reality worthy of addressing would not be sustained, unless I take some dramatic steps in asserting it. And so that's what I did, and everyone, a lot of people, I had friends who were just devastated "What are you doing?" People still say that to me! "Why wouldn't you become a lawyer, you could have you know, you could have done" but I couldn't do it.... (U1:24)

And again, of her working environment with brain damaged children,

It was paid well, got me in classrooms which I really enjoyed, but I didn't enjoy, I find the environment really bourgeois, I have a resistance to bourgeoisness, it's true, laughs! Anyway! You know, very small minded, if anything controversial would come up, then everyone would ignore it, or sh, sh sh.... So I didn't want to be part of that culture, you know, teachers culture, really I didn't. (U1:20)

This is linked to her personal rejection or refusal of one of the Grand Narratives, of **Education as preparation for Work, of Vocationalism, and Professionalism**. She tells me

proudly,

I thought well, I'll go into Medicine, did some pre-med courses um, realised Medicine wasn't for me, and then was going to do Law, I was going to do teaching, you see. Yes, they all, those subjects are vocational in a way, they're going to lead to work. And I always resisted it! Like that's the one thing I never have done, I have never done vocational training! (U1:18)

And,

You know some of the things I've done, I've just done because I want to do them, not because I have a professional degree that will let me do it, right? No, I just say, if you want to do it, you go out and do it. In fact I don't have the professional credentials for anything I've done. I've just done it on my own wherewithal. (U1:12)

Throughout her narrative, Sonia emphasises her parallel educational careers--the one path has taken her on a journey learning to be a **Buddhist**, to improve her practice, the other path has been through academia. Her Narrative finds her as **Outsider**, at times, in both educational worlds. She says, of her time teaching the Tibetan nuns,

So I think it was realising that I was continually occupying the space as an outsider, you know? Marginalised, and that in the end I would feel resentment about that and be bitter in spite of, you know, intentionally training to cultivate more kindness. (U1:34), that precipitated her move back to Canada and to graduate school, where ironically she is still cast as an outsider, too idealistic, too passionate....too critical?

But throughout the telling of her story, Sonia has stressed her faith in a **Karmic** purpose, a **Narrative of Belief** in herself and her actions, that never mind how contrary they might seem, there is a purpose to it. Whether it is meeting the Dalai Lama, being picked out of a crowd of 5000 people to study with him in morning meditation or whether it is choosing to work at building community among graduate students--modelled on what she has learned in her Buddhist

studies--when she knows academic work would be 'better' for her to do, she has a sense that she is following a Karmic path, "So I think there was a Karmic thing, I mean I really do believe it" (U1:20).

Sonia makes no bones about identifying herself as a **Feminist**, finding, she has told me, resonance with the theories of the post structuralist feminists, and the French feminists, such as Kristeva. In her work with the nuns in India, she spent much time not only in teaching, but in ministering to their physical and emotional needs, and in fundraising to help support their cause. She has stories to tell of their several oppressions--culturally, where a vocation for the spiritual coincidentally frees nomadic women of a lifetime of childbearing and drudgery, and politically, as in the tales she heard from the nuns of torture at the hands of the Chinese occupying Tibet. It seems a long way from the nunnery in Dharamsala to a graduate school, but Sonia has no problem identifying characteristics of male oppression and the inequalities women suffer, in Canada, or elsewhere.

Narrative Model

Sonia's narrative most clearly fits the Picaresque model, her story representing over and over "an ironic and satirical position in relation to hegemonic values" (Chanfrault-Duchet, 1991, p. 80). In comparison say, to my own story, where I seem to wander in and out of models at whim, she makes no bones about consistently rejecting the values espoused in her present academic community and in her past Western communities--she looks for values not currently espoused here, calling for us "to spend more time imagining possible ways to make cities, universities--to make a possible education as opposed to what's been done before" (U3:11).

Finally, for this analysis, but with the understanding that a life cannot be told in 5 or 6 academic pages, or professionally assessed, the sense of wanting to be part of a Community, to

build a Community is a foundational Narrative for her at this time, as she says,

You see you have to get the right combinations of people, it's never just your own study, it's having the right community of learners? Right? Where it works. Really...train our minds, and work. I think it's usually best to work with a community, so you're working out relationships in a community on a deep level of commitment, support, that sort of thing? This is really what...education is about. (U1:23)

And to conclude, a Sonia story, one of many, that shows her uniqueness, and her special ability to look at a situation from a position of difference....

A Story From Sonia:

Educating Compassion

Well, because of my Psychology background I got work with head-injured kids. It's different than what you do when you educate them, it's different than what you do with regular kids. So I had the qualifications, they're more flexible, and they do have professional teachers as well, but they also have people who work with them in other capacities and that's what I did, you know, like massage, and communication programs, so that's what I did....

I liked doing the work though, educating and working with kids, especially when they're in such high need. I mean teachers would go into the school I worked in, there were stories, at least, of some teachers going in, lasting an hour and freaking out, crying, and leaving, and saying 'I cannot stay here', because of the tragedy of those kids lives.

You know, like a kid who had been hit by a car, or drowned, and was left. You see for me, it doesn't seem that way. I remember I had to work through some things, mind you, but I realised we're the ones who think "Oh, Well, unless you're contributing to society or have the potential, then that's all that matters." But that's not true. We don't know what is contributing to life on earth. These kids, maybe they're contributing by giving us the opportunity to practice

compassion. Maybe they're people, beings, practising incarnating as a human being. You know? They keep practising a few lifetimes and it doesn't work! Laughs!

But you get the idea after a while, and the next time it works! You don't know! (Laughs) Right? I thought sometimes, Maybe they're angels that have come down to check things out. Who knows, right? So, and we would have fun, it was very enjoyable. It was good practice, for compassion, that's what I did, really I looked on it.... I was quite Buddhist then, you know, gave me time to meditate, keep my Buddhist studies and practice up, do charity work for the Buddhist group I was with, and yet at the same time, really practice compassion, sharing my merit, in giving, and always attending the Other. They have the Drug Baby Program there too. You know the program? It's very good training for compassion, and patience, and well, these are important things in Buddhist education, right? To have that, training, so....

But then I became really fed up with my work with the School Board, and the Dalai Lama went to Toronto, and I never planned this, but like overnight things just started to fall apart at work and I decided, one day, I was crying because this kid had been hitting me, they had problems, right, and he punched me, and one of the other kids who didn't even have a problem that would justify it, started to punch me. And I was walking home, I was crying I was fed up, and then I thought, "What, am I doing? I'm sitting here, but you have a choice Sonia, you can continue in this classroom being punched in the face, or you can go to see the Dalai Lama". How could I ever not make that choice? You know I mean I didn't feel then I was helping those kids by letting them punch me, and believe me the Principal wasn't helping at all! Well, Anyway, there you go! So I left... I went down and saw the Dalai Lama in Toronto. (U1: 29)

Lee

Lee: And I'm Lee and I am program developer and consultant for abuse prevention services for a non-profit organization, for the province of BC, so I work in the area of family violence intervention services (G1:1).

Lee's Life Story

I first met Lee at graduate school. We were in two classes together and when a study group was forming to work toward the Comprehensive exams, she and I were founding members. I have always been a talker, chattering away, and so I found her silences disconcerting in our first class together. In our second class I had come to know her as being, not silent, but calm, still and reflective.

I have only seen her nervous once--on the day of our exam, when we met at our department both picking up the questions for the take-home, she gave me a ride home, confessing she had been a "bit rattled" first thing, and had spilled her hot drink in the car. But it was just a ruffle, by 4.30 she was back to tranquillity, rescuing me from a non-functioning fax machine at Kinko's. In full panic mode I stood there, seething, swearing as the fax machine refused to send off my answers, fully-formed visions of letters marked "Failed--Submission of Answers Too Late" in my mailbox, of having to drop out of the Program because my nerves wouldn't take another go at this ugly exam...And then I looked up and there was Lee, smiling, and she said, "I knew you'd be here, so I came to find you and take you up there--I've already told the Examiner we're on the way". So when I think of Lee, I think CALM.

In our first interview she told me she wouldn't be an interesting interview, because,

Basically my life has sort of gone on a straight line in many ways, I haven't had a lot of curves thrown and I've definitely had a real sense of having control and having decisions and power in what I've chosen to do, (L1:18),

but I think it's because she has made her path smooth, stilled the turbulence, straightened out the curves.

I am not the only person to sense this about her--in one of our shared classes, with a Noted Scholar, she was asked to consider working on a Doctorate with him on "Silence as part of Learning". And in our first interview she told me,

I always have been, even when I was a kid, a fairly calm person, and I remember my French teacher telling Mum and Dad that he thought, I guess the word he used was poised for someone that age, because, he said, 'I could see this school catch on fire and Lee would just calmly walk out.' And when I was in nursing doing direct patient care, I really liked the high stress areas, I liked the ICU, I liked Emergency, I liked the Post Recovery Room and I just, really enjoy that type of thing, and just calmly responding to it. And the same as when I was overseas, at the International school, people would be running and yelling, Lee! So and so can't breathe! or, So and so can't do something! and I just have a calm response. So I know that for crisis management and dealing with people that I can be fairly calm in their approach, so I see family violence as an extension of that and in the work that I do now, I'm often dealing with people who because of the information go into crisis, get really upset in the classroom, and so I see the same threads running through, of just calmly being able to help them work that through and own it, and find their you know, what route they want to walk through it, and honouring that with them. (L1:16)

Interestingly enough, for such a calm person, Lee has chosen (as the above extract shows) to work in areas of high stress, tension, crisis and excitement.

She gave me a capsule life history when we started our first session,

I did my schooling in Calgary. And right after I finished Grade 12, I went into Nurses training at the Calgary General Hospital, which was a three year RN program, and I worked for a year, and then I got married and went to India for 2 years, and then came back and went into University and did my Bachelor of Science in Nursing, a three year course at that time, so that I came out with a

degree in teaching, administration and public health. And then I worked 'til, um, 1991, when I came back, part-time, to do my Masters in Education. (L1:1)

As she unfolded her story to me in more detail, I was struck by how adventurous her life has been, how full, and I felt some embarrassment that I had missed all that in our first class, thinking of her as a rather quiet working mum.

She stressed, often, how much she is a mother, and a wife, her family the most important thing in her life, her children coming before any class, job or degree. But this has been part of her strength-- she told me many times how vital their support was in choosing her path. Of her husband, a renowned surgeon, who from their first meeting as nurse and intern, impressed her as "a very caring person, but who has very high standards (L1:19)", and that in their work together in India in a mission hospital, "We established the base for our relationship, because we really became best friends. I mean it was him and I against the world" (L1:8),
and

I am really fortunate in the relationship I have with my husband in that he's a very unusual man, and very special, and I think that just that backdrop of knowing that there's always someone like that to support you? And the kids, I mean we've sometimes we've gone through tough times with the kids...But calmness comes back in place, Let's look at this, Let's examine this, Let's walk through this, and knowing that it's him and I doing that together...(L1:18)

That support has kept her going. But she also acknowledges that during a particularly difficult time with one of her children,

he was about two and just wasn't settling in that well, and I'm thinking, Lee, you'd better quit work, you know, if things don't come together you're going to have to quit. And it wasn't the chance that my husband quits (his job), it had to be me that handled it...But somehow I've kept going, and ploughed through it. (L1:18)

After time spent in nursing, teaching, living and working in South East Asia, Lee found her passion, her life vocation working as the Training and Education Consultant for a Family Violence Prevention program. In a typical Lee way, she linked theory and practice together. Starting from an intuitive sense that the problems she saw in her practice working with adolescents in an International School had a cause, she researched family violence and child abuse, worked as a volunteer, took as many courses as she could, wrote her own job description, presented it to the Board of a national non-profit agency, and was hired. She speaks of her work with passion, and emotion, and acknowledges that it was her desire to put more theory behind her practice that put her back in classrooms as a graduate student.

Lee's Personal Narratives

Interviewing Lee was a pleasure, she is a natural story teller, and expresses her views and opinions clearly and non-judgementally. We met up at campus, in the same room Jane and I used, on two of her afternoons off, and on one Holiday, Good Friday. (We were lucky enough to be interrupted, silently, by one of the grad students, who deposited two chocolate rabbits on the table, and left us). She was writing her Major Paper during the months we met and constantly brought her reading, scholarship and practice together to illustrate her answers to my questions.

In reviewing our transcripts, listening to us talking together, searching for Key phrases I hear her Voice again, calm, measured, slightly husky, and often amused (by me? my intensity? I think so!), and note her charming habit of mixing metaphors, giving phrases a real Lee twist as in

You know that book um, what's that book, Three Boxes, or Colour my Parachute Purple, those, there's a couple of those books that say, find out what is your passion and learn about it, and write yourself a job description, and go for it, well that's what I did! (L1:15),

and, "I'm a real simmerer, so when I leave something, I think about it" (L1:20), and I smile, again.

She makes her own meanings as she says,

I think I have a really strong sense of who I am. And I'm not, not threatened very, very easily, and I'm very accepting of my strong points and of my weak points and that's just who I am.

(L1:17)

Lee uses emotion and feeling in her narrative, for example, "other worlds swirling around him" (L1:5), and "it was all just whirling, we didn't know what to do" (L1:4), talking with humour and with affect about herself, her work and her family, and those she has come into contact with. She does not use the same phrases consistently, as say, Jane did, but there is a keen use of metaphor, especially to describe her relationships with clients and family, with a use of walking/walking through to paint the picture of connection and working with someone, so

I think nursing is a wonderful..I think it's a wonderful profession for giving lots of doors that one can walk through, it's very comprehensive (L1:8),

Knowing what route they want to walk through it, and honouring that with them (L1:16),

Let's walk through this and knowing that it's him and I doing that together (L1:17),

I happened to be there to facilitate or walk with them through their own pain, which was a great honour. (L1:18)

In searching for key patterns of behaviour, I find myself drawn back to the calmness of her, the way she lets others spin out of control, observing them, waiting for them to land, and then picks up where she left off. She says she is firm in herself, and that she is, sticking to her path, having control over it, secure in herself, as in, "I just thought, Well, these are the hoops I have to go through" (L1:9), and,

We ended up in this really bizarre situation, where it was a very wealthy Englishman who owned and ran this hospital. Like he was the upper class, he hobnobbed with Harold MacMillan, that was his contemporary, he had this huge house, I don't know how big this house was, it was

eleven doors leading into it, I counted once, and these rose gardens! With, I think he had about 9 servants, running around..and then you crossed this bridge and you were just in this dirty, Albert Schweitzer type hospital situation...our culture shock was a combination of India, though we responded much more to that, and to upper class English snobbery! Laughs! He thought, a) we were too young to be married, b), my husband was definitely too young to be a doctor. He was probably the youngest person in Canada to get his M.D., 21, but to this guy, you know, we were 'colony' and my husband was called the "Boy Doctor", we were 'Colonials' and we were too young to be married, and he was too young to be a doctor. So we came head on against that type of attitude. And we blew it the first night, because we arrived at dinner, dinner was late, at 8 or 8.30 and we arrived in our jeans, and we were informed that we were to wear a suit and dress up for dinner. So we, we had problems with that and we had problems with the whole mission concept...we were seen as the rebels! (L1:7)

But Lee never loses sight of herself, and her purpose. In the course of our three interviews I don't think I ever heard her express real doubt, or confusion about how to deal with situations, people and places, or hegemonies!

Lee's preference is for relationship and connection, to be connected with others, and her talks with me revealed that one of her strongest patterns of behaviour is to form connections with others, teachers, students, family, workers--connection, relationship, is vital. So she tells me,

When I look back on the educators who were meaningful to me, were the ones who developed a relationship with me, and were very nurturing but also had high expectations...that combination of pushing for the best but in a very caring way. (L1:20)

and,"I think connection is a very strong point. If you can't connect, if you don't understand that, then you're not a very good nurse! Because nursing is all about connection" (L1:10).

Lee's Self-Stories

How does Lee see herself? Definitely as a **Mother and Wife**, not sentimentally so, but still, she is very strongly aware of her role in **Family**. She is multi-dimensional, her own person, but secure too, in her separate identity as **Nurse, Teacher, Administrator** and, as I know, **Friend**. She believes in her role as **Walker-With**, a facilitator and guide for troubled youth, police, other nurses, those in need..."I really have a passion and belief in the work I'm doing, it's not just work, it's..it's to make a difference in people's lives" (L1:18).

And she is a **Learner**,

I really love learning and I'm an avid reader, so I read, read, read. And I love taking courses, and learning through that. I just think learning is lifelong and I'm only worried that there's not going to be enough years to learn all I want to learn, that is probably the biggest worry I have about learning. There's just so much to learn. And it's always wonderful to read. (L1:17)

Learning is very important. Very important, also, in the way that I've raised my kids...summertimes was time yes, for holiday and relaxation, but always there had to be some type of learning occurring. That didn't have to be formal, but some way they had to learn something or learn a new skill. We have bookcases all over the place, and my husband, I mean the conversation is often around books or, ideas we've learned, or a new idea, or philosophy or that type of stuff. (L1:19)

Collective Narratives

Hearing Lee's narrative I hear Grand Narratives, collective stories of our culture and society. I hear about **Power**--who has it, who misuses it, abuses it; I hear about **Family**--the centre of living, the

societal unit; I hear about **Violence**--enacted upon others and ourselves; I hear **Education as Liberation**--for her, for youth, for those who suffer; I hear faith in **Medicine**, Lyotard's Big Science; but I also hear **Women as Healers, Women as Teachers, Women as Talkers, Women as Equal, Women and Men as Human**. Indeed, while Lee calls herself a **Feminist**, and while her practice is feminine, of all the Women I would call Lee the most Humanist. If there is still room in the 12 types of Feminism (Williams, 1996) for Feminist/Humanist, then Lee will model that one.

Narrative Model

I feel Lee's Story fits the Epic Mode--she reveals a strong identification with the values of the community, working tirelessly within it to improve and expand the mores, beliefs and ethics she has found there, whether it is in improving the ability of police officers to listen to society's victims, or upholding the strongly feminine ethos of her organisation, Lee is one with her community.

And lastly

A Story from Lee:

The Boy With The Stomach-Ache.

The International School--about 1200 kids, there was what 47 different nationalities on campus, the school was really the hub of the ex-pat community--phoned me and asked me if I would be Health Co-ordinator. So, I did that job there for five years.

We'd see on the average about 80 kids a day come through our office, they'd either be sick or it soon became known that they could come into the office and talk about their problems or whatever, but it's..I mean we were really the first front-line health workers for the ex-pat community, because a lot of them were really afraid of the Health System out there, when people are sick, in a crisis you want

to go back to what is norm, and what feels familiar. So for them to come in and talk to me and for me to help them to work through the Chinese system was so much easier than for them to walk into a Chinese hospital where no-one spoke English and try to figure out what was going on, plus, through my husband, they knew I had a route through the medical system. Which I used often!

Families came, mum and kids, I had everything from broken bones to suicide attempts to depression, to kids wanting birth control, wanting to know about sex, to tummy aches and headaches and asthma, and the whole works, basically what a general practitioner would have.

So it was really, it was really great, kids drove with me in the morning to school. So it was a real extension of family. And I worked with really neat people. Really wonderful people. And I was on the Advisory Committee for the Elementary School and for the Secondary School, where we would be looking at kids who were having a problem learning, or kids where there were problems and I just kept thinking that we just weren't understanding the problems we were seeing. So I wrote up a Parent Interview and started the whole process, that we would put parents through an interview when kids were referred to our Committee.

And I did a number of those interviews and still felt that I wasn't asking the right questions. Like it was just that sense, when you have that sense that there's a gap in your knowledge, and you're not quite sure what it is, but you're not able to get the questions to find that out. We kept hitting this block in our understanding.

One boy came in, I'll never forget him, he'd come and sit, there was a bench sitting across from my desk, he'd sit there, and he kept complaining about stomach-ache, stomach-ache, his whole manner was one of depression and ..oh, of hopelessness. I examined him, I even had him admitted to hospital, they ran him through a whole variety of tests, I had his parents come in, talked to them, his parents were with the American Embassy. He was just really struggling, he was in Grade 9, I remember the English teacher was just so upset with me, because she thought I was giving him an out, and he was missing class because he had this safe place to come to, and she'd come down, she was a real bag, she'd

come down and scream and yell at me, and I'd tell her to, listen to her screaming and yelling, cool her down, say, We're working on this.

Anyway, he became alcoholic, and he was sent home to treatment in the States, came back and one night he tried to commit suicide by jumping off a building. It was a party, the kids were all at a party, so the kids pulled him back. But anyway, from that it came out that his dad was sexually abusing him.

But see, I didn't know that. At that point, I didn't know anything about it, and I didn't know the questions to ask him to find that out for him. And all he could tell me is, I've got a stomachache. So it was those experiences that said to me, I'd better get some more knowledge behind me, so I came back. So when I came back I decided I was going to try to fill in that gap. So I did that by starting studying about families and family violence. (L1:7)

Jane

Jane: I'll start, I'm Jane and I'm a corporate trainer and program planner and I work for the City of --- (G1:1)

Jane's Life Story

Jane is briskly small; in her 30's, she is articulate, cogent and direct in her approach and language. She is always neat and well dressed, her hair blonded and curled, if not coiffed--she told me during our first interview that her mother owns her own business, a hair dressing salon where she gets "free perms and all that!"

We did each of our interviews in one of the Education buildings on campus, in a room that was familiar and comfortable to us both. We had had classes there, never in the same one, but we had studied in the room together, meeting with the other four students in our "Comps. group". I think we both felt quite cosy there, furnace churning away, and as a backdrop for our conversation the sounds of a weekend class that we, smugly, agreed we were glad not to have to take.

We met on Saturday's, her husband then free to look after their daughter, Jane coming to our sessions without worrying about childcare. She was always on time--of course, she is Jane! Even at 10 o'clock on a precious Saturday morning.

She was so diligent, too, as a participant, always "reflecting" as she drove in to meet with me--on her time off, giving up family time for my study--on what she thought we would be talking about. She offered her opinions, usually backed up with some empirical evidence from her life experience, but was always willing to say, Oh, I hadn't thought of that, and consider different viewpoints. Jane takes pride, I have heard her say it, in being task oriented; when we were studying for our exams she would let us all wander and then bring us back to the topic, OK guys!

In our interviews she was a model participant, never deviating too far from our main topics, learning and education. I could see how well she would function in the meeting and task oriented position she holds within the Municipal Government.

She is not easily swayed, and holds to her beliefs and values. She is quite clear that she is a "trainer" and teacher; she likes the concrete everyday reality of her working world, wanting to ground theory in her experience of practice. She is not averse to the "airy fairy, fuzzy wuzzy" world of human relations, but it's clear that she has a pretty no-nonsense approach to it. If you like, her and Sonia are probably at the end of each other's universe, recognising that each has a world, but not willing to re-locate or colonize that other world.

Jane is the second daughter of two European immigrants, her mother is Romanian and her father German; and both come from working class stock. She told me how they came to Canada, a true Old Country story:

My mother's sister, who is two years older came first, I guess it was in the '40s, Canada was offering grants to immigrants to come, they were paying their way and then they had to pay back the loan. So my aunt came over, worked as a housemaid and paid off her loan, made enough money to bring my mother over without getting the loan, and they both went to night school to become hairdressers. (She) didn't meet my father until they actually came out here, but they met and they were from similar backgrounds and got married. And my Dad comes from a very large family, I think there was limited opportunities in Germany, he's a cabinet maker by trade, and came out here...the story he always tells is, he had to come across Canada on the train, and in Europe they had all the cowboy and westerns, and he said he didn't sleep at night on the train because he was waiting for the Indians to come out! I can imagine this little kid, he would have been about 19, going to a new country, just floors me! (J1:6)

But I could see Jane doing the same thing....

Her parents valued education tremendously, so for her this meant

That you worked really hard, that you do your homework, I mean homework was really important. Both of them because, like my dad was from Germany and my Mum was from Romania, they never went to High School, they stopped. So neither of them are well educated. But education is very important...it was highly valued, my mothers family had a lot of teachers in it, and teaching was an honoured profession in their home village. (J1:6)

They paid for both daughters to attend a private girls school, ("they got a discount for sending two of us, but it was still expensive"), a "British school", she told me, laughing, run and staffed by British emigres along the lines of the English Public School model--lots of games and lots of homework. There was an annual Speech Day, (Jane was thrilled to hear someone else, me, speak her lingo--she told me all about Speech Day with the gusto that comes from being understood) where Jane always won prizes, books not money, because she was bright and worked hard. The academic environment was competitive but not vicious, and she prospered. She never knew, she said, that girls weren't supposed to do Science and Math, so did well at both; in fact, in Grade 11 she wanted to do something in the "area of wildlife management" when she left school.

I asked her if she had any negative experiences at school, and she said

Not that I can think of off the top of my head. I dated a teacher! Laughs! Well I mean it was in my last year and he was the Math professor or teacher, whatever, he worked in Grade 11 and in Grade 12 he left, and we kept in contact and when I graduated high school we started going out. Yeah, much to the dismay of my parents, because he was 14 years older than I was, but we went together for five years. So.... I went out with the Math teacher, teacher's pet! Laughs.... (J1:3)

Ever practical, she told me later, "I think that was my mum's big fear that I would throw it all away and be a hausfrau somewhere. But that was never part of my plans...." (J1:19)

Like Sonia, then, a relationship with an older man, an educator, was important in setting her early career direction. She moved to the Mainland to study Commerce at university, and although she doesn't think it was due to pressure, she agreed that the fact that she was going out with the Math Teacher at school may have influenced her in that decision, to take Accounting, and adds,

I really wanted to get into business, I think I wanted to become an accountant, I think that was kind of what I had in mind, which shocks me now. I was very good with numbers, with Math, so business was a good place to start, I mean I couldn't think of just going to an Arts degree...an Arts degree! What are you going to get? When you're out of it, an Arts Degree? A Commerce degree is a little bit more practical. (J1:10)

(Jane and Sonia are diametrically opposed here, Jane being all for the practical, the link of school to work, Sonia abhorring it).

She went into residence at the university, a real shock after being so socially restrained in the Girls School. She also had to contend with a complete change in how she learned, her educational environment. She talks vividly of going from the safety of small classes, where discussions and questioning was encouraged, where teachers modelled enthusiasm, love for their subject/s and academic excellence, to huge lecture halls and jaded profs....

It was like being dropped into a wholly different world! Because think about coming from a very traditional British School, going into Totem Park Residence...coming from high school where everything was so easy, all of a sudden being put into these great big auditoriums, and being too scared to talk in these auditoriums, and that was my primary way of learning was to talk. That was all of a sudden taken away. My grades were atrocious. I remember taking one class in Hebb Theatre and just, so..you know you're in there with 200 other students, and being blown away by that. Yeah, I just sat there and listened, and it was the first time I had been exposed to a straight lecture format because although in High School they lectured, there

was always opportunities to ask questions and there was interaction there, because classes were so small. I had gotten in to (note-taking) which held me in good stead. But there was a lot of stuff that high school doesn't prepare you for, at university. (J1:11)

But Jane recovered. She met her partner in residence, gave up the Math teacher, and finished her degree in Commerce.

She had difficulty finding work in her area of concentration, Organizational Behaviour, but after two years in retail she became an assistant to a trainer in a large government controlled health and safety Board, progressing up to Education officer, responsible for all general training. She learnt about politics, had her baptism of fire,

There's a lot of real piddly little stuff when you're organizing corporate training area, and, too, it was really good for my political education! Just because there was so much going on. And it was very easy to step on people's toes and I did it! I had done something that I thought was good customer service, but the supervisor thought was the pits. There was a job posting and a lady who I thought was really good, so I phoned her up, and said, You know, this job is up there, and you might be really good at it, and her supervisor later phoned me and said, How dare you do that? She just yelled and screamed at me, in front of everyone. And I went away and cried...see, there was somebody who had higher status and power, yelling at me. And I was just a young little kid, who didn't have the experience to know that, to tell this person to f off! She was the head of a steno group, all women, and she called them 'girls', which always just really...there was a real status thing, she was a real hard taskmaster and the power issue was really there for her and they were just scared of her. She wasn't that old, in her mid 40's, but just a real bad example of a manager.... There are a lot about. (J1:23)

Here Jane planned programs and delivered training, learning from practice, but thinking, There must be a different way to do this! She spent some years at the Board, learning about politics and how to survive in a bureaucracy, as well as about how to plan programs--or is that

program planning?

When she came back to university as a part time student, first in a Diploma program then as a Master's student, it was in response to this urge to find the theory that would explain her practice or tell her how to do it right. She said,

I wanted to know if I was doing it correctly, was there anything out there that could help me. Am I doing it right? There's got to be a better way. And having talked to program planners now who haven't had any education they kind of say, I always have the feeling that there's something out there, that everybody else is laughing at me, because they know how to do it, and I don't! And when they explain what they do, I say, No, you're doing it right, nobody else has any clue either! So, I mean, I was like them, looking for something, some magical formula or whatever, what I was supposed to be doing. (J1:25)

After leaving her job at the Board, Jane went off to private practice, consulting for a year, expanding both her political power-knowledge and her training knowledge, before moving in to the position she holds now as Educational Program Planner for one of the Municipalities in the Lower Mainland.

Starting back into the educational system a year after graduation, (when she swore, NO more school!), Jane has always been involved in learning. "Oh yeah always learning. I don't think you can ever not learn. Those who don't, get left behind" (J1:27).

She is always engaged in some project, Tai Chi, her Master's of Education, learning about plumbing or home renovations, any number of "work sponsored" courses, "which all tend to blur together". Jane has a daughter, now just over two years old, a dog and a husband. She also teaches a course, Training Techniques, at one of the local colleges, and regards herself as a Master Trainer, although modestly, she didn't say it.

Her commentaries on her graduate and professional education experiences are therefore filtered through her own accomplishments and practical knowledge; most of all, her ability to see

clearly and simply through to the heart of the matter made her words direct, plain and trenchant. Jane has little time for time-wasters, but lots for dreamers. She was married at sunset, on a beach in Hawaii--just as she always dreamed she would be....

The brief life story Jane told me reveals little tragedy, a fairly happy life led well and certainly not lived in the margins of oppression of any kind. Jane strikes me as being content, well satisfied with her life and circumstances, but as our talks dwelt mainly on her educational history, I can only assume this is so. Like Yolanda she is not given to emotional or affective speeches, but she did share with me one sadness. Or, perhaps, a discomfort, at being seen as "different" because of her private school education, at not often having a chance to talk the language she learned there, the discourse of British propriety, or to share the European reverence for schooling or education she learnt from her parents. In one session she talked, quite wistfully, of making contact with another woman at work who had gone to a similar school.

At the group session, Jane listened, talked and laughed with the other women. She came from work, smartly dressed in what was called a "costume" in my British girls school, a navy two-piece, and participated in her usual well considered and non-inflammatory way. Lee and Lana and Jane found common ground in being 'trainers' not educators, or teachers, but all three shared a pride in what they do. Sonia's stories seemed to amuse her, and although she may not have experienced her learning as emotionally as Sonia had, she listened to her respectfully.

I was pleased that she was able to stay as long as she did, until well past 8 pm, after a long work day and commute. It shows a commitment to my research project that humbles me. Her comments and suggestions on planning learning for women are thoughtful and practical. She said she valued being involved in the "Val study", (Sonia's name for my research has stuck!) and that it had caused her to stop and think, and to examine some of her assumptions, about women, learning and work.

Jane's Personal Narratives

Reading through her interviews, and listening to her voice, I was able to isolate some **Key phrases** that revealed more of Jane. She uses Basically, as a marker. It introduces important value judgements, as in

So I mean very individual attention and that's basically why my parents started us on that, because they really valued education and that they couldn't see putting us in public school where there was going to be you know, 30 to 36 kids to one teacher, they just didn't think that would work. (J1:1)

Also, That is/ was really interesting, usually sums up her attitude to life's struggles.

I got extremely good grades, pretty much, Grade 4 I almost flunked but everything else I was usually at the top of my class, with very little effort. My sister had to work like a dog, she is four years older and she had to work like a dog to get anywhere. So it was really interesting. (J1:4)

Like an equal is the highest praise, reserved for the best way for others to treat her, especially in education. Similarly, a real, personal level indicates the best, it's not good enough unless it's at this level, and she uses this phrase to refer to work, teaching, family, or relationships- all are best at the personal,

she really brought me along and fostered my interest in training, corporate training. She was good, and again, she treated me more like an equal, we did a lot of discussion over ideas and stuff like that, we brought another trainer on, and she also was very much like us, very talky. We did a lot of just sitting around talking about what we were going to do, and concepts and how best to train people. (J1:21)

Also marking approbation is really good, used for a very positive and satisfied life experience so far, this phrase tends to book-end those experiences; this is used too with, Again, which also introduces a really important belief,

She was a real visionary, she had a lot of really good ideas, she is a real future oriented kind of person, but cannot handle the day to day stuff. Just doesn't do it, a lousy manager in that respect, very good at marketing and getting things up and going. She was fired. Yeah, interesting. (J1:23)

and,

I had an excellent instructor, she was great. Just again her style and the model, that was my first exposure to a model, and I did very well in the class and it made lots of sense, and I thought that was kind of where I wanted to go. (J1:24)

In terms of Key patterns of behaviour, she remarks If I had to do it again, I'd do it the same way,

I worked while I went to school part time, and my last year of undergrad I had three jobs while I was going to school, three part-time jobs. Which actually if I had to do it again, I would advise anybody to do it that way because it gives you a good reality check. (J1:17)

She has a very positive sense of self, with strong, assertive reactions to adversity and difficulty. There is very little self doubt of decisions, or directions taken. When she has rejected an option, for good reason, usually, she will say calmly, It didn't appeal,

V: Did your parents come to your graduation?

J: I didn't go. I didn't want to. I don't know, it didn't appeal to me, ceremony kind of thing. I like smaller more intimate settings and the idea of being in with 59....went to my sister's graduation from college and you see her go across the stage, and that's all you see, and meanwhile you sit there for the whole time, didn't appeal to me, to go. (J1:31)

She seems to weigh up options, make a careful decision, with little doubt, and is quite capable of resisting pressure from authority or peers or family if she thinks it's not right, and she dismisses it with the phrase, It didn't appeal. There is usually little sentimentality to her actions or pronouncements, as in her terse statement about the Math teacher, "He asked me to marry him, but I had other plans". And persistence is a constant reaction--she doesn't give up, keeps on trying, for a job, promotion, Calculus at University, and I'll bet, those books that were awarded at Speech Day. She says she doesn't care for ceremonies, not telling her family about her wedding plans, and not wanting to waste time sitting through graduations. A very no-nonsense attitude!

Little Narratives of Self

I would have to say Jane's private Narratives cast her as the **Good Girl**, (one I envy), and the **Good Student**. I know, too, she is an **Excellent Worker**, not one of the Fuzzy Wuzzies, although she took those options at University, and has little time probably for slackers of any kind. In her own words I think she would say:

"If you work hard you don't get fired, you win prizes too, as **Top of the Class**".

"There are good managers and bad managers, life is **Balanced**".

"**Education** is to be tremendously valued".

"Work hard. It pays off. Be a **Good Employee**".

And a little hesitantly, "I am **Different**, because of where I went to school, and because of my European cultural differences".

"I value good **Management**--of life, work, play, family".

"**Learn**. Those who don't, get left behind".

Intersection with Collective Narratives

Where her narratives meet the collective's, I hear a nod to the discourse of derision from the New Right, "Human resources is airy fairy, fuzzy wuzzy, not real work" Is it maybe **Women's Work**? Not a total agreement, room for thought, maybe? Or a small apology, for liking the fuzzy wuzzy? I also hear a **Feminism** close to the Liberal Feminist strain--give them an equal chance and opportunity, women are no different from men. Once possibly, said strongly, but not so sure now, with a few years lived experience to draw on, so "We're all **Human**, Gender doesn't really come into it." Or does it? But most importantly, for Jane, "Life is ok".

Narrative model

Jane's narrative model fits the Epic most closely. She subscribes to her community's values, and very strongly, with ethical and moral guidelines firmly in place in her own practice and life.

Here is a story of Jane learning....

A Story From Jane:

Mrs. Santa Claus.

Prof X, who taught OB, again, he brought in really interesting concepts; it was the first time I had been exposed that we had to write a diary about what we were learning and he read it. A journal, you know. Oh yeah! In commerce that is really airy fairy, but we were the fuzzy wuzzy option, we were called the fuzzy wuzzy option, or the airy fairies, we were the most touchy feely of the whole Commerce faculty. And we had that reputation of being real people oriented and

that sort of thing.

One of my papers, the final paper for his class, we could basically do it any way we wanted. We could! And because it ended at Christmas term, I wrote a Christmas story on a Santa Claus and how he couldn't organise his organisation any more, and Mrs Claus sorted him out. She got a whole bunch of fake Santa Clauses so he wouldn't have to visit every store, he could just concentrate on what he needed to concentrate on, and I remember it was great, I did it up in about two nights, but I brought in a whole bunch of different organisational concepts and the whole bit, and he loved it! I got an A+ on it! One of the comments on it, he said, Interesting way of bringing in feminism with Mrs Claus sorting it all out.

I don't think I was consciously feminist at that point, but.... I think because I came from a girls school there was never any time where it was said girls couldn't do science, girls couldn't do anything, because we all did it. And some people were a lot better than others, and there were some women that couldn't do it, but there were some people that excelled at it, so it was never, there was never anything that women couldn't do. That women were supposed to be good at Arts and English and those sort of things...I mean I think I had an awareness from media and stuff like that, but my schooling was, 'No you could do it' and you could see people doing it, so....

The majority of my teachers were women. I think that has really held me in good stead. And what's interesting is that I went into the more touchy feely, the more feminine side of Commerce. And I've always wondered about that, and then going into teaching, again, more of feminine type of occupation. You know..I always wonder about those sort of things....

So there was Prof X...and it's only in re-reading my journal now that I really understood, like we were confused about some of his teaching style, but it's only now as I re-read some of the stuff I did for him--the amount of learning, the group learning, the group interaction! He was teaching about Politics, Organizational Politics, and group interactions and stuff like that, and I mean we went all the way through it in our class. Because we had little political um, because

there was a couple of students that everybody couldn't stand, so all that sort of stuff, and just the political interaction, and reading my journal now, is like, Wow, did I ever learn a lot! (J1:15)

Lana

Lana: I can go next, my name is Lana and I'm an employee health and safety consultant and I work for an organisation that provides health and safety prevention services to 180 health care facilities in the province, so I travel around and deal primarily with health care workers in a variety of different settings, including acute care, long term care and home care and of that as you can anticipate the majority of them are women and so I'm dealing with a lot of health and safety issues. So that's me. (G1:1)

Lana's Life Story

"I was born over there", she says, pointing out the window at the Hospital that, even here, a dozen floors up, dominates the view from the south side of her office. It is our first interview; I have come to Lana's office at work, right at 4:30 when everyone finishes for the day, a place where we can talk quietly together and, because Lana is considerate of the fact that I don't have a car, it is so close to where I live. On the way in I had admired the brand new building, the understated opulence of this lofty territory, a whole floor in the building devoted to the province wide private health organisation where Lana has worked for just over three years.

We had first met in the qualifying course for entry to the Master's program, and I had been so impressed by her enthusiasm for her new job; the enthusiasm is still there, but tempered by experience, dimmed a little by the conflicting roles she has been called on to play in her career.

I had also been impressed (and still am) by her own elegance, always so well dressed; she reminds me a bit of the Duchess of Windsor--rich and thin! Lana tells me later that her lean-ness has been a trial to her, "I was terribly thin, really underdeveloped, not popular" at school, but I'd like to tell her she could model for Chanel. She wears, not Chanel, but lovely clothes, matching

separates, suits, cashmere-like coats--even in casual clothes she is elegant, neat and yet the clothes don't quite fit the energy bristling below the calm surface.... Models are generally more laid back.

And I never spoke to her, in our sessions or follow-up calls, when she wasn't operating at a high energy level. She is active, walking, running and even horse-back riding when she can; in her early 40's she is a little sad that "you don't see any children running about" but she and her husband have a country home and a city condominium and a "pretty good lifestyle" she says. Lana talks a mile a minute, very bodily, arms waving, always excited, never usually finishes a sentence because there is always something more interesting to be said in the next one. It gives a breathless quality to her transcripts, and leaves me with an image of a mind and intellect perhaps still untapped, one where ideas and thoughts, comments and notions are rushing up and out, eager to have their say. I'd bet that she is a dynamic instructor, and she alludes to that, in one of our interviews.

She tells me that her life has been entwined with the Hospital all her life, from her birth, through her childhood, on to her early twenties, through two, or is it three?, careers in different departments, and finally, now, to a place where she is only an observer, but it still observes her. Now it is something that blocks the light from her office window; at a later session she tells me she still feels bound to it, and says it will be her tombstone. Sombre words.

It has been an intense, thirty-odd year relationship, a frame for her life.... Lana is the only one of the women who is actually a native Vancouverite, born in its Hospital and living and working within its shadow, or at least in the city limits, most of her life. In our first interview, she told me, "Well, I'm probably unique because I come from Vancouver" (L1:1), and this is so, she is the only one of the Five Women born and raised in Vancouver.

Her family were upper middle class, her parents both working by the time she was a teenager, and she says of her family and years growing up,

I grew up in Kerrisdale, so I came from the upper middle class. I think I had a fairly ideal, idyllic childhood, nothing to complain about, and when I was about tennish my parents moved to West Vancouver, so we became even more middle class-upper! (L1:2)

Her father she describes as a self-made man, who improved himself,

My father had a work ethic, he worked his way up from shop boy, he didn't have a formal education. He is very well respected as a purchasing agent in the purchasing community, he is a real doer, I think it's where I get it from, and an achiever. A real high achiever. He made money in property, but he came from a working-class background, where they lived ok, but after his father died he supported his mother, but he was upwardly mobile. And my mother comes from 10 children, she was a nurse on the Prairies. She went back to school for her Public Health when I was in elementary, and back to work. So I prepared dinner. She was at home for my siblings and they are much more dependent. I am much more independent. Both my father and mother were role models for education, taking courses into their retirement, very pro education, active learners, and passionate about it. (L1:3)

But into this idyllic childhood came a traumatic incident, one which has affected Lana's whole life, and brought her back to the Hospital.

An interesting thing happened at that stage in my life which did have an impact on my growth and development. I was involved in an accident, I got hooked up on the propeller of an outboard motor, it was quite traumatic, and spent a good proportion of those early years in hospital...I ended up taking a number of years to recover, and it's interesting that I turned to sports, partly to prove to my Dad that I was ok, because he felt responsible for the accident. So it launched me into an early sports career which later spelled itself out in me taking Kinesiology, and my interest in sports. (L1:1)

It also left her with teenage epilepsy, and led to her first career.

She had worked, she told me with great pride, right from when she was fifteen, as a waitress, and later at the Bay. Her family were "all teachers", and she says they were devastated when she decided not to go on to University, not to become a teacher. (I wonder if she realises that she is now? Funny how so many of us still end up fulfilling our parent's expectations.... Me too.) Instead she took up an offer which had come from a summer job.

The job in turn came from that early trauma; here is what she says about it in an excerpt that tells me a lot about Lana's definitions of learning:

After the accident, and the epilepsy, I had to go for a number of tests, called electroencephograms, (did you get that? and she laughs!) until I was in my late teens, but that launched me into electroencephalography, as an electroencephalographists assistant. It was fairly avant garde, and I just thought it was kind of off the wall, but it was interesting. I became instant friends with the director of the lab at the Hospital and he encouraged me to go to the Montreal Neurological Institute. Part of me was reaching out for something different, and so 2 months after graduation I found myself in Montreal, really scary! Gee, you have to buy an ironing board, buy an iron, gee, you just expect those things to be there! My salary was \$250 per month, my accommodation \$125, so I learned how to live off a can of beans. It was another one of those wrenching, growing up fast experiences. I was extremely shy, extremely ill informed about the world, but a survivor. It was a learning spurt. I enjoyed the work, watching brain surgery, etc., and it was an international centre, an incredibly inspiring place to be, with world renowned scientists and neurologists...But I had no idea, I just said, Sure, I'll go out there! I was 19. I had the only ever grand mal seizure in my sleep 6 or 7 months after being there. It was a time of change and transition, and the life learning that was taking place was phenomenal, I didn't go out seeking anything, I was letting life take care of me. (L1;3)

She came back to Vancouver, to the Hospital, and over the next few years worked as an electroencephalographer, strangely enough, with the same kinds of children that Sonia would later spend time, educating her compassion. Then she was persuaded to try a bit of fun in her life, so she became a "stewardess" for Ward Air. Why ? Because a roommate, a "delightful British woman who made me laugh..said, Oh, go on, you'd do really well at it!" and, Yes, it was still stewardess,

it was just at that cross over time before we became 'attendants'. It was the best thing that ever happened to me, having some fun, travelling for five years, and I didn't want to give up my training so I worked on the side at the Hospital, under my original mentor as a research assistant. I was a flying technologist, it was just great, you have all that energy in your twenties, across the Atlantic and back, great experience! (L1:3)

But eventually she felt the desire to go back to school, something a little voice inside her, she says, nagged her to get her undergraduate degree, and so she took a career job at the Hospital, in diagnostics. Lana pursued her undergrad degree for 8 years, part time and evenings, going from qualifying at college to university until she got her BA in Applied Science, in Kinesiology and Communications. I asked her if it wouldn't have been quicker to go full time and she said,

What really struck me was the struggle I had pursuing my education part-time, but I had now become a seasoned worker and used to income, and I was fearful. Fearful of losing my independence, if I had to go back to school full time, and I had become accustomed to a fairly nice life style, I mean I had been working from the moment I left school, all my late teen years, so I was used to having an income. To me it was really a matter of maintaining my independence...to keep learning and earning, so I never ever gave up work for school, up to this day. And I also recognised too, that I didn't want to get out of the work force. But..No, I didn't want to go full time, in fact I feel and I find the academic environment very stifling.

(L1:5)

After working full time in diagnostics, eventually as a Supervisor, she was recruited to become the Coordinator of Health Promotion at the Hospital, and, as she will tell you, she was very successful. She completed her degree, and within three months was hired into her current position, still in health promotion, but more involved with safety issues than before. She thinks she clinched the job at the interview by telling the CEO that she was enrolling in a Master's program and "her eyes lit up!"

This has been a constant theme running through her life story, the need to get an academic qualification to be accepted. It has often contributed to her feelings of inadequacy and incompetence she told me. Lana speculates too, that it might have something to do with a need to be accepted, stemming from some unpleasant years as a teenager.

At any rate, she has "worked hard", another thread, where she is now, planning programs, writing manuals, training, facilitating, doing workshops--as participant and leader--in short, she is Miss Health Education now, just as she was once Miss Aerobics!

Her last two years have been very difficult. Lana has always it seems, looked upon crisis, and trauma, even, as a way to learn, but she has had a lot to learn, too much maybe, since she began this job. She loves the job, but the dynamics in the workplace have ranged from tense to ugly, as she has struggled to define a workable relationship with her male supervisor, her Fearless Leader. We will hear more of this later, but suffice it to say at this point, the experience has been transformational.

It has been a delight to talk to Lana, and at later interviews I got to see her home environment, ultra chic (with gorgeous faux finished walls, green, yellow, blue, and, she tells, there's a story there, but not for now. Only later does she tell me they had to fire the painters with the work not quite finished, can I tell where?..Don't you love the stories that live in people's houses?), with a view of the Fraser River a block or so away, and, of course, in case I haven't mentioned it before, it is Hospital neat and tidy, clean and shiny..operations could be done in the

kitchen....

Lana's Narratives.

In analyzing Lana's interview transcripts for key phrases, one in particular jumps out. When she is about to recount an incident or event or emotion that has been challenging for her in her personal or work life, she says it's "interesting", and then often reflects on just why it's interesting.

Usually the experience has meant learning to her too, and we have seen how she responds to difficult situations--as learning opportunities. So she says, of her parent's reactions to her wanting to go to the Neurological Institute in Montreal, instead of to university like her siblings, "they knew I was different, and Institute was prestigious, but it wasn't quite the same. It was interesting, because I didn't do that" (LI:2), and "An interesting thing happened, I was involved in an accident...it was quite traumatic..This was a really interesting episode in my life. It taught me a lot.... (L1:1), and "The other interesting thing that happened because of the accident and all the medications I was on, I ended up having childhood epilepsy...but it was interesting because of the attacks I had had, I became interested in (electroencephalography) (L1:1), and later, talking about being treated disrespectfully, often by the males, the pilots and navigators in the airline, "(I) didn't command quite the same kind of, like the public would give you the respect, it's interesting when you strut down the airport in your stewardess outfit and your little perky hat and your, all the kids are going, Mummy, mummy look!" (L1:3).

Lana actually uses the word "learnings" to describe those kind of events, and while my computer's spell checker doesn't like the word, I do. It recreates Lana's earnestness, her determination to take negative or traumatic happenings and turn them into a "learning". So while she described herself, (as did Jane) as a "babbler", (and it is true, she talks a lot, and she talks

fast), but it is like a stream of consciousness, she talks her feelings, conclusions, emotions, thoughts, her self, into reality. Lee and I had talked about those who talk to learn, and while it isn't Lee's style and it sometimes irritates her enough to block the talk out, it has been fascinating to hear and see Lana talk her way to realisations and knowledge, about herself, her world and her interactions in it. And you do "see" her do this--she is an active talker, hands waving, body moving, jumping up, walking, talking, all the time, energising her words.

This also plays itself out in her key patterns of behaviour. Lana consistently describes herself as acting; when something happens that is challenging, she won't sit and reflect on it, but gets into a "doer" stance, reacting, acting and making a physical statement about the "learning". Always the energy is directed into finding out why, and how to respond to events or (hegemonic) pressures. So she turns to sport to help her deal with the consequences of her accident, she runs when she has had a needling and nagging, needless phone call when at home on vacation from her Director, her "Fearless Leader", she takes classes on her vacation time, she pulls weeds and gets physical in her garden in Whistler to work out the frustrations of looking for work in today's job market. Most of all, when it is an experience of disjuncture, she learns. So she says, "It was the next crisis in my life, feeling very strongly, in my heart of hearts, and standing my own ground, but..All these crises propel us on to new learnings, they're not all negative but I wish life didn't have to be based on crisis" (L1:11).

Lana's Little Narratives of Self

Lana describes herself as stubborn, active, a **survivor**, and a **learner**. Her story of how she has survived a horrible accident, loneliness, harassment at work from her "Fearless Leader", all show how she constructs herself. But she also sees herself as an **outsider**. I asked her about this, as she related stories of feeling like an outsider in the academic community, in the Hospital

power structures and when she first went into her current job. She links that feeling to two things. The first stems from her sense that she has "academic failings", is incompetent, and doesn't "know" the theory; the second, from her experiences as a teenager, and how she learnt to camouflage the uncertainty and to try to fit in, by altering the image she presents to the world. So she tells me about

some experiences in school, I was under developed as a teen, very very thin, not quote unquote popular, my girlfriends that I hung out with were all the elite coeds, the elite crowd and I felt always on fringe, but it's just that I was a late bloomer...these were very pretty girls from very wealthy families, and they all drove cars, it was the thing to do, they all had boyfriends, and I remember always feeling resentful...always somehow as if I had to somehow prove myself. I don't recall that I was extremely bright at school, I was average, but I always applied myself, I was always a hard worker. It didn't come naturally, whereas some of my girlfriends were not only good looking but top of the class! It seemed like I was always struggling harder, like the tortoise and the hare. (L1;7)

But that struggle created her "**incredible work ethic**", because

it really planted seeds for me to keep trying harder...I'd have to put more effort into it, I would end up ahead of the game, come to the front of the pack. It's not because I'm that competitive, but I resented feeling the way I did, feeling powerless..not belonging..it seemed that every time I thought I was getting some place I got put back, so it was that kind of struggle...these were my own personal challenges..I always was the one, the wallflower, people said, Oh, invite her along, but I wasn't up there in the elite. I remember I just got angry and in Grade 12 I came out, excelling on the student council, making valedictorian speeches. And people were going, Well! I just got angry, and I think that is what propels us into doing things in conflict situations, you know, where we get that sense of anger or emotion which forces us to move on..but...that false value stuck with me through life, where it was

appearance, rather than what you were, who you were...how you dressed...I think that part of that stuck with me, even when I ended up going into my sports and I got caught up in the whole teaching aerobics, it was all image-focused, and being in the airline, it was all very image focused, very much trying to be a perfectionist. (L1:7)

So Lana has been driven to be a perfectionist in her work, her appearance, to feel like she looks like she belongs, but now, in this last year or two she is beginning to question those false values, re-assess her life, her relationships, her work. Dislocation is not a deliberate state, you just question your state of complacency and I'm not as complacent and not prepared to accept things the way they were, and I don't know the way things are leading. (L1:13)

Lana is very much a connected person. **Relationships** are key in her private and public life. She knows this, and her learnings are, in part, about how to maintain connections in her life. Of her husband she says, "for me relationships are a really important thing and I'm not very good out there in the marketplace, I need an anchor and some stabilising force; certainly he was that for me, very supportive, and has always been very proud of me" (L1:12).

Also, while she recognises the value that society places on the academy and the credentials it bestows, she knows she is credentialed by her practical knowledge. She is experienced, practised, and she **respects** experience, **street knowledge** she calls it: She says of her husband, he is

not an academic himself, he's a business man, a street smart person, who knows business inside out and knows people inside out, and he knows how to put together deals, he's very good with numbers, he's the old downtown Vancouverite. (L1:12)

Earlier she had said,

Today the reality is, in the kind of circles I am in, I have to be in a Masters or be at a PhD level. Yet I have friends who have no formal education at all who do exceptionally well and who are making, if you want a measure of success, oodles of money. But they are just street

smart and they just have it! (L1:10)

Lana's Narrative Meets the Collective Narratives

Like all the women, Lana knows society is **classed**. She knew that when she was growing up in two of Vancouver's richest neighbourhoods. And she knew her father came from the working class, but made it in to the upper-middle class. She says, "growing up in that kind of upper class environment, if you're not upper class, you really feel that you have to work really hard to get there" (L1:6). But you can get there. Unlike the European kind of class, that's yours from cradle to grave, a class you cannot escape, or buy your way out of, several of the Five Women have absorbed the North American Collective Myth, that money makes new class ranks, and that hard work will help the climb up the ladder, that **Upwardly Mobile** is a good thing. All the women are now middle class, white professionals, who are or will be, earning "good money", and enjoying some status in society.

Lana's story intersects at two interesting points with the collective narratives of **woman** in our society.

1: she paints the picture of the "typical" girl/woman, not good at science, and math phobic. (Jane did not, and attributed this to her education at a single sex school). Lana says,

One thing that really terrified me, and I realised early on, is I am not a scientist, and I am lousy at Math, I have a tremendous math phobia. I became very fearful, so I said, You've got to get over this! So I went off and took a Math course at college for science prep, and I just did so abysmally, it shattered me, I came out of there, and said, Well, that's it, you're just never going to make it! And similarly I took a course in accounting, a first year level one, at university my first year and I just froze, I absolutely froze, I couldn't get it, I blamed it all on

the prof, he couldn't speak English, I was maybe looking for place to put the responsibility, and I just didn't feel comfortable, it just didn't connect with me at all, and again, that feeling of inadequacy, or incompetence. Like what's wrong with you? You're stupid! I did that to myself, very well.... (L1:7)

But is she stupid, or just educated to think she is?

2: Lana absorbs the lesson that girls have to be **pretty** to get ahead,

My girlfriend was very popular, the one every one wanted to date, very wealthy, always the best clothes, and it was a hard thing to keep up, maybe it's silly in retrospect, but you're assimilating those kinds of values without even realising, it's imposed upon you, and somehow, as a child, you don't try to interpret, you just think, Well, I just have to have those clothes, I have to be the prettiest! As a kid you just start pulling it in and reacting to it, and you don't even know what you're reacting to, it's imposed upon you, I have to have, to be, it's just, Gee Mum, why wasn't I born prettier? And what I didn't get a sense of then, it was a false value that stuck with me through life, where it was appearance rather than what you were, who you were, or how you dressed. But (lately) I started to grow up, to think, it's not what I look like, it's what's inside of me. (L1:6)

Lana did not refer to herself as a feminist, once or twice she even expressed nervousness about the dangers of stereotyping, but she is beginning to sound like one!

Lana's Narrative Model

I would place Lana's story within the Epic model. She subscribes to the values of the community, questioning some, but not rebelling against them totally, nor does she seek her values outside of known structures. She does have a strong moral and ethical sense, this is prominent in her story.

And here is a story that tells you about Lana in a clearer way than all my words do....

A Story about Lana:

Just a Spandex Freak!

I was still pursuing my undergrad degree when I went from diagnostic neuro-physiology to the position of Coordinator of Health Promotion. I'd left the airlines and I ended up, kind of through a series of events, working in the community as an aerobics instructor just doing it on the side, because I thought it was a lark, it was my new passion and well, I taught 9 classes a week! just one of those freaks up there in spandex, (laughs!). Oh yeah, one more, two more, I invented it! I was Miss Aerobics Queen!

It was a hobby, but then I teamed up with some people at the Hospital to launch an employee fitness centre. I got involved setting up the Centre and really took it to heart, like everything, and put in 110 percent. I guess I caught the attention of the CEO at the Hospital, and I then became the co-ordinator of Health Promotion.

When I took that position, health promotion was still a new unknown entity; there were some big guns at the Hospital. One in particular, a woman on the clinical staff, a smart lady. Got her PhD and immediately started to call herself Dr. and just, you know how some academics tend to wear their Ph.D? Well, she wore hers with gilded letters! And so when I became the Coordinator she was outraged that she hadn't been brought in to the process, and the very fact that I would dare to have the word health in my title, Well! Because anything that has health in it has to go through nursing, and on top of that, She's not a nurse, she's not qualified!

Well, talk about sending a dagger right through me, here was something I felt I could do but my academic "failings" didn't give me permission to do it. I really got mad, I think I became

obstinate, stubborn and defensive, and it worked against me. I did a lot of growing up, in many ways there was a truth to what she was saying, I didn't have a background for the position.

But I went at it intuitively, I used my energy, which I had a lot of, and I applied myself 110 percent, and I just made stuff happen, more program planning, taking chances and taking risks. I was not bound by any theoretical perspectives, I was not jaded by any academic mode or constrained view of world, I didn't have a clue about program planning or evaluation, I just did it!

And it was a lot! We put on community programs, and workshops, we did stop smoking, and violence against women workshops, we had so much stuff. The Centre hired 3 fulltime staff, and a consulting staff, and we had 45 part time or casual workers and it was amazing, the energy was terrific, I never once, I didn't stop once and say, I don't know this. I didn't know any better.

I had practice, and experience, but I didn't have the degree. The likes of the Ph.D's said, Who the hell are you? They didn't mince words, and it got the ire of some of the other professionals. I was treading on their toes, moving into their areas, like if I wanted to do workshops on diet, the nutritionist got bent out of shape, and if I wanted to do workshops on fitness the physiotherapists would get bent out of shape.

You know, I was always dealing with the sensitive egos of all the professionals and I don't think many of them questioned it after a while, but I remember making a presentation at the staff executive and having to introduce myself, And I'm saying, I'm Lana and I'm a neurophysiologist! Now in retrospect I sit here and laugh--especially now I'm in the academic community. I would have looked and said, Who the hell are you? I would have said the same thing, isn't that sad?

That community puts so much emphasis on formal education and on the academics and they didn't buy the informal learning, not at all! The formal learning and education gave them the right to judge me, and it put me back like in high school. I felt again, inadequate, incompetent..and I get accused of this when I am skiing, I did it through pushing..it doesn't all bring out the best in you, when you're out of balance, when you feel you don't have the control,

you lack the confidence, you become almost directive, other personality traits come out when you're trying to cover up inadequacies. If push came to shove, I knew how to push, but it's not my nature, I had then no ability to be assertive. I was passive aggressive. I hadn't learned those skills of becoming an assertive person which I think you do as you develop your skills of learning, of confidence and competence.

I spent a lot of years in that situation, fight or flight. I was so tired of feeling not competent enough. I was doing all this stuff, I thought, Who cares if I don't have a degree? Even my peers, who I had to oversee, they had degrees, and said, Well, who are you? To tell us? They were women and one in particular I had on the back team program, she had just got her Masters, and she was like, Thank you, Lana! You don't even have your undergrad yet and you are my administrator? She couldn't fathom it. We just never got along, and I felt alienated from the team. In those years I reacted a lot from fear and anger.

I finally finished my undergrad, it was hell, it took too long, it was holding me back, but within two or three months after, I said, It's time to move on. I had been there part time, casual and full time, for 20 years. It was at the time of the first cutbacks and the pink slips were flying, I thought mine would come, but it didn't. The position was saved, and I took pleasure from that. People came up to me and said, You made a difference.

Postscript: Valerie's Story

You have now been introduced to the five women who told me stories about what it was like for them to learn and to work. Their thoughts on gender and learning, and planning for women's learning helped me to begin thinking what the answers might be to the research questions I started out with, some 18 months ago. Of course, I would have different questions now; also, the Five Women gave me answers for questions I hadn't thought to pose but which they had, and some answers were found for questions I don't yet know how to ask....

Sonia's comments prompt this story, a Sixth Story when she said,

Like you have to actually model it--They're not revealing themselves, no way! Students can reveal themselves, their personal narrative is included in a thesis, no problem, but when people get in power they're not doing it! These researchers! (G2:26)

And as I don't want to be counted in with 'those researchers' I offer some of my own petits recits....

So, here is a personal narrative, parts of a learning life story, from me, the Sixth Woman. Because Sonia is right, my life is part of their stories, my interpretation shapes their lives, my analysis writes their lives, so my life should be here for you to read too.

In a more traditional thesis, the one I would have written 10 years ago, or even 10 months ago, this would have been the (yawn) "Strengths and Limitations" blended with "Researcher Perspectives"; perhaps it would have been, daringly, called, Factors Affecting the Analysis, or The Lens of Analysis--I think qualitative researchers find a new lens whenever they feel (quantitatively) guilty or defensive, and it seems to comfort them, or persuade them, that the new lens will remedy some blindness their earlier training insinuates must be there; the lens is to the qualitative researcher what the statistic is to the quantitative researcher.

Now! This part of the Story is my talking about my learning, what difference my biography makes in constructing this knowledge, and what my personal tales are, what my baggage is....

Valerie: Or, I packed my bag and in it I put....

Part of a Life Story

When I was 12 my parents sent me away to boarding school. After an outrageously early lights-out (eight o'clock? For thirteen year olds?) we would talk in whispers, gossip, argue, complain, and now and then, play word games that involved memorisation, no pen and paper allowed, or because, in our case, being in the dark, they could not be used.

One of the games we played was called, "I packed my bag and in it I put.." We were all desperately homesick, and end of term, Oh, going home! with travel by train or car was a subject we all liked. In this game, the person starting said, I packed my bag and in it I put, and named an object beginning with A. The next person had to say the same thing, I packed my bag and in it I put, A--, and then name an object beginning with B. The next repeated the whole phrase, A, B, and then named a C thing, and on it went. There were time limits, more points for how fast you got it all out, and of course, you were out if you missed a word or got it wrong. Five other girls listened and judged--no mercy shown--until only two were left, usually around the M's or N's, then the second to last would stumble, we'd declare a winner and start all over again. It was a lot of fun.... sometimes. Sometimes a real nuisance if you felt like going to sleep. But as I found out in my Ethnography course, great training for an ethnographer or anthropologist, who in sticky situations cannot take notes and must develop as eidetic a memory as possible.

A thought....

The school was truly a training ground for Coloniser's consorts; the days of the Empire lingered on in the girls who came from Kenya, Australia and Hungary. Perhaps the encouragement of the playing of games like "I packed my bag" was to outfit us for our "careers" as Pukka-Sahib's wives. We would be able to visit quaint native dwellings, dispense tea and some charity and come home to write it all up, in another one of those agonizing--and think of it, truly agony, the writing of it, the enduring of it, the reading of it, the torment that must have lain underneath those crisp white blouses, layers of chemises, vests, corsets, the wasted talent, the screaming inside of the terminally bored, terminally starved mind--"Memoirs of a Collector's Wife", or the "Diary of an East India Company Wife". At any rate, most of us were destined to play bridge, or become genteel secretaries, or to die in quiet desperation in the Provinces, so the training went on even when we thought we were playing. The English Boarding School is one of the great inventions of the Raj, and for cruelty institutionalized, only the Stalinist Lubyanka might compare.

So for this journey, I packed my bag and in it I put....

A for Abandonment, and *AUTOBIOGRAPHY*

B for Boarding School, and, for Summer wear, the Straw Boater

C for Crimes against the school/state, and one felt Cloche hat

D for Desperate, and of course, *DISCIPLINE* (see Uniform)

E for Emotional

F for Frantic

G for Good Girl, and for *GENDER*

H for Hell and/or Homework, and 18 handkerchiefs

I for Intelligence, Intuition denied, and Insomnia, for ever more

J for Joy, not

K for Killing, as in, character, soul, spirit

L for Laughter/Loneliness, and *LANGUAGE*

M for Marks, marking, male marked?

N for No Love Here

O for Outrage, Opposition

P for Panic--especially in Maths

Q for Queen, of the Boarding House, of the Form

R for Rebellion, Rage and Rancid memories

S for Starved, of food, love, joy, hope

T for Torture, torment and Trust, even so, and *TRUTH*

U for Ugly, as in naming, and most of all *UNIFORM*, navy blue

V for Valerie, the name my parents couldn't pick

W for Weak-willed, weeping and woeful

X for Xenophobia, still on my school syllabus

Y for Yearning, and a wasted Youth

Z for Zealous and Zany, Top of the Form, but hiding as a clown

Autobiography, Or, My Little Self Narratives

I have carried my bag with me, my life, my lived experience, and it has affected my choice of research topic, my choice of methodology, my epistemology, my ontology, who I asked to be on my Committee, who I avoided, who I spoke to in preparing my design, who I picked as participants, who I didn't pick, and so on, and so on, and so on. To claim otherwise would be 'untrue'.... But what if I had done a quantitative study, lots of n's, graphs and svelte surveys? Would my baggage still be there, my lived-experience affecting my topic, my methods, my world-view, my committee? Of course it would have....but why is quantitative work so often taken as being value-free, value-neutral, objective and de-personal?

But I as a "good girl", I lay out for you my qualitative blemishes, my emotional preferences, my affective and effective judgements.

So I tell you--I am not just middle-class, but born upper-middle middle class; I am a woman; I am a lady, by birth and upbringing and education; I am white; I have had servants, people of colour to my grandmother's great joy (indeed, my grandmother encouraged such a return to 'gentility', servants being a natural part of her life, and much missed until my mother, her daughter-in-law came along--as a Colonial she was, of course, of slightly inferior status, but not, unfortunately, servile); I am a lapsed C. of E., NOT Anglican, thank you; I am heterosexual; I am intelligent--in the upper percentiles of those awful, outmoded IQ tests; I was educated at a private boarding school, part of a public school, a Grammar School, elitist and academically elegant; in

short, or long, I am me, Valerie-Lee Chapman.

I was born to an English father, a Canadian mother, the three of us, all serving our time in the Royal Air Force, my mother and I trailing my father, "dependents", as he chased promotion, success, validation? My mother hated England, missed Canada with a passion, even missed her short lived career as a psychiatric nurse at the largest mental hospital in Canada, and had cultivated a few pet obsessions--hatred of the class system, scorn for the Queen and the Royals, a love for roses, and old silver, and a contempt for all that seemed authoritarian. She had an old Brownie camera, and would suddenly say, Let's get a snap of this! I have a battered photo album, up here in my head, and I'd like to show you some of those snaps. My personal self-story is dominated by some of those same obsessions--a hatred of class, a deep distrust of authority (especially male authority) and an agonizing and traumatic relationship with education.

7 years old/The Alien

Around my seventh year, my father was posted, on an 'unaccompanied' detachment, to serve around Easter Island, monitoring the atomic testing going on there, a globe away from the village school which I had to attend as part of the enforced stay with my Grandmother. I felt like an alien there, stuck like a sore place in their lives and mine, not allowed to play with the village kids, no-one to walk with me to and from school, an outsider and an outcast. The same story would be repeated 7 times over the next few years, and maybe I sensed that, already despairing of a settled home, a real home--not a married quarter or a small room in my Grandmother's house.

And so, when in the Summer Class this year, I was asked, along with my classmates, to bring in a childhood memento for a presentation in The Gender War Class, for August 1. Coming a day after the Instructor had invited us all to do an ink-shedding, to write collectively about what was troubling us, causing us dis-ease, muting our Voices--and what a revelation that was! That

each half of the class didn't know what was bothering the other half, and that one of those halves didn't know, or even sense the silencing or distancing of the other half, nor did it care much--it is not surprising that one Alien called down the years to the Other Alien. 7 or 47--the lived experience was the same, the same feelings, the same emotions, the same distress, the same fears and isolation. The alien-ness shivering up and down the corridor of time, from 7 to 47, and back again.

And the same childlike sense of hurt--Why are they so nasty? Why are they bullying me? What did I do wrong? Why aren't I like them? Why do they hate me so? And the names might differ--stuck-up snob, or feminist bitch, but the hatred is the same. So that's what I wrote about, in eleven or twelve incarnations, as the inky papers passed around the tables on July 31st, 1996. The next day we were supposed to come in and talk about childhood!

Well, with my graduate ink-shedding (awfully close in tone to a blood-shedding, isn't it?) about the alien-child experience still lodged in my oesophagus ten hours later, (still hadn't managed to swallow it), I went unerringly to my one and only photo album, pulled out a picture of the 7 year old alien, put it in my notebook to take for August 1st. After our presentations, the drama student leading the session asked us to write about what we had brought and what it meant to us. Here is what wrote itself that night on my computer screen.

Why I brought a picture of myself to class to day,

of when I was 7 or 8....

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
2 mile stretch of pebbly, white, stoney 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 it looked different from theirs
My body wore it differently
My body had begun, even then, long before then,
To loose its grip upon my mind.
And mind had created its first echoes
Lodged them down the corridor,
Bodied them in numbered rooms
Ready to step out their doors, when mind or body called
En Garde!
And now the trick won't work.
Why?*

The 11+/Fear of (Social) Failure, and 17/Feared

At 11 I had had already three schools in one year. At the third, I sat the 11+, the exam that weeded out the workers from the leaders. To my parents horror--What will the neighbours/Commanding Officer think! for my academic success was tied to their search for status--I was a 'border line' case, had to sit it again and, of course, passed, but it was enough for them. Failure had come sniffing too close! Boarding schools were researched....which were good (socially), which not, which too expensive, which welcomed Air Force children....and one was chosen that fit the bill.

In September of my twelfth year I left home--for good, returning from the barbarities of the boarding school/jail only on half term breaks and school holidays. It felt to me like an abandonment, and it was, and not for my own good, but for theirs....

The food was so bad, the hazing at meal times so subtle, so ugly, that I lost 20 pounds the first half term, causing my mother much anger as my expensive new uniform no longer fit me. But I got a handle on manners, and to this day I know exactly how to eat fruit, toast, sip soup, with an upper class dexterity that would see me, still, through afternoon tea with the Queen Mum.

And, of course, I acted out, up and around, living always on the edge of expulsion, collecting a black dossier of misbehaviours which would eventually be too much for all but one of the six universities I applied to in the Upper Sixth, five rejecting me out of hand, based on that damning personality assessment, not my academic honours. (The sixth, University College, London, had me down to London for an interview, but rejected me as 'too pert', so tossed me out anyway, after sadistically raising my hopes.)

For I was a **Good Girl** in day school, bored to tears but rousing myself when I had to, doing superlatively well, winning a Lindsay County Council Scholarship, much to the chagrin of my teachers and the Headmistress and the Housemistress, who I suspect prayed daily for my early

demise, or at least departure from their turf. For I was a Bad Girl in the boarding school. I led two lives, daily, one from 9 to 4, one from 4:01 to 8:59.

I did not oblige the Boarding School Regime by dying or leaving, simply grew more cunning in my rebellions, my subversions. Staying on at school for an extra term in the Sixth form--as a boarder with my English master and his family, the Regime got its own back by refusing me living space one moment longer than it had to--and that term necessary in order for me to sit the Cambridge Entrance Exams. And how excluding that competition was! Limited to those who could afford a year out from work, those who knew sufficient Latin and those who were generally male--but this time, I was accepted at all the Universities I applied to--except Cambridge--my A level successes outweighing my damaging radicalism. Except at University College of London, who insisted on interviewing me again, and, (during that time of student rebellions) accepted me only because one brave (male) Professor thought I would be an interesting addition to the mix, a **Radical**, a **Rebel**, and he personally guaranteed my good behaviour. At the end of my third year he told me how much I had disappointed him, living the blank existence that I had, totally bland, totally normal....or so he thought, for why would I tell him differently?

I only attended 7 lectures in the whole three years I was there, but did write every essay required in my Tutorials, choosing a Medieval Option for its difference. It was a wasted three years, a few sit-ins (Got my picture on the second page of the Times, and around the world in Singapore, my father had to explain away that one in the Officers Mess!), Thursday nights Monty Python, sing songs in pubs, down to Kings for the Norman Conquest on Wednesday and Fridays, and then, suddenly, 10 3 hour exams in 14 days to decide my fate. But I collected my degree, from the Queen Mum, our Chancellor, curtsying, a Good Girl, a good **Upper Second Class**. My future was set.

Now, of course, I think, What did I miss! but I also suspect I was a **Victim of Over-schooling**, a burnout at 18. It has left me with my own narratives--a condemnation of schooling and liberal arts education, a fear that I will be always be an alien, a set of skills and manners that would suit a **Lady**, a reputation as a **Bad Girl**, a **Trouble Maker** that I still find myself trying to live down to.

Reappraisals or, Collective Narratives

My little narratives intersect with the Grand Narratives of **Education for Domestication**, the Western European as Civilizer and **Colonizer**--did I mention, I lived at Changi Royal Air Force base, Singapore, with my father and mother, servants and all, working part time at the Officers Club, from January to September, before going back to cold, old England?--and the **Capitalist** struggle for control of the means of production..... Quite a load for my bag.

Here are a few other things I packed to bring with me....

Discourse or Discipline or Just My Uniform?

When I came to a reading of Foucault, his work made perfect sense to me. I only wonder that he didn't study the English Boarding School, along with his prisons, asylums, hospitals and psychiatric clinics, when he was preparing to write Discipline and Punish. I am intimately acquainted with the use of uniform to unify, homogenise, discipline.

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 officers arm from a hundred yards away, and by relating those to the number worn by my father, knew exactly how to behave. And knew too, that those rings invisibly marked the "dependents" of the man too, knew I could play with a dependent of the same rank, or of one rank BELOW, or of any rank ABOVE (kudos! a good thing, rank might rub off) but that was it..NO fraternizing with Other Ranks' kids, not even Sergeants or senior NCO's, (rough) kids.

We were disciplined in body and soul, us little Service children, so it was natural to me to don my uniform to do my schooling. But mine never seemed to quite fit me, making me stand out from the herd, not uniform with them. And they knew it. I used to beg my mother to buy the school uniform sold in the local shops, the CORRECT style would then be assured, but, moving so often, she said, What difference does it make, it's navy blue, just like the last one? But as everyone knows, the STYLE is not the same. So I was marked as **Different**, though **Uniform**.

Going to boarding school necessitated the purchase of TWO uniforms--one for daily wear at Grammar School, one for evening and weekend wear as a Boarder. My parents protested, but if the list said, 18 handkerchiefs, it meant 18 handkerchiefs. Girls were punished for 17 or 19, no deviance allowed. For winter Boarding school attire, a smart navy blue costume, for summer, we wore a blue and white spotted dress, straw boater with a navy band, white gloves.

We were marked (wo)men. There was no way of acting up, or out, in the town, or its shops, we were as obvious and as outstanding as peacocks. This had the effect of allowing the townspeople to partake (with gusto) in our disciplining--phone calls to the Housemistress from disturbed citizenry on Saturday afternoons resulted in the loss of the only freedom we had, a one hour "shopping" time on Saturday mornings. I was always losing that freedom, sitting lonely in the Common Room, or staring out the (barred--to keep us in, Them out) window, wondering what it would be like to be free to walk in and out of the doors in my life....

Even though the uniform fit, and was the right STYLE, my behaviour wasn't. I yearned to be a good girl, do the right thing, but monotonously, my mouth would open, and I would question the mandated manners, the rigid rules, the lock-step laws---"But why do we have to do that, eat that, say that?" And I truly wanted to know, because I always want to know, Why? What's below the surface? What is that about? Who says? Where do these rules/laws/reasons/habits/lives we live come from? Never in a malicious way, but very aware from an early age of inequities, injustices, and, after the age of 10, not really expecting anyone in authority to respond with anything other than lies and annoyance, but still driven to ask.... Why?

People have offended themselves on me all my life, angered themselves at my disturbances, my writing, my voice/Voice. This is one of my Personal Stories, carried in my bag, taken out still for a bewildered look, prompted by the hostility directed at me, the pressure of Authority trying to mould me into the 'right' shape, the right 'place' in life. But it's never worked.

I was cast at birth, I think, as Rebel, Revolutionary, BAD GIRL.....my reputation coming with me in my bag on paper--forms, assessments, regulations flouted, laws broken--and personality 'reports'. Now at 47, I get into as much trouble as I did at 7, or 17, but I have stopped trying to be the Uniform(ed) Good Girl, the Well Disciplined Subject....

Reprise: From my Journal, July 22, 1996

I feel as usual like I will draw lightning, but am determined to keep that mouth firmly closed, not say a Valerie word, no Valerie jokes, no stirring things up. But, of course, not talking is so hard, I am the most optimistic pessimist I know, my good intentions die at the hands of my impulsive 'chatter'....here we go again....

Gender/What Has it Engendered in Me?

Like Jane, I attended an all-girls school, but unlike her, it is not a time I look back on with pleasure. Like her, I never absorbed the lessons of gender, career choices or sex role stereotyping that are so prevalent in mixed sex schools. It was not until I reached the Sixth Form that I met boys....but as Jane says the socializing, gendered, aspects of our education were missing,

Commentary: The Five Women Speak

Jane: I guess, I mean going back to the classroom experience, I've been telling Valerie about my experience, I went to an all girls school...I guess it's given me a different perspective because I didn't experience that the boys were talked to more, because it wasn't part of our realm.

Sonia: I've heard a lot of praise for segregated schools.

Valerie: I went to a single sex school and I wonder if I would be here, now, if I hadn't. Because there was never any difference between Math and Science and History and English, you just were all encouraged to do it, pushed toward academic excellence, that was the motivator.

Jane: I also think, that although I got an excellent academic education I missed out on a lot of the socialisation, BIG time!

Valerie: Me too! (G2:1)

But now I wonder if that was so bad, because when I did have classes and education with boys, I had a mirror to hold up to that experience, to compare it to.... Here is some writing from the Gender War Class, vintage summer of '96, about hitting the gender wall, the first time, about discrimination, about self-regulation....

Words from my Journal, July 26, 1996

My, I must have been cut deep yesterday, when I had to present a "feminist" article that provoked a lot of hostility.... All the old cynicism coming back, it's like being back in the Sixth Form, at King Edward VI Grammar School, Louth, Lincs. Where, after the comfortable years of single sex education, we were dragged, all of us, into mixed classrooms, male teachers--"Sir" after all those years of "Miss", boys in with us! And it was different, for they were suddenly dangerous and demanding, and so destructive, and we were so coy, so seductive, so awkward....

How do you compete with boys in the classroom? You don't. Girls compete. We discovered boys declare war, and use every advantage they can against you.... All of a sudden it's not a good idea to be top of the class any more.... Too brainy, too stuck up, too bigheaded! But not if you're a boy, then it's normal. How they hated us when we beat them, and then they beat us in all the other ways.... They rejected us, and to be rejected was to be cut out of the herd, the mating dance, to be abandoned, was to force one to give up any claim to brains, Better a bust than a brain! But it seemed to be something I couldn't do, so I did what I could do, kept it secret, put on lipstick, pretended I didn't know the answers even though some of the teachers saw through me, and puzzled at why I tried to be a dummie when they knew I wasn't, kept asking me questions until my "I don't knows"

drove them away.

But my boyfriend (a new Prize, not one you could get on Speech Day) never knew, or never consciously did, for I let him win the top place, because belonging was too important to give up. And only a faint little whisper underneath the curled hair, the new eye-shadow, What are you giving up? and an even fainter one, which even to hear would lose my lover for me, It's not FAIR! I'm smarter than him, I'm smarter than all of them, why can't I say it out aloud?

But why the surprise, I learned before I could walk, before I could talk, Daddies hold the power, only Daddies count, Daddies rule.

So these days, in the classrooms I frequent now, many years later, too much later, too much thrown away for the Glittering Prizes of Love, I sit and memories come crowding.... Stifle the voice, smile, talk soft, turn the wrath, keep your boyfriend happy, wear what he likes and let him call you dummie. But the whisper is getting louder now, someone else might hear it, god forbid, yes, but Goddess hopes someone will.... as a shout

IT'S NOT FAIR! IT'S NOT FAIR!

As I walk over to see Phoenix-the-cat (I am looking after him while his owner is away, one of my many jobs that pay my way through Grad school) I cross the Arbutus Railway Tracks, where so many of the homeless have their hiding places, and on the sign that says, No Trespassing! someone has written their world, sadly

the RICH rite the rules

and I want to say, No

the RICH and the MEN rite the rules.

More memories, this thinking and writing of gender stirs the bottom of the brain, and just look at the things that come floating up....

I think it is something I have to come to terms with, the decision I made at 17, and again at 25, to give up the life of the mind, to be lobotomized for love, to have part of my brain excised by the Loves of my Life, so that I would not be a challenge to them. Could dream, instead of Ph.D's in Medieval History or entrance to the Foreign Office, of kitchens full of red pots and pans and a career as a wife and, possibly, if he said it was ok, a teacher.

And.... Oh, how I hated school, teachers, teaching and all it meant, and how I longed for Cambridge, or King's College, or BudaPest, but pretended I didn't....Denied ever reading War and Peace (twice), every one of Hardy's, Zola's, Flaubert's, Dostoyevsky's--and even, for God's sake, Pushkin's, all the Russian--novels my library stacked, denied three times and more, with or without cock crows (or more aptly, as the cock crowed victory) my craving for learning, for words, and worlds, and said, Oh you are clever (insert current name)!! Much cleverer than me! And one I left and one left me, and so I came to Canada, tried for Love one last time, gave up Love and Learning for Absence of Brain and Absence of Heart, and now....

Here I am writing a thesis...not too late, I hope?

Commentary: The Five Women Speak

Lana: Yet, I wonder too if some of this isn't due to the fact (of) socialisation, young girls into womanhood in terms of...biology, in terms of willingness to please, to be desired, wanted and those kinds of things..Do they perpetuate it somehow..that attempting to please and to be liked, and liked by a male. I may be taking this out of bounds but I think there are other, biological or genealogical motivations that create the way woman react..in society. I mean whatever the biological motivation is here, I think it underscores the behaviour and maybe therefore some of the compliance that we see, some of that, that..submissiveness and that lemming syndrome, I don't know..

Valerie: But if it is biological, why is so much effort and time spend socialising people? I mean, if it's innate, that little girls will be little girls and little boys will be little boys, why is so much time spent socialising boys to be boys and girls to be girls? And I think, like Sonia speaks about teaching, one of the most inimical or one of the biggest influences is the classroom teacher, they always give more time to the boys, they answer the boys questions, the girls are praised for being good and quiet and the boys for being lively and I guess even today with all the education that goes on, this still happens. And I was reading that and I thought, I wonder if that happens in the big people's classrooms too?

Lana: I mean it just opens up a whole other dimension, that. (G1:21)

*

Language and Texts, Or, How Shall I Put That?

The difficulty with 'myth' started me thinking about what foundations for life and its writing have been laid for us in language. I had refused to use the word myth, or even to use "myth" the concept as embedded in the word, to de-construct the stories of the Five Women--it felt to me as if it had too much of a masculine, iron tasting, sword wielding, beheading, sneering tone to it. While writing in the Gender War Class, summer '96 again, hoping to round out my sense of the importance of narrative, voice, language, how to find the writerly way of wording a world-view, I came across theory that validated my misgivings about the "masculine" inappropriateness of language.

Lillian Bridwell-Bowles (1992), writing about encouraging diverse discourses, began to answer some of these questions, ones I had been struggling even to form, to articulate, ones that had emerged as I began to 'write up' my thesis. Especially the questions that were welling up, mysteriously, around "myth", de-railing my analysis, paralysing my use of a framework that I had found intriguing.

When I read Bridwell-Bowles' words on the "father tongue", I found my uneasiness about the choosing, or using, of what should be innocuous, even lovely words, like "myth", substantiated. Bridwell-Bowles says,

Any departure from the norm is accompanied by fear.... Perhaps in time, post structuralist revolutions in thinking about our culture will influence our language so much that we will come to see personal writing, nonlinear patterns of organization, writing that contains emotion, writing that closes the gap between subject and object, writing that does something "with" and not "to" the reader, and all the other possibilities yet to come as having equal status with carefully reasoned, rational arguments.... All of this is complicated of course because we are working within a patriarchal, racist, and classist culture and using a

patriarchal, racist and classist variant of language to try to define something outside the culture. It may not be possible to create a feminist discourse with "the father's tongue" (citing Penelope, 1990, Speaking freely: Unlearning the Lies of the Father's Tongue) or the "master's tools" (Audre Lorde's now famous comment, p. 352).

Exactly! There is my feeling theorised, and explained! I have had so much trouble trying to write in ways that did not/does not fit the stories of the Five Women, nor my own. But what to do? Fear indeed is a great motivator, and fear of not having my thesis accepted is a real one.... But at least I now have an answer for one of those questions I did not know came with me on my thesis voyage.

But that question raises another--how do these "language games" play out in real life? How is our world written/spoken politically? How are we constructed as subjectivities in the father-tongue? On a whim, I turned to the Thesaurus function on my word processing, and found out how we are gendered by language--unequally.

man:

(n) 1. a human beings

- b. humanity (n) human race
- c. humankind (v) benevolence, charity, compassion
- d. mankind
- e. people

2. f. chap

- g. fellow
- h. guy

(v)

3. i. garrison

j. people

k. staff

l. station

(ant): abandon

And woman

(n) 1. a dame

b. dowager

c. female

d. lady

e. matron

2. f. consort

g. mate

h. spouse

i. wife

j. handmaiden

k. housekeeper

l. maid

(ant) man, husband

Masculine

male, manly, virile, brawny, muscular, powerful, robust, strong, (ant) feminine, weak,

Feminine

female, ladylike, womanly, delicate, dainty, soft,

(ant) masculine

Interesting indeed! So if I now question the use of the father tongue, what should I put in its place?

Wittgenstein's famous line, "Language goes on holiday", used to describe the convolutions and exclusivity of academic language prompted me to think of using "plain language", but up comes another question: is "plain language" simply another language game, part of the discourse of derision used by the New Right to

debunk and displace not only specific words and meanings--progressivism and comprehensiveness--but also the speakers of the words, those 'experts', 'specialists' and 'professionals' referred to as the 'educational establishment'...their control over meaning [is] lost, their professional preferences replaced by...technologies of 'truth' and 'rationality'..the market, efficiency, and management. (Ball, 1990, cited in Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 91)

It seems my choice of language is narrower than I thought when I first began. Back to the examination of just how powerfully I am bound by the father tongue, academically and personally.....

Jane Tompkins (1987) extended my cognitive knowledge of what the "father tongue" is, and what it means for women writing within the academy to try to not use the father tongue. I had already got a pretty good handle on what I should not be using, and felt the emotional push away from the "father tongue", but I needed a filling-in of that affective understanding.

One of the most important things I learned, reading and writing and working with language in my Summer Session course, was just how language shapes my words/worlds. So how will I be able to write my Women's/woman's world in a language not my own? I shall have to invent a new language. I like the quotation from Ursula Le Guin used by Tompkins,

The dialect of the father tongue that you and I learned best in college...only lectures...Many believe this dialect--the expository and particularly scientific discourse--is the highest form of knowledge, the true language, of which all other uses of words are primitive vestiges...The essential feature of the father tongue is not reasoning but distancing--making a gap, a space, between the subject or the self and the object and the other...All the great

thinkers wrote in it. It is the language of thought that seeks objectivity. The mother tongue, spoken or written expects an answer. It is conversation, a word the root of which means "turning together". The mother tongue is language not as mere communication but as relation, relationship...It connects...Its power is not in dividing but in binding. We all know it by heart. (cited by Tompkins, p. 173, no source)

But I am not sure of two things:

1. Is mother-tongue what I want to use? I think not. Is there a variant, another choice apart from the old binary one? Can there be a feminine writerly language, or a gendered writerly tongue, or even a new tongue, a multiple tongue? Where I can take bits of one and put with bits of another, and create a language of my own? After all, I want to use my voice, my tongue, not my mother's tongue, nor my father's tongue, but my own, to honour the voices of the Five Women. Can I do this? Yes, I can and will.

2. Tompkins is right, too right, when she tells us that the public-private hierarchy is a "founding condition" of female oppression, and it's also right too, that upholding a male standard of rationality, which includes a discourse divorced from emotion, is the one that is academically acceptable. If the only way to challenge the hierarchy is to use the language that it accepts, then isn't that a betrayal? But how do I/we/women get published/approved/mastered or doctored if we don't use the father's tongue? Well, I guess I'll be finding that out, soon....

These two questions, answers different daily, are packed awkwardly in my bag, jostling me, poking me in the side when I least expect it, making my writing irritable, and I am sure, irritating to some! But my Language is my own, and I have made the choice to use it--in the public, academic sphere, because maybe it is time to move beyond the Father tongue.... And someone has to be the first....

And Texts and Truth

Language makes our world. In the world/text I am creating there is, in a Derridian sense, a meaning held within it, where the 'text' of the Women's learning is the reality of education, for if there is no 'outside' reality, no 'truth' or meaning apart from the text, then I must accept this 'text' as truly representing the world of education/learning of the Five Women.

Derrida's texts suggest that the meaning of education is not to be found on this outside, but rather on the 'inside', in the story or stories (narratives) which education tells about itself, or perhaps more accurately, the stories told for and about it (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 145).

This text, or story, is created by the fusion of researcher and researched, and becomes another story, an intertextual story with its meaning contained within it. I have struggled with Truth, and how to represent Truth with Language, to make this story authentic, real, reliable, how to put down my bag while I write, but of course I can't. Like Pilgrim, this burden is inseparable from me.

However, I can read and write the text knowing that the work that the textuality of texts does can only be understood by becoming aware of and using certain features which they have in common:

- * con-text (or that which is 'with' the text); the situatedness of the researcher/reader-embodiedness, embeddedness, e.g., gender, ethnicity, class, biography;

- * pre-text (or that which is 'before' the text); language and signification, binary oppositions, writing and textual strategies, culture and interpretive traditions;

- * sub-text (or that which is 'beneath' the text); professional paradigms and discourses, power-knowledge formations. (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 153)

Holding my bag, I know from its weight that I must, indeed, have a pre-text, a con-text and a sub-text! But I am holding my bag as I write this text and I do try to remember what has

come before, what is with, and what is beneath my words/language.

So if you ask me, "Is it true, what these women said to you?", I shall have to answer, Yes. And, No. There is a constant tension between true and untrue, but in this text, I present the reality as it was true for the Five Women on the days they talked to me....another day, and perhaps the stories would have been different, but they would still carry meaning, would still be accurate representations of what the story/narrative of their lived experience was on that day, at that time. I started my graduate life thinking that there was an 'outside' meaning if I could just find it--now I know the only meaning resides inside the text I have constructed, as researcher/researched.

And so I have to keep unpacking and packing my bag; what I find in it differs now from a week ago, a year ago, a day ago, and especially from when I began this study....and what will it contain next year? I look forward to another search, "I unpacked my bag and in it I found...."

A Postscript To a Postscript

I have told you stories, given you snaps of me, at 7, at 17. The snaps of me at 47 come, as I am sure you have already discovered, in the Interludes, and the allusions, which tell the story of Valerie at 47, the story of my summer course, Vintage '96, the story of the Gender Wars. It is the bright red thread that runs through the Five Women's Story, the 'sub', the 'pre' and the 'con' text of this thesis. It is a corollary to, a supplement to, an explanation too, of their stories of learning, teaching and planning....

A RIVER OF TALK

At the beginning of June I returned to Winnipeg for a conference. I had lived there several years ago, five or six, before I moved to Vancouver in 1991, and it was gratifying to visit old friends and old places, to find them as unchanged and clear as my homesick memories had made them. I had been totally immersed in my thesis for several months, writing drafts, interviewing women and thinking, thinking, thinking and talking, talking, talking.... A river of talk had flowed over me and around me. I needed diversion, and so I was thrilled to find the two rivers in Winnipeg swollen and turbulent with spring run-off, and went down to the Forks to take in the sight with all the other tourists.

The Red River had always been rather corpulent; large, sedate but powerful, dominating the city and areas, rather ominous, masterful, but lazy--you knew it could flood you, drown you if it chose, it had the power.... But normally, it tolerated you, having no inclination, no wish to exert itself. The Assiniboine was much more flighty, scurrying along, eddies and swirls, very energetic but no match for the Red which engulfed and swallowed it whole in a brief death flurry, there at the Forks. But this June, what a difference!

Both rivers had swollen and bloated, the Assiniboine particularly. I stood on the banks I had often walked in the evenings years before and nearly didn't recognise it. It, or she?, chuckled and laughed, talking excitedly to itself as it raced along, flirting with the trees, dragging them under its surface, letting them spring free, leaves flying, gasping for green air. And as for the works of Man, the carefully contrived walkways, proudly laid out by Parks and Rec., manicured, shaped to take the tourist comfortably along the banks to the Forks. Well! Drowned, drenched, under nine feet of dirty chortling water! I loved it.

I sat on a bench, scratching mosquito bites, and as I slapped it seemed to me that the Assiniboine was just like my women's river of talk. On the surface, flowing strongly, chuckling to

herself, a collection and a connection of little female streams, merged in to one larger and louder voice, telling stories of trips through the country, cutting paths, making a way for herself, swirling through the city.... She was inspiring, fun, connected, embodying all the best of what we call nature, a bright community of rain, snow, dirt, springs, an outpouring of a quintessential femininity. If I closed my eyes, I could hear Sonia talking and laughing with Lee, Jane "gabbing" to Lana, Lana throwing herself bodily into her conversation, arms waving, and Yolanda, sitting smooth and quiet, her words promising great depths. I heard their voices, coming from the river of talk at its surface, as it went racing along, drowning lamp standards and lawns and bedding plants placed too close to its banks, challenging the "it's such a peaceful little river" story I had always been told.

But, too, as the women's stories had begun to reveal when I listened more closely, there was effort involved. Struggle, battles against institutions, people, the "correct channels". Sometimes the river of talk smashed against those obstacles, and reeling and receding, fell frustrated, chastised, put in its place. So, too, had the women often felt as they experienced learning, because, as their own rivers swept them too close to the banks of traditions, the sandbags came out, and defenses were raised against such an invasion of non-river ground.

And some days later when I returned to the Forks just before leaving, I saw what lay at the bottom of the bright, sparking, sparkling, flooding Assiniboine....stinking mud three or four feet deep, whole trees which it had had the strength to carry with it, now thrown up on the banks, with clusters of branches, weeds, bike tires, a dead animal, and all the other dark, secret river-bottom things that shouldn't be exposed to the air and light. The river had talked, laughed, screamed, struggled and had finally had to show what it carried along beneath it....it did not have enough power to hold to its new course, not enough energy to sustain its new high-water mark. As with the women, power was what counted in the end, and He who had the power won.... But what a show the River had put on, what stories it told of what might be, could be, what a model it

had been of feminine power in those few weeks!

I took the model the river had shown me, and the metaphors, and set them, like music, to the stories the women told me. On the surface, all is bright, funny, where talking is a metaphor and a reality for many ways of learning and connecting and creating community, models for a new kind of learning.... Or is it a way of learning forgotten and concreted over when the scientists and rationalists decreed which way the river should run? But still there, subversive, running underneath the paving....

So here are just some of those stories of what seemed to the women to be learning as women--what was preferred, where and how it actually took place and what effect these experiences had had on their professional work. Here the stories confirmed much of the literature, where talk was crucial, collaboration, community and connection were found, and where an holistic and embodied approach to learning was preferred. And here are stories of school, of how the theory they were taught served to validate the lessons they had already learnt in practice.

Talking: As Learning, Teaching and Planning

Yolanda: Learning Is....

I think that's all there is. Like what else is there in life? If you're not learning something then what are you doing? You're just nothing. You're just there! If you're not learning, then how are you engaging in life? You know? You've gotta engage some way, and it just seems to me that it's the most positive way to engage with people and I mean, it's always active. And you make a difference. In some little way that we may not know, but you always make a little bit of a difference. Like I know with some of my students I make a tremendous difference in their life, and I know that they're going to remember me for a long time. I mean, it just seems to me that

everything you do is learning.

You learn how to drive your car, and then you learn what streets to drive it on, and then you learn the ways to Baskin and Robbins--you know, like it's all learning! That's all it is. You learn that you like to run the Seawall when the tide is out, rather than when the tide is in.

It's all part of who you are, it's all a part of how we engage in this world, and I look at some of the improper behaviour that I see (at the hospital), and I think, you know, "What did you learn, how did you learn it, from whom and why do you want to continue?"

But (learning) it's just a positive way to live. Where did I learn that? I don't know. Not from my family. But I believe it with my heart and soul. And I don't know where it came from, because I don't think I've read it in a book. (I) didn't learn it at school, no! Mrs Harris did not teach me that! And (it's) not something that came from doing (my) Masters and Baccalaureate. No, I think it's been a part of my path for a long time.... But I don't know where it comes from or why it comes....(Y1:20)

Lana: Informal Learning is....

I think that when you talk about learning about the self and one's abilities and one's aptitudes and getting through one's fears, I've been in an environment where people around me tote their PhD's and one's worth or self worth attaches to that, and so much of my understanding of myself is within that kind of academic standard. But once I broke through that myth, then the informal part is learning about me. And that's what this whole experience has done, allowed me to take more risks and grow and go through that, and that's informal learning I would say. (L2:33)

Yolanda: Talking And Body, Too

I think talking is everything and I'm coming to realise that I'm really looking at conversation and what happens between people in conversation, because that's where it all occurs.

Even if it's conversation with yourself that's where it happens. And 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. You know? But I think my body is very much my grammar, it's how I punctuate things. But talking is everything. It's, it's the key element, it's the only way that I'm going to know what you're thinking or feeling or wanting and it's the only way that you can know or have any understanding of what I think, feel or want. And it's the only way we can come to any sense of meaning between us, it's not going to happen any other way. You know, and there are some, I think there's non-verbal discourse that happens as well and I think that that's part of talk, that's part of conversation. And that's touch and, and looking and, and sometimes it's just being in the room. But that's part of the conversation. When my students give IM's they're all terrified and they don't get a lot of practice with it, and it's kind of scary, you've got to go in there and make sure you find the right place to put it, you got to put a needle in somebody, and they're really...so when they do it, I rub their backs. I think that's part of conversation, you know, like they can feel my hand on their back and I'm right there, and, You're OK, and, You're alright, and Just do it...While they push the med in I just kind of rub their back and then I leave. And they're fine and I know they're fine. And that way if they are going to fall apart on me, I know that too! Laughs! But so, no it's..I think talk is the word I use, but I don't think of it narrowly. I have a very wide construction of it, so that it encompasses a whole bunch. But I do think that's what it is. Yolanda (Y3:8)

Jane: Talking and Teaching

We had mostly young women, except for Miss X, a nice older lady, never married, very kind, very understanding and really tried to make you do your best, but in really gentle ways. There was a Biology teacher and for the life of me I can't remember her name, I can picture her. Again it was probably she, Grade 8 or 9 where you're rebelling over everything, and we did just a

lot of talking in her class, you know Grade 8 or 9 you're going through all the various things..and from a Biology standpoint it makes perfect sense to sit there with all your little girls and just talk about what's going on in your life. That created a real impact. There was a History teacher from back East, I can't remember her name, who really developed my love of History, I had really hated it before, and I don't know what she did, I guess she started bringing in things like novels, historical novels and piqued my interest from a storytelling standpoint. So I guess different ways of teaching really impressed me, and a lot of discussion because I've always loved to talk.

Talking is very important for me, I learn best when I sit down and talk with a whole bunch of people. I mean I'm very logical, and I do like the things that have to be right or wrong, I can do that. I kind of think it's just a great big puzzle. But my greatest um, I don't know, experiences are the debates. Where there is no right answer and you talk to other people and find out what their opinion is and it may sway you and it may not, that's where I get really excited.(J1:2)

Sonia: Talking as Creating a(n) (Embodied) Learning Community

And there's an incredible potential to human beings gathering together in group situations to learn, it's just that it's not used properly usually. I think that because their bodies are engaged in learning as well, voice tones, and many other things..It's like in Tibetan Buddhism, you have textual teachings but really the heart of it, that traces back to the Buddha, is the oral teaching, it's an oral uninterrupted lineage. It's like, just to be there, it's like a chemical...the process of learning, of being there, it's not just about the knowledge, it's like a transmission quality as well, you could also see it as an archetypal thing, it has psychological resonance and maybe even physiological resonance. Which I think, why not have that potential here? You know, I think it is going on when you get a brilliant teacher, and if other people are able to come in and talk and join in that creative process, then all the better. You'll raise questions, in a class, and all these different views coming in, it's like in ethnography the more voices you have the more valid it is. And in my best

learning experiences, that'll happen. Then I'll go and be replaying that tape of what was said in the class. Over and over again, and building the threads into my understanding, you know, as I reflect on it. And then if I'm writing as a form of reflection as well, then it gets threaded through my writing. And then come back to class, with synthesised information, but new questions that come out of that..It's, that's the best to me! The best combination. (U2:23)

Lee: Talking Is Forbidden, The Old Paradigm

I remember there was a girl in our class who, there was some political struggle going on around Nursing and nursing education and the fact that students were being overworked, and she went on the radio and talked about what was happening anonymously. Which was totally against what anyone should do in those days. And I remember the big meeting and the Faculty telling us we had to tell who talked, and us all meeting not wanting to give her name. The pressure mounted and mounted and the faculty agreed there would be no repercussions, so finally someone told her name. They kicked her out. There was HUGE problems over that. She came back the next year and finished off, she still comes to our reunion because she sees herself as part of our class. But I looked back on that and think in many ways we didn't support her, because it was just whirling around us, we had no skills for knowing how to deal with this level of stuff. Their definition of professionalism is that you never talk out, and tell the truth, or tell the reality of the situation. Because she wasn't saying anything untruth. Oh, and yes, and when we talked to patients as well..Oh there, oh definitely there was stuff you couldn't say. You had to leave it up to the Doctor to say stuff, and that was very, very well defined. The rules were there. And the culture defined the rules. (L1:3)

Yolanda: Talking in the Male Paradigm

Well, you know, you're still walking into a predominantly male paradigm. It's traditional, it's old, he who talks loudest the longest wins! You know, so it doesn't matter where you are, you're going to fight the same battle. It's not winnable in Nursing. It is more winnable in Education because I think there are more people who are willing to listen. (Y2:10)

Lee: Men and Women Talking

When I'm in a class I'm not one of the more verbal members in the class. I really believe in sitting and listening and getting a feel for it, and I also have a real strong sense of not just talking for the sake of talking. If I have something to say, I'll say it, if I don't have anything to say and I can learn more by listening, I will be quiet, I won't say anything the whole class. I don't feel a pressure on me to talk. Sometimes when there's been classes and you can observe that say, the males are doing the majority of the talking, I'll pick that up and think, Hmm! You know, What's happening there? I think that there's competitiveness in the classroom. I think it's demonstrated by people trying to get their voice out front, and talk a mile a minute, and appear, wanting to appear, brilliant. So, I mean my response is then to just sit quiet and let them appear as brilliant as they want to appear, I'm not going to compete with them. I'm not going to enter that field.

If I sit quiet I can learn, you know, if I really disagree I can speak up and say I don't agree with that, it doesn't threaten me and it doesn't impress me, if I can learn, fine, if I can't, I think that it's really important that the facilitator play a role with that. I don't like it when the facilitator or the prof or the teacher, whatever you want to call them, lets that predominate in the class. You know, I think males dominate, because I think that's how males have been socialised, men are socialised so that their voice is more valued than female voices, so they tend to do that. (L2:20)

Lana: Men and Women Talking

Oh, I don't think so, if it is, its something I've never really paid attention to. I find, maybe this is an over generalisation, but sometimes the men can put their argumentation together or they seem sort of less, um, what's the word I'm looking for, sometimes I think some of the fellows have really been good at putting their thoughts together and organising their thinking and being a bit more critical and reflective and I find that. Yet I've run into a couple of gentlemen who are just all over the map, so I don't know, I don't think that I can truthfully say there's any difference (L2:29)

Yolanda: Talking Is Learning Is Connecting Is Teaching

I think that's the status quo (keeping distance), that's what university teaches, I think it teaches you how to maintain distance, and that's what they see as a professional. And I think it's what the RNABC¹ perceives as professional. It's not! It's not got anything to do with it-- professionalism is in creating that connection in a decent and caring manner, but it's not in maintaining distance. It's not coldness and aloofness, but that is what's taught. And I've watched doctors at the hospital give chemotherapy and never say a word the entire time that it's happening...You know, and I think, "How can you do that? This person is scared stiff! And you're running this purple drug into them, how can you do that!?" But they don't know, that's what they're taught...It's the old male paradigm, very masculine.

Grand theories, anything to keep from being understood, I believe. You know, like when you read some of the theory people propose, and I just think "Hah! This is meant to create distance and to keep distance, it's not meant to create anything that leads to understanding. 'Cos understanding doesn't occur without connection. There has to be some kind of resonance for

¹. The Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia.

understanding to occur, so there has to be some kind of meeting, it's necessary. And so much of what I read, I think "This is meant to create distance, it's meant so you keep people away from you." (Y2:22)

Lee: Talking Is Connecting Is Good Teaching

There was a real strong respect and also there was a real strong connection: I think he tried to connect with everybody. I had arrived in class late and immediately he, just the way he came up to me, and talked to me, gave me a sense that he was going to really value my presence in that room, it was very important. He was very skilled in really an understated way. (L2:20)

Jane: Talking and Showing The Way

It was really good when I originally started taking a couple of courses here at, the undergrad ones, and I had an excellent instructor, she was great. Just again her style, the planning model, that was my first exposure to a model, and I did very well in the class and it made lots of sense, and I thought that was kind of where I wanted to go.

And the instructor was talking about she came back to school and stuff like that, and it was like my exposure to trainers, corporate trainers, and I would consider her to be a corporate trainer rather than an academic, was just a lot more touchy feely. Like her, just a lot more caring, more learner centred, not lecture oriented, being very practical, coming up with neat little books that all appealed to me. It was a different way of learning again. And then I went on to take the companion course to that, instructional skills, something like that, and I had a grad student teach that from the States. And she was really out there!! I mean she had us do group hugs and stuff like that, which was a little bit beyond what I wanted to do, but it worked in her class. We did a journal in her class, it was a lot more feeling oriented. Very neat, neat lady. And she was getting her Doctorate here while she was teaching us, and she was telling us a little bit about the problems

she was having, bashing her head against whoever was here at the time. (J1:24)

Yolanda: Talking Is Caring

Because you know, you're sitting there and you're giving these drugs and sometimes it would take you an hour to give 'em, and you'd talk to people and people would tell you everything. And they would tell you about their families and how they felt, and mind you, I used to ask the question too, though, "How's the family dealing with this? And how's everybody, and how are you?" And you know, we talked about what it was like to lose your hair and lose your eyebrows and the nausea and the vomiting...And you got to know people. I mean, I can remember patients saying, "You've been running around all day! You just sit right down here on the end of this bed and rest!" You know? Like there was an incredible connection with people..maybe because they were all in some stage of dying. You know? It was a way to be alive, was to connect. But that's what we did, and the fact that I gave them these supposedly life-saving drugs, while that was going on it was just the vehicle for what was really happening. And what was really happening was the conversation between us. So that's what I think is still important. And that's what I tell students is important, is that. And you know some of them get it. (Y2:24)

Yolanda: Talking Is Connecting With The Body

I can understand people. And I can form a relationship with them that is connected, and I can understand what they need. You know, so that..I don't know it's so hard to explain, it's like, it's like the knowledge, is in my fingertips, that's where it really lies. Yeah, it's a bodily knowledge, an intuitive bodily knowledge.

Yolanda: Talking Is Epistemic

I'm also coming to understand that there's nothing wrong with looking for connection as being a way of knowing. That that doesn't make me less of a critical thinker or less of a rational thinker, or a logical thinker, it just means that I look for what's common and move from there and that's OK. And I'm becoming more comfortable with that. How do I define that? I just think that it's, in part, I try and understand what the person who wrote this article say, was thinking, feeling and saying. And just the same as I try and understand what you say, or I try to understand what the students say, from their perspective, as much as I can have that. And I look for what resonates between us. And that's what I use as our starting point. And I move from there. And I just think it's, it's about connecting with people, um, it's not, I don't look for differences, I don't look for what's wrong or what's right, I just look for that place where maybe we have a commonality, that we can then bridge to other things. And for a long time I've been told that was wrong. And that wasn't critical thinking. But I think it is. I think it's just different and it's not Socratic, and that doesn't make it wrong. And I've, it's been hard for me to come to grips with that because I think we're still inundated with this male model. That says that what you have to do! (Y3:22)

Jane: Talking Together

The group work, most of the group work that I've done has been very good, the people have been very good, most people pulled their weight. I hate group work though, because of the time factor more than anything else. I mean I like the fact of getting together with people and discussing and whatever, but it would be so much easier to do it by myself. Faster, easier, I could do it exactly the way I want to do it..

But by the same token by doing it in certain groups, there was one group I did for one class on Feminism, and there was one lady who knew it inside out, backwards, I learnt so much. Just from her. I got a whole bunch of reading material, I've read through about half of it, but I got exposure to feminism that I would never have gotten before, just because of her, because of a fellow student, not because of an instructor! So that was very beneficial for me, that group. It was on teaching styles, and we were presenting on a Feminist way of teaching. We had to do a presentation to the rest of the class on feminism, so we had to be really sure that we knew what it was, so we talked about the history of feminism and how it related to adult education; it was good, we had a video and everything. And I got an excellent mark! Probably one of the best I've gotten, and it felt really good, because I really did feel that I had learned a lot. (J2:14).

Yolanda: Talking Is Being With

(Coming from the working class is) is, if anything, a boon for me, cos I understand where people come from and I can talk to them, because I can talk to my mum and to her family when I have to on their level. I know how to do that. And I know what their world looks like. And what it feels like and sounds like, and that, is so I have a different bond. It's just a way, it's just a way of being with people.

When people from a very consistent middle class background go in they bring in their conceptions and they make judgements about people and, I mean we all do it, but when I go in and talk to the same person, I can talk to them at a different place. Cos I know what happens in their world. I have a much greater understanding of it because I've lived in it and I've seen it, and, so often what I can do is, I can draw on my own experiences and I can move into their experience with that. So, I know how their husbands treat them, and the way they're spoken to, and I know what they're watching on TV, and I know that that's their life, and I just have a sense of what to say and how to be with them, that's different from what others would have. (Y2:23)

Sonia: Talking and Listening to the Body

Clearly someone like her made efforts to integrate these sorts of things, but it just didn't work. I think she was too stressed out, like her heart wasn't in it? You know she wasn't present to us, her body, her whole body was rejecting being there. I mean, she was sick all that term, and she's a feminist but she's not listening to her body. So this is part of it, it's about being embodied, in this environment, I think that makes a difference. And it is, the professors that I work best with, that's the way I would describe them, it's the way I always describe the Dalai Lama, too. Why I was so drawn to him from the beginning. And he said, They are embodied people who enter an intellectual or academic environment, you know? And I remember seeing the Dalai Lama on a video tape with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Catholic Archbishop, and they were giving him some honour from St. Francis of Assisi, and he was like, you know, scratching himself and he looked like, here was this live person on TV, with these other people who are like frozen stiff! And I thought, that's so interesting, how can a person be so alive and appear so alive? And when I met him in person it was the same thing, he just resonated. And in every case, the three professors with whom I have found the learning became most transformative, also have that quality of being embodied. And that's my goal too as a teacher. I think when you talk about an embodied learner, then you're talking about the integration of all these things, the inter-relationship between all these things, feeling and thinking, emotions and the head, theory and practice, right? Our Noted Scholar, he was one of them, I found him to be embodied, you know, like he used to scratch his belly, sometimes, in class, no really, he did! I think he's an embodied person and he comes out of the Anglican tradition so I guess it's possible anywhere, you know? Oh! And I just slighted the Archbishop of Canterbury too! And he's English too, right? But he was, you know, definitely a catalyst, an important catalyst for me. In moving me out of the institution through his phenomenological assignments, especially doing that work, you know,

everything..It worked, you know, like that was where the classroom, that was one of the models I was thinking of when I was saying how it can work. (U2:23)

Yolanda: If You Don't Talk/Teach....

A problem for me is that coming from Ontario we didn't have this tremendous fundamentalist reaction that you have in BC, especially in the Lower Mainland. In Ontario, issues of abortion and euthanasia were part of the curriculum in high school, they were discussed in health classes and they were discussed in History classes, as civil studies. They were talked about; we had issues in Ethics classes in Grades 12 and 13 where these kinds of things were brought up and discussed. So when I trained, even in a Catholic Hospital, but of course we didn't do abortions, I wasn't unfamiliar to what an abortion was, and I had certainly thought about it and considered it, and it was something that had been talked about amongst me and my class mates.

But when I come here, people don't do that kind of learning in High School, they don't talk about abortion or euthanasia, any kind of those ethical issues that have a societal impact. So the first time, you see, I got caught off guard, because I just assumed that that was part of everybody's curriculum. Well, here this was happening on the ward and I didn't understand why my students were all on the ceiling.

The ward where there were postaglandin abortions, and every hospital here handles them badly. Women are left alone, usually to labour in their beds and the babies are born in to either a bedpan or a commode, and as these are done quite late..So, we have the technology now where we can keep a 20 week old infant alive, and these kids are often 20 to 22 weeks, so many of them are born breathing, they cry. So you know, you had students on the ward and even though they weren't looking after the patient, there's a baby crying in a commode and everybody's waiting for it to die, so that they can take it, and take it down to the lab or whatever. And you know, you've got students who just have never really considered what abortion meant, and what babies mean,

and when life starts and when life doesn't start and at the same time you've got a woman in a bed, who needs somebody to be with her, and you've got students falling apart and I mean, it's here and it's now, and it's present and you deal with it!

Well, they'd never considered the issue before, this was the first time that abortion ever in any way was real to them. So I had to, it took some time to defuse that and talk about that.

(Y1:26)

Lana: Talking As Dominating

It varies, some of the students have a certain personality type and like to dominate the room, the course etc, and there's always going to be those, I mean I've worked enough in group dynamics to know that that's the way it is, and they're a pain in the ass and you just deal with it. Sometimes I get a little angry when these people are allowed to sort of dominate and either the instructor doesn't intercede and/or other students allow this person to sort of take over. I don't, I'm never really very good at sort of dealing with conflict but I'm getting better at it. I think that, that really it's the instructor at that point who really is the leader in the class and has that responsibility and it angers me when they don't utilise that appropriately. There was one, there's been a couple of situations, where in fact a student had been embarrassed by an individual, and it was over, in retrospect, a silly thing but it really was uncomfortable in the class, this poor guy was so nervous, and this individual spoke up, trying to say it nicely, but this guy was just almost in tears.

I felt so badly and here I was playing the kind of, you know, protective role, well, I think I did speak out at that point, but we kind of let it go because it was getting out of hand. And you know, that there was no debriefing afterwards which was really unfortunate, the instructor didn't choose to debrief. But you know he debriefed the very last day on it, because it had hung in the group.

And nobody had taken any initiative to get it out, it was very wrong, very wrong, because that student felt badly, left feeling badly, there was all this, everybody in the room felt badly, it was just poor, very poor group dynamics. The leader, you know, also I think he was defaulting to the group and the fact that we were all adults and I mean its just, but still, there's that human aspect of learning and there's just common courtesy and it just, it really was unfortunate and that happened on another occasion, similar to that, (L2:27)

Yolanda: Caring Teaching Versus ?

(She laughs!) Oh I've had several outstandingly baaaad experiences, and...Well, yeah I've had a couple of outstandingly good teachers, they've been female. Um, and they have been, they've been people who have been knowledgeable and intelligent and willing to connect, and sensitive and understanding of what goes on in people's lives? You know? Just people who are really open, caring, you know, caring people and you know, willing to talk and discuss certain things and...Then I've had other experiences where people have been quite cruel, and "You will think as I say". Certainly I ran into that problem with writing my Master's thesis in Education. Yeah, You will think as I say, and we weren't going anywhere until I wrote what he wanted, so!! There we go! (Y2:30)

Sonia: Talking As New Possibilities

The big V voice of wisdom is the language of community...my interest in building it here in the West has been informed in part by my experience in Buddhist culture. (It's) a nurturing Voice of possibility. And, almost utopian, you know..that we can imagine a way that is different..it's a very feminine place too, right? And when that is blocked, the ability to speak out of that, my voice becomes a smaller v voice, which is critical, very into critical analysis, because I am critical of the fact that that nurturing voice isn't allowed, so! (she laughs), I'll deconstruct until

it's able to manifest and when it manifests then let it manifest as a re-constructed voice, yeah.

(U2:28)

Lee: On Relating Practice to Theory

Like it was just that sense, when you have that sense that there's a gap in your knowledge, and you don't quite, you're not quite sure what it is but you're not able to get the questions to find that out. So when I came back (to school) I decided I was going to try to fill in that gap. (L1:28)

Jane: Ta(l)king It Back to Practice

Oh yeah, post-modernism sparked major discussions in my office because I went back and told them all about this and they were going, Oh, that's really neat! And the whole feminist thing, that sparked real interest. So I was able to go back to work and say, I learned something new blah, blah, blah and I think this is how it goes, and they'd go, Oh yeah and what about this?, and I'd go, no, no, no, and so we'd have really neat discussions on that.

That was kind of neat to bring the knowledge back. And spark some people, and I love books, and so I bought books on the various things and said, Oh, you have to read this article! Or whatever. If you're interested in this topic, this is what you should read. It was neat. Post-modernism is one thing that, maybe that is learning for learning's sake, because I am not quite sure how I would apply that, but I am still fascinated by it. Well that's neat, because it's more on the leading edge, and with that I start thinking about how I teach and how I program plan and is there a different way of doing it? That kind of idea. (J2:24)

And putting it altogether....

Yolanda: The Cancer Man Story

I would be there with patients and I would be criticised for spending time with patients.. And I can remember one day in particular, where the census was really low and I only had three patients. And they were laughing at me, How can those three people be keeping you busy? I had a wonderful day, I only had three people all day, and I was busy, all day, with those three people. And people were like, How could that be?

And I remember, you know, again, it being real quiet on the floor, and one of the older nurses said to me, she said to me, You are so different, you're not like any of the others. And I said, What do you mean? And of course, as I'm going around what I'm doing is, I have a little cart, it's really slow in the ward, and I'm changing everybody's oxygen bottles and giving everybody clean masks, and she said, Nobody else would think to do this.

I remember this patient, he had blood on his bed and I said, Oh, you'll have to get up because I have to change that. And he looked at me and he said, You're not from here are you? Laughs! So, there's something. I need people, and I have to do something with people and I obviously, there's something that, and I believe in touch and I believe in, in caring and I think that..you see, I don't think that people get better because of anti-biotics or medications or anything else, they get better because it's that, I don't want to say it's motherhood professionalised, but it's that same kind of unconditional caring, that, I will be here with you. And that's why people get better. People don't get better for any other reason.

I looked after a gentleman and he was just a rubbie dub from off the East end, East side somewhere, and he had cancer and it had rotted through and his face was gone. And nobody wanted to look after him. And he was just a mess, he was dirty and smelly and he was just a mess. But you know, there was something in his eyes, I just thought, He's so nice. And he

couldn't talk, and you know all he wanted was a drink and a cigarette. So I got a little catheter and I cleaned his mouth out and I got old chicken out, behind, because everything had rotted away and then I packed it all and I figured out how to put a surgical face mask on to make a Band-Aid so he was comfortable, and got him all cleaned up, and I took him for a walk and people were just amazed. And I worked with him for five days. And he would smile and he would try and talk to me, and I would clean his mouth before and after meals, and..I just really enjoyed him for some reason. And somebody said to me, Boy your patients sure look cared for! And then I was off for three days and nobody took care of him, and when I came back he died.

I mean, it was because I was there. And I was willing to be there and I wasn't grossed out by his face and I was willing to pull the chicken out from beneath, you know and that sort of stuff and...clean it up and...I mean, he wasn't ever going to have a long life or a good life, but he was comfortable and he was happy, you know? He'd sit there and smile I'd bring him stuff, and, then...I just felt so bad when I came back to work...nobody had cared for him when I was gone. And I'm sure they'd done his dressing but that's all they'd done...So, it's just, you have to be with people...they just need to know that somebody cares and that somebody will be there and they're not alone.

And you know, it's the same with students, I tell students the same thing, You're OK, I'm right here, nothing bad is going to happen and there's nothing we can't work through. And you know, there isn't! Sometimes there might be consequences we don't want, but we can work through...we'll get through it and it's just, you just have to be with them, and that's what it's all about. But it's not about learning that potassium has to be between five point one and five point five, that's part of it, but it's more than that, and to simply reduce it to that factual knowledge is to just denigrate the whole human experience. (Y3:12-14)

Struggling: To Learn, To Be....

Reprise: But, too, as the women's stories had begun to reveal when I listened more closely, there was effort involved. Struggle, battles against institutions, people, the "correct channels".

Sometimes the river of talk smashed against those obstacles, and reeling and receding, fell frustrated, chastised, put in its place. So, too, had the women often felt as they experienced learning, because, as their own rivers swept them too close to the banks of traditions, the sandbags came out, and defenses were raised against such an invasion of non-river ground.

The second group of stories deal with the struggles and challenges the women faced, especially when they forgot their place, broke the banks, and surged into new territories. These stories are darker, deeper, and dirtier, as mud is churned up from the river bottom, choking up the new courses.

The stories were darker, more disturbing and discomfiting. Opposition was the theme-- from colleagues, from fellow students and especially from the "old, male model", the "old paradigm". Women felt devalued and belittled; they were sexualized, experienced subtle misogyny, and felt covert and symbolic violence directed toward them. This occurred in evaluations, in aggressive class room confrontations, in faculty-student interactions, in thesis committee meetings, in the workplace, in school--in all areas of learning. Often, practical knowledge was devalued, the academic theoretical knowledge held in higher esteem. The women paradoxically learnt from these kinds of experiences how not to plan educational activities.

Sonia: Struggling, As a Woman

It was like, I felt like it had been played out over and over again, like I was caught in a role as a woman. Where in fact I think outside of that institutional context he would have been the one culpable and needing to explain himself. Instead he had pushed it over to me as if I was neurotic and had a problem and that I had to explain myself. You know, I could feel it happening and it reminded me of decades of struggle as a woman, you know? So, and I couldn't get out of it, even though I knew it was not right, but I did, I struggled....

Lana: Struggles With Balance

Has it all been hard? Oh, I would lie if I say it hasn't impacted, I mean it can't help but.. You know, you get so self absorbed and I mean I've been doing this now, I did my under grad for eight years so it became, it's been my life, and I mean you don't notice, you know, three or four kids running around here either! (laughing) You know, we chose not to have a family but I think these are all life decisions in terms of, you know, you get so self absorbed in the whole process and it takes time, um, and I'm just not capable of being a super woman, you know? (L2:31)

Yolanda: Losses....

But no-one speaks to me anymore, so other than my mother, I have no family. Because they think that what I have done is wrong. And they think that I have stepped out of my place in the world, and that I should not have done this..I think it may have been in part the culture they came from. Only two of them have a high school diploma, and certainly of all the grandchildren, I think only three have gone through college, and not all of them have high school diplomas. So, no..they just believe that what I did was wrong, that that, there's no reason for this book-learning, and that it doesn't teach you what you need to know about life, and it's not important it's not real work. What (book learning) people do is not work, it's only work if the sweat runs down your

back... It's created a lot of hardship for me.

I never go to graduations; there's no-one who would come. So I've never attended any of them. (Y1:2)

Jane: Losing Time-Struggles

I know I need to do more reading, but it's actually finding the time to do that. If I have to come to a class and actually sit down in class I can organise my life around that. How do I ration my time? Well, when I was taking classes, I try to read a little bit over lunch if I could. During the day that's basically it. When my daughter wasn't there it was a lot easier to go home, have dinner, start doing some studies, stuff like that. Now that she is there I can't do anything while she is awake, it's just impossible, unless my husband takes her away.

So, after she was born I took a year off and so she made it to six or seven months before I had to start again, which was good. She goes to bed about eight, so from 8 to 11 was about when I did all my school work. And you're pretty pooped by then. Every night, I tried. Well, it didn't seem to be enough. I didn't do it every night, and I'd start feeling guilty, I'd try to do a little on the weekends if I could, but..that was my barrier, yes. And that's the trouble I'm having with my major paper too, is that that's the only time I have to do it, and by the end of the day, by 8 o'clock I want to take a bath and go to bed! My husband is really good about that. That was part of the conditions of me coming back for my Masters is that he knew he would have to take up some slack. (J2:11)

Yolanda Struggles With Committees

I failed Committee 101, Big Time! I did this twice. When I was in doing my Master's in Nursing I chose a committee and I fired them, they were horrible people and, "I can't do this", because I had a topic nobody wanted to deal with, Stress Incontinence. So that's what, you know,

when women sneeze, cough, laugh and they lose a little bit of urine? It affects about 80% of the female population. It's also more common in older adult women, and it's also, um, incontinence is probably one of the biggest concerns or issues, care-giving tasks that nurses deal with in hospital.

It is of immense proportion, you spend more of your day getting people to and from the bathroom and changing wet clothes than anything else. So it's not a little issue. But it's not a clean issue. It's kind of ukky, it's not about family and it's not about children and it's not about hearts and it's not about, even wife abuse is better than dealing with incontinence, right? Nobody wants to talk about this!

But anyway these people agreed to be on my committee but they really weren't interested and I wasn't working well with them, so I got rid of them. And I then got a woman, who I just think is a marvellous marvellous human being, and I'm sure she could part the Red Sea if need be, she is just a wonderful, and was extremely supportive and took this on, even though it was out of her realm, and then I had another woman, she and I didn't see eye to eye, very much at all. And she was kind of subversive, which I don't like, I like people to be much more up front and honest, I don't like things going on behind.

Anyway, those committee meetings for me were, they were quite OK. I mean you send stuff in, and you wrote it up, and we met as a group and we talked about it, and then you went away and you wrote it up again and you fixed this and that and the other thing and it was fine, and I mean I just thought that was the way life was supposed to be.

So, at university to do my Education degree, again, we're into this issue where, "Well you don't really fit with anybody", you know? So one man agreed to be on my committee, and he's a very nice man, and very supportive in a lot of ways. And then I had another gentleman on the committee who, supposedly, was a phenomenologist, but was a raging paternalist! And it was just war.

Two men, and so then that's why I invited the woman, because I thought maybe she could mediate for me. We also never met as a group, neither of those men would talk to me and what I needed was somebody to speak with, I needed to TALK to someone, and I was used to working that way, I was used to having a committee to talk to, and I needed to talk and yet they didn't want to hear from me. So um, I needed someone to kind of listen to some ideas and...tell me some, whether or not I was completely off track or whatever, so..She was great. She just you know, she listened to me and helped me sort some of it out.

The men, they just well, one doesn't bother reading anything, and toward, until toward the end, the other fellow, he would only respond in writing. So what happened was, is that he was responding and writing to what I had written but he was taking me in a direction I didn't want to go. And he was forcing that, because he didn't know where I wanted to go because he wouldn't talk to me to let me kind of explain, so it just kind of blew up. I asked at some points um, how we could work this out, and he just, "that's the way we do it". Yeah. So it was a very different experience, but they'll, they meet for your defense.

That was interesting...That was just bizarre, you know, the one, again, was on his tangents about what empathy was and part of it, you know, is that I'm so proud of being a nurse and of nursing, and what I see is what nursing does and how I know that it helps and if they don't have any of that sense of, what nursing is, you know, part of it's that.

And part of it's because you know, again, I think men are grand theorizers and I'm not. I'm very practical and you know, I'm just want people to feel better. So that's what I do. And they don't understand that. The defense actually went alright, it went, it went OK. I had an examiner who was great. And ER, she was wonderful. I wouldn't have anybody there! No. Because I didn't, one was just a loose cannon, I didn't know what was going to happen.

I'm working on the assumption, I know that on the next committee there are going to be two women! I do know that! I know who will not be on it! And I know that there has to be

three people on it, and two of them will be women! Laughs! (Y2:30)

Jane and the Class from Hell

The first class quite boring, he was quite good, well relatively good, but it was boring. It was general theory and he assumed that we knew a lot because he assumed everybody had taken the pre-req., which quite a few had but quite a few of us hadn't. So I had to do a lot of reading to catch up, and I didn't do as much as I should have. My first paper, getting that back, I got an OK mark but there was a lot of comments on that so my writing definitely wasn't up to graduate standards, like just how I cited things etc, I didn't know what the APA guide was or anything! And nobody takes the time to explain that to you. Oh, there was the orientations and that stuff for students but I mean, working full time, you just don't have the time to come in and do that sort of thing. No, couldn't get to anything, not the retreat or orientation, walked into the first class and EEEEEKKK!

The other students seemed pretty much in the same boat, there's always in any class I've been in there's always those that just seem to whizz through the class without an effort, get high marks and don't seem to do anything, and know all the top theories, seem extremely well read and make you feel like a country bumpkin! And then there's the middle, and then there's the people who are just totally out to lunch and I was somewhere in the middle and the totally out to lunch people! Laughs! It was a good learning experience in how to be a grad student and what sort of calibre was expected.

I was OK after that class, it was nothing great, it was kind of middle of the road, and then I hit his class! Oh God!!! I never met him before and other people who had had him before thought he was just fabulous. I remember the first thing he did when he came in the class, it was a 4.30 class, he said, This time is really inconvenient for me, how about if we change this to a 1.30 class? And about two thirds of the class worked full time, they started like sputtering and

coughing, and going, I don't think so! He had just no knowledge of who was in his class, like no conception. And that was basically it.

He had it in mind we were going to write a collaborative work, and we were each going to contribute a chapter for it. Which in hindsight is kind of a nice idea. The cynic in me figured that he just had to publish something and this was a good way for him to publish something. I worked damned hard in that class, it was beyond I really think what we should have been doing, it was thesis type material. We could, he worked it out, we picked any topic that fell into his theory and follow his format. I did a forty page paper for it! For a term's course, I did a 40 page paper which blew me away! I think I had something like five pages of references, it was a big paper.

He was--there was some question on whether he actually read anything. We had to meet a couple of time's at his house. He was extremely difficult to get a hold of, didn't respond to faxes, phone calls, emails he did respond to and that was when I started on the email system because that was the only way I could get a hold of him. But he couldn't see any of your work from that. At the end we had heard that, a lot of us had felt he hadn't read our final papers, and had just assigned marks. One of the ladies who wanted her paper back after the marks had been submitted, the secretary let her into his office and she got her paper back in her original sealed envelope.

We sent a letter to the Dean, we sent a letter to the Dean of Graduate Studies c.c.'ing the Professor, there was two separate letters saying this is ridiculous. Nothing was done. He wrote back saying he had seen our papers at least two times and probably he had, we submitted two drafts, at least two drafts. But in my case my first draft was something like five pages and the second one might have been 10, but the majority of my paper had not been in the first two drafts. On the first two drafts there were some comments, some. In class, we talked about the areas, we did presentations on the last two times we actually did presentations on our papers and how they figured into the social context etc. So, on the one hand, yeah, I learned a lot about writing, I had to write and my writing skills greatly improved, he is a good editor, very critical so that really

helped, but on the other hand just the disdain. It was a real lack of respect. I think, for the class in general.

He had his favourites, and it's interesting, his favourites tended to be in the people who were more into the more radical areas, there was a Chinese woman who was doing stuff on functionalism, he, I don't know, he really knocked her down several times. And yet there was a man also doing some stuff on functional, and he was fine with that. I don't know, that one, it makes my skin crawl. I don't recall that there was any like, a gender split on the favouritism, no it was more people that were more in line with his theories, than anything else. More of the radical. He seemed most excited by anybody who was doing anything in the more radical area

I really seriously considered dropping out of the program I was that upset about it. We all talked, the class, quite a bit. It was one of the more cohesive classes that I've ever had because we were all kind of united in the fact. I mean, there was a good two thirds of the class that were dissatisfied with how the class had gone. We didn't go to the Department Head because I guess you kind of hope that it's going to get better. Or you don't realise how bad it is until the very end. Well, the writing was good, and I do like the theories, they make a lot of sense to me too, they've helped me in other papers, knowing that and being able to cite that. So I did learn..in spite of everything. But I always think that I learn something regardless of what I do. (J2:8)

Yolanda: Struggling to Talk

How much was I able to talk in my learning? Never. None. Not in my second Master's. In my first Masters, I think my really, I think my only conversation was through my writing. Prior to that I was completely shut down. Um, I think people are trying to shut me down in this program I'm in now, and I keep popping my head up and saying, I'm not going to be quiet! Laughs! I just keep coming back at you, God Almighty, here I am! So I think people, I think I can be silenced, I think I feel it, I feel the fear a lot of times, but I'm pushing more against it. (Y2:30)

Sonia: On Discrimination

I was fairly popular, I drew attention because I dressed really well, was bright, and yet I didn't like the attention, I felt very self-conscious. And I remember once a History teacher of mine said to the class when I wasn't there one day, "Oh imagine, brains like that and looks too". It devastated me, you know. And the men were talking, the men teachers, I know they were talking about me in the staffroom because teachers I didn't even have, or knew nothing of, would walk up to me and talk to me, about things they knew about me.

So I knew this was happening. I think I felt really uncomfortable actually. There's the level where it's flattering but it's not really, it was strange. And there was a woman who was a strong feminist, I think she was a lesbian, a French teacher, who attacked me for two years, regularly. I had her for two years, and she said atrocious things to me. Once when I wrote a philosophy paper she accused me of plagiarism and I said I would never do that. And she said, "Well, it's sometimes, you seem like such a dumb blonde". But you know what I really believe? I believe that she heard them talking about me in the staffroom. And yet it wasn't me, I was very shy there. So it was very uncomfortable. I didn't really want the attention actually it made me feel uncomfortable at that point in time. (U1:8)

Yolanda: On Being Blonde and Blue-Eyed

There's a real danger in being blonde and blue eyed and cute. I've certainly bumped into discrimination, where, and it's not you know just, it's people trying to keep your attention and people willing to spend time with you, it's just, and it always feels icky. And I've noticed it, I mean in Tai Chi it happens because I'll get attention, I'll be the person who always gets help, um, you know, um it's real hard for me to take a lot of times. (Y3: 34)

Yolanda: Computer Impaired, Or Repaired?

You know, this notion of who gets computers and who has access, my greatest frustration is when I go into a computer store and men don't want to talk to me, and sales reps figure I don't know anything and so then I just go in and I just spew out words, you know! You want to play this game? I just, I hate that! I hate the way I'm treated, you know, or I'm looking at computer programs and they try and take me over to programs that they think, Well you need something like, and I don't need that trust me! And I don't need that Tutor and you can trust me on this one, and I want to look at this and where is this? And where is that? And, so, that I find that immensely frustrating, this male attitude that because I'm a woman I won't know.

And we have tremendous difficulties at the college getting support from Computing Services because it's the Nursing Lab. Well, like it matters? You know, excuse me, this lab is down and I need it up! So, but I can't get support because, well you know it's for the nurses. The computer repair guys are male. Of course. (Y3:43)

Jane: The Old Male Paradigm

You know, I never realised until recently that I spent all my undergraduate and my graduate education and only ever had two female instructors, one in Commerce and one when I was doing my Masters. I don't think there were any women when I started. I don't think there were any women in 1991 when I started and then two came, but nothing there sparked my interest. And one other does courses now and then, now. And yet the majority of the grad students are women. Yeah, that always kind of interests me too. It would be interesting to see women teach some of the courses, I mean, some of the courses..yeah, laughing, like I said, are really deadly and need a kick in the pants. Does it bother me that most of the instructors are men? I probably didn't even think about it at the beginning of my program but as I started going through

my program and getting more into feminism and stuff I thought about it a lot more. Um..does it bother me, no, it doesn't bother me. I think it's more of a reflection on the faculty and the university more than anything else. That disturbs me a little bit. Do I think women could do a better job than men? I don't know. I mean I think they could do as good of a job. (J2:18)

Lana: Is it a Male Model?

I've tried to think, I don't know, because we don't know any different, we don't know what (laughing)...Pretty sad. Um, I guess that I see a lot of women, and maybe because of the feminist movement and I think that a lot of the male teachers try, many of them try hard I think to try to bridge that gap because I think they've learned as well, they've recognised the feminist perspective. I mean I find it kind of interesting that there's a separate school for feminism, I think that there's a sort of separate, no, I can't, I can't quite segregate it in that way, I think that, as in life there's always a balance, and I think whether the men have assimilated some of the female values or vice a versa, I don't believe it's, you know, a cut and dried, black and white and I think it would be hard for anybody to sort of say, Well, what's the feminist approach versus the patriarch approach or whatever.

I think where you do find it is in the literature and written from the male perspective, I think that is valid and I've written from the feminist perspective and I really do see a difference. How would that translate into learning, would it be more of a nurturing approach to learning? I have no idea, I have no idea. I think sometimes women themselves fall into the trap as instructors and sometimes model the male perspective more than the males themselves...(L2:34)

Yolanda Describes the Male Model/Subtle Misogyny

Because of some of the attitude, that's primarily male attitude. You know, education at this level is primarily masculine dominated. And I don't care what those guys say, about whether

or not they are trying to be feminist or not, they miss the boat! Some of them didn't get to the dock! So, you know there's still subtle misogyny. Like, oh, comments on your paper like, "Knee jerk feminist reaction", and comments, and being shut down in class. Like a prof thought that he could be considered a feminist and all this sort of stuff if he added Mary Wollstonecraft to our reading list. Well, he added her first text which is really quite innocuous, whereas the "Vindication of Women's Rights" wasn't. She had wonderful ideas, and yet when I tried to bring them up, it was just like, SLAM down, "That doesn't really mean anything!" And I thought, OK! I understand! So there is, there is a subtle misogyny. (Y2:23)

Sonia: Just Paying Off a Mortgage....

Then I see professors and I think, What are these people really, what do they really believe they're doing? And a lot of them, they're babyboomers, most of them, and they're privileged and I think what this is about for them is, paying off their mortgage...and it's about surviving, it's about getting their kids through university...I don't see moral courage.

It sounds cynical, but I guess that's what I'm feeling right now. I don't see a lot of ethical, moral courage, I don't see people talking about love in the classroom. Why is that, tell me why it is? That ethic of moral caring is not displayed to the students, in fact I see the reverse. I see such that this environment can be more tyrannical than others, in terms of what it will allow. I mean why is it, why is it we can't talk about these things in class, the personal? There's a tyranny about what forms of thinking we will allow or tolerate, and it's not the personal. I refuse to engage in the roles that are ascribed in this environment, not in class either.

And that's what this environment is about, and I think others feel this is what you have to prepare people for, and I've heard of women going in to defend their Ph.D.'s and ending up in tears because it's so aggressive...From my point of view, it's aggression. It's not clarification of view, it's aggression and it's got to do with, I find it very male! I find it about dominance displays

and testosterone shows that a lot of women are engaging in for power. That I don't think comes naturally. And if it comes naturally to them then I don't think they don't realise the disservice they're doing other women because it's so uncomfortable. Because I don't think that is the type of community we would create, I don't. I think we would create lines of support. I don't think we would form a system based on hierarchical idea that you dethrone the person above you if you want to get ahead, or that we would necessarily view ideas as in a competition between this or that, rather than a conversation where they might both co-exist at least for a period of time. Why do we have to resolve the difference so quickly and decide, This is NOT right! And this is right. And that's a sign of intelligence to be able to reject or accept instantaneously and prove (it) through reason? I don't know.

Yolanda: Getting Marked....

I'm so used, you know, to getting an A, that anything else is an affront! It's interesting because I actually got a B+ on the last paper I wrote for my professor, and he made some comments that were cruel. And I look at the comments, and I look at the mark and I think, "What's the real message here?" That I didn't say what you wanted me to say? Or what? You've been quite clear that you didn't think I had anything to offer in class, because I was a nurse. So what's the real message here? You know, that you don't think I belong? I do think that all nurses are over achievers and we work real hard to get high marks because we are still trying to prove we belong. And I don't know whether that is a feminine issue or not, but I certainly know it's an issue for me. That that mark does say that I belong, that's what I use to measure, so it's very hurtful for me to get less.. I don't know, like this last paper, when you read the comments and he says, articulate, concise, well written and then he gives you a crappy mark? You think, What's your problem boy? What I'll do is, I'll re-submit the paper. I'll make a few changes, and I'll resubmit it. (Y2:30)

And putting it all together....

Sonia and the Religious Poets Exam....

And then I had this Hell! A course in Religious Poets. The discussions were good, I was really interested in the subject, of course it was Christian, but I thought, Well, that's fine it doesn't matter to me I want to get a sense of this culture, so I'll look at the religious tradition and poetry. So, it was really interesting to start with, John Donne and so I would always respond you know, in my mind thinking about Tantra and my knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism, Tantric Buddhism but I never let people know that that was my background or even that I had just come from India. I felt like I should hide it!

He would lecture for about an hour, for about 45 minutes, and then we'd discuss for 45 minutes. And there were a few older women in that class so I felt more comfortable in that respect, but I was far the most articulate woman in the class. I spoke a lot, you know, so I wasn't shy in that way, but I didn't let it be known where I was coming from, I didn't feel comfortable in that respect. So anyway, he assigned us a mid-term type thing, you know, a little test that was going to be worth I think 10 percent of our final grade, in a three unit course. And in the meantime I had decided to apply to do a MA in development education. So on the two days before writing this test, I had to do this lengthy application for a Canada CIDA development grant that would have funded my studies. And it was a huge undertaking, I was staying up late every night to draft this proposal and get things faxed and all this, because the deadline was then. So, I thought, Well, I'm not going to get to the Religious Poets but you know, c'est la vie, 10 percent isn't very much, I can focus later on doing well. Especially since I thought I'll be doing Developmental Ed anyway, my grade doesn't really matter in this course, it's just getting me in there, right? A foot in the door.

Well! Talk about getting your big toe bit off when you put your foot in the door! I went to write it that day and it was this sight poem by John Donne, with this image of Christ on the Cross, right, blood dripping down, like it's a bit of a gruesome image, It just wasn't easy to write about that, and especially since clearly I wouldn't have a Christian interpretation of that, it was talking about his compassionate look, his great compassion on the Cross, but talking about his being nailed and...Gruesome! And I think something in me just balked at it actually. I know that probably it wasn't well written, it was the first thing I had written in ten years for an academic piece and I think it just came out, maybe a bit garbled, I had all this information in my head so the information sort of just poured out. I'm not sure if it was well-ordered...

Then within a few hours I developed a terrible migraine, so on top of that confusion was pre-migraine symptoms, I was sitting there in my next class listening to the prof, and this huge brilliant kaleidoscope image came up right in her face, and I had to sit there and pretend like nothing was happening, like half my visual field was blotted out by this kaleidoscope image. I had heard of this with migraines, I just hadn't experienced it before. So I had to carefully walk to the bus, and get on the bus with this mandala spinning away in my visual field and go home and had to sleep it out for the next 18 hours..

And so clearly it was also the migraine, you know, that had caused the confusion or maybe it caused the migraine, I don't know which came first! A week passes and he hands back our tests, and he says, Oh, some of you will be happy, some of you will be disappointed. So he hands back the test and he doesn't hand one back to me, and I thought, Oh shit, this means I did really bad! But you know, I didn't really care, if I get zero, who cares? That's 90 percent, you know, I can lose another five marks, eight marks, who cares, right? Anyway, HE CARED!

So at any rate, he held back and then I saw my paper on his desk so I picked it up. And he looked sort of stunned as he saw me. And I looked and I just froze. Not only was the mark like, D, D-, D+ or something, D, DDDDDDDDDDDDD !!! I had never gotten a D in my whole life,

laughs! But that would have been alright because I had decided just forget it, right. But it was these comments!! A page and a half of like scathing attacks on my character! I could not believe it, you know, I couldn't believe it, I thought, Where have I landed?? Wow!

He said, this is incoherent, I can't tell whether you have good ideas because the ineptitude and the way you communicate your thoughts, he said, Don't you think it's about time, you've been here a few years, don't you think it's about time that you faced reality that you have a writing problem? Like, it didn't sound as a "Writing problem" it sounds like he was saying a "Psychological problem"!

The force of it, the way he just let loose, you know. Anyway, I was frozen, I was absolutely paralysed! And I just sat there and I thought, How the hell can I get out of this room? I just sat there frozen with this, you know, attack, you know, on paper! So I quickly slipped out, went down and went into the courtyard. I was just spinning, I was like dizzy. With disbelief, I couldn't believe it, that that cruelty was going on here.

Because I'd never experienced it before, you know, and I thought, How could it be that I have never seen this before? And I thought, Well, I guess it's because I have always done well, you know, I've always gotten A's, so this must be going on here all the time. You know, most people don't get A's, right? So when you get B's or C's or the odd D, like are people saying this? Like assuming that you've got some major character flaw, you know? I mean that was his assumption. How the hell, he didn't even know who I was!! You know, he didn't take a moment to say, Did you have a migraine that day, Did you study? I assumed he hadn't known who I was, he hadn't put a name to me, to this paper but I'm not sure in retrospect whether that was the case, I assumed he thought I was a young student and didn't realise who I was. And I assumed he wouldn't have said that if he knew who I was, because I was so vocal in class.

Anyway, I sat there, you know, on a park bench and just thought, This tower is just like a bastion of, of cruelty, you know, meting out this sadistic venomous, repression to the young, you

know? And all these people who are getting, able to climb to the top of this huge tower, this metaphoric phallus, then get to impose the sadistic treatment that would let them become successful and squash others in the process.

I was really dizzy with it, I got on a bus crying, by the time I got into the house I was probably hysterically crying. It was just bizarre to me, it was too much to even deal with, it sounds strange, but it was also having been with the Tibetans where it's so gentle, they wouldn't do that. Sort of attack on that level. And it was like I had seen you know, like, war, gone to a symbolic level, to this sort of cruelty. It was like a torture, you know? The nuns had been tortured physically but it was no different to me, the same sort of repression...I went in the bath, and the phone rang, I got out and I was standing here naked, you can imagine, the way I felt, so vulnerable and it was this asshole professor! Who said, I'm really sorry about your mark, about your paper, when I found out it was you I was quite concerned because I know you've contributed a lot in class, so I'd like to talk to you about it. I went to his office the next day. I assumed he was apologetic, but when he made me wait 15 minutes it didn't make sense and I started to think, This is passive aggressive...I went in and he said, Sooooo...Now what happened to you! In this arrogant tone! And he leaned back in his chair put his feet up on his desk, and crossed his arms like this, So, now tell me, what happened to you? There was something so arrogant about that.

I thought, What am I going to do here, it's not what I thought it was, he's going to take control of the situation so that I'm apologetic to him in some way! And I was just devastated, I thought I'm trapped in here! He had all rows of bookcases, and they just reminded me of phallic spines, you know, that he was hiding behind. I realised, you get in these situations and you can lose.. you don't have freedom of speech entirely, like there is a script happening that is overwhelming. You know, like to break out of the script is almost impossible! And I could just feel this has gone on for years, and he's got the power, he knows he does, and...

So when he said, Tell me what happened to you? Everything in me wanted to say, Fuck you, but I didn't know how to do it. I said, Ok, I had a migraine, that day, and I had done this application for the two days, but then, this is where I started to try to break out of it, I wanted to get out of the script where I was coming up with excuses and he was saying, like he was right, I was wrong, I had to come up with the excuses, like HE should have come up with the bloody excuses about why he was so cruel!

I mean forget the D+, he can give me a D+, like where does he get off saying these things, like you know? But instead he had control, like he had nothing to apologise for, or to be, to feel embarrassed about, wouldn't he be embarrassed about having been exposed in that way, to expose his cruelty?

And it was clear to me that there was an erotic sado-masochism in that situation. That he was getting power and a certain high out of this cruelty, you know? I think that's where it was coming from, you know, from this underlying sadistic quality. And that it was VERY significant that I was a woman. It was like, I felt like it had been played out over and over again, like I was caught in a role as a woman. I think outside of that institutional context he would have been the one culpable and needing to explain himself. Instead he had pushed it over to me as if I was neurotic and had a problem and that I had to explain myself.

You know, this is what I could feel, it happening and it reminded me of decades of struggle as a woman, you know? So, and I couldn't get out of it, even though I knew it was not right, I struggled. I wanted it to be clear, I wasn't going to grovel, he said something like, Well, I'll have you re-write, I can't change the mark system, right? And I said, Well I'm not asking you to change the mark system, I said I don't know if I want to write it again. So I started to get my power back right? And he said, Well I wouldn't want this to hinder your mark, so I looked at him and there's this power thing going on, you know, this cruelty, you know, it started to bring tears to my eyes, which again makes me feel the neurotic woman! Well, I want you to write it again.

I'm going to have you write this again and you know, on and on and on, and so I said, Ok I'll write it again.

It didn't change him. It was a struggle the whole term. (U2:20)

Power, and Planning....

Reprise: And some days later when I returned to the Forks just before leaving, I saw what lay at the bottom of the bright, sparking, sparkling, flooding Assiniboine....stinking mud three or four feet deep, whole trees which it had the strength to carry with it, now thrown up on the banks, clusters of branches, weeds, bike tires, a dead animal, and all the dark, secret river-bottom things that shouldn't be exposed to the air and light.

The river had talked, laughed, screamed, struggled and had finally had to show what it carried along beneath it....it did not have enough power to hold to its new course, not enough energy to sustain its new high-water mark. As with the women, power was what counted in the end, and he who had the power won.... But what a show the River had put on, what stories it told of what might be, could be, what a model it had been of feminine power in those few weeks!

At the third level, the blackest and bleakest, women's stories of learning were about the misuse and abuse of power--"it's all about power" each of them told me. Some felt it as "soul destruction", as "sadism"; some had real physical violence enacted on them, others were treated "hatefully and aggressively". Their conclusions were that it was nearly all males who held and abused that power, and that the power was used to maintain male dominance in the "old paradigm". But, distressingly, some women had learnt to misuse power, too, when they managed to get it.... It seemed that who held the power determined the kind of learning that occurred, the programs that were planned, and the wounds that were inflicted.

Lana: A Commentary

Well, there's different, and I don't want to go off on a tangent, but when I started to think of it, there's different ways of defining what education is, in the workplace, and when I thought of your question about whether women and men's learning differ, in my situation I took it out of the classroom and I put it in to the workplace and to my interactions and my learnings, there...I guess my most recent circumstances where I was at when you asked me that question, it just resonated and I went, You're darn tooting, there's a difference! Because of something I've experienced in the workplace, a power situation...an harassment situation. So I was really sensitive to this question and I came in with all this baggage and it just landed on your tape! But I guess that was a learning. (G1:20)

We learn a lot about ourselves in times of conflict or crisis and I have opted to try and understand and reflect, maybe I own too much of it but I have a sense that a lot of what I do in my workshops has been enlightened or I'm more aware because of my own situation...I'm now delivering workshops dealing with personal skills and with conflicts and even in our discussions about gender issues I'm more aware of those issues.

Is it my own agenda, do I stand alone in this? No, I think from what we've discussed and from talking to other women that I have become conscious of the dynamics and the politics and the power issues that go on in the workplace and that's a learning. That has been for me an amazing learning. I've pursued more recently how to deal with those issues, how to deal with power, control, conflict issues, being reflective each time, sitting back and saying, Ok, what happened there? What's going on and trying to learn through that. I've gone out for expert resources, books or talking to people to understand that situation.

I'm out there in the workplace delivering workshops around these issues and I'm kind of living it, this is part of my reality, and it's provided me with a lot more sensitivity than I think I would ever had before. Some quirk of fate? I never had to deal with conflict issues that have

affected me so deeply. I have been triggered by events, have been passive, and never have been so stirred up emotionally as I have in my forties...I thought, I'll learn my way out of it or through it.

But I didn't see the other party doing that! It annoyed me, I've tried to put some understanding to the situation and to go forward in my work but it's had an impact on a lot of my last two years on work, where I have been needing to talk things through, get acknowledgement, try bouncing off ideas, and I was needing a mentor, a valuing.

I do respect the man for his knowledge and wanted to benefit from it, I was disappointed I couldn't access it. I felt isolated by that. Part of it was, when I started my Masters I had great ideas of marrying that to my work, but because of the alienation, no support or interest, I was very hurt too, it was another learning, but it's his loss not mine. I would get comments like, Oh, that's the latest thing you learned in school, very sarcastic and not interested, at all, and this feeling, Oh, you're still doing your masters, you're still learning, you haven't done it yet, really, if you don't have a PhD, you haven't arrived there..I can anticipate the kind of reaction I will get...They are supporting me financially and I had a sense of obligation that because they were paying for my Masters, they should have some benefit, I felt despondent and it turns into anger and turns into resentment, it's really a sense of being let down.

He is a real presenter, a real orator, flashy overheads and likes to lecture, and he also facilitates very well, but his preferred mode of teaching is lecturing, and my other colleague and I do more of the workshops and we are trying to get into more experiential learning, really engage the learners, we are looking for ideas all the time, to make our workshops more exciting, more interactive. He wasn't the least bit interested, and had a half smirk on his face and says, like, Oh, that's the latest thing you learned at school.

Was my gender an issue? Yes, yes and yes. Personally, professionally, oh, there's no question. I won't explore all the gory details but I have been pursued...it was very confusing for me, very disturbing, I didn't know how to deal with it, I didn't know what to say. In the beginning

I had a lot of feeling for him, I admired him tremendously, and I remember thinking, this man walks on water! he just seemed to, he was brilliant, he is brilliant and I didn't know him as a person. I thought, Should I leave? But I hung in there and thought if we could just talk we could resolve it..and it dawned on me there wasn't any friendship here. It was really upsetting for me and I tried to move it toward a more equitable situation where we do joint workshops together and feel that sense of respect, and I would just be isolated. I never initiated anything. It was very subtle, so you think, Maybe I'm just reading stuff into it, and I just found it extremely, uh.... I sought help from a friend, a counsellor, but in the beginning I didn't know what was happening, I couldn't trust my own feelings, certainly I was stirred up, just didn't understand what was happening, I believed, foolishly, that this person was sincere. He just reeled me right in, got me emotionally off balance, and then slipped the mat from under my feet..Perhaps I should leave, but now I'm trying to work my way through it.

The other thing that opened my eyes, I started to see him playing up with other female staff, and first thought well he just likes to be a bit of flirt, outgoing and friendly and it's always a matter of interpretation, and I thought to myself, Oh, stop being a prude. But I'm not stupid either and because I still wanted to respect him, wanted to keep him up there, I thought, no, no. I really worked at maintaining a sense of dignity and to carry on a conversation, but had I allowed it to come forth, the resentment, it would have exploded.

And I have, definitely, evidence, and with 20 20 hindsight I see a lot of stuff I didn't see at the time. And then I had it confirmed by another colleague who knew him quite well and this was in fact his behaviour, he had done it before. Part of it was my own anger, I was embarrassed, all the typical reaction, and thought, What did I do to bring this on?

It's destroyed the working relationship; it can never be patched up, and all the learning I go through is just Band-Aid, it doesn't get at the root cause. And I guess when that's done in the workplace I don't know how you repair it. It's made a huge impact, not just in my interaction with

this individual, but in terms of my formal pursuit of education, it's taken away some of my own initial enthusiasm to do it. Is it meant to be a learning where I will move on? Will it have a major effect, change the direction of my thesis, and my career? I didn't treat it lightly, people say, Oh, you're just blowing this out of proportion. Well maybe I am, but I live with it everyday, I try my damndest to improve upon it but it doesn't go away, Valerie, so everything that person does, every reaction you interpret it, thus and so, the damage is done. I would have to expose him and his foibles but once I've done that...Well, you don't go backwards and always you are treated as, Oh, you snitch. (L3:6)

She says the personal narrative she has engaged in has caused a perspective shift in her private world, her public world of planning programs where she can't stop asking questions now about how gender affects learning and in her relationship with herself. Who knew this would happen, she says, when I said I would love to talk to you!

Yolanda: Soul Destruction

I hated my Baccalaureate degree, I really enjoyed my Masters degree, but even doing my Master's in Nursing, I really enjoyed what I did learn, I enjoyed it, but unfortunately I think a lot of the learning was serendipitous. And in Education, but I did enjoy it...and Nursing, you see, it just needs to get, and so does the whole university, they need to establish a community of enquiry. And they need to realise that that's what they are there for, to establish a community of enquiry and that's not accomplished by people working off in little individual things. But it also, it requires a safe environment, and it requires an environment where people won't be shut down, cut out, hurt, where cruel comments are not tolerated, where the subtle misogyny is not tolerated, where people are allowed to express who they are, and all ideas are given credence. And so somebody says something that perhaps people think isn't at a high enough level, that that's still listened to, and that what we work on is the germ that's there and we build it up! But we don't tear down the

people! There's no sense in destroying souls in this endeavour. And I just really think that sometimes in Education with the way teachers respond to students, that that's sometimes what happens. I think we do--destroy souls. (Y2:35)

Lee: The Flying Breast

It was very hierarchical. Hierarchical within the nursing (staff) and also within, with the medical staff. I remember that for some doctors, when they came down the hall one was supposed to stand up and greet them standing up. I remember this one surgeon who had just the most terrible temper, he was just terrible. His name was Gibson, and he actually, (when) one of my classmates was scrubbed in the OR with him...he lost it, and he was doing a mastectomy, removing a breast, and he picked it up and threw it at her. And those things were tolerated. I mean, it was tolerated! And when, I remember him coming on the elevator and we would all basically shake because of his incredible anger and temper that was allowed to be all around the hospital.

Sonia: The Butterfly

Well, when I was in Grade 4, I was put into a Grade 5 class in English, and Science, and the teacher was a man, I remember, tall, very thin, wiry sort of fellow, with wiry black hair, curly. I felt quite disoriented in that class I remember, and I mean, we studied if you can imagine, we studied Robert Louis Stevensons' Kidnapped, that was the first novel I was asked to read. And I could not understand a word of it.

So I felt really out of place even though it was flattering to be put in a year ahead, I felt very disoriented. And then in Science class one day, this boy in the class brought in a Praying Mantis, in a jar. And the teacher showed us, and you know, patted this boy on the head, what a wonderful child you are. And we emptied the Praying Mantis from the jar, or he did, into this

terrarium, right? And I always remember this Praying Mantis, he just sat there frozen, you know? They don't move, they just sit there, frozen, with their hands cupped.

And so, next day, the little boy brought in a Monarch Butterfly, in the same jar. Well, the teacher announced, Good little boy, patted him on the head, This is to feed the Praying Mantis! And I thought, Oh my god, how gruesome! You know, to feed a Monarch Butterfly, which is one of the most beautiful things to us, in Ottawa, as children, were the Monarch Butterflies, you know? With their orange colour, and flying in the garden, you know? They were just one of the most beautiful things I remember from my childhood. And that they would be FED you know, to this creature that just stands there frozen, like...Who's to say who is of more value? And it seemed very, very, almost sadistic to me, you know, that he, that he would do that.

And so he said, "Now we'll put it in, and you all have to march by and look at this, and watch this Praying Mantis eat the Monarch Butterfly". Well, there was no way! Now fortunately my desk was in the furthest corner from where that terrarium was, right by the door. Right? And so the whole class went filing by the terrarium and I thought, Well, hopefully the teacher will not notice that I'm not going. But he did. He noticed that myself and another girl, we didn't go. And he said, "You have to go!" And we said, No. And so he said, "I'll make you go!"

So the other girl got up and went and looked and walked back. But there was no way that I was going to go. So he called some boys, and said, "I want you to go and get her, and force her." And they walked on either side of me. Now I was big, like I was bigger than the average child, I was taller than any boy in the class, even when it was a year ahead, and I felt embarrassed of it, you know, I knew I could probably beat them up, but I didn't want to publicly you know, being a girl and all, be beating these boys up! I used to beat my brothers up, but I thought, Oh no!

So, I, they pulled at me or whatever so I sort of let myself be, taken, you know, succumbed to it, but closed my eyes along the way. And they brought me up to the terrarium and I held my eyes closed tightly, and then when no-one was looking, I peeked. And I remember

seeing the last wing of the Monarch Butterfly folding itself into this, huge oral, orifice, like of this Praying Mantis. And, then I sat down.

She sighs. And after that I, I always feel, I feel in the meditation retreat this came up, so I feel it is really significant as one of the main blocks for me to studying Science, that experience. That experience. (U1:36)

Sonia: Just Give Them Boxing Gloves!

Competition too, this is something I have been working with a lot, and have talked to others about, that I have been really distressed by the amount of conflict in the academic community. In the journals and I'm not saying just informally but in the very discourse of the academy, that it is about competition. Academics would point at competition as one of the major problems of this society, the problems they work with, and in other words, a lot of left theorists, academics, don't seem to even recognise that they are participating in a culture that is reproducing those values! This place is set up on a vicious model of ideas, almost a Darwinian model of the evolution of ideas, you fight, go into the struggle and fight each other and see what idea lasts, and that's the victor. It's an extreme competitive model I find. Sighs, maybe it's also a capitalist model, yeah, I guess they go hand in hand... Oh, no question about that one! It's Male!

Sometimes I think, you know, why even bother with the pretence, why not just give them boxing gloves and tell them. Well, what do they get, I mean what's the prize? I don't know. I think it's the unconscious working of desire. And aggression. And we believe, and probably that's why it seems so tyrannical in this environment, is because we are under the delusion it's about reason. Two of the top professors in their field, at the first public lecture I attended here, degenerated into this nonsensical debate, that had nothing to do with the topic, just one berating another, shouting about stupid questions, about who needed therapy, and didn't need therapy. It was nonsensical, how do you make sense of that? Their power gave them the ability to just let it degenerate into a

personal attack...and then they'll turn around and pretend it didn't happen. Half the time I can't even follow what they are saying, Is this about ideas or is it just posturing? Like, one professor said, I won't even answer that stupid question, does anyone have an intelligent one? It's so bizarre! So disrespectful! What a community!

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At the bottom, the river confronts the power of the immovable, the concrete channels, the dams and dikes of man's plan to tame the unpredictable noisy river. These stories of power surfacing in the women's lives are the darkest and the dirtiest, and these stories don't like the light of day, they flourish best in the stinking mud and rocks in the river's bed.

But like the Assiniboine did, literally, when it threw up those blocks and tangles on to solid ground, so tourists could ooh! and aah! and ice-cream dripping, point out this and that, the women have tossed up these stories of power and its uses and abuses. We can examine them and confront them, and find a way around them. Or we can find a way to use them to construct new/old ways of learning, of planning and of connecting with each other. Some new Stories perhaps?

Sonia: On What Kind of Community It Could Be

The worst is coming from the male attack, I don't find the problem is with women academics. I just have seen it a little bit. But also I haven't seen enough women reflecting on the failure of this environment to nurture communities. And the effect of that on women functioning in this environment. It's always women who are working on it, you look anywhere! It's always women who are working on building community, I know in my department, I have not yet taught an undergrad class, I am in the PhD, I don't have good experience yet in my discipline, ESL, I could work full time, I could have a teaching post next year, be in an ESL program for teachers, but here I am caught up in trying to create community spirit in my department, when there's so

much resistance around it, and I'm sure it's the same for you...

And in classes. I brought in ten papers for a fellow student. But it's always other women I see doing that, bringing in stuff for another student, it's always women. And then I think, what if we spend all our time working at this, and then we go to get a job and they say, Where are the teaching qualifications, look at this guy, he taught five courses, what did you do? Oh, We spent all our time organising, trying to create community! When it's discrepant with the values of the institution. Big sigh!

Well I'd like to say that I think we need to spend more time imagining possible ways to make cities, univer-cities--to make a possible education as opposed to what's been done before. I think there is not enough imagination. Not enough saying, What could we make here, and having the courage to act on it. Even the smallest thing seems to drown in this black hole of cynicism. And all I can point to is that people are too, they see it too much as a threat to their individual existence, they are too caught up with money, the need to preserve a position, oh they have to graduate, they have to get a position their job, they have to get tenure, they have to.

Is it really what they want out of their lives that they secure that salary, or can we let it go a little, can they really imagine new ways of educating that might make women feel better, instead of pumping out the fifth paper you've written this year on how to make the classroom more accessible to women--I mean can we do it, be a bit more, get the expectations of the institution to better match our imaginings, our words, our writings, what we're saying is needed here, instead of making it just a place where we manufacture words? (U3:12)

Yolanda: A New Curriculum?

There's so many other variables that we deal with, it's like we can't have this angst of the curriculum. There's this need for that to be stable, because of everything else. But we have to learn to let that curriculum flow, and I think that's very difficult for people. But I think there's a

lot of people now who are looking at it and going, Wow, that's true, there is another person here! But you see for so long, based in this positivism, we didn't care that there was a person out there, it wasn't important.... 'Cos that was just what we did, it really wasn't a person. So I think it's only as we're starting to swing around a little bit that we're beginning to realise the Other is an equal partner. Y3:14)

Lee: Planning Is...

For the area that I work in, the whole program is built on starting from people's experience so whether it's male or female, that's where it's starting. So I reverse the program, in university you read before you come into class and you come into class and discuss your reading. In the program that I developed, you come into the class and you discuss the issue and then you go and read, because I want them to start with experience. And in fact, if I do that with males or with females, it works. We start with their experience. So if we're looking at what was it like when they were adolescents, it's what's their experience, what was it like, whether you're male or female. The cognitive aspect is the next step, but experience is the first step.

I designed it before I had the theory behind it, so I designed that probably because there was an aspect of what I learnt best, because it made sense to me. I wanted to honour people, learners, then I would start with their existing knowledge, you start where they're at. And then you build on that, but you can't build if you don't know where they're at.

In university, it takes a while for people's voice to come out around their experience because it gets so clogged up in the academics. I mean the class I did on Women and Education, started off with this incredible amount of reading, and the first couple of articles were so, so, academic, that literally you sat with the dictionary beside you trying to figure out the meaning of this word and what this sentence said, and at least one or two women dropped that course after the first night because they thought it was beyond their capabilities intellectually. Well, what a

shame! It wasn't, the course wasn't beyond any one's capabilities intellectually in that group, but immediately it was the cognitive approach that eliminated them. Let's start where people are at, and then build it. To me it makes sense..but there's probably some theory around out there somewhere that questions that!

And emotion, you can't talk about your teen years, you can't talk about, you can't look at family violence without everybody being basically forced to reflect on their own family experience. You can't talk about kids and feelings of being rejected without everybody looking back and thinking, Yeah, I got called that, or my Mum wasn't there when I needed her, or my Dad used to do this..I mean it just forces people to connect, and that's one of the challenges of facilitating that type of group, is you're working so strongly on the affective domain.

So I mean I've been in groups where people have just sobbed and sobbed and I've had people vomiting on me, I've had people screaming, I've had people, you know, fleeing the room, I've had, you know I've had emotional responses all over the place. Yeah, so yeah, it's a definitely a very strong element in the work I do.

So when you bring in the theory and say, You know, this is not unique to your experience and let's look at other people's experience and let's look at the theory behind it, then it's like turning lights on for them. And makes them feel, I'm normal! So there is a real, real connection between the emotional and the thinking. I think often we stay in a theoretical parameter, because it's easier, it's very easy to stay in the head, and the hardest thing about working with people is working with their emotions, and with their emotional responses. So to keep it easy, let's just stay above the neck. But then I think the learning, I think if we look at transformative learning we have to go below the neck and we have to go deeper into people.

I guess probably one of the biggest tests of that would be when I have done training with police. Who tend to have lots of stereotypes around them, and once the classroom became safe for them, then they could go into that. But when it wasn't, and that took a week to get it, I mean

they were battling me, they didn't want to, you know, Give us the facts, make us write notes, don't put us into discussion groups and don't do that simulation game with us, come on we're out of control in that game, we don't know what's coming next. And all those types of things, by the end of the second week in the Fall they were really on tap with me.

And to the point that I couldn't shut them up--I mean many of them said, This is the first course I've ever taken that's given me permission to go and to learn at this level, to be able to philosophically discuss issues at the same time as being able to bring my own issues on to the table. And a whole issue is even appearing vulnerable to each other, because they're supposed to be 'in control', right? If anyone in our society is supposed to be in control it's supposed to be the police. So it was interesting when I reflected back, and saw what they were like when they came in the beginning of that first two weeks, and their barriers, and you know, what is this shit all about anyway?

And just working through and just really calmly challenging some of their assumptions, where does that come from, tell me more about your thinking, lets take it deeper. But really being respectful so that became a safe environment for them. When I brought them back in February to do a week on relationship violence, it was, you know they walked in, and said, Well Lee, let's get to this ! We're here! And really examining their own relationships, really bringing them on the table.

I mean we spent a whole two hours, What does equality mean? And two hours they just went after that, and it was within their own relationships. So, I think a lot to do, to be able to do that, we have to go again and understand our clients. And we have to get rid of some of our own stereotypes around that, understand them and really wrestle with how do I work this environment so that they can learn?

I did not follow a model! I've done this a variety of times and I can go in, and begin to feel the audience and then change the ways I plan things. So I go in with a bag of tricks and the tools

to do those bag of tricks and shift as I go along, depending upon what response I'm getting.

I don't like teaching to all one sex. Because I think that they learn from each other...And I think that we live in a world where we live together and we need to work that out...I know there's a big movement for girls to have their own education, which I guess has some valid points and I think that there are times when women need to be with women, and men need to be with men, I think that that's a given. But to talk about family, we are in families together and we need to wrestle that through. And as a facilitator it's my role to make sure all those voices come forward. I think that's a really philosophical difference, I think that we need to be able to talk about this together.

Because we don't live in separate worlds. I think in the long run you'd want them to be able to move in together. But I think the men, if they are dominating, they need to learn that, to understand that issue, they need to they need to quiet their voice. And they're not going to learn that if they stay just with males, or they don't stay, being challenged about that?

We sent one of our male presenters to talk to police, and he did fine, but in the long run the one that they liked was a female presenter who was more skilled. So I think initially when he got up there and did sort of his rapport type thing, which he could do well, Oh, there's a man up there talking about this issue. But then his knowledge base wasn't as strong, and in the long run it was a woman who had a really strong knowledge base, and very good facilitation skills that they preferred. So I think there's an initial thing but in the long run it's what those learners want from that educator no matter whether they are male or female.

I would probably not send a male into some of the, really strong, quote unquote radical feminist groups. It would just be too devastating. It would be devastating for him, and there would be no learning going on at all. So I would probably not do that, in fact I'm concerned because we have a male co-ordinator and I'm concerned for him, because I know we have gotten some flack in various segments of the country from those very strong radical, I don't know what

else to call them, someone told me I should call them not radical, but what would be farther down the continuum? They don't like our philosophy of talking to males and females, together. (L3:10)

Jane: On Power and Planning

I mean I loved Cervero and Wilson's book² because finally somebody in program planning acknowledged what actually goes on! It is negotiations between needs and wants and the interest and you know the whole thing, it is very much that. There are courses out there that a certain group may want and then I have to, I mean I have a fair bit of power too, I get to determine what's good for the particular group, for the organisation, whether it falls within the city manager's philosophy, the organisational philosophy.

But I have to go out and sell it. Safety courses are fairly easy to sell but there still things that I believe should be taught every year but the foremen are saying, No, I don't know, you know, so I do negotiate on that too. (J3:28)

Jane: And Her Philosophy

I plan courses with my philosophy very much in mind. Respect for the individual, for their experiences, not to embarrass anyone, its very important.

I've had a couple of instructors who I'd never hire again, put people on the spot and I won't do that. That's not say I don't want to challenge people but I think there are ways and means of doing it. Going around the class and asking each person, it smacks me of grade school, you know. A real acknowledgement that these people are adults, not children and the power relationship, I'm really conscious an instructor has a lot of power, how they use it, I don't like demeaning, belittling...they won't get hired again. It has to be high quality, there's so much crap

². Cervero, R. and Wilson, A. (1994). Planning responsibly for adult education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

out there, I have, I have very high standards.

I have a certain level of quality that I demand, more interactive definitely, again more group involvement, I don't like people that just sit there. A lot of the people that I'm teaching safety courses to, or have instructors for, are labourers that are not used to sitting all day. You have to do something otherwise they'll fall asleep and they will, you know! It has to be something that's exciting, that they can move around and do things but not too cutesy too, I'm really conscious of there's a real fine line between interactive and being real cutesy, like there has to be a purpose. (J3:27)

And lastly, one of my favourite stories,

Yolanda's Kindergarten

I'm real relaxed, I mean some people just get nervous I'm so relaxed! Students come into the lab and I say, Ok, this is a review lab, so you need to review dressings, you need to review IM sitings, you need to review vital signs--you know where the dressing trays are, you know where the IM stuff is, and you know where the stethoscopes and the blood pressure cuffs are, so have a blast! And I'll be around. And people are like, Oh, well you know you haven't given directions and you gotta send in, like, I'm, you know, Oh God, I'm going for coffee! I leave the lab, I'll go get tea and I'll come back and when they're all doing something, when they're all settled about, then I go around, and I start to, So why are you doing this? And, What are you going to hear? And, Do you think that's right? And, When you did that, what would happen? And so then I start to go around and ask questions.

But I don't have any need to be structuring the environment, and all that, so I don't. Partly because I don't do it well, so I don't try. And in class I do the same thing, it's all group work, um, I try and talk about concepts, I try and make things relevant to their life, to what they're doing, I try and get them to talk. I don't write anything on the board or anything on overheads, they do it,

so if we need to have that kind of list or documentation happening, one of them has to get up and do it.

I do a lot of group work where I have flip chart paper and smelly pens, then they put their work up around and we talk about different kinds of things. So I think it's different. I also, I have a belief that I think is, probably a lot of people would react to, that's that the closer you bring your classroom to a primary classroom the more learning will happen...And I really believe it. And so I do that. I, you know, they're in a circle, and they get stickers on their paper and we talk about, I relate things back, and the further back I can relate it the better, because there's something in those elemental experiences we had so long ago, that for some reason, I don't know, they're OK. And I latch on to them, and that's why I have them do things with coloured pens and coloured paper, and put stuff on the wall, and I have them write on the board. My biggest sadness is that the college won't give us a Nursing classroom, so that I could put stuff on the walls! Laughs!!
(Y3:18)

INTERLUDE, THE JOURNEY'S STRUGGLES

The second week of the Journey.

July 29, 1996. Dear Diary,

A disappointingly poor day today. The weather continues fine, a good sun and no rain, but despite the clarity and natural beauty of our surroundings, one of our party, and then another, wandered off the track we had so painstakingly marked out on Friday, when we had retraced our missteps of the days before. So worrying, had thought we had begun to truly find our way, but we became mired in the mud, and several of the party turned upon others, accusing them of leading us all astray, down paths of discourse that were not navigable, or indeed sound.

I myself found I was under attack for some words and thoughts I had uttered at the beginning of the climb and felt my footing slide, toppling down the slope I had so laboriously scrambled up earlier. Such a shame, we have missed miles of the road we should have been on, and I fear at this rate, with such mistrust and discord, we shall not reach the community, Diverse Discourse, our Guide had promised was our goal at the end of these three weeks.

I am leaden of heart, and wonder, dear diary, why I ever imagined I could complete this trek. I have been warned over and over, by friend and foe alike, that this is no journey for the fairer, weaker sex. I begin to believe in my heart of hearts that the nay-sayers were the ones who spoke true, and not my stout companions of earlier rambles among the foothills of Academe. These fabled mountains are indeed a different proposition, clothed as they are in the mist that obscures their lofty pinnacles, and with pleasant greenery obfuscating the dangerous scree slopes that lay one false step away....

But dear diary, such sharpness can never be right! Many hesitated to share their thoughts at the day's end today, as if timid or fearful of drawing wrath upon themselves.

Our Guide watched all our doings with great interest today, those who slipped, those who fell, those who did nothing to help the injured, and those who came to a begrudging rescue or at least, drew cover.... I talked with him as we rested after the day's travails, and he reminded me this is not a journey for the faint of heart, nor for the weak willed, and that only those who keep themselves privately forewarned of the daily dangers will complete the course. I sensed within this speech some small desire to intervene and turn those of our party from false paths, but he is not yet sure of his position among us, nor how willing some would be to take the hand of a native, even though he must have walked this way so often in the past. Our arrogance, our desire not to be led, must irk him mightily....

I looked up, hurting, and saw an eagle drifting off the cliffs, such ease, such disdain for us, but such beauty. Such small moments I find are the heartsease, the little balms of the soul....

Well, dear diary, having bespoke myself of every cliché I can muster, it is time to trim the wick, and peruse the chart for tomorrow's course.

*

A bloody awful class, I am still sizzling, smarting, snuffling, stomping, and could gleefully carve my initials in one or two men, VLC was here.... I feel a thousand years old. I bet Gloria Steinem, and certainly not the Pankhursts, never felt this despair. If I could find a bloody horse, at Ascot or otherwise, I'd throw myself under it.

*

Here is what I wrote in the Wild Writing exercise, that came directly after one of the women presented the Norman/Leggo article. She asked me to lead off the discussion, and I did, feeling safer after last Friday, and because I had shared with one man on the way to the Museum meadow where we were having class that day, my own experiences in a methodology class that were so similar to Renee Norman's in the article. But two of the men attacked me, personally, venting on me, I think their dis-ease at discovering the depth of their hatred for those who were

turning against them as White Males.

How to write about what has just happened? Why did she pick me to start, I was feeling ok. One man said, I don't see any oppression around me, and then the other, attacking me, calling me You, said he was watching the expression on my face when the other spoke.... Have I to discipline my very body, to stay in line? Well, why do you ask, hasn't it always been that way?

I felt on fire, the old pain, the old anger, the humiliation, the scorning, the old fears, tickle on the lids, prickle on the lids, and the anger, it's not FAIR and why doesn't anyone help me, where is the teacher, no help there, can the rest not see it is unfair, why is that man picking on me? Are you talking to ME? I ask him, and they all look away, shifting nervously, Oh God, she's going to make a scene....

But I don't, no allies here. I can't believe this is happening again, how can he be so rude, so PERSONAL? This is a CLASS!

Do they find me so strong, so Iron Lady, that they think they can say what they like? I don't attack them, I don't say, You, why are you so dumb and blind, You, you are a blowhard and a bigoted bigmouth, and You, why don't you stand up for me? And finally, one of them does, and I thank him for it....

Oh, this has changed my mind! I was beginning to have the courage to say my truths, but not here, not here....

Shut the book, the mouths, tell the safe stories....

Tired of smiling, pretending it doesn't hurt.... Oh, no! That's ok, it's academic freedom....

An Evening Postscript

One of the other ladies communicated privately with me today, sharing my dis-ease with some of the chatter and banter of the men, and we agree they are a strange and difficult species!

*

July 30, 1996. Today it became apparent we will not reach our destination. Aggravatingly, tantalisingly, we could see the spires of Diverse Discourse shifting in and out of the far horizon....but we knew as we struggled in silence that we could not reach that horizon in the next 10 days. A crushing, stifling sense of hopelessness imbued some of the party, while others seem entirely unaffected by the events of the past few days journey, joking and joshing as we drifted away.

Our Guide is deeply disappointed, and in speech with me, later, at a boulder along the path, where I tarried for luncheon, asked what responsibility we all carried for our failure. I ask myself too, what could I have done? I had considered late last eve, bravely, that I would seek out one of our party who has led us down some very stony, echoing, rough paths, and ask what his purpose was, to see what change I might effect on his sensibility, but in the cold light of morning, glimpsing him as I entered our enclosure ready to begin the day's trek, I faltered, and slipped instead, quietly to my usual place in the order of the day's march. I may yet if the moment should be auspicious, attempt an engagement with him. But I am afraid, deeply afraid, of such anger and capricious temperament....

*

Reading today, on the bus going home, Valerie Walkerdine's work, Schoolgirl fictions (1990) I am struck by two things

* I am only the second person, in the four or more years that it has been in the Resource Centre, to check it out,

* and that I know why I prefer adult education to school education.

I find teachers so narrow minded, so attached to their daily practice that they cannot lift their head from grading, and discipline and staff-room politics to see beyond, to theory and what they are doing every day. I know I left teaching 20 years ago, not because of the very difficult children, girl children, I taught, but because of the teachers.

I said that to people at the time, and they looked at me, like good Catholics, aghast that a priest could say, I don't like God or the way he runs things, so I'm leaving.... It is a heresy to call teachers anything but "dedicated, fine, hard working, caring", WELL what bullshit.

As a novice publishers rep at my first display, a large teachers Conference, I was shocked to hear Marvin Koski, the most expansive and most experienced rep, boozy breath, cigarette cupped in hand, declare, Bloody Teachers, how I hate them, the job would be fine without them!

And a few months later I remembered why I had left teaching, and realised that for every good teacher, (and what is good, that they cared....a little?) there were another fifty who took their cheques, their summer's off, bitched at all the new stuff consultants made them do, sat in staff rooms in the chairs they had sat in for the last 500 years, smoking or drinking the PCP beverage they called coffee, the men and the women cursing when the bell rang for classes, passing by my morning coffee display, saying, Well this looks ok, but I like the text book I've got, I know it all, I don't want to change my lesson plans, (like they had lesson plans!) but if you want to give me a review copy I might give it a try.... And I smile, and using a public publishers voice, say, Well, of course! and, Let me know if you'd like to see the Teachers Guide, yes, there is a Teachers Guide, and yes, it has daily suggestions, all the answers to the problems worked out, and, yes just put it on the desk, it'll teach the class for you, the little devils will never even know.

And now, as our adults come in, faces blanched and guts churning, back into the old arena of humiliation and chastisement, as my friend relates, they tell you stories, tales of when they were five, six, sixteen some 20 or 30 or 35 years ago, and the name of the teacher who crippled them

forever, that teacher who lives in the bowels where all the horror films get mixed up with children's nightmares, and humiliations and beatings physical and psychic, and I say, WHO COULD INFLICT THIS WOUND??????????

Not me, I left before I became a walking wound, bleeding and dripping the pus of my hate on them.

Why are teachers so combative about their pupils? Why is it war? It was no different 20 years ago at Hornsey School in London, each teaching period was seen as "over the top, over the wire, and into battle, bayonets fixed, no prisoners, lads, to the death".

And now, I am filled with the same disgust, and I know how thin the wall is between us, I can hear their thoughts, hear them breathing, I am them, they are me, I could be one, but could they be me? No, because I gave up the summers off, the benefits, the staff-room, the rush when the pupils grovelled, Pleeeeeease, Miss, and the power flows through the body, and charges the air around you, a crackling ozone smell of power and pain, punishment, control, it's all for your own good, sonny, no, it isn't, it's for your good, your good only, Sir or Miss.

That wasn't what I was going to write, but there it is....

*

July 31, 1996. My journey is over. There will be other parties, other diaries, other Guides. We are only half way, but I know within me the spirit has fled.... I shall say no more, I am exhausted.

*

I had wanted to write about:

- * how they felt opposition, how my five women felt it in all their adult learning, but so much in the educational institutions

- * how war, battle, fight and of course, opposition are such masculine devices--or so we say, but how five women felt all of those things in their learning, their learning bodies, their learning brains

* how when the Guide said, What is poetry?, I was back in my Third of Fourth Form classroom at King Edward VI Grammar School for Girls, dreaming lethargic dreams in my navy blue uniform, uniform thoughts, well schooled, well mannered little lady, and the teacher started to read, Dulce et Decorum Est, and how my flesh stood on end, my hair crept off my head, and I was there, in the trench, gasping for air, I was there in the church with the pompous parson, the smug squire, preaching, how sweet it is to die for god and country, I was THERE, they in their khaki uniforms, me in my blue, Wilfred Owen as reluctant a soldier as I, but returning to the trenches after being cured of his "Shell Shock" and knowing, but where else would he go, when you have been to Hell, there is no other place to be, to go, and, of course, you go back, hate, death, torment, but it's what you KNOW so you go back, and you hate it, and especially hate the ones who sent you, the ones you loved and believed.... And, of course, you know you will die. And I must have heard so many poems as a child, how can you escape 12 years of schooling without a hatred too, for Poetry, ugh! But I never heard another poem before that, and why that one when it was the wrong gender?

* how in my first graduate paper I discovered what adult education meant to those oppressed by race, class, politics. How it saved lives, made lives, destroyed lives, and how, suddenly, gender was revealed to women who never knew their sex, or sexuality, or what "it" was. Like Vera Brittain, who found the University Extension Lectures--the ones in the afternoon where middle class ladies and girls were permitted to attend by paying one whole shilling each, to support the workers, the male workers, who could come in the evening but could not afford to pay, and for whom the Lectures were really intended--an oasis of mind in a desert of dreary provincial femininity. And 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. (p. 64)

* how I felt that way too, as I went into the room to write my Cambridge Entrance Exams, and how I felt when, in competition with my boyfriend, he was accepted into one of the 27 men's colleges and I was rejected at one of the 3 women's colleges, and how dimly, I knew I had been in a battle, but it was fought and decided, before I ever showed up, and how I knew I was much cleverer but I failed. I gave up then, knowing higher education would be just as weighted on "their" side....but how I didn't know I had given up until I read of Vera's joy, two years ago come November, and realised that I had lost my joy, tiny and hidden though it had been.... Never let them see you cry!, choked it off and said, Nevermore!

* how the Five Women struggled with family, husbands, mothers, teachers, students, workers, professors, instructors, bosses and themselves to fulfil their soaring aspirations

* how Vera and millions of other women fought the Great War and all the other wars, wars they had not called, nor been invited to, but that that they catered anyway, and who knew of Vera's sacrifices? Only through her fiancée's death was she acknowledged as suffering....

* how men and women are from different worlds, just masquerading as the same species, an elaborate god joke, the god who, says Einstein, does not play dice with the Universe.... Well Bert, that must have been the day you missed class, god admitted it was just a laugh, to sit up there and watch us war and whore and wear ourselves out, trying to get the bits to fit, when god had mixed the jigsaws of two DIFFERENT puzzles together, and then said, Of course they fit, would I lie, keep on trying, keep on trying....

* how I wrote so academically about "How gender is constructed" but that now I have had my gut re-constructed, have not eaten nor slept well since last week and how now I know

how gender is constructed, and my body knows it, even if the mind cannot tell it....

* how I don't need to write about opposition, because, like Vera on the Western Front, I have been up to my knees in blood, again, and I know the wounds shrapnel makes, metal or spoken, it makes no difference, the soul is hit, the body shrivels,

dulce et decorum est

to learn at UBC....

But I don't feel like writing, I feel like killing or dying, and I know in these last few days I have somehow knit together the red and black deaths of childhood, the pain and fear and killing, and the white and black truths of the Other and the Othered, the pain and fear and/of killing of today with then....

dulce et decorum est

to be sewn together so/sew neatly....

dulce et decorum est

but

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,

He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

* how I have been living opposition, war and death, no need to write it, I am living my story....and how sweet it isn't.

*

August 1, 1996.

I walked to class this morning, after yesterday's ink-shedding, feeling sick at the shedding of all that ink and blood, dreading to go to class, like a little girl dragging her feet..I wondered if I should have joined the one man who wanted us all to boycott the presentation by the "You" man.

But I was too grimly determined, and angry somewhere inside, not to go....and it was ok!

I went to talk to a Wisewoman later, and she told me, Maybe it was ok because he needs to be the centre and today he had it? And perhaps that's it....

He had us all act out personal stories, based on the object we had brought from childhood. It created somehow a much more open atmosphere, or maybe we were too shellshocked after yesterday to even care any more? I wonder if we shouldn't have done this before? In spite of the angry words he had scrawled back to me in the ink-shedding--Lighten up! Stop blaming your father! Get a life!--I brought in a picture of me at 7, the little alien I had written about in my first ink-sheddings....

I wrote a poem about it later.

*

August 2, 1996.

Today the two men did not come, taking the Guide at his word, that those (really wounded by the dis-ease in the room) who felt they could do more at home, could stay there, meeting him for individual tutorials.

And we had a good class! Much more warm and open, listening to ourselves create postcard stories. A good day. I had created a longer postcard story about my Auntie Doris, but invented a new one on the spot, put it on the back of the mystical looking postcard the Guide had given us. Here it is.

A Postcard Story

The Romans renamed her SPES, for God/Good Fortune, and in 372 the Emperor built her a temple, but forbade the dark and ancient practices--the sacrifices of male children, for luck. The Greeks had called her ELPIS, and had Her hold poppies--for death?--the Goddess of Gardens and Hope. But I looked out my window late last night and saw Her running. To and fro under the moon, dodging dumpsters in my back lane, a male child clutched under her arm, and I smiled, Welcome Home!

DENOUEMENTS.... OR, THE STORY(IES) UNFOLDS

Lana: So, Valerie, have we answered your question? (G2:-13)

It seems a long time, a year and half, since I first phrased my "problem statement", or, The Question:

What lived experiences have helped form the beliefs that women planners hold regarding women's learning: have their experiences as women learning shaped their practice?

After 18 months, 16 official interviews, numerous informal conversations with my participants, half a dozen committee meetings, hundreds of pages read, and the spilling of enough ink onto the reams of paper I have marked with my words to make me personally responsible for the destruction of a small copse of trees, I could just say "Yes", to me, to Lana, and close the text. But convention, and my own desire, call for a fuller elaboration.

During the period of intense analysis that would enable me to elaborate my answer(s) to The Question, another Story had (as we know) began to insinuate itself, wriggling into the little spaces still to be found between the already complex, multi-threaded, Stories, the tapestry made up of the words of the Five Women, the Literature and our Conversations--that was my Story. As you have read, in Interludes, asides and parentheses, it was the Story which started the whole process. Its Voice had been muted over the months of my research, but began to write Itself into my words as the months went by, until finally, here it is, looking for answers too, to the same question.

I did make some attempts to untangle all these different skeins, but I now accede to the demands of all the Stories, and remembering the words of some of the (embodied) Women, I have decided to let my whole Story embody itself, making different knowledge constructions

where it will. Because my own Story continued to Unfold, as you have seen in the last Interlude, parallel to the Five Women's Stories, illuminating and distracting and underscoring some of the more pertinent conclusions. Perhaps it is time to see and listen to those Voices....

Also embodied in the text, joined in love and hate, are the Little Narratives of the Five (Six) Women, and the Grand Narratives of Education. As was becoming clear as I wrote their life stories, some Grand Narratives were jostling repeatedly and continuously against the *petits recits* of woman after woman. They were, are--for they are still here/there, unthought or unvoiced, but present in the reading and the writing of this text--the narratives of Gender; Power and Knowledge; Discipline and Discourse, and Teaching and Planning. Each in turn unfolds its own answers to my research questions. And running through, with, over, behind, below, this text is the voice of the River of Woman's Talk. Here then are some of those research questions I asked. Here are also some of the questions that those questions caused me to ask, each re-constituted question is followed by a de-construction/discussion of how some--not all, for there is no right answer, or indeed, any answer at all for some of the questions we ask--answers unfolded for me and the Five Women.

The Gender Questions

These were: To what extent has the experience of the women been typical of those mentioned by feminist researchers in learning. Would the planners recognise, from their own experience or practice, the framework proposed by MacKeracher (1995a) as being "women's learning", which might include any or all of these components:

1. The focus on an individual and her personal experience as a beginning for, and as ongoing in, learning activity, and that that experience includes talk as a major factor.

2. The recognition that individuals should self-identify their personal connection to what is to be learned.

3. The holistic emphasis placed on connecting thinking and feeling, experience and ideas, theory and practice, and reflection and action.

4. The emphasis on cooperative and collaborative learning, with a recognition that self-direction is a goal, not a process for novices.

5. The use of cooperative evaluation techniques which empower the learner to take responsibility for their learning.

6. The recognition that learning has as its goal a transformative dimension and this, while difficult to implement, should never be devalued.

Well, I think the Women answered all of these questions, some of them answered with a Yes, some with a No, and, occasionally, a Maybe. Certainly their stories validate much of the literature¹--they learnt in collaborative and connected ways, they liked to start from their own experience, they liked to identify what they wanted to learn, they wanted to be holistic learners, connecting emotion to cognition, feeling to thought, theory to practice and reflection to action. Most especially, they disliked many of the evaluation techniques used upon them (but Jane talked about how she liked the evaluation that was done collaboratively with her (only) female instructor, and now incorporates something like it in her own course on Training Techniques) and they all recognised that significant personal learning has a transformative aspect.

And yet.... Lee, and Lana, and Jane and me, too, felt uncomfortable with the possibilities for stereotyping that this framework created. Lee says it well:

¹. In other ways they force me to problematize the literature. The academic tones of "gendered" learning do not convey the intensity and pain of what that really feels like. I did not even ask the Women questions about abuse or violence, imagine what I might have heard if I had begun there, instead of with my neat, sanitized questions about ways of learning.... Hmmm!

Lee: Well, a lot of things go through my mind around socialisation and how males get to this point and females get to this point of what we call women's ways of knowing. And how we have traditionally socialised our male children to not respond to their emotional self, or even parts of their creative self. And then I do a big leap to the programs that I've set up and teach in, and then I would at times question the women's ways of knowing because within these programs I see males are reacting in the same way, given the opportunity to have a nurturing environment to learn from their experience, to contextualise, to connect, to be able to touch that emotional part, and it brings them to the same learning level as what I see women going to. And part of that is not buying into the stereotypes that males want to stay cognitive and straightforward and very linear thinking, and saying, this experience is available to you and watching them walk through it and watching them be transformed by that process. So I don't know if we do it a disservice by trying to define this on a gender level. (G2:6)

Jane: I mean I know how I prefer to learn, my preferred way of learning, it's something I build into my courses when I plan, because from a philosophical, I really believe that each person brings something to the learning environment, male or female. I've always been a feminist but my views of feminism have definitely changed. I think that women have something very valuable to offer, and it hasn't been valued, and I think what's quoted as women's way of learning has not been valued, but I think both sexes can use it. And I think that that's what we need to kind of get out there. I mean there is a definite, from a program planning standpoint, and from a learning standpoint, I think there is definite advantages to marrying the two, the cognitive, the logical, the way of going through it and explaining things to people, but also bringing in the emotions, the personal experience. I mean I learn so much from other people's stories and that's what I like to hear, I like to hear the stories. That's when I get really excited and I find most students do. Because when we grow up, what do our

parents tell us? They tell us stories. And that's how you hook people in. (G1:7)

Yolanda: I do think that we address many of these issues now that we haven't addressed before, such as language and power. But it's not making a lot of changes, I don't think. I think that there's talk but the talk is a little bit circular and not a lot of action is happening. We have implemented a curriculum in Nursing which is trying to move to this humanistic, experiential model and it's interesting watching the men, about ten percent of our students are men, and some of them, it suits them very well. You know it's a warm nurturing environment, and they seem to come out and they do very well. But men that are hostile or that have a problem with women, especially women who might be in positions of authority, the problem is intensified, it doesn't seem to take it away for them or to make it any easier to address. It seems in some ways to intensify it. Somehow there's a difference in how certain people approach things and we're doing really good at acknowledging and trying to negotiate but I don't see a lot of change happening in a lot of ways. I still see what you're talking about. That men will try and dominate, they will try and hold the power and that, as women, we're still struggling and fighting against that. And even as we try and bring in these different kinds of curriculum that we're bringing them in with people who have been educated in a behaviouristic model. And so the changes with students, the changes with the faculty, that change isn't always occurring. So we get lots of people with lots of rhetoric. (G1:8)

It seems to me, and Lee and the other women too, that gender is much more deeply embedded in our lives, our construction as women so much subtler and insidious, that simply planning for women's ways of learning, will not overcome the inequities that we face in education.

Sonia: I think there may be very deep levels in this question actually. And I think it's really simplistic to think of gender as socialised, the level of discrimination could be very deep, and to say it's all socialized is, although it is socialised in a way too, right? It's just that it's more

complex than that and perhaps we're less free around adopting another model than we might think as well. My experience in the classroom--at the PhD level where it's more equal numbers of men and women, and I certainly don't think this is universally the case at all, but I did notice that the men that dominated in the class, and I know there's been research done on this as well, that men are often motivated to establish power relations in a group. That that's their motivation and women it's cohesion, right? And I see this in the PhD classroom, it's no different than anywhere else whereas you might anticipate well women at that level would be more motivated for power and I don't see it. It's so competitive and I think some men are seeing it as a compete--at least in terms of with other men--as a power, an issue of dominance. You know? There's a problem there.(G1:8)

Not that that isn't a goal to strive for, creating programs that honour women's ways of learning, but my experiences, and the Five Women's, in our gender wars, or should I say, gendered conflicts, indicate we need to go beyond re-arranging the furniture in the classrooms of life. We have to look too, at why it is a struggle to be a woman learning today, and what part power structures play in our continuing inequalities. How can we begin to do that?

I first felt quite negative and said at the group session, "Well, this is going to be a really negative thesis, isn't it?" and they all laughed but then Sonia said, "Why? You're telling the truth", and then Yolanda said, "Well, no, I think it's very positive!" (G2:13), so I started to listen harder to the stories. My first clues came around "context".

I had asked, To what extent does the context in which the learning occurs affect it's gendering: how is this experienced in work place learning?, but the answers that began to unfold surprised me. Perhaps the question should have been, what does the context in which the learning occurs have to do with Power, Discourse and Discipline.

Unfolding Context Creates a Foucauldian Story

As my reading of the women's Stories continued, I began to see that, contrary to what I had thought, the learning that went on in formal educational institutions seemed much more traumatic than that which took place in workplace settings. I had expected the exact opposite. I asked the women about this at the Group Session, "I'm also struck by the differences that I seem to be hearing between education within a formal educational institution like this, and education in the workplace. Why is that?" (G2:13)

But it seemed to be as mystifying for them as for me. I knew it must be about Power, that Story kept coming around again and again. Finally, I decided to tackle another Dead White Man, Foucault, to see if he could shed light on my puzzle. And there unfolded the answer--in Foucault's universe, educational institutions regulate bodies. If they do their job well enough, discipline subjects properly, then workplaces are about simple reproduction. Here are some of the thoughts I have on the, unexpected, answers to my question about context--does it affect gender and learning ? Absolutely.

Power and Power-Knowledge Structures

Lyotard, another one of the postmodern pantheon, argues that the scientist classifies narrative knowledge

as belonging to a different mentality: savage, primitive, underdeveloped, backward, alienated, composed of opinions, customs, authority, prejudice, ignorance, ideology.

Narratives are fables, myths, legends, fit only for women and children. At best, attempts are made to throw some rays of light into this obscurantism, to civilise, to educate, develop...(From the Post Modern Condition, 1984, p. 27)

But from this Narrative, these Stories told by women, I have found knowledge that illuminates, educates, develops.... Coming to me as the women talked about power:

Lee: I think power is an issue. And I sometimes, I think I was talking to Valerie about this, I don't want to put it down as a male issue or female issue, I want to put it down as a human issue, and that when people get to a certain level of power then the behaviour can be very much the same, no matter what their genitals look like! And recently, I've had probably more problems with women misusing their power, around work stuff, than I have had around men, and it's been as hard and as difficult and smells the same as men misusing their power. I see it really strongly as a human issue and that we are all vulnerable to misuse our power. If we're not watchful.

Sonia: The reason I mentioned it as women particularly, is because you see that you're disadvantaged, you would think then as you get power you'll change the system--that's the assumption. But the process of getting power, especially if you're in a disadvantaged position, can make you adopt the pattern of the oppressor even more than the oppressor.

Yolanda: It's very strong.

Lee: I was thinking, I told Val, I referred to that story in the operating room where the surgeon took the breast and threw it at the student nurse, and how we just quaked whenever he was around. But there also was a Supervisor, I remember she was just a huge woman, I mean she was HUGE and you would hear her come walking down the hall, and you'd just quake over her, because she would just be incredibly aggressive and inappropriate, and a booming voice and just trying to catch you off guard at every step of the way.

Yolanda: And it's two o'clock in the morning.

Lee: And it's two o'clock in the morning. And so when I think about it, I think of this guy and with his anger just coming out all over the hospital and I think of this huge woman, her anger coming out inappropriately. And they both had power.

Jane: Yeah! And because you played the game according to the rules, you have to maintain the system because that's what got you where you are today, so you have to maintain that because if you change that perhaps you won't be in the same position of power.

Sonia: Now, I actually have not experienced that, at the level of professors at the University, (earlier she had talked about seeing it in staff at the university), I've not had that experience with this particular group. But with what you were describing, it just brought it to mind, I think, especially in the school system you see that. (G2:5)

Especially in the school system.... And while power is found in all relationships, public or private, in some it seems much more blatant, so it is in educational relationships.

I found that taking an historical, or contextual view of Foucault, his writing, his historiography has been useful. Even when it is such convoluted, "pure" academic writing it seems to work for me to put it in a body. To know that Foucault wrote out of his own practice of sado-masochistic homosexuality, that he gloried in being found so uncategorizable, that he abandoned academia for some years in order to sit in on psychiatric clinics, (a not unreasonable segue for me), that he came in his later work to accept some of the tenets of the modern project that he had earlier repudiated, that even though he analyses institutions, discourse and social

practices he never developed a critical analysis of patriarchy in modern culture and "nowhere developed a critique of the family as an institution that oppresses women and children" (Best and Kellner, 1991, p. 74), this helps me embody his work. I can put his body in it, and my body in it. But warily, and after promising myself to take the antidote, some feminist reading, immediately following.

Foucault critiques the Enlightenment tradition that equates reason with emancipation and progress, arguing instead that "an interface between modern forms of power and knowledge has served to create new forms of dominations" (cited in Best and Kellner, p. 34). Foucault brought to his work a perspective developed from his work in psychiatry, medicine, punishment and criminology. His writings on the formation of disciplinary apparatuses, the constitution of the subject and the emergence of the human sciences have led others to enshrine him as THE postmodern thinker, but he himself rejected this title. As a theorist he combined pre-modern, modern and post-modern positions.

My autobiography makes me more receptive than some to his notion that there still remain some totalising theories. My personal history makes no sense without some unifying narrative. In his work on discourses and disciplines, especially, he rejects the dominant models of modern power--the judicial and the economic--as being flawed and outmoded, but posits in their place a new mode of 'bio-power' that resonates in me and the stories told me by the Five Women. This new power operates, not through "physical force or representation by law, but through the hegemony of norms, political technologies and the shaping of the body and soul" (cited Best and Kellner, p. 48).

Foucault claims power travels up, not just down, it is indeterminate, subjectless and yet productive--of individual's bodies and identities. He defines two modalities of bio-power. In the first, the disciplinary power is directed at the human body; in 1979 Foucault defined disciplines as "techniques for assuring the ordering of multiplicities", that is, discipline works through discourse

and normalization to form a "carceral archipelago", where all thought and utterance is straitjacketed. In the second modality, emerging subsequent to disciplinary power, power focuses on the "species body", the population in general.

The population is supervised through new forms of knowledge-producing techniques, such as surveillance, objectification, practices and technologies of exclusion, and through the development of new disciplines such as psychiatry, sociology and criminology. Institutions such as the asylum, the hospital and the prison, and, of course, the school, function as laboratories, where new techniques of domination are produced and where new knowledge leads to social control. The human body is shaped by "scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms", where a moral/legal/psychological/medical/sexual being is "carefully fabricated...according to a whole technique of force and bodies" (Foucault 1979, p. 217, in Discipline and Punish).

Foucault also understands 'subject' to have two meanings: one is both "subject to someone else by control and dependence and also tied to their own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (Foucault, 1982, p. 212, The Subject and Power). Foucault rejected the Enlightenment model which links consciousness, self-reflection and freedom, preferring instead a more Nietzschean claim that moral consciousness and self-knowledge are a power effect, whereby that knowledge employs power internalized as social control.

In this Foucauldian light, the struggles of the women to learn in educational institutions become more adequately theorised. In the carceral institution of the school, and particularly the University, the discourse is to discipline, and to normalise. In their perceptions as revealed through their stories, the Five Women were most often being normalized to the male model.

Thus "gender" has become a domination technique, a discourse designed to exclude, to confine, to conform, to regulate their bodies in the required modality of power. The construction of their subjectivity can be seen as a construct of domination. Far from being an Enlightening experience, learning for women as they progress through and up the educational institution's

ladder has been a correctional experience; the more they learn, the more their gender is revealed, paradoxically, the more they are subject to power imposed to dominate. If the institution performs its regulatory function properly, the women, especially Sonia and Yolanda should have submitted, become subject totally to the dominant discourse and be enacting or inscribing that discourse on to their student's and pupil's bodies.

Foucault suggests we question modern practices through his methodological use of "reversal" that is, reversing modern root assumptions of the human project. For example, he questions the rationalist and humanistic grounds upon which modern society bases most of its institutions--and one of those institutions is that of education. His focus reveals that power and oppression is still present within the humanist forms of emancipation, and regulation is hidden within modern discourses. Humanism does not remove power, just reinscribes it.

The value of Foucault's work, which does not fully focus on education or schools and other educational institutions, is that it reveals the centrality of education in the construction of modernity. Modern forms of governance and social discipline are secured through education. Modernity replaces overt coercive authority and subjugation with education. Education does not simply go on in schools but is an

essential part of governmentality, a crucial aspect of the regulatory practices of a range of modern institutions. Foucault's work questions the mirror which modernity holds up to itself, the benevolent image of emancipatory practices (including education) which it chooses to see reflected there. (Usher and Edwards, p. 84)

But What Is True? Can Education Be an Untrue Discourse?

When I began my research study, even though I thought I was thinking in postmodern ways, I realise now that I was still influenced by the liberal-humanist paradigm, hardly surprising

as that was the paradigm which informed my education in various educational institutions here in Canada and in England. In my learned world view I saw knowledge and power as distinctly counterposed to each other. I thought knowledge was a thing that you used to search for truth, that power could get in the way of that search, and twist the truth. I thought, too, that power was a thing, reified, "out there" and held by institutions like the State and the University--actually, I 'knew' power was held and used oppressively against me by pretty well every institution that I had worked in, been educated in and medicated in. I equated power with force and coercion, and believed it distorted and corrupted knowledge. It seemed to me that 'truth' and 'knowledge' could not co-exist with power.

But listening to the Five Women and thinking through my own biography, I have come to find Foucault's theorising in this area makes sense of what I have been hearing and living, and is, paradoxically, more hopeful in the long view than my previous humanist world view.

I have debated over these last few months with what 'truth' is--I fought with my deep belief that "the truth will make you free", that if I could find the truth of the learning experiences of the six/Five Women, I could construct it as new knowledge and then use it, politically and educationally, to make learning 'better' for women. I noted that my research wasn't popular and began to question what truth I would find, and what reception it would have. I am beginning now to see how educational institutions marginalise and suppress some 'truths' discovered through alternative ways of constructing knowledge. If truth is the basis for emancipation and progress, and truth is gained from knowledge which faithfully represents the world, or the 'truth' of the way things really are, and this truth is found in allegedly value-neutral and power-free, scientific ways, then when it is imparted through the educational system, then it can be used to liberate and free oneself from power. But what if the 'truth' you tell is not constructed this way, if it comes from revelation, from literature? (see Leggo, 1995, "Storing the world/Storying the World", for a discussion of truth/not truth in literature and writing) Or from bodily practice? Then these "truths"

are suppressed and ignored, because they do not have the same status.

I asked, Where does the locus of power-knowledge reside, then? Where is truth created? Well, if Foucault is right, it lies in discourse and the discursive practices through which "truth" is constructed. And what is discourse?

Discourses are...about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations..thus discourses construct certain possibilities for thought. They order and combine words in particular ways and exclude or displace other combinations. (Ball, 1990, p. 17)

For those who speak the discourse it is a given--it works 'behind their backs', it is 'unthought', and so 'conceal their own invention' (Foucault, 1974, p. 49, from The Archaeology of Knowledge). Discourse speaks, yet is silent--it as an absent but powerful presence, and as it author-ises some to speak and some to be silent, it is exclusionary, dictating whose voice may be heard with authority whose language is authorised. Discourse can be seen at work sometimes in the physical setting of a classroom or a work situation, who is at the centre, who is most easily seen and heard, whose voice will be overlooked? Often attempts to democratize sites results in self-regulation, as in group-work, or team-work, which simply replaces overt supervision.

Using Foucault's notion of reversal we might want to question spatial re-arrangements, what is proposed as more 'democratic' or 'progressive' and look still for power relation and the discourse at work. An interesting notion to bring to program planning theory--are we just re-configuring power and discipline or truly planning more equitable programs?

Foucault asserts that these power-knowledge formations operate through discursive practices to produce 'docile bodies' and 'obedient minds' (1979 in Discipline and Punish); an interesting point--the latin root of docile is docilus or teachable. These discursive practices bring together power and knowledge, as they are used and constructed, and organise them in ways that

facilitate constant forms of surveillance and evaluation. It is no wonder then the women mostly felt uncomfortable when being evaluated.

If the disciplining in education is effective, power will operate through people rather than upon them. In the modern world coercion is not physical but is hidden in discourses and power-relations that constitute oppression.

So Foucault's "regimes of truth", those powerful discourses of medicine, psychiatry and other forms of disciplinary knowledge, this is a phrase that rings true in my own truth. Most woman in our society have experienced this marginalisation of body, bodily, when they go to a male doctor, who tells them what's "wrong" with them, not what's right with them. Yolanda knows all about this, how "true" her words seem now!

This is the marginalisation felt by the Five Women when they brought their practitioner-based knowledge with them to graduate school and had it discounted, when Sonia's work with brain-damaged children gave her a knowledge of compassion that was not recognized by credentialling organizations, and so on and so on. Ironically, (because Foucault never adequately theorised male/female power dominations), his work carries an allure for feminists and women and men who seek to understand the politics of discourses, to see that knowledge is tied inescapably to power, and that knowledge is a place of political power.

In Adult Education the classification of what comprises the 'really useful knowledge' (see Thompson, 1986), and what should be disseminated to whom has been a grandly contested area; it also illuminates the unsoundness of the grand narrative of the separation of power and knowledge. For Foucault, and I think for me and the Five Women, power and knowledge are inseparable. "Knowledge is always found in relation to its uses and therefore in relation to a form of power, and so too, no power can be exercised without the extraction, appropriation, distribution or retention of knowledge" (Usher and Edwards, p. 87).

In summarising just what "truth" might be revealed in the stories the women tell about women learning, Foucault (1980) says,

Truth is centred on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it; it is subject...it is object...it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media); lastly it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation. (p. 77)

Confession and Foucault

My reading of Foucauldian thought in the area of disciplining and regulating bodies and minds through discursive practice was disturbing to me, but especially so is his notion of the use of confession to further regulate, as he demonstrates in his work on the discourse of sexuality. Here Foucault focused on 'confession', the search within ourselves for a deep truth or meaning; hoping that when we find it we will use it to move into greater personal autonomy and emancipation. This is at the heart of the humanistic and progressive theories of education, and increasingly so today when "personal experience" is brought into educational theory and practice. But what if Foucault (in 1981, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 60) is right when he says that confession is

so deeply engrained in us, that we no longer perceive it as the effect of a power that constrains; on the contrary, it seems to us that truth, lodged in our most secret nature, 'demands' only to surface; that if it fails to do so, this is because a constraint holds it in place, the violence of a power weighs it down...

Therefore practices such as guidance and counselling, professional "confessing", ascribe meanings to experience; they are already an effect of power. Confession results in self-regulation, we discipline ourselves, we internalise oppression and we monitor ourselves. Therefore educational

practices that include these elements--the use of personal experience, for example--actually allow us to learn to be 'subjects', even as we believe we are working toward meeting individual needs.

I wonder, at this point in my analysis, where my own research study fits into this framework. I had been particularly moved by Lana, who had found the experience of being able to talk about her education, her upbringing, her work, her practice, her life, so powerful. For her, the space created by the interviews had allowed her to create her own personal narrative. She had then been able to reflect on some aspects of her life that telling her story had revealed for the first time.

Valerie: What's it been like to talk about this?

Lana: On a number of levels, well, one it's helped me to talk through some of these difficult issues for me, and put it, be more analytical and objective about it, just that opportunity to talk, to open up, and I haven't felt intimidated by you or the tape and that's probably a credit to you, in that way it's been therapeutic. I think a lot of people have a lot of stories and never get a chance to tell them, and it's the stories I think that are the essence of what's really happening out there. I think that for me trying to understand my learning personally, has been, really afforded me an opportunity to reflect on that. Really for a lot of these issues, I have never studied them from all angles. It's given me a lot of insight. I'm still sitting on the fence in terms of it being a gender issue, I don't know, gender has a huge impact, but maybe...I think from what we've discussed and from talking to other women I have become conscious of the dynamics and the politics and the power issues that go on in the workplace and that's a learning. That's has been for me an amazing learning. (L3:10)

Surely this powerful, empowering, opportunity for her to talk, to examine a complex and difficult, sexualized, relationship with a superior at work, to tell her story and make meaning of it, this can't be a way for the disciplining power of the dominant discourse to shape her into self-regulation, or worse, construct herself as victim, sexual harassee? Or can it?

And Sonia said to me,

Well!!!! I just went down to the bathroom and I was thinking, this feels weird, it feels like I'm on another planet! Like I think it's been two hours, it flew by, yeah, it is, it's really, there is something about therapeutic somehow, talking about yourself, the talking cure.... wow.

(U1:39)

But now I am questioning the research process, my study, other studies....does Walkerdine (1990) have the "truth" of it when she casts the social scientist in the role of paid voyeur, using "the basis of mass social science. What is to be known, what is to be kept in check?" (p. 206), the ones who survey and classify so that the(ir) disciplinary power-knowledge structures can regulate and control us? I think in part I am colluding in this project.... And I wonder, when we talked to each other, when we told stories, when they talked and I listened, when I transcribed their recordings, night after night, living with each tape and each unique voice for days and days, each nuance, each pause for breath, every laugh and every sigh faithfully recorded, was I/were we creating our own subjectivities as wounded, gendered "individuals with needs"?

It's Not the Learning, It's the Teaching!

One of the questions I had not thought to put initially, but did as the conversations with the women persisted, was how relationships with teachers had affected them as learners. I had originally thought I would ask if they had had interactions with Teachers who espoused feminist pedagogical practices, but as our Talks progressed, they naturally came around to tales of difficulties, of oppositions to them personally or to their gender, from teachers of all kinds. On a happier note, stories were told of good teachers, good modellers of behaviour. It began to seem to me that how the teaching was done was at least as important as planning of the learning. I had

not originally seen that much difference between the two, believing one to be the back of the other, like an educational Janus, but as I listened, and as I lived out my own Story in that Summer Session, I came to believe differently. Now my question is, can we Teach differently?

At the Group Session, continuing with our discussion of power, I asked,

...and there were the Capo's, not the collaborators but the people from amongst the prison population who of course helped the Nazi's and that was how they survived. By turning in fellow prisoners and putting them into the gas ovens; it's a really ugly image and yet it's the one that seems to be fit in here, this metaphor, that's the thing that keeps coming to mind. But I also still want to come back and ask that question, So, can you teach people NOT to abuse power? I mean is there any way? There should be, I hope there's a way, that with education that you can teach people not to use power abusively or am I just hoping..?

Yolanda: I really think that in part, it's how we are with one another, it's how faculty behave with faculty and it's how faculty behave with support staff, so that students see something different than what they have traditionally. I have a real difficulty with the word "teach", because that word to me simply says, power, it just blares it out. And I don't know what to put in it's place, because I don't I have any alternative, but it seems to me that as long as we hang on to that word we hang on in part to some of that traditional dynamic. Our new curriculum is a curriculum about "becoming", it's not about differences with the students, it's about faculty being different, and that's where faculty have so much trouble understanding the curriculum, that it's not about the student, it's about them and it's about their learning and their becoming and about them behaving in a different manner, and then you'll start to see the social change that the curriculum is supposedly trying to direct. So I really think that it's how we are with one another that comes to a different.

Jane: And what you model in the classroom, whether you give respect to your students for their experiences, or if they get the answer wrong, you don't belittle them or embarrass them or do whatever was done in the past, You can come up with 101 (worst) things from grade school. I mean the best compliments I've had, have been from students coming up and saying, If someone had taught me in grade school like you teach me here, I would have liked school. And I think, What a waste, because I loved school and here was a person who could have enjoyed it so much more out of their school but they didn't fit into that mould.

Sonia: I think what you were saying about teaching is that they're not explicit (about) intentions, none of them...at any level. And I think that's one of the main problems, they're part of the hidden curriculum...it is the limitation of what goes on in the classroom, the limitations of the professor or educator, is the limitation of the learning that can take place in that classroom. What is the intention in these classes? Is this all about getting an academic position? Why? A job? And I say that to people, and they say, Of course it is, it's about getting a job, it should be about that. I don't think it should be about that.

Jane: Isn't it supposed to be about learning?

Yolanda: Yeah. And about ideas.

Sonia: Yeah, and about saying, Is this going to have a good effect in the world? (G2:12)

So we may be constructing particular kinds of learners, inscribing them with characteristics; we may be teaching or planning programs that paradoxically construct people as

praiseworthy, or blameable, in terms of the 'natural' attributes they have 'discovered' for themselves through confession. For Foucault, 'student-centred' approaches to education-- approaches that are, of course, held up as the goal of much adult education practice, and which much feminist pedagogy aims at--work to extract a 'confession' "from a person as an individual with a particular set of skills whose needs are regimented within a range of practices reinforcing the identity of that person as an individual with needs" (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 97). What a thought! We are constructing or at least positioning people in subject positions, such as 'woman', 'man', 'teacher', 'taught', 'student' and 'professor'. What a prospect, what a warning for teachers and program planners!

Regulation/s

In the Foucauldian world view, disciplinary power functions by observing, surveilling, those subjects to be disciplined. Indeed, Foucault argued that far from trying to create uniformity, or homogeneity, disciplinary power operates as it, "separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units" (Foucault, 1979, Discipline and Punish, p. 170). This process of decomposing works through the use of files, dossiers, records, that is, "a field of surveillance situates them (subjects) in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them." (p. 189) and whereby subjects become "a case", an "object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power" (Foucault, 1979, 191).

As the need to regulate grows, so does the surveillance and the categorisation--which is not neutral, but normalises as it categorises--which in turn lead to boundaries and then to exclusions. We see this, particularly those of us who are constituted as graduate students, (Sonia and I) and surely those of us who teach (Lee, Lana, Yolanda and Jane), and definitely those who

plan educational programs (Jane, Lana, Lee and Yolanda) in the proliferation of transcripts, certificates, assessments, curricula vitae, school reports, records, appraisal forms, tests, degrees, diplomas--the sheer weight of the dead trees/paper pressing on us is enough to smother us. Take a number....any number....student number, employment number, social insurance number, pay grade, pin number, credit card number, telephone number, fax number....

And the significance for education is two-fold. Firstly as teachers, Foucault reminds us that a relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a "mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency" (Foucault, 1979, p. 176).

Secondly, as students or learners, we are assessed in what we assume (because we have believed what has been told us) to be neutral or objective procedures. But this is a surveillance "that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish...a visibility through which one differentiates and judges" (Foucault, op cit, p. 184). The objectivity or supposed neutrality is actually normalisation, a manifestation of disciplinary power, but one which points away from the power-knowledge discourse to measure "objectively" what is there "naturally".

Discipline or Punish?

These two points are at the heart, I believe, of the always difficult, sometimes wounding, experiences of the Five Women where they were the taught, the evaluated. The process of "evaluating their learning" was the process whereby they were judged as worthy of inclusion in the power-knowledge discourse or rejected, excluded from it, left as was Sonia, with a D, or Yolanda with a B, both knowing at some intuitive level that they had not played the right game, in both their cases, the game as regulated and ruled by male markers. All the women felt that evaluations were crucial, even if they had not ever articulated to themselves just why they were so

important.

And an aside from my Journal, prompted by Sonia's story of the Religious Poets Exam and her feeling of being marked, male-marked, and the Story told by Renee Norman (Norman, Leggo, 1995) about her experiences in a Research Methodology Course prompted a poetic attempt to articulate my feelings in the not-father tongue....

One of my favourite little books, found one dismal working day in a furtive ferret in a book store in Nanaimo is the Crone's Book of Words, by Valerie Worth, (definitely worthwhile if so named). First published in 1969 and continuously in print since then, it's a book of spells, women's poems, the mythos of the hovel, the garden and the grave, the private places where we really live. While the men are off at war, chasing after the King's shilling, killing and kinging in the public eye, we crones are muttering charms. She has a lovely spell called Against Enemies Or Evil, which ends with a chant,

But say these words

Against the worst:

I stand

In circles

Of light

That nothing

May cross

Valerie Worth

And I've had mileage out of that! Here's another, one of mine, for every
female student who had to take EDUC 500,

AGAINST MALEVOLENT MALE-MARKING

Write your best prose,

Quote your best quotes,

Always by APA style,

Italics and bold,

Foot notes,

Or Header Style A?

But say these words

Against the worst:

Stand firm

Breathe deep

Cry

When

You get home

Valerie Chapman

From the Group, about Evaluations/Male Marking....

Valerie: (To Lee) I'm also struck by the differences that I seem to be hearing between education within a formal educational institution like this, and education in the workplace. I know Lee's program is very very different it seems to me from what we've heard here and yet she deals with police officers and tough nuts heh? So why do your courses work, and how do you create a safe environment?

Lee: I think that it works because of a combination of safety in the environment and content...working from their experiences...having action and having something for them to do with their new information...barriers and aggression and all that (have been) set in my way but (I) know...that they are just a person who has their own stories and their own experiences and if you can provide an opportunity for them to turn an eye and look on that, then it becomes quite changeful for them. A certain level of transformation.

Valerie: The other thing too, is they're not being graded at the end, right?

Lee: No. Well, they have to do a take home exam that's open book, and a skill level of how they are going to respond to family violence situations, how they're going to handle disclosures that type of stuff, and they get a certificate which will add to their resume. So there is some evaluation?

Lee: Yeah ..

Valerie: I wondered because Sonia was making the point in the doctoral classroom it was the issues of power and competition.

Jane: So I mean, you can do well, and another person can do well, for your situation (to Sonia) it seems that only certain people can do well, because there is a pyramid going up, just only a certain amount of positions available, because if there was infinite amount of positions then it wouldn't matter because everybody would get a position.

Sonia: Yah..although I think it's constructed, and I think the men constructed it. I don't think I feel that way, even though I want to be an academic, I don't feel competitive with them. I feel competitive for a mark though--I'm sensitive to the mark I get. But not, I don't have to know what they got, but I have felt on their side (the men) that that's motivating them. And I think it's the limitation of the professor, and in your case (to Lee), I'm sure if it's worked it's because of you. I really believe that's how much power and influence an instructor has in the classroom even if they say nothing. I mean in our Noted Scholar's class it worked, it wasn't particularly competitive, but it was a graduate level class.

Valerie: Until the last day when we got our papers back!

(Laughter!)

Sonia: Why, then what happened?

Valerie: Well, then I went to see him and told him I didn't have a good enough mark and (Lee laughs!) there was a line up behind me! And in fact he'd said he would negotiate...So everything was great except for the mark!

Lee: Marks are yech! *(makes graphic noise....)*

(The others agree, Uh huh)

Yolanda: See, I agree I don't feel any fight for the academic position, because I don't want that kind of position but certainly I'm sensitive to my mark. Really am. And I think that that mark, that materialistic exchange is just, is critical and it puts so much, it places power in the situation, places power in the instructor because they're the person who's going to put that A or A- on your paper and that's a problem.

Jane: And that whole thing--I mean, it sounds like we are all very similar--the mark is very important. It's something I fight with every time, like why does it make this much difference to get this mark, like what does it prove, has anybody ever asked to see my marks? No, so why am I so hung up on it? And I think it really takes away from the learning experience.

Yolanda: But it's almost part of the value of just

Jane: Oh it is value!

Yolanda: it is the value of you in some way too. It's regard, regard of you.

Jane: But that irritates me, really irritates me and the older I get the more irritated I get about it. (Laughs, with others) But of course I still look at the mark !!

(Laughter from all the women)

Yolanda: Me too!

Sonia: Yeah!

Lee: Yeah, it can take away from the learning experience, the time I experienced that was in the Noted Scholar class. Because I audited that class, I didn't need it for credit. I loved that class. I could just go in and relax. And just listen and learn and it took away any type of feeling of being under pressure. It was wonderful. If I could go audit..

Jane: Well you see, I'd love to be a perpetual student because I'd like to go to the classes and do the discussions, the papers just about kill me! I mean I like doing them in sort of a masochistic kind of way, just because I get proud of what I've written but it's a real struggle for me. But I love going to the classes and being exposed to the different ideas and discussing the different ideas that's what I love. The final mark... Well, I could care less, but I do care! So..

Yolanda: You see we all say that, I don't really care about the mark, but you get the paper back and you take it out of the envelope

Jane: Look right at the back page!

Yolanda: do you look at the comments, no, you go, Well, where's that mark?

(All the women laugh)

Sonia: Yeah, that's it! (G2:32)

Regulating Experience

And of course, educational practice, as the disciplinary power, excludes the competencies gained through resistant and oppositional knowledge, or understandings arrived at through alternative discourses, in order to maximise correct performance of knowledges acquired through normalising processes of education. Performative knowledge or discursive practices developed in diverse or different learning communities are marginalised at best, alienated and totally excluded where possible.

Hence, Lana's experience on arriving at her new position, where her practical knowledge was devalued, dismissed by a Director with a Ph.D. and where even her determination to complete her Master's studies is patronised as not being quite 'right'.

Lana: Learning opportunities at work happen at all different levels for me. Both the informal and formal level. I learned more about myself in situations I reflect on as foreign or critical. It was a fairly steep learning curve in this job, compounded and confounded by

relationships in the workplace, in part my relationship with my immediate superior who is male, and dominant power oriented. I had to acquire new information and new knowledge in the field of employee health and safety. I came from a field of health promotion that was not a structured professional entity, but very eclectic, I had to bring my experience more than formal learning to play into that environment. I never had pursued an academic career in health promotion but had learned very experientially, I learn by doing and bringing more of a generalist perspective. I found myself with colleagues all with an academic grounding of sorts, and I felt somewhat intimidated, didn't know where I was going with all my experience, face to face with theory, academia. And lately we have been under attack from industry for not dealing with hard core more traditional issues, and they directed accusations at my Fearless Leader that the materials and our directions etc, that he had couched in too academic, too arrogant, too..not connected to reality. It affected all of us, my other colleague and I are grounded in practical knowledge and we were not surprised at the criticism. It was the first time I did not apologise for my lack of academia, if anything I saw now the strength in my experience. What I had been saying from day 1, was now being recognised, not by my Fearless Leader, but our CEO. I thought, what's going on? It was my first wake up call, I have been too dormant, have been too much the silent lamb, but at the same time I am very conscious of politics and not being at liberty to impose my will or thought. What came was me going back to my experience and valuing my experience as learning and not feeling the academic world forcing me to relinquish my own sense of worth, or the value of my 20 odd years experience. (L1:20)

Writing Rebelliously?

And for me, planning my thesis, my proposal, filling in forms, reading regulations, regulations for working with my supervisor, regulations for the research so that it meets Ethical Guidelines, regulation letters to introduce myself to my participants, regulations for writing proposals, theses, grant applications, regulating my words, what I can and can't say, never 'all', not 'most', maybe 'some', but being careful to regulate my questions, to get the well-regulated answers...What is more regulating than the process of studying for a graduate degree, the process of writing a thesis? Until I doubt myself, my thoughts, my instincts, my Voice, and only trust and hear the Committee's.... But, Foucault was right, there is resistance, just listen to this story I told the Five Women at the group session! Sonia has been talking about a scary presentation she was scheduled to give at a Conference and how she nearly lost her nerve:

Sonia: But I didn't! But you know really, I think that's one of the problems. People just don't (do it), they say, Oh well never mind. People are advising me of that all the time, Oh well, you know you want to graduate from this place.

Lee: Oh, the politics.

Valerie: Well, I know when I went to my mini-committee meeting--I have two men and one woman on the committee, and the woman couldn't be there, and I knew I would have had her support--so I went to the meeting with the two men, and I came with my preliminary findings and I knew I was going to talk about discrimination and male professors harassing women students, etc etc, and I was really scared. And I went in there and I thought, I'm not, I'm just going to talk about the first level, I'm going to talk about the safe stuff, women like to talk, talking is connecting, connecting is learning, and I didn't! I really took a risk..But I was shaking, I was shaking underneath the table and I thought, They're just going to jump on me,

they're going to tell me to throw this out the window. And what was the most disturbing was that they said to me, Why are you so surprised? Why are you so surprised that you see this discrimination and harassment, don't you know it? And I think that was the worst thing, that they weren't surprised! And they did, they told me how I had to be confidential and I should check with the Equity Office and make sure I don't mention any names because there is no statute of limitations on this and blah blah blah! And

Yolanda: Amazing how they knew that, isn't it?

(Everybody laughs!)

Valerie: But that was really interesting, and I did feel they supported me, both of them, very supportive. Good work, said my supervisor!

Lana: Well I think that's what struck me, that you are taking some risks here, as you have, Sonia, and I think it's knowing that there is courage and that, and yeah..It will probably take you down some pretty scary alleys. But I commend you for that, I think for my sex, my gender, laughs!

Yolanda: But it's interesting that they weren't surprised, so they know and they accept. And that produces a message that we should also accept. And so I think the courage and the creativity really come through because it's a matter of, Nope! We're not going to! (G2:23)

So. I have broken some rules, flouted some regulations, will I be disciplined? As Leggo says "Professors have power" (Norman and Leggo, 1995, p. 5). And as I have said elsewhere, who will actually read my thesis? Or is it a discursive practice I have to learn, so that I may

regulate, may discipline, may control myself, become normalised, Mastering my resistance? More questions than there are answers to, once the unfolding, the denouement takes place. I think, I hope, I will spin the tales as told by the Five Women, then weave their words, their reflections, their feminine model of program planning for women (and for men) into my own alternative discourse, speaking my own language, telling my own stories, not repeating the stale old myths.

Is There Room to Hope?

Resistance

Another question I had not thought to ask, but have answered anyway, now. Foucault, whilst never clearly articulating a coherent theory, did argue that a discourse can be a focus for resistance, a base from which to oppose. He claims that there is a plurality of powers, not a monolithic or monopolistic power. The metaphors he uses of nets and capillaries, deliberately suggest spaces--things fall through nets, power diffuses. If power is so diffused then there is nowhere that it cannot be resisted. Similarly, there can be oppositional discourses within one discourse, subjects can be multiply positioned, with room for resistance. And it seems to me, Foucault's own strategy of reversal when used here will produce the possibility of refusal of the dominant discourses. So, is there room to resist?

Yes, indeed. As the Women's stories tell us, there is in this panopticon of modern disciplinary power still room for resistance. Bleak as his theories paint the world, Foucault finds some hope in following through his notions on power as being contingent and vulnerable to contestation, that every human relation is a power relation, a strategic relation, and ones that we can reconstruct. He points out,

My optimism would consist rather in saying that so many things can be changed, fragile as they are, bound up with more circumstances than necessities, more arbitrary than self-evident, more a matter of complex but temporary, historical circumstances than with inevitable anthropological constraints. (Foucault, 1988, cited in Best and Kellner, p. 59)

I like the fact that Foucault does not present subjects as helpless and passive, but instead says that "as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to precise strategy" (Foucault, 1988, cited by Best and Kellner, p. 65). Foucault's later work shifted away from technologies of domination, the ways in which individuals are classified, normalized, excluded, objectified, individualized and disciplined, to technologies of the self, or the ways individuals transform themselves or are transformed by others.

Such transformation is possible through resistance. There is space in the panopticon, between the cells, between the bars even, where the jailer cannot see the prisoner, space for resistance. Foucault calls for a "plurality of autonomous struggles to be waged in the prisons, schools and asylums, a micro-politics where numerous local groups contest diffuse and de-centred forms of power spreading throughout society" (Best and Kellner, p. 56). He rejects the "general intellectual" who speaks for the oppressed, and the concept of a human essence waiting to be free from its shackles is of course at odds with his notion of power being constituted in individuals in social relations.

For women, for feminists, or for those just struggling for education as individuals, this is good and bad news. The good news is that every woman's struggle or resistance is theoretically possible, and that the aggregate of these micro levels of resistance, a plurality of resistances, will contest the power that is embedded in local or capillary levels of society, which in turn will affect the way that power is taken up by larger institutional structures. The bad news for women in general, and for the six of us in particular, is that no one gargantuan "soul of revolt, no locus of

great Refusal" (Foucault, 1980, The History of Sexuality, cited Best and Kellner, p.56), will do the work of rebelling or resisting for them/us.

Foucauldian postmodern politics "attempts to break with modernist unifying or totalizing strategies of resistance, to cultivate multiple forms of resistance², to destroy the prison of received identities and discourses of exclusion, and to encourage differences of all kinds" (Best and Kellner, p. 57). It includes two key components: a discourse politics and a bio-politics.

In the first, marginal groups may attempt to fight against the hegemonizing discourses that position people within the straitjacket of "normal" identities, and this can lead to the liberation of differences. Foucault finds space for resistance even within the power relations of discourse--in any society, the rules that determine discourses enforce norms of what is sane, rational or true, and to speak from outside these rules is to risk being marginalized and excluded. So every discourse is produced by the power circulating within the people creating that discourse, but they serve too as "a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1980, The History of Sexuality).

Such counter discourses are levers of political and personal resistance; in its way this thesis contains several such counter-discourses. In Sonia's resistance to the classroom practices that attacked her beliefs and knowledges gained from childhood, in Yolanda's resistance to the prevailing discourse of nurses as handmaidens of the physician, in Lee's resistance to the homophobic discourse of some of the participants in her training sessions with police, in Jane's resistance to modes of discourse that gender the Sciences and Math in mixed-gender schools, in Lana's resistance to her Director's sexualizing and de-valuing discourse, and in my resistance to the constraints of the normalizing discourses enshrined in the typical Master of Arts theses, and of course, in my resistance to the discourse of gender in graduate school.

². Well, women have actually been resisting for several thousand years.... Strange I would need to see a man say it to make resistance ok.... Oh, dear.

In the second component of Foucauldian micro-politics, bio-struggle, individuals attempt to break free from disciplinary powers that regulate the body, to re-invent the body. Foucault believed that by developing new bodies and new pleasures there was the possibility of subverting the construction of normalized subject identities and forms of consciousness. Indeed, the development of theory and practice around the trans-gendered body, and the writings of queer theorists bear this out. What will gender mean as a discourse in twenty years time?

In his later work Foucault does discuss power in the form of male domination over women, but there is still no working out of how the technologies of the self can deal with the power relations that saturate gender. At this point, Foucauldian theory becomes questionable in its usefulness for a feminist analysis, but his contributions regarding power, knowledge and truth are sufficient. At this stage, regretfully, I leave Foucault, leave him at centre stage as one of the new panoply of White Male Academic Gods of the Postmodern.

With bell hooks, (see Griffiths, 1994) I will take what I like from this new discourse, and leave the rest. Foucault has opened up a space for rethinking power and some political strategies but he has little to offer to fill that space, and while his 'reversals' of modernist thinking are intriguing, I leave dissatisfied. He seems to seriously understate the continuing importance of violence and overt repression. It is interesting to speculate on how the body is regulated and dominated, but there is no depth to it--what would Foucault have Lee's friend do when the surgeon throws a breast at her? What indeed, would most academics suggest? Talk it to the incinerator? Walk it conversationally to the garbage can? Foucault has no bodily grasp of the anger felt by those women marginalized by normalizing discourses. How could he, as one of the normalizers? Foucault was gay, but he still inhabited/s the centre, was/is one of the gods of the white, eurocentric academic heaven, a very male heaven, sexual orientation notwithstanding....

Feminism

Question, Can We Feminise Foucault?

I began this story of unfoldings with gender and will include in my Final words, a reminder to my readers, and stern injunctions to adult educators, to make gender visible--and so I must, too, make gender visible in this analysis of power-knowledge relations. There were too, some silences in the Women's stories, some other invisibilities that are disturbing. None of them/us talked about the regulation of race, or sexual orientation, or of ability. Of course, I didn't ask them, and there I assume some responsibility, but it is interesting that none of us mentioned race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Sonia and I did touch on "sizeism" and "ageism", peripherally, as it figured in our own personal experiences of learning.

Inherent in the women's stories were metaphors of talk, opposition and power. Foucault has given me words and theories to more clearly perceive the revealed shapes in the mud at the bottom of the river of talk. But Foucault's theorising cannot tell the whole story. Once again, my own intuition tells me that there is more to this narrative than he tells. Turning to two feminist writers who have interrogated Foucault's writings, Nancy Hartsock and Valerie Walkerdine, I find the missing thread,

The Other

Hartsock argues for a search for a theory of power for women. For her, and for me and the Five Women struggling to explain our difficulties with power, "power" is associated with the male and the masculine--often connected to virility and masculinity. Not that gender needs its own theory, for what applies to power relations and domination of other groups and their

experiences of domination and subjugation, equally applies to women. But, she says, the new theories of power in social sciences proposed by Foucault and others may not be useful or fruitful for subjugated groups, and in fact post-structuralist theories particularly fail to provide a theory of power for women.

And because 'women' is not a single category, should one theory suffice for all, or just make a space for heterogeneous groups? Expecting an answer from those who have argued against totalizing theories, Lyotard and Foucault for example, who argue for a social criticism which is ad hoc, contextual, plural and limited, is not unreasonable. But "For those of us who want to understand the world systematically in order to change it, postmodern theories give little guidance" (Hartsock, 1992, p. 159).

For women are excluded from the ruling class at the very least because of their gender, marginalised away from the minority which controls the world, and need to understand how the world works. Hartsock explains therefore that postmodernism is a dangerous approach to take, and she uses the work of Memmi, in particular the Colonizer and the Colonized to analyze some postmodern theories of power and to reveal their deficiencies.

At this point the metaphor of Opposition, of struggling against something, someone, some things, so poignant for the Five Women in their experiences of learning, becomes clearer if we can accept that the disciplinary power at work has been Male, "the old male model", reacting in fear and with alienation to Female, creating an Other.

This creation of the Other was a necessary precondition to the birth of the Enlightenment's rational subject, the subject who is the speaker for the Enlightenment. Dualism is at the heart of the modernist project, evil versus good, darkness to light. The Colonizer limns the Colonized as possessing all the negative qualities rejected by the Colonizer, for example, lazy, wicked, backward, not fully human. Sounds familiar to women! The Other is Not, a void, a lacking in valued qualities; the Other is opaque, "you never know what they're thinking",

unreadable; the Others are not individual members of the human community, they are chaotic, disorganized, and an anonymous collectivity, "they all look the same to me".

This is the world view characteristic of the white male Eurocentric ruling class, a way of dividing up the Universe with an omnipotent Subject (individual) in the Centre and a constructing of marginal Others as sets of negative qualities, until the Other becomes an object, for domination and utilisation. Memmi refers to this as a peculiarly "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over (the Orient)/Other" (cited in Hartsock, p. 161). What is a sociological point becomes labelled as being biological, or preferably metaphysical, and is attached to the colonized's basic nature. The creation of the Other was done politically, socially, ideologically, intellectually to create the transcendent and omnipotent theorizer who exists outside of space time and power relations.

To render the Other visible, we must reclaim his/her subjectivity, and just when the post-modernists have declared the subject dead!

Why is that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic?...and uncertainty emerges over whether the world can be theorized...and about historical progress? (Hartsock, p.163-4).

Foucault is described as a colonizer who resists--there were always a few, but does not work for transformation. He writes from the perspective of the dominator, and systematically, unequal power relations vanish from his account of power, because to those in a position to dominate others, power relations are less visible. The stress on resistance, rather than transformation, comes because he is "with" power, he is from the ruling group, as evidenced by his commentary on other knowledges as being illegitimate, disordered, fragmentary, lacking autonomous life. Foucault exposes power relations, but has nothing to put in its place, dismissing attempts at social transformation and claims to scientific knowledge. He thus loses the focus of

social relations and power, and focuses instead on the individual; this makes it very difficult to locate domination, and especially in gender relations. His account is of abstract individuals, not women, men or workers. Power disappears....

His use of metaphors and images of networks resonates with implications of agency and equality, with an insidious implication that seems to suggest that those at the bottom are in some way responsible for their situation. In substituting the individual for the subject, analyzing not at the level of large scale social institutions but at the very local individual level, this construction writes gender out of the picture again, just as the Rational Subject of the Enlightenment did.

Hartsock recommends two courses, to critique and then to construct, using what we know about our lives, taking five steps. First, we must reconstitute subjectivity, put ourselves, as women, into history, continue the struggles of colonial independence, racial and sexual liberation to sort out who we really are, and to develop a world which treats our perspectives as primary and constitutive of a different world. Second, we need more than conversation or a discourse on how it is that power relations work, we need to construct a new society with a different epistemological base--that indicates that different knowledges are possible. Third, we need a theory of power that recognises our practical daily activity as giving us knowledge of our real world, along Gramscian lines where everyone is an intellectual, and each of us has an epistemology. Fourth, we must recognise that alternatives will not be easy, that as an oppressed group we must struggle for own understandings, knowing that the ruling class, race or gender has structured the material-social relations, and new ones will have to be developed. Fifth, the understanding of those oppressed will recognise that such relations are inhuman and that a call to political action is inevitable. It is not a turning away but a turning toward change and participation in altering power relations. A final paraphrase of Marx completes her critique, the point is to change the world, not simply to redescribe or reinterpret the world yet again.

Hartsock's analysis has been useful to me in revealing the strengths of a Foucauldian deconstruction of power-knowledge structures; as a woman I see and feel the lack of gender in his world-view, the lack of a critique of patriarchy as flawed. But I hold that his framework goes furthest to explain the continuum of difficulties experienced by the Five Women in learning in educational institutions; from discomfort to trauma, each of them felt the impact of butting up against a discursive practice that was alien to them. The power and passion I felt in listening to the women's stories is missing, still, from this largely academic, dry and emotionless dissection.

But reading Valerie Walkerdine (1990) on Othering echoes the feelings and visceral reactions some of the women had, their sense of being alienated from the model of education used against them in their classrooms. It echoes too, the powerful reactions we have to those who are different, and women and men are different, as I found out in my Summer Session course; designed as a tool to complement the writing up of the research, it became a vivid reminder of just why I began this "hunt for gender".

Once again, gender divided the classroom into what were, on some days, warring camps, on other days, a unity of dis-ease and dis-comfort was felt by all. There were, at times, instances of complete alienation, and in this class the style of instruction, or facilitation, was almost irrelevant, unable to prevail over violently different discourses. Ironically the invitation had been extended to create a community of diverse discourse, but it was so diverse that we could not even communicate. Gender was the spark that lit the tinder. White males felt and vocalised their dislike and discomfort at experiences of discrimination. Here are some journal entries that formed part of my writing for the course.

During this time of eco-tone³, I read with hope Valerie Walkerdine's words. In particular I

³. Eco-tone refers to the habitat where two separate habitats meet; for example, where a forest and a meadow overlap. "It is a place of tensions, of incredible fecundity, richness, liveliness.... Where writers, and teachers of writers, live, a place of tension, with the possibility of disruption..." C. Leggo, Personal Communication, July 23, 1996.

liked,

For many years, like many other women, I was a schoolgirl...This view I held of myself was as of a struggling little girl...I was infantilized, hated it and yet was terrified of the figure of the powerful woman set out so pejoratively in fictional spaces. How can it be that femininity is a fiction and yet lived as if it were real, felt deeply, as though it were a universal truth of the psyche? I am suggesting that masculinity and femininity are fictions linked to fantasies deeply embedded in the social world..inscribed in powerful practices like schooling, through which we are regulated. (but) We are not simply positioned like a butterfly pinned to a display board. We struggle to break free...there is a voice which does not belong to the father, nor to the schools of thought, it is our own voice, but what is it we want to say?...not some kind, essential feminine voice that has been silenced, but which exists in the interstices of our subjugation. We can tell other stories..frightening stories, that blow apart the fantasies through which we have come to understand ourselves...murderous fantasies, not there because they are essential to the female body or psyche, but because the stories of our subjugation do not tell the whole truth: our socialization does not work. (p. 8) (Emphasis mine)

Wonderful, our socialization does not work, murderous fantasies below stories of quiet little girls. I love it! Later she says,

Individuals are powerless or powerful depending upon which discursive practice they enter as subjects. In some practices women are quite powerful, for example, as mothers..(p.10)

Do we give this up when we get to six or seven or ten? No, I think we have the power to struggle, to resist, to redefine the practice, re-write the discourse, re-voice ourselves, re-invent ourselves, re-story ourselves as women.

Later on, in an echo for me of Nancy Hartsock's comments on power, and her illustrations of power as posited by Nemmi, shared by Colonizer and Colonized, she talks of Foucault's notion that knowledge is based on the necessity to know the population to be governed, and is therefore

surveillant. The surveillance leads to regulations. First though, the object to be regulated must be created, and this is of course, the Other--"everything to be guarded against, to be kept in check". Walkerdine casts the social scientist in the role of paid voyeur, "the basis of mass social science. What is to be known, what is to be kept in check?" (p. 206) I began here, to question the whole role of my research, was I producing a blueprint of women's learning, that would then later be used to regulate them? I have no answer for that.

Colonial government, of whatever subject population, operates on the foundations of fear, phobia and fetish (Bhaba, 1984). The colonized and colonizer are bound together, the telling of stories to punish, to regulate, of differences endlessly retold, to make them true? But are they simple fictions?

What if we choose the discursive practices where we have power? Can we live without the Other? Does not our being depend on their Being? "What unspeakable, forbidden desire has to be transformed into fear or hate?", asks Walkerdine (p. 208). What indeed? The desire to possess, to be the Other, to tell a different story, use a different voice? What if we gave up War and opted for Desire? I will return to this theme in my Final Words.

Planning and Power

The Planning Questions

To what extent do women planners subscribe to the views expressed by Cervero and Wilson and Forester: do they see their practice as an extended metaphor for negotiating power and interest, or is this a masculine analogy? What metaphor do women planners' stories of practice reveal?

Although the women recognised Cervero's metaphor as being valid, it did not seem to resonate for them--was it a metaphor in the father-tongue? I have come to believe, after talking to them and with them, that for them, planning is a metaphor for "owning their own model", putting their lives and their bodies into the programs they plan, re-creating their own best experiences as women learning. And while power and the negotiations of interests is naturally a part of it, because power structures are embedded in every relationship we have, including the one we have with ourself, it's not the whole of it for the women who planned. A friend of mine asked me, "Well, doesn't that mean, modelling it, just reproducing the status quo?" Oh no. These women are clear on what has been right and what wrong in their education. They know they have been Colonised/Educated into a system that is not theirs, and while the colonised are always complicit to some extent in the maintenance of the power structures in which they are dominated--having been educated to be so complicit--the Five Women have found some large holes in the nets that tried to capture them. Resistance....

When I asked them how they would plan for women's (and men's) learning, we fell into an hour long conversation. From it I have synthesised the key components of what could be called a feminist model of planning--and I note, that "planning" is leading and teaching and modelling and learning and becoming and dealing with power, and like "talking" earlier, is analogous to much more than one definition of one verb. For the Five Women, "planning" is a truly "owning and re-creating."

Here are some of the thoughts the women shared with me at the Group Session/Feast.

Valerie: When I presented this research, I talked about those three levels of learning. I said if we're program planners or instructors or we design learning and language, should we be attempting to plan programs that appeal to women or enhance women's learning from the things we see at the first level, or is that just re-arranging the furniture? Should we be

addressing issues from the second level, where there is so much opposition to women, and then at the third level--where Sonia's sado-masochistic profs live! (G2:3)

Yolanda:..So it's not even that you have the power to plan it, it's who has the power to say you can implement it. And having just put in a new curriculum at my college and having to go through their Council and Advisory and all that kind of stuff, it's not, because we had the power to plan it, I mean we can plan anything we want, it's having the power to implement it, and it seems that somebody else gets to say that.

Lee: Yeah, I think that's a really important point. I'm just working on a infrastructure and standards around my program, the service delivery that I'm involved with...and we're going to hit right smack that because there is one person...who is upset and she's going to do everything in her power to derail it. So, the big question is around that.

Y: And, again, I think a lot of times what you see, is someone who's behaving like the oppressor because they think that that is appropriate behaviour, or the way to be, and they put it on the next group underneath and that's us...certainly in Nursing, it's the way Nursing practice is..(Laughs from her and Lee) You just learn to survive it. (G2:6)

The four components of the Five Women's model are:

Intention

Sonia: ..the education of intention...explicit intentions (are made clear in the Tibetan) curriculum and they're not explicit in our education systems at any level. And I think that's one

of the main problems, they're part of the hidden curriculum. (G2:11) To explicitly address intention, you know. Have a class dedicated to exploring intention, including the professor, What's your intention, here? Oh, no yet another course that I have to teach, they'd say, laughs...but, Yeah..I think that's one level to start with. (G2:12)

Lee: I think you would really have to work from Yolanda's premise to get the environment where people could be really honest with their intention. I think that would take quite a while, for people to be able to trust enough to not play the games around, what is the intention. (G2:13)

Valerie: Well, it reminds me, thinking back to Jarvis' lecture about the morality of teaching and the only thing that counted was the intention of the teacher, whether the intention was to subject the learner to symbolic violence or pedagogic violence, or to be with them in their becoming. I like the idea of intention. (G2:13)

Modelling

Jane: And by the same token, I try and be very up front, I have rules around my courses, and one of the rules, is you don't embarrass anybody, you treat everybody with respect, you know, but those are all my values. Like it's back to intentions or thoughts, those are the rules of my classroom.

Valerie: And that's what you model that for people?

Jane: I try to.

Sonia: I think that's an important issue actually, the issue of modelling, and intention. Like you have to actually model it. So if you're really going to invite different styles of learning you have to model it, you have to be willing to be up there. (G2:25-26)

Lee: I also think you (have to) model another level of vulnerability, being the facilitator and teacher so that when you hit times where you're not, you don't know what do to next or there is a barrier, or you're not sure how to handle this situation, that you say that. (G2:27)

Courage and Creativity

Sonia: You know what my sense is? Is that I think what's missing, the missing ingredient is, is creativity. For women. Like as they get power, no, it's two things. Not just creativity, courage and creativity. As they get power, if they focused less on how to get power, focus less on how to get power or get a position, and more on how to be creative and courageous, then I think we could change things naturally. Because if it's a suitable environment for us, if we can insist that the environment that we work in and learn in and educate in, is acceptable for us, we're also making it acceptable for other people who think like us, regardless of what their sex is, right? (G2:31)

Yolanda: (We get the) message that we should also accept (the status quo). And so I think the courage and the creativity really come through, because it's a matter of, Nope! We're not going to! (G2:33)

Lana: Well I think that the challenge for us will be to model. Because there isn't perhaps a lot of "us". (Laughter from all six women) And when I hear about the numbers and statistics, the breakdown of who's who out there, I guess the nucleus of ourselves and others, in other universities, we'll take that leadership role. We'll hopefully have the courage and the creativity to go forward. And I think to create the change, to err on one side. To step maybe too far the other way in order to get the rebound effect somewhere in the middle. That's in the nature of the change. I just think how long we've been operating in this mode, I think the presumption is that we're going to do it in the next decade, maybe, but I think we will certainly start moving the ship in that direction. I think we are, so they say, entering into the Intellectual Age,

Sonia: Who says that?

Lana: Oh yes, it's the year of the intellect!

Yolanda: Moving into the Aquarian age. Age of Aquarius, it's just coming.

Sonia: When!?

Lana: When?

Yolanda: 2000.

(Laughter! Some singing, badly off key.)

Yolanda: Everything until now has just been getting ready for it. (G2:36)

Questions about Gender and Technology.

Regretfully, I had to make some decisions about what areas or questions I would pursue in depth when I began to analyze the stories I had accumulated. I had to make such a decision, firstly because of time--I had over 500 pages of transcripts alone to read--but also because I could have taken so many different directions, the thesis itself would have been very different if I had chosen to pursue, say, questions about gender and organisation and the gendering of technology. And too, the women's stories were so vivid, so dramatic about learning at school, that I could not resist their allure.

So for another time, another thesis, I might develop some of the stories I heard about gender at work, gender and sexuality in the organisation and so on. Suffice it to say, that all the women agreed that technology is gendered. Sonia talked of computers and their use and maintenance as being gendered in the School Board and at the university. Lana thought status and class were involved too, as in only managers carry powerbooks, an object that embodies their power and position in their work structures. Both Lee and Yolanda, looking amazed, said, Well of course the technology has always been gendered in Nursing, the doctors use this machine, but they'll never touch that one, that one is the Nurses!

Lana and Lee and Jane all have female CEO's. All three thought their organisations had a feminine quality, although Lana called hers schizophrenic, moving between one sex and the other daily. Jane called hers a chameleon. Lee said hers was nurturing, strongly feminist. Interesting directions, for another day....

INTERLUDE: THE JOURNEY ENDS, WITH RESOLUTIONS

The third, and last, week of the Journey.

*

August 5, 1996

I am sitting here in my office, on a Monday Holiday morning, thinking about the Gender War Class. I think it has been really important, not (just) for the content, but for the issues of gender that have come up. Without this timely reminder I would not have had the bite in my writing that I need....

Watching others, too, has been rewarding, and from the comments of the other women I have put together some observations.

~ that most of the men did not feel any dis-ease, going home after the class and not even thinking about it, while for us three women and for the Guide, and a few of the men, I think it was a sore place for the rest of the day.

~ that some of the men could be wounded too.

~ how is it to be supreme in your Universe and then have notice served that it may not be yours for very much longer?

~ that I have done some soul excavation, and it is painful.

~ that I don't believe suffering ennobles, isn't there some other way to get the point of life?

~ that I can write.

~ that I can write well.

~ that I can write badly.

~ that I will continue to write (my world).

~ and now on with life!

*

August 6, 1996

a post-modern classroom

Peter

At the front of the room

Curtains over the window, and again. Gathered tightly to make a sky-dark.

6 corkboards

1 blackboard, double

1 blackboard, wheeled

1 whiteboard

21 empty chairs (20 grey, 1 green)

10 full chairs

1 screen

1 coat-rack

24 coat-hooks, well prepared at least for cloaks and coats.

1 television

1 overhead projector

1 trolley, waiting for a burden

7 tables

1 wastebasket, fullish.

2 texts,

1 "Please note: close this door after your class is over",

(don't let ideas or words get in, or out?)

2 "PLEASE KEEP THIS SPACE CLEAN"

(not dirtied up with talk, words, sighs, groans, giggles)

and Peter writes the first and only word in the room--

coho.

Is this postmodern? We all wonder, wonder at Peter's poetry,

Peter's word.

I don't know.

But I know I like it.

But Clive asks, What is modern?

And I don't know, again.

Valerie-Lee Chapman

*

August 7, 1996

On the way to class today I walked from where I park on Marine Drive, and tried to enjoy the walk. I had an intrusive thought, What if this is my last day? Is this a good day to die? It was disturbing, I had thought those thoughts dead, gone a long way away, so it was scary to find it/them there again, just sneaking in, weaseling, creeping in, as if it were really mine, when I know it is not....but anyway, I said, LOUDLY, NO! Because who would feed my cats, what would happen, William is outside, and anyway, I haven't written my thesis yet. But all the same, I looked around me as if, what if I didn't walk down here tomorrow, what do I see now!

And, although sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, Freud would have liked the co-incidence that the Guide read out an extract, familiar to me somehow, but from where I don't know, about living as if you only had three days left....hmmm....

So when it came time to write our descriptive words here is what I wrote, but didn't want to share that scary moment when the insidious voice introjects itself into my life....

*

I walked to class as usual this morning along the road parallel to Marine Drive. It's generally quiet, almost peaceful, past the sleepers in Residence, white t-shirt crucified to dry in the window, rustling seductively, whispering to male bathing trunks next window over....and down to West Mall. A thought, Is today a Good Day to die? Did it come because my senses were so sharp, or did they sharpen in breath-stopping reply? The trees, the honey smelling clover, last week's flowers turned green-berried on bushes, wild grass dying heavy headed, and Look!

One subversive tuft of green, a little weedy patch of grass, cunning in a little pothole, sneaky seedy revolutionary in the grey of Strangway's rutted road, brighter than any Presidential Monument, wise enough to keep its head down....

Cold wasps mumbling into pine bark, was that dugout canoe always there?

I don't want to die today, the tuft has gifted me with revolt....

A Psssst script

I have been thinking. About how it would be to live poetically.... I have always been a revolter, why not a rhyming revolter, how much different would it be?

Answer, very exposed.

But I'm going to try it.... I shall be a green tuft, too.

FINALES, OR....

(IS THIS) MY LAST WORD ON THE SUBJECT

Lana: (Because of) our discussions about gender issues I'm more aware of those issues...and from talking to other women I have become conscious of the dynamics and the politics and the power issues that go on...and that's a learning. That's been for me an amazing learning. (Lana 3:2).

So these last words are about writing/telling New Stories, or what would in a more traditional thesis be called, severely, "IMPLICATIONS!"

First, Make Gender Visible, Always

In my first year of graduate school I worked as a Coordinator at a centre for women recovering from substance abuse and alcoholism. One of the descriptions of a family's denial about active alcoholism was that they all behave as if there is an elephant in the living room, never mentioning it, acknowledging it, but still, walking around it, and silently cleaning up its messes. That seems to me to be how we treat, or rather, don't treat, gender in adult education. We don't talk much about it, except for a few marginalised feminists, we don't conduct studies that, openly, address it, nor examine how we construct it. But from the Stories of me and the Five Women, it's pretty clear that gender is there, a huge elephant (I like the elephant image, the herd is always ruled by matriarchs...) sitting square in the middle of our classrooms, our planning sessions, our teaching, our learning. How do we create it?

Watch Your Language!

Language is not transparent, nor simply representational, it creates discourses and therefore excludes. Who is being excluded in our language? It has a context, a subtext, a pretext. We should examine all of those texts, in the text we create as adult educators. Whether we speak the father tongue or another tongue, we create with that tongue, that discourse, our practice, and we construct it with our participants/students/learners. We cannot be objective, above it, or distant, because we are connected to them -- female or male, style of learning, ways of knowing are almost irrelevant. So ask,

What Discourses are We Embodying?

As I have said before, for those who speak the discourse it is a given--it works 'behind their backs', it is 'unthought', and so 'conceals their own invention', so says Foucault in The Archaeology of Knowledge, (1974, p.17). Discourse speaks, yet is silent--it has an absent but powerful presence, and, as it author-ises some to speak and some to be silent, it is exclusionary, dictating whose voice may be heard with authority whose language is authorised.

Discourse can be seen at work sometimes in the physical setting of a classroom or a work situation, who is at the centre, who is most easily seen and heard, whose voice will be overlooked? How are we constructing discourse in our plans, our teaching, our practice? We need to bring discourse out from behind our backs, think it, uncover it, not conceal it.

Make Othering Visible

Gender plays out daily as we put our worst fears, fantasies and fetishes upon the Other. As I found out this summer, as we all know, the Other gender can be alien, a different species--or the other (dark) half of ourselves. So again I say: The colonized and colonizer are bound together, as we tell stories, story the Other into existence, to punish, to regulate and to discipline--we tell of differences endlessly, to make them "true"? That all Chinese are inscrutable, all Blacks are lazy, all women are fickle, all men are brutes...And, there they are again, those fictions of masculinity and femininity, Walkerdine's (1990) fantasies retold, males and females regulated, and all in check, a constant checkmate....

And I repeat, and think we should ask ourselves daily: What if we choose the discursive practices where we have power? Can we live without the Other? Does not our being depend on their Being? The oppressor always fears the oppressed, but what of phobia? Easy to see, hear, "those feminists again, the queers, the Asians are ruining the trees/the blood supply/the family". Pick one, we all think them, we all nurture them, no one is right, no one wrong, and in the end, Bhaba's fetish is maybe the truest.."what unspeakable, forbidden desire has to be transformed into fear or hate?" (Walkerdine, citing, Bhaba, p. 208). What indeed? The desire to possess, to be the Other, to tell a different story, use a different voice? What if we gave up War and opted for Desire?

Planning (Power-ing) As a Discursive Practice

I think Lana's Voice on Planning Models should be heard here,

Lana: The planning course that I took I really liked...we went into all these different models, I think you were in that one with me, in fact I remember your model and I thought

you had the best model there, (laughs) I still use that, the swirls that you drew, you know? Oh you forget? Anyway, I remember all the goals and all these various, you know, I can't remember half of it, but I just thought, Okay that's great! Now we know there's a hundred and one models and everybody has their own model and it seems like that's a good place to start, is to create a model, and that's what I've done in my work, you know....but everybody has to own their model. (Lana2:15) (emphasis mine)

And what if we own our models as women? Then we own our own experience as women, as women learners, we own our gender; instead of resisting models we don't like, we can use our own model. The Five Women's model would begin with Intention, would include a Modelling of inclusively powerful discourses, would recognise the Courage it takes to speak our own language, create our own subjectivities, and would be, above all, Creative. I can own that model.

It's the Teaching that Matters, Not the Learning

I had begun this study with a desire to discover how learning is affected by gender, and I have found an answer to that--of course it does! Gender is one of the most powerful of Lyotard's Grand Narratives, not to be dismissed, as he would have it, as an ideological fairy tale, but to be rehabilitated as a powerful, quite grown-up fairy tale--that affects everything in our Society. But I had not looked at learning's binary opposite, teaching.

The Women's stories of Teaching, and Teachers, are powerful, and I now have come to realise that Learning has its Other, and that we cannot separate one from the other. They, too, are bound together indissolubly. Recalling my powerful words on teachers and teaching, and the trepidation with which I included them in my Unfoldings, I suggest that we, as adult educators, as trainers, as instructors, as teachers, examine our pedagogical practice, but I know I fear retribution. As Sonia said once or twice, I feel like I am saying, Look the Emperor has no clothes!

But always a green tuft, here I am writing it up anyway...

Which brings me to my penultimate point.... When I heard Peter Jarvis (1995b) lecture on pedagogy as being symbolically violent, I knew he was wording a world I had lived in as teacher and taught. His solution was to share power with the learner, to be with them in their becoming, above all, to question the moral intentions behind our teaching (and planning) practice. I think we can plan that way too. The Women called it intention, so ask yourself, What is my Intention, what is my Desire?

But Am I/Are We Expecting Too Much?

If the Post Moderns are right, and Education as Emancipation is a dead Grand Narrative, if Performativity has replaced the search for truth and ultimate knowledge, where does that leave women or other different groups, those whose oppressions are now dismissed as ideological fairy tales?

I am torn between optimism--look at all the resistance I encountered in the Stories of the Five Women!--and pessimism. I sat in an Education class this summer with practising teachers and heard two of them say, "I don't see any oppression out there!", and "It's just politically cool to be one (a survivor of sexual abuse) or a Victim today!" Of course, as White Straight Males, (their term for themselves), they were feeling their own oppression, but still, it was chilling....

Where are the spaces today, where will we continue to educate for liberation, where will we fight domestication, regulation, where can we find room to breathe, and not be smothered under the weight of surveillance and assessment? We need to search out these spaces, little lingering places, the gaps in the nets, find the green tufts...

Honour Feminist Research

Valerie Walkerdine says,

individuals are powerless or powerful depending upon which discursive practice they enter as subjects. In some practices women are quite powerful, for example, as mothers..little girls are constantly struggling with the boys to define their play, and re-define it into discursive practices in which they can be powerful. (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 10)

And I repeat, I think we have the power to struggle, to resist, to re-define the practice, re-write the discourse, re-voice ourselves, re-invent ourselves, re-story ourselves as women. But we have to want to. And we have to honour Diversity in Research, in the Academy, encourage Different kinds of Research.

Suggestions for Other Stories, Other Studies

I would like to suggest that this study could be expanded, developed in some ways, for example:

- a) Why not do it again, with men?
- b) Make it a longitudinal study.
- c) Survey many women, about learning, and planning.

I would also suggest picking up some of the threads around gender and organisation, for example, and examining perhaps,

- a) Gender in the organisational context.
- b) Gender in workplace learning.
- c) Gender and sexuality in the workplace.

d) Gendered technology, as an expression of power structures.

One could also look at how gender is constructed in adult education: does it happen the same way as in initial schooling? One could look at how language, texts, curriculum, organisational structures, teacher interactions, peer culture, society and media all influence gender construction, and then what power structures might be so revealed. One could focus exclusively on the writing and the language used in adult education....

There are many other Stories to be told....pick one, any one...Tell it, or let it tell itself...

And here is a last little story....

EPILOGUE: LOCKED OUT?

They talked from five o'clock to seven forty-five, and I said they could go, but they talked until past eight, Lee had to leave, and then Jane....but Sonia, Yolanda and Lana were still talking, standing on the stairs, moving to the doorway, still talking, down the sidewalk, still talking, talking, talking....

I cleaned up the food, not much left, but a little to take home, a moveable feast.... And the microphones and tape recorders unplugged, tapes stored, cords wound and into the bags. I could see Yolanda and Sonia, still talking away, and I smiled. Well, at least they had all seemed to like each other, and we had had a good time, lots of jokes, laughter and lots of good ideas, even some tense moments--how profoundly language affects our world, the completely different understandings Five Women could bring to words like 'education', 'teach' and 'train', for some, positive words, for others, laden with negativity.... I shall have to look at language when I analyze, I thought.

But I knew I would have some fun transcribing this interview, and what had become a purgatorial duty--thanks to Repetitive Strain Injury--might be quite amusing, as Sonia said,

Sonia: It promises to be a really important work and you know, book material. It really needs to be said.

Valerie: Yeah so I think it's going to be interesting, although' at the moment I'm still stuck in the boondocks of transcription. When I get into it, it's just so fascinating, I start transcribing and I'm listening to all your voices and I live with somebody for a week

Lana: Oh my god!

Yolanda: That's a long time!

Valerie: But when I go through it, it's hard to pick out just some things, because so many sentences and paragraphs and things just kind of fall out, there's some wonderful stuff there, and I would like to get all this hilarity on the tape it kind of gives me a little boost!

Sonia: Well, when you transcribe this you can giggle all over again. (G2:35)

I even asked them about the food, and in a typical, connected way, we discussed women and men, food, power and ways of learning, a la carte laughter on the side.

Valerie: Well, I gave you all a feast, I'm sure no males would do that—Food and a thesis!

Sonia: They also wouldn't do your subject matter!

Valerie: No you're absolutely right..I'll just put the bagels here

Lana: Recharge our batteries!

Yolanda: Can we have the icing please? (She and Lana had been surreptitiously scooping the icing off the carrot cake, but Sonia or I had taken it away in the middle of one of their weightier pronouncements, when they were busy thinking. In fact, all through the session all of us had been snacking, or feasting!) That and a knife and I think we'll be fine! We had a knife somewhere.... Oh, there it is, it's not like we want the cake, just the icing!

Valerie: Does anybody want a bagel?

Sonia: Well, I'll have half of one now, I mean I had to miss dinner.....

Valerie: Right. So, I don't want to keep you all night, but I just wondered if anybody wants to offer any concluding thoughts ? Anything to say? Or you can stay for ever, that would be lovely, but....

Lana: But Valerie, have we answered the questions?

Valerie: Well, I don't know. When I'm listening to the tapes and I'm talking to each of you, you seem to keep coming around to the same question, that women do seem to have "ways of learning", but we don't know whether we should plan for that kind of learning. And then the other issue is power. I keep coming up against this, power. So a paradox, that there are women's ways of learning, but that we don't seem to know, none of us seem to know, how we should plan for that

and how we should deal with the power issues that are in the classroom and in the workplace, and all the rest of it.

Lee: But you do plan for it, you plan your whole program. Setting up, around the environment you set up, around contextualising your information, around setting up group experiences, so that they're connecting, so they can connect with their experiences and with the information. I think we plan totally around it, and I think you constantly deal with power. All the time. There, it's simple!

Lana: Further to that, is putting it on the table in a safe way, that opens up the channels for communication, for the discourse to take place. Oh, all the icing has gone! (She laughs), I'll pretend I didn't even see what went on there, I just dug away

Yolanda: We just wanted a little icing..

Valerie: I had to laugh, I had to make two trips to bring all this food upstairs and I was thinking, I wonder if a male researcher would be so thoughtful, would feel like it was just crucial to bring food to the research group?

Lana: They'd just bring a different type of food!

Lee: Probably bring a pizza!

Jane: Some probably wouldn't bring anything.

Valerie: No, I don't think they would actually.

Lee: Depends. If it was my son, or not!

Valerie: So my question still is, should we plan for women's ways of learning?

Some of the humour was quite earthy, relieving tension as we talked about some of the darker stories....

Valerie: I was going to tell Lee's Flying Breast Story, (at a Conference) and I was really quite nervous about telling that because I didn't know how the men in the audience would react.

Whether they would see, just that it was kind of nasty, or they would see that it was a female sexual organ, or a part that's sexualized, that was thrown....

Lana: Then they'll probably come back with, what's the story about the woman who cut off?

Bobbit? All kinds of scary things!

Valerie: Anyway, I guess it's pretty late

Lana: Well, that's a good note to end on!

Valerie: Anybody want a carrot? (Great laughter!!!!)

Yolanda: Says something about penis envy!

But there had been too, some really profound discussions around women learning, about power issues, about how to plan for women learning.... I knew the Five Women had answered all my questions-- yes, Lana, you did!--and had posed more. I had enough material, enough stories to write Five Theses, how would I choose which stories to follow to their ends?

I was worried, too, that I would be breaking rules, silences about gender, disturbing sleeping Elephants....and part of me wanted to rush ahead and do it, tell the Story. As Sonia had said, It needed telling. But part of me still wanted to be the Good Girl, accepted at last, inside the enclosure, not Outside, Alien. Just how would I reconcile these two Voices, Revelatory or Reassuring?

I decided to take the recorders up to my office on the sixth floor, lock them up safe, return them tomorrow to Audio Video in the Basement. I walked out of the third floor Centre Block, through to the elevator for the top floor. Behind me the door swung shut. At the last moment I remembered, all the doors were supposed to be locked up tight after 7 pm! I turned, but too late, it slammed shut, trapping me outside, all my notes, books, food, all the stuff of daily life, all inside, me outside.... I couldn't believe it, locked out of Education!

And, after fruitlessly, tearfully, struggling with the door, armfuls of tape recorders and microphones, my key not working, only fitting the front door, not the inner ones, I recovered myself, a

little. Went up to my office, deposited my burden, ran back down the stairs, circled the Centre Block and found what I was looking for, what I knew this Educational Building must have--a cleaning lady....and of course, she let me in the back door....

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guides

First Interview. Aim: To establish rapport, obtain demographic details, and obtain a brief life story.

1. Recapitulation of the project, questions arising from it, confirmation on schedules for next session.

2. I would like to get a little information from you for my own files, which are not available to anyone else, about biographical details and how I can contact you if necessary.

Name, address, home and work numbers, email address, fax number, age, family status, level of education attained, position at work. Any other pertinent details.

3. I would like to hear how you came to the job you have now, and also about how involved you are or have been in education at work and personally. Would you like to tell me a little about both those things? If you have any anecdotes or stories I would love to hear them

4. What were the expectations you held about school and learning? What were your family's? Were there any cultural expectations? Share own experience here if necessary--white, middle class, English schooling etc.

5. What expectations did you have about working? as above

Ensure participant discusses how she feels about talking to me, what questions or other she may have at the end. Does she want to examine the transcript now or later?

Give her the synopsis of women's learning (based on Dorothy MacKeracher's work, "Women as Learners", 1993) or if necessary, the whole article. Advise we will be talking about her own learning at the next session, beginning with these themes from MacKeracher's work. Ask her to read it through, and think about how the themes resonate in her own life experience.

Second interview. Aim of interview: To discuss your personal processes in learning, and your experiences as a learner, using the six themes listed in MacKeracher's work as a starting point. No expectation that you agree with them, just want to hear how you feel about learning for yourself.

1. Tell me about how you went back to formal learning as an adult--graduate school, professional education etc. How different was it from your earlier experiences?
2. How easy was it for you to engage in this learning process? How did it affect you financially and personally?
3. Did you have a choice about what content was covered? Did it relate to you or your life? Did you get to talk about your life and your experience as it related to what you had to learn?
4. Did you feel your educational experience allowed you to connect : Thinking and feeling.
Experience and ideas.
Theory and practice.
Reflection and action.
5. Did you get the opportunity to collaborate or cooperate with other learners? Did you want to? Are you more comfortable working on your own? Do you like a lot of direction? How do you feel about competitiveness in the classroom? Did you feel you had opportunities to talk about how things were going? Did you feel you had choices about how you could learn, write, do assignments, etc?
6. Tell me about the teacher/instructor. Did you like the way they taught, or interacted with the learners? What did you like about them? What didn't you like?
7. How do you feel about evaluation? Do like it to be ongoing, only at the end of the class? Did you get to talk about your grades or evaluations with the instructor? Did you have a choice about how it was done? Did you get to evaluate the instructor and the course? Do you think it was ever looked at? used? What else do you have to say about learning goals, outcomes etc?

8. Do you think the learning experiences you went through affected you deeply, or not much at all? Did anything change for you personally? How did your family or friends react to your learning?

9. Is there anything else you would like to say about how your expectations (cultural, family, personal) matched your experiences?

10. Apart from the formal learning you had, would you like to comment on anything you learnt informally or incidentally along the way? give eg's from own experience.

Thank you for your time and just a reminder we will be talking about learning at work next time--yours and what you may have been involved with regarding designing, or facilitating other people's learning at work.

Third session. Aim: To talk about your own learning experiences at work, and what you have been involved in as regards others learning.

Part I.

Repeat the questions from Interview 2, but ask about learning in the workplace. Same vein, using the same themes.

Part 11.

1. Tell me about any programs you designed/ delivered at work.

2. What do you recall about how the women acted? The men? Were there any differences? Did you do things differently for men or for women? What effect did it have when the trainer/teacher was a woman/learners men; vice versa; all men; all women?

3. How equitable was access for learning at work? Share my own experience, management only, men only in one job.

4. Elizabeth Burge, a distance educator, talks about how the new technologies are often unequally accessible to women and men, for example, most women find it hard to get access to computers at home, or to have enough spare time to learn in the evenings. She also points out that this is often true at work, where women do word processing, but don't often get the chance to learn about programming etc. She feels this puts them at a disadvantage when learning involves new technologies. How do you feel about that?

5. Is there any thing you'd like to talk about as regards your own expectations of what learning at work, or learning on the job has been like for you? What do women mean when they talk about how they "know" their job? How did you learn to do your job?

6. Lastly, has what we have been talking about in these sessions changed the way you look at learning, your own or other peoples? Have you felt your assumptions have changed? Has this happened in work settings or your own life environment?

Thank you for your time. A reminder that we will be having a group session next -----, at ----. It will be a time to compare learning experiences and also to talk about what this research project has been like for you. After that we will have one last meeting, just to tidy up loose ends and finish up.

GROUP SESSION/5/14/96

AGENDA/ER?

1. Valerie-Purpose of session

-Issues of confidentiality

-preliminary findings, helpful definitions 10 mins

2. Introductions

15 mins

3. Question 1....

?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------|
| 4. Question 2.... | ? | |
| 5. Question 3.... | ? | |
| 6. Free for all? | ? | |
| 7. Close-participants | 15 mins | |
| -Valerie, or what happens next | | 5 mins |

THE QUESTIONS....

and about the answers--THERE ARE NO RIGHT ANSWERS, JUST TALK!

1. Do you as women identify with the traits/characteristics of women's learning?
2. How have you experienced being a woman learning? Is it more to do with socialized gender roles or is it innate?
3. How would you plan programs to enhance women's learning? Would you want to? Would you be able to do so in the power relationships and dynamics that exist in your workplace?
4. Any other comments?

APPENDIX B

While thinking about how to best present my research at my defense and for later occasions--and I hoped there would be later occasions!--I found a poem. It's Autumn now, and everywhere on every street, leaves are falling, colours and textures swept together in piles of passed seasons. The Stories told in these pages would look a lot like that I think, if I swept them altogether and piled them as neatly as I could....like the poem on the next page, that I will use to introduce my/our stories. And the poem has one story (gender?) sticking up, a rake of words to clout the inattentive round the face, a wake up call, a rake up of pain....

And also in anticipation that people will ask me, So, what was it like to tell such a Story? I have prepared a summary of the challenges and seductions I faced as I struggled to grasp "Narrative"; for "Narrative" slithered and slipped its way away from me on some days, and on other brighter days it crooned/croned beguiling, whiling away lullabies....singing, This is how it looks in words

A Pile of Stories Poem...

S
t
o
r
y
S
T
O

LEE'S *STORY* UNA'S STORY
 MY OUR HER HIS STORY *THEIR* STORIES
 JANE'S STORY LANA'S STORY YOLANDA'S **STORY**
LITTLE STORIES **GRAND** STORIES ANY STORIES ALL
STORIES PETITS RECITS **GRAND** NARRATIVES **META**
NARRATIVES LOCAL NARRATIVES PERSONAL
 NARRATIVES MY STORY/STORIES... OUR **STORIES** LEE'S **STORY**
 YOLANDA'S STORY UNA'S STORY JANE'S STORY LANA'S STORY
 VALERIE'S STORY THEIR STORY OUR STORY ☆☆☆☆✚⊗*

STORY **BIG** STORIES SMALL STORIES *TELLING* STORIES
 WRITTEN STORIES **FILMED** STORIES PHOTOGRAPHED STORIES ALL
 STORIES STORY THE WORLD STORY? OUR LANGUAGE OUR
 LIVES OUR SOULS **SO MANY STORIES** WHO'S STORY? THEIR STORY? YOUR
 STORY? MY STORY? ALL STORIES JUST A FEW STORIES SAD

STORIES HAPPY STORIES **LONG** **STORIES**
STORY STORIES STORY STORIES STORY
 STORIES STORY STORIES STORIES STORY STORIES

So who's story gets told?

The Challenges and Seductions of Narrative... .

1. Challenges: to Narrative as a Methodology....

From the Academy

From Peers

From Committee's

From the Self Writing the Narrative

2. The Seductions

I get to tell stories!

I get to tell my own story!

I get to play!

I get to write, and write, and write, and write and....

3. More Challenges

Where was I? Losing the thread....

Analysis.... How do I do an analysis? Do I have to?

Ethics.... Who said you could steal my story?

Interpretation, all about personal investments.

Is it REALLY critical?

Confession.... Or, Self Regulation?

Making it up as you go along....

4. More Seductions....

Making new stories

Writing new worlds, oh yes!