

Flesh and the text:
Poststructural theory
and
writing research

Thesis submitted by

Susanne Marie GANNON

Bachelor of Arts, *La Trobe University*
Graduate Diploma of Education, *Murdoch University*
Masters of Education (Hons) *James Cook University*

In June, 2003

For the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

In the School of Education
James Cook University

Statement of access

I, the undersigned, the author of this thesis understand that James Cook University will make it available for use within the University Library and, by microfilm or other photographic means, allow access to users in other approved libraries. All users consulting this work will have to sign the following statement:

In consulting this work I agree not to copy or closely paraphrase it in whole or in part without the written consent of the author; and to make proper written acknowledgement for any assistance which I have obtained from it.

Beyond this, I do not wish to place any restriction on access to this work.

Signature

Date

Declaration

I declare that this is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or institution of tertiary education.

Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

Signature

Date

Acknowledgements

This thesis is my love song to hundreds of women (and a few men)
who have contributed to this thesis and my thinking
including...

the women of the Internationale Frauenuniversität, Hanover,
Germany;

the actors, dramaturges and fellow playwrights I met through the
“Enter Stage Write” Program in Cairns, Australia;

the women I met and worked with in the Magnetic Island collective
biography workshops;

the wild women writers;

numerous beautiful and generous friends in diverse locations;

my supervisor Professor Bronwyn Davies;

my beloved family...

Abstract

This thesis is an analysis and practice of writing otherwise in academia. It takes off from Barthes' claim that "Science will become literature" (1989, p. 10) into a labyrinth of writing in different contexts and genres. In local and specific writing contexts, the author contrasts (social) scientific analytical writing with poetic, dramatic and autoethnographic writing to begin to generate theories about how different types of writing might work differently to construct different knowledges. Data from collective biography projects is re-presented as poetry and as a theatre script. Data from a professional development context becomes the launch pad for autoethnography. Sections of "creative" or "literary" writing are interspersed with theoretical and methodological analysis. The research methodologies of collective biography/ memorywork and autoethnography are interrogated in the light of poststructural theories on language. Poetry and drama are analysed as poststructural research and writing methodologies. The thesis is a risky journey into transgressive writing research. The linear narratives of research are disrupted as the thesis is organized as a series of detours into writing towards a conclusion that stresses the (im)possibilities of conclusions.

Particular lines of flight through this thesis are the subject, the body and the other in writing. Poststructural perspectives on subjects emphasise their positionality (Foucault, 1972) and their mobility (Ferguson, 1993). Subjects are produced in particular spaces, places and times (Probyn, 2003) and this thesis attends to subjects-in-process in particular writing (con)texts. Writing is both the site and the practice of research. The body is pivotal in this thesis. All the texts produced in this thesis attend explicitly to the (female) body. The methodologies of collective biography/ memorywork (Davies et al., 2001; Haug, 1987), which provoked the poetic and dramatic writing in this thesis, begin with the body as the locus of knowledge. The particular research sites and texts of this thesis have given an overtly feminist cast to this textual body. My research colleagues have almost all been women and it is women's embodied experiences that have been of interest to us. Research sites have ranged from Germany (where I was part of Project Area Body of the *Internationale Frauenuniversität* in 2000), to a community theatre

company in my town, to a writing group around my kitchen table. The “other” is the third line of flight in this thesis and I use the concept of the other to trace how the writing in this thesis has been a collaborative practice, and an ethical practice where writing the other (otherwise) might be seen as a practice of love (Cixous, 1991; Somerville, 1999).

Chapter 1	Introduction(s)	pp. 1 - 35
Chapter 2	Collective biography/ memorywork	pp. 36 - 71
Chapter 3	Poetic in(ter)ventions	pp. 72 - 105
Chapter 4	Poetic in(...)ventions	pp. 106 - 135
Chapter 5	Writing "The Breast Project"	pp. 136 -161
Chapter 6	(Re)Writing "The Breast Project"	pp. 162 - 180
Chapter 7	"The Breast Project" Script	pp. 181 - 254
Chapter 8	Writing the self writing – auto/ethnography	pp. 255 - 281
Chapter 9	The (im)possibilities of poststructural auto/ethnography	pp. 282 - 301
Chapter 10	Blackmore Avenue, 1960...Autoethnographic fragments	pp. 302 - 322
Chapter 11	Conclusion	pp. 323 - 340
	References	pp. 341 - 367

Chapter One - Introduction(s)

The strange serenity of such a return. Rendered hopeless by repetition, and yet joyous for having affirmed the abyss, for having inhabited the labyrinth as a poet, for having written the hole, “*the chance for a book*” into which one can only plunge, and that one must maintain while destroying it. The labyrinth, here, is an abyss: we plunge into the horizontality of a pure surface, which itself represents itself from detour to detour. (Derrida, 1978, p. 298)

This thesis, this *book*, is a series of chapters that appear to follow one another in a linear sequence. As is the convention of such an artifact, it presents a *thesis*, of sorts, an argument that, at different times, claims to be somehow relevant, to something(s) in the field in which I work (Education, and also, sometimes, Sociology, Literary Studies, even perhaps Philosophy). It is also a series of detours, indeed a labyrinth, both as it is written and as it was lived. To write this thesis, I plunged into an adventure in writing in different forms – poetic, dramatic, reflexive and academic; in different communities – friends and peers close to home in regional Australia, a feminist university in Europe, a local community theatre organization; and in different (dis)guises as student, teacher, playwright, poet. The text you read here – this book, this chance I must take on a book - attempts to *make sense* of these adventures in writing and living through frames informed by poststructural theories. Whatever sense I make of and in this thesis must be understood as partial, provisional and situated. What I am interested in is both “how I can write differently about what emerges out of the research process and ...how the act of writing itself is fundamental to that process” (Davies, 2000a, p. 191). If, adapting Derrida again, the centre is “the sign of a hole that the book attempted to fill” (1978, p. 297), then the centre of my last three years has been this hitherto unwritten thesis (this hole, this emptiness, this absent presence) which I have used to justify my adventures and my leaps into the abyss of writing. Now I attempt to fill a hole, the centre (of reason, of academic practice and discourse, of Method, of Science, of the Law) with a book. This book.

Though you hold this book as a solid object, perhaps nestled in your arms, perhaps spread flat on a desk, or a table, though the words lie still on the pages, I argue in this thesis that a written text is a moving labile event. This argument is elaborated through textual performances in poetic writing, dramatic writing, autoethnographic writing and in academic writing. I'm interested in exploring what poststructural theory makes visible and possible in writing and I use my own forays into writing as the exploratory ground for this adventure. In presenting "creative" or "literary" writing as research, I take my lead from Barthes:

[S]cience will become literature, insofar as literature – subject moreover to a growing collapse of traditional genres (poem, narrative, criticism, essay) – is already, has always been, science; for what the human sciences are discovering today, in whatever realm: sociological, psychological, psychiatric, linguistic, etc., literature has always known; the only difference is that literature has not *said* what it knows, it has *written* it. (Barthes, 1989, p. 10)

Through this thesis I adopt a research paradigm that disregards binary oppositions between analysis and creativity, science and literature, objective and subjective, rational and emotional, intellectual and aesthetic, mind and body. This thesis values *all* these aspects of writing. I have chosen a range of research and writing strategies that have been used by poststructuralist researchers as my methodic practices, but rather than stopping at an analysis of the texts of others to show how poststructural writing interacts with and produces particular possibilities in social scientific inquiry, I have also produced my own inquiries, my own writing, in order to examine these possibilities reflexively, in process, in order to make them visible. I take up poststructural theory as a set of practices that necessarily trouble "foundational ontologies, methodologies and epistemologies" (St Pierre and Pillow, 2000, p. 2), that enable "lines of flight" towards "a different sense of what is knowable, and of what can be done with that knowledge" (Davies, forthcoming 2003).

The landscape of this book

In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 3)

Each detour in this thesis has its particular more or less discrete territory named for a certain methodology and/ or writing practice. These detours, circling in and out, are sometimes several chapters in length, sometimes only one chapter. The territories covered in the landscape of this thesis could be described as:

Chapter 1 – Introduction(s)

Chapter 2 – Collective biography

Chapter 3 – Poetry

Chapter 4 – Poetry

Chapter 5 – Drama

Chapter 6 – Drama

Chapter 7 – Drama

Chapter 8 – Autoethnography

Chapter 9 – Autoethnography

Chapter 10 – Autoethnography

Chapter 11 - Conclusion(s)

What I do in each textual detour varies but – if you prefer a map – the terrain is more or less as follows:

Chapter One *introduces* myself, this text, my theoretical allegiances.

Chapter Two *elaborates* and *analyses* the methodologies of collective biography and collective memory work.

Chapter Three *presents* and *analyses* a collective poem called “Boundaries.”

Chapter Four *presents* and *analyses* poems written from dreams.

Chapter Five *compares* dramatic and social scientific writing emerging from a project about breasts.

Chapter Six *explores* the consequences of (re)writing a play in a collaborative context.

Chapter Seven *presents* the full script of “The Breast Project” play.

Chapter Eight *analyses* the methodology of autoethnography.

Chapter Nine *elaborates* poststructural approaches to writing the self.

Chapter Ten *presents* a poststructural autoethnography.

Chapter Eleven *speculates* on the possible consequences of this thesis for writing, research and education.

Different theorists are significant in certain chapters, whilst other chapters make minimal explicit use of theory. Later in this chapter I will introduce the theorists I have found important for my thinking. I will outline what each of them has to say about writing and how I take up and use aspects of their work in my own. As well as taking up particular theorists here and there in this text, across all the chapters and through all these detours, I pursue particular conceptual lines of flight – the subject, the other and the body – through the thesis. They are elaborated in specific writing contexts through the thesis and, in the final chapter, I explicitly address their implications for writing in education and in research. Before the next set of introductions, I sketch out my approach to these concepts.

The subject

Poststructural theory has made “changing the subject” (Henriques et al., 1984) of the social sciences its business. Poststructural theorists trace the construction and contestation of subjects through diverse and conflicting discourses and regimes of truth. In contrast to the liberal humanist subject, the subject in poststructuralism is fluid, non-essentialist and non-unitary, constituted and constituting herself through discourse and in social relations. In retheorizing the subject of psychology through a Foucauldian lens Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine threw the subject back into the social and language. They elaborated how the “subject itself is the effect of a production, caught in the mutually constitutive web of social practices, discourses and subjectivity; its reality is the tissue of social relations” (Henriques et al., 1984, p. 117). They claimed that their work answered a gap in Foucault’s genealogy by accounting for the constitution of individual subjects within discourses. Their work was groundbreaking at the time in bringing Foucauldian discourse analysis into social science (and education and psychology) and continues to be discussed, developed and contested to the present day (Bayer, 2002; Gavey, 2002; Henriques et al., 2002; Maracek, 2002; Leach, 2002;

Søndergaard, 2002). In this thesis, I am particularly interested in the subject of and in writing, and the subject who writes. This investigation pursues what St Pierre calls poststructuralism's "double move" – wherein the "subject ...exhibits agency as it constructs itself by taking up available discourses and cultural practices and ...at the same time, is subjected, forced into subjectivity by those same discourses and practices" (St Pierre, 2000a, p. 502). In this thesis, the relevant cultural practices and discourses are those to do with specific types of writing and specific types of research. I take up the problematic question of the author and writing as these ideas have been contested by poststructuralism.

At times throughout this work I map recurrent and intriguing eruptions of humanist conceptions of the subject into my own and others' writing. Although it is compelling to place humanism and poststructuralism in another neat binary, with poststructuralism now on the theoretical/ literary ascendant, I trace the play between these epistemes in my own writing in this thesis, keeping in mind St Pierre's suggestion that "[r]ather than place them in a binary opposition that allows no movement and inevitably privileges one or the other, we might, as we attempt to describe them, look at how they function in the world" (2000a, p. 478). St Pierre suggests that self/ other is the "master binary" of Cartesian rational thought (2000a, p. 494). Mansfield characterises the humanist idea of "a fixed, knowable, autonomous subjectivity" as "an hallucination contrived by power in order to isolate and control us in the cage of individuality" (Mansfield, 2000, p. 36). Foucault characterizes humanism not as monolithic, but as a set of historically located themes that are "too supple, too diverse, too inconsistent to serve as an axis of reflection" (Foucault, 1997a, p. 314). In my work I take up a version of poststructuralism, articulated by Davies, where "[t]he *point* ...is not to destroy the humanist subject nor to create its binary other, the 'anti-humanist subject' (whatever that might be), but to ...see the subject's fictionality, while recognizing how powerful fictions are in constituting what we take to be real" (Davies, 2000a, p. 133). Writing as a technology for producing the subject is central to this investigation.

The other

If the subject is constituted (and constitutive) in discourse and discourses are socially situated apparatuses, then a relation with “the other” is always constitutive of the self. The other has been theorized widely (eg. in postcolonial theory by hooks, 1990; Mohanty, Russo and Torres, 1991 and others) in relation to hegemonic social structures that disenfranchise certain people in certain ways. For the purposes of this thesis I do not consider any category of otherness to be completely fixed or rigid. Rather, I suggest that within poststructural theory it is productive to consider subjects as constituted within discursive regimes that position us in diverse ways in relation to (each) other individually and collectively in complex social contexts. The other might be he or she (or they) whom I perceive as different from me in terms of race, ethnicity, class, (dis)ability, language, gender, sexual orientation, personal memory, history, location or any combination of a range of such socially constructed vectors. The other then is all those others who are not “I.” Yet the “I” of poststructuralism is a multiplicity, a plural self constantly engaged in the (re)negotiation of identity in social spaces. It is within intersubjective space, space that is contaminated by the other, that the poststructuralist subject – tentative, vulnerable, open - comes into being. Compare this to the humanist self-contained and rational individual who in research and life “can study the outside, observe it, know it, make predictions about what the outside will do, and try to control it” (St Pierre, 2000a, p. 500). Unlike the humanist self, the poststructuralist self is always already “part of the outside, of the known, of social practice, of change, of time” (St Pierre, 2000a, p. 500). In the feminist poststructuralist theory that I use (and generate) the interrelations between self and other are fundamental. Poststructural theory provides tools for the discursive analysis of practices of “othering,” and for the appropriation of “sameing” (Chun, 1999). Thus it is profoundly political.

Another framework for considering the other is psychoanalysis, where the (upper-case) Other is “not a person but a place, the locus of law, language and the symbolic” (Grosz, 1990, p. 67). According to theorists such as Kristeva (1987, 1984), the Other operates within a phallic symbolic order to structure desire and language in terms of lack. Woman herself is lack. In contrast, the poststructural theorist on writing whose work is of greater

interest to me is Cixous – the writer of *écriture féminine* - who explicitly rejects psychoanalytic Otherness in writing: “I want all. I want all of me with all of him. Why should I deprive myself of part of us? I want all of us” (Cixous, 1981, p. 262). This multiplicity in writing the self and the other is, for Cixous, the key to writing the other lovingly and the appropriate counterpoint to the (modernist) subject of “stupid, egotistic, restrictive, exclusive behaviour which excludes the other” (Cixous, 1994, p. xvii). Within the poststructural practice of writing that I play with in this thesis, the subject herself is multiplicity: self and other merge and diverge. The ethics and (im)possibilities of representing the other in writing is a problem that I return to in different sections of this thesis. The consequences for writing, for research and for education are profound and various.

The body

Finally, we come to “the body”. My body. The body as a site of writing. My body as the site of this writing. The creative textual performances in this thesis are deeply embodied. In the chapters on drama I discuss and present a play called “The Breast Project”. It began when I traveled to Europe at the beginning of my doctoral studies to participate in the Body strand of the *Internationale Frauenuniversität*, a three month international postgraduate program at the University of Hanover in Germany. The texts which provoked me to write a play when I returned were generated in the embodied female space of collective biography workshops that I convened there. But months before I left for Europe, long before I started to write a play, that text began in my own breast as a lump that erupted and terrified me. Later, working with a German photographer, in a text that does not appear in this thesis, I photographed and rewrote my breasts and their multiple dormant cysts as “the buds of flowers about to emerge” (Body Project, 2002, p. 218). One reading of this strategy could be as individual psychological therapy (for a pathologised body) but this is not how I take up embodied writing. Rather I took the opportunity to intervene in the medical discourse that had colonized my thinking about my body. Strategies of discursive in(ter)vention and multiplication are among the possibilities for writing that are enabled through poststructural work. Writing the body is one such strategy. In the chapters on poetry in this thesis, I present collective and individual works that attempt to articulate the body and to rupture the mind/ body split.

Embodied writing practices enable new possibilities in the approaches we take to methodology, to theory, to working with others and to living and writing in these bodies. For example, in the following poem (Gannon, forthcoming 2003a) - which I offer as an interlude before the next set of introductions - I use a fragment of feminist theory as a point of departure for a radical poetic writing of the female body.

Bodyscapes

Woman has sex organs just about everywhere. She experiences pleasure everywhere. (Luce Irigaray)

THIS TEXT HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

This (teaching) body

My own location and motivations for writing this thesis are introduced in this section. This is a thesis about writing presented within a university school of Education, yet it diverges from much research within this professional field. It does not, for example, attend to writing in schools, or to writing produced by students. Yet the context and pedagogical implications of these investigations into writing are a subtext to the thesis. McCoy suggests that within poststructural feminist research, it becomes difficult to differentiate between the questions "When am I living my life?" and "when am I doing research?" (McCoy in McWilliams et al., 1997). Although I am unable to lay down my life as a text for your reading in this thesis, my work is contaminated and shaped by everything I have been and done during these last years and before. This is not always apparent. The poem above, for example, although it would seem to have no context in school education, emerged at a time when I was reading feminist theory in my postgraduate work and teaching Geography in high school.

Professionally, I am an English, Social Science and Human Relationships teacher and a teacher educator. My undergraduate degree was in English Literature and Linguistics, structuralist and modernist domains. I learned that texts were fixed entities, dissectable with the correct analytical scalpels. As a secondary teacher in the late 1980s and through the 1990s, I was required to teach such practices to my students so that they could convincingly and conventionally dismember the texts laid out on the slabs of their poetry anthologies. My role required me to teach my students to write "creatively" as well as (and separately from) analytical writing. Familiar binaries, such as this between creative and analytical writing in schools, or between personal and analytical writing (Kamler,

2001, p. 83-84), have been further instantiated through the genre mapping work of systemic functional linguists (Halliday, 1978, 1985; Halliday and Hasan, 1989; Halliday and Martin, 1993; Martin 1986a, 1986b, 1992; Martin and Rothery, 1980, 1981) which has been widely taken up and institutionalized in Australian school English syllabi (eg. Department of Education, Queensland, 1994). As an Education Adviser for the new Queensland syllabus from 1995 to 1998, I was thoroughly saturated in this theory and practice, and active in proselytizing and converting other teachers. Although the intent of genre theory was to locate texts within volatile social and cultural contexts, its application in schools has tended to be highly prescriptive (Kamler, 2001; Watkins, 1999). The text itself disappears under the weight of regulatory practices delineating the generic and textual features characterizing a particular genre or text type. Under this regime, the criteria that teachers devise for evaluating student texts can, at worst, become schemata based on the technicalities of grammar (though perhaps they always were to some degree). On the other hand, at its best, genre pedagogy has had powerful and transformative effects in turning the attention of teachers and students to how texts operate within socio-cultural contexts and how this impacts on the shape and features of texts. Genre pedagogy has been the dominant influence on writing in Australian schools over the last decade. The other main influence on English pedagogy in this time has been the emergence of critical literacy/ies, but these have been mainly taken up as modes for reading and critiquing texts (especially texts of popular culture or the ‘everyday’) rather than as pedagogies for producing texts, for writing (Kamler, 2001; Morgan, 1997).

Although my knowledge of English pedagogies grew as I worked as an “official interpreter” of the new Queensland English syllabus (Honan, 2001), so did my ambivalence. When I returned to classroom English teaching and put into practice these ‘new’ pedagogies my disquiet continued to grow. However, I digress. This thesis does not set out to critique English syllabi or teaching practices. It is not directly related to schools and their operations. Yet my leap into writing (and into full time doctoral study) was provoked by my teaching experience as an English teacher. In my last semester teaching, I ran a small class as a creative writing workshop. It felt like an (illegitimate) escape from the constraints of the functionalism of genre pedagogy. I worried that the

diverse pleasures of that class were due to a retreat into a fantasy world of antiquated bourgeois progressivist pedagogy that (over)valued “personal growth” and “creative writing” (Peel et al., 2000). As Misson notes, throughout the nineties and into the new millennium – in contrast to the noise generated around genre pedagogy and critical literacies - there has been a remarkable silence amongst English teachers on creative writing (Misson, 2001). This thesis, and the production of myself as (creative) writer that is mapped through the thesis, is (in part) an entry into that silent space. It is a more oblique entry into that space than it would have been if I had continued to teach in high schools as I worked on this thesis and as I wrote. I would probably have used my students’ work as my data. I would probably not have travelled to Europe to take part in the *Internationale Frauenuniversität*. I would not have written the play that is included here in Chapter Seven. I’ve taken up this PhD as an adventure into writing, rather than into writing in schools, although I envisage that my postdoctoral research will lead me back to schools, to English pedagogy and to English teachers (as well as students) and the question of how we take ourselves up (or not) as writers.

In this thesis, I am interested in the text itself. In writing. I take writing – or perhaps I should say that writing has taken me – into arenas far removed from schools. I claim to be a playwright and a poet through this thesis as well as an academic writer and researcher. The chapters of this book are organized around these textual performances. Methodological analyses of collective biography, autoethnography and creative writing as poststructuralist practices are the academic performances of this thesis. Poetry and drama are the creative performances of this thesis. But my attitudes towards texts, to reading and to writing, were also shaped through earlier literacy experiences. These too are among my stories of writing, and constitute some sections of the ‘autoethnographic’ text presented in Chapter Ten. Experience itself is a text to be read (and written) in the sort of critical writing pedagogy espoused by some poststructuralist educational theorists (Davies, 1993, 1994, 1997; Kamler, 2001; Morgan, 1997, 2002) and so my writing brings me back in the end to teaching.

This theoretical body: Poststructuralist writers and writing

In the body of this text – which is about writing rather than the teaching of writing - my work has been influenced by a range of theorists who have worked on writing within more or less poststructuralist frameworks. In the final section of this introductory chapter, I explore some of the critical concepts, strategies and practices that have informed my writing and thinking about writing and I outline how the work of particular theorists is (to be) used in this thesis. There are many other theorists whose work I use here and there in this thesis but the key thinkers who have influenced the theoretical landscape of this text are introduced in the remainder of this chapter.

Extracting fragments from the works of poststructural thinkers as if they are representative of an author's work can be a dubious strategy. Foucault, for example, describes himself as a writer as “an experimenter and not a theorist”. The difference, he says, is that:

I call a theorist someone who constructs a general system, either deductive or analytical, and applies it to different fields in a uniform way. That isn't my case. I'm an experimenter in the sense that I write in order to change myself and in order not to think the same thing as before. (Foucault, 2000a, p. 240)

I treat Foucault, as many have before me, as though he were “a theorist”. I use his words here and there within my own according to the conventions of academic citation. I apply concepts and strategies that I have encountered in his writing to my own. Whether or not this might be consistent with his admonition that he is not a theorist is not relevant. Foucault says in another interview:

I have no way of knowing how people interpret the work that I have done.... I believe that somebody who writes has not got the right to demand to be understood as he had wished to be when he was writing; that is to say from the moment when he writes he is no longer the owner of what he says, except in a legal sense.... I believe that the freedom of the reader must be absolutely respected. A discourse is a reality which can be transformed infinitely. Thus, he who writes has not the right to give orders as to the use of his writings. (Foucault, 1999a, p. 111).

I use the words of Foucault – and all the other writers I cite in this text - in this spirit and with respect engendered from an awareness that to take up someone’s work is “not just a question of intellectual understanding or agreement, but of intensity, resonance, musical harmony” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 86). Rather than construct a hierarchy of names and influences – disciplining them according to geography, effect, age or academic field – I introduce my writing and theoretical influences in alphabetical order. In the sections below I outline the principal ideas on writing of each author, and how I use these ideas in this work, this thesis.

Roland Barthes

As I noted earlier in this chapter, Barthes’ deconstructive move against the Science/ literature, analytical/ creative binary underpins my approach to writing throughout this thesis. It describes the work I do in writing analysis that is also sometimes poetic, and by writing theatre that emerges from a social scientific research paradigm.

In Barthes’ work, within his “large, chronically mutating body of writing”, there was, according to Sontag, “finally one great subject: writing itself” (1993, p. vii). Barthes – “undoubtedly the most entertaining, witty and daring of the French theorists” (Selden and Widdowson, 1993, p. 130) - pursued writing through formalist/ modernist/ structuralist and poststructuralist phases. His poststructural turn came with his essay “The death of the author”, originally published in 1968, wherein he rejected the notion of the author as author-*ity*, as the origin and interpreter of the text. Rather he asserts: “[w]riting is that neuter, that composite, that obliquity, the black and white where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes” (Barthes, 1989, p. 49). Barthes is insistent on destabilizing the (modernist) author function: “*I* is a *poseur*: a matter of effect not intention, the whole difficulty of literature is here” (1993, p. 480). Instead Barthes argues that “the text is a fabric of quotations, resulting from a thousand sources of culture” and the writer’s “sole power is to mingle writings” (Barthes, 1989, p. 53). The reader, not the writer, becomes “the site where this multiplicity is collected...the very space in which are inscribed, without any of them being lost, all the citations out of which a writing is made; the unity of a text is not in its origin but in its destination” (Barthes,

1989, p. 54). In this thesis I present collective poetry and a play, both of which were spun in other texts and (con)texts, and woven with a myriad other sources into this tissue. I hope their text(ure)s are open enough to encourage diverse and contrary readings, to allow, as Barthes says, “the subject [to unmake] himself, like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of its web” (1975, p. 64). In the detour into collective writing on memories I examine collectively written texts into which the individual author(s) dissolve. In the autoethnography I weave fragments of other people’s words through my own. None of the texts in this thesis are presented as the work of an individual solitary writer, a creative genius in her attic away from the world, although for the purposes of academic credentialing I am compelled to present them as if they were. Rather, I think of them as self-conscious weavings produced – at least partly - in busy collaborative spaces located in the world.

Barthes talks about texts of pleasure and texts of bliss. A text of bliss is a text that “imposes a state of loss...unsettles the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language” (1975, p. 14). A text of bliss is not stable, it cannot be spoken about, it is unpredictable, it exists in relation to texts of pleasure that tend to reify selfhood, bring comfort and do not break with culture. Texts of pleasure and bliss, however, are not necessarily oppositional. Barthes speculates on the aesthetic possibilities of “textual pleasure” - even ultimately of bliss - where the aim is a sort of “writing aloud” that is carried by “the grain of the voice” rather than merely by reason, expression or vocal inflection. Such writing aspires to use a “language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body...it granulates, it crackles, it caresses, it grates, it cuts, it comes: that is bliss” (Barthes, 1975, pp. 66-7). This thesis presents poetry and a play, texts designed to be heard as much as to be seen. (Did you read the poem out aloud? Did you engage your voice and your ears as well as your eyes?) In writing and rewriting these texts, each time saying the words and phrases out aloud, I listen with another ear for the “grain of the voice”. I attend to the timbre as well as the

language and the sense in an attempt to build texts more likely to unsettle, to be multisensate provocations (through pleasure and) towards bliss.

Barthes' later work embraces fragmentary and elliptical text forms. These enable him to perform the consequences of his thinking about the death of the author as the site of meaning. Writing in discontinuous fragments disrupts the linearity of the text and opens it to multiple readings and writings. These are most evident in his final, most personal works, which Sontag calls "three installments of one of the most intelligent, subtle and gallant of autobiographical projects: *Roland Barthes, A Lover's Discourse*, and *Camera Lucida*" (Sontag, 1993, p. xxxviii). Despite his move towards the "autobiographical," Barthes was intent on disrupting humanist notions of the self in writing. Writing the self in fragments is part of his deconstructive strategy: the fragments are like "so many stones on the perimeter of a circle: I spread myself around: my whole little universe in crumbs; at the center, what?" (Barthes, 1977a, p. 93). His book *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (1977a) troubles the transparency of autobiographical writing from the first line "It must all be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel" (p. 1) and its extension "- or rather by several characters" (1977a, p. 119). He deconstructs the self in history through multiple twists of language, and qualifications:

Do I not know that, *in the field of the subject there is no referent?* The fact (whether biographical or textual) is abolished in the signifier, because it immediately coincides with it...I myself am my own symbol, I am the story which happens to me: freewheeling in language, I have nothing to compare myself to; and in this movement, the pronoun of the imaginary, "I", is *im-pertinent*; the symbol becomes literally *immediate*: essential danger for the life of the subject: to write oneself may seem a pretentious idea; but it is also a simple idea; simple as the idea of suicide. (Barthes, 1977a, p. 56)

For Barthes, the writer is co-incidental with the text, "the modern *scriptor* is born *at the same time* as his text" (1989, p. 52). Autobiography – as a project of recapturing a self that existed at some other earlier time and whose trace is somehow available more or less truthfully in memory – is an impossible project. In one of the detours of this thesis I explore the (im)possibilities of writing the self in reflexive and autoethnographic writing.

Barthes' deconstructive textual strategies are clues for me as to how to produce a poststructural (re)writing of the self. In Chapter Ten I play about with strategies including writing fragments, disrupting chronology, speaking from different positions, enclosing fragments of other people's texts within my own, writing counter-stories that interrupt straightforward readings of 'truth', writing desire, emotion and the body, and using photographs as well as written text.

Hélène Cixous

Cixous refuses to be a theorist. She writes fiction, criticism, psychoanalysis and philosophy "without enclosing herself in any of them", and with the awareness that "all writing is necessarily 'autobiographical' " (Conley, 1991, p. 12). In conversation with Conley, she locates her work in relation to 'theory':

I am obviously not without a minimum of philosophical and analytical knowledge, simply because I am part of a historical period. I cannot act as if I were not a contemporary of myself. Neither do I think that I must wage a mortal war against a certain type of discourse...I do have knowledge of theoretical discourses. Yet the part that represses women is a part which I quickly learned to detect and from which I keep my distance. One leaves these parts aside. (Cixous, in Conley, 1991, p. 147)

With Cixous' writing and the practice of *écriture féminine*, I have come to a different sort of writing. Her work on poetic writing, embodied writing, autobiographical writing, memory writing, and writing for theatre have all enabled me to write this thesis. Cixousian thinking and writing infuse the entire project. *Écriture féminine* is a practice of writing that Cixous says "will never be able to be theorized, enclosed, coded, which does not mean it does not exist" (Cixous, 1986, p. 92). Nevertheless Cixous' work can be understood within a theoretical landscape. For instance, Conley suggests that Cixous reads and writes at the "interstices of Lacan's theory of language – that of the chain of signifiers and not that of the phallus – and Derrida's *différance*" (Conley, 1991, p. 9). For instance, Cixous' texts – dense, enigmatic, intensely lyrical, texts of desire and of loss – could be understood as texts of bliss. Yet it is as a *practice* of writing, an approach to

writing, a position, a stance from which to begin to write differently that I take up Cixous' work in this thesis.

Cixous' writing is deeply metaphorical. Her writing shimmers with movement, with "signifiers that flash with a thousand meanings" (Cixous, 1991, p. 46). Her writing (and reading) entails careful attention to the possibilities of language. In my adventures in poetic and dramatic writing in this thesis, it is Cixous' work that sensitizes me to the multiplicity and excess of language, her work (along with Derrida's) that keeps me worrying away at words, phrases and images knowing that the simple truth (if such a thing can be said to exist) is neither desirable nor possible. In her writing Cixous attends to other sources of language beyond the conscious, beyond reason. She sources her imagery and understanding of the corporeal effects of language in dreams, in the unconscious and in what she calls "*zones in(terre)conscious*" (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 88). Language emerges in zones between earth and consciousness, deep in the body and memory (Davies, 2000b). In this thesis, in the latter part of the detour into poetic writing, I descend into dreamscapes, into the "vital river" (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 88) of the unconscious and the body. In the detour into autoethnography, I explore the writing strategies Cixous adopts in her most overtly 'autobiographical' writing (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997; Cixous and Derrida, 2001).

Cixous reads her body as a text. She sources the 'truths' of life and of writing within the body which always mediates every experience and which is itself the ultimate text (of life):

History, love, violence, time, work, desire inscribe [life] in my body. I go where the "fundamental language" is spoken, the body language into which all the tongues of things, acts and beings, translate themselves, in my own breast, the whole of reality worked upon in my flesh, intercepted by my nerves, by my sense, by the labor of all my cells, projected, analysed, recomposed into a book. (Cixous 1991, p. 52)

In this thesis, the body is the fundament of writing. I aim for a poetic writing that derives from the body and that reverberates with the body, and with other bodies. I use Cixous'

analysis of poetic writing and its heightened capacity to resonate in and with the body - like music or like blood - to explore how poetic writing works differently from prose, how it invokes other responses and enables other writing. I have already mentioned the text that began as a lump in my breast, and is now a play presented in this thesis. That play, and the social scientific papers that emerged from the wider breast project (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2000; 2001; forthcoming 2003; Müller-Rockstroh and Gannon, 2002), have as another of their starting points the comment by anthropologist Vanessa Maher that “breasts are a microcosm of women’s lives” (2000). Bodies are texts of lives and must and can be written within an embodied writing practice of *écriture féminine*. The methodology of collective biography that I discuss in this thesis owes much to Cixous in its assumption that memory is stored in the flesh, as embodied language (Davies, 2000b, p. 33).

Writing is not an interior, private communion with an inner originary (corporeal) self. Cixous talks of writing as also turning towards and opening to the other. The other might be he or she or they who are different in race, ethnicity, class, language, gender, sexual orientation, personal memory, history or location. The other then is all those others who are not “I”. And (for Cixous as well as Barthes) even “I” is herself “blurry, simultaneous, impure...the very demon of multiplicity” (1991, p. 29). In this context, for Cixous, writing is an intense practice of love, an ethical attentive practice deeply rooted in the body, in the unconscious, in respect for the self and the other, in life itself. Writing the other is a persistent thread through her work. Sellers defines *écriture féminine* as “an/other writing” (1996, p.xi), indeed the search “to encounter and inscribe the other, is the hallmark of *écriture féminine*” (Cixous, in Sellers, 1996, p. xv). Cixous’ writing of the other and the self impacts on my explorations of collective biography, of poetry and of autoethnography but it is particularly in my writing for theatre that I take up this work. It was in theatre that Cixous found the medium where the writer, the ego, could let go and make space for the multiplicity of the other: “In the theatre one can only work with a self that has almost evaporated, that has transformed itself into space” (Cixous, in Sellers, 1996, p. xiv). In that space of theatre, the writer must imagine and create and *be* everyone. She can – at last – encounter and inscribe the other, and in writing the other she

puts herself under erasure. It is in writing for theatre that the self will “consent to erase itself and to make space, to become, not the hero of the scene, but the scene itself: the site, the occasion of the other” (Cixous, in Sellers, 1996, p. xv). In the section of this thesis on writing for theatre, before the play itself, I trace the collaborative context of its production and the curious position of the playwright who dissolves into the text.

Bronwyn Davies

The work of Davies has, inevitably, shaped much of my thinking in this thesis. It is through her work (Davies, 1994, 2000a, 2000b) – and through working with her - that I have realized the possibilities of a poststructuralist attention to lived experience as a text to be read, written and contested (Gannon, 2002). In collective biography workshops and subsequent collaborative writing (Davies et al., 2001, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, forthcoming 2004a, forthcoming 2004b), I am part of a small but fluid group of feminist researchers – the Magnetic Island collective - engaged in pushing this methodology towards new practices and in using it to unpack abstract poststructural theoretical concepts. Thus I have been part of Davies’ bigger project of making poststructural language “accessible, understandable, and usable as a conceptual framework for interpreting and analyzing the social world” (2000a, p. 9). Davies’ other work on collective biography (1994, 2000b, Davies et al., 1997) provoked my use of this methodology in my own research (Gannon, 1999; Gannon, 2001; Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2000; 2001; forthcoming 2003; Müller-Rockstroh and Gannon, 2002; Cadman et al., 2001). Collective biography is a research methodology that engages a group of people in collectively generating, writing and analyzing memories from their own lived experience in relation to a particular theme or idea. Collective biography has been developed by Davies and others (including myself) into an explicitly poststructural version of the methodology of collective memorywork (Haug et al., 1987). Collective biography has been central to my own research practice – in this thesis it underpins both the play of “The Breast Project” and the collective poetry performance – and I have been part of several versions – and contestations – of the methodology. Thus in the first detour of this thesis I elaborate on the method and how the practice spearheaded by Davies through the Magnetic Island collectives sits in relation to the memory work of other practitioners.

Particularly important for me, as I have already indicated, is Davies' articulation of a feminist poststructuralist subject. This is not a nihilistic subject, a passive subject provoking despair or disappointment for feminism, but a subject who is constitutive of as well as constituted within discourse. She suggests that "[i]t is in the constitutive force of discourse that agency lies", and that agency in fact becomes possible through deconstructive thinking "that requires us to take on board contradictory thoughts and hold them together at the same time" (Davies, 2000a, p. 134). Discourses are volatile and subject to constant mutation. Rather than the subject *per se*, poststructural analysis is concerned with the processes of subjectification, with how the subject comes to be realized "through the ongoing and constitutive force of language (with all its contradictions)" (2000a p. 137). The self itself is a "discursive process" rather than a "unique relatively fixed personal invention," a verb rather than a noun (2000a, p. 137). The poststructuralist subject is "constantly in process; it only exists as process; it is revised and (re)presented through images, metaphors, storylines, and other features of language such as pronoun grammar" (Davies, 2000a, p. 137). In my work I take up a version of poststructuralism, articulated by Davies, where "[t]he *point* ...is not to destroy the humanist subject nor to create its binary other, the "anti-humanist subject" (whatever that might be), but to ...see the subject's fictionality, while recognizing how powerful fictions are in constituting what we take to be real" (Davies, 2000a, p. 133). In this thesis, I write at the points where binaries such as humanism/ poststructuralism, theory/ literature, analytical/ creative, academic/ non-academic face off against one another. I move back and forth, over, beneath, and through the boundaries between them. In the poetic and dramatic writing in this thesis I search for strategies to write the possibilities of the subject as multiple and as mutable, to push against images, metaphors and storylines that come too easily. In the section of the thesis that describes (re)writing the play in a collaborative context, my reading of the persistent eruptions of the humanist subject is also informed by Davies' analysis. In reflexively writing the self as I do in the autoethnography in this thesis, I try to disrupt and deconstruct familiar images, metaphors, and storylines, to trace the subject-in-process and so to shift her from the fixity of "noun" to the fluidity of "verb".

Norman Denzin

Methodologies are “thinking technologies” (Haraway, 2000) and what and how we are able to think is made im/possible through the thinking technologies we use. Denzin has been influential in expanding the thinking technologies, and so the possibilities of qualitative inquiry, in the social sciences, both in his own work (1995, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001) and in his editorial positions with Yvonna Lincoln on the *Handbook of Qualitative Inquiry* (1994, 2000) and the journal *Qualitative Inquiry* (1995-present). Noting the “triple crisis of representation, legitimation and praxis”, incited by post/modernity, Denzin (1997, p. 3) suggests experimental writing as a route out of a moribund and traumatized social science. The naiveties (and the violences) of positivist social science call for more reflexive, experientially based and multilayered research projects in which researchers will use a “new language, poststructuralist to the core [that] will be personal, emotional, biographically specific, and minimalist in its use of theoretical terms” (Denzin, 1997, p. 26). He predicts a “search for forms of writing that shamelessly and playfully transgress the personal while making public that which modernism kept hidden and repressed” (1997, p. 27). My own success in publishing in *Qualitative Inquiry* locates my work within this new landscape of experimental ethnographic texts (Gannon, 2001, 2002). In this thesis I present new poetry and a play as texts that began in other (con)texts, and that I have also written about in more conventional social scientific prose (Gannon, forthcoming 2003c; Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2000, 2001, forthcoming 2003; Müller-Rockstroh and Gannon, 2002). It is with recourse to the work of Denzin, amongst others, that I can also claim legitimacy for the texts in this thesis as research.

Jacques Derrida

Derrida’s work asks us to “change certain habits of mind: the authority of a text is provisional, the origin is a trace: contradicting logic, we must learn to use and erase language at the same time” (Spivak, 1976, p. ix). Taking up Derridean tactics means proceeding “by ellipses, corrections and corrections of corrections, letting go of each concept at the very moment I [need] to use it” (Derrida, cited in Spivak, 1976, p. xviii). The tactic of using a concept/ a word/ a thought at the same time as “letting go” of it and marking this by crossing it out in the text – for example, ~~author~~ – is called putting it *sous*

ature or “under erasure”. It enables the writer (me) to continue to use a useful concept (author) whilst simultaneously indicating my intention to trouble it, renew or unsettle it. Though I attempt to dislodge “author” from an unproblematic (or unconscious) reading, I also continue to use the concept in my discussion. Putting words *sous rature* is one of many textual strategies that Derrida deploys in his pursuit of polysemous, playful, multivocal, multivalent texts. He uses metaphors that “slip and slide in many directions as he continually finds and claims space for the otherness within the text” (Ferguson, 1993, p. 27). He slices across and through the page with columns and split layout to promote dialogue and represent fractures within a written text and to force non-linear readings of those texts (Derrida, 1986; Derrida, 1991, Bennington and Derrida, 1993). Making space in the text for the other, and for other readings, is part of Derrida’s practice of writing. In the section on autoethnography, I explore the evasive textual strategies Derrida uses in *Circumfession* (Bennington and Derrida, 1993), and in *Veils* (Cixous and Derrida, 2001) where he both writes (and does not write) himself and the ‘other’.

These textual strategies derive from Derrida’s project of *deconstruction*, breaking up the binary oppositions in which systems of thought have become sedimented, naturalized and thus invisible as systems of thought. Derridean deconstruction is “a double gesture, a double science, a double writing, [in] practice an *overturning* of the classical opposition *and* a general *displacement* of the system” (Derrida, 1982, cited in Hekman, 1990, p. 24). For feminists, deconstructive readings of sex/ gender have broken open the (il)logic of what Derrida called “phallogocentric” thought (Derrida, 1975, cited in Hekman, 1990, p. 166). Indeed, for feminists, “Derrida reveals more clearly than any other postmodern figure that at the root of logocentrism is a set of inflexible binary oppositions [all informed by] the masculine/ feminine opposition” (Hekman, 1990, p. 26). Derrida’s work is “guerilla warfare with Truth” that highlights how “conventional logocentric writing conducts its own evasions when it ducks the fertile field of possibilities lying within it” (Ferguson, 1993, p. 27). In the poetic writing I present in this thesis, and in other writing (Gannon, 1999, 2001, 2002, forthcoming 2003c), the strategy of attending to the binary oppositions embedded in these texts derives from reading practices pioneered by Derrida.

In reading, and in writing, deconstruction proceeds on the basis that language bears within itself the necessity and the possibility of its own critique. Deconstructive critique ‘hinges’ on the idea that writing always contains multiple possibilities, multiple meanings and it breaks open writing to reveal these multiple meanings, each existing simultaneously within a text, yet always moving in a dance of endlessly deferred meanings, the movement of *différance*. Language is “a field of play... a field of infinite substitutions ...[with] something missing from it: a center which arrests and grounds the play of substitutions” (Derrida, 1978, p. 289). This “movement of play, permitted by the lack or absence of a center, is the movement of *supplementarity*” (Derrida, 1978, p. 289). Derrida argues that this “center” - which purports to ground western rational thought - is a “non-locus”, a space of endless substitutions, a “linked chain of determinations ...of different forms or names”, all of them presuming some form of “Being as *presence*”, including “essence, existence, substance, subject... transcendental, consciousness, God, man and so forth” (1978, p. 279-280). Once the centre was recognized as a “function” rather than a “locus,” Derrida claims that “language invaded and everything became discourse” (1978, p. 279-280). Within this context can be understood his claim that “*There is nothing outside of the text [...il n’ya pas de hors-texte]*” (Derrida, 1976, p. 158). There is no “referent”, no outside reality that is “metaphysical, historical, psychobiographical, etc”, no “transcendental signified” whose “content could take place outside of language” (1976, p. 158). Discourse is everywhere, everything is always already embedded in discourse (including of course the subject). Rather than restricting language, this means that “[t]here is always too much, more than one can say” (Derrida, 1978, p. 289). In this thesis, a Derridean stance has enabled me to envisage the process of research as an opening of multiple possibilities, of opportunities, of detours and experiments in/ with writing. In the texts I have written it has meant trying not to foreclose meaning (not that – as “author” – I am able to claim this authority over the text and how it might be taken up). Nevertheless, taking up practices of poetic, dramatic and autoethnographic writing within a poststructuralist frame has meant trying to write texts that are open to the play of supplementarity. What is missing in the centre, the hole at the heart of these texts, is the all-knowing humanist subject who thinks she stands outside (discourse, the text) and understands what is going on.

It must be noted, in this thesis about writing, that one of Derrida's most famous deconstructive targets has been the binary of speech/ writing. In *Of Grammatology* (1976), he traces a chain of oppositions through the works of Rousseau and his anthropological successor, Levi-Strauss. He describes how writing came to be understood as inferior or secondary to speech. In Rousseau's work, extended in that of Levi-Strauss, speech is opposed to writing as presence is to absence and as liberty is to servitude (Derrida, 1976, p. 168). In the discourses of anthropology, intent on "constituting the other as a model of original and natural goodness" (Derrida, 1976, p. 114), written language came to be characterized as corruption, as a tool of oppression which facilitates "the enslavement of other human beings" (Derrida, 1976, p. 130). Derrida's deconstructive strategy proceeds by twisting and turning Rousseau's language and logic upon itself, and so subverting Rousseau's position that writing is a supplementary transcription of transparent inner speech, the "destruction of presence and disease of speech" (Derrida, 1976, p. 142). Rather than being "dangerous" as these anthropologists claimed, writing is always already there within/ alongside speech in language. Derrida goes so far in inverting this binary as to say instead the opposite - that "[t]here has never been anything but writing; there have never been anything but supplements" (1976, p. 159). Of course, Derrida is not talking about "writing" merely as a graphophonic system of marks made on some substance but rather about supplementarity as the mark of language itself. The hegemony of the binary of speech over writing is apparent even in the citational style that I use in this text – I claim that Derrida "talks" and "says" when actually these are words from his writing (mediated through Spivak's written translation). In terms of this thesis, Derrida's demolition of the speech/ writing binary shatters any illusion of an articulate inner self who speaks (silently or aloud) and then merely transcribes this unsullied inner truth into writing.

Carolyn Ellis (and Art Bochner)

Ellis and Bochner have been influential in creating a niche in social science writing for writing the self through a methodology called "autoethnography." Although the term autoethnography has been taken up by other writers (Reed-Danahy, 1997), Ellis has been

a prolific producer of autoethnographic texts and the main theorist associated with its recent elaboration (Ellis, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Ellis and Bochner, 1992, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 2000; Bochner and Ellis, 2002). Autoethnography is described by Ellis as “a genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness”, it moves “back and forth” between an outward gaze on the social and cultural contexts of lived experience and an “inward gaze” on emotions and the “self” (Ellis, 1999, p. 283). Autoethnography has affinities with some feminist poststructuralist writing that uses reflexive readings of lived experience to get at the discursive formation of the female subject (Davies, 2000a; Gannon, 2002).

Autoethnography is of interest in this thesis because of the claims that have been made for it as provocative of new ways to approach research and writing in the social sciences (Denzin, 1997; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000a; Tierney and Lincoln, 1997; Tierney, 1998, Van Maanen, 1995). Autoethnography is positioned by Bochner and Ellis as one of the constructive responses that ethnography can make to “postmodernist and poststructuralist perspectives on truth, neutrality, objectivity and language” (1996c, p. 3), and as an ideal response to the “crisis of representation” in the social sciences (2000, p. 733). In this thesis the (im)possibilities of writing the self in the text within a poststructural frame are traced through close readings of autoethnographies by Ellis and texts of self-writing by other authors. Recent controversies about the strategies of autoethnography hinge on the question of “the subject” in the text. Consequently, the range of work produced as autoethnography includes, on the one hand, exemplary evocative self reflexive postmodern research texts, and on the other hand, texts that may be poetic and justified by postmodern rhetoric but are still underpinned by modernist, realist notions of self, author, voice and text (Foley, 2002, p. 479). Within a post modern autoethnography or self-writing “oneself becomes a shifting, multiple text to be read” and written, and a site where the “construction of that self through discourse, through positioning within particular contexts and moments and through relations of power, is both recognised and made revisable” (Davies, 1997, p. 29). In my detour into autoethnography I analyse the contributions of the work of Ellis and others in author-ising autobiographical writing in

the social sciences. I look at the theoretical underpinning of this work and the writing strategies that are taken up in it. This analysis then informs the approach I take in this section in attempting an “autoethnography” of my own.

Michel Foucault

Foucault believed that “someone who writes has not got the right to demand to be understood as he had wished to be when he was writing” (1999, p. 111). Like Barthes, he sought to dislodge the relationship between author and text. Writing is not a fixed artifact, product of an author’s intention, but rather:

Writing unfolds like a game (*jeu*) that invariably goes beyond its own rules and transgresses its limits. In writing the point is not to manifest or exalt the act of writing, nor is it to pin a subject within language; it is, rather, a question of creating a space into which the writing subject constantly disappears. (Foucault, 1998a, p. 206).

In his essay “What is an author?” Foucault locates the emergence of the “author” within a juridical system as a “privileged [historical] moment of individualization” (1998a, p. 205). As is obvious in my own set of personal introductions in this chapter - and in the citational practices of academic writing - the solidity of the “author” continues to dominate systems for categorising texts (and thought). Acknowledgement of the author, signified by the “paradoxical singularity of the author’s name” (1998a, p. 210), came to make discursive sense, he argues, within a “circuit of ownership” (1998a, p. 212) which itself emerged at a particular historical juncture and came to be associated particularly with literary texts. It is within this discursive frame that “We now ask of each poetic or fictional text: From where does it come, who wrote it, when, under what circumstances, or beginning with what design?” (Foucault, 1998a, p. 213). Foucault suggests an alternative strategy that deprives the subject (the author) of its originary role in relation to the text, and instead analyses that subject “as a variable and complex function of discourse” (1998a, p. 221). The subject of the author is an artifact produced by the text, and reading texts requires attending to the “signs referring to the author” in the text - including pronouns, adverbs of time and place and verb conjugations (1998a, p. 215). It

suggests different sorts of questions than those reliant on the particularity of the author, questions such as:

What are the modes of existence of this discourse? Where has it been used, how can it circulate, and who can appropriate it for himself? What are the places in it where there is room for possible subjects? Who can assume these various subject functions? (Foucault, 1998a, p. 222)

These questions circulate through the detours into collective biography, poetry, theatre and autoethnography in this thesis. In attending to the subjects (and others) in the texts in this thesis, I attend to the 'we', the 'I' (and the 'you' or 'she') of texts. I explore questions like: how has she come to take up this position in this text, and what are the implications and consequences?

Much of this thesis has been collaboratively developed, particularly the poetic and dramatic texts and the methodology of collective biography. These approaches to writing – the texts themselves – are predicated on the multiplicity of the author function. Davies' reading of Foucault suggests that we should not sign our names to the texts we write but instead sign "the names of those who had the conversations in which the ideas for the writing emerged" (Davies, 2000b, p. 7). (Even) the poetic and fictional texts in this thesis are palimpsests of other writings, of others' writing, and at relevant moments during this thesis – informed by Foucault's work - I elaborate on the processes, the textual effects and the ethics of collaborative writing. Yet, in writing and circulating these texts – in writing academic papers, grant applications and submissions - I have had to take upon myself the humanist "author function". I have attached my "Proper name" to these texts as "sovereign" author. I have also appended the names of all those who contributed to my thinking and to my writing in the various phases of these texts. The contradictions within the author function unravel in the detour into the writing of 'my' play, "The Breast Project" which began as a collective biography project and mutated into a text developed within a community theatre context.

Foucault's work on writing as a technology of the self is also taken up in this thesis, particularly in the section on autoethnography. Writing, Foucault suggests, is one of those

practices that “permit individuals to effect...operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (1997b, p. 225). In pagan and early Christian times he found that “[t]aking care of oneself became linked to constant writing activity. The self is something to write about, a theme or an object (subject) of writing activity. That is not a modern trait...it is one of the most ancient Western traditions” (Foucault, 1997b, p. 232). Writing as a practice of caring for the self included “taking notes on oneself to be reread, writing treatises and letters to friends to help them, and keeping notebooks in order to reactivate for oneself the truths one needed” (Foucault, 1997b, p. 232). In the detour into autoethnography in this thesis, I suggest that Foucault’s work on self-writing as an ethical practice is essential for understanding and interrogating the ‘new’ autoethnographic reflexive writing practices in the social sciences (eg. Bochner and Ellis, 2002). Foucault notes that in the first and second centuries “[a] relationship developed between writing and vigilance. Attention was paid to nuances of life, mood, and reading, and the experience of self was intensified and widened by virtue of this act of writing” (Foucault, 1997b, p. 232-233). Current autoethnography has been described as “a turning of the ethnographic gaze inward on the self (auto), while maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography, looking at the larger context wherein self experiences occur” (Denzin, 1997, p. 227). To write the self, both in classical times and in current ethnographic practice, is to engage in “very specific ‘truth games’” (Foucault, 1997b, p. 224) where lived experience and careful reflection on that experience was/is believed to enable practitioners to better “understand themselves” (Foucault, 1997b, p. 224). In this thesis, I read current autoethnographic and other reflexive (self)writing practices through Foucault’s work on self-writing and the care of the self.

Frigga Haug (et al.)

The work of Haug and her colleagues – Andresen, Bünz-Elfferding, Hauser, Lang, Laudan, Lüdermann, Meir, Nemitz, Niehoff, Prinz, Rätzzel, Scheu and Thomas – in developing the feminist research methodology of collective memorywork is of profound importance to my work. With *Female Sexualization* (1987), the English translation of

Sexualisierung: Frauenformen 2 (1983), they launched a new and productive strategy for feminist research. Collective memorywork involves a group (usually of women) working together in (and often after) a writing workshop. During the workshops, participants work collectively to examine lived experience and embodied knowledge in cultural and historical contexts. The texts of lived experience are memories that are produced and interrogated collectively. The methodology collapses the familiar binary between the subject and object of research in the social sciences to create a new collective research subject. Collective memorywork was devised as an explicit attempt to “inscribe feminism into the Marxist framework” and in response to the collective’s “unease” with available sociological and psychological “theories of socialization” (Haug, 1987, p. 23-24). In this work, the individual sexualized female body becomes a “collective body” as researchers work together to unravel the discursive nets in which individual memories are caught. They rewrite and analyse their memories as data enabling more complex understandings of the cultural and social processes of female sexualization. During the course of this thesis, I have convened and participated in collective memorywork groups in Australia and in Europe with diverse groups of women. I met with Haug in her home in Berlin in 2000 for an afternoon of discussion about how the methodology has been further developed in the poststructural theorising that we call “collective biography” in the work of Davies (1994, 2000b) and within the Magnetic Island collective (Davies et al., 2001, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, forthcoming 2004a, forthcoming 2004b). In the detour into collective biography in the next chapter, I present a close reading of the research field inspired by the work of the Haug et al. collective.

As well as its central importance to my own work, collective memory methodologies are important in this thesis on writing and poststructural theory because of controversies within the field of practice of those who base their work on Haug’s original text. In Australia, fissures in the field appear between practitioners adopting poststructural positions, such as the Magnetic Island collective, and those who do not. In this thesis I trace these fissures through the claims that have been made for the methodology and through the writing and research practices that have been taken up by its various practitioners. In this detour, I analyse a lingering ambivalence towards the subject that

might be traced back to the original work of Haug et al and that continues to the present. I also interrogate the idea of “embodied writing” through collective biography.

Barbara Kamler

Kamler is one of the practitioners of collective biography whose work is of interest in the detour into collective biography but her work is of much wider interest throughout this thesis. In *Relocating the Personal* (2001), Kamler has elaborated the place of personal writing in feminist poststructuralist theoretical frameworks. She brings together self-writing and collective biography into a critical literacy pedagogy which focuses on writing practices rather than the usual emphasis on reading practices. I see this thesis as complementary to Kamler’s work on the possibilities of critical writing pedagogies. The writing workshop, for Kamler, is an interactive social site for “designing both text and subjectivity” (2001, p. 181). New critical writing pedagogies, such as those elaborated in this thesis and in Kamler’s work, redress a lack in writing pedagogies where “historically, we have focused on textwork but ignored the material and bodily effects of that writing” (Kamler, 2001, p. 182). Additionally, threaded through this text is Kamler’s reflexive autoethnographic writing, which traces her embodied self reading and writing and learning and teaching. This reflexive writing is part of the work I do in the detour into autoethnography in this thesis.

Kamler’s work explicitly engages the concepts which operate as lines of flight through this thesis - the body in writing, the formation and contestation of subjectivity in writing, and the place of the other in personal writing – and it brings them together within a feminist poststructuralist paradigm compatible with my own. My work differs from Kamler’s firstly in the detail and allegiances of my theoretical elaborations. For example, whereas Kamler locates authority for critical personal writing practices in the pedagogy of multiliteracies developed by the New London Group (1996), I make use of the work of Cixous, Barthes and others to whom she does not turn. Secondly, my work differs from Kamler’s in the attention I give in this thesis to “creative” writing practices for representing research through poetic and dramatic writing. Nevertheless, it is notable that Kamler has also turned to poetry as a powerful means of re-presenting interview data

(Kamler, 2001; Santoro, Kamler and Reid, 2001). Thirdly, this thesis attends in more detail than Kamler's to elaborating the feminist poststructuralist methodologies of collective biography and autoethnography.

Patti Lather

Lather has both pioneered new ways of representing ethnographic research in writing (Lather and Smithies, 1997), and raised doubts about the effects of new ethnographic writing. For example, in relation to genres of self writing such as autoethnography she suggests that we are reaching a moment of crisis where:

At risk is a romance of the speaking subject and a metaphysics of presence that threatens to collapse ethnography under the weight of circumscribed modes of identity, intentionality and selective appropriation (2000a, p. 20)

Lather sees feminist poststructural research as operating as a “praxis of not being so sure, of working the ruins” of modernist discourses (Lather, 1998, p. 488). In her adoption of deconstructive thinking in research she is committed to “openness, passage, and non-mastery” (Lather, 1998, p. 488). Lather's commitment to research practices that are situated, tentative and suspicious about the emergence of any transcendental subject informs my own approach to research and to writing within this thesis. The writing strategies that she adapts to maintain openness and multiplicity are explored in the detour into autoethnography. Additionally, Lather's contestation of the notion of “validity” in poststructural research (1994, 1997, 2000a) is important in this thesis in both the multilayered detour into the writing of “The Breast Play,” and in the final detour into autoethnography.

Laurel Richardson

Sociologist and poet – Laurel Richardson – takes up writing in diverse contexts and forms. Over many years, Richardson has written “sociology as drama, responsive readings, narrative poetry, pagan ritual, drama, lyrical poetry, prose poems, and autobiography” (1997, p. 3). In the collection *Fields of play* (1997), she frames reprinted papers between fore-words and after-words with the intent of repositioning the genres of “selected writings” and “autobiography” in a “new convergence [where] we become

writers, tellers of stories about our work – local, partial, prismatic stories” (1997, p. 3). As well as undertaking her own textual adventures in transgressing disciplinary boundaries, Richardson is also deeply committed to careful reflexive and theoretical analyses of the implications and consequences of writing otherwise (1990, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d, 2001). I have written elsewhere about the profound influence Richardson’s work on poetic writing (1997) has had in opening up my writing (Gannon, 1999, 2001, forthcoming 2003b), as have Kamler and her colleagues (Kamler, 2001; Santoro, Kamler and Reid, 2001). In the detour into poetic writing in this thesis, I interrogate in much more detail the processes and effects of re-presenting research as poetic writing, and in the detour into drama, I explore the consequences of re-presenting sociological research through a theatre script. Both of these textual adventures have been enabled by Richardson’s work and my understanding of what is happening - and of its limitations - continues to be informed by her work.

Richardson is also particularly interested in representing the personal in writing (1997, 2001; Richardson and Lockridge, 2002). In the detour into autoethnographic writing, Richardson’s work on the consequences of “getting personal” informs my reading of these practices. In Richardson’s take on personal writing as poststructural:

Writing about our lives, poststructurally, then suggests two important things: first, it directs us to understand ourselves reflexively as persons writing from particular positions at specific times; and second, it frees us from trying to write a single text in which everything is said at once to everyone, a text where the ‘complete’ life is told. The life can be told over and over again, differently nuanced. (2001, p. 36).

Richardson’s reflexive self-writing subject resonates with Davies’ conceptualization of the subject in poststructural theory as both “constituted and constitutive” in and through discourse (Davies, 2000a, p. 139). Richardson’s interrogation in the framing texts in *Fields of play* (1997) of the regimes of truth operating in the particular disciplinary and temporal locations from which she wrote underpins my attempts in this thesis to be explicit about my situatedness, and my simultaneous awareness of the impossibility of any such self-knowledge.

Elizabeth St Pierre

The work of St Pierre in elaborating the central concepts of feminist poststructural theory and their implications (2000a) and in publishing innovative and exemplary feminist poststructural research (St Pierre and Pillow, 2000) has been invaluable in developing breadth of field and depth of theory in feminist poststructural research in education. Aspects of both of these works are taken up throughout this thesis. In her comprehensive analysis of the core concepts of poststructural theory (2000a), St Pierre's unraveling of the "subject" in theory and her elaboration of the (inevitable) persistence of the humanist subject (even) within poststructural theory enables me to better recognize and comprehend the periodic eruption of a (humanist) subject in my own writing and the desire for such a subject in the writing I create in collaboration with others, particularly in the text of "The Breast Project". Although it is compelling to place humanism and poststructuralism in another neat binary, with poststructuralism now (perhaps) on the theoretical/ literary ascendant, St Pierre suggests that it is fruitful to trace the play between them: "[r]ather than place them in a binary opposition that allows no movement and inevitably privileges one or the other, we might, as we attempt to describe them, look at how they function in the world." (2000a, p. 478). Her work suggests that perhaps we need to be adept at mobilizing the discourses of humanism alongside and with(in) a poststructural postpositivist skepticism:

Humanism is the air we breathe, the language we speak, the shape of the homes we live in, the relations we are able to have with others, the politics we practice, the map that locates us on the earth, the futures we can imagine, the limits of our pleasures. (St Pierre, 2000a, p. 478)

In addition, in revisiting her own doctoral research and rereading it through diverse conceptual lenses, St Pierre develops "nomadic writing practices" appropriate for poststructuralist research (1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 2000b). These texts are models of reflexive research practices and of writing strategies that dislocate and multiply the researcher as subject. They demonstrate the possibilities of bringing "difficult" poststructural theoretical concepts into productive relationship with feminist research into the lived experience of real women, as is the intent of the collective biography research of

the Magnetic Island collective(s) of which I am a member (Davies et al., 2001, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, forthcoming 2004a, forthcoming 2004b) and is part of my discussion in the detour into autoethnography in this thesis.

Onwards ...

Despite the numbering of chapters, despite the logical explication of its thematic organization earlier in this chapter, this thesis does not aspire to linearity. Each chapter is a detour, a meander into writing. The 'style' is eclectic. As I have read and written in and through the work of particular theorists my writing turns on the tides of their work. At times, the writing may seem more lucid, at others more elliptical. Sometimes direct, sometimes circuitous. This is an *effect*, not a *defect*, it is part of my intent. "[I]f there is style", says Derrida, "it must be *plural*" (cited in Spivak, 1976, p. xxix). Writing this thesis has led me to abandon the humanist teacher's/ writer's quest for my "authentic voice" (Kamler, 2001, p. 134). It has freed me to try out many voices, to take up many disguises, to write my way into different spaces, to take risks. Yet, at the same time, I recognize my deep desire, in tension with a poststructuralist tendency towards fragmentation, to produce a text that is also coherent, credible, convincing. This is not an in error but fundamental to any research project.

[R]esearch work must satisfy two demands; the first is a demand for responsibility: the work must increase lucidity, expose the implications of a procedure, the alibis of language – in short, must constitute a *critique*... here Method is inevitable, irreplaceable, not for its 'results' but precisely – or on the contrary – because it realizes the highest degree of a consciousness of language *which does not forget itself*, but the second demand is of a very different order: it is the demand for writing, for a space of desire's dispersion, where Law is dismissed; hence it is necessary, *at a certain moment*, to turn against Method, or at least to regard it without any founding privilege, as one of the voices of plurality: as a *view*, in short a spectacle, mounted within the text – the text which is, after all, the only 'true' result of any research. (Barthes, 1989, p. 319)

At different points in my work - I take up, name, apply and interrogate "Method". I spin tissues of citations and intertextual references through theoretical discussions, in order to

ground my results – my new thinking - in authoritative ‘scientific’ discourse. Research through a poststructuralist lens means paying minute attention to language, staying alert, maintaining a curious, even suspicious, “reflexive eye/I” (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003a) on the work. As Lather puts it, citing Derrida (1978), antifoundational research is attentive to the “‘structure, sign and play’ of social relations”; it “is not a matter of looking harder or more closely, but of seeing what frames our seeing” (Lather, 1994, p. 38). In my interrogations of Method - beginning in the next chapter with a detour into collective biography and memorywork - I try to make more visible the frames – the particular discursive fields - which en-able certain ways of writing and understanding writing (and research) and dis-able others. But it is the *text* itself – this thesis, this book, this space into which I (dis)appear – that I present as a tentative account of my adventures into writing and research.

Chapter Two – Collective biography/ memorywork

THIS TEXT HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

(Extract from Gannon, “On the Rock: Telling stories,” in Davies, 2000b, p. 48)

In this first detour into Method, I explore the research and writing practices of collective biography and collective memorywork. I tend to use these terms interchangeably, to disturb the binary that is set up in some discussions of the methodology (Gannon, 2001,

Onyx and Small, 2001; Small and Onyx, 2001). This methodology has been of great importance in my work. I could claim that it has – at some point – informed all my research. In this thesis, the detours into poetic and dramatic writing began with texts produced in collective biography workshops that I had convened here and in Europe. During my doctoral candidacy, I have been a member of diverse memory collectives who have gathered in research workshops and then co-written and published academic papers based on our work (Cadman et al., 2001; (Davies et al., 2001, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, forthcoming 2004a, forthcoming 2004b; Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2000, 2001, forthcoming 2003; Müller-Rockstroh and Gannon, 2002). I take this detour for these reasons and because the conceptual “lines of flight” of this thesis – the subject, the body and the other – alight here and there in any consideration of collective biography as writing technology. This detour is in a way a “pre-tour” for the next detour into poetic writing, which begins with what I call “collective poetry.”

Collective memorywork/ collective biography

Collective memory-work involves a group (usually of women) working together in (and often after) a writing workshop. It provides powerful opportunities to disrupt the binaries of subject and object in research as it enables participants in memory-work groups to act as co-researchers, to work collectively to examine their own lived experience and embodied knowledge in culturally, historically, politically and geographically specific contexts. Thus, at first glance, in terms of both the usual disparities of power between researcher and researched, and the historical devaluing of personal experience in academic work, it might be read as a deeply feminist methodology. It is a particularly powerful strategy for poststructural work because of its potential for close discursive analysis as well as its disruption of the objective/ subjective binary embedded in social science research-as-usual. My interest in this thesis lies particularly with collective biography as research that takes up writing as its core mode of investigation. Collective biography, like all writing, constructs particular subjects through the writing and it is the textual strategies of this subjectification that I trace later in this chapter. Prior to the investigation into the writing of collective biography, I detail the salient characteristics of the methodology, as it was first conceived (Haug et al., 1987), and the various ways in

which it has been taken up by research practitioners. I do not intend to explain the methodology, or its variations, in such a manner that others can take it up through my work. Numerous authors provide descriptions/ prescriptions for taking up this methodology in research (Crawford et al., 1992; Davies, 1994; Gannon, 2001; Onyx and Small, 2001; Small and Onyx, 2001; Shratz, Walker and Schratz-Hadwich, 1995; Stephenson et al., 1996). I take up memorywork in different ways in different locations and always with a commitment to keeping the methodology “open” in the spirit of the Haug collective’s original work:

The diversity of our methods, the numerous objections raised in the course of our work with the stories, and the varied nature of our attempts at resolution, seemed to suggest that there might well be no single, ‘true’ method that is alone appropriate to this kind of work. What we need is imagination. We can, perhaps, say quite decisively that the very heterogeneity of everyday life demands similarly heterogeneous methods if it is to be understood. (Haug et al., 1987, pp. 70-71)

My participation in collective memory research practices began in a collective biography workshop on “the Rock” - Magnetic Island, in the Coral Sea, off Townsville, North Queensland (Davies, 2000b, pp. 37-62). The poem that begins this chapter was written after that first workshop. Subsequently, I have been co-researcher and co-writer in a series of workshops on different themes convened by Bronwyn Davies ((Davies et al., 2001, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, forthcoming 2004a, forthcoming 2004b). In this chapter I refer to this “body” of work as the work of the Magnetic Island collective. Although we are multiple and our membership is fluid I use “collective” rather than “collectives” to emphasise a certain coherence in the writing and research practices that we are developing.

In a collective memory workshop, participants tell and write memory stories from their lived experience around a particular theme or problematic. The process might be understood as a sort of weaving where the warp of the personal is woven against the weft of the socio-historico-political contexts within which “the personal” is lived and comes to make sense. This is a recursive and rigorous weaving. After the spinning of memories,

the patterns in each text are unraveled, examined and contested with the intent of identifying the discursive threads with which the memories are woven. Usually, after careful collective analysis, the memories are rewritten by the author until each story is recognized by the collective as both the story of that individual and also, potentially, the story of all of them, a story that “might have been true for anyone living in that particular culture and taking up that culture as their own” (Davies, 1994, p. 84). The collective critique and theorizing around the stories produced in the workshop enables participants to weave a strong and vibrant text that brings lived experience together with theories of discourse and the social. This (idealized feminist) metaphor of collective work as weaving might apply to all research that takes up the pioneering work of Haug et al. in one way or another. It complements Davies’ metaphor of a methodology where researchers “spin the web of themselves and find themselves in the act of that spinning, in the process of making sense out of the cultural threads through which lives are made” (1994, p. 782), and Haug’s metaphor of stories as “patterns from the fabric of life” (1987, p. 52) . Yet despite our commitments to equitable deconstructive feminist research, there are significant differences amongst practitioners in terms of procedures, analytical frameworks and theoretical paradigms. Such differences are reflected in the terminology used by different groups of memory workers. Those who tend to take up the methodology as poststructuralist prefer “collective biography” (Davies et al., 2001, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, forthcoming 2004a, forthcoming 2004b; Kamler, 1996, 2001; Lather, 1991) while those who are more ambivalent about (or hostile to) poststructuralism tend to stick with the term “collective memorywork” derived from Haug et al. (Crawford et al., 1992; Onyx and Small, 2001; Small and Onyx, 2001; Shratz, Walker and Schratz-Hadwich, 1995). In my own work I use both terms in order to both maintain the line straight from Haug et al.’s work on female sexualisation (1987) to my own and to simultaneously position my work with that of the Magnetic Island collectives of which I am a member.

My discussion of collective work on memories in this chapter emphasizes those approaches that take up poststructuralist positions. Certain tenets might be agreed to by all practitioners who trace their work to Haug et al. (1987). These commonalities include: that collective memorywork/ biography spans the theory-practice gap, that it collapses the

subject and object of research, that it uses everyday experience to generate knowledge. These descriptors are so familiar to practitioners that (to me) they have become almost emptied of meaning through repetition. I am interested here in the particular flourishes that mark some work as poststructuralist in contrast to other work that is not so marked. In this chapter I suggest the differences revolve around the articulation of distinctively poststructuralist conceptualizations of “the subject” and “the body” in writing. To date, these concepts have not yet been systematically mapped or elaborated across collective biography research. I draw predominantly from published (or about to be published) materials that I have co-written during my doctoral candidature. These include papers on gendered subjectification (Davies, et al., 2001), power and knowledge (Davies et al., 2002), reflexivity (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003a), morality and femininity in fiction (Davies et al., forthcoming 2004b), embodiment (Davies et al., 2003b, forthcoming 2004a) and “unresolved power” in collective memory workshops (Cadman et al., 2001). I have written elsewhere of research where I conducted collective biography or memory workshops with numerous women, and then wrote up an analysis on my own or with one other co-researcher (Gannon, 1999, 2001, forthcoming 2003c; Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2000, 2001, forthcoming 2003; Müller-Rockstroh and Gannon, 2002). Rather than reiterate my analysis of the dilemmas of this strategy, I am concerned in this chapter to attend particularly to (co)research contexts where analysis is also (co)written by workshop participants, including the work of the Haug collective (1987) and that of the Crawford collective (1992).

The subject of memorywork

In the following sections I explore the subject(s) of memorywork and collective biography. In a recent paper, Stephenson (2001) suggests that one persistent problem with memory-work can be traced back to an ambivalence surrounding the subject in the original work of Haug and her colleagues. They claim to reject methods that assume a deterministic, linear, psychological, self-determining subject, like autobiography, because of the “theoretically untenable presupposition...[that] childhood and adolescence [are] simply [a] causal phase of today’s person” (Haug et al., 1987, p. 46). Through their emphasis on the *process* (of “sexualization”), and their attention to the jaggedness of

contradictions and fractures in memories, they emphasise a non-unitary, fluid, contextually-nuanced notion of the subject, but, as Stephenson argues, they also create another sort of subject in their work. Written memories, they suggest in various places in the text, have potential to illustrate “the way in which human beings construct themselves into the world” (Haug et al., 1987, p. 52). Stephenson reads explanations like this as indicative of a subject who “exists (in some sense) *before* the process of its social production...as ontologically prior to her own construction” (Stephenson, 2001, p. 45). This critique resonates with aspects of the discussion which follows in this section, where I unravel the subject of memorywork and collective biography.

There are multiple dimensions to “the subject” of memory-work: the subject as workshop participant, reconstructing and deconstructing moments from her life; the subject as the researcher(s) writing a paper/ thesis/ book about memory-work. These are (experienced by us as) flesh and blood subjects. There are also clearly textual, discursively constituted subjects of memory-work: they twine around and complicate any clear or simplistic notions about “flesh and blood” subjects. They cannot be separated. They include subjects in re-membered stories written from our childhood, subjects formulated further in the talk that is part of the work of memory-workshops, and collective subjects constructed through texts generated in and through research contexts. From a poststructural perspective, the subject is always contested and in process. In Butler’s words, the “subject is never fully constituted, but is subjected and produced time and time again. That subject is neither a ground nor a product, but the permanent possibility of a certain resignifying process...” (1995, p. 47). It is the production of the subject(s) of memorywork to which I attend in this chapter, beginning with the “collective subject”.

The collective “we” of memorywork

The collective writing of an analytical text is a distinctive feature of much memorywork and the first subject any reader of a collective biography paper will encounter is the writing subject of the text who calls herself (herselves) “we”. Each quotation from the body of work of the Magnetic Island collective (Davies et al., 2001, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, forthcoming 2004a, forthcoming 2004b) that I use in this chapter is the effect - I know

through my participation in each process - of careful and intense struggle over meaning and, finally, represents the thinking of a collective of poststructuralist researchers. Each of the papers was written collectively after each workshop through an email roster of turn taking in the months following the workshop. This collective “we” who writes is always constrained by the realities of academic life where everyone is busy and everyone involved always has the option of doing more or less textual work depending on her circumstances. In one of these papers I was the first writer, in another I was the last writer. Every paper circled through the hands of all of us a number of times before it was completed. When I read these papers now, I catch my own voice here and there in metaphors, paragraphs, sentences, phrases, headings, ideas, quotations that I might have inserted but every time, my voice is so layered amongst these other voices that the text is truly a palimpsest. “I” have disappeared into the text of the collective “we” who writes. In other (con)texts I have had similar experiences (Cadman et al., 2001; Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2000, 2001, forthcoming 2003; Müller-Rockstroh and Gannon, 2002). This collectivity in writing differs from the work of Haug et al. where, despite the implication of common authorship, the names of one or more of the different members of the collective are attached to particular sections of the book as “author”, with Haug alone responsible for the introductory section on methodology (1987, p. 8-9). Although collaborative writing in academia is not restricted to this methodology, the collectivity of the collaborative writing “we” is particularly apt for collective biography/ memorywork.

Collaborative writing is potentially productive of new ways of thinking beyond the individual’s particular proclivities but it is also exceedingly difficult. There is always another “other” story, a story of erasures and additions and struggles, an invisible story told in the writing of the text and in the peripheral texts (such as email messages) that are not available to the reader of a published text. I will return to the question of “difference” later in this chapter but there are always differences amongst the participants in memorywork research and collectivity is always an active production as we work together and as we write. If we were able to publish a multi-layered text, where the changes to a text were marked in different colours layer by layer, draft by draft, with notes attached, as would be possible with the “Reviewing” facility of Microsoft Word or

with the sort of rhizomatic text that Morgan calls a “hypertext poetics” (2000, p. 130-150), the complex processes of collective writing and thinking could be made apparent but the texts might well become impossible to read, and certainly the ideas within the text might become obscured by these “textual tricks” (Davies et al, forthcoming 2003a). In any case, this would be, in a way, a rehabilitation of the individual over the collective in a way that is inimical to collective work. Nevertheless, the contingency and fragility of the collective (writing-a-text-for-publication) subject is an interesting and rarely discussed aspect of collective work. A trace appears in a footnote in the paper on reflexivity (Davies et al., 2003a):

In the first draft of the paper, there were ‘interludes’ which included excerpts from the opera *Tancredi*. These disappeared in successive drafts. We mention this here since what does not appear in final texts is often still there as an almost invisible backdrop to what is there. This oblique reference to opera here, reminds us of those passages that are now gone, and whose major purpose was to show how men positioned with power over others’ lives may experience considerable anguish in their acts of domination. We mention this here, in a footnote, to draw attention to the way in which the dramas, difficulties, and interesting negotiations in co-authored papers are generally smoothed out of the final draft, leaving little or no trace of the work that is done to find the words that satisfy all members of the collective.

The ‘smooth’ texts that we write and publish present the collective academic subject of ourselves as competent articulate memory-work co-researchers and harmonious collective workers. This practice is apparent in the representations of our workshop processes that we write (together) in the papers after each workshop. In one of two papers that emerge from a workshop on embodiment, one of us wrote about the process as an idealized and different sort of academic work:

In the garden and on the wide verandah of the rented holiday house, we had the luxury of talking all day and long into the evenings about our topic, embodiment, among women who took time to understand each other, listened with care, responded to each utterance. In our intensely focused practice of collective

biography, there are moments when one woman can seize a word uttered by another and spin a tale that drifts over our collective group, and drapes over our collective shoulders. In these moments we find ourselves uttering collective sighs of understanding, of appreciation, of sadness, of pleasure, of anguish, as we sit under a veil of storying that we have all collectively spun. (Davies et al., 2003b)

In such words we claim to care about each other in particularly “female” ways in tune with nature and with each other to an extent that is extraordinary in comparison with the harsh realities of the neoliberal work places where we normally do our academic work. We slip into a discourse that Ferguson calls “cosmic feminism” (1993) where we are attuned with each other and with nature. In this chapter I name the collective biography project after a place – Magnetic Island – because the geographic and climatic location of this work has seemed important to our practices of knowledge production. In terms of “care” it is notable that “nurturing” was a dominant theme in the stories of our conduct of memorywork research in another collective paper written after a research conference in Sydney (Cadman et al., 2001). Creating safe spaces for thinking differently (but together) is a legitimate and even necessary strategy for academic work and it is part of the work of any collective working intensely with the emotionally fraught empirical data of our own memories. These moments of pleasure undoubtedly exist in the workshops, but they are only part of the methodological story. In the reflexivity paper of the Magnetic Island collective the process is described in more jagged language:

This process is not a warm fuzzy pursuit of empathy in which we assume a union of two or more selves in a mirroring relationship (Lather, 2000a, p. 19). The questioning and challenging of each others’ stories can take on a ruthless quality as we pursue the detail that might otherwise be obscured by the clichéd phrases that announce: ‘this is what anyone would know and recognize’. This sometimes brutal process is aimed at breaking open platitudes with which anyone could empathise and a pursuit of the detail that makes it possible for something else to take its place. ‘To argue against empathy’ as Lather (2000a, p. 19) says, ‘is to trouble the possibilities of understanding, as premised on structures that all people share’. (Davies et al., 2003a)

I do not compare these extracts in order to suggest that these two collectives worked differently because fundamentally we did not. Each workshop included committing to a nurturing sort of collective support of one another and of ourselves as a group, and, at the same time, rigorously attending to the too easy truths in the memory stories and in our interpretations. Indeed, four members of each of these workshops were the same. I compare these texts to illustrate that the collective subject of the “we” that we create and sustain through the workshop and then through the writing of a paper is fragile and the effort to sustain her is exhausting, exhilarating and essential. The writing process, when we are dispersed and it becomes more difficult to maintain an embodied sense of our collectivity, seems to be particularly fraught.

In the writing phase, as we struggle to maintain ourselves as “we”, we work hard to create the “we” in our emerging text. As far as possible - without compromising any necessary methodological ‘truth’ – we erase ourselves as discrete individuals. Thus the careful construction of the collective “we” enacts a parallel process to that adopted in the workshop itself where:

Through the processes of talking and listening, of writing and rewriting, the edges that mark off the texts of ourselves, one from the other, are blurred. The frames and borderlines through which we made (and make) our individual identities knowable and recognisable to ourselves and others are no longer sealed off from each other—they flow into one another, making visible the fictional referential frames through which the possibilities of being are drawn. (Davies et al., 2001, p. 169)

The poem at the beginning of this chapter and the metaphor of the tale as a shawl that “drapes across our collective shoulders” reflect this sense of “blurring” in borderlands of self/ other(s). Binaries of identity begin to collapse in our textual work. The memory stories that appear in the final text are never ascribed to any one of us yet, generally, one of the principles by which illustrative stories for a paper are chosen as we write is that we aim to include at least one story from each participant. Thus a tension between the collective and the individual remains as a trace in the text, and as a focus of periodic discussion about ethical writing practices. Where naming occurs, it is in descriptions of

methodological procedures specific to that workshop. For example, where Bronwyn Davies as convener and principal researcher has taken up the framing of the workshop as her own responsibility, this is elaborated:

Our starting point for each day's topic of the collective biography work was a fragment from Judith Butler's extensive theoretical work on subjection... Bronwyn had selected these fragments and posed, as an organisational strategy for our daily programme, a topic for memory work connected to each of those theoretical fragments. These topics included first memories of...(Davies et al., 2001, p. 168-169).

Additionally, particular responsibilities in the writing are sometimes named:

We began with a first draft written by Sue, then sent it by e-mail in succession to each member of the group. We have each written two drafts, with Bronwyn taking responsibility for the final draft. (Davies et al., 2001, p. 171-172)

Where responsibility within the workshop is differently allocated, that also is specified:

Across the five days of our workshop, each of us took responsibility for a discrete half-day session. ... These included: the bodies that we most want to be and do not want to be in the workplace (Bronwyn); the ideal teacher (Eileen); flexible bodies in neo-liberal organisations (Sue); the labour of producing stillness (Margaret); and time and embodiment in the workplace (Jenny). (Davies et al., forthcoming 2004a)

Why these details? Each of the five collective biography groups of the Magnetic Island collectives that I discuss here has been made up of different bodies (although 2003b and 2004a were two papers produced from one workshop). Each configuration has included at least one woman who has not encountered collective biography before, as well as women who have participated in more than one workshop. Groups of women who are both different and the same have made different decisions in the writing and in representing themselves and the methodology. Yet an aesthetic-ethical practice of collective biography is evolving through this body of work that is recognizable and committed to a fluidity of practice related to the collective intention that:

Each time we take up the methodology in our ongoing project of bringing poststructural theory to work in our lives, we experiment with productive

variations in the method.... In keeping with a poststructuralist approach we eschew Method with fixed, explicit rules to be followed. While acknowledging our indebtedness to Haug's collective, we insist on remaining free to develop and change what we do in response to the particular questions we are asking and the situations we find ourselves in (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003b)

Productive and particular innovations have included: unraveling the "rationalities" that gave sense to stories about power and knowledge (Davies et al., forthcoming 2002), reflexive evening writings on the process itself in the workshop on reflexivity (Davies et al., 2003a), intertextual readings of the fictional and real lives of girls through favourite childhood narrative heroines (Davies et al., forthcoming 2004b), and attention to bodies and artistic practices in work on embodiment (Davies et al., 2003b, forthcoming 2004a). The fluidity of the Magnetic Island practice of collective biography is in opposition to a tendency of other memorywork practitioners to rigidify the Method. For example, Onyx and Small imply that the openness of Haug's original approach resulted from its immaturity when they suggest that now "the method has matured to a point at which a critical reflection of its strengths and limits is needed" (2001, p. 781). In contrast I argue, both from within and outside the Magnetic Island collective (as I slip and slide between pronouns), that the strengths and limits of collective work with memories will vary from project to project and indeed, as I made clear at the beginning of this section, it is its very capacity for mutation and adaptation that is the strength of collective biography and memory work.

The collective subject of the "we" of memory work is not particular to those researchers operating within a poststructuralist paradigm. Nevertheless, it is the subject envisaged and created in memory work that differentiates between those who take it up as a poststructuralist practice and those who do not. Haug links the construction of a collective subject through the "we" that we make in telling and analyzing our memories to the question of agency. Through their work in generating multiple stories around a single theme she asserts that:

In collective studies of the same object in different accounts, there evolved a collective subject capable of resisting some of the harmful consequences of traditional divisions of labour. (Haug et al., 1987, p. 58)

The collective subject is not described here as an effect of text, but a necessary precondition for the emancipatory project which – as a feminist response to Marxism - is the heart of collective memorywork as it was initially developed. In current practice, it is the ontological status of the subject of memorywork that marks collective memory research as poststructuralist (or not). That is, difference is marked in the degree to which agency is ascribed to any of the subjects of collective memory work (the collective subject, the individual members of the research group, the individual subjects of the memories).

Agency and the subject in memorywork

Memorywork relies on a notion of the subject attaining some diffuse or specific agentic potential through the methodology. In the original work, rather than passive objects of institutions, processes of socialisation, or of “economic relations” (Haug et al., 1987, p. 43), people were seen to be complicit in their own “subjectification” (Haug et al., 1987, p. 59). The approach of Haug and her colleagues is explicitly emancipatory: “[w]e were seeking guidelines for a liberation strategy in the domain of sexuality – or better still, opportunities for active intervention” (1987, p. 203). For this reason, they say, they reject Foucault’s work: “[h]uman beings who make their own history have no place in Foucault; instead, human beings are the effects of the structure (the ‘order’) that attains its goals by the most devious means, and remains impervious to willed efforts to change it” (1987, p. 203). Hauser, who is the credited author of this chapter of the book, elaborates further: “Foucault’s major flaw – the absence of subjects – has led a number of [feminist] researchers simply to ‘append’ what seems to be a missing link: the woman as subject,” but she goes on to say “nothing is changed in the ‘real’ lives of the women under consideration, and these women do not change either” (1987, p. 205). The absence of subjects in Foucault is contestable. He claimed that in all his work, the formation of the subject had been his “general theme” (Foucault, 2000c, p. 327). He explains how his research swerved from previous practice and brought him in a circular but definite

movement to what he finally called the technologies of the self:

I have tried to get out from the philosophy of the subject through a genealogy of this subject, by studying the constitution of the subject across history which has led up to the modern concept of the self...and now I wish to study those forms of understanding which the subject creates about himself (Foucault, 1999b, p. 160-161).

Foucault argues that analysis must “take into account the interaction between ... techniques of domination and techniques of the self” (1999b, p. 162). This is exactly the intent of the discursive analyses of collective biography and collective memorywork. However the language that Haug et al. use – disputing the production of selves as the effect of a structure and insisting on “will” as a capacity of human beings – could be read as preserving a pre-discursive individual that could be seen as inimical to poststructural research, as Stephenson (2001) implies. An alternative reading is that Haug does not mean to reify an ontologically prior, essential subject. Rather, from her position as a feminist Marxist, she insists on the production of a revolutionary subject who has agency. This Marxist subject is produced through social and cultural contexts but also manages to exist outside these discourses, and is thus in some way “extra-discursive.”

Another important disciplinary context for memorywork is psychology. The subject of psychology tends to be a modernist subject who has a pre-discursive existence and therefore, after appropriate enlightenment, has the clear possibility to act, to be agentic in her own life and wider society. In an explicitly psychological take up of the method which has been influential particularly in sedimenting a set of “rules” for memorywork , Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault and Benton (1992) name their work as feminist “social constructionist” psychology, and set it against traditional patriarchal psychology, which they characterise as: individualistic, biological, positivist/ empiricist and ethnocentric. Relationships between feminism and psychology are complex and strained, and the work of the Crawford collective was a feminist intervention into psychology analogous to the Haug collective’s feminist intervention into Marxism. Although psychology and feminism can be read as inherently “antithetical,” Burman claims that “feminists familiar with psychology” can offer “vigilance and commentary on the permeation of psychology

into everyday discourses on gender, relationships, life events” (Burman, 1996, p.11). Collective memory and collective biography projects engage this vigilance over the embodied practices of everyday life and they generate commentary and critique from a feminist perspective. Burman sees the most fruitful arena for psychology as “mutual engagement of feminism with post-structuralist and social constructionist ideas (especially their Foucauldian varieties...)” (1996, p. 2). In contrast, Davies argues that, for feminists, psychology “remains part of the gender problem” (Davies, 2002). Nevertheless, the potential of alliances between poststructural theory and social constructionist psychology has been explored by Davies and Harré (Davies, 2000a, p. 87-106) and in more recent work by several members of the earlier “Crawford collective” (Stephenson et al., 1996). The approach of the feminist psychologists in the Crawford collective does not take up these possibilities wholeheartedly. Their work does not deconstruct psychology in any fundamental ways, it takes a “corrective form, retaining some commitment to existing standards of evaluation, claiming that adjusting and supplementing the models to include women or limit the male bias results in better psychological theory” (Burman, 1996, p. 30). The Crawford collective rely on the fathers of psychology, old and new, in their theoretical discussions, including Freud, Mead, Peters, Shotter and Vygotsky (1992, p. 205-212). Their work is, they say, “constructionism, but constructionism which allows a strong sense of agency” (1992, p. 195). They build a theory of “self” through their text, though, as Davies and Harré note, the self has long been a concept whose “ambiguity has bedeviled the psychology of personhood” (Davies, 2000a, p. 89). The self of the Crawford collective is significantly socially constructed and somewhat fluid: “we construct our selves through the world of our social relations and the expectations of others and social rules which govern those relations” (1992, p. 190). Yet it is simultaneously a stable self who becomes capable of self-realization and emancipation through agency. Agency is central to their project, which they conceive as intrinsically a moral project:

Morality is constituted in deliberation and choice. It is here also...that emotions are constructed. And as humans construct their emotions, they construct themselves. Memory and reflection are implicated in those processes. Emotions are the markers of the construction of the self, the personality. (Crawford et al,

1992, p. 126)

The insistence on agency and liberation as objectives of collective memorywork persists in more recent formulations of the Method by a member of the Crawford collective (Onyx and Small, 2001; Small and Onyx, 2001). The rationale for memory-work for both the Haug and Crawford collectives lies in what they see as its powerful potential for agency. In contrast, as I elaborate later in this chapter, the Magnetic Island collective problematises agency and interrogates humanist notions of morality (Davies et al., forthcoming 2004).

The problem of agency and the individual in collective memorywork has also been noted by Stephenson (2001) who offers a way out of this conceptual and methodological impasse. In an analysis of the collective subject in both her own collective memory work and that of Haug et al. (1987), Stephenson (2001) suggests that the problem with memory work that “celebrates collective subjectivity” is that “difference is explained away” (2001, p. 49). In a more nuanced and reflexive practice, she argues that we would take up “an alternate way of thinking the connection between memory-work, collective subjectivity and the political: “change is made possible when, instead of shoring up an *a priori* notion of collective subjectivity, we seek to question it...[to investigate] how our differences are also constructed” (2001, p. 49). In memorywork which implies a humanist subject, there is a slippage where “agency and resistance” are seen as “capacities with which individuals are endowed” rather than as discursive constructions (Stephenson, 2001, p. 49). Although I agree with Stephenson’s analysis of this problem within much memorywork, and her assertions that in all collective work we construct “partial connections,” “situated knowledges,” and “mobile positionings” (Stephenson, 2001, p. 48), I do not concur with her conclusion that we should attend, therefore, to the “interiority, the depth aspects of the psychologies of individual memory-workers” (Stephenson, 2001, p. 51). I suspect that such reification of the individual in memorywork would be detrimental in numerous ways, not least of which that it would push it back from its indeterminate interdisciplinary location into the embrace of psychology and its cult of the self (Kvale, 1992, p. 15). Later in this chapter I will return to Stephenson’s comments about difference in collective memory work.

The psychological subject is problematic for poststructural theory in general, and thus for those research practices that are taken up within poststructural paradigms (Davies, 2002; Henriques et al., 1984; Søndergaard 2002a). As Kvale noted in his evaluation of the impact of postmodern thinking on psychology:

In contrast to the individualistic and intra-psychic terminology of modern psychology, there is a deindividualization and externalization of the person...The age of the self is coming to an end. There is a move from the inside to the outside, from the knower to the known. Concepts of consciousness, the unconscious and the psyche recede into the background; and concepts such as knowledge, language, culture, landscape and myth appear in the foreground. (1992, p. 15)

Although modernist versions of psychology, such as developmental psychology, are suspect within postmodern thematics, psychoanalysis, a “marginal school” in “scientific psychology” (Kvale, 1992b, p. 40) has been prominent. Particularly in its Lacanian forms, psychoanalysis has been found theoretically productive by some poststructural feminists for theorizing subjectivity (Flax, 1993; Fuss, 1989; Grosz, 1994, 1995; Henriques et al., 1984; Walkerdine, 1997; Weedon, 1997). Recently, Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody argue that psychoanalysis fills a gap in research: “social and cultural analysis desperately needs an understanding of emotional processes, presented in a way that does not reduce the psychic to the social and *vice versa*, but recognizes their imbrication” (2001, p. 87). However, Søndergaard is critical of what she calls the “monopoly of psychoanalysis” in “analyzing subjectification in its more subtle and complex forms” (2002a, p. 446). Psychoanalytic discourses necessarily, she suggests, reproduce the binary of the individual and the social (and rational/ irrational, conscious/ unconscious, contextual/ individual). They “suggest irrational, unconscious, personal motives for our actions” and they tend to be “pathologizing” (Søndergaard, 2002a, p. 448). In my own work and in the Magnetic Island collective, psychoanalysis becomes (no more and no less than) one of various available discourses and sets of analytical tools through which meanings can be made.

Struggles to find explanatory frames arise in contexts where co-researchers have diverse theoretical allegiances. In the collective paper (Cadman et al., 2001) that emerged on memory work processes after a conference convened in Sydney, humanist versions of psychology dominate the text:

[T]he capacity of the individual to reflect on memory is a crucial condition for intentionality, and hence agency...We broadened our understandings of our selves as (anxious) researchers from an individual to a wider social/ cultural context. It was an empowering experience. (Cadman et al., 2001, p. 90).

The empowered feminist subject of the feminist collective is a heroine from second wave feminism. Her agency comes from a sense of sisterhood and from the new collective knowledge that the group has generated, and her power is directed at oppressive patriarchal institutions:

[W]e began to see that what we had felt as a weakness for each of us as individuals, could actually be a resource from which we all drew...we can go on to challenge the institutions and disciplines within which we work and study. (Cadman et al., 2001, p. 90).

I do not mean to denigrate this effort. I was part of it. The memories we shared were curiously affirming (indeed “empowering”) and the consecutive textual struggles of eleven writers from different disciplines and theoretical paradigms to work with each others’ meanings was both fascinating and frustrating (but I would hasten to add here that an element of frustration is always part of every collaborative writing project).

The diverse discourses of feminism are also, always and already, amongst the discourses available to us (women living in the west in the present) for understanding lived experience. In my collective memory work on breasts with Babette Müller-Rockstroh, we take up an analytical stance that is informed by feminism more perhaps than by poststructuralism. This was appropriate in the context within which we convened a series of workshops, the *Internationale Frauenuniversität* (International Women’s University) in Germany in 2000. We wrote the first text (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2000) shoulder to shoulder as the leaves fell from the oaks in the park outside my window at the student residence and we later developed three papers from that text. Although we do not

claim a “poststructuralist” identity for the “we” of our texts, our analyses focus overtly on discursive contexts for memories. In a conference paper on “nurturing breasts” we examine memories through discourses of “femininity, maternal bodies, sexual bodies, the body’s public obligation, body politics, processes of medicalisation and women’s private wants and needs”. We reject the binary that locates the breastfeeding mother on the side of nature and argue that “[m]aternal breastfeeding carries no inherent ‘natural’ meaning but is always located where historically specific, culturally articulated interests, various disciplining practices and power relations collide with the recalcitrance of the individual body of a woman” (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2001). Bodies move through discourses and subjects are constituted through discourses. We do not claim the emancipation of agency as the goal of our research - not directly - but we conclude that:

Our goal as feminist researchers is to regain interpretive power about our embodied experiences. To do this and to resist, we have to disrupt the dominant metaphors. (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2001)

The language of this text suggests the traces of humanism in the feminist discourse we take up. We claim that our intent is to “regain interpretive power” and “to resist.” The analytical text is a site traversed by diverse discourses. We move within subject positions where we recognise discourse as constitutive of selves and where our deep desire, as feminists speaking to feminists, is to reserve the possibility of resistance. The language we use resonates with that of “emancipatory” projects. The subject that “we” are in this paper, the resisting vocal feminist subject, sometimes seems to stand outside discourse. Slippage between humanist and posthumanist subjects might be inevitable when “humanism is the politics we practise...the futures we can imagine” (St Pierre, 2000a, p. 478). I do not mean to succumb to binary thinking about versions of memorywork that insist on agency and those that do not, in our own work or in the work of others, but rather I suggest that there are different kinds of contexts and emphases, with overlap and with difference. We focus on language in our collective analytical space, not a matter of acquiring any new and more powerful grid of knowledge enabling us to challenge major institutions, but rather of (collectively) entering that very feminine (and strangely silencing) embodied space – that of the breastfeeding mother – and insisting on speaking into it. We see language as a means of structuring thought and we take up ourselves as

speaking subjects who constitute discourse and who are constituted through discourse. In a later text, a book chapter on adolescent experiences of “getting breasts,” Babette and I are more explicit about the discursive focus of our analyses, concluding that:

Strategies for ‘re-embodiment’ ourselves as women include telling our own stories and listening to those of our ‘sisters’, increasing our knowledge about culturally constructed constraints and developing skills to help us deconstruct discourses about women’s breasts. (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2002, p. 216, English original)

We take up an analytical feminist position where ‘re-embodiment’ is a consequence of re-membering in a critical framework that attends particularly to unraveling the multiple discourses around women’s enfolded realities, that attends to the body itself. Later in this chapter I look in more detail at the body in collective biography.

In the final text that Babette and I wrote together, a paper on “dangerous breasts” for a philosophy journal, we added another feature to our project of troubling “the taken-for-grantedness of discourses around women’s health” (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, forthcoming 2003). In the conclusion to this paper, we link strategic re-membering not only to the interrogation of dominant discourses but also to discursive intervention via the production and circulation of new stories:

Stories of survival and effective treatment for breast cancer do not circulate as widely through the community as do stories of horror and of death. We are not well practised at telling these stories, neither are our public health authorities and other powerful institutions. These stories need to be told.

What possibilities there are for ‘agency’ seem to exist in an approach that is akin to some versions of “critical literacy” that entail not only the discursive deconstruction of existing texts but also the production of new texts of diverse sorts and genres (Davies, 1997; Kamler, 2001; Morgan, 1997). The play that is presented in Chapter Seven of this thesis began as another strategy to generate a new text on the theme of breasts. New (and more) texts might mobilise a wider range of discourses and challenge (and potentially begin to change) hegemonic discourses. The process of collaborative writing in analyses of memory texts is also productive of new texts. Another sort of “agency” can be

experienced as we struggle in writing to articulate new understandings and mobilize multiple discourses. Despite the difficulties of creating a collective “we”, over great distances in time and space, constructing and sustaining this subject who analyses memories might be able to take us towards some sense of “agency”, in the sense of active discursive intervention and production.

In contrast to other collectives, the Magnetic Island collective is committed to developing collective biography as an explicitly poststructural practice. Concepts from poststructural theory are foregrounded in papers and seen as essential to provoke different ways of thinking through lived (remembered) experience. This practice differs from Haug’s who stresses that “In memorywork the researchers confront theory with experience...experience is the starting point” (Haug, 2000). We take up a different position. Rather than developing theory from memories, we use embodied collective writing to push abstract theoretical concepts into the everyday so that they can be of use. In different papers the Magnetic Island collective has “troubled” subjection (Davies et al., 2001), power and knowledge (Davies et al., forthcoming 2002), reflexivity (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003a), reading and morality (Davies et al., forthcoming 2004b), and embodiment (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003b, forthcoming 2004a). In all of these papers the Magnetic Island collectives take up positions on the subject and agency that are compatible with poststructuralist paradigms.

Davies, the constant member of the collective and convener of the workshops, has written extensively on agency and on the subject in poststructuralism (Davies, 2000a, pp. 55-68, pp. 133-144) and her work inevitably informs the approach we take. The “moral” authority that the Crawford collective hooks to agency and the humanist subject is rejected by Davies as necessarily embedded in dominant discourses that have excluded (most) women and many others (Davies, 2000a, p. 55). Agency is no longer the main game within overtly poststructural analysis. Instead, through such work, the speaking/writing subject learns to attend to discourse, in its multiplicity, and, using conceptual tools from poststructural theory, with particular attention to language:

The speaking/ writing subject can move within and between discourses, can see precisely how they subject her, can use the terms of one discourse to counteract, modify, refuse, or go beyond the other, both in terms of her own experienced subjectivity and in the way in which she speaks in relation to the subjectivities of others. (Davies, 2000a, p. 60)

This agency is not extra-discursive, not something the subject outside discourse can mobilize at will, but agency is contingent and always situated within discourse by subjects who are constituted by (and simultaneously constitutive of) discourse. The subject of the person is “constituted afresh through each discursive act” and possibilities for agency open and close as our shifting subjectivities position us differently within different discourses (Davies, 2000a, p. 64). Agency might be rethought, Davies suggests, in terms of *authorship*, of learning to speak and write “in ways that are disruptive of current discourses, that invert, invent, and break old bonds” (Davies, 2000a, p. 66). This sense of agency as the authorship of multiple meanings and desires is always contingent, specific and necessarily located within rather than outside discourse(s):

Agency is spoken into existence at any one moment. It is fragmented, transitory, a discursive position that can be occupied within one discourse simultaneously with its nonoccupation in another. (Davies, 2000a, p. 68)

The collectively lived and written work of the Magnetic Island collectives enacts this process of (collective) authorship of new, multiple, tentative and fluid subject positions from which to understand our memories and our own subjection through them.

The subjects of poststructuralist theory are always discursively constituted and always in process, but we nevertheless have the capacity “to explore how it is that we can think we have, and act as if we have...a sense of agency, and recognize at the same time that it is in the constitutive force of discourse that agency lies” (Davies, 2000a, p. 134). This is what St Pierre calls “poststructuralism’s double move”. It produces “a subject that exhibits agency as it constructs itself by taking up available discourses and cultural practices and a subject that, at the same time, is subjected, forced into subjectivity by those same discourses and practices” (St Pierre, 2000a, p. 502). This subject does not access the unproblematic agency of the humanist subject who can look to emancipation

or liberation as unambiguous objectives, but rather she takes up a highly contingent and situated agency (Butler, 1995). The ambivalence of this subject is examined by the Magnetic Island collective (Davies et al., 2001) through Butler's theorising of subjection where "the lived simultaneity of submission as mastery, and mastery as submission, is the condition of possibility for the subject itself" (Butler, 1995, p. 45-46). In an analysis of memories of becoming (good) schoolgirls, the Magnetic Island collective deconstruct a humanist storyline that they reconfigure as the "illusion of autonomy":

Autonomy was often read by us...as moments of power. In these moments of power we present ourselves as individual subjects who choose to act independently, who differentiate ourselves from those others who are still rule-bound, or bound by the gaze of the Other. Our remembered selves somehow subvert the 'natural order' of the institutional practices of the school and get away with it. As Butler points out, the processes of exclusion and differentiation are covered over and concealed in the experience of autonomy. The schoolgirl subject comes to believe she is autonomous, as long as she can no longer see her dependence on the Other for her recognition and her recognisability. (Davies et al., 2001, p. 179)

Another collective paper (Davies et al., forthcoming 2004) explores the strong willed humanist heroines of our favourite childhood fictions. Autonomy for these characters - who were so deeply inscribed in our desires and memories - is constrained by their material dependence on Others as well (the adults around them) but they exert a sort of agency of the spirit. This is an agency connected with a certain type of morality that, in Foucault's work (1987), obliges the ethical subject to make life into its own "telos":

[T]hese girls each have a strong will to be appropriate, combined with a strong will to be free to critique the terms of their appropriation. What makes them fascinating is precisely their agency in both becoming and in questioning the terms of their belonging. (Davies et al., forthcoming 2004)

Poststructuralism's "double move" is enacted in our readings of these fictional heroines who are simultaneously constituted and constituting and inside discourse (as we are also when we read them). Despite their willfulness, the girls in our childhood novels do not operate as independent autonomous subjects. Rather, they have access to a wider range of

discourses of morality than those adults around them, and thus they find different ways to act and speak in the world – different subject positions - because of their access to multiple discourses on morality. A sense of agency – of freedom - can arise from creative and imaginative practices that allow us to generate meanings through non-hegemonic discourses. However, as the collective explores in the paper on power and knowledge (Davies et al., 2002), attempts at creativity and freedom “emerge in ‘cramped spaces’ – within a set of relations that are intolerable, where movement is impossible, where change is blocked and voice is strangled” (Rose, 1999, pp. 279-80). Agency is always contingent and contextual and the subject is never completely “free”. This is not necessarily a debilitating position for feminists. As St Pierre (2000a) stresses, humanism is a discourse that remains in circulation alongside the competing discourses that critique it. Humanism has not been erased, as Foucault says, it is “too supple, too diverse, too inconsistent” (1997a, p. 314) to be done away with, but rather it has been put *sous rature* or under erasure. In any case, humanism has not always been beneficial for women and (other) others. We continue to use it, but with caution and suspicion, using it and troubling it at the same time, looking at “how it functions in the world” (St Pierre, 2000a, p. 478), remembering to maintain this attitude also towards poststructural theories and continuing to develop our capacities for critique as we continue to take up whichever subject positions become discursively available and productive. The contradictions implied in this move need not be problematic as, by disrupting binary thinking, poststructural theory enables us to hold together contradictory ideas at the same time (Davies, 2000a, p. 134).

Poststructural feminists argue that the very ruins of humanist thought are productive sites. Butler (1995) stresses that it is the very contingency of post-foundationalist thought that opens new possibilities for freedom and action. Many feminist poststructuralists agree (Davies, 2000a; Lather, 1994; St Pierre, 2000a; St Pierre and Pillow, 2000; Weedon, 1997). According to Butler, the subject is:

constituted through an exclusion and a differentiation...that is subsequently concealed, covered over, by the effect of autonomy...the autonomous subject can

maintain the illusion of its autonomy insofar as it covers over the break out of which it is constituted. (1995, p. 45-46).

In this version of the discursively constituted subject “*agency is always and only a political prerogative...it seems crucial to question the conditions of its possibility, not to take it for granted as an a priori guarantee*” (Butler, 1995, p. 46-47). The work of the Magnetic Island collective is engaged in interrogating the conditions of possibility for agency and in retrieving those “breaks” within which the subject is constituted. In our paper on power and knowledge, the practice of collective biography is described in Deleuzian terms as:

a way of positioning ourselves, as researchers and as subjects, ‘on the ground’, in order to see the lines of descent, the tangles, the sedimentations, and the fractures and breaks. We pull our memories up out of the tangle of lines of force to examine them more closely, while recognising at the same time that they are always in motion. And we descend into the watery tangle to find the intersections with other lines. (Davies et al., 2002, p. 297)

In the practice of the Magnetic Island collective, the memories that are examined are deeply embedded in the body, as they were for Haug’s original collective. The lines of force that we draw up are simultaneously embedded in our bodies and in discourse. Our bodies are materialised in discourse. Yet they are also material.

The body in memorywork

The body is central to the deconstructive work of collective biography, and the other poststructuralist writing practices that I develop in this thesis. The body is both a discursive site and enfolded materiality. Poststructural theorists are sometimes accused of erasing the body in favour of discourse, yet many feminist poststructural theorists (struggle to) refuse this erasure (Davies, 2000b, Grosz, 1994; Grosz and Probyn, 1995; Probyn, 1993, Somerville, forthcoming 2003). Collective memory work refuses any binary between discourse (social, intersubjective, exteriority) and the fleshy body (prediscursive, private, interiority). It rejects the binary split between culture and nature. In a recent interview, Butler clarifies her position by explaining that:

[D]iscourses actually live in bodies. They lodge in bodies; bodies in fact carry discourses as part of their own lifeblood. And nobody can survive without, in some sense, being carried by discourse. So I don't want to say that there is discursive construction on the one hand and a lived body on the other. (Meijer and Prins, 2001, p. 282)

Feminist work on abject bodies is quite clear about the inscriptive effects of discourses on and in bodies (Bordo, 1993; Brush, 1998). In her work on volatile bodies, Grosz refigures the body, moving it “from periphery to centre” so the body can be “understood as the very ‘stuff’ of subjectivity” (Grosz, 1994, p. ix). Memory work attends to the traces in the body of the processes of subjectification. It is concerned particularly with examining the “repeated, minute accretions of everyday practices” as they lodge in our bodies (Davies et al., 2002, p. 312).

In all versions of memory work the body is crucial. This is most obvious in body centred research such as the breast project of Müller-Rockstroh and myself, or the legs and hair projects that had the attention of the Haug collective (1987). But in all collectively generated memories the body is as much at the centre of theorizing as in these more overt examples. And it is the body that underpins the collective research process itself, the experience of doing memorywork and the writing that is done during and after collective biography workshops. The poem that begins this chapter gives one version of the embodied experience of memorywork research. In the first Magnetic Island paper that I co-wrote (Davies et al., 2001), we articulate our intention as to:

...deliberately set out to make our storying an embodied process that would produce a site evocative of the unexpected, the forgotten and the foregone. We created a purposeful interactive space where the writer, as well as the listener and reader, might acknowledge her temperature rise, or her stomach cramp, with anger or embarrassment at a moment past, where she may feel exhilarated by her own daring or the daring of others, or might laugh as joy or pleasure flow from her, where her eyes may leak silently, her body flush or shudder, where she might experience grief, frustration or relief at the telling, or where she may feel her bladder surprisingly full and insistent as it did that day when she wet her pants in

kindergarten. And in so doing, we wanted to (re)value and (re)view the experiences of bodies and emotions in the processes of subjectification. (Davies et al., 2001, p. 171).

The Crawford collective made emotion the focus of their book length collective memory project (1992). They produced memories in which emotions had effects on bodies but they tended to operate within a psychological paradigm that sustains a binary between emotion and the body and focuses on emotion: “[e]motions are the markers of the construction of the self, the personality” (Crawford et al., 1992, p. 126).

In their earlier and very influential text theorizing a poststructural subject within psychology, Henriques et al. argued for a psychoanalytical version of poststructural theory. Otherwise, they argued, how “[c]an people’s wishes and desires be encompassed in an account of discursive relations?” (1984, p. 204). Recently, Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody continue to argue for a psychoanalytic poststructural theory that accounts for the emotional: “social and cultural analysis desperately needs an understanding of emotional processes, presented in a way that does not reduce the psychic to the social and *vice versa*, but recognizes their imbrication” (2001, p. 87). In contrast, Kvale argues that the way forward for psychology lies in the discursive turn, in a postmodernism that shifts attention “from the inside to the outside...Concepts of consciousness, the unconscious and the psyche recede into the background” (1992, p. 15). The Magnetic Island collective refuses binaries such as emotion/ body and inside/ outside, preferring instead a theory where discourse is always already part of the “lifeblood” of the body (Butler in Meijer and Prins, 2001, p. 282). In this version of a feminist poststructural approach to memorywork, we refuse to give up emotionality but we relocate it deep within (and simultaneously on the ‘surfaces’ of) our living volatile bodies. As I will discuss later in this section, poststructural theorists (for example, Ahmed and Stacey, 2001; Davies, 2000b; Cixous, 1997; Grosz, 1994; Probyn, 2000) disrupt the corporeal binary of depths and surfaces, arguing that the interior is as much surface as the exterior.

The memories are written and rewritten during the workshops. The criteria for rewriting stories for both the Magnetic Island collectives and others (Cadman et al., 2001;

Crawford et al., 2001; Onyx and Small, 2001) are derived from the work of Haug et al. (1987) who specified that stories should concentrate on discrete experiences in memories and should be free of explanations, clichés, rationalizations and interpretations. The Magnetic Island collectives have increasingly linked the criteria for listening and for rewriting to the presence of the body in the text. The process of carefully attending to the body and memory can be ambiguous and frustrating, as one participant reflects:

Why is it that you want the stories stripped of ‘explanations’ and ‘clichés’? When we tell them to each other they seem to make sense only because we place them into a narrative form that entails explanations, well-known story-lines, plots, beginnings and ends. You say you only want the ‘embodied’ moment. What does that mean? Can it be separated from the ‘intellectual work’ we employ when we tell it (...) Does it ‘work’ when it gives us goose bumps or makes us want to cry? Is that what you mean when you say ‘powerful’? (Davies et al., 2003a)

Consequently, the collective shift their question from a focus on text with “Does it work?” to “Are you with me?” with its focus on (con)text, on the intersubjective space where we sit reading and listening to memories. In this space it is the provocation of emotional and embodied experiences that marks the text as powerful, as a text that ‘works’. The text that works on us in these ways is the text that is specific, that attends in minute detail to the body in the memory. This text attends to the movements, emotions, and desires embodied in that memory. In a vignette of her own re-remembering, Haug describes the process of retrieving embodied memory:

I then recall every detail of my surroundings at that moment: in this case, my bedroom, a room which I still remember as if I am a diminutive 1m 30 tall. I myself am standing by my bed, my face turned towards this furious figure of a man...But now I feel my fists clench involuntarily, I sense feelings of defiance and anger rising within me. Aha...my feelings are remembering. Or at least, they are reacting by duplicating past emotions. My anger is strong enough, uncontrolled enough to allow me to feel once again as I did the first time I cast my customary cowardice to the winds and protested, I can see the china cat shattering once again, my little cactus being bent in the middle, it hurts, I cry and scream and storm towards him to hurt him in return, to avenge myself, I want to

hit him, bite him, pinch him, kick him. (Haug et al., 1987, p. 72).

This body takes itself up in this memory in a very particular context that makes it more possible to write the body in detail in the memory. Squire (2002, p. 58) suggests it is “easier” to incorporate the body into writing “when writing about a specific aspect of bodily experience”. In collective biography or memory work, the focus on a specific moment elicits embodied detail that might not be otherwise accessible. Rather than talking about “the body”, Squire suggests that it makes more sense to talk about “types or modes of embodiment, for the body varies according to a range of postural, spatial and temporal moments” (2002, p. 58). It is these moments to which we attend so closely as we unfurl and inscribe our memories as body and as text.

Imagination and craft are inevitably part of the practices of writing embodied collective memory texts. We aim to reclaim embodied memory in the loving detail of our memories. We mine the hints and glances and to uncover the things that one does not remember in the first full direct gaze on the past. It could be claimed that any good writing, writing that is evocative, detailed and multidimensional, is embodied in this way. But embodied writing in collective biography means something more, and different, than just good writing. Neither is its effect(iveness) due to any transparent retrieval of the ‘truth’ of memories. Duplication, Haug’s term, is still a process for producing copies, not originals. We do not believe that we (can) recover memories in our writing as they were experienced at the time. We do not tap into any veridical truths in memorywork. Memories are vulnerable, as Davies explains, always subject “to the landscape of desire and the discourses through which [they] are called up” (2000b, p. 43). The “truth” of memories, the power of their effects on us, rely instead on our “struggle to enter into the bodily detail of what it is [our]body registers *now* of what it experienced *then*....the kind of ‘truth’ that comes from inside the remembered event, and also from inside the process of remembering” (Davies, 2000b, p. 43). In a paper on embodiment at work, the Magnetic Island collective describes the (im)possibilities of embodied writing practices:

Our remembered stories are attempts to create the enchantment, though not by an intentional masking, but by making them perceptually as true and as vivid as our memory and writing skill will allow. Yet to the extent that memory is flimsy, and

lived experience impossibly complex, and to the extent that our stories do achieve that enchanting quality that simply draws the reader in uncritically, we are creating fictions of life ... At the same time, our analytic writing is influenced by our memory writing—we seek to tell a tale (as any good writers do) that you will be taken in by. Analytic and creative writing thus cross over with each other, and what is mask and what is reality cross imperceptibly, each taking on features of the other. (Davies et al., forthcoming 2004a)

Grosz points out that “all the effects of subjectivity ...can be adequately explained using the subject’s corporeality as a framework...Bodies have all the explanatory power of minds” (1994, p. vii). Indeed, Davies argues (after Spinoza) that “the mind is no more than an idea of the body – albeit a very powerful idea with material effects” (2000b, p. 19). Grosz emphasises the body as “surface”, using the metaphor of the Möbius strip to disrupt binaries of surface and depth, of mind (or psyche) and body. In the Möbius strip, a three-dimensional figure eight that twists on itself, “the inside flips over to become the outside or the outside turns over on itself to become the inside” (Grosz, 1994, p. 160). In our work on embodiment (2003b, 2004a), the Magnetic Island collective adopts the metaphor of “folds” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) to disrupt notions of interior and exterior, surface and depth, body and culture. We extend the notion of “the fold” to the practice of collective biography and to the process of retrieving memories from “deep” within the body. This work is influenced by Davies’ work on bodies and landscapes “in which the folding and unfolding of embodied beings is read in the contexts of the folds in the landscapes through which they move and take up their being” (Davies, 2000b, p. 14). Memory is folded into the body and is always already imbricated in language. In conceptualizing the research process we take up ideas from Cixous (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997) and elaborate how “memory is stored as language on the deep surfaces in/on the body, and that memory is embodied language” (Davies et al., forthcoming 2004a). The body is at the same time surface and depth, and discursive effects take place simultaneously in deep structures and surfaces of the body: “inscription and sedimentation takes place on the deep, enfolded, enfleshed, enfolded surfaces which are themselves active in the process of inscription” (Davies et al., 2003b). We take up the materiality of bodies as folds with an acute awareness that this metaphor is particularly apt for women’s

bodies and for feminist work. Women's embodiment is one of folds and flows, of insides that are outside and outsides that are inside, as Grosz's work (1994) has established. Thus the body is, we argue, active and always in process. The body is "both a location and a motion" (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003b), even "*loca*-motion" (Probyn, 1995, p. 5). Herein lie the possibilities for something like "agency" in terms of discursive interventions. Butler suggests that " 'agency' is to be found in the possibilities of resignification opened up by discourse...discourse is the horizon of agency, but also performativity is to be rethought as resignification" (Butler, 1995, p. 135). In collective biography, we work our collective selves into the cracks that open in and across discourses and we experiment with the stories we tell (about) our selves as performative textual spaces for this resignification.

During the workshop on embodiment, we wrote new texts of ourselves at work by taking up practices of imagination and creative invention. We made assemblages of found objects. We worked with an artist for an afternoon painting memories and making bodies sculpted from paper and other materials. We worked with images that represented abject and ideal bodies at work. We call this work "focused imagination" and link the expansiveness of imagination to a poststructuralist version of agency that though "always partial and contingent, fragmented and transitory" nevertheless can enable new thinking (Davies et al., 2003b). Through these creative and artistic practices, we write ourselves along new trajectories, following lines of flight that take us into imagination as well as memory, and into the future, as well as into the past. In one of the two papers emerging from the embodiment workshop, we explain that "imaginary work was part of the process we adopted to dislodge embodied memories in order to find possibilities for movement, for new ways of envisaging ourselves..." (Davies et al., 2003b). The research landscape of collective work on memories, particularly in the work of the Magnetic Island collective, is engaged in a project to realize what Probyn calls "the geography of the possible" (1993, p. 172). In this landscape, (our) bodies imagine (and invent) other bodies and this imaginative work takes place at the nexus of experience and theory. In this work our selves "carry with them the movement of bone, of body, of breath, of imagination, of

muscle, and the conviction of sheer stubbornness that there are other possibilities” (Probyn, 1993, p. 192).

Difference and specificity in memorywork

The collective is always inevitably created through (and despite) differences. Stephenson (2001) suggests that difference is a problem for memorywork. Her solution is to turn inwards to the “interiority” of psychology. This is only one frame through which “difference” can be understood. Difference is often approached through the trope of the “other” particularly the classed, sexed, raced other of postcolonial and cultural studies. The work of feminist theorists such as hooks (1990), Mama (1995), Morrison, (1992), Mohanty, Russo and Torres (1991), and Trinh (1992) suggests that the frame of difference should not be ignored by feminists. Although Shratz et al. (1995) use collective memory work to theorise racism, the implications of difference - apart from sex - have not been addressed in much memory work. One reading of this is that memorywork collectives are often relatively homogeneous. For example, the women of the Crawford, Haug and Magnetic Island collectives have all been white, western and educated. However, in a more careful reading of the Magnetic Island collective, for example, we differ widely in terms of religious affiliation, class background, first language, sexuality, family, age, disciplinary/ professional backgrounds, geographic locations, nationality, life experiences. This reading suggests that difference is not a fruitful focus for theorizing the way that memorywork methodologies are taken up. Focusing on difference creates a binary split between “difference” and “sameness” that breaks down in the face of the untidy details of our diverse lived experiences. Rather than falling for a binary mode of thinking, it is more useful to think of memorywork and collective biography as facilitating a focus on specificity. Through our rigorous attention to detail in the analysis of our memories, a research space opens up for recognition that we are all different, *and* that we are not alone in our differences.

At the *Internationale Frauenuniversität*, we wove our memories of our breasted lives into a conspicuously diverse female space. Müller-Rockstroh and I note the diversity of the collective in a footnote in a paper on “dangerous breasts”:

The memories recalled in the oral and written memories from the formal workshops and the tutorial group included stories from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Nigeria, USA, and Russia....Geography was just one of the multiple frames within which the memories were told (others could have been class, age, ethnicity, profession, religion). (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, forthcoming 2003)

In other breast workshops and discussions, women from Zambia, Georgia, Ukraine, Israel and Papua New Guinea were also amongst the participants. And sexuality was another “difference” that (might have) impacted on our identity as a collective within the workshops. In this thesis I am more interested in investigating collectivity as a productive technology. In spite of – or perhaps because of – the specific details of our embodied memories we produced ourselves collectively in the breast memory workshops. As we listened to each others’ stories in the workshops “women often held their own breasts, shadowing the movements in ...remembered stories with the actions of their bodies of the present” (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, forthcoming 2003). Collectivity is always produced in a particular relational context and as participants in the *Internationale Frauenuniversität*, we were already embodied in a meta-project of collectivity that rested on the belief that despite the multiplicity of differences between the 900+ women in this experiment, there was a foundation of commonality in our sex. Those of us who came and who stayed were already engaged in creating and sustaining a collective “we” in a multitude of ways every day of the 100 days that we lived and worked together. Nevertheless, inevitably, this “we” was highly sensitive and always vulnerable to the eruptions of difference (Body Project, 2002). The women who came to the collective memory workshops on breasts took the everyday work of creating collectivity into this space as well. We already knew each other, we came and worked amongst friends. The stories we chose to tell each other – despite their specificity - were complementary. For example, one woman told a story of maternal exhaustion that ended:

In Russian there is a metaphor – when you want to say that somebody is completely neglecting her appearance and clothing and when she is paying no attention to anybody we say “You are looking like a breastfeeding mother”

Every woman in that room who had breastfed or knew someone who had breastfed could enter into the reality of that memory. In the final analyses, written by Müller-Rockstroh and myself, we could say that: “[d]espite our geographic and (other) differences, it was the complementariness of our memories that led us to a collective understanding of how we lived as breastfed women” (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, forthcoming 2003). In other memorywork groups I have convened (Gannon, 1999, 2001, forthcoming 2003c), participants were from different social classes, nationalities and ethnicities but we lived at this moment in the same town and we were already friends through our love of creative writing and participation in other writing groups. We engaged collectively in the production of complementary and mutually comprehensible memories despite the differences in the particular details of our memories, even though some even included words from another language. In the next chapter I discuss aspects of this production of collectivity further in a collective poem constructed from some of the texts we produced in this series of workshops. Little attention has been given to differences in collective memory work but it is notable that despite diverse ages, sex, disciplines, languages, and ethnic and national identities, one group of post graduate international students, participants in a memorywork project (Ingleton, 2000) on their experiences, went on to collectively write and publish a paper themselves (Luthfi Ballido-Caceres et al., 2000). The collectivity they created – their collective “we” in the context of the topic they were examining - transcended the differences amongst them. This is the core project of collective memorywork. That collective “we” that we produce is the necessary ground for the work we do. In promoting collective biography as a research strategy that foregrounds collectivity, I do not promote erasure of the “other” or refusal of “difference” as any violent or violating consequence of the method, as a colonizing practice of “eating the other” but rather I suggest that participants in collective memory workshops tend to take up this stance themselves. The disappearance of the self into the collective is taken up by participants as productive of new subject positions from which to interrogate discursive effects, subject positions that are not available from the isolating pillars of our individual differences.

Onwards...

In this detour into the methodology of collective memory and collective biography, I have traced the subject and the body through texts that have been collectively written. I am interested in the possibilities and potentialities of this methodology because of my extensive experience with it. I have co-written papers about collective work with memories in diverse contexts and formulations (Cadman et al., 2001; Davies et al., 2001, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, forthcoming 2004a, forthcoming 2004b; Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2000, 2001, forthcoming 2003; Müller-Rockstroh and Gannon, 2002). I have also explored aspects of the methodology in papers that I have written alone (Gannon, 1999, 2001, forthcoming 2003c). In this thesis on the productive possibilities for writing (research) differently in poststructural theory, collective work on memories is at the beginning of much of my (other) work. In this chapter I have argued that the collapse of the individual into the collective that becomes possible in collective writing is one of the most interesting facets of collective biography as a poststructuralist writing practice. This collective “we” that we struggle to produce and sustain is both “volatile and fragile” (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003b) and the writing process is fraught with dangers. Collective biography is a methodology that begins with each person’s *specificity* in a particular embodied moment – in a memory recalled and stripped bare of clichés and explanations – and proceeds by focusing on *discourse*. Careful analysis enables the group to begin examining the *commonality* of (their) discursive construction, made visible through their work with the specific memories. Thus collective biography necessitates a degree of submersion of the “self” into the collective that is not usually encountered by academic workers, and with which we sometimes struggle. In this chapter I have not directly explored the idea of “power” in the writing process as I have elsewhere (Gannon, 2001) but it undoubtedly snakes its way through our texts. In the work of the Magnetic Island collective, for example, we have varying degrees of experience with poststructural theory, with the method and with academic writing and publishing. Collective writing is itself fluid and situated in the complex contexts of our working lives. None of us has (or wants) control over the process or the evolving text yet in different phases of our collective writing we have the opportunity (perhaps the obligation) to take “control” by hitting the delete button or by taking responsibility for the final version. We write our

own words over and through each others' until the text is literally a palimpsest. Our sense of ourselves as "collective" shifts through the writing and part of our struggle in writing is to create a collective "we" to whom we are each prepared to sign our name. In the next chapter, I begin a detour into poetry. In this chapter, I elaborate a different strategy for intervening in text to construct a different sort of collective subject. The collective poetry that I discuss initially emerged as a response to my concern about disparities in power that left me as the sole writer of analytical texts based on collective memory workshops. I created a collective subject in poetry who is a fiction but who is grounded in memories and texts of lived experience. In this detour into poetry, I also take up the other main strand of poststructural writing practice that I have begun to elaborate here – the body in the text.

Chapter Three – Poetic in(ter)ventions

In another room,
 another place,
 another time,
 another life....

This chapter begins a detour into poetry as a poststructural writing practice. In the preceding section I discussed the writing and research technologies that are taken up by collective biography and collective memory workers to produce a “collective subject.” I wrote about research projects where papers were co-written after workshops by all the research participants (Cadman et al., 2001; Davies et al., 2000; forthcoming-a; forthcoming-b; forthcoming-c; forthcoming-d; forthcoming-e), and about a project where the subsequent analyses were co-written by two participant-conveners (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2001, forthcoming 2003; Müller-Rockstroh and Gannon, 2002). In contrast, in this chapter I write of a memory work project where I was the sole ‘author’ of texts produced after a series of workshops. In the previous chapter, I argued that the collapse of individual subjects into a collective subject in collective thinking and writing can produce new ways of thinking about lived experience and the discursive production of subjectivity. Undoubtedly, this work happens within the embodied space of a memory workshop. It continues into a different site and in different ways when co-authors write collectively to analyse the workshop texts. In this chapter I shift attention to another genre and a different collective subject.

The collective subject in this chapter is a crystallization of collective experience that becomes write-able and powerful in poetic form. The collective subject of this chapter and the previous chapter is a subject who is both fictional and truthful. She does not emerge from nowhere, from some imaginary space, but from texts of memory with visceral links to lived experience. Probyn suggests that:

[S]ubjectivity is not a given but rather a process and a production. the sites and spaces of its production are central. In other words, the space and place we

inhabit produce us. It follows too that how we inhabit those spaces is an interactive affair. (2003, p. 294)

Probyn is writing here about geographic “space” and “place”, but her words are useful for looking at texts as spaces and places. Writing can be conceived of as a(n interactive) site for the production of subjectivities, as can reading (Davies et al., forthcoming 2004). In the previous chapter, academic writing (of papers for publication) was a particular site(s) of production where co-researchers wrote themselves (as) a collective subject. In this chapter, collective poetry is the site for the production of a version of collective subjectivity. I claim in this chapter that collective poetry can be a textual space that can draw a reader into the “provisional pleasures” of the text (Tarlo, 1999). I attend to the particularities of poetic space in the writing of H  l  ne Cixous, Laurel Richardson and in a new collective poem called “Boundaries” from which I have taken the lines that begin this chapter. Part of the power of the poetic text is its attention to the body. In the feminist textual work in this thesis, I take up a position consistent with Probyn’s where the body is the site for the production of subjectivity:

[T]he body provides us with key knowledge about the working of our subjectivities. The body then becomes a site for the production of knowledge, feelings, emotions and history, all of which are central to subjectivity...the body cannot be thought of as a contained entity; it is in constant contact with others...subjectivity [is] a relational matter. (Probyn, 2003, p. 290)

In collective poetry, as in the collective biography work in the last chapter, the body (in the text) is not a self contained and separate entity, not a site of separation, seclusion and individuation, but a site that can be mobilised for inclusion and connection with others, as “relational matter”. The body (in the text) might be perceived as a porous membrane between self and other, between interiority and exteriority. The body folds into itself but also into other landscapes, spaces and bodies as it ‘makes sense’. Experimental poetry, feminist poetry that can be read as poststructural, is marked by “provisionality...refusal to tell a simple story or resolve into a single meaning” (Tarlo, 1999, p. 95). The text(s) that I present in this chapter invite readings in a space open to provisional and multiple meanings, to meanings that are made through the body.

In this chapter, I elaborate and interrogate the textual strategies I adopted in writing a collective poem. I explore poetry as a particular space for sense making that works differently from other literary and non-literary writing spaces. I began to explore this idea in a collective biography project on women's writing where I reconstructed data in poetic form, taking up collective poetry as a textual strategy authoris-ing me (as Researcher) to escape a methodological cul-de-sac (Gannon, 2001). In another project and another paper, I describe how I re(in)scribed the same lived event – the prelude to a divorce - in four different texts, including a poem, written in different circumstances and at different times (Gannon, 2002). I claim that the poem, distilled much later from journal writing at the time of this “ordinary event,” has power that the cliché-ridden journal entries do not have: it is “like breast beating, an ululation....a poem of grieving” (Gannon, 2002, p. 676). I discuss this project in more detail in the detour into “autoethnography” towards the end of thesis. In the collective biography project on women's writing, I first shaped “collective poems” from all the prose texts written by myself and other women in the session where we wrote about “isolation” (Gannon, 2001). I borrowed this strategy from Laurel Richardson who wrote up interview transcripts as poetry (1997). In my project, the textwork inscribes a collective subject, the “collective girl” of the poem, who represents all of us (and none of us), an elusive subject anchored in the intercorporeal space of our writing workshops. Yet this textual girl is also a “deeply embodied” subject, who bleeds and weeps and “tumbles over and over, suffocates as snow fills her mouth and nostrils, peddles away as fast as her little legs will take her, exercises frenetically in a futile attempt to exhaust herself, remembers traces of violence through a haze of alcohol” (Gannon, 2001, p. 798). For a collective memory workshop, the textual construction of such a “collective girl” is useful and can be justified through a research logic that is up front about the highly selective and arbitrary use of research data that is the unspoken and usual practice of research. Both of these papers rely on the sociopoetic work of Laurel Richardson for their theoretical/ textual legitimacy. Yet Richardson was only one of the theorists who guided my textual adventures.

In these two chapters of my thesis, I explore the possibilities of poetry through analysis of the work of both Richardson and H el ene Cixous. Although poetic textwork is important

for both these women, they are rarely invoked in the same texts, or by each other. They are divided by disciplines, as well as an ocean, and by language. In 1997, they each published important new works (in English). In these books both writers explicitly elaborate their practices of poetic textwork in ways which I read as deeply complementary, yet the cover of Cixous' *Rootprints* names it as "Literary Criticism," while the publishers of Richardson's *Fields of Play* categorise her work as "Sociology." In libraries their books are separated by hundreds of numbers, by rows and rows of shelves, by thousands upon thousands of other books. Yet both writers are also (secondarily) positioned as feminist and as poststructuralist. Both enact their academic work through radical, original, deconstructive, approaches to text, particularly through poetic writing.

As I make my way through this detour into poetry, I hold the hand of Cixous in my right hand, and the hand of Richardson in my left. Their hands are both warm, their blood circulates just centimetres from mine, skin through skin, a poetic osmosis where their life-affirming creative work mingles within me and enables my own work. They meet through me, through my body and through the texts that emerge as I write my way into this creative academic landscape. In this detour into poetry, I include new works of my own. In this chapter I include a poem shaped from prose texts of collective memories about "Boundaries". In the next chapter is a poem shaped from journal writing. I discuss them alongside what these theorists say about poetic writing and my own emerging sense of what makes (some) poetry work (sometimes) in academic contexts in the social sciences. These chapters intersect, at different angles, with the detour into theatre (in Chapters Five, Six and Seven) and the detour into autoethnography (in Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten). In the next section of this chapter I position my work in relation to wider disciplinary fields of research and writing in academia.

Disciplining poetry

Poetry has been written as (part of) research at the edges of the social sciences over the last decade, particularly in sociology and anthropology (Brady, 2000; Denzin, 1997). Experimental writing, including poetry, is a consequence (or a cause, or both) of what Denzin has called the "sixth moment" in qualitative research; that moment when "we"

realise that “how our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others is and has always been our topic” (1997, p. 27). This moment – and the future which is always already upon us - invite new representational and interpretive work in qualitative research. I invoke Denzin here because he is also the co-editor of *Qualitative Inquiry*, the journal in which I published both the papers that I mentioned above (Gannon, 2001, 2002). I love those papers, yet, sometimes as I reread them, I find the theorising a little thin, the claims I make not quite convincing, even to my own eyes/ears/gut. What haven't I said, I wonder, in these tidy texts? Are there *really* differences in what poetic writing and prose writing can achieve? These are the claims I have made for my work, and for the work of other experimental research-writers. In surveying the ethnographic field of poetic writing, Denzin (1997, p. 202) warns that (mostly):

[T]he new social scientist poets ...become modernist observers telling realist tales, deploying a parallax view, and recording a constantly changing internal and external world. Seldom are the modernist narrative strategies subverted because the new works seem to always presume a fixed or semifixed standpoint for the ethnographic gaze. Thus an affinity for lived experience and its reconstruction is maintained. These works become vehicles for the reproduction of a series of humanistic sensibilities that valorise the feeling, knowing, self-reflective individual. The texts are often records of or reflections on experience. This makes it more difficult for the text to become a means for the reader's own moral experience.

Denzin's warnings resound with some of my concerns about the (im)possibilities of autoethnographic writing elaborated in Chapter Eight of this thesis. The *postmodern* (to use Denzin's term) poetic practitioner aims to subvert rather than to reproduce humanist sensibilities or certainties. In post-positivist epistemologies, 'knowing' itself is suspect. It is always tentative, partial, contingent, situated. Poetic writing can highlight the instability of the 'knowledge' project in the social sciences. This destabilizing begins with “poeticity” itself, which Brady describes as “the degree to which [the] work flags the linguistic nature of its own being” (Brady, 2000, p. 954). Poetic texts draw attention to themselves as constructions rather than concealing their constructedness behind masks of invisibility, as realist texts tend to do. Yet “poeticity” does not necessarily lead to

poststructural aesthetics, research or textual practices. A postmodern position for ethnographic poetics does not just deal with internal and external worlds that are “constantly changing” (Denzin, 1997, p. 202) but the ethnographer herself is a mobile subjectivity who cannot secure a position from which to ‘know’. The texts that she writes inscribe subject positions that are slippery, contradictory, even unreliable. The poems that I present in the poetic detour of this thesis emerge from “records of experience” but I want to move them beyond the mode(rni)st horizons that Denzin identifies for much experimental ethnographic poetry. In doing this I explore how poetry might help to interrogate and to multiply discursive fields, how poetic textwork might begin to be taken up as poststructural practice. Poetry becomes a practice of “(dis)place(ment)” and a “necessary intervention in academic spaces and discourses” (Chahal, 2003). Richardson’s work guides me in the textwork of “crystallizing” poetry from prose. The work of Hélène Cixous guides me towards the opening of subject positions of tentativeness and slippage, positions where readers might locate a place for their own “moral experience” (Denzin, 1997, p. 202).

In my poetic textwork, I work towards a different sort of knowledge production. It is also inflected by literary sensibilities and aesthetics. I aspire to the textual possibilities that Tarlo describes in innovative feminist poetry where “[e]veryone must start from scratch. The reader is invited in to make their own sense, to have their own experience, within the space this work creates” (1999, p. 96). Nevertheless, I proceed with extreme caution, mindful of criticisms of experimental poetic writing. Critiques emerging from the traditions of positivist social science express concern about the fracturing of fields of knowledge and the certainties of disciplinary ‘truth’. A different critique emerges from the “literature” side of the binary. From this position, the literary insider rails against the production of “inferior poetry” by “unqualified” poets in qualitative research (Piiro, 2002a). Piiro, for example, argues that “personal creativity enhancement” has come to be mistaken for research (2002a, p. 434). In education particularly, she argues, arts based research practices emerging from constructivist pedagogies confuse “the seekers for the masters...the poetasters for the poets” (Piiro, 2002a, p. 444). Piiro goes so far as to argue that graduate students should not be permitted to pursue arts based research unless

analysed in terms of the discourses of adolescent sexuality and female sexualization at play within the text. I have approached it in this way in a paper for the journal *Sex Education*. In this paper I claim that the poetic text is particularly suitable for conveying the “discursive complexity and deep (and often dangerous) contradictions through which girls negotiate their shifting subjectivities” (Gannon, forthcoming 2003c). My paper enters a space where:

[Most research into] how young women and girls begin to construct themselves as sexual is conducted within a positivist paradigm, securing ‘validity’, for example, through carefully composed sample groups and large numbers of subjects; and ‘objectivity’, through the careful distancing of the researcher from the researched” (Gannon, forthcoming 2003c).

In the discursive spaces around sex education, the poem has something new to say about the “missing discourse of desire” (Fine, 1988). However, in the context of this thesis I do not take up this sociologico-analytic frame. Rather, I am interested in the poem as a performance of textuality, as a text that draws attention to language and to its own “poeticity” (Brady, 2000). Piirto’s final question is “What does the *very nature* of poetry have to contribute to ... research?” (2002a, p. 444). This question is of concern for many qualitative researchers, including myself, but in this detour into poetic writing, I also begin to unravel what “the very nature of poetry” might be.

Boundaries

Eleven,
they let your friend
(at last)
sleep over.

Two girls together,

one narrow bed.
White sheets,
Locked door.

She's beautiful,
your friend, who speaks
with another tongue,
of another place,
of another world.

Her golden skin,
black eyes,
black hair,
always plaited and
flattened, but
now (for bed) soft and loose and long.

Your friend is double-jointed,
at school she bends over
backwards to the ground
(your fingers itch to walk along
the strong bridge of her body).

Two girls together,
one narrow bed.
White sheets,
Locked door,
 (Shhh)
One of you says

You be the man and
I'll be the lady

You're kissing,
Saying things from movies,
Whispering, you taste
foreign sounds
thick, soft in your throat.

Your faces in hair and throat and skin.
Your knees hard
in each other's crotches:
sticky, rolling hot,
hard to breathe.

Then (not sure
what happens next)
you crawl apart
to separate beds.

Your friend is not
allowed to stay
again.

In another room, another place, another time, another life

A man kneels by your bed,
stroking your hair,
your shoulders,

whispering.

You know him, he's
A Good Man,
he's The Father
of this house.

He whispers something:

My little Lolita
You're so beautiful
Don't worry
I won't hurt you

Your heart pounds

(Can he hurt me?

Will he kiss me?)

(Shhh. Your friend sleeps in the next bed.)

You turn to face him.

(Maybe his hand might
move on to your breast).

He mutters:

I shouldn't be here
I'll go
in a minute

You know then (for that second)

that you are in control.

You have absolute power

over what he does and

over what will happen next.

Then you're scared
(thrilled?)
He's strong
(perhaps you try to push him away) but
 (shhh).
You don't want her to wake.

Another time, another place, another life, another girl, you know

that God is everywhere,
He knows what you do,
what you think,
God and Grandma
always watching over you.

She speaks to you of
womanhood, blossoming,
virginity and virtue,
the tragedy of
succumbing to
temptations of the flesh;
men who will test you,
to make you surrender...

 No decent man will have you
 You'll be '*un trapo sucio*',
 a dirty old rag, (used goods, tart, slut, slag, moll, harlot,
 everybody's, nobody's, you know what she means...)

You'll wait

for the right man,
and be married
in the church.

You know him at once, he's
A Nice Boy,
From a Good Family.

Each date, she asks you:

Quien mas va?

Who else was there?

But you always lie to her, she never checks,
you're always alone together.

The first time he touches you,
you cry.
He holds you, he
tells you how much
he loves you.

For a whole year you wait,
experimenting in bucket seats until
you don't cry any more and
you tell him 'now',
you're ready.

You park in seclusion (in the shadows of a building, in a forest, by a lake,
by a river, near the ocean, by a mountain, on a moonless night and it hurts
and you feel nothing and you'll get a good bruise from that gear stick in

your thigh but you can't move and at least it's done and over with) but
afterwards
you cry and cry and cry
(and he holds you and tells you that he loves you).

When you come home at dawn,
She's standing at the window,
saying her morning prayer.
(Can she tell already? Just from looking? Can she smell you?)

But she can't,
so you walk straight past
(past the altar, the saints, the burning candles, the plaster Virgin Mary,
the bleeding bust of Jesus, the open Bible, the rosary)
and you fill the tub with
the hottest water you can stand
and bubble bath and sink down into it:
cleansed
clear
free.

This poem purports to create a collective girl, a girl positioned at the sticky borderlines of sexuality, of naivety and knowingness, between childhood and adulthood. Every woman has been here somehow, in some context particular to the details of her life. Every girl will sometime hover here. Boys and men have their own different and difficult equivalents. One way to write about this text is to explore the discourses of sexuality, heteronormativity, adolescence and adulthood with which it is suffused. Discourses of freedom and coercion resonate with other work on adolescent female sexuality (Gavey, 1996; Kehily, 2002; Lees, 1997; Phillips, 2000). In this approach the poem operates as an

efficient condensation of research data which is available for analysis-as-usual. It is possible – from a poststructuralist perspective – to concentrate on the discursive threads that are evident in the storytelling in the poem. This is a sociological research story that I tell elsewhere (Gannon, forthcoming 2003c). In this text - in this thesis on writing, in this chapter on poetic re-presentation as in(ter)vention - I am interested in how the form operates, how the poetic text evokes the ambivalences and complexities of adolescent sexuality differently, in ways that cannot be represented in socio-(or politico-)logical analyses. In this chapter I concentrate on the textual-representational implications of the text as poetry, rather than as sociological data. The poem is a composite of three texts written and discussed in collective biography workshops. All of them were written as prose. One was written in the grammatical third person, as recommended by Haug (1997); while two of them were written in the first person. All of these texts included in their original versions elaborate explanations, rationalisations and evaluations of the events described. A fourth text dis-connected from the others in the workshop was not included at all. Together these prose texts comprised over 2000 words across six dense pages. As a poem, there are 660 words across five and a half sparsely populated pages. (If I was in Ohio with Richardson I might call this ‘prairie poetry’). I flaunt these vital statistics merely to emphasise the extent of my intervention. I have radically dissected these texts, sliced away two thirds of their corporeal-textual substance. I have laid out this newold body differently, and I’ve changed the voice (but not the language). At every step, in every stage, for every word and phrase I’ve thought carefully about each decision, concerned to retain something I imagined as “integrity” in the text. In the published paper on “the collective girl”, where I began to theorise this approach, I justified my textual intervention as an ethical strategy for maintaining the “collective sensibility” that is the objective of collective biography work. Furthermore, I claimed that poetry “is relatively free of the corset of written textual conventions,” that it is “less linear than other texts” and thus leaves “pauses and gaps...where readers can insert our own lived experiences and our various selves to create embodied knowledge” (Gannon, 2001, p. 791). This is my excuse for the power of the poetic text. I’ve already begun again, in the opening sentences of this paragraph where I invoke female collective corporeality, to lead you towards this reading. But these claims are vague. The textual

they have previous qualifications in the relevant domain, and that dissertation panels ought to have poets on them if poetry is taken up in the research. Other poet-researchers, such as Richardson (1997, 2000) and Neilsen (2002), claim that writing is itself a method of inquiry, a liminal space, and that different sorts of writing enable different sorts of thinking (Neilsen, 2002; Richardson, 1997, 2000). Foreclosing on these possibilities smacks of what Neilsen calls “theistic adherence to borders and boundaries, to distinctions between science and art, fiction and fact” (2002, p. 213). My project is more radical than is suggested in Piirto’s critique of poetic writing in terms of literary standards. In the challenges to disciplinary boundaries that I am interested in provoking, poetry is as much a “theorizing socio-political text” (Chahal, 2003) as any other text. However poetry makes its arguments differently, it is evocative and provocative in different ways than other texts. Nevertheless, Piirto’s concerns about quality are not irrelevant. The aesthetic dimensions of research texts, impossible though these may be to pin down, should be relevant more often in academic writing. Conversations about the characteristics of “good writing” - in various genres and (con)texts - are endless and essential. Writing ‘matters’ and academic writing is (too) often badly written, sometimes even boring (Piirto, 2002b; Richardson, 1997; Tierney, 2002b). Although I cannot help but wonder whether my credentials would have met Piirto’s prerequisites, my interest in poetry is more than a gimmick, or naïve fun, it is a strategy aimed (like that of Chahal, Neilsen and Richardson) at epistemological disruption, and the production of new and different knowledge and theory.

The poem that I present in this chapter, “Boundaries,” can be read as a literary text but it can also be read as transgressive sociological *data*. It is reworked data in that I took the prose texts that a group of women, including myself, had written on a particular collectively generated topic, and I reworked these texts into a single collective text on that theme. I chose the words and phrases that captured the specificity of our memories and that resonated across our stories, and with the afternoon’s discussions about the memories that I had tape-recorded and transcribed. Our memories of “Boundaries” were about our adolescent sexuality at different moments and thus the text(s) can be understood in terms of sociological data. From this disciplinary position, it can be

strategies and effects of (this sort of) poetry (on reader, on writer) are difficult to articulate. The textual work that takes place seems to operate (in me) somehow subliminally, although I am skilled enough to explain this work with more assurance than I have felt:

I used these texts as the raw material[T]his poem was extracted directly from the written stories but whittled down to central images, phrases and elements that had been insistent in our discussions. The syntax, wording and rhythm of each writer's contribution is preserved in each section of the collective poem... (Gannon, 2001, p. 791-792)

Perhaps my slippage here into the passive voice – the disappearance (again) of the author - hints at my feeling that I was not (completely) in (or under) control (and, if so, whose?). In extracting myself from this blurry position, I consider the poem about “Boundaries” firstly in relation to the work of Richardson, and then to the textual practice of Cixous.

Writing (il)legitimacy

Laurel Richardson has in various texts elaborated the special ways that (research) poetry might work on us and in us. Richardson's initial poetic “masquerade” into her academic life was a poem shaped (like mine) from other texts. “Louisa May's story of her life” (Richardson, 1997, p. 139) emerged from interview transcripts. Richardson locates “Louisa May” as a radical move in sociology towards “poststructural critiques of authority, science and science-writing” (1997, p. 137). She is explicit about the strategies she deploys, and many of these relate as much to her challenge to the practice of sociology as to her textual work. She explores her “texts of illegitimacy” from both within and outside the disciplinary boundaries of sociology. So do I, when I present the poem “Boundaries” as both an intervention into the field of sex education, and as a poststructural writing experiment. Richardson explores the poetic space of “Louisa May” in sociological terms, showing how it explicitly codes the context of its production as a sociological interview (1997, p. 132, 141), and she explores the poem as a textual experiment that (re)creates the (speaking) subject of “Louisa May”. Yet the writing of “Louisa May” did not leave the other research subject - the sociologist - intact. Richardson reflects that it turned her from a feisty, authoritative, experienced researcher

into a gentler, more humble and tentative, but no less analytical or experienced, “Woman who Accepts She cannot Control all She Sees” (1997, p. 135). With “Louisa May” the subject of the academic researcher who ‘knows’ is destabilised. The ‘other’ of the sociological encounter, the unwed mother, is (re)located at the centre of the text. Her words convey her experience. They are not mediated, extracted or generalised in the same way in the poem as they might have been in a conventional sociological text. For example, the sociologist has no speaking position in the poem. There are no quotation marks separating spoken language within the poem, except where Louisa May quotes herself or others (1997, p. 131-135). Richardson presents the poem as “Louisa May’s narrative, not the sociologist’s” (1997, p. 141), but readers know that the sociologist has made particular selections and arrangements of words, and chosen not to make others. Sociologists always do this. But then, so do poets. This is the work of writing. In different writing sites, sources are more (or less) explicit than in others. In the re-presentational work of poetry as ethnographic research, the source - transcripts (Baff, 1997; Butler-Kisber, 2002; Poindexter, 2002; Richardson, 1997; Santoro, Kamler and Reid, 2001), collective biography (Gannon, 2001, forthcoming 2003c), journal entries (Gannon, 2002), fieldnotes (Smith, 2002) – are often quite close to the text of the poem. Those of us who take up poetic writing through this route tend to carefully map the textual shifts from another form into poetry, as I do in the other paper where I have used this poem (Gannon, forthcoming 2003c). Yet, from a poststructural perspective, the sanctity of a text is questionable if we take up the view that any text is “a fabric of quotations, resulting from a thousand sources of culture” (Barthes, 1989, p. 53). The work of the writer, in Barthes’ view, is to be “the site where this multiplicity is collected...the unity of a text is not in its origin but its destination” (Barthes, 1989, p. 54). Richardson’s work also enables a shift to the “destination” of the text. The metaphor that she uses for post-positivist research (and writing) practices is the crystal:

[The crystal] ...combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities *and* refract within themselves, creating different colors,

patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose. (1997, p. 92)

In the metaphor of the crystal, there is a shift to writing as a mobile location for the production of diverse knowledge. There is a shift from the production to the destination of the text, in Barthes' terms. There is an attention to that Other who is always there as the possibility entailed in every text, the reader.

The textwork of creating poetry from other texts is also a strategy of crystallization within the text, in the sense that poetry magnifies and clarifies detail. Research poets endeavour to focus and polish up some details in the text as they discard other aspects of the text. At the same time they aim to "open" the text so that "the questions the poem raises for readers ...reflect their own particular subtexts, not universal texts" (Richardson, 1997, p. 141). Despite a poststructural shift in attention from the author to the destination of the text, in a reflexive ethical practice of writing the researcher poet does not (yet) perform her disappearing act. The textual strategies that shape a poem are not generalisable to other projects, they vary according to each (con)text, but reflexive attention to writing is also part of a poststructuralist research ethic. Richardson, the poet, has much to say about the constraints and possibilities of the textual work she does in "Louisa May." She explains, for example, that working with someone else's words is very difficult. Her informant "used no images or sensory words and very few idioms" (1997, p. 142), and "her speech was bland and unconcretized" (1997, p. 149). This already accomplished poet compensates for Louisa May's poetic deficiencies by using "other poetic devices such as repetition, pauses, meter, rhymes and off-rhymes" (1997, p. 142) whilst retaining Louisa May's "voice, diction and tone" (1997, p. 142). The poet retains the "poetic essence" of Louisa May: her use of "large words and complex sentences," the "distinctive 'hill southern' rhythm of her speech" and her use of "dialogue and conversation" (1997, p. 149). The poet settles "words together in new configurations," and creates reverberations between words through "echo, repetition, rhythm, and rhyme" (1997, p. 166). Richardson is deeply committed to the truth of Louisa May's life, to the integrity of the story that was told in the interview and, in shaping the interview into a poem, Richardson uses her poetic artistry to enhance Louisa

May's language. Richardson's work does not provide universal guidelines for this work. Each text has its own language – or languages – and suggests its own particular poetic textwork.

The researcher poet is responsible to the subjects (re)presented in the poem, those others whose voice(s) she (re)places at the centre of the text. In reworking their words – and rewording their worlds - in the poem, she must be respectful enough to make those words powerful. She must make the imagery unforgettable, but also 'truthful' to the spirit of the texts from which she works. In the "Boundaries" poem there are three voices. One of them was once mine but here it is just another voice in the text(ure) of the poem. The vignettes of memory are dense with details of places and people who were there with us in these moments. In each section of the poem there are fragments of language, discourses of exotic otherness, or of forbidden desire that might exclude as much as they include, that might 'close' as much as they 'open' the text to other readers. Yet my responsibility remains still to the 'authors' of those texts, the subjects who spoke their ambivalent desires, and it precludes any erasure of our particularity. In any case, from an aesthetic perspective, as Richardson notes, blandness is the enemy of poetry. From a thematic perspective, the details carry the poem towards a more powerful sense of the dangerous desires of sexuality for (these) adolescent girls (at these moments). The poem retains the language that the women used to describe their experiences, the feelings that they remember now that they had back then. In another collective poem (Gannon, 2001), I called the girl of the poem "she", creating "a collective subject" across the range of memories. In the earlier version of "Boundaries" that is in the journal *Sex Education*, the girl(s) of the poem was also "she" (Gannon, forthcoming 2003c). In the version in this chapter, I intervene differently by changing the grammatical voice to the second person - "you" - with the intent that the reader will be "hailed" here and there through the text, despite its detail. I hope that this textual strategy will encourage the reader to take herself up in some equivalent or different memories, to create her own next episode of the story of "in another place, another time, another girl..." There is a slippage between the subject in the poem and the subject reading the poem, a displacement. Nevertheless, the poem is open – as is any text - to resistant readings. Taking up the rhetorical stance of

second person voice is not a subtle move. The author has no say over how the text is taken up (or not) by those who might be its destination, the site of its meaning, the possibilities of its “provisional pleasures” (Tarlo, 1999). Richardson claims that “*Louisa May*” is a postmodern text because the knowledge it presents is “metaphored and experienced as prismatic, partial and positional” (1997, p. 143). Poetry, she suggests, is particularly able to reveal “the process of self-construction, the reflexive basis of self-knowledge, the inconsistencies and contradictions of a life spoken of as a meaningful whole” (1997, p. 143). In contrast to the tidy explanations of our separate prose texts, the subject positions available in “*Boundaries*” slide from one to the other, across and outside the boundaries of the text itself to the reader and back again. The ‘subject’ speaking in the poem does not really know what is going on, who is in control, what might happen next, even what it might mean to be “free”. Knowledge is partial, tentative, contingent, delusional, open to re-configuration as events move out of (your) control. The text opens to the reader who recognises this feeling, rather than the particular details through which we evoked these emotions in our own memories. The poem invites you to remember such moments in your own life.

The instability of the subject positions inside poetry are only part of the story. Poetry works in the body in peculiar ways. The effects of poetry – which Richardson suggests mimic human speech - have to do with the power of the pause. As a hybrid “sociologist/poet” Richardson describes how she “writes in the pauses, signals them by conventions such as line breaks, spaces within lines and between stanzas and sections” (1997, p. 142). Further to this, she claims that there are particular poetic conventions that evoke physiological responses. Poetry resonates in bodies through recreating embodied speech in “line length, meter, cadence, speed, alliteration, assonance, connotation, rhyme and off-rhyme, variation and repetition” (1997, p. 143). Life is lived, suggests Richardson, as the “three second interval” that underpins “social and religious ritual poetry” (1997, p. 143). Richardson’s invocation of the traditional and the divine is seductive.

Writing where it vibrates

Cixous elaborates on how poetry works in ways that complement and extend Richardson's work. Cixous, poet-critic, does not write about the sort of discipline-ry policing that Richardson, poet-sociologist, describes, though she too has her own "critical tribunals" demanding of her "Give us proof..." (Cixous, 1993, p. 157). The struggles of Cixous have more to do with the intractability of language and the (im)possibilities of writing. There are far too many words in the world for Cixous. Poetic writing is a practice of condense-ation and also of encirclement. It disrupts the linear habits of language and of thought. Unlike Richardson's poetry, Cixous' poetic writing follows prose conventions in the layout, though she says that if she could, if space and book length were not obstacles:

I would prefer to write my texts as I hear them: that is, as poetry. I would write them in a column: then there would be white space which would allow the vibration of the sentences to be heard in reading. (Cixous, 1997, p. 66)

How does a text vibrate? Cixous is partly talking about pauses, marked by blank spaces, breaks in and between lines and stanzas, when she says that "poetry works with silence: it writes a verse, followed by a silence, a stanza surrounded by silence...there is time to hear all the vibrations" (1997, p. 66). How does a text vibrate? Poetic texts invite reading out aloud, the caress of each syllable in the throat, the ear catching ripples of meaning and of sound that are not visible to the eye looking at a page. The text vibrates with/in the body of the reader: the body of the reader vibrates with/in the text. Poetry invites the reader to mutter audibly to herself, to use her vocal cords and her eardrums, the resonating cavities of her body as she reads in ways that prose does not usually demand. Cixous' writing quivers with what Barthes calls "textual pleasure" where the aim is to create:

language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body, of the tongue, ...it granulates, it crackles, it caresses, it grates, it cuts, it comes: that is bliss" (Barthes, 1975, pp. 66-7).

How else does a text vibrate? There are echoes and repetitions. Given space and time, and particular textual attentions, the text begins to resonate: "I want people to hear the vibrations- on occasion I will reinscribe them. I will follow a statement with its vibration:

a vibration which is obviously not purely phonic, that is on the order of meaning” (Cixous, 1997, p. 66). This strategy is sometimes semantic, where perhaps synonyms and antonyms, words with shades of each others’ meanings within them, are at play. It is also syntactic as patterns of sentences, phrases and grammatical markers ripple through the text, repeating and responding to one another. For instance, in his (de)constructive reading (writing) of Cixous’ “Savoir” (Cixous and Derrida, 2001, pp. 1-16), Derrida traces the vibration of the letter V through the words in the original French, noting that “translation always fails when it gives up giving itself over to a certain alliance of lips and meaning, of palate and truth, of tongue to what it *does*, the unique poem”(Cixous and Derrida, 2001, p. 101). Working in translation with Cixous’ texts (and Derrida’s in turn) cuts out the nuances of French that Cixous plays with, so what I work with here in English is another version of Cixous, a translated woman, translated by women who are enough in love with her texts to create English simulacra of the originals. I do not mean to reduce Cixous’ eloquence to a bare list of poetic devices, yet these are part of the language available to talk about the workings of language. In evaluating Kafka’s writing (of dreams), Cixous uses all the range of her languages, metaphoric and technical: “Kafka’s dreams are angels without wings. Movements of the soul. Acts of goodness. Runnings. Infinitives. Verbs without subjects” (1993, p. 105). In her writing, in poetic writing, vibrations are also phonic, in the order of assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia; and, as in the example above, they are often imagistic or ideational as complex metaphors work through her texts. But she means much more than all of this. To follow the path of ‘vibration’ just a few pages further in *Rootprints* we find that writing is the originary place where everything vibrates.

I write where it vibrates. When things start to signify. To self-ignify. Very far beyond the simple moment of vibration. There is a sending, dispatching, there is jostling together and reverberating; it echoes through our memory, through our body, through foreign memories with which we communicate through subconsciouses. (Cixous, 1997, p. 68)

That originary place of writing is deep in the body, and memory and in intersubjective space, in “in(terre)conscious zones” (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 88). The

consequence of all this vibration, is, just as it is in elementary physics, an explosion into fire:

*The fire spreads, throughout the text.
The text flames. The fire lives. The text
laughs with all its teeth of fire.* (Cixous, 1997, p. 68)

The text itself, the writer herself, explode into fire. The text undergoes the ultimate purification, the alchemist's transformation. There is spontaneous combustion, or perhaps this fire (of poetry) is an *auto-da-fé* (literally, "an act of faith," but historically, a sentence passed by the Inquisition that resulted in the burning of a heretic). I stumble between languages (inept in French but with fragments and associations offering themselves up to me, with *feu* as fire) and link concepts that are not linked, in the most naïve manner, yet to enter the fire of poetry is itself an act of faith. Cixous is impossible to work with in a rational manner. Once you start to work with her, she starts to work in you and language runs away in Cixous-ian loops and whirls. How does a text vibrate? The writer writes, the writing pulsing up from inside her body, her heart beating, like a painter, painting: "With the hand running. Following the writing hand like the painter draws: in flashes...From the heart where passions rise to the finger tips that hear the body thinking" (Cixous, 1993, p. 156). The finger tips hear the body thinking and record it in the "writing aloud" of "textual pleasure" (Barthes, 1975, p. 66). Thinking does not belong to the head: it is a deeply embodied, deeply sensual and deeply aesthetic experience. The writer knows, Cixous suggests, just like the painter, how to recognise the truth (and the lie): "when I begin to go deeper, that is to paint the picture of the tears, it can happen that I feel I have not painted right; that I feel I do not recognise, in what was just written, the vibration, the truth, the music of the thing I have glimpsed" (1997, p. 44). How does a text vibrate? Like music, which vibrates through the body: "music engages a discourse that goes through the belly, through the entrails, through the chest. I do not know where music enters. And plays its score on our own body" (1997, p. 46). To write where it vibrates the writer must be poet, painter and also musician:

[W]hat remains of music in writing... is indeed the rhythm, it is indeed that scansion which *also* does its work on the body of the reader. The texts that touch me the most strongly, to the point of making me shiver or laugh, are those that

have not repressed their musical structure; I am not talking here simply of phonic signification, nor of alliterations, but indeed of the architecture, of the contraction and the relaxation, the variations of breath; or else ...the stops, the very forceful stops in the course of a symphony. Suddenly, my own breath is bridled sharply by the reins. We are suspended up there, above ourselves in the soundless air. And. We restart, in a leap, a path or a heart higher up. Who writes like that – like emotion itself, like the thought (of the) body, the thinking body? I have a passion for stops. But for there to be a stop, there must be a current, a coursing of the text....(Cixous, 1997, p. 64)

The writing vibrates. The body of the reader vibrates, in laughter or in shivers, in heartbeats. And we circle back to the beginning, to the idea of the pause, and the stop, and the start that follows, that is enabled by the suspended animation of that pause. The writer invites the reader (and allows herself in the first place) an immersion in the moment of knowing, an immersion of the whole body in the act of comprehending just this particular aspect of human existence in all its richness and complexity. In the pause is the possibility of an ‘other’ knowing that is not controlled or limited by the discipline and its traditions, its rules and explanations of what can be known and what can be said.

And so, we circle back to the poem, to “Boundaries”. Please, turn back and read it again. Does it vibrate? If so, does this mean it works? How does it work? How can I begin to answer these questions? On the one hand my answers are banal, on the other these questions are impossible to answer. I cannot systematically compare this text with the poetic work of Richardson, nor with that of Cixous, but (I hope) we stand now in more fertile ground for generating a close(r) reading of the textual work of my poem. So I’ll begin, at last (I hear your sigh) to tell you what I did (or think I did). Yet, to digress momentarily, what I have done thus far perhaps reflects how (excruciating though it may be for some readers) poststructuralist work “calls attention to the unmarked and invisible,” and thus challenges research norms where the “constitutive power of ways of talking and writing are not normally made visible” (Davies, 1994, p. 19). Everything is a hesitation, a qualification, a careful unravelling of cause and consequence, of possibility and impossibility.

Writing (at the) “Boundaries”

The most obvious intervention I made in those texts, as I have discussed, is that I changed the grammatical voice to second person: “you.” This was one aspect of my poetic textwork. Although I write with confidence: “I did this, I did that...” I also remember (and remind you by mentioning my remembering) that my “I” is less confident and in control than the pronoun “I” pretends to be. I need to speak as “I” because indeed, it was I (these fingers on this keyboard, these blue eyes looking at this screen) who – after our workshops and our discussions - took these memory stories and reworked our individual works into a collective work within which each of our “I”s disappears into a multiple “you” constructed in/by the text. Thus this poem speaks straight to “you”, the reader, and – if it works at all as a collective text of adolescent female sexuality (and if you are female) - you are likely to have moments (more or less) of intersection where you feel (again?) traces of this ambivalence/ confusion/ guilt/ fear/ desire/ power in your own body. This time, through the poem, the unspoken, the unspeakable, is spoken. Guilt and pleasure are here side by side, they co-exist in print and out aloud in poetic form. The moment can be lived, not again, but differently. Poetry has different effects in the reader than, for example, socio-logical texts.

The poem, “Boundaries,” invites readers to recognise – in their own bodies and memories – the double standards that structure (adolescent) female sexuality. It does not demand that the reader take up a morally ascendant position (from the outside) on these standards. The open invitation that a poetic text gives to the reader is different to the invitation offered by a sociological analysis of a similar topic (eg. Phillips, 2000). The poem asks that we recognise the complexities and contradictions of lived experience. This lifts the experience out of a narrow moralising stance to a somehow ‘higher’ morality entailing compassion and passion along with a deeper self-knowledge of our own frailty. The multivocal tentative texts of poetry disable simple moral stances. In the final section of the poem, bracketed additions multiply the mimetic moments. The particular detail of what began as one girl’s story unfurls in strings of other possibilities in which you may recognise yourself. Thus if “*un trapo sucio*,’/ a dirty old rag” was not part of your vernacular, then perhaps the bracketed synonyms of “used goods, tart, slut, slag, moll,

harlot, everybody's, nobody's, you know what she means" will bring you into the semantic/ discursive loop where (we all knew that) girls who have sex are stigmatised. Thus, by integrating text (beyond the original text) but by marking it off inside brackets, the poem invokes a collective awareness of gendered double standards, without diverging into a discussion of that afternoon's discussion, or into sociological analysis. The text again uses brackets to open up more possibilities beyond a singular story with:

You park in seclusion (in the shadows of a building, in a forest, by a lake, by a river, near the ocean, by a mountain, on a moonless night and it hurts and you feel nothing and you'll get a good bruise from that gear stick in your thigh but you can't move and at least it's done and over with).

Many of these details come from our discussion and further storyspinning that afternoon, some of them do not. But this is not an argument for validity based on textual integrity where this text is exactly the same as, but briefer than, the original (though almost all of it is). It is rather an exploration of poetic writing and representation of lived experience, and an unravelling of the work done by the writer to bring the poem out of the denser texts.

Despite the metaphors of crystallization and condensation that I have used earlier in this chapter, poetry also works through economies of excess and of contradiction. The poem uses brackets to mark these other economies. There is not only Grandma waiting but an overflow, an excess of those signifiers of God/ the Father/ the Law for whom Grandma deputises: "...the altar, the saints, the burning candles, the plaster Virgin Mary, the bleeding bust of Jesus, the open Bible, the rosary." These signifiers have lost their power – for the moment - over the girl who (thinks she is) is "cleansed/ clear/ free." All these details (and more) were in the story and, though the particular signifiers from our own contexts did not *all* include the plaster Virgin Mary and the rest of them, what we three recognised and talked about at length was the exhilaration of that moment of feeling "free" that we felt, regardless of the diverse (but more or less safe) circumstances of "losing our virginity." In the earlier sections of the poem, brackets are also used to complicate the linearity of the text by illuminating, qualifying, expressing secret desires and fears, allowing the text to turn back and contradict itself, allowing the girl to speak her impossible and dangerous desire: "(Can he hurt me?/ Will he kiss me?)". In my work

as an English teacher I would tell my students that brackets belonged in mathematics, not in writing. I would tell them that what was contained in brackets might be a subordinate clause which could be marked more elegantly inside commas, or that brackets indicated that their sentences needed re-structuring. Or that they should just leave out whatever phrase or thought was muddying their argument. I would show my students how to do this, writing straight over their drafts with my red pen. Some of them dutifully rewrote their texts according to the Law of the fathers of writing that I was authorised to school them in. But in this poem, and (obviously) elsewhere in this text, brackets are part of the repertoire I have acquired as I shift towards the possibilities of poststructural writing practices. Brackets work as textual signifiers, they mark the text with hesitation: meaning hovers differently around a text which is (en)bracketed. Etymologically, “brackets,” also used as “a support for something fastened to a wall,” is the diminutive of brace, from “O. French *brace*, F. *bras*, the arm, power”. The alternative name for these marks is “parentheses,” which derives instead from the Greek “*para* –beside, *en*, in, *thesis*, a placing”, thus “parentheses”, as well as naming the curves which textually embrace these supplementary words and meanings, also contains tracings of the figurative meanings of “interlude, interval” (OED). Space(s) appear in the poem for images and thoughts to sit beside other thoughts, for interludes or intervals that embrace a logic that is prismatic rather than uni-directional. Brackets, or parentheses, suggest that the text is not as linear or straightforward as an unmarked text would be. They begin to permit an excess of meaning, a supplement. The text begins to turn on itself. For example, in Chapter Five on theatre I use “(con)text” to represent the spaces of writing and performing texts as well as the texts themselves. Brackets invite the reader to read twice, once with and once without the inclusion in the bracket, permitting a more lingering interaction with the text as well as attention the sound of the words and their capacity to induce meaning(s). The subject in/ of/ behind/ writing the text begins to speak with her double tongue. She speaks and undermines her speaking at the same time, and there are layers and layers (of story and of struggle) in what she is trying to say. Un-prose like punctuation in this poem also marks masculinity, i(r)onizes it with an abundance of capital letters in: the “Good Man, ...The Father” who begins to seduce the girl in his care, under his roof; and the “Nice Boy,/ From a Good Family” who gains Grandma’s approval while he gradually deflowers her

precious granddaughter. Although the contexts were quite different, for both the girls and the men, treating them similarly in the text marks the relative autonomy that the men had to act on their desires compared to the girls.

Although I talk of supplements, additions, qualifications, extra words and phrases that compromise and complicate; poetry is also the art of the stark. Each word has weight in the world of the poem. Each word works harder than it might have to in (less poetic) prose. At once each word works in fields that might be semantic, syntactic, figurative, phonetic, metrical and rhythmic. And because poetry is now read more often than it is heard, a visual field of text layout is also at work. The poem works best when each of the words that make it work operates in several of these dimensions at the same time. In the work that I did on this text, I pruned the prose text back to shape the poem. I cut the words, phrases, sentences that did not work hard enough. Thus, one paragraph of the original prose begins already dense with details:

Mary was beautiful and exotic and had grown up brothers and memories of life in another country. At school she was a wonder because she was double-jointed. She could bend over backwards to the ground from a standing position and arch her stomach up to make a bridge of her body. She had golden skin, long black frizzy hair, always parted in the middle and plaited down the sides of her head. It was pretty and soft when it was loose.

In the poem these details are diffused and dispersed across several stanzas of the poem:

She's beautiful,
your friend who speaks
with another tongue,
of another place,
of another world.

Her golden skin,
black eyes,
black hair,
always plaited and

flattened, but
now (for bed) soft and loose and long

Your friend is double-jointed,
at school she bends over
backwards to the ground
(your fingers itch to walk along
the strong bridge of her body)

Details from elsewhere in the text migrate and supplement. Despite this infusion of new words, this fragment of the poem is shorter by about one quarter than the prose original. Irrelevant details, such as grown-up brothers, are excised from a story about two girls and desire. Relevant details, such as the friend's multiple exoticism (the wonders of her physicality and of her ethnicity) are retained and suggest an intricate and complex relationship between desire and difference. Insignificant grammatical words like the prepositions that begin three lines in a row in the first stanza – "*with another tongue,/ of another place,/ of another world*" - work harder as they carry their usual meanings but they also make a pattern that allows the detail of her exotic otherness to build on phonetic and rhythmic levels as well as a semantic level. Lexical repetition creates resonance through the poem both on an intimate scale "*black eyes,/ black hair*" and "*another tongue, another place, another world*", and across wider expanses with the lines "*In another room, another place, another time, another life*" and "*Another time, another place, another life, another girl*" linking the three sections together whilst also separating them from each other. The "foreign sounds" of the first section reverberate with the fragments of Spanish in the last section. The whispers of the first section continue into the second section. But these are not practices of poststructural writing. These are practices of a poetic writing, not unique, not new, not even difficult. Very simple, in fact. Much of this work was about simplifying the texts via various textual strategies.

Although here I have spoken analytically, describing how I did this or that to the text that appeared before me in this form and now appears in this (other) form, I speak with a

retrospective awareness. The process of shaping the poem from the prose texts was not so rational. My pruning of the poem was guided more by the aesthetic-feeling sense of my friend the bonsai artist than by the rational-knowing sense of a horticultural expert. The text becomes clearer as I snip away at the excess foliage with my secateurs. Cixous talks about “lightness,... active passivity,...capacity to let things come through”; thus, the work of the poet involves coming “all the way from our over-furnished memories and our museums of words to the garden of beginnings and rustlings” (1991, p. 114). The shape of the text emerges from careful work and attention, from simplification. We who are so literate and for whom words are so abundant have taken up discursive practices that embellish whatever truth we may want to explore until it is lost in the details. Cixous is an advocate for “the force of simplicity” and acknowledges the difficulty of writing when she says:

This is our problem as writers. We who must paint with brushes all sticky with words. We who must swim in language as if it were pure and transparent, though it is troubled by phrases already heard a thousand times. We who must clear a path with each new thought through thickets of clichés. (1991, p. 114)

This means simplicity, precision, purification: “Words are our accomplices, our traitors, our allies. We have to make use of them, spy on them, we should be able to purify them” (Cixous, 1991, p. 127). In my text work, purifying words meant trimming back – removing where possible suffixes, prefixes, auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, prepositions and articles; making tense present again; replacing three words with one wherever I could. It meant removing commentaries, explanations and elaborations such as those in this extract:

I'm 14-ish, and lying asleep in a twin-bedded room with my girlfriend Marie. We're on a working holiday. For some reason I don't now remember, the wife and kids in the family we're staying with are out and the husband, Tony, has fed us and goodnighted us; no tensions or undercurrents, a nice safe household. I wake, and am conscious of a figure kneeling next to my bed, stroking my hair and my shoulder. It's Tony, and he's whispering something like 'my little Lolita, you're so beautiful, don't worry, I won't hurt you'. I had no fear that he might hurt me until he said that, and my heart was pounding and I wondered if he would kiss me. I

was excited at the thought. (Kisses were big deals at the time , you know those conversations with girlfriends like 'did he kiss you? What was it like? Did he use his tongue? Oh yuk!' On reflection that was always the sort of language used; about what HE did, not what YOU did.)

The prose is all sticky with words. In working the text into a poem, the details that became the poem were of those bodies in that space and the ambivalent feelings of the girl about what she wants and what is really going on. Some of those details came from transcripts, after she had read her story, when we asked her what happened next. All this became less than three stanzas of the poem:

A man kneels beside your bed,
stroking your hair,
your shoulders,
whispering.

You know him, he's
A Good Man,
he's The Father
of this house

He whispers something:

My little Lolita
You're so beautiful
Don't worry
I won't hurt you

Your heart pounds
(Can he hurt me?
Will he kiss me?)

(Shhh. Your friend is asleep in the next bed.)

You turn to face him.

Each word works harder to convey the meaning contained in the prose text but the words are more straightforward and the sentences are simple. The poetic text is tentative and ambivalent, speaking in a voice that captures knowing and not knowing, wanting and not wanting, longing for but being afraid at the same time. That ambivalent voice was in the prose and in our talk about this memory but it was overlaid by the voice of the present self. In prose we tended to over-write our memory stories with analyses, comparisons and moral judgements from our present selves, the omniscient ones who claim to understand. Our discussion of the memories moved into a torrent of other stories, told in knowing tones that we could no longer speak without, and which the poem puts aside. The poem abandons the narrow moral stance of the present, of the outside, in an aesthetic textual practice that tries to work from the inside, to convey the experience of the other (who is also our(earlier)selves).

Telling the 'truth'

Good poetic writing is compassionate, empathic, open to the multiplicities of self and other, and it is committed to an (un)certain moral complexity. These are the truths of poetry. This is the work of the poet. Cixous names as poet "any writing being who sets out on this path, in quest of what I call the second innocence, the one that comes after knowing, the one that no longer knows, the one that knows how not to know" (1991, p. 114). From a poststructuralist perspective, truth is multiple and always situated, always contingent. Cixous writes often of truth, particularly of the relations between writing and truth. Her writing is, for her, the practice through which she seek truth that remains always elusive. Truth, the self and writing. These are other lines that traverse this thesis. I have argued in this chapter that poetry works (truth) differently to other textual genres. It works on and through the body. Its truth is multiple and indeterminate. Truth for Cixous is what we see when we "*look straight at God, look him in the eye..... It's looking at what must not be looked at, at what would prevent us from existing, from continuing our ordinary, domestic lives, and what I call, for better or worse: 'the truth'*" (1993, p. 61). Thus truth is an impossibility, as she recognises in her writing: "Wasn't writing the realm of the Truth? Isn't the Truth clear, distinct, and one? And I was blurry, several, simultaneous, impure. Give it up! Aren't you the very demon of multiplicity?" (1991, p.

29). Yet despite its impossibility, the writer (Cixous) does not give up, she continues to seek – through writing - the impossible (the truth):

When the author wanted to write this book, the indisputable voice said: go towards truth. A path we've never taken. Not that the author has taken paths contrary to the truth. Writing doesn't lie. But she can tell of so many things, by distancing herself from the author, and even by approaching the author. And she can circle the truth. The Truth has borders? She has a center? A cupboard? A heart? Yes, in a way. 'Go on,' said the voice one does not disobey. 'Go straight ahead.'

The author started on her way, straight ahead. Right away, it looks to me as if some twists and turns have appeared. But that is the author's drama.

As for me, in order to go straight ahead I proceed by avowals. I wrench a door off. I lay a card down on the table. I show my devil. I proclaim my Queen. All this causes me pain. If truth were measured by the violence of the battle, I would deserve it. If by the outcome, I don't know. I write my avowals with severity. Rewriting, I cross out, I correct, endlessly I rectify digressions, I drive the lamb brutally, like an ass, straight to the pyre....I arrive. I reread. And it isn't true. And yet I wrote this whole chapter hanging from the Truth. (1998, p. 98)

The impossibility of truth coupled with the imperative to keep searching for truth thread throughout Cixous' writing, and my own.

The truth is necessarily at the heart of my endeavours as a writer. In Gannon (2002), I unravel the paradox of truth through four different written versions of the same "ordinary event", the prelude to divorce. I apply a poststructuralist writing practice of multiple inscriptions of this event, in the spirit of poststructural critique that St Pierre suggests "can be employed to examine any commonplace situation, any ordinary event or process, in order to think differently about that occurrence – to open up what seems "natural" [or what seems "true"] to other possibilities" (St Pierre, 2000, p. 479). As I struggle to rewrite the event again and again it changes, as does my memory of the detail of it, and the truth of this "ordinary event" becomes more complex and contradictory, and closer to "truth" in these very qualities. Like Cixous, I am obliged to "circle 'the truth' with all

kinds of signs, quotation marks, and brackets, to protect it from any form of fixation or conceptualisation” (Cixous, 1993, p. 6), to embrace and to qualify it, to use it and question it simultaneously, putting it under erasure. Like Cixous, I must continue to talk about truth when I talk about writing, and continue to seek truth in writing despite its elusiveness because without it (the word, the mystery) “there would be no writing. It is what writing *wants*” (Cixous, 1993, p. 6). But like Cixous, I must also insist that the truth “is totally down below and a long way off” (1993, p. 6).

Onwards...

Poetry creates another sort of knowledge, another set of truths, located in multiplicity and ambiguity, to those more singular truths created in other types of text. In this chapter I have suggested that poetry is a fruitful and provocative in(ter)vention in research. Academic research concerns itself, in every field, in every discipline, with the (re)presentation and performance of knowledge. In this chapter I have used a poetic text as my performance site, as the site where I re-enact my research data. Rather than a socio-logical analysis of an issue (such as adolescent sexuality), my focus here has been on the workings of the poetic form, on the effects that become possible in reading and writing poetically that are not elsewhere or otherwise available. Cixous writes elliptically and constantly of poetic writing as an embodied practice, not (merely) in some abstract metaphorical way but as deeply embodied where the throat, the ear, the lips, the heart, the fingertips are all engaged and words flow like blood, like tears, and that is how we – readers, listeners, and writers - catch them. In our own bodies, our flesh, our blood, our lives. In this chapter I have explored collective poetry written from texts generated in the intersubjective space of a memory writing workshop. My journey into the workings of poetry, particularly through the work of Cixous, continues into the next chapter where I enter another zone of the “in(terre)conscious” (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 88) to construct a poem from dreams. In the following chapter I follow the consequences of Cixous’ lessons on writing further into the body.

Chapter Four - Poetic in(...)ventions

This chapter is a risky in(ter)vention, an experiment. At risk is the authority of my voice, both poetic and analytical. But, as I have suggested here and there in the journey thus far, the authority of the author must be considered a fiction in any case. In Chapter Three, I began a detour into poetic writing through the work of Richardson and Cixous and a collective poem written from prose texts of memory. I explored questions of il/legitimacy, the subject writing, speaking and reading and the destination of the text, the reader, as the locus of meaning. In particular I began to explore how poetry works in and on the body as a site of writing. In the preceding chapter, Chapter Two, on the methodologies of collective biography and memorywork, I interrogated versions of the subject in collective research texts, taking up a version of poststructuralism that does not rely on psychoanalytic thinking. In that chapter, I asserted that the theoretical position that I take views psychoanalysis as one of diverse discourses that might be deployed - and deconstructed - in understanding how we live. This is a refusal of the dominance of psychoanalytic discourse, yet not necessarily of the work of theorists who make use of it. I'm less interested in master narratives than I am in eclectic, strategic and situated theory building. My commitment is to poststructural theories that enable me to explore how language works to "word" our socio-politico-cultural world(s). Other literary texts in this thesis - the play and the poem both beginning with collective memory projects - are clearly embedded in the wider social world. In this chapter I take quite a different path and construct two "dream poems". I take up this research practice as an opportunity to delve more deeply into Cixous' theory and practice of writing. I mine my notebooks for source material, as I did in the paper about multiple stories of the end-of-the-wedding (Gannon, 2002). This time I looked through my journals at the dreams I have written down erratically in their pages. Dream writing has never been a systematic research/writing strategy for me, as it seems to have been for Cixous (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 27), but an occasional practice when particular dreams disturb or puzzle me enough to linger past the moment of waking. The first of the poems in this chapter, "Dream(e)scape," is a distillation of one thread from many dreams over several years, the thread of husband/ lover. The second dream poem, "The map of her hand", is one night's

dream, much more recently, reshaped as a poem. Each of these poems (in a different way) could be seen as derived from memories, and shaped by (my) lived experience. In contrast to the collective (con)texts in which the “Boundaries” poem and “The Breast Project” were shaped, the dream poems do not have the social context for writing of those other crowded spaces. The crowds in this poem are interior, the multiple voices come from somewhere “inside” the poet (inside her body, inside her mind), somewhere unconscious, beyond consciousness, beyond reason (although, as I discuss elsewhere in this thesis, inside and outside are another binary opposition that I subject to deconstruction).

Language such as “dreams” and “unconscious” necessarily suggest psychoanalytic discourse. Cixous and her compatriot, Julia Kristeva, both write about the production of poetic language and use concepts with psychoanalytic lineages. Cixous claims that dreams and the unconscious are the origin of writing. Kristeva, herself a psychoanalyst, relies on psychoanalytic discourses to situate poetic language as “revolutionary” (1984). In this thesis on the textual practices and effects of writing within a poststructural theoretical paradigm, I conclude this detour into poetry with a trek into the valley of the unconscious and writing. In this chapter, interested in taking Cixous more literally than she ever intended, I follow her into dreamscapes. I set myself the task of shaping dreams into poetry in order to interrogate her claim that: “Dreams teach us. They teach us how to write” (Cixous, 1993, p. 79). Ultimately, Cixous suggests that dreams teach us to go beyond the limits of our lives “towards foreign lands, toward the foreigner in ourselves...in the unconscious, that inner foreign country, foreign home, country of lost countries” (1993, pp. 69-70). In the next section of this chapter I consider how Cixous and Kristeva mobilise the “unconscious” and other aspects of psychoanalytic theory differently in their work on poetic language. I conclude that Cixous’ work is more productive for understanding the textual processes of poetry than Kristeva’s which remains locked into psychoanalytic discourses. In later sections of the chapter, via my own dream poems, I explore what Cixous has to say about dreams and writing, and about writing the other in poetic language.

Poetry and psychoanalysis

Cixous is often positioned with Kristeva (and Irigaray) in a triumvirate of French “psychoanalytic” feminists (eg. Fuery, 1995; Gunew, 1991; Moi, 1985; Weedon, 1997). Both Cixous and Kristeva theorise poetic writing but there are many differences between them, not least their writing style. Cixous’ writing is intentionally “anti-theoretical,” offering “no obvious edge to seize hold of for the analytically minded critic” (Moi, 1985, p. 102), while Kristeva’s is highly theoretical. Cixous practices theory *in* poetic writing. Kristeva’s writing remains firmly on the theory side of the binary as she interprets avant-garde poetic writing through psychoanalysis inflected with semiotic theory (1984). Cixous appropriates aspects of psychoanalytic discourse to elaborate her practice of *écriture féminine*, writing that practices a feminine libidinal economy that is as diffuse and polymorphous as woman’s sexuality (eg. 1981, 1986, 1991). Both Cixous and Kristeva claim *jouissance* as a feature of poetic writing – “total access, total participation, total ecstasy...extra, abundance” (Cixous and Clement, 1986, p. 167). Each of them defines *jouissance*, in part, in terms of the maternal. Cixous links maternal abundance and the body and writing: “A child! Paper! Intoxications! I’m brimming over! My breasts are overflowing! Milk! Ink. Nursing time. And me? I’m hungry, too. The milky taste of ink” (Cixous, 1991, p. 31). Kristeva theorises the semiotic space of the *chora* as a maternal nurturant rhythmic space. In this space, the unitary subject has not yet been constituted, meaning remains provisional and mobile and thus multiple subjects and multiple meanings remain in play (Kristeva, 1984, p. 25). Although the *chora* is a nonexpressive space, beyond language, Kristeva argues that some avant-garde poets, such as Mallarmé and Joyce, draw attention in their work to this semiotic space (1984, p. 25-30). Yet, Kristeva’s work on the maternal and the avant-garde (1984, 1987) has drawn strong criticism from feminists. For Kristeva, suggests Bartlett, maternity is “overwhelmingly passive...Maternity cannot be an act of a speaking subject”, whereas, in contrast, for Cixous, it is one of the sources of creativity in writing (Bartlett, 1998, p. 45). Grosz argues that psychoanalysis generally is blind to “the specificity of the body” (Grosz, 1990, p. 204). Bodies are sites for psycho(analytic)dramas of castration, scission, fetish, separation, abjection, rejection and negation. Although Kristeva portrays the semiotic as a maternal space, she “disembodies the feminine and the maternal from women, and

particularly from the female body” (Grosz, 1990, p. 160-161). Kristeva’s avant-garde poets are all male. Cixous’ metaphorical maternal feminine writing does not exclude men. She deconstructs the category of the maternal as she continues to use it, bringing it back, always, to her primary question which is how to write the other:

I write ‘mother.’ What is the connection between mother and woman, daughter? I write ‘woman’. What is the difference? This is what my body teaches me: first of all, be wary of names; they are nothing but social tools, rigid concepts, little cages of meaning assigned, as you know, to keep us from getting mixed up from each other ...But, my friend, take the time to unname yourself for a moment. Haven’t you been the father of your sister? Haven’t you, as a wife, been the husband of your spouse, and perhaps the brother of your brother, or hasn’t your brother been your big sister? Writing and traversing names are the same necessary gesture. (Cixous, 1991, p. 49).

Both Cixous and Kristeva see poetic writing as transgressive of the symbolic order, of language and the law. Kristeva’s theory of poetic writing is that certain avant-garde poets write into the semiotic space where the boundaries of the symbolic order are transgressed with “upheavals and ruptures which ...enable what is usually unspoken to be articulated” (Grosz, 1990, p. 164). In Grosz’s analysis of Kristeva (Grosz, 1990, p. 150-167), women are excluded from the symbolic order because only men can acquire a unified and stable position (as phallic/ speaking subjects) within it. Women do not have access to transgressive writing. One cannot transgress a boundary (the symbolic order) if one is already and always outside it. Consequently, in psychoanalysis, woman can write from only two positions: either producing compensatory simulations of the family, or as hysterics – bound to the body and its rhythms (Grosz, 1990, p. 165). In Kristeva’s theory, only avant-garde (male) poets can move literature past the binary of realism or madness “in a leap that maintains both ‘delirium’ and ‘logic’” (Kristeva, 1984, p. 82). Ultimately, Kristeva’s reliance on psychoanalytic discourse locks her work into what is just “one more individualistic discourse in which femininity is defined as a lack that must be struggled with” (Davies, 2000a, p. 41). Kristeva’s theory on poetic writing is not useful to women, or to women’s writing. Woman, as speaking subject, entails an impossible

contradiction. Cixous' work creates utopian writing of multiplicity and excess whilst Kristeva's work reifies binary logic and closes off possibilities. Despite Kristeva's claims that "the phallic or symbolic is not inherently masculine nor the semiotic inherently feminine", she "not only perpetuates but relies on this dichotomy" in her theoretical work (Hekman, 1990, p. 91). Kristeva's theory of poetic writing leads to a dead end for women who want to write as the most we can hope to do is to mimic (inadequately) the poetic language of the masters (Bartlett, 1998, p. 37). Nevertheless, Cixous' *écriture féminine* seems to do just what Kristeva claims is the privilege of male avant-garde writers. Cixous' writing challenges "the rules of binary logic, objective meanings and the single, self-referential reference point decreed by masculine law" (Sellers, 1996, p. 15). Part of her strategy is to explore what she calls the "jewellery box" of the unconscious for "pearls... diamonds... signifiers that flash with a thousand meanings" (Cixous, 1991, p. 46). Operating as a (t)he(o)retical outlaw, Cixous steals "past Freud's blind spots to take up his instruments to do [her] work" (Cixous and Clement, 1986, p. 166). She steals the language of psychoanalysis and turns it to her own purposes in her theory/practice of embodied women's writing. She takes up what in psychoanalysis is "not-the-subject" – woman – as her subject, and she writes woman writing.

Cixous' outlaw practice provides the conceptual framework for understanding dreams and poetic writing without necessarily forcing me to adopt a psychoanalytic position, which too often slides towards totalising discourse (eg. Gavey, 2002; Hekman, 1990; Søndergaard, 2002; Threadgold, 1997). Dreams in psychoanalysis are "composites of various unconscious memories or wishes, usually of an oedipal or pre-oedipal kind" (Grosz, 1990, p. 90). They are texts for dream work where the analyst maps the "chains of associations, overlapping memories, linkage between elements, repetitions and nodal points" (Grosz, 1990, p. 91). In Kristeva's theory, the poetic text "turns out to be the analyst and every reader the analysand" (1984, p. 210). Dreams – and texts – are always locked in to analysis, to interpretation. For Cixous, poetic writing is an aesthetic (and theoretical) practice. Cixous speaks in her own language of the relationship between the unconscious and dreams in writing:

At night, tongues are loosened, books open and reveal themselves; what I can't do, my dreams do for me. For a long time I felt guilty: for having an unconscious. I used to imagine Writing as the result of the work of a scholar, of a master of Lights and measures.... (Cixous, 1991, p. 45)

Dreams operate on a semiotic level where pretensions of unity or of symmetry between signified and signifier fall away. The endless displacement of *différance*, of constant substitution of meanings, plays through the language of dreams in ways that subvert the logic of the scholar of reason. Dreams operate outside the phallogocentric economy of "lights and measures" and attending to dreams is entry into a space that allows for *écriture féminine*, for poetic feminine writing. Cixous links dreams and the unconscious repeatedly when she talks of her own practice of writing:

I began to write in the regions of the unconscious. I had tremendous and clandestine relations with dreams; my dreams were so much stronger than I was I couldn't but obey them. But I had a disturbing sense of imposture. I kept thinking: what I have just written didn't come from me. I could write a thesis, but the texts I wrote were never mine.

They think it is me, but I only copy the other, it is dictated; and I don't know who the other is. (1993, p. 102-103)

According to Cixous, if I read her literally as I do here, dreams give her access to the other within, the other that is not coded and bound by the apparent unitary subjectivity of the everyday. Dreams spill out all the others of our lives in different combinations and fragments, known and unknown, in surprise and in shock. Later in this chapter, I explore the "other" in poetic writing. The body is there in dreams, always at the centre of the dream, and always there when we wake: running, falling, sweating, heart pumping, or smiling at the soft touch that we still feel on our skin.

In the dream poems in this chapter, and in Cixous' enigmatic writing, the body is present and the body is the source of writing but this writing comes from another realm of the body where the author is not in control. Strange slippages occur and new combinations of images and thoughts emerge. These texts might be read as emerging from zones of "in(terre)conscious" (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 88). This is how Cixous

describes Derrida's "circumfession" (in Bennington and Derrida, 1993) where he brings together "structures or logics that have never before been thought" (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 88). Dreams do this too. But Cixous differentiates her writing practice from Derrida's "diachronic aptitude" for bringing together new thoughts (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 88). Instead, she describes her thinking and writing as the pursuit of the fragment, of the small detail, the sign, the haunting. She is an "astrophysicist of miniscule stars" (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 89). In another reading of "in(terre)conscious," Davies locates the site of writing as "between earth and consciousness" and traces its practice in fiction that locates bodies in landscapes (2000b, p. 235). For Cixous, the zone of writing, her own "in(terre)conscious" is not located in the "physical" landscapes of the world (rivers, forests, oceans, earth), but in "subconscious, interconscious...if not buried conscious zones" (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 115). Her role (as a writer) is at the "*scene* of the body...Not the head. The body. The entrails...the soul" (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 89-90). Memories are stored in flesh and writing unfurls from the body. The body is a (physical) landscape that turns the outside to the inside, and dreams are one of the strategies the body uses to turn the inside to the outside. Cixous writes constantly of the necessity to go deep (into the body) to encounter the source of writing:

[Writing] is deep in my body, further down, behind thought. Thought comes in front of it and it closes like a door. That does not mean that it does not think, but it thinks differently from our thinking and our speech. Somewhere in the depths of my heart, which is deeper than I think. Somewhere in my stomach, somewhere in my womb. (Cixous, 1993, p. 118).

What we know in the body is not retrievable in any simple or straightforward manner. Nor is the body erasable through the abstractions of high theory. In the chapter on collective biography I talked about re-evoking the embodied space of memory through conscious and intense effort to recall and write the details of the body. This chapter takes up a different (embodied) writing strategy. Memories, sounds, images, smells, feelings, fleeting sensations and other fragments are folded into the body, stored deep down but also on the surface, always ready to erupt into language, always already language.

Dreams erupt from within the body, from beyond reason and consciousness, and dreaming is another mode of thought that is taken up by the body.

Writing (in the school of) dreams

So I turn to my dreams. I trace them through my notebooks, searching. My practice has been, over the years, to write down dreams that wake me with a shock, to ‘get them out’ and on paper, out of ‘my head’ so that I can go back to sleep or start the day. So now I can look through these scribbled traces here and there in my journals and ask: What does *my* body give me when I dream? What are my “signifiers that flash with a thousand meanings” (Cixous, 1991, p. 46)? I find that the fragments that the body throws up that wake me with a fright strong enough to have to write them down are fragments of banal and ordinary events. They are people, places, moments, emotions that (perhaps) I know already and that keep replaying in infinite upsetting combinations. Nightmares of work, of relationship breakdowns, bizarre versions of ordinary events. My jewellery box is packed with paste. But I set myself the task of writing poems from dreams, in this experiment in poetic writing. One of the problems of catching dreams is that already, by the time you have pen in hand and notebook open, the dream is gone and the details that remain are already under the control of the rational mind and its desires to pin down, record, make sense, construct some sort of narrative. Nevertheless, the poem that follows below was shaped from dreams recorded on waking. It is not meant to be a text for psychoanalysis of submerged, repressed emotions or desires. I do not write poetically with hermeneutic intent. The subject of this poem, the “I” who speaks, is continually reconstructed and reconfigured as she slips and slides through the dream/poem. Though it is this body that woke in panic or surprise, the poem writes from a subject position that seems strangely disembodied in the detail that the poet/ dreamer (me) records but that is very mobile in space and time and social context. Sticking to the rules that I set myself in this task meant that I did not add any details to these fragments and I did not reorder them. Nor did I produce current material. I took old texts scrawled in the dark of the night and cut cut cut and what remained was this poem. It is not offered as an exemplary poetic text in Piirto’s sense (2002a) but merely as one of my attempts to find “a virgin way of listening” (to myself, to my body, to language) and to make the “always newold language speak” (Cixous, 1994, p. xxi). Cixous’ *Three steps on the ladder of writing* (1993) is my

first guide to unravelling this poetic text. In this chapter I take up a strand of research mentioned by Cixous and I follow it into my writing:

[F]or a long time I have permitted myself to use the writing of dreams to conduct a certain research in writing. I assume, in saying this, that the dream does not cheat with metaphor. That is impossible by definition. (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 27)

Nevertheless, working at a text like this, shaping it into this poem, is a conscious careful practice. This poem takes up one thread from the journals that I have already written about – the end of the wedding (Gannon, 2002) – and traces that through occasional dreams of husbands and lovers that I recorded over several years of journal writing. The dream lover/ husband is the fragment, the haunting, that I follow through these dreams and this poem.

Dream(e)scape

Inside a huge old house
(a façade, another house floats inside it),
My husband, his lover, another not-me, lover,
line up against me.
(He's confused, he says,
he loves them both)
My room is blue,
the walls are false;
Below two children write
their misdemeanours
in a book.
(Why won't he?)
My only escape
is down the stairs
into the sea;

and ...
I'm at a dance,
an old man
is leaving,
if he had a knife, he says,
he'd slice off my breast
as a mark of courtesy,
and ...

I'm in a house
with a dead man,
I slit his throat
when he attacked me.
I should burn the evidence
But I have a pocketful of letters and
no time to read them,
I'm too busy writing,
and...

My husband says he'll get someone else
to fuck me,
to give me a baby,
then he'll be
free to leave.

My husband's lover
takes him shopping
for watercolour yellow shoes.
I know the colour will wash out with the first rain
but he won't listen
and...

It's our last night,
in a double bed,
on a train going
nowhere.
They shunt our carriage
off the track,
BANG,
the door swings open and there she is,
in the kitchen, eating breakfast and
smiling,
and...
I'm in a recruitment hall,
looking at her photo,
on the wall,
long hair in her eyes,
and she's there,
in front of me, sitting
on a row of seats against the wall,
and I'm in front of her
an ashtray in my hand,
I smash it
at her feet.
I run after
so sorry
for my temper,
sorry that I'm still
so upset after
so long.
(She didn't know, she said,

how much I cared)

In a kitchen,
a woman washes dishes
while my friend feeds her baby,
she introduces us and the woman
becomes a young man,
who becomes my lover,
I ask him what his name means in English
Prostitute, he says,
and...

I'm in a hostel in a rainforest,
preparing for my wedding
but I don't want to marry him again
and I have nothing to wear,
and...

I'm at the ATM and
Straightaway I hit the jackpot
one million dollars, more,
it just keeps coming,
and...

There's someone in the house
who knocks me down and
runs out arms piled high with things
and...

I'm on a jetty at dawn,
My husband's in a dinghy
He looks good,
he tells me he's leaving her,

(He's sorry, he says, and
we hug each other and cry).
I was pregnant
but my baby was kidnapped.

My lover leaves me
when my back is turned,
lingers with another woman on a lounge,
disappears onto a balcony,
(I still love you, he says)
And ...

A man sells me a lucky charm,
an amulet,
I buy it with my last coin
certain that my luck has turned.

My lover returns with a woman,
He says he's leaving
I swim outside into the backyard pool
green and cool
watching them throw water
over each other and laughing,
I know that that they are lovers,
and ...

I'm waiting for my husband
on the verandah of a small hotel,
The car is loaded with all our things,
I have to wait for him but
I know he's forgotten (me), and

Still I can't leave
and ...
I'm living in a shack
on an island,
I come from the ferry to find
dead fish all over my beach,
I go down with my shovel
A man comes and stands beside me
with his little dog under his arm,
Pat my dog, he says,
the dog grinning its piano key teeth,
or I'll split your back open with my axe.

I'm in my yard
at midnight
pruning roses,
when someone comes,
Who's there? I call,
Your loving husband.
His face bristles
with hatred,
I've come for my things, he says,
with his dog beside him, growling
Are you alone?
He says he's seen a lawyer
and my father,
But I have my rose clippers
and my own dog
and my car and

(even without any keys)

I start it and drive up the slope and away

This poem makes use of strategies that have been discussed in the first poetic performance. There are similar textual tendencies in the transition of these prose texts (the dreams) to a starker poetic text, tendencies towards patterns of meanings, sounds and structures that vibrate against and with one another. But Cixous is very explicit about the relation between dreams and writing. At the School of Dreams, the second of the *Three steps on the ladder of writing* (Cixous, 1993), she says there are four lessons to learn about writing. In this section I follow the traces of each of these lessons through the poem “Dream(e)scape”. The first is the lesson of *Without Transition* (1993, p. 79). We wake (still sleeping and dreaming) and we are already, instantly, in a foreign world, and in the country of writing. In this world “extreme familiarity” coexists with “extreme strangeness” and our pure foreignness is a “fantastic nationality” (1993, p. 80). In the dreams that make this poem, real husbands and lovers (his, mine) are transposed into unfamiliar and unpredictable places and events. As is the way of other worlds, of dreamscapes, borders are unclear and landscape is unpredictable: houses float inside one another, solid walls are false. Although (some) people look familiar they behave strangely: they come back (repeatedly), they leave or threaten to leave over and over again, they slide from one into the other (from woman to man to my lover whose name means prostitute, from a photo on a wall in a hall to a woman sitting on a bench in front of me) and they appear to be where they do not belong (in a dinghy, on a train). And strangers appear, benevolent and malevolent, and disappear. The second lesson in writing is *Speed* (Cixous, 1993, p. 80). Dream-time operates at “lightening speed...no passage, no introduction, no entrance,” frontiers are crossed “at the stroke of a signifier” (1993, p. 81). In the poem time unfolds sometimes at speed (going to bed and then BANG the train is shunted and it’s time for breakfast) though at other times the woman waits, passive and immobilised by waiting for a man. There is no (time for) explanation or suspense (1993, p. 81). The third enigmatic lesson about writing in Cixous’ School of Dreams is the *Taste of the Secret* (1993, p. 82). Although we cannot know “the main secret that life is made up of” or it would no longer be a secret, Cixous suggests it is the “*feeling of secret* we

become acquainted with as we dream” (1993, p. 85). The impossible secret that will never be known, that can never be said, yet that is so close that it is like “a kind of heart beating” is what provokes both dreaming and writing (1993, p. 85). Perhaps it is this fragile impossibility that fuels the desire for writing, the search for the (an?) elusive secret. Dreaming provides a “living illustration of those paradoxes, contradictions and difficulties in our relation to the other” (1993, pp. 85-86) that for me (and Cixous) seems to be the greatest of all secrets. In this context, the poem is a subterranean map of relations between the dreamer and the others in her life, fictional and factual, over several years. The final lesson on writing in the School of Dreams is the *Pure Element of Fear*, a phrase Cixous borrows from Tsvetaeva (1993, p. 88). Cixous is explicit that she is “not speaking in Freudian terms,” but rather that the unconscious, exercised in dreams, is “the source of instincts that will be the motors of writing” (1993, p. 88) including terror and joy. Such instincts are elemental, substantial: as if they are “something chemical, something concrete that you find, fear, taste, perceive in dreams” (1993, p. 90). In heading for daylight - for clarity, purity, and strength in our writing - we must traverse night, the land of dreaming. Thus we “pass through dreams in order to perceive the supernatural dimension of the natural”(1993, p. 97). Tangled elements of grief, fear, abandonment, loss, anger and forgetting thread through this poem. Fuelled by dreams these elements (can) become the “motors” of writing. Yet the relationship is not merely instrumental. The author does not merely choose at will to exploit emotions that are kept fresh and intense in her dreams.

Writing is like dreaming where, despite our illusions, “[w]e are not having the dream, the dream has us, carries us, and, at a given moment, it drops us, even if the dream is in the author in the way the text is assumed to be” (Cixous, 1993, p. 98). Cixous is most interested, she says, in texts that “escape” their authors, in writing that gives in to itself, in books that are more like places than narratives, in the book “that writes itself and carries you on board” (1993, p. 100). Yet writing is also work, work that entails the struggle to “attain the same strength and intensity in reality as in dreams” (1993, p. 103). Cixous’ canon of “sleepwalking scribes” (1993, p. 101) includes Tsvetaeva, Kafka, Genet and Lispector. It may seem ludicrous that I should attempt to write (of) my dream poem

in reference to the comments Cixous makes about these authors and her own practice. Yet the School of Dreams is free and open to everyone.

This is a poem constructed (literally) from dreams. Cixous warns that the “dream’s enemy” (and the dream’s enemy is also writing’s enemy) “is interpretation” (1993, p. 107). Yet, if, despite Cixous’ warning against it, I was to venture into interpretation, it is obvious that this poem is loaded with signifiers of domesticity. They are spatial, such as homes, houses, shacks, little cottages, kitchens, beds, fences, rose gardens; and relational, including friend, husband, lover, stranger. They are unreliable and capricious and the subject of the poem (if we (continue to) take her, as pronoun grammar dictates, to be one) is repeatedly let down by them. Many of them are more or less familiar to me. These hauntings, these “apparitions” are characters from “the theatre that is my life during a certain period” (Cixous, 1997, p. 28); but in different (dis)guises, transmuted from the everyday. There were many other characters in these journal dreamscapes but I extracted the husband/ lover scenes from them to make this much more compact text. Cixous suggests that her dreams teach her secrets about herself, yet this is not necessarily a psychoanalytic reading. The secret the dreams of this poem reveal is an obsession with the end of a marriage. This was the thread I followed through the dreams into the poem. Not such a secret, perhaps, but in the everyday of the dreaming times, life went on and that was all in the past. But my body threw me each time into wakefulness. Cixous (1997, p. 28) stresses that the body is the centre of her theory:

What we are able to do as an exercise in translation with our body or as a translation of our effects in terms of the body is unlimited...The central interchange is the body in metamorphosis. What the dream shows us in its theatre is the translation, in the open, of what we cannot see, of what is not visible but can be sensed in reality.

The specificity of the body is the place of metamorphosis, of translation, of writing and of reading (our lives and our dreams).

In another reading, one emerging from my feminist reading position, the poem could be read as a fragment of story (or fragments of stories) of female escape from subjection to

romance, or the domestic as a safe and secure location for female subjectivity. If it is read as a narrative with some sort of linear logic, and a singular subject, the 'I', the woman, attempts to exercise agency through anger initially but this is destructive – she even kills a man. The poem could be read, from another feminist reading position, as a narrative of a woman learning to speak and to act for herself, to use an assertive force that is more controlled and effective than anger and that allows her to meet the threat of patriarchal violence (“Are you alone?”, the husband, the lawyer, the father) with competence and confidence. She too has a dog and a weapon, and she can start a car without a key and drive up a steep road and take herself away from that place. The point where the poem drops me, the moment when the ending (this ending of many others that might have been possible) suggests itself, and the readings which I have outlined, give a narrative turn to the poem which is itself one reading of other possible readings and writings. If the last section (the last dream), “I’m in my yard...”, had not been there perhaps the poem may have been more resistant to closure. If I had not said earlier that the dreams (the poem) were chronological perhaps a reader of the poem would be less inclined to seek in it a narrative logic. But the pull of narrative, of linearity, of modernist assumptions about texts and how they work, about time and the order of things, are very strong and difficult to resist. Notions of the humanist individual underpin the logic of narrative, where the individual is “generally understood to be a conscious, stable, unified, rational, coherent, knowing, autonomous, and ahistoric individual” who exercises “freedom, will and intentionality” in the public sphere as they act in the world (St Pierre, 2000, p. 500). Although the humanist individual is gendered male, in another reading using a narrative logic, the woman of the poem becomes more “male” (less hysterical, more powerful, more independent) as she moves towards a type of emancipation offered at the end. If indeed it is an end.

In terms of a poststructuralist reading - and writing – it is the subject herself who is called into question in the text. In poststructuralism, “the subject does not exist ahead of or outside language but is a dynamic, unstable effect of language/ discourse and cultural practice” (St Pierre, 2000, p. 502). Thus in a poststructuralist writing, the subject must be “opened up to the possibility of continual reconstruction and reconfiguration”, she must

be “presumed to be created in the ongoing effects of relations and in response to society’s codes” (St Pierre, 2000, p. 502). This woman, the subject (if we read her as singular) of the poem, slides through a range of subject positions that open and close to her momentarily as her sex and her contexts enable some possibilities and close others. She is not me, not the me of that time, nor the me of daylight, of waking. She uses my voice (when she speaks as ‘I’) and she may have some similarity in appearance but she is a *doppelgänger*, she is not me at all. She is a wraith, she is no one, she is many. The poststructural text and the poststructural reading of that text retain the strangeness of the subject. Cixous’ translator describes how she achieves this in *Jours de l’ans* or *FirstDays of the year* (1998), by producing a text that:

limns the rhythms of a mind thinking, tentatively following, at oblique angles, each thought, each memory of the narrative voice, from its enigmatic beginnings through all its twists and turns unto the next, mysterious inception of a thought. It is a text written from the point of view of a radical subjectivity, a ‘subjectivity inhabited by turbulence... a mute struggle between the *given* subject and the subject that *surges forth*’... (MacGillivray, 1998, p. viii).

The strangeness of thought itself, of the production of the subject through thought, following the traces of discourses which underpin the text, their twists and turns, their allusive elusive patterns of signification – these are elements of a poststructuralist writing. The School of Dreams, with Cixous as the teacher, is the school without walls in which we can learn these writing practices. This is the school where we can get in touch, through writing, with our unconscious.

Writing (in the school of) the other

Dreams are for Cixous the place of the other inside, the place of disguises where: “[t]hey think it is me, but I only copy the other, it is dictated; and I don’t know who the other is” (1993, p. 103). In psychoanalytic discourse the (upper case) Other is “not a person but a place, the locus of law, language and the symbolic” (Grosz, 1990, p. 67). The Other operates within a phallic symbolic order to structure desire and language in terms of lack. Woman herself is lack. In contrast, Cixous explicitly rejects psychoanalysis that constructs women (anyone) in these ways: “I want all. I want all of me with all of him.

Why should I deprive myself of part of us? I want all of us...What's a desire originating from a lack? A pretty meager desire" (Cixous, 1981, p. 262). Within a poststructural theory of writing, the subject is multiplicity: self and other merge and diverge. Cixous' other is not the abstraction created in the oedipal split and the mirror stage of psychoanalysis. Nor is it the (modernist) subject of "stupid, egotistic, restrictive, exclusive behaviour which excludes the other" (Cixous, 1994, p. xvii). St Pierre suggests that self/ other is the "master binary" of Cartesian rational thought (2000a, p. 494). Mansfield characterises "the whole idea of a fixed, knowable, autonomous subjectivity" as "an hallucination contrived by power in order to isolate and control us in the cage of individuality" (Mansfield, 2000, p. 36). Cixous refuses that cage. Her practice of writing the other is an imaginative and generous strategy to disrupt the binary of self/ other. Cixous' other is experiential and imaginative. It is literally the imagined other inside ourselves, the other that underpins the possibility of compassion or of empathy. Each of us holds within ourself "all the ages, those we have been, those we will be, those we will not be, we journey through ourselves" (Cixous, 1994, p. xvii). Writing becomes a practice of love that strives to access the other and to allow the other to come through us:

Our own subjective singularities are in truth composed, on the one hand, of many other near or distant humans, we are carriers of previous generations, we are, without knowing it, heirs, caretakers, witnesses of known or unknown ancestors; on the other hand we are full of others originating from the books we have read. (Cixous, 1994, p. xx)

As a research/ writing strategy, collective biography and memorywork is particularly attuned to developing the practice of writing the other. In Chapter Two of this thesis, I explored how we fold ourselves and (our) other (selves) into a collective that is multivoiced and that can also speak with one voice. For Cixous, writing for theatre has gradually become her ideal medium for writing the other (Sellers, 1996). Through research and imagination she multiplies the speaking self into a cast of thousands. In the next detour into theatre I explore this in more detail but in this chapter, on poetic writing, I suggest that poetic writing can also be a practice of (re)writing the self and other across the binary divide.

Poetic writing, in evoking others, can be a space that bypasses the unitary singularity of rational consciousness. In the poem in this section, “The map of her hand,” I suggest that the dreamscape of the poem enables the writing of a subject who is deeply connected to others. Unlike the earlier dream poem, the text in this poem has all been extracted from a single dream. In constructing “Dream(e)scape,” I followed one figure (husband/ lover) through his hauntings of many dreams over several years. There were many others in these dreams whom I ignored in my singular pursuit of this spectre. There were students, teaching colleagues, strangers, children, taxidriviers, musicians, family (real and fictional) who did not make it into the poem. From a more compact and modest source, just one dream, the next poem retains all its cast. I do not know them all – the sister for example, in this poem, is neither of my ‘real’ sisters but another sister, imaginary, whom I have not yet met, except here in the landscape of this dream. She might be a stranger but through this dream she becomes also all my sisters outside it too. Though the subject of “Dream(e)scape” slipped and slid around in place and time, despite my avowals to the contrary, she told a more or less coherent story. Amongst the plausible readings of this poem were those driven by narrative logic and feminist longings for emancipatory tales. Despite my claims that the body is fundamental to *écriture féminine*, “Dream(e)scape” absents the body from the scene(s) in comparison to the depth of corporeal engagement in “Bodyscapes” in Chapter One, or in “Boundaries” in Chapter Two. In those poems, the body was the source of knowledge about the world. In the next poem, “The map of her hand”, the subject of the poem is more deeply engaged in imagining the place of the other, of being (with) her in that place, and she uses her body in her imaginative work of recuperating the other within (and without).

The map of her hand

My sister is dying -
I lie alongside her
holding her body
(wasted, small)

against the length of mine,
make small noises
in the back of my throat,
run my thumb along the bones of the
back of her hand.

(What name is there for that part of the hand that you stroke with the pad
of your thumb when someone is dying and there's nothing for you to do
but hold them against the length of you and shush shush shush them like
a child?)

In the house become a hospital,
my sister lies dying
and I'm the only one who knows
(but the nurses click click up and down the starched corridors).

I've lost her, and
no one knows where she is,
who she is, or
that she is dying.

My sister is lost
in the small labyrinth of her death.

Frantic -
I ask for her.
open door after door:
their dull white surfaces blank,
polished floors silent.

They silence me.

I'm the only one who knows,
who will press her body along mine,
and press my thumb into her cool/hot flesh,
and calm her through her dying.

This hospital house is my house,
rotting
requisitioned.

The lower floor eaten out
by termites in the basement,
timber by timber,
length by length.
(Step softly or you'll fall right through.)

My neighbour in the corridor
of the house that is a hospital:
beautiful, and young,
his arms swollen with muscle.
(Where does desire go when death enters the house and the body of the
house is death?)

The basement of your hopes is an
asylum and
pushing it away
is a balancing act between
knowing and unknowing
the imminence

(immanence)
of death

My sister's hand under my thumb,
I feel the tiny bumps of scars,
white, on the back of her hand,
through my skin.
A map of her life in thin flesh
and translucent bone.

This is the place to see
The map of her hand
(the secret revealed)
Shine a torch in the palm of your hand
(on a dark night walking on a clear path
in a forest with a lover and in love)
and the flesh glows clear through
to the other side,
the upper side,
the map of life in the hand,
inside flesh/ bone/ sinew
and the light shines golden
and glowing clear through to the other side.
(And she is my responsibility and whose am I?)

And the tide crashing on the rocks
is the backdrop to everything.
My ears strain to hear if
the tide is coming in or going out

(I think that it is always going out)

Some of these moments, places, sounds, images are familiar. Some are not. Even those that are familiar remain strangely ‘other’ to their everyday truth. A psychoanalytic interpretation might seek to explain their sources and their significance to me, the individual, right now or in the past, in terms of unresolved repressed desires and so on. They could be traceable, analyse-able in terms of biography as Cixous’ imag(ina)ry can also be analysed. For example, Cixousian scholars (eg. Sellers, 1996) sometimes trace her writing through Algeria, Jewish-German-French identity, her father’s death, her mother’s practice as a midwife, her myopia; as she sometimes does herself (Cixous, 1997, 2001). This strategy has merit from feminist perspectives that promote both “reflexivity” (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003a) and awareness that knowledge is always “situated” in local, cultural and historical specificity (eg. Haraway, 1988, 1997; Harding, 1986; Mohanty, Russo and Torres, 1991; Stanley and Wise, 1983; Trinh, 1989). Likewise the reader of any text is a situated being and I might read Cixous differently if I am Jewish or if I am Algerian Arab or perhaps if I am male or a mother. These are among my others. But this is a reading strategy that tends to position author (and reader) as complex singularities in whose specificity all details can be explained. It is not so useful for generating a writing strategy, like Cixous’, of writing the other. Paradoxically, perhaps, at the same time it is in the specific detail that the other becomes imaginatively possible. In collective biography, too, the embodied detail in the stories answers “Yes!” to the question: “Are you (with) me?” (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003a). In the poem above, the embodied detail is of deep connection and nurturance through the body. When nothing else can be done, when someone is dying, the subject in the poem lies her body along the body of the other. Although the others in the poem – nurses, neighbour - are busy and elsewhere the subject of the poem attends to the other as best she can. She comforts the body of the other with her blood, with her touch, with her skin, with the sounds she makes in the back of her throat. Beyond words. Beyond names. When flesh is so translucent that light shines right through “flesh/ bone/ sinew” (and that is a truth of the everyday) then the boundaries between us break down and we are, at last, responsible

for one another: “If she is my responsibility, then whose am I?” The answer might be hers (and hers and hers and his and everyone else’s). We are all responsible for us all and for each other. This poem is a hesitant and modest move towards an example of how we can be – self and other in the text, in the world – an “ensemble of one and the other, not fixed in sequence of struggle and expulsion or some other form of death but infinitely dynamized by an incessant process of exchange from one subject to another” (Cixous, 1981, p. 340).

Writing the other is a critical practice (of love), opening up the possibility of imagining otherwise. This writing creates an “inter(re)conscious” zone where the inbetween of becoming is the space where self and other merge and diverge, where they momentarily dissolve. This strange little dream poem is a gesture towards this practice. Cixous locates the exemplary practitioner of writing the other in Brazilian novelist Clarice Lispector, who “has treated as has no one else... all the possible positions of a subject in relation to what would be appropriation, use and abuse of owning” (Cixous, 1988a, p. 18). Others claim that, in her fiction, Lispector wrote “the human face of poststructuralism” (Fitz, 2001, p. 3). The human situation is explored in her writing through the complex and ambivalent relations with selves and others of her characters. In her texts (eg. 1985a, 1985b, 1986a, 1986b), not much “happens” in narrative terms but there is great interior depth, the ordinary becomes extraordinary, people grapple with an everyday that becomes strange, from which they become estranged as some small event disrupts familiar certainties, and – through the patient loving attention of the author - every hesitancy, every feeling and every moment is documented in their irresolvable impossible complexity. For Lispector, imagining the other and writing (all of us) is a practice of generating “memories” that are not her own, via an intimate embodied sense of otherness in (and despite) her self:

To write often means remembering what has never existed. How shall I succeed in knowing what I do not even know? Like so: as if I were to remember. By an effort of ‘memory’ as if I had never been born. I have never lived. But I remember, and that memory is in living flesh. (Lispector, 1985b, p. 120)

The work of imagining the other in writing involves not the appropriation of other people's experiences but the creation of an authorial subject position that abandons the familiar authority of s/he who knows. Lispector creates this new writing subject in character of the writer in her novel *The hour of the star*, he who is "scared of starting" because writing is "as hard as breaking rocks" (1986, p. 19). The author announces the beginning of "the story" on p. 24 with "I am about to begin in the middle by telling you that...". The pages preceding are the writer's flailing dance around the story that he is afraid to begin because the responsibility of writing the other is so awe-full. In order to write respectfully, lovingly, about the girl whose story he knows (she is both his invention and a girl from the North-east he once glimpsed), the writer says "I mustn't shave for days. I must acquire dark circles under my eyes from lack of sleep: dozing from sheer exhaustion like a manual labourer. Also wearing threadbare clothes" (1986, p. 19). Although he knows society has other expectations (of him as a writer), he must humble himself, abase himself, until he is receptive to Macabea, his other, the girl from the North-east. And (s)he – the writer Lispector - must transform herself into a man writing "for a woman would weep her heart out" (1986, p. 14). This writer claims he is "in no sense an intellectual. I write with my body and what I write is like a dank haze" (1986, p. 16). He writes a narrative "from which blood surging with life might flow only to coagulate into lumps of trembling jelly" (1986, p. 12). Lispector's writing emerges from the body – a body which is male in this text but at the time she wrote this novel was also a woman's body riven with a cancer that began in her breasts. Lispector's final novel, for Cixous, is ultimately a "discreet psalm, a song of thanksgiving to death" (1988a, p. 10). Lispector's attitude is of "extreme fidelity" to her character(s), her imaginary other selves. Cixous reads her as another astrophysicist of the miniscule as she "tells the story of a minute fragment of human life. Tells faithfully: minutely, fragmentarily" (Cixous, 1988a, p. 10). The most insignificant other – the character, Macabea, barely a woman, and doomed - is worthy of the utmost respect. Writing that acknowledges the other comes from a corporeal imaginative terrain. It is not a conscious rational practice but unconscious, imaginative, intuitive, visceral. What (s)he, the author, writes "is already written deep inside me....I am powerless to invent with any freedom: I follow a secret, fatal line...forced to seek a truth that transcends me" (Lispector, 1986, p. 20). Macabea is

the other. In order to tell her story, to allow Macabea to enter her, the author must undergo a “superhuman...self-estrangement” (Cixous, 1988a, p. 12). To allow the other to rise up and speak through writing, the author becomes “a being stripped bare” (1988a, p. 12). The author abandons in her/ himself in all his/ her social guises, including sex. In writing the other, writing other-wise, writing the other within and imagining those others we must write our multiplicity, abandoning the binary that separates us from our(other)selves:

Let us consider our behaviour in life with others, in all the major experiences we encounter, which are the experiences of separation; the experiences in love of possession, dispossession, of incorporation and non-incorporation, the experiences of mourning, all the experiences ... How do we lose? How do we keep? Do we remember? Do we forget? (Cixous, 1988a, p. 19)

We re-remember in writing those who are our others, all those others, everywhere. Through the immense effort of imagination, we undergo a “relentless process of de-selfing, a relentless practice of de-egoization” in order to imagine other-ness. But it is necessary at the same time to attain the right distance, to retain the strangeness of the other in order to avoid the annihilation of appropriation, of pity, of “badly thought out love”, of “ill-measured understanding” (Cixous, 1988a, p. 19). In Lispector’s novel the effort of sustaining this distance is always evident as the writer describes every turn, every doubt, every hesitation about his own position in relation to the other, Macabea. In writing the other s/he re-writes himself as well through the transformative and generous writing practice, this practice of love.

In this chapter I have taken up the risky textwork of writing (from) dreams. This has been an experiment in taking Cixous literally in her claim that dreams teach us to write (1993, p. 79), rather than an opportunity to present exemplary literary texts. At the end of this chapter, my exploration still seems as risky to me as it did at the beginning. I doubt that there has been any ‘progress’ but this thesis is not intended to be any sort of heroic narrative. Part of my practice is to destabilise the author who knows, the rational self who can write a thesis with confidence, who can be sure that what she writes publicly (whether creative or analytical or both) is always assured, always ‘good’, always going

somewhere. This chapter is more tentative than other sections of this thesis. Interested in pursuing the practice of writing into zones that are not conscious, that might bypass the rational, I wrote poems inside the texts of my dreams, limiting myself to those signifiers and structures that they had delivered to me. Initially, to theorise my undertaking, I explored psychoanalytic approaches to the unconscious and poetic writing through both Kristeva's work (1984) and Cixous' *écriture féminine* (1981, 1986, 1991). Ultimately, the psychoanalytic model was less useful for this writing experiment than Cixous' work. Although she takes up language inflected by psychoanalysis, Cixous tends to operate as a theoretical outlaw (Cixous and Clement, 1986, p. 166), rejecting "rigid concepts" and "little cages" (Cixous, 1991, p. 49). The poems in this chapter do not provide answers to my questions about writing, instead they do provide leads for further inquiry. I used Cixous' lesson on writing in the "school of dreams" (1993) to explore the first poem in this chapter "Dream(e)scape". My second dream poem, "The map of her hand," led me on another path, via Cixous and Lispector, away from the unconscious as a psychoanalytical construct and towards an inter(re)conscious zone that values relations with others. In this approach to (poetic) writing, imagination is a strategy to move us beyond our singular selves, and writing begins to become a practice of love as we learn to write the other. Cixous develops this practice further in her theatre writing, suggesting that the other-consciousness that theatre enables had to come after the self-conscious earlier work: "It takes time for 'I' to get used to 'I'. Time for the 'I' to be sure 'I' exists. Only then is there room for the other" (Cixous, 1988b, p. 153).

Onwards...

In her overview of poststructural feminist theory, St Pierre suggests that humanism persists because, despite its disadvantages for women and many others, it structures "the relations we are able to have with others, the politics we practice, the map that locates us on the earth, the futures we can imagine, the limits of our pleasures" (2000a, p. 478). The humanist authorial separate self dissolves in a poststructuralist approach committed to writing the other. In her *écriture féminine* and more explicitly in her writing for theatre, Cixous suggests writing practices that enable more inclusive politics. As Butler argues (1995), it is in the very contingency of any will to truth in a poststructuralist

philosophical position that new possibilities for political action can emerge. In writing, this might involve imagining the other who is as far as possible from you, occupying the opposite side of a binary (any set of I/ you, or us/ them) and writing across them until they collapse. It might involve entering lives we have not (could not have) lived in a profound act of imagination. But is this too simple? On the contrary - as the works of Cixous and Lispector and my stuttering attempts at dream poems suggest - it is profoundly difficult. It requires all the usual skills of the writer and more: "As I rework, I cross out, I correct, ceaselessly redressing the mistakes" (Cixous, 1998, p. 98). Perhaps it is too obvious, too banal, too familiar? How can I claim it as a "poststructural" practice of writing? From this tentative position I cannot provide a definitive answer. But I must continue, circling through other detours back towards this question. Prior to that, in the next detour of the thesis, I shift attention from poetic writing towards writing for theatre with "The Breast Project". In the next chapter, Chapter Five, I return to the opposition between science and literature to theorise how I began to write the play and how that text worked differently to analytical texts based on the same data. This chapter complements the parallel discussion in Chapter Three on poetic writing. Then in Chapter Six, I explore the practice of "writing the other" in theatre, building on the discussion of the other in text that I have begun in this chapter.

Chapter Five - Writing "The Breast Project"

[S]cience will become literature, insofar as literature... is already, has always been, science; for what the human sciences are discovering today, ... literature has always known; the only difference is that literature has not *said* what it knows, it has *written* it. (Barthes, 1989, p. 10)

This chapter begins a detour into theatre as a writing practice that disrupts the binary between analytical and literary writing. This chapter and Chapter Six present different accounts of my textual adventure into playwriting. This chapter continues the theoretical work of Chapter Three and looks through another lens at the Science/Literature binary (Barthes, 1989, p. 10). It elaborates the process of writing “The Breast Project,” a three act play for three women actors. The next chapter, Chapter Six, takes up the idea of ‘writing the other’ that I began to explore towards the end of Chapter Four and pursues it into the realm of characters (Cixous, 1989) and validity. The play itself, presented in this thesis as Chapter Seven, concludes this detour. This project has been my first foray into playwriting. It began as a strategy for reworking research data in a different genre and became a great adventure in writing. Until I came to write this play, my experience of theatre was predominantly as an audience member for live theatre, or, as a secondary English teacher, as a text analyst with my students of mostly canonical plays of English literature. Perhaps my venture was impertinent or naïve. Perhaps, having no prior credentials in this genre, and with due respect for properly author-ised playwrights, I should not have ventured into unknown writing territory (Piiro, 2002a). But writing anything – a thesis, a play, a poem - is always a venture into unknown landscapes and unimagined possibilities. This is why I write. Writing is itself “a method of inquiry” and writing matters both in and *as* research (Richardson, 1997, 2000a). In this detour into theatre I elaborate, as I would in any research project, on the methodological processes, decisions, dilemmas and effects of this particular research (writing) project.

My playwriting adventure took place within a regional theatre company JUTE (Just Us Theatre Ensemble) in Cairns, north Queensland. In partnership with the Queensland Theatre Company, based far south in Brisbane, JUTE developed the Enter Stage Write (ESW) program to develop new work and support emerging

regional playwrights. I was one of those playwrights. Intermittently, over two years, I worked intensively with dramaturges, and sometimes with actors, through successive drafts of the play. Different versions of “The Breast Project” were presented to audiences as rehearsed readings by actors in October 2001, and again in October 2002, at the JUTE/ ESW Playwrights conference in Cairns. As I worked through this highly collaborative process, the shape of the text shifted as did my desires for its realization as a living text in a theatre. I began with the idea that I would write a play from the collective biography on breasts that I had co-convened in Germany with women from different parts of the world. As I worked on the play, I straddled inside/outside divides both in the university and in the theatre. When people at my university asked me how my (thesis) writing was going I would answer in terms of the play. In the theatre I began as an outsider because, unlike the other playwrights, I was not an actor and I had no tertiary qualifications in theatre. In neither place did I feel quite legitimate. Nevertheless, legitimacy looms in both contexts now as I bring this thesis to ‘an end’, and the play is slotted in to the JUTE program for a full production in Cairns in 2004.

As an intellectual worker I zigzag across borders which are more permeable than academic tradition often allows. But this transgression goes beyond my positioning of myself as “academic” and/ or “playwright” and/ or “poet”, a problematic which I have written about in this thesis and elsewhere (Gannon, 1999; 2001). The *text* itself shifts shape – now a research paper, now a theatre script, now a performance, now a different research paper – each tracked though with traces of the other(s). These (con)texts are all sites where subjectivity is differently produced. Texts are places and spaces for the enactment of subjectivity which “is not a given but rather a process and a production...the sites and spaces of its production are central” (Probyn, 2003, p. 294). The two chapters that begin this detour focus on different readings of “The Breast Project” play. Both chapters explore the very nature of (writing for) theatre, as earlier chapters explored the nature of poetic writing. These two chapters refer to different versions of “The Breast Project.” This is partly because I began to write these chapters at different times when different drafts of the play were current. I have retained the earlier extracts in this chapter because I want to emphasise how mobile this text has been (and remains). There is no “final” definitive version, just moments here and there where the text presents itself as having a certain unity and integrity,

certain merits. In retaining references to different drafts, I wanted to show the complex process of writing and the nature of the decisions that were made as I continued to (re)write the play, rather than to present a single seamless text as if it had sprung fully formed in a straightforward translation of ideas into text, or as if it were a simple transformation of one genre of text into another. The earlier version of the play, cited in this chapter, was well received. On the basis of this version I was awarded a 2002 Major Development Grant from Playlab (Brisbane) to work on it further. The different version that was read at the next conference a year later was also well received. This version was shortlisted in late 2002 in a Queensland Theatre Company competition, “The Works.” On the basis of this version, I have the promise of a full production. When that takes place no doubt there will be further changes made to the script in rehearsal, and after the production, another set of possibilities will present itself. Rather than assuming that all these changes meant steady and unproblematic progress towards a better text, it seems more fruitful to consider the script of the “The Breast Project” as a sort of “assemblage” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) always in process of “becoming”. Each of these and many other drafts emerged from particular spaces, times, and contexts where different people gathered to work (with me) on this text. None of the extracts from the earlier version that are in this chapter remain in the current version of the play, presented in Chapter Seven. In the next chapter, Chapter Six, I explore how the realm of characters became increasingly important as different drafts were developed. The stories I tell in these chapters dovetail in some places and diverge in others and contain traces of many of the other stories I could tell about the trajectory of “The Breast Project”. Although in the pages that follow I take up an author-itative speaking position, and I speak of ‘the’ text I have written, this preface serves as a caveat to remind you that these categories are more tentative, multiple and fluid than my grammar might sometimes suggest.

Beginning the Breast Project

I began to write “The Breast Project” play with data that Babette Müller-Rockstroh and I had collected in the collective biography workshops at the *Internationale Frauenuniversität*. In the original workshops, women recounted memories, wrote stories and discussed our sexualization into appropriate (breasted) womanhood. Our storytelling sessions were emotional, intimate, embodied spaces of ‘excess’ in the

academic context in which the workshops took place. Our memories spilled into the collective space in ways reminiscent of other such workshops as “we [found] ourselves uttering collective sighs of understanding, of appreciation, of sadness, of pleasure, of anguish” (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003d). In the breast workshops, we were struck by how our bodies were also visibly engaged in the process of remembering: “women held their own breasts shadowing the movements in their remembered stories with the actions of their bodies of the present” (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, forthcoming 2003). We intuitively mimicked other women’s gestures and movements with our own bodies as we listened to each other’s memories, holding our breasts protectively for example, as a woman told a story of medical intervention. The collective biography workshops spilled out into an accompanying breast photography project (Rothmüller, 2002). Following the workshops, Müller-Rockstroh and I co-wrote several analytical texts based on the data of our memories (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2000; 2001; forthcoming 2003; Müller-Rockstroh and Gannon, 2002). Later in this chapter, I compare extracts from these texts with equivalent extracts from the play. In writing these papers we also wrote ourselves as social scientists, reining in our ‘excessive’ data and constructing in writing a subject position for ourselves that was appropriate for this disciplinary regime. But the breast stories would not be restrained. Outside and long after the workshops and my return to Australia, women wanted to continue our conversations about breasts, and so did I. Women kept telling me stories and sending me news clippings and emails. I read histories and medical texts and explored religious iconography and feminist arts practice about breasts. The breast stories seem, in some ways, to be like Hélène Cixous’ texts (1998, p. 44) that “get away, that escape... (t)hat can’t be closed, that leave us behind, that can’t be finished.” The script for “The Breast Project” began as a strategy for integrating all the breast stories and moving them into the possibility of another collective textual space - performance. Women actors, dramaturges, and audience members have continued to leap into this space to tell me more stories in rehearsals and readings of the text in progress. This continues its trajectory towards performance, where it will move again off the page into a palpable fleshy arena where meanings are tentative, transient, relational and embodied.

(Extract from Act Two, Scene Two "The Breast Project" – ESW Conference, Cairns, 2001)

Woman C enters pushing a clothing rack (with clothes designed to drape and cover).

Woman C: A painter in Florence saw me in a street performance and asked me to model for him. In the first meeting in his atelier, he decides that he will paint me as Eve. For two months I stand naked on a table, holding an apple. I stand straighter and taller, holding my breasts up and out. Proud of my lush woman's body. Proud to be Eve. I trust him. I'm surprised when I finally see the painting. "That's what you look like!", he says. "Wonderful! The only thing I changed is your breasts. ... Don't take it wrong." He says. "You have wonderful breasts, very sexual, but big breasts are not suitable for Eve..."

Woman B enters the stage and moves through the rack of clothes as she speaks, holding things up against her body.

Woman B: I spent years shrouded. Made myself invisible. Swathed my body in loose clothing. Wrapped myself in layers of floating fabric. Winter and summer I dressed the same way, my skin covered like a Bedouin. But people misunderstood. My friends called me Salome, the veiled woman. Would-be lovers hinted that it made me all the more tempting and seductive. But that's not what I meant at all.

Woman A enters and sorts through the rack.

Woman A: My cousin was almost killed once. She was riding her bicycle home when a car stopped to ask directions. This man grabbed her and said "I've got a gun. Get in." He'd kill her unless she did what she was told. Just then, another car pulled up. The man looked at the car, then at her and he said 'Ha ha, just kidding', and drove away. She called my aunt to come and

get her. Her mother just said: 'What did you expect? This never would have happened if you'd been wearing a bra'.

Woman B: The message is always the same. You shouldn't be here...not at all. You shouldn't be here...not in that body...

Woman C: Remember those judges who say things like she shouldn't have worn that skirt, been in that place, blah blah blah...well, tell me this, if there can be such things as 'fuck-me shoes' or 'fuck-me clothes' then how come there are no such things as 'don't fuck me' clothes?... That is to say... what I mean is... Where can I get the clothes that will guarantee me 100% safety from being harassed or from being raped?

Together the three women turn to the audience. Woman B in the center begins to speak to the audience.

Woman B: My friend asks me to come to the Reclaim the Night March. I haven't been outside for months. Since I got attacked coming home from a late shift. The March is on a really hot night. My friend's at the front with her women's drumming group and I'm right beside her when she pulls off her T-shirt and finishes the march in her bra. It's fantastic. Embroidered so it looks like a shark. With the big drum strapped around her body, the shark dips and weaves as she moves as if it's surfing the waves. I love it so much she gives it to me. I'll never be nervous again...not with a shark bra.

Most of the stories in this extract came after the collective biography workshops, back here in Australia, in the excess-ive spaces where my conversations about breasts continued. The stories came as fragments, an image, a couple of lines in a telephone conversation, a scene in a film (Hadleigh-Smith, 1997), traces from news articles, my own experience, the embellishments of my imagination. One of them came by email as a detailed story already. All these texts, along with the memory stories from the collective biography, became the materials from which I shaped the script for "The Breast Project". In the next section, I compare equivalent extracts from the play and

an analytical text about “nurturing breasts” to show how the same data was used differently but for this first extract, I cannot make such a comparison. There is no equivalent scientific extract because none of these stories came from the original collective biography workshops. They were not part of the pool of ‘data’ we allowed ourselves to use as we took ourselves up as appropriate-d social scientists. As academic writers we were denied the possibilities of fiction. As a literary writer, I granted myself the space to ‘create’.

Science will become literature...(Barthes)

Different forms and conventions in knowledge production create different knowledge and access to that knowledge. Knowledge production in universities has always been dominated by the grand narrative of Science. The humanist/ positivist project which, following Descartes, Hegel, and Comte, established the mind/body split, the desirability of coherence, unity and empirical knowledge, and the dominance of reason and objectivity (St Pierre, 2000, pp. 493-495), is only one of various stories that can be told about knowledge and about truth. This thesis tells some of these ‘other’ stories. Literary forms are also legitimate spaces for knowledge production. Indeed, “knowing and knowledge are fictions as much as fiction is knowing and knowledge” (2002, p. 208). Neilsen links the persistence of beliefs in positivist research that “knowledge is and must be proof, proposition, muscle for prediction and control” to the cult of the individual that has underpinned enlightenment thinking, capitalism and colonialism (2002, p. 208). Along with colleagues who name themselves with her as “arts-based researchers” (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Butterwick, 2002; Dunlop, 2002; Neilsen, 1998, 2002; Neilsen, Cole and Knowles, 2001; Piiro, 2002a, 2002b) and others who do not (Ellis, 2000; 2002c; Richardson, 1997; 2001), Neilsen envisages and practices research and writing that does not privilege Science over Literature. Although every genre, as Piiro elaborates (2002a), has its own diverse practices of legitimation, Science focuses on Method for legitimation. Barthes (1989, p. 318) describes how “[s]ome people speak of method greedily, demandingly; what they want in work is method; to them it never seems rigorous enough, formal enough. Method becomes a Law.” In practice, research projects emerge in complex contexts, and research work, according to Barthes (1989, p. 319), must also respond to:

the demand for writing, for a space of desire's dispersion, where Law is dismissed; hence it is necessary, *at a certain moment*, to turn against Method, or at least to regard it without any founding privilege, as one of the voices of plurality: as a *view*, in short, a spectacle, mounted within the text—the text which is, after all, the only “true” result of any research.

In this thesis, the texts – poetry, analytical papers, this thesis, the play, the autoethnographic text – are taken up within different generic and textual regimes of truth. In juxtaposing different genres in this thesis, both scientific and literary, I turn against (social scientific) Method as Law. The ultimate criterion of scientific respectability, of Method, is ‘validity’. In positivist social sciences it has been the function of validity to provide “epistemological guarantees” (Lather, 1994, p. 38). As Lather (1994) and others (Denzin, 1997, Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) demonstrate, rather than jettison validity in postfoundational research, it is more useful to reconceptualise it. In Chapter Six, I elaborate how Lather’s work of theorizing “validity after poststructuralism” (1994) has influenced the rewriting of “The Breast Project”. I do not, in this thesis, intend to inscribe any new Laws, privileging literary writing over analytical writing for example, but to trace the different workings of these texts, the various “spectacles” mounted within them.

The methodic practices of positivist social science venerate the integrity of data and, as the extracts from the analytical text in this section show, Müller-Rockstroh and I were careful to replicate textual practices that produce the author-ity of science. The validity of data, the degree to which it is presented as untainted, as pure, is part of Science’s God trick (Lather, 1991, p. 114). But science itself “is a performance” (Fine, 1986, p. 148) as much as literature, and in writing analytical texts we simultaneously perform ourselves as (social) scientists. For example, in the final report of the *Internationale Frauenuniversität*, our Dean, Professor Barbara Duden, names our collective biography project as an exemplar of the coupling of “creative imagination” and “learned discipline” yet she describes it in the following words: “A German midwife-anthropologist and an Australian sociologist worked together on an essay on the vagaries of the breast in memory” (2000a, p. 11). In this description, the scientific text, the “essay” is centre stage, the women, the stories, and our collective embodied space are erased, and Babette and I are legitimized as proper social scientists. I have become a sociologist despite having no credentials in this field of

study. We have “passed” (ourselves off) as social scientists because of the textual work we did in writing ourselves as social scientists in the research paper we submitted (Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, 2000). In the second of the three collective biography workshops on breasts that we wrote about in that paper, women talked about their memories of “nurturing breasts”. Subsequently Babette and I reworked part of our research into a conference paper and presented it at the International Association of Research in Mothering Conference in Brisbane in July, 2001. The textual conventions we took up to presented ourselves in this (con)text again as social scientists can be traced through that paper. A chunk from the middle of that conference paper is reproduced below.

(Extract from “Nurturing Breasts: Constructions of motherhood in contemporary women’s breastfeeding stories”, Gannon & Müller-Rockstroh, 2001, pp. 7—9).

....

One of the women who is training to become an ‘expert’ tells the following story about lending an authoritative ‘helping hand’, thus degrading the value of embodied knowledge, the instincts of the mother:

My hand on a milking breast that doesn't belong to me. Instead it belongs to a young mother, one that has experienced what it means to give birth to a child, to feel the changes of the body, psyche and status. In contrary, the hand belongs to me, young midwifery student, in theoretical professionalization but not bodily experienced herself: childless. However, we both as well as the nurses, doctors, etc. consider me to be the 'knowing' among us, 'the expert', the one who has learned to squeeze out the milk in the 'correct' way to make milking most effective to nurture a sterilised bottle handed out by my expert hand...

The status of an ‘expert’, the one with the education which has delivered ‘brain’-knowledge as opposed to body-knowledge, seems to legitimise the violation of the border of intimacy, to make it acceptable to all participants including the student herself. Nevertheless, the ‘voluntary’ submission of women to the culturally constructed orders that are made ‘natural’, comes as a surprise to the woman recalling

this moment. The docility of women's bodies in these inhumane contexts appears to turn their bodies into animal-like bodies as the same woman remembers her first introduction to nurturing breasts:

Actually, I have no memories about a nurturing breast until I became a midwifery student...My first introduction to nurturing breasts then is that I opened the door to the children's ward: right opposite the door I saw a young woman sitting on a chair to whose breast is attached one of these automatic pumping machines that extract flows of milk right out of her breasts. 'Similar to a cow' is the thought I remember – a milking machine.

While all the horrifying stories about the 'caring' situation in hospitals were memories of the non-mothers, interestingly enough, all of the participating mothers had breastfed their children, despite sometimes extreme pain, unease and difficulties in dealing with the new duties of being a mother:

I despised having to let my baby at my breast: I felt like I was a prisoner – knowing there was no escape because my 'keeper' was yet so helpless. I was the only 'lifeline'. Breastfeeding then felt like an 'obligation'. I shed so many tears. Waking up at odd hours, the thought of wrecking my looks was really a serious matter. Despite all that – I knew my baby 'needed it' and I had to give it. Bottle feeding was not an option. I can actually say now that breastfeeding was worth it. It was the only way to convince me that I was a mother and to nurture life from conception till 'hungry baby' was truly a memorable experience.

Anthropologist Vanessa Maher suggests "day to day decisions are made by women themselves" who may sometimes even "turn breastfeeding to their own advantage" (1992, p. 551). Yet, as this memory shows, in the detailed definition of an identity that had been vague before, it is still medical institutions – highly patriarchal and extremely hierarchical - that structure cultural practices and, thus, individual decisions around breastfeeding. Both these stories demonstrate the fact that, since the 70s, the medical model of breastfeeding that had previously propagated the bottle, re-incorporated psychological ideas and imperatives, such as the mother

and baby 'bond', as part of the reproductive assembly line, consistent with the metaphors of industrialisation that pervade medical science in the latter part of the 20th century (Martin, 1989). From that a new image emerged, that of the nearly body-less woman without her own needs and desires. This image is inscribed into women's bodies by medical institutions using their authoritative, and professional normative power to define what is 'right' and what is 'wrong'. By stigmatizing any signs of deviance for example with regards to 'the child's good' or its health, they exert a moral discourse of what it means to be a 'good' mother or a 'bad' mother (Murphy, 1999). In doing this, they do not work alone but are helped by other agents, among them the woman herself, who incorporates the proper behaviour that seems so logical into the rituals of her everyday life:

*Early in pregnancy
I start with my nurturing tasks:
I expose my breasts to the sun
To 'harden' the nipples,
As my midwife told me.
I put lemon juice on the areolas
To learn early enough how painful a nurturing relationship can
be
As my neighbour has told me.
I buy special bras
To support the shape of my breasts
As my doctor has told me.
When my baby is born
I restrict my eating to a carefully balanced diet of vitamins and
calories,
I don't drink alcohol
Nor do I expose my nurturing sources to the smoke of public
places
'For the best for our baby'
As my husband, the caring father, has told me.
I select my clothing to fit the needs of my baby's hunger:
Every shirt is chosen in terms of the time needed to unzip,
unravel or pull up
To be ready as soon as demand is uttered
Wherever I am
Whatever I do
While no one asks me about my needs
And no one nurtures me.*

Nurturing, thus, can give the sense that the woman no longer owns her body, rather it becomes the realm of the baby, or, rather, the realm of the culturally constructed needs of the baby as they are perceived by a society which has managed to engage some of its members to make sure that societal needs are filled.

...

In this analysis, we take up the abstract voice of authority, familiar to us from our other academic work. Both of us have followed academic trajectories that value reason and analysis of data as the foundation of theory building. Yet both of us are interested in bringing women's corporeal realities into the centre of our work. Collective biography seemed, as it had in my earlier work (1999), to be an ideal way of bringing in our bodies and of beginning to breach the object(ive)/ subject(ive) divide. When we came to write up the data of the memories we wrote as social scientists. We speak authoritatively and deploy a sophisticated analytical vocabulary. We use declarative sentences to present a version of 'this is how it is in the world as our evidence proves...'. We locate our particular knowledge project in a suitable academic lineage through citations to feminist anthropologists and medical sociologists. Our data, the memory stories, are pristine. They have been entered just as the women wrote them. We do not correct any grammatical errors to make the texts read more smoothly in English as that might "corrupt" our data. We mark them (off) from our own text with italics, indenting and single spacing. We enclose them in our own analyses. We follow the law of Method, of Science. Though we use insider knowledge when it suits us (perhaps to enhance our authority, as those who "know" what really happened), when we reveal that all the mothers in our group had breastfed, we choose not to reveal that one of the texts in this extract was written by one of us. Should we? Does it matter? Probably not, but as I write now, alert to the nuances of the text and its production, my "reflexive eye/ I" (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003b) reminds me of the textual tricks that are necessary in this sort of writing. Even in analytical writing about literature (the basis of my BA), the writing subject engages a "so-called scientific or parascientific style" which Barthes calls "*écriture*", it is the "unself-conscious writing of these discourses" and it maintains the tedious "old opposition between subjectivity and ...objectivity" (1985, pp. 164-

165). This “*écrivance*”, entailing the separation of subject and object, is evident in this text as we treat the memory stories merely as data, as “semiological or historical document(s)” (Barthes, 1985, p. 165). All the texts are distanced from us, now we are outside the circle of storytelling women, now we are (social) scientists. We have a thesis – that women’s experiences of breast feeding are culturally constructed - and we weave the memories into our analytical and explanatory commentary. We do not address other aspects of the text. For example, we do not comment on the “poeticity” (Brady, 2000, p. 954), the obvious constructedness of the text that has been shaped as a poem. This memory writer uses artful lexical choices and repetition to build a refrain through the text that reinforces her thesis that the mother’s needs are disregarded. All of the other memory stories are also textual constructions (as is our own text in which they are embedded and this text in which I again perform a sort of “*écrivance*”), yet we do not acknowledge this, rather we cite them as unproblematic data to back up our thesis. We take them up as transparent reflections of moments of lived experience. We position ourselves as “feminist” and we construct our text and our particular readings of these memories for presentation at a conference entitled “Motherhood: Power and Oppression.” We make this our topic. If we had been preparing the text for a different context, or if we had each been working with the memory stories individually, or within the constraints of our particular disciplines, other readings may have been privileged. But we do not articulate this possibility, we do not allow it to seep through into our story of ourselves as competent (scientific) researchers. Another story could be told about performing the text, as we did in a room full of people at a conference. This would be a story of other decisions, not visible in the written text – whether to stand or sit, how to divide the reading, which stories to project on the screen above the audience, and which sections of the paper to cut as our allocated twenty minutes evaporated while we sweated and slashed as we spoke.

In contrast, when I began to shape the memory stories that appear in the conference paper into a (written) literary text, other readings became possible. Other conventions came into play. As playwright I felt better positioned to represent the contradictions in breastfeeding memories of pleasure and of pain, of regulation and liberation. Some of the memories in the next extract remain close to the originals, others are compacted or altered for better effect, still others are invented. In this scene from the theatre script

(and as playwright I was very happy with this device), the colonizing and disciplinary effects of medical institutions on women's bodies are graphically and concisely portrayed when one woman lays her hand on the naked breast of another on a stage.

(Extract from Act Two, Scene 7 "The Breast Project" - ESW Conference, Cairns, 2001)

A medical waiting room with chairs and a table. Woman B enters dressed as a nurse. She arranges the magazines on the table.

Woman B: I was still in training when I visited a remote health clinic. The midwife shows me around the maternity ward. Grey, like a barracks. Each woman sits on her bed, silent, breasts exposed. But the babies are missing. One hand milks, the other holds the cup underneath. It's "better" for the baby not to drink the first milk, the midwife says. The mother has to squeeze it out and throw it away. The newborns are in the next building, screaming, waving their tiny fists, moving their little mouths.

Woman A enters, sits on one of the chairs and loosens her clothes. Woman B sits beside Woman A and reaches in to feel her bare breasts. While she feels the breasts, Woman B speaks to the audience.

Woman B: My hand's on a breast that's not mine. The breast of a mother. She knows what it means to give birth to a child, to feel her body change, her psyche, her status. But it's my hand on her breast. The midwife, the professional, the expert. My knowledge is in my head, in my books, not in my flesh.

Woman A begins to speak out aloud to herself, while looking at the audience.

Woman A: Wet T-shirts, sweat-shirts, soaking blouses, milk seeping through my bra. No pads can prevent me from leaking. There's a constant flow of liquids from my body. My inside turning to the outside.
Woman B exits.

Woman A: I am a prisoner – but there's no escape. My keeper is so helpless. I am her only lifeline. I shed so many tears. I wake up crying.

The thought of wrecking my looks is really serious. Will my breasts ever be normal again? But my baby 'needs it' and I have to give it.

Woman B, as nurse, returns with a baby and Woman A prepares to breast feed the baby. She arranges her clothes to shield the baby and breast from view. Woman B stands behind her and strokes the suckling baby's head, speaking to the audience.

Woman B: What do you think is normal? I ask them back, when they ask me that question. Breasts are as different from one another as women are. Every breast is normal.

Woman C enters with a baby and sits in one of the other chairs. She begins to feed her baby. Woman B monitors Woman C's technique, reaching across to adjust the angle at which the mother holds the baby, then exits.

Woman C: In Russia there's a saying – when you want to say that somebody is completely not paying attention to her appearance and clothing and when she is paying no attention to anybody we are saying “You look like a breastfeeding mother”...

Woman A still breastfeeding, speaks.

Woman A: My daughter makes the milk flow by bumping her little nose at my breast. I try to imagine a breast as big as my head in front of my nose and some eyes high above it watching me and smiling while I am suckling.

Woman C still breastfeeding, speaks.

Woman C: My friend died in the car on the way to the hospital. After they declared her dead her husband came to my house and handed me their little new-born son. He had to arrange to fly her body back to her family in Europe. I was still breastfeeding my own baby. I was so proud of being able to do one last favour for my friend and her little son. I could nurture him...not only with milk but with affection, love, warmth, sorrow and all my knowledge of what it means to be alive and beloved.

Both women exit stage with babies.

This extract takes up some of the same data texts as the earlier extract and it weaves them into a different sort of narrative. The message is consistent. In this scene, set in a medical waiting room, the scientific knowledge of the midwife is again contrasted with the embodied knowledge of the women who are mothers. In the discourses of medicine within which this binary arises, the midwife is compelled to violate “the border of intimacy” as we noted in the analytical paper, despite her reflexive awareness of the gaps in her own knowledge. That violation is embodied on the stage as the nurse touches the woman’s breast, delivers and monitors the baby and adjusts the breastfeeding technique of another mother. Breastfeeding is not ‘natural’ in medical discourse, but a complex set of procedures to be managed by professionals. The other women are mostly silent when the nurse is on the stage but they tell more of their experiences when her authoritative presence has exited. The ambivalent feelings that women have about breastfeeding as both diminishing and expanding their sense of self are apparent in the juxtaposition of stories that tell of imprisonment and of extraordinary acts of love. I have shortened and reworded some texts and I have included others that we did not use in our analytical paper. Of the stories in this scene, all were in the original data of the collective biography stories except the nurse’s speech about normality which is based on other conversations I had with Babette about her work as a midwife. This extract from the play is as firmly based on the data gathered in the workshops as the extract from the analytical text.

The theatre script, like the academic text, is about how it is to live women’s lives in women’s bodies, but it is about much more than this. The script ‘enfleshes’ the idea that breasts are “a microcosm of the wider world” for women (Maher, 2000) that underpinned our original breast project collective memory workshops. The extracts from the theatre script which I have included thus far are from a series of scenes where the collective voices of multiple women are represented by unnamed women. Part of the ethical practice of this project that I was developing as I negotiated my subjectivity as playwright-researcher was that I should retain the ‘truth’ of the ‘internationality’ of its origins, that the memories were generated by multiple women from different cultural and geographic backgrounds. Other scenes in the play revolve around three (imaginary) friends, located in fictitious scenarios and invented relationships and events which allow me to add more voices to the cacophony of

different stories in the script. In the later version of the play that is included in Chapter Seven, these three women have taken over the text but the multiple voices remain as a backdrop to their drama. In the next scene from the draft that was completed soon after we presented the ARM conference paper, my critical reading of brochures provided by a breast-feeding advocacy group is voiced by Judith and is informed by Vanessa Maher's work on the anthropology of breastfeeding (1992, 2000). Elsewhere in our analytical paper we discuss how the discourse of the 'natural' is deployed in arguments propagated by organizations that promote the ideology of "breast is best" (WHO, La Leche League, NMAA). The voice in the play is still didactic, still driven by a (liberal) feminist critique, but here that critique is embedded in a relational context, in Judith's dialogue with her friends, who do not appreciate her perspective. Thus, the critique simultaneously critiques itself, through displacement. It is located in the complex emotional arena of friendship rather than the dispassionate space of science. Multiple and conflicting allegiances come into play and complicate everything that can be said.

(Extract from Act Two, Scene 5 "The Breast Project" - ESW Conference, Cairns, 2001)

...

Judith: ...*(To Anna)* Tell us about the baby.

Anna: Not much to tell yet. But look! *(Pulling out a folder of brochures from her bag and passing them to Judith)*. I'm already on a mailing list...

...

Judith: Listen to this. *(Reading from a brochure)* "Breast milk is the best gift a mother can give to her baby." What about carrying it in her body for 9 months? Giving it a loving home? A good gene pool?

Anna: That bullshit detector of yours...it's still functioning then?

Judith: Of course ...listen. *(Reading)* "Breastfeeding delays the return of menstruation - this saves money and lessens the impact of tampons and napkins on the environment" – hello? Save the planet, have a baby?

Sabine: Were you breast-fed?

Judith: Yes. My mother was old-fashioned. *(Reading)* "Breastfed babies are very portable and you have 'instant', pre-warmed, ready-to-serve food with you wherever you go."

Sabine: Convenience food.

Judith: *(Reading)* "Infants' eyesight, speech and jaw development are all known to be enhanced by breastfeeding." Amazing. But wouldn't they improve anyway? As they get older? How did they measure this objectively? Or this: "Many women find they lose excess weight when breastfeeding." *(Passes the brochure over to Sabine)*. Great marketing.

Sabine: *(As she looks through the brochure)*. Do you have to rip everything apart Judith? You're such a cynic.

Anna: My Mum didn't breastfed me, don't know why.

Sabine: It wasn't the fashion, was it? Now it is again.

Judith: It seems to be obligatory - no matter if you're tired or you have to go back to work, no matter what.

Sabine: I did it. I loved it. You work it out. I didn't want to stop.

Judith: Isn't it erotic? Maybe that's why they discouraged it. Can't have women enjoying their bodies.

Sabine: The number of perving looks I got when I was breastfeeding. No matter how discreet I was. But a hungry baby is a hungry baby.

Judith: I thought you liked people looking at you.

Sabine: Oooh. Nasty.

Judith: Listen to this one: "Breastfeeding may lessen the incidence of cancer of the breasts and ovaries, heart disease and osteoporosis in the mother." Remember that scare about nuns having higher rates of breast cancer?

Anna: You haven't even been listening to us Judith. *(She shoves all the papers into her bag and stands up)*. Can't you just be pleased for me – for once - interested in what I'm going

through? That's why I came over, to share it with you. Not to deconstruct the bloody literature.

Sabine: (*Standing.*) And that thing about the nuns. That was because they'd never been pregnant, at all, not because they hadn't breastfed. Me and Anna are all right now. You've made different choices. You have to live with them.

...

In contrast to the scientific/ medical model, in the discourses of the 'natural' promoted by breastfeeding advocates, possibilities for resistance are shut off by diverse arguments. In this scene, Judith models a resistant reading of these discourses in a brochure, while, as "resistant readers" (Ellsworth, 1989) of Judith's critique, Anna and Sabine refuse to take up a critique that they read as both strident and as foreclosing on pleasure. The ambivalence that was reflected in the memory stories about the costs and the pleasures of breastfeeding for mothers, and the complex social contexts within which breastfeeding takes place, still thread through this extract but they are tangled up in the bigger story of the personal history of these three women. Arguments are not abstract in the play but they occur in complex relational contexts, more akin to everyday experience than the more distant perspective we established in the analytical text.

In this section I have compared extracts from an analytical text and one version of "The Breast Project" to explore how these texts worked differently, how they authorized different writing strategies, how the subjectivity of the author and what she could and couldn't do with the text was differently shaped in these different (con)texts. In the next section of the chapter, and into Chapter Six, I explore the particularities of writing for theatre. Thus far I have used extracts from sections of the play where multiple unnamed women speak, and from other sections where the characters of Judith, Sabine and Anna carry forward a narrative and explore issues that Müller-Rockstroh and I analysed in our conference paper for the Association of Research on Mothering. In the next section I move further into theatrical writing to unravel the processes of writing "The Breast Project" as a play and I locate this writing project within poststructural and feminist aesthetics.

Haunted by a universe of fictitious but real people... (Cixous)

I will now describe the process of writing “The Breast Project” and the changes that took place in the script and in my thinking about its shape and purpose. Here I consider how, from the original collective biography workshops right through its development into a theatre script, this project has been densely populated by “a universe of real and fictitious people” (Cixous, 1989, p. 126). The ghosts of the women standing just behind my shoulder as I began to write the theatre script of “The Breast Project” continued to proliferate. As playwright I began by selecting and distilling interesting or important ideas from this unruly cacophony, careful to retain the sense of multiple voices. As I began to shape the theatre script, I could still hear the women whispering into my ears. I saw myself initially as an ‘artisan’, who would merely construct a polyvocal text of the (unmediated) words of many unnamed women. I imagined a feminist theatre script as a string of monologues, like “The Vagina Monologues” which I had seen performed (Enslar, 1998). My ethic, as a researcher now writing a literary text, was I thought to “respect” the voices of the women who had contributed. As I worked on successive drafts of “The Breast Project”, another sort of integrity emerged. My aim shifted until conveying our ambivalence about female embodiment, and the undertow of all our memories, as *powerfully* as I could became the most ethical way I could proceed. In Chapter Six I explore what this meant in later drafts but in the early development of the text the multiple voices became one layer of a multi-layered script, a background to other layers of the script. Judith, Sabine and Anna in the present formed another layer. A third layer of the script, from which I have not taken any extracts in this chapter, but which added more characters to the text, revived the martyr St Agatha of Catania in Sicily, who, according to Catholic hagiography (Caxton, 1931), had her breasts severed in the third century AD. Telling “new stories from old,” weaving old stories into new ones by taking up women figures from the past, is a practice favoured by feminist theatre practitioners in diverse cultures (Cathcart and Lemon, 1988; Gamboro, Sarumpaet, Mitra and Sigurdardottir, 1995; Kemp, 1996). Cixous has used female (and male) ancestral figures like the Medusa (1981) and the Furies (Fort and Cixous, 1997) in her writing. My trajectory towards “The Breast Project” was also influenced by a week spent in the Hartz mountains exploring the life and writings of medieval poet, playwright and nun Roswitha of Gandersheim with drama teacher

Anja Sparberg and other women from the *Internationale Frauenuniversität*. From its inception this research and writing project has been populated by a universe of people beyond myself.

As a playwright within a community dramaturgical program, I wrote in a “crowded house”. I worked with a series of professional dramaturges within the Enter Stage Write program. At various times during that program actors read the script in progress aloud, and gave me feedback. The women at the ‘reflexivity’ collective biography workshop (Davies et al., 2003a) also read an early draft on a beach on Magnetic Island. When the first complete draft was written, I wrote to every woman who had contributed to the project at any point and sent copies of the play to all who wished to read it. In turn some of these women gave me feedback. Thus the script for "The Breast Project" developed as a collaborative and recursive text. Each “outing” of the script has folded back into and altered the text and my own understanding of how it is working, or not. Thus, "The Breast Project" remains continually in draft form, adrift, reflecting a poststructuralist sensibility where language is fluid, relational, open to the other.

If writing within a poststructural aesthetic can be characterized as a site “where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes” (Barthes, 1989, p. 49), then theatre – volatile, embodied, polyvocal, interactive – seems an ideal (con)text for poststructuralist work. It displaces the author into a space where multiple voices can (literally) be heard, and dislodges the written text from the (residual) grasp of the transcendental subject, the author-creator-controller-playwright. As research products, performance texts are amongst the new ethnographies that become both possible and necessary in “postmodern” times (Denzin, 1997, 2000). As *feminist* and poststructural texts, theatre scripts enable “dispersed and multifarious subjectivity...fragmentary and visually elusive impressions of female self” (Tait, 1994, p. 68). In this draft the three actors all play multiple roles through all the layers of the text. The play constructs a predominantly female world replicating the (con)text of the *Internationale Frauenuniversität* in which it began. As I have elaborated in this section, although the play has some context in my own life, the process of writing “The Breast Project” has been far from solitary. In theatre, relational contexts continue on into the staging of the play. The processes of realizing a text in a

performance on a stage are highly collaborative with all or any of the writer, dramaturge, director, designer and actors involved in interpreting the bones of story and character in the text into living, breathing, moving performances. I began this section by citing Cixous, as a way of envisaging the process of writing as one that is “haunted” by others. I will now look more closely at what Cixous says about the form and effects of writing for theatre and consider her words in relation to “The Breast Project”. This leads into the following chapter where I explore the radical rewriting that led to the draft that is presented in Chapter Seven.

I, the author have to disappear...(Cixous)

Cixous is as well known in France for her theatre texts as for her other work, and she has spoken explicitly about writing for theatre and how it differs from (her) other writing (Cixous, 1989, 1994a, 1994b; Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997; Fort and Cixous, 1997). She describes her foray into theatre as though it was the discovery of a new land:

For a long time I believed my texts would only live in those rare, desert places where only poems grow. Until I arrived at the Theater. There was the stage, the earth, where the ego remains imperceptible, the land of others. (Cixous, 1994, p. 152)

Theatre, the stage, the earth, the land of others. Theatre is a space of displacement and dispersal. When a theatre script is embodied, fleshed out by actors, the playwright is further displaced from her text, just another member of an audience. But the audience is not ‘just’ or ‘only’, they are essential. The audience creates the text of the performance:

In the theatrical text, the audience is implicated, it is actively present *in* the space of language. The audience is an essential *character* without whom no character would speak. Would speak (to himself, to herself). The audience is the reflexive *Self* of all the characters. (Cixous, 1997, pp. 99--100)

As audience member, as playwright, I split (or double) myself. In the audience at the first public performance of “The Breast Project”, a rehearsed reading at the 2001 Enter Stage Write Playwrights’ Conference, I did not know how to be, what to be. I experienced the first tremors of “that fragile moment when the classical subject of writing [the author] is in the throes of change, of destruction, in the midst of entering

into an arrangement” (Barthes, 1985, p. 166). I had heard the words of the dialogue coming from the mouths of actors several times but never without the weight of the written script on a table before me, ready for my busy annotations. I had not seen the emotions and the movements I had imagined and written into the script embodied in flesh. I did not know where to locate myself: near the back of the room where the friends who had come to see it had lined themselves up, or near the front of the audience where I could better see and hear the actors. I heard words that I had written, stories from my own memories, stories from my friends, fictions I had invented, coming out of other women’s mouths. I had to twist myself around, to submit to my displacement, to become audience member rather than playwright, so that I would not call out, “No, that’s not how you should say that line. That’s not how I imagined it”. I was irrelevant. Cixous captures this irrelevance in a response to an interview question about translations of her plays:

B.F.: *What happens when your plays are translated and performed in another language? Do they become strangers to you?...*

H.C.: They are always performed ‘in another language.’ That is, as soon as they are *performed*, it is another language. The first staging, even if it is in France, is already another language. (Fort and Cixous, 1997, p. 453)

Estrangement begins on the stage, when the text shifts from paper to bodies and performance, in the translation from written text to performance text where the playwright becomes another interested audience member.

As I, along with the rest of the audience, watched “The Breast Project” embodied at the ESW conference, we became another (multiple) subject in the space of the theatre. I began to tune in to the responses around me. I could not see their faces as I had chosen to sit near the front of the room. But people laughed, at the lines I had thought might be funny. They were silent in the tragic moments. No one left the room, or their seat, for the duration. The characters became more alive, more distinct, in the bodies of the actors, as the audience response drew them further out. I stopped thinking of them as actors. Sabine is a bitch, I thought, saying that to Judith. But they don’t exist, I had to remind myself, they are theatrical devices. The strange displacement, this disappearance, continued as the text was re-presented at the next conference as a work-in-progress. In an interview about her play “The Perjured City” Cixous remarks on this displacement. Working with Ariane Mnouchkine and the *Théâtre du Soleil*,

Cixous carries this displacement back into the recursive process of writing as she explains that she doesn't write endings until the actors are well into rehearsals:

[D]uring the time they rehearse, I myself am a part of them and of the audience and I keep wondering how, exactly, the play is going to end. I don't know! I don't know! The play is going on, reality is going on, this story is going on, I don't know about the end. (Fort and Cixous, 1997, p. 429)

This is where the otherness of theatre begins. Cixous sees theatre as a place for the "other," as audience and as characters, rather than for the author. Success in writing for theatre is contingent on the disappearance of the author: "I, the author, have to disappear so that you, so other, can appear...On the stage, I, the author, am no longer there, but there is the other." (Cixous, 1994, p. 141).

Writing an(other) text

The otherness of this text begins with its form as a theatrical outcome of research. This is not a unique approach but part of a movement towards experimental ethnographic texts that entail new criteria and aesthetics. Denzin sees performance texts as "the single, most powerful way for ethnography to recover yet interrogate the meanings of lived experience." (1997, pp. 94-94). It is becoming a convention for poststructurally inclined researchers to write scripts that destabilise the voice of the researcher, disrupt authoritarian hierarchies and emphasise the multiplicity of voices that contribute to any site of knowledge production. Such texts include dialogues between co-editors of an academic text (Ellis and Bochner, 1996; 2002; Norris and Buck, 2002), ethnographic dramas (Richardson, 1996; Richardson, 1997; Pelias, 2002), "fictional" dialogues about theory (Bartlett, 1998; Ellis and Flemons, 2002; Jones, 1999; McCann, 2002, Sanders, 1999), representations of workshops (Butterwick, 2002; Conrad, 2002) reader's theatre (Adams, Causey, Jacobs, Munro, Quinn & Trousdale, 1998) written for performance at academic conferences, as well as dissertations written entirely as theatrical scripts (Sanders, 1999). Though many of these texts use familiar theatrical structural and staging conventions (eg. Acts, Scenes, Settings, Costumes and Stage directions), performance in the wider world, in theatrical spaces outside academic contexts, is not a priority for these playwrights. Indeed, the language and content of these scripts may be too rarefied or particular to be of interest beyond their intended audiences. In "The Breast Project", I tried to

incorporate all my research into female embodiment into a theatre script which could be innovative, original and powerful. But I was also mindful of Denzin's warning that "(e)thnographers of performance must produce texts that are accessible and performable" (1997, p. 123). Remaining entirely within an academic milieu would have enabled me to work more independently and to pay little regard to the constraints and possibilities of popular theatre. No doubt, the novelty of a dissertation script would ensure an audience and volunteers to 'read' the script on some occasion(s). But the work of writers such as Barthes, Cixous, Richardson and Neilsen convinces me that ignoring the divisions between university and (outside) community, like those between theory and literature, is itself a poststructuralist project. Finally, I wish to write a play that enables other people - not part of my research and not (necessarily) part of my university - to take a critical journey of the heart and of the body, as well as of the head in that intense secular space that is theatre. As I elaborate in the next chapter, in writing "The Breast Project" through the characters of Judith, Sabine and Anna, and in persisting in calling this text a research product, I have relocated the work from a social scientific epistemology to an "epistemology of emotion" where my intention is "moving the reader to feel the feelings of the other" (Denzin, 1997, p. 228).

Emotion is fundamental to theatre and engaging this emotion is problematic when dispassionate academic texts move into passionate theatrical spaces. When texts are simultaneously located within academic and public contexts, it is difficult to resist the residual "cooling" effects of Science and Method. Just presenting a text as a script does not ensure its effectiveness as theatre. For example, in her critique of a script purporting to be feminist, Torres (1998, p. 412) claims that "patriarchal frames" of narration, dispassion, detachment, immobility, academic coolness continue to subvert the effects of such writing. Rather she says, we must engage emotion, theatre's greatest resource, "in order to capture/ ravish/ persuade the audience" (1998, p. 410). To Cixous, the power of theatre, although temporary and ephemeral (Fort and Cixous, 1997, p. 450), approaches that of religion:

Theater is a form of religion: I mean to say that there we feel together, in the re-ligere, the re-linking, the reaping of emotions....we need these temples without dogma and without doctrine ...where our dreads and our blindnesses are acted out. (Cixous, 1994, p. 154)

Onwards...

In this chapter I have demonstrated how “The Breast Project” was both science and literature. I explored the displacement and shape shifting that occurred as the text began to turn towards theatre. I detailed the collective process of developing the script that became one of the multiple layers of otherness around the text and the project. In the next chapter, I detail another layer of negotiations and decisions around the characters as I (re)wrote the script through the next major development phase. Validity and the subject are the key ideas that I interrogate as I explore how the characters in the text became more insistent, more coherent and more ‘humanist’ as drafts of the play became more ‘theatrical’ as that was defined in the context within which the play was (re)written.

Chapter Six - (Re)Writing "The Breast Project"

Stephanie waves the script around, pages fluttering, her arms flying everywhere as she speaks.

*"But what about **Anna**?"*

Everyone looks at her.

"I just can't get inside her..."

She looks at me and waits for a moment – I don't know what she means –then she speaks again.

"She's like....a shadow ... a phantom.... What's her story?"

Everyone looks at me.

"Well... she has to be there. The three of them were friends at sch..."

"But she's not... she doesn't seem... real" Stephanie cuts in.

I think of all the moments where Anna is pivotal to the plot and the details of her life that I have woven through the text and I begin to list them "Well she's a nurse and she's ..."

That's not the right answer. Stephanie's desperate.

"But I just can't get inside her."

Everyone's looking at us looking at each other. My stomach flips as I look at Stephanie. How could I have made her read a character who wasn't even real? After so much work, so many drafts, I feel like crying. Everyone's looking at me; trying to help me.

"What's her journey?" says Lou.

"What does she want?" says Tia.

"Well..." I swallow and start again. "She wants to be Judith's friend. And she wants Judith to see her Mum..."

"But that's not enough."

"What does she want for herself?"

"What's her secret?"

(Workshopping "The Breast Project," October, 2002)

Judith, Sabine and Anna were characters who emerged through the writing process, as I wrote my way through the messy mass of material I had gathered. I wanted to write a “poststructural” play, whatever I imagined that was at the time. Characters would be less important than the stories they spoke. I imagined a multitude of women’s voices chattering across and over one another, in different accents, suggesting different times and places and even cultures. A postmodern pastiche. A collage of multiple voices. But as I continued writing, I realised that I could not write the whole world. Rather, it is the local and the particular story of Sabine, Judith and Anna, that carries the emotional weight of the play, that engages the audience in this arena of “love, fear and chaos” (Daly, 2001). Cixous describes the paradoxical qualities of characters: “A character cannot be universal unless he is also *very particular*. It is only the very particular, the very precise that can expand to larger circles of imagination” (Fort and Cixous, 1997, p. 439). Many of the stories from the collective biography group and other sources shifted across to supplement the particular story of Anna, Judith and Sabine in later drafts of “The Breast Project”. The brief extracts from “The Breast Project” included in the last chapter give little sense of the thematic threads, woven through Judith, Sabine and Anna, of grief and the consequences of survival, of desire and denial, of sexuality, of the capriciousness of memory. These themes, dependent on the characters which carry them, make “The Breast Project” a more powerful text. They make it a work of theatre. Characters, who are like us but are also not like us, are necessary in theatre. If “[t]he audience is the reflexive *Self* of all the characters” (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, p. 100), so the characters are also “the reflexive *Self*” of the audience. Thus we move towards a “theater whose stage is our heart, on which our destiny and our mystery are acted out” (Cixous, 1994, p. 152). In this chapter I follow the implications of writing the other through the characters of Judith, Sabine and Anna. The shifts in the text that I describe required shifts in conceptualisation of the text as research, leading me to question validity and its (per)mutations, and also my own position, the subject of the researcher/ writer who I try to make very present in this analysis. Threadgold suggests that in feminist and poststructural ‘transformative’ writing:

[T]here has to be a very thorough understanding of the contexts, both material and discursive, in which we write, and a very detailed understanding of the materiality of texts (the resistances they offer to the meanings we want to make), as well as a sense of the new discursive spaces, the unthought, the

unspoken, that we are trying to make visible and audible in our writing. We also need to be constantly aware of who the 'I' is who writes. (1997, p. 56)

In this chapter, I *interrupt* my telling of myself as a researcher with a poststructural research inclination. I *dis-locate* the research practice which authorized the play, and I pull up and examine some threads of the tangled context within which "The Breast Project" had its genesis and further development. One of these threads had to do with the problem of Anna and what I came to see as the place of the "humanist" psychological subject in fiction. The particular and local contexts of production and reception of the script in JUTE and the ESW program, as well as the contexts of the initial research project, were all threads which (re)shaped the text and opened some possibilities (and closed others). In taking up these threads, I examine whether turning to theatre in developing "The Breast Project" might have required some of the concepts that poststructural theory puts under erasure.

In the previous chapter, I argued that theatre scripts are particularly liminal textual spaces. *None* of the extracts used in the previous chapter (from the 2001 Enter Stage Write Conference draft) remain in the version of the script that appears in Chapter Seven. In a sense, I suspect that the stories I tell here about these reworkings and their consequences ought to remain secret. They may have no place in this thesis lauding the textual possibilities afforded by poststructuralist theory. Some of the stories tell of how this shape-shifting theatre script - envisaged within a poststructuralist framework – seemed to become suffused with humanist desires. This chapter may seem at times less theoretically informed than the previous chapter, may be more a description of what (I think might have) happened and some musings on the consequences and how I understand them in relation to other works of theatre/research/theory. (Sometimes) I tell what seems to be a realist story, I take up a modernist position, the place of the ~~author~~ as playwright. I cannot tell this story without occupying that speaking position, however tentatively, and with acute awareness that:

The central text of theatre itself, the playscript, is the result not of one but of numerous potentially conflicting meanings/ interpretations. In its movement from page to stage, the script is subject to a multitude of rewritings by its many interpreters, the playwright, dramaturge, director, designer, actor, and critic, so that the "finished" text can be seen problematically as a cacophony of voices. (Hoffman and Sutherland, 2002, p. 2)

Rather than seeing this cacophony of voices as ‘problematic’ as Hoffman and Sutherland describe it, I have argued in the previous chapter that it is that cacophony of voices that provides the conditions of possibility for theatre scripts to be seen as poststructural texts. Multiple voices haunt the script both as it is embodied in characters on the stage and, as I have described, through the entire writing process. But in the later drafts of “The Breast Project,” such as that in Chapter Seven, the three characters have each become more ‘rounded,’ more realist, more coherent, and more convincing as ‘psychological’ subjects. In the latter part of this chapter I interrogate the version of subjectivity created for the characters in the script of “The Breast Project.”

Theoretically, Lather’s ongoing “fertile obsession” with validity in research (1994, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b) provides me with the other conceptual lens through which I can understand some of the things that have been going on - the shifts in the text and my own desires as playwright in relation to parallel (research/ writing) projects. At the same time however, I am mindful of St Pierre’s comment that, within a poststructural framework “feminists... have given up on finding out ‘exactly’ what is going on” (St Pierre, 2000a, p. 477). As Davies et al. (forthcoming 2003b) note: “‘What is going on’ is no longer a question we can answer with certitude about anyone else, nor even about ourselves”. Rather, they suggest, we might study ourselves as embodied, contradictory, discursively constituted, and constituting, subjects in the world. Thus in this detour into theatre, I examine myself as a subject in process as playwright/ writer. But in this chapter I make the further shift to consider the subjects – including Anna and her spokeswoman Stephanie – who ‘live’ in the discursive spaces of “The Breast Project”. In the next section, I examine the (textual and ethical) consequences of moving towards an evocative epistemology, an epistemology of emotion (Denzin, 1997, p. 266). Rather than excerpts of the play, through this chapter I make use of extracts from texts about various drafts of the play written by me and others involved with me in its development.

Validity

In this section I consider Lather’s question: “[w]hat might open-ended and context sensitive validity criteria look like?”(1994, p. 37). The context is specific and local, generated in the moments of ongoing possibility that enabled me to (re)work “The

Breast Project” within a collaborative context for a second year. Different configurations of validity arise in terms of the play’s feminist orientation, its origins as a research project, the micropolitics of production and reception and the discourses of theatre within which we (actors, dramaturges, writer) were situated. Although I take up some of Lather’s versions of validity, I do not offer a ‘grand narrative’ based on my work (or hers) – the definitive version of “validity after postmodernism” (Lather, 1994, p. 36). Rather, as is my intent throughout this thesis, I tell another of my “*petit récits*” of (this) writer (and this) writing (Selden and Widdowson, 1993, p. 184).

My intent in writing the “The Breast Project” was overtly feminist as I began to elaborate in the previous chapter. It could even be seen as a form of textual feminist praxis. In that sense I took up a strand of text-based feminist theatre where the playwright cannot “write on behalf of a general category of women [but] she can tell stories, creating her own fictions and specific biographies which compel cultural recognition of diversity” (Tait, 1994, p, 48). In the brochure for the JUTE Playwrights’ Conference 2001, I positioned the text as explicitly feminist for the audience of the first rehearsed reading:

[T]his play is an experiment in subversion. It tries to bypass objectification of women’ bodies by creating a world within the play which is completely populated by women: a space where only women define and describe women’s bodies. Instead of presenting any single ‘truth’ about how it is to be in a woman’s body, it aims to portray some sense of the diversity, complexity and contradictions that we experience as women. It tries to engage critically with some of the cultural and social constructs that define women’s bodies (eg. medicine, popular culture and particularly religion). It attempts to shift research away from an academic context into a creative and imaginative space. And finally, it aims to be amusing, shocking and emotionally engaging as theatre. (September, 2001)

My commitment was to fragmentation, disruption, subversion. It was also – despite poststructural (pre)tensions - to remain as ‘true’ as was aesthetically possible to the initial source material, the stories that had emerged from the workshops and subsequent stories. The desire to respect and preserve (these) women’s voices arises from a feminism that can be read as “thoroughly modernist...rooted in the

emancipatory impulse of liberal-humanism” (Hekman, 1990, p. 2), committed to ‘writing women in’ and assuming a direct equation between texts and (multiple) truths. In the beginnings of the first draft, there were many monologues around which I gradually wove the story of three (imagined) characters and of St Agatha of Catania. Scenes from the three layers of the script – the monologues, the friends, the saint – did not integrate or complement but disrupted and intruded on each other in order to trouble any ‘truths’ that might be glimpsed. The scenes where unnamed women emerged onto the stage and told their own breast stories were the core of the script. Although in the previous chapter I suggested that I took many liberties with the texts in the script, it is also true that in the early drafts I left the memory stories mostly unchanged, merely selecting amongst them, ordering them and shortening them. I stressed repeatedly to the dramaturges with whom I worked that I did not want to mess with these texts. This desire came not from a scientific paradigm but a feminist one where the integrity of the research project demanded respect for the voices of my ‘sisters,’ the others with whom I had begun talking about breasts. In that draft, the trace of ‘validity as authenticity’ (Lincoln and Guba, 2000) from positivist traditions persisted in my approach. This is characteristic in the work of many other experimental writer-academics. Disclaimers abound. Richardson’s work stresses the integrity of Louisa May’s voice, as I discussed in Chapter Three. More recent research poetry uses qualifying statements like “no changes – except in sequencing – were made to the actual wording” (Poindexter, 2002, p. 708), and “[w]e have “cut and pasted sentences... never changing words” (Kamler, Santoro and Reid 2001, p. 196). I have made equivalent claims in my own writing (Gannon, 2001). Similarly, researchers who have written up data as drama also make such truth claims: “[the script] is derived from verbatim ethnographic account work that has repeatedly been confirmed by informants as truthful in its representation of their behaviors” (Mienczakowski, 1996, p. 245). Despite our textual tricks, we keep one foot in a place from which we can claim a more traditional validity. We preserve the ‘real’, we respect the “authenticity of voice”, our radical work is shot through with the trace of the “romance of the speaking subject” and the “metaphysics of presence” (Lather, 2001b, p. 483). In contrast, in the later drafts of “The Breast Project” – although the unnamed women telling memories are still one layer of the script - I radically intervened in the texts that had remained more or less intact through the early drafts. I cut, intercut, changed, excised and merged them into the invented story of Anna,

Sabine and Judith which has finally become the (emotional and narrative) core of the text. Reading my research project now I wonder whether it is legitimate to claim the play as a research outcome. This thesis is about writing, though, not a sociological investigation into breasts. In this context, writing “The Breast Project” is a research practice in itself, separate from but also inevitably connected to the collective biography project. It is not *just* a question of evocative re-presentation of data. Nevertheless, it is also that and the question of validity still lingers over the text. I’m caught in an ethical “aporia”, one of the stuck places that we come up against when we “work the ruins” (Lather, 1998, 2001b) of what was research-as-usual.

A slight turn on the ethical axis brings new ways in which to conceive of validity in research-writing. Lather suggests that, at moments of aporia, we must be “resourceful, elusive, wily in finding a path that does not exist” (2001b, p. 482). Reconfiguring validity within poststructuralist positions is one of these wily paths. Validity is “multiple, partial, endlessly deferred” (Lather, 1994, p. 38), negotiated (over and over again) in specific locations in time and space around specific projects. In this configuration of validity there seems to be no space for grand claims. Nevertheless, some researcher-writers do make grand claims, sometimes even relying on Lather’s work. Many researchers who name their practice as “arts-based inquiry” claim that dramatic representation of research is intrinsically poststructuralist/ postmodern (eg. Butterwick, 2002; Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer, 1998; Cole et al, 2003; Conrad, 2002; Neilsen et al., 2001; Sanders, 1999). Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer, for example, claim that the particular form they call “readers’ theater” is most suitable for poststructural paradigms. They stake this claim through a reference to Lather’s *ironic* validity, which “proliferates forms, recognizing they are rhetorical and without foundation, postepistemic, lacking in epistemological support” (Lather, 1994, p. 41). Readers’ theatre is highly stylized, intent on minimizing realism and obstructing emotional seduction. This “presentational” form, they suggest, is most appropriate for data display. They create a binary between “presentational” and “representational” theatre. They stress that their ideal, presentational theatre, “eschew[s] realism in order to encourage audience members to use their imaginations...[M]eaning in presentational forms of theater is jointly constructed by playwrights, actors and audiences” (1998, p. 400). Thus presentational is equated with imaginatively engaged active participants, and, on the other side of the binary, representational is equated

with passive unengaged participants. They refer to devices of alienation developed by Brecht and they argue for a theatre that is not a source of “emotional escapism from the world” but that encourages the audience “to *think* about the world” (2000, p. 400). Thus they reify the binary between thinking and feeling, intellect and emotion, brain and heart. This, they argue, is what makes their version of “theatre” most suited to poststructural data presentation. In contrast, in the journey of “The Breast Project” from one major draft to the next, it has become more like what Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer call “representational” drama, the sort of drama that they suggest is *not* appropriate as a research outcome. In the sort of theatre they dismiss, the goal is to “create the illusion of reality on stage” and make the audience “forget – at least temporarily – that the reality on stage is indeed only virtual” (2000, p. 400). Although they see playfulness as characteristic of poststructural approaches to data (Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer, 2000, p. 403) and cutting back the data as necessary (2000, p. 405), it is the turn of “The Breast Project” script towards realism and emotionality that eliminates it as an appropriate vehicle for data display in this theory of theatre as research.

The first draft of the play threaded a tale of three friends through a postmodern pastiche of fragments, sudden shifts in time and place and parodies of popular culture texts (such as bra advertisements and breast self examination brochures). In the later drafts of the play, the realist tale of three friends in a particular place and time became the main line through the text and those fragments that were not relevant to their stories were gone. Those that remained were incorporated into this throughline. The ‘data’ stories that remain no longer burst periodically onto the stage without explanation periodically but they have been gathered by Judith in her work and they directly complement the events of the main story. The play moved from the first draft through the second draft from ‘head work’ to ‘heart work’ (as well). It became more emotionally engaging. The absent presence of two other characters - Judith’s partner, Lydia, and her mother, Edie - haunt the women in the play. From a play about breasts, it has become a play about grief and redemption as I elaborated in the program for the second JUTE conference:

One year ago “The Breast Project” was a massive collage of research material tenuously linked with the throughline of Catholic school girl friends Sabine, Anna and Judith. The grand theme of the play was ‘breasts’ and the

assumption behind it was that, as feminist anthropologist Vanessa Maher argues, breasts can serve as a 'microcosm of the wider world' for women. Last year I wanted to tell an everywoman's story of adolescence, fertility and death (through breasts).

This year, the play is the story of Judith, and her friends Anna and Sabine. Most of the research is still here but now informs their personal journeys and their collective journey. Now it is more acutely about love, and loss and friendship and family than breasts. It's more straightforward and simple but – I hope – more dramatically effective. The starting point of this project - a version of a research project I did in Germany with midwife-anthropologist Babette Müller-Rockstroh – now frames Judith's story. (September, 2002)

In reworking the text, I shifted my desire from preserving 'authentic voices' to making the play work best *theatrically*. This entailed a shift towards what Lather calls the "validity of tears" (1997, 2000a), a shift away from the origins of the text towards its reception, towards the audience, that audience who is "the reflexive *Self* of all the characters" (Cixous, 1997, p.100). This is taking up validity as "multiple, partial, endlessly deferred" (Lather, 1994, p. 38). As theatre, in the model of theatre within which I worked, the text has validity when the audience comes out emotionally affected by the experience, when the play has been a provocation to feel differently. As feminist praxis, the text has validity when audience members find spaces to think differently about the politics of women's bodies and sexuality. The validity of tears stems from "a renewed interest in affect, emotional responses, 'feelings'" (Lather, 2000a, p. 21), a shift to what has been variously called "the 'contamination' of subjectivity,...the pathos of the ruins,the return of sentiment and sobs " (Lather 2000a, p. 22). Earlier, Lather postulates a "voluptuous validity" where a female imaginary might create a "disruptive excess", where "women in their multiplicity can become – body, nature, maternal, material" (1994, p. 46). These dimensions of research representation emerge within a postmodern aesthetic and responsibility. Denzin says, "Those who write culture must learn to use language in a way that brings people together" (2000, p. 899). Theatre, necessarily a place of "self-conscious partiality, embodied positionality and a tentativeness which leaves spaces for others to enter" (Lather, 1994, p. 48), is one of the spaces in which to bring people together.

The script, embodied in performance, is the vehicle for a sort of communal experience. Although Cixous, like Brecht, writes theatre on an epic historical scale, she does not deny emotionality. On the contrary, Cixous sees it as the responsibility of theatre. The ability of theatre to evoke emotion in the audience is where its power lies:

What happens in the theater is that the audience will cry, which means that something important is opening up, a closed door opens. In the theater, you are not forbidden to cry, and it happens. It is unexpected, it cannot be calculated by the writer. I myself cry, even at my own plays, which is a surprise, because I don't cry when I write them. But when I see death and life exchanging kisses on the stage, it is a key opening suddenly the source of emotion. It frees the belief which has been frozen. The theater does provide a possibility for us, who have become socialized and dry, to relate again to higher emotions, to what is called divine by Saint Augustine, which for me is simply human. At the theater, we have experiences of resurrection. We cry with joy but we cry with sadness because we know that it will not last. Crying is a deepening of the heart. (Fort and Cixous, 1997, p. 450-451)

This communal emotional catharsis is something that Cixous says “only happens in the theatre” (Fort and Cixous, 1997, p. 450). In the aesthetic of theatre within which I developed “The Breast Project” - defined for me by the dramaturges and actors I worked with - the priority as I redrafted and redrafted the text became to deepen its emotional intensity. Comments from other people on the text’s effect(iveness) demonstrate the centrality of Lather’s “validity of tears” when the script is evaluated primarily as theatre rather than as research. The first extract is the beginning of a feature story in a local newspaper on the Brisbane-based dramaturge Sue Rider and her arrival to work with the ESW programme:

Award-winning Brisbane theatre director Sue Rider was reading out aloud the latest draft of a Cairns woman’s play about breast cancer when suddenly she couldn’t make out the words.

“It was the most surprising thing,” she says. All of us in the room were reading it for the first time and suddenly we couldn’t see the words because we all found ourselves crying.

“Oh, it was a beautiful scene and we all choked up at the same time. That was a lovely moment.” (Extract from “Action now sets scene”, The Cairns Post, 21/9/2002)

What makes the scene effective, or “beautiful,” and the moment “lovely” for the dramaturge, is not just the text, or just the emotion that seems to be triggered by the text, but the communal experience of emotion. Emotionality is not at first an ‘intellectual’ experience but an experience of the body – the eyes go blind, the throat chokes up, tears fall. Body, emotion and intellect are inseparable and a scene that ‘works’ engages them all and engages us together collectively in that experience. This is the power of the theatre, which, as Cixous suggests, is entirely unpredictable, and the most surprising thing.

Another pragmatic answer to the question of validity in “The Breast Project” is that the success of this project (both as feminist praxis and as transgressive research product) lies in the overleaping of the text from the university onto a stage in a theatre. Thus it must have validity in terms of the contexts of production and reception within the discourses of theatre within which I worked. The script must become an object of desire for professional theatre companies. Staging decisions are based on what will work dramatically and will attract audiences (or ‘bums on seats’). These decisions are driven by emotional and aesthetic dimensions of theatricality as is apparent in a comment on a late draft: “...it is absolutely beautiful. I laughed, I cried and cried some more and I can see it all unfolding on stage” (Suellen Maunder, Artistic Director, JUTE, email message, 8/3/2003). In my context – working with professional dramaturges and within a small company committed to producing work that they can stage in our regional city – I have charted a course towards production. I have shifted through this writing process from ethnographer to playwright. Once the researcher transgresses the line and enters the seductive space of ‘playwright’ other factors come into play. Straddling research and theatre, the writer must justify her work in terms of both “traditional academic categories” and “aesthetic, semantic and emotional” criteria (Mienczakowski, 2001, p. 473), producing “double the work to gain the credibility and status...” (2001, p. 473). And – despite any avowals I might be tempted to make to the contrary – credibility and status are intrinsic to the games of academic writing and of theatre. Otherwise this would not be a thesis and the first draft of “The Breast Play” would be languishing in a drawer. In this chapter I tell a counter-story, a modernist story, a humanist story, a confession, of how poststructural understandings of text and of the author-function – such as I have performed at different points in this thesis – are so easily undermined. Lather’s approach to validity

is “open ended and context sensitive” (1994, p. 37). Validity in theatre hinges on successful production, in the text transmuted into the fleshy space of stage, actors and audience; always contingent and mutable, changing from performance to performance, night to night, review to review, - always “multiple, partial, endlessly deferred” (Lather, 1994, p. 38). As dramaturge/ actor/ director Maryanne Lynch stresses, “mainstage theatre” in Australia is marked by an “expectation of a ‘story’ with Freudian-styled characters and a beginning, a middle and an end” (2001, p. 21). This was the trajectory that marked the progress of “The Breast Project” towards the potentiality of production. The role of each dramaturge within this aesthetic was to guide the text (the writer) towards this possibility, towards a proper understanding of “the dramatic form”:

When I first encountered the script, it betrayed its origins as a research project, containing sections of thinly disguised information, loose dramatic structure and articulate but undeveloped characters. Susanne worked with enthusiasm, thoroughness and imagination and her understanding of the dramatic form increased with every meeting. She made several breakthroughs in terms of structure, characterization and storyline, making “The Breast Project” one of the best-received presentations of the Conference. (Extract from Letter of Support, Sue Rider, October, 2002)

Earlier in this section I cited Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer’s argument (1998) that the presentational qualities and stylization of reader’s theatre highlights rather than obscures the research origins of a script. This quality in particular, they suggest, enables poststructural theatre-as-research. In contrast, from the perspective of a theatre professional, the revelation of the research origins of a text is a betrayal of the text in theatrical terms. The key to successful theatre, according to Rider, is “dramatic form” realized through “structure, characterization and storyline.” Both of these positions reify the binary between theatre and research. Lather’s reworking of validity as situated, partial, emotional, voluptuous, female enables me to think through “The Breast Project” as shaped within a feminist poststructural aesthetic that does not venerate the cool distance of the intellect over the excessive and emotional, and that allows the body as well as the intellect to engage with the text.

Subject(ivity)

In this section I pull up the thread suggesting that the persistent desires of humanism impacted on the text as I reworked it. I explore the idea that in order to craft a text that worked theatrically, that satisfied the demands of the “living collection of readers” (Barthes, 1989, p. 69) – the dramaturges, actors and audiences, with whom I have worked in my particular local context – I had to turn towards the characters and consolidate them as credible individuals. If the humanist “conscious, thinking subject as the author of knowledge” (St Pierre, 2000a, p. 494) has been put *sous rature* within poststructural theory, why have my rewritings attended so much to creating characters which seem to be (humanist) individuals? One answer is, as I have already suggested, that my turn towards the ‘validity of tears’, to a feminist poststructural validation of emotion, worked within and against my desire to produce an exemplary postmodern theatrical text. Another set of not altogether different answers have to do with the version of theatre - text-based, narrative and ultimately character-driven - within which I was working. I turn here to the words of those who work within the field. Dramaturge of the Australian National Playwright Centre, Timothy Daly, stresses that the most damning statement made about a script under development is “I couldn’t care less about any of the characters”. (Daly, 1999, p. 12). Not only do characters need to be credible but the audience has to have emotional reactions to them and on behalf of them. This is not “presentational theater” stylized to distance the audience and prevent “emotional escapism” into the text (Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer, 1998, p. 400). This is not drama for conferences or for data presentation. This is drama that has entered another space entirely, the space of live theatre.

In its workings of character and emotionality, theatre can be seen as having some affinity with the work done in collective biography. In Chapter Two of this thesis I suggested that it is the specificity of the particular embodied memories generated by participants in collective biography that leads us to the general, and thus to the possibility of understanding the collective/ discursive realisation of commonality. The specificity of our memories, the lived detail reverberating in the writing, provokes emotional and rational involvement in those texts. Perhaps this is not so much a “return” to humanism, that might be read as a “betrayal” of the postmodern or poststructural endeavour, but rather an insistence on bringing *specificity* to life through character and storyline that enables a collective realisation that goes beyond

what we might already (individually know). And another perhaps unanswerable question arises as whether this might, ultimately, be the *purpose* of art?

Local contexts, discursive and material, are also relevant. Theatre is a space of embodied narrative, where stories are told on and through the bodies of actors in the guise of characters. The actors with whom I worked in successive readings of “The Breast Project”, like Stephanie, demanded characters with substance, with materiality enough for them to occupy/ be occupied by them and to bring them off the text of the page into the text of the live space of the stage. The discourses of theatre within which we were located validated characters as if they were autonomous humanist individuals - each character needed her own story, her own secret, her own motivation, her own psychological story. The text must be the vehicle – initially - to realize this sort of character. These are the demands of those Others – dramaturge, actors and audience – who were involved in this project. These are the expectations which shape the work. Issues of theatre aesthetics, structures and practices – even at a local level - take place in a complex and contested discursive field. Realist approaches to theatre have been mentioned in the previous section through the work of ‘readers’ theatre’ research dramas. Theatre practitioners and critics provide other angles from which to read the micro-politics of production and reception of theatre (scripts). Sontag in the 1960s identified three “ready-made ideas” which delineate humanist approaches to theatre. Firstly, she notes the “connection between theatre and literature” which positions “the director as servant to the writer, bringing out meanings already resident in the text”; secondly, the “connection between theater and psychology” which posits drama as “the revelation of character, built on the conflict of realistically credible motives”, and finally, the “connection between theater and idea”, that “ a work of art is to be understood as being ‘about’ or representing or arguing for an ‘idea’” (Sontag, 1966, p. 165-169). In the collaborative context of developing the text of “the Breast Project” with dramaturges and actors, the shifts were towards coherence, consistency and credibility in the terms Sontag delineates – of idea and character manifested through a well crafted script. I do not mean to say that these dimensions are wrong or undesirable or outdated or in any way less worthy than more disruptive texts and performances. We need all sorts of theatre. And more broadly, as St Pierre stresses, poststructuralist projects “cannot escape humanism” which is always already implicated in such projects (2000a, p. 479). In feminist

theatre, parallel controversies arise about aesthetics. Whilst some feminist theatre practitioners see realist theatre as patriarchal, even as “the prisonhouse of art” (Tait, 1994, p. 28), others “move in and out of realism to suit their intention. .. especially where women practitioners want to reach the large audiences of the mainstream theatres and must pragmatically adapt to established modes of presentation” (Tait, 1994, p. 39). Yet, as is evident in the current draft of “The Breast Project” (eg. Act 2, Scene 3), non-realistic elements can still be incorporated into realist structures (Tait, 1994, p. 205).

Here I tell a story of how the play turned inexorably, draft by draft, towards characters and their interactions as the heart of the drama, and the source of the ideas of the play. I tell this as though it were a drift towards a realist theatre and humanist characters (and away from the pleasures of postmodern pastiche and textual trickery). The humanist self – the subject as an entity, as unity – is enabled through self-knowledge according to Foucault. The condition of its possibility is the “unbroken continuity running from desire to knowledge [*connaissance*], from the instincts to knowledge [*savoir*], from the body to truth” (Foucault, 2000b, p. 10). This, were it to be possible, is a masculine subject. Some feminists (Irigaray, 1985; Fuss, 1989) argue that woman can never be subjects within humanism. In contrast to the agentic humanist subject, for the poststructuralist subject, always in process within discourse, there is “only discontinuity, relations of domination and servitude, power relations” within which subjects are constituted (and constituting) (Foucault, 2000b, p. 10). The subject in this paradigm is always a fiction, at best it is a delicately poised illusion that enables us to hold ourselves together. In terms of the claims I have made about characters in theatre, what sort of subjects are the characters – Judith, Sabine and Anna? Although they do not exist apart from the intersubjective space of their relations with each other, their motivations spring from something ‘inside’ them – their own story, secret, journey, desire. Talking about characters in theatre, Daly uses language which resonates with both poststructural views of the subject and humanist views in his advice to playwrights:

[C]haracter is the soul of theatre. Theatre, more than film, is an exploration of character. Or, to put it better, theatre is about revealing: not the richness of character but its essential *mystery*. Human beings are mysteries. Theatre characters should be doubly so...Essentially a stage character is a symbol. A

symbol of not just the play itself, but of us, or rather, our inner life... A play exists in order to allow us to dream. A play itself is a dream, a fantasy, a rumination, a brooding, whether malignant or benign... Our fundamental job is to create characters so strange, mis-shapen and incomplete that they will not leave the audience's imagination alone, and audience members find they have taken the characters home, and even had their sleep disturbed...The strength of symbol is how much we are fascinated by what we know of characters, and yet, days or even weeks after the performance, we are still puzzling over their fragmented, contradictory, volatile and unstable natures. (Daly, 1999, p. 12-14)

In the aesthetic and discourse of theatre within which this play developed, the characters that carry the text must be simultaneously coherent, credible, logical – recognizable as humanist individuals (symbolic of “our inner life”) *and* at the same time they must be as complex, confused, un(self)conscious, multifaceted and as mysterious as ‘real human beings’. This version of the subject-character is not necessarily incompatible with a poststructuralist view on the subject. The “fragmented, contradictory, volatile, unstable” ideal subjects of theatre, the characters who work as Daly envisages, sound more like the subjects in process of poststructural theory – with a contingent sense of themselves as autonomous – but constituted within conflicting discourses through which they must - with great difficulty and many obstacles - navigate. The forward movement of the narrative, driven by the subjects’ actions and reactions, arises from the choices the characters make. But these are not the rational choices of the humanist (male) individual subject, they are choices driven by impossible inarticulate desires.

Give characters an inner life that is powerful, chaotic, at odds with their outer life, and most importantly, an inner life they do not understand. Give this inner life a power over them they cannot control. Make their language the means by which they wrestle with their inner lives. At the very core of them, have them galvanized by the contradictions of their own nature. (Daly, 1999, p.12)

This is the mystery of character. Such characters are the necessary subjects of live theatre. Despite being under stress, close to fracture, characters must have forward motion, must be active in this model of theatre, must have forward momentum, must be driven by something deep inside them as well as events outside them. This was how the ‘problem of Anna’ in the vignette that opened this section was explained to

me. Anna needed a 'subtext' of her own to bring her forward from the shadows. Without one she was merely a simulacrum of a human, all surface, and thus not able to meet the desires and expectations of those others who demanded her presence. This seems to suggest that Anna, and the other characters, are humanist individuals but none of the three women have the autonomy and independence from each other that St Pierre describes is the mark of the (masculine) humanist individual:

Because of its separation and distance from the outside, the individual of humanism...can study the outside, observe it, know it, make predictions about what the outside will do, and try to control it...[T]he self's center, its internal integrity, is elsewhere; it is not part of the outside, of the known, of social practice, of change, of time; it is uncontaminated by the outside, by the Other. (2000a, p. 500)

It is within interaction, intersubjective space, space that is contaminated by the Other, where the self is provoked into crisis in connections with the other that each character finds the possibility of resolution in "The Breast Project". This is more like a feminist poststructural subjectivity, which encompasses "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to her world" (Weedon, 1987, p. 32), which is produced "socially, through language in relations" (St Pierre, 2000a, p. 502). In contrast, "the female subject...is *of* the collective, ...knows in connection to, rather than in separation from..." (Davies, 2000a, p. 47). The *feminist* poststructural subject has multiple dimensions, her subjectivity "is fragmented, contradictory, always unfolding, embodied", constituted within discourse and connected to others and "to the universal" (Davies, 2000a, p. 47). Through Anna, Sabine and Judith, the characters of "The Breast Project", the ideas that drive the narrative to resolution have become connection, reconciliation and love: of mothers and daughters, lovers and friends. In this project, writing becomes the practice of love in Cixous' sense, of ultimate respect for the other, where ego lets go to make space for the other (Sellers, 1996, p. xiv). Theatre for Cixous also, more than any other writing, is "the realm of characters" who come to life inside the playwright as she writes them into existence:

There are those I detest, those I rejoice in, those who make me laugh; some who exasperate me, others I love and admire. They are characters full of color who tell me their lives. I note down everything they say. I write as quickly as I

can, trying to get everything down. I listen for their voices, through their conflicts, their encounters, their struggles. (Cixous, 1989, p. 126)

Thus is playwriting, particularly, a practice of love, of attending closely to the “universe of fictitious but real people” (Cixous, 1989, p. 126) inside her, each of them different to the playwright herself.

If one were to film the heart of a playwright at the time of writing it would be a most extraordinary sight. For one can give these characters enormous richness, all the richness and potential all of us have but which becomes crushed and thwarted in the onslaught of everyday life...we are no longer in the realm of the banal. I don't believe we can mobilize people in order to recount platitudes. I'm looking to write the essential, and this is what the characters who inhabit me, talk to me, sing to me, help me to achieve. (Cixous, 1989, p. 127)

This is what theatre offers, through the density and materiality of characters and the urgency of their dilemmas. There “must be an immediate explosion of meaning” (Cixous, 1989, p. 126). This is the sense of theatre that has directed draft after draft of “The Breast Project” from its initial conception. Although “no text can do everything at once” (Denzin, 1997, p. 287), this local and specific project is an entry into moral discourse, into “the seventh moment” – the future – of ethnographic research, which “interrogates and illuminates those interactional moment when humans come together in their struggles over love, loss, pain, joy, shame, violence, betrayal, dignity” (Lincoln and Denzin, 2000, p. 1052).

Onwards...

In this section I have taken up the modernist/ humanist stance of the writer in order to construct a subject position from which I can speak about writing. It should be obvious though that we all – playwright, dramaturge, actors, character – are constituted in a collective discursive space. When the writer goes home to her computer to generate the next draft, she works on a text which both *is* and *isn't* hers. Of course it is her name that is inscribed as “playwright” on funding applications, programs, and awards. Others are acknowledged in the text but do not have the same access to the title as the one who sits and taps on her keyboard. Yet, more than anyone, this writer knows that this text is “a multi-dimensional space... a fabric of quotations resulting from a thousand sources of culture” and her role as writer has

been merely “to mingle writings” (Barthes, 1989, p. 53). In “The Breast Project”, competing discourses of femininity, loyalty, connection, mortality and sexuality create the discursive space of the text. And, ultimately, the writing is both the space of creation and of disappearance of the author-playwright:

Writing is that neuter, that composite, that obliquity into which our subject flees, the black-and-white where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes (Barthes, 1989, p. 49).

Like Anna and Stephanie, the actor who is her advocate, and many others, as playwright I also ‘live’ in the discursive spaces of “The Breast Project”. As Butler stresses, “discourses actually live in bodies. They lodge in bodies; bodies in fact carry discourses as part of their own lifeblood. And nobody can survive without, in some sense, being carried by discourse” (Meijer and Prins, 1998, p. 282). In writing this play, collaboratively and contingently, in naming characters and giving them histories and desires and trajectories which intersect and conflict, this writer has patched herself together for a time, been constituted and embodied herself as ‘playwright’. She has patched together characters in the guise of subjects within the text. But in the space of the play as theatre – in performance - it is the corporeal bodies of the character-actors who carry and are carried by discourses, and the audience who are “the site where this multiplicity is collected” (Barthes, 1989, p. 54), while the writer herself – if you look very quickly - might be glimpsed “diminishing like a figure at the far end of the literary stage” (Barthes, 1989, p. 51-52).

Chapter Seven - "The Breast Project" script

THIS CHAPTER HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

Chapter Eight

Writing the self writing – auto/ ethnography

[T]he self both is *and* is not a fiction; is unified and transcendent *and* fragmented and always in process of being constituted; can be spoken of in realist ways *and* cannot; its voice can be claimed as authentic *and* there is no guarantee of authenticity. (Davies et al., 2003a)

In this detour of the thesis I explore the problematic and productive practices of “*auto-ethnography*” in social scientific writing. I have written elsewhere about the difficulties of reflexively writing the self within poststructuralism (Davies et al., forthcoming-a; Gannon, 2002). Here I unravel “the subject” as she writes herself (and others) into existence in autoethnographic texts. In this thesis, autoethnography is of interest firstly because it has been taken up as postmodern research practice (Akindes, 2001; Bochner and Ellis, 1996; Jago, 1996; Jones, 1999; Lau, 2002; Mykhalovsky, 1996; Reed-Danahy, 1997; Ronai, 1998, 1999; Spry, 2001); secondly, because it has been used in interesting ways in teacher education (Bass, 2002; Brodkey, 1996; Kamler, 2001); and finally, because (re)writing the self is a strategy that I have used extensively in my own life and work, initially within humanist frames of self-awareness and latterly to begin to put “self-awareness” under erasure (Gannon, 2002). This detour consists of three chapters. Chapters Eight and Nine are more analytical or theoretical whilst the text in Chapter Ten, an autoethnography, is more “performative” (although of course analysis and theory are performances as much as creative or personal writing, and creative and personal writing also engage in a certain theory-building). In this chapter – alert to the enormous potential of reflexive practice - I begin by interrogating the emergence of autoethnography as a distinct research paradigm. I’m interested in tracing the production and consumption of ‘autoethnography’ in qualitative research. I’m interested in how my own work (Gannon, 2002) articulates with (and against) work that is published and named autoethnographic. In this analysis, I am caught in a space where “I consider the possibilities of speaking selves to be great, and the liabilities of an *untheorised* return to the ‘I’ to be even greater”

(Probyn, 1993, p. 11, my italics). My dilemmas about autoethnography, its theoretical allegiances and textual practices are germane to the particular autoethnographic text that I include in Chapter Ten of this thesis. This text began as a personal/ professional autobiographical text that I wrote in a teacher education professional development context several years ago. It was written as a more or less linear reflexive narrative of my life as a reader/writer/ English teacher. In Chapter Ten, I have messed around with that original material to (re)present that text with a poststructural attentiveness to what and how I write the text (and the text writes me). In the version of the autoethnography that I present in Chapter Ten, the text has shifted far away from the educational / schooling context with which it began. One of my struggles in (re)presenting and (re)writing this text, for this (con)text, in a thesis on poststructural writing practices, has been to simultaneously lay bare and trouble the (humanist) discourses of literacy and teaching professionalism with which it was infused. Ultimately, the text moved from schooling into the realm of “selving.” Overall, in this section of the thesis, I am impelled to both “do and trouble” autoethnography, to work “within/ against” autoethnography (Lather, 2001a, p. 204).

In this chapter, to begin the (de)tour, I look at the methodological and textual practices of autoethnography. I begin with an introduction to autoethnography as a research practice and introduce some of the dilemmas involved in writing autoethnography. In the next sections of the chapter I interrogate some of the work of Ellis and Bochner who, for reasons I will outline, have been central in defining the emerging field of autoethnography in qualitative research. This strategy is compatible with investigations of the work of, for example, Richardson or Cixous in earlier chapters of this thesis. In this chapter, however, I generate a multilayered reading of the new chapter dealing with autoethnography in the second edition of the *Handbook of Qualitative Inquiry* (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). I read this definitive chapter a number of times, analyzing its structure and rhetoric. Finally I take up a reading position through “Sylvia,” a postgraduate student like myself, who is embedded in the text. Sylvia becomes a sort of “hinge” (Derrida, 1976, p. 65) through which I come to an-other reading of the chapter and of the type of autoethnography that Ellis and Bochner are producing in that text. In the final section of

this chapter, I explore critiques of autoethnography and of the (im)possibilities of speaking the self by Lather, Probyn, St Pierre and Clough, each of them speaking from positions informed by poststructuralism. This leads into the following chapter where I examine how French poststructural writers – Foucault, Barthes, Derrida and Cixous – take up (and do not take up) practices of writing the self.

Auto/ethnography emerges

There has been a surge in autoethnographic writing in recent years. Indeed, Clough claims that it has rapidly become “the most developed form of experimental ethnographic writing” (2002a, p. 280). My own interest, and practice, in writing a self within poststructural theory (Gannon, 1999; Gannon, 2002) has paralleled this surge. Much of the writing published under what has been characterized as the “broad rubric of autoethnography” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 739) entrances and engages me¹. Autoethnography has been identified by numerous authors as potentially provocative of new ways of approaching writing and thinking in the social sciences (Denzin, 1997, Denzin and Lincoln, 2000a; Tierney and Lincoln, 1997; Tierney, 1998; Van Maanen, 1995). In this chapter, I examine what it means to name a text “autoethnographic”, and couple this with a poststructural stance on textuality. In this section I trace the emergence of autoethnography as a research paradigm, and how it has been named, shaped and contested². I begin by exploring my own writing within this frame.

Initially, I did not call my personal writing “autoethnographic”. (Indeed, I need not do so now. But I do because I am interested in exploring the tensions that this move provokes). In the first article that I submitted to a journal for solo publication, I called my stories “poststructural” and “feminist” and “autobiographical”. I claimed to write myself as a

¹ In the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Ellis and Bochner subsume examples of the following writing practices under “autoethnography”: personal narratives, narratives of the self, personal experience narratives, self-stories, first person accounts, personal essays, ethnographic short stories, writing-stories, complete-member research, auto-observation, opportunistic research, personal ethnography, radical empiricism, literary tales, lived experience, critical autobiography, self-ethnography, radical empiricism, socioautobiography, autopathography, evocative narratives, personal writing, reflexive ethnography, confessional tales, ethnographic memoir, ethnobiography, autobiology, collaborative autobiography, ethnographic autobiography, emotionalism, experiential texts, narrative ethnography, indigenous ethnography, ethnic autobiography (2000, p. 739).

² For example, see the special issues of *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 28 (5) (1999), *Qualitative Inquiry* 6 (2) (2002) and *Qualitative Studies in Education* 15 (4) (2002)

woman writing stories (of divorce) into and against multiple discourses. I took up personal writing in the way that Davies explains:

not in order to produce an autobiographical account of a particular life (though of course it can be read that way), but because the detail of the texts of life as I have lived it as an embodied being provide an immediate and vivid resource for examining the constitutive power of discourse (Davies, 2000a, p. 10).

The “texts of life as I have lived it” are the foundation of collective memorywork and aspects of the poetry and the play in this thesis. In autoethnography, the texts of the “self” are uncoupled from the collective contexts of memorywork and playmaking. The writing context, in autoethnography, appears to be just “me” here writing “mystory” (Denzin, 1997). However, this is always already compromised within a poststructural paradigm where, as Barthes suggests, “the subject of the speech-act can never be the same as the one who acted yesterday: the *I* of the discourse can no longer be the site where a previously stored-up person is innocently restored” (Barthes, 1989, p. 17). Autoethnographic writing might be seen as a naïve presumption of innocence in a context where “the legacy of poststructuralist textual criticism is an evacuation of any ground upon which one could speak the self” (Probyn, 1993, p. 14). The strategy I used in the paper I submitted to the refereed research journal was to emphasise the instability of my “I,” to displace any singular position from which I could speak/write, by contrasting four different written versions of the same event, a prelude to divorce. The anonymous reviewer raised another question that I call here the “So what?” question. S/he astutely suggested how I might rewrite the paper to: “counteract the very ordinary (though horribly personal and important) topic of divorce, where the reader may think, ‘Oh, Lord here’s another divorce story’”³. Writing personal stories – even when they are multiple contradictory versions of the same event – if they are not rigorously theorized isn’t enough to answer the “So what?” question that the reviewer stressed is important in (all) publishing. The “So what?” question continues to be relevant to debates about and within autoethnographic practice. In this chapter I track some of the practices of

³ This article was finally rewritten and published (Gannon, 2002). I am deeply indebted to the anonymous reviewer who assisted me to shape my text and my thinking. Academic publishing is almost always a collective exercise marked - if at all - in the borders of the texts we write (in footnotes, acknowledgements, prefaces or postscripts). Our texts are crisscrossed with the invisible tracks of reviewers and the peers who have read our work through draft after draft.

autoethnography and the regimes of truth within which it operates. I question autoethnography through a poststructural frame on the subject and on the (im)possibility of writing the self.

Autoethnography can be seen as an emergent genre and set of practices, but it is also part of a “long tradition that favors autobiography and lived experience as the sites for reflexivity and selfhood” (Denzin, 2001, p. 12). Autobiography comes from the Greek words “*autos* (self), *bios* (life), and *graphie* (writing)” (Buss, 1993, p. 14). It is a literary description that has been used for centuries, most often for books written by public men recording their lives for posterity. Buss, in her study of Canadian women’s autobiography, describes the effects of (post)modernity on the genre through the twentieth century: “we have moved from emphasizing the ‘bio’ as life history, to beginning a re-examination of our sense of what ‘auto’ or self means, to questioning the whole problematic of language as ‘graphie’” (Buss, 1993, p. 15). Using the term “autoethnography” signals a shift in *frame* from a literary field to a research field (though, as this thesis demonstrates, these categories are unstable and any binary between them is subject to collapse). Brodkey describes autoethnography as “a genre of autobiography that ‘opens up a space of resistance between the individual (*auto-*) and the collective (*ethno-*) where the writing (*-graphie*) of singularity cannot be foreclosed” (Brodkey, 1996, p. 28, citing Lionnet, 1990, p. 391). She describes it as a strategy for writing “from the contact zone” of complex social spaces (Brodkey, 1996, p. 28). In another (con)text, Ellis and Bochner describe autoethnography as “an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (2000, p. 743). Neumann describes it as a convergence of inward and outward lookings, a term of “textual analysis and an orientation to textual production... [that] renames a familiar story of divided selves longing for a sense of place and stability in the fragments and discontinuities of modernity” (Neumann, 1996, pp. 173-174). In anthropology, autoethnography is used in a “double sense”, synthesizing “both a postmodern ethnography in which the realist conventions and objective observer position of standard ethnography is called into question, and a postmodern autobiography, in which the notion of the coherent, individual self has been similarly

called into question” (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 2). Autoethnography (dis)locates the self into the social, into discourse, whilst the traditions of autobiography (p)reserve a place for the coherent speaking self at the centre. In autobiography, lived experience is the ground for the production of the self and the reflexive autobiographical writer traces his formation from a backwards view over a singular life. Denzin suggests that, in postmodern times, autoethnographers must struggle “to find a narrative voice that writes against that tradition” (Denzin, 2001, p.12). Within postmodernism, experience is “a labyrinth with no fixed origins and no firm center, structure, or set of recurring meanings” (Denzin, 1997, p. 36). Writing “against” the equation of self with lived experience is a necessary move because modernist reflexivity is a “trap” that “too easily reproduces sad, celebratory, and melodramatic conceptions of self, agency, gender, desire, and sexuality” (Denzin, 2001, p.12). The trap for autoethnography is the textual reproduction of selves that are subjectively reflexive but unreflexively humanist and modernist in their substrate. Thus, Denzin suggests, “[t]here is a pressing need to invent a reflexive form of writing that turns ethnography and experimental literary texts back ‘onto each other’” (Denzin, 2002, p. 12, citing Clough, 1998). A postmodern text might display a Bakhtinian “parallax of discourses” where “nothing is ever stable or capable of firm and certain re-presentation” (Denzin, 1995, p. 8). My project throughout this thesis, rather than finding a definitive new form, is to play with various reflexive forms of writing and to co-locate them with other writing and so to fold texts back onto one another. In this detour of the thesis, autoethnography is the genre I unravel.

In the autoethnographies that I discuss in this chapter, the contact zone (Pratt, 1991) is predominantly the self looking at the self. This sort of autoethnography aims to “reveal the fractures, sutures and seams of self interacting with others” (Spry, 2001, p. 712). That self is always embedded in social and cultural contexts. From a poststructural perspective, that self is always constituted by and constituting her-self within multiple and contradictory discourses. “Selving” is an active and tenuous project. Autoethnography has the potential to enable the writer to catch herself – for moments here and there - in the act of spinning the web of herself in discursive spaces (Davies, 1994, p. 83). Unlike the collective biography discussed in Chapter Two, writing

autoethnography requires the writer to work more or less alone on pulling up the tangled lines of her life (Davies et al., 2002). If she were writing a *poststructurally* informed autoethnography, the researcher would not write her life in order to sort and separate the threads, to get at “the true story” or at “what really happened” or at “how this made me what I am today”. She would not aim to extract a linear story, or to “impose definitive contours”, but to interrogate the always in motion “lines of subjectification” operating on and through her at different points of her life (Deleuze, 1992, p. 161). In Deleuze’s reading of Foucault, these lines act upon us not as psychological individuals but as people who “belong to social apparatuses [*dispositifs*] and act within them” (1992, p. 164). He suggests that “it is necessary to distinguish what we are (what we are already no longer) and what we are in the process of becoming: *the historical part and the current part*” (Deleuze, 1992, p. 164). Deleuze is talking here about the vast (and minute) discursive movements of history, of whole societies. However, applied to the individual, we could conceive of autoethnography as a strategy to identify in and around ourselves – as embodied individuals living and acting with others within social apparatuses - those discourses which are deeply sedimented, that are *historical*, from which we are already pulling away but which continue to pull at us. It could be a strategy which cracks open ways of thinking otherwise, to explore *the current part*, the discourses which track and enable ‘becoming’, which make ‘creativity’ possible (Deleuze, 1992, p. 165). This conceptualization of autoethnography as *poststructural practice* stresses that individuals – even the writer writing and deconstructing her-self – are never outside discourse, that discourse is never static, that discourses are as much constituted and constitutive of the others with whom we interact in social space as of ourselves, and that subjectivities are fluid and contingent. In this chapter I am interested in moving through autoethnography to a point where “the trick ...is to think and use the self – to follow the lines of subjectification – without falling into a humanist and universal individualism” (Probyn, 1993, p. 111).

Although I argue that autoethnography can be taken up as a poststructuralist practice, and this is a general claim that has been made for autoethnography, there are relatively few texts that perform autoethnography, use poststructural textual ideas and reference

poststructural theorists⁴. Sometimes the theoretical underpinnings of autoethnographic work are implicit, vague or self-referential, leaving, at worst, a vacuum that can be read as vacuous or as solipsistic. In this chapter I take the position that it is because of the potential of autoethnography to be a powerful tool, that there is a need, each time, to ground it theoretically. Otherwise such events as the slippage of autoethnography into therapy, or the resurgence of the humanist individual as the “ground” for autoethnographic work – both of which I discuss in this chapter – can go unnoticed or unremarked, or the consequences of these moves might not be considered as carefully as they could. Elsewhere in this thesis I have argued for necessary liaisons between theory and literature, between academic writing and creative writing. In this thesis I have performed writing that is unorthodox and argued that it be deemed acceptable as academic product. In this chapter, I argue that experimental writing should also be grounded theoretically⁵.

Autoethnography can also be seen as quite a new genre, named as an approach to qualitative research relatively recently⁶. It has been delineated and given credibility (as academic discourses generally are) through publication. In this section I trace the emergence of autoethnography through significant publications. As I have already noted in this chapter, and traced through an entirely different project in the section on “The Breast Project” play, all texts are produced within complex contexts with particular regimes of truth and practices of legitimation. The text that I read on the bias in the next section of this chapter, is the chapter on “autoethnography, personal narrative and reflexivity” that was commissioned from Ellis and Bochner for the second edition of the *Handbook of qualitative inquiry* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000a). The editors invited the chapter, because: “the first edition [in 1994] didn’t sufficiently highlight autoethnography and personal narrative” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 733). The authors set out “to show how important it is to make the researcher’s own experience a topic of investigation in its own right” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 733). Autoethnography, they suggest (Ellis and

⁴ Some that do are Akintides (2001), Jago (1996), Jones (1999), Lau (2002), Mykhlovsky (1996), Ronai (1998, 1999) and Spry (2001).

⁵ Although I am aware that the academic writing I do in this section and elsewhere in this thesis (also) has problematic parameters (see Prain, 1997 and footnote 13 of this chapter).

⁶ Hayano (1979) and Lionnet (1990) are variously credited for coining the term. .

Bochner, 2000, p. 733), is the correct response to the much discussed “crisis of representation” (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000b; Flaherty, Denzin, Manning and Snow, 2002; Tierney, 2002a). As Ellis and Bochner note in their chapter, handbooks are very powerful texts, particularly when they are as successful as this one has been. More than any other academic publication, handbooks serve to delineate a field and legitimate research practices and protocols. They “provide citations and sources, a sense of history, and arguments others can use as justifications for their own work” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 734). The inclusion of this chapter in the second edition of the handbook marks “autoethnography” – as it is elaborated and exemplified by Ellis and Bochner - as legitimate qualitative research. It marks Ellis and Bochner as the authorities in the field⁷. They have written extensively on autoethnography, with Ellis in particular publishing a string of autoethnographic journal articles and chapters (Ellis, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Ellis and Bochner, 1992; Ellis and Dent, 2002; Ellis and Flemons, 2002; Ellis, Kiesinger and Tillmann-Healey, 1997). They have further delineated the field through the book series “Ethnographic alternatives” published by AltaMira Press and edited by them. By 2003, there were thirteen volumes in the series, two of them collections edited by Ellis and Bochner (1996a, 2002a). The book series emerged in response to the passionate response to a call for papers for a special issue of the *Journal of contemporary ethnography* guest-edited by Ellis and Bochner (1996c) on “experimental approaches” to ethnography:

[W]e literally were *swamped*...we had touched a *hot nerve* extending across the fields of social science...Many of these scholars expressed a *hunger* for alternatives... (Ellis and Bochner, 1996a, p. 9, my italics)

Discussions about autoethnographic practices continue to be passionate and, as Clough notes in her reading of Ellis’s *Final Negotiations* (1995) about the chronic illness and death of her husband, the texts that are written within this frame can be so “hot” that they are difficult to critique (Clough, 1997). Autoethnography, as it has developed, relies on

⁷ In an imaginary reconstruction of an “ethnographer’s ball”, to show how the field has changed since the original ball in 1980, the two (new) tables near the door are “the postmodern ethnographers” headed by Denzin and including Richardson, and “sitting next to the Denzin clan and closely aligned with them is the group of ethnographers who claim autoethnography, introspection and complete membership” headed by Ellis (Adler and Adler, 1999, p. 443). Accordingly, I focus here on the work of Ellis who is so influential in delineating the method(s) of autoethnography.

the “validity of tears” (Lather, 2000a, 2001a), and the “epistemology of emotion” (Denzin, 1997), criteria on which I have staked my claims for the validity of “The Breast Project”. In the first collection she co-edited with Bochner, Ellis stresses that autoethnography need not be “primal” because “[m]ost of life is commonplace...a lot of autoethnography will focus on details of everyday life that won’t provoke these raw emotions” (Ellis and Bochner, 1996b, p. 23). Nevertheless, common themes of autoethnography, as Clough notes, are drug abuse, sexual assault, child abuse, rape, incest, anorexia, chronic illness and death (Clough, 2000a, p. 287). In recent work, the slippage into a model of autoethnography-as-therapy is made explicit, even ideal (Bochner and Ellis, 2002a). Ellis consistently promotes emotionality as a sort of writing technology in order to produce exemplary “evocative autoethnography” (Ellis, 1997). Through the volume and locations of her writing, Ellis wields more influence than any other researcher in shaping the current practices that are called autoethnography⁸. The chapter in the *Handbook of Qualitative Inquiry* (Ellis and Bochner, 2000) is the most definitive version to date of Ellis’ approach and textual practices. Compared to papers on abortion (Ellis and Bochner, 1992), the death of her partner (Ellis, 1995), and her relationship with her ailing mother (Ellis 1996, 2001), the Handbook chapter is a relatively ‘cool’ text emotionally and therefore more accessible to critique. In the next section of this chapter, I present my reading(s) of that chapter.

Reading autoethnography (with Sylvia)

The Handbook chapter displays many of the experimental textual strategies that Ellis and Bochner have used before in writing (about) autoethnography. The omniscient researcher is barely in sight. Carolyn and Art are there right from the beginning line: “ ‘Hi, glad it’s you,’ I say, relieved to hear Art’s voice at the other end of the line” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 733). Sections of the chapter are clearly written from the point of view of one or the other of the two writers. In this text, Bochner’s contributions are italicised and set within the unmarked text of the overall narrative of the chapter, written by Ellis. Three

⁸ Ellis and Bochner, partners and colleagues – tend to write separately except for the dialogic introductions to their co-edited collections (1996, 2002) and the chapter on methodology for the *Handbook of Qualitative Inquiry* (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). Ellis is much more prolific than Bochner as a producer of autoethnographic writing.

subsections are embedded and italicized within the longer narrative. The marked sections are all expository or analytical in tone. The embracketing of analytical or theoretical writing within a narrative has the unusual effect of privileging the latter over the former, in a reversal of the usual academic preference for analysis. The larger narrative text in which the three subsections are embedded is personal, subjective and embodied. In the narrative text written by Ellis, the text that frames the subsections, Carolyn and Art (and Sylvia) are (re)constructed as if they were *real* people. The text creates the sort of realism I've learned to expect (paradoxically) in fiction. Reading the narrative text I know how each character feels, speaks, moves. I eavesdrop on their conversations as I would in a novel. I know the thoughts and feelings of the narrator and those of the other characters through her eyes. I even know that Art is "the good-looking guy sitting at the table" (2000, p. 743). The narrative structure works quite conventionally within the expectations of narrative. It unfolds chronologically through phases of beginning (or orientation), middle (or complication) and end (or resolution). The text begins with a meeting between Ellis and Bochner where Bochner reads a draft (the first subsection) to Ellis. The first narrative section serves as an *orientation* to the main characters, their concerns and the field. It ends, as is conventional in narrative genre, with the emergence of a potential complication, in this case, embodied in a person. The complication arrives with a knock on the outside of the door and we are engaged (as we might be in a detective story) in the suspense and the promise of a stranger entering the room (and the story). Here the narrative glides into the middle phase of its structure as: "A woman in her mid-40s opens the door..." (2000, p. 736). This woman is Sylvia. In the middle section of the story, the "complication" in the narrative, Sylvia and Carolyn (or Professor Ellis) negotiate the possibility of Sylvia taking up autoethnography as her research methodology. The *complication* is of course Sylvia's qualms about the methodology. Through the middle section of the story Sylvia and Ellis meet, they part then the text of the chapter segues into the second subsection of analytical writing. This is purportedly the draft of a lengthy definition and elaboration of the field of autoethnography (by Ellis), that (in the narrative), the character of Ellis reads to herself. Continuing in the narrative's second stage, the middle, "a week later" (2000, p. 743) Sylvia and Ellis meet again and go together to a seminar where Bochner speaks about personal narrative as methodology (the

third embedded analytical text) and answers questions from the floor. After the seminar, Sylvia meets Art and the three of them have coffee together. The *resolution* of the complication, in the phase that operates as the ending or conclusion of the narrative, begins with “[t]wo weeks later, Sylvia appears in my office” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 755). This section establishes that Sylvia has overcome her resistance and has become enthusiastic about autoethnography and the possibilities for her own research. This chapter also takes up the further option peculiar to narrative of a second ending, a coda that comments on and reinforces the resolution. The coda here is a scene one year later where Ellis and Bochner discuss the success of Sylvia’s “proposal defence” (2000, pp. 759-761). Reading the chapter through another of the lenses of narrativity, in a sense the *protagonist* of this narrative could be seen as autoethnography, embodied in Ellis and Bochner. The *antagonist* then would be versions of “anti-autoethnography,” embodied in the skeptics at the seminar discussion addressed below, and more poignantly in Sylvia’s struggle with herself over whether she should take up survey methods or autoethnography. The narrative relies heavily on dialogue to move the story along, as is also a convention of contemporary narrative. The text also provides appropriate descriptions of settings and other factors that might ‘complete the picture.’ In this text Ellis performs the very style of writing that she idealises elsewhere as “evocative” (Ellis, 1997, 2000), as it is attentive to plot, characters, scenes, conversations, feelings and ethics (Ellis, 2000). This text appears to meet Tierney’s recent call that social science writing would benefit from taking up the strategies of “fiction and storytelling” (Tierney, 2002a, p. 385). Piirto takes a different position. She suggests that though social scientists should read “good” writing in all genres, the risks of importing the “unreliable narrators” of fiction into social science are (too) high (Piirto, 2002b). My position (and I suspect that Ellis would agree) is that unreliable narrators abound in every genre, including conventional social science prose. Perhaps, in postmodern times, unreliability is the most certain feature of any *singular* speaking position whether it is in the guise of narrative or of analytical social science.

Whilst it is the work of narrative to produce story, it might be seen to be the work of social science writing to produce reliable “truths”. In contrast to the narrative frame of

the chapter, the embedded, italicized chunks of text are where the authors perform themselves as “Researchers” in more familiar ways. All the formal citations (in the usual format with surname and year of publication in brackets) are made in the embedded texts rather than the narrative text. The first embedded subsection is by Bochner and tells about shifts in social science practice over the years. The second embedded subsection, by Ellis, is a definition and description of the breadth of the field that can be collapsed into “autoethnography.” This section uses the impersonal objective declarative confident voice of “social science prose” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 743). The usual authority of this prose is undermined when it is subsumed within narrative and, further, when the writer Ellis (who is now the reader of the social science prose and the writer of the narrative prose, watching herself read the text) writes of herself that she concludes her reading by “[s]miling at the social science prose” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 743). The analysis is undermined at the same time that it is given. The doubleness of doing theory and troubling it at the same time (Lather, 1997) could be read as a very poststructural move. Some of Ellis and Bochner’s writing suggests that their work (and the work of others who write experimental ethnography) is a response to poststructuralism (Bochner and Ellis, 1996). The final embedded subsection is the speech on “why personal narrative matters” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, pp. 743-747) that Bochner gives at the PhD seminar to an audience including Ellis and Sylvia. During and after the seminar, Bochner stresses that postmodernism was a “provocation” for his (re)turn to narrative (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 747). This third subsection operates as a reinforcement and extension of Bochner’s initial subsection, the first embedded text in which he tells the story of his professional career. This subsection might be read as a sort of “conversion story” (Ballis and Richardson, 1997). This personal-professional recount begins with the sentence: “*Like most social scientists educated in the 1960s and 1970s, I was socialized into the legacy of empiricism.*” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 734-735). Bochner tells his story of academic progress and disillusionment over several pages and ends with a rallying cry to his imagined audience of social science peers:

No, we need a form that will allow readers to feel the moral dilemmas, think with our story instead of against it, join actively in the decision points that define

an autoethnographic project, and consider how their own lives can be made a story worth telling.

With the shift in the last sentence from the “I” of the rest of the story to the “we” of a collective call for action, the text shifts towards proselytization. Conversion, and its corollary practice, is an undertow throughout the entire chapter as Ellis works to convert the student Sylvia (and, through her, perhaps us as well) to autoethnographic research practices. The conversion story in one subsection is the mirror of the entire narrative. Sylvia is the miscreant (or heathen) who is converted into an acolyte, who becomes transfigured when she can finally believe (in autoethnography as a transformative research practice). Bochner’s academic life-story ends with a sentence beginning with an imperative “No.” This “No” that gathers us up with Sylvia and Carolyn and Art into the movement for a new social science writing. In Bochner’s story, the “No” comes straight after his explicit rejection of the genre of handbook chapters and the practices of academic prose:

I doubt whether a handbook chapter can help guide the work of those who have turned toward autoethnography and personal narrative if it holds to the voice and authority of a form of writing that this works seeks to transgress. How helpful would it be to list references, define terms, abstract from and critique exemplars, formulate criteria for evaluation, or theorize the perspective of the ‘I,’ so readers can make our knowledge theirs? No, we need a form that will allow.... (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 735)

Bochner uses all the rhetorical resources of argument to state his case and arouse the readers (who are likely to be interested qualitative researchers) to join the cause. Back in the narrative where Ellis has been listening to Bochner read his draft, she marks this paradox by telling him: “ ‘...you quickly fell into using the handbook genre to argue against the handbook genre.’ I can’t stop laughing” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 735). Laughing might be cathartic (even carnivalesque in the dismal portals of academia)⁹ and Ellis’ response certainly reinforces the argument but I suspect that the theoretical, analytical, argumentative work that is done in the subsections of “social science prose” are entirely essential to the work done in this text. The tensions in this chapter lie in the

⁹ See McWilliam (2000) on the disruptive pleasures of laughter in academic work.

necessity to simultaneously produce and transgress social science writing as usual. Ellis and Bochner's strategy has been to displace themselves as writers and thinkers through juxtaposing different texts and genres.

The chapter makes an argument against theory (as we have known it) whilst using theory. In other contexts Ellis has recently expressed her antipathy to theoretical discourse in quite explicit terms¹⁰. In a recent special issue of the journal *Qualitative Studies in Education*, a critical essay by Tierney is a provocation for responses from diverse authors. Tierney suggests that much innovative qualitative ethnographic writing is turning away from socially engaged praxis-oriented reflexive research towards the "cathartic I-centric agency of the self" (Tierney, 2002, p. 385). Ellis' response to Tierney's critique follows straight after his paper and is framed as a letter beginning "Dear Bill..."(Ellis, 2002b, p. 399). It uses rhetorical flourishes to create communality between them, such as "I hope [others] will join you and me Bill..." (Ellis, 2002b, p. 404). She frames his arguments within events such as her mother's illness, the death of her mother-in-law, the events of Sept 11, her working-class southern rural childhood and expresses her aversion to theoretical debate a number of times in terms of personal preferences and history:

[T]he truth is that I have never been attracted to the argumentative rhetoric of academic discourse...Criticism is not the only way (or necessarily the best way) to increase understanding, produce knowledge or convince people to work for social change and civic renewal...I don't much like living in my body and the psychic space I create around me when I take on the critical persona (Ellis, 2002b, p. 400).

Ellis argues back to Tierney that autoethnographies have always "been about the Other; they always have involved critical engagement, social problems, and social action, *though authors may not say so explicitly*" (Ellis, 2002b, p. 401, my italics). Ellis concedes to Tierney that there is a "need to more consciously and concretely connect social action to personal stories" (2002b, p. 402). Elsewhere, Ellis locates the validity of

¹⁰ Clough (2000, p. 290) notes, in relation to this, a "recent tendency ...to refuse theory as if theory were a defense against the emotions or to refuse cultural criticism because it is in a language that seems impersonal compared to the melodramatics of vexed agency characteristic of autoethnography."

autoethnography in its emotionality, in its potential for therapy for the writer, telling her students that “one of the goals of the course is that they should become their own therapist”(Bochner and Ellis, 2002a, p. 116). She describes a dialogic process in her writing where “[p]art of my healing is hearing the stories of those who respond to mine, so the making public can be self-consciously therapeutic... open[ing] up the conversation so [it] can continue to be therapeutic for the writer” (Bochner and Ellis, 2002a, pp. 168, 190). But autoethnography is not therapy, it is theory – when it is produced in academic contexts. Although autoethnography might be emotionally useful for the author this is not its sole purpose, nor should it be its main purpose in academic contexts. The promise of examining the minutiae of everyday events through autoethnography that Ellis alluded to in 1996 has not been achieved, yet from a poststructural perspective it is the “repeated, minute accretions of everyday practices” (Davies et al., 2002, p. 312) that become important data in examining the discursive production of (ourselves as) subjects (Haug et al, 1987). I suspect that the excision of theory in the production of transgressive (postmodern) approaches to social science, in favour of emotional evocative “other” writing, would lead to unnecessary impoverishment.

Now I return to the Handbook chapter and continue my layered reading of it through Sylvia. The transgressive text of the Handbook chapter is the framing narrative text, which, as I have argued, utilizes narrative conventions that are quite familiar, even conformist in terms of narrative linearity and generic expectations. PhD student and breast cancer survivor Sylvia, whose story the social science prose is embedded within, is another text to be read in this chapter. She is the “other” of this text. She colludes with Ellis and Bochner in undermining the social science prose when she returns a bundle of papers to Ellis with the comment “Wow, those personal narratives just blew me away. Your autoethnographic piece was interesting but hard to get through” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 743). The substantive story of this paper and the longer chapter is the story of Sylvia, the student, and of Carolyn, her mentor¹¹. Now here I am, in this text (within this mass of citations and footnotes), in case you were wondering where this “I” had

¹¹ Framed by another story of the desire of the qualitative research/ readers to write texts which “blow people away”.

disappeared to, a PhD student like Sylvia, trying to find a way to use *all* my voices in academic work¹². I want to use a personal voice in powerful ways but it is not helpful to my project of multiplying voices in and out of academia, that the binary between creative and analytical writing is reversed and that more traditional academic prose is diminished, particularly if the justification for this is that (doctoral) students – like Sylvia (like me) - find academic prose difficult to read. In any case there are ethical difficulties in transgressive writing as well. One way of reading Sylvia’s story as it is told by Ellis as I have suggested is as a conversion story. Perhaps it works as well as a secular story, a “liberation” story. Ellis is the catalyst for Sylvia’s transformation. Or it could be read as a “therapy” story - with Ellis as a therapist, providing the tools for Sylvia, the client, to begin working on herself. There are many metaphors that might suffice. Here I give a bias-ed reading through Ellis’ descriptions of Sylvia. The means of Sylvia’s liberation in this reading is the bundle of autoethnographic texts that Ellis gives her, and Ellis herself. The effects of her liberation are marked on Sylvia’s body as much as in the words she says: in how she speaks and sits and walks. As I have noted, the narrative is organized through three episodes of meetings between Sylvia and Professor Ellis, and a coda. They meet when Sylvia knocks on the door and enters Ellis’ office. Sylvia wears a “large-brimmed floppy straw hat covered with purple bangles” which obscures her face, just as her overconfident manner obscures her pain. In the first episode (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 736-93), when Sylvia plans to study breast cancer within a positivist paradigm, she speaks too quickly with “a rapid-fire assertive style.” At different points in their conversation, when Professor Ellis challenges Sylvia’s positivist inclinations she “assumes a downcast, defeated posture” and looks “confused”. She becomes animated only when telling Professor Ellis about her own embodied experience of cancer. Ellis responds emotionally to Sylvia’s revelation of her buzz cut hair and the details of her

¹² *On the (im)possibility of writing (the self) in academic prose...*Prain (1997) elaborates on Docherty’s “parasitic citation” (1993, p. 59): “an institutional form of authority [that] inevitably locks the author or researcher into a very meager set of procedural moves, theoretically and practically...at the same time as they seek to legitimize their research by its resemblance to, and immersion in, a larger citational authority, researchers are also expected to distinguish themselves from the research of others, to demonstrate the individuality and novelty of their findings by their refusal to obey a current authority or strategy...to play the renegade, the critic, the outlaw” (Prain, 1997, p. 73). In this chapter I have also used footnotes extensively to proliferate the citationality of the academic prose. In a parody of academic textual practices, in the final chapter of Stronach and McClure (1997) footnotes create a dialogue with the text that becomes so overwhelming that the footnotes split and migrate to displace the ‘main’ text of the chapter.

surgery but she speaks professionally to her, as a professor. Ellis is as perceptive as a therapist, noting “[t]he pain on Sylvia’s face in spite of the casualness of her words,” and like a therapist she decides that she will take Sylvia on because “this study might be useful” to both of them. As Professor Ellis elaborates on autoethnography as a methodology, “Sylvia holds onto her chair, her eyes wide”, and after receiving the bundle of papers, she “scurries” away down the corridor. Fortunately, in episode two (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 743-755) of Sylvia’s story in the chapter, she returns to Professor Ellis’ office just in time to accompany her to the colloquium at which Bochner speaks about personal narrative. The speech interrupts Sylvia’s story but at least we know she is there in the audience (perhaps we are imaginatively beside her). In the debate which follows the speech, she (and we) hear many concerns about narrative as research voiced from the floor and answered. Sylvia’s qualms are disappearing. As the audience disperses, Sylvia is left “standing alone watching the students gathered around Art talking passionately about their writing projects”. Professor Ellis, who knows them all, rejoins Sylvia and introduces her to this charmed circle. Sylvia “exclaims, ‘Wow! This is exciting!’ ... [then] blurts out, ‘I want to write my story...How would I do it? Where would I start?’”. As the Professor answers her questions, Sylvia “grimaces” over “reliability” and “generalizability” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 753). Art joins them in the Florida sun and they talk about autoethnography as therapy. In the third episode of Sylvia’s story, at their next meeting (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 756-759), Sylvia has been writing her story, and has found this cathartic. She has changed from the (overly) assertive woman of their initial meeting to a woman who “begins to cry”. She has become vulnerable because she has now begun to observe herself (Behar, 1996). There has been a breakthrough. After some time, Ellis and Sylvia resume speaking. Sylvia now “responds forcefully, although her voice shakes [as she says] ‘Oh, no, I *have* to continue it’”. She is “energetic” and “smiling” as her project takes shape. She is “leaning forward, speaking passionately” as she speaks now, and this time as she departs she goes with “a twinkle in her eye”. The chapter ends with a coda (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 759-761) wherein the authors discuss Sylvia’s successful proposal defence, one year later. This is the Sylvia story that Ellis tells. In the opening to this handbook chapter, Carolyn and Art, respectively “mischievous” and “playful”, frame their construction of Sylvia’s story as transgressive

of the handbook genre, as showing what they do as well as telling about it (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 736). They succeed very well in this; however, the text, in its unproblematic shift to narrative, ignores the fact that narrative itself is highly constructed. Narrative produces its own gaps and silences. Realist narrative obscures this as much as social science prose, but uses different rhetorical strategies. Questions that remain for me from my bias-ed reading are: What story would Sylvia tell? How would Sylvia locate Ellis (and Bochner) within her story? How does Sylvia negotiate her newly liberated position with the other professors on her advisory committee? Is there a Sylvia, and does it matter if there isn't? How does Ellis (re)construct her conversations here and elsewhere in such detail? Does Ellis tape record her conversations and if so, why do they seem to be so unlike spoken conversation? What textual decisions have been made to construct this singular unproblematic position in the narrative for Ellis who is presented in this text as she who knows herself and Sylvia and Art and social science (new and old)? How would the text be writable if Ellis' position as narrator was (dis)placed? I don't offer these readings, or ask these questions, in order to invalidate the important work that this chapter does, but rather to show that this text, though experimental and innovative, is (still) problematic. In this text, Sylvia is an object spoken for by the author, an extension of the author's voice (Denzin, 1995), and through her story another story is constructed of teacher-mentor as saviour (or therapist, or catalyst), yet the authors elide any discussion of this. Also, through this chapter, the binary of theoretical and evocative texts is maintained, though evocative texts are now in the ascendant. My bias-ed reading, from the point of view of Sylvia in Ellis and Bochner's text, takes another position and reminds me that here (and there) there is always a certain violence involved. There are no innocent texts. There are no reliable narrators. Narrative (academic) genres are no more value-neutral – or truthful - than analytic academic genres and we ought to be up-front about the workings of all our texts. In one section of this chapter, Bochner defends postmodernism from its laughing, nodding detractors because, in what he calls its "affirming strain", there is a "renewed appreciation for emotion, intuition, personal experience, embodiment and spirituality" that justifies autoethnographic work (2000, p. 747). There is much more that postmodernism can bring to autoethnography, including a more rigorous suspicion about the regimes of truth embedded in *all* the texts we write.

Reading autoethnography (with Patti, Elspeth, Betty and Patricia)

In the remainder of this chapter I explore some (more) of the critiques made of autoethnography and the (im)possibilities of writing the self. In this section I discuss the work of some feminist poststructural authors, including myself. Autoethnography can (potentially) produce, on the one hand, evocative self reflexive postmodern research texts, and on the other hand, texts which may be poetic and which may be justified by postmodern rhetoric but are still underpinned by modernist, realist notions of self, author, voice and text (Foley, 2002, p. 479). Autoethnography becomes credible as a research practice through postmodern arguments and through feminist validations of personal lived experience. This was the double justification I used for my own auto(bio/ethno)graphic writing, my multiple “end-of the wedding” stories (Gannon, 2002). But, as I noted, I found myself “mired in humanism at every turn” (2002, p. 671) despite my poststructural feminist allegiances. Though I clutched for authority in these directions when I produced my own writing, some of the most cogent critics of autoethnography are from feminist and poststructural theoretical positions. They are variously (and multiply) positioned disciplinarily in education, feminism and cultural studies. They speak of both the risks and the possibilities entailed in speaking the self and they experiment with different strategies for writing themselves into their research.

Poststructural critics of (auto)ethnography concentrate particularly on problematising theories of the subject upon which such work often relies. Davies et al. (2003a) describe the (im)possibility and the absolute necessity of reflexivity within poststructural social science:

[T]he subject is deconstructed in such a way that it can no longer be read as a fixed object to be read, nor as a superior transcendental consciousness that can engage in objective readings. But ...researchers are (always already) subjects who engage in readings, and in analysis, and who draw on their own experience of being in the world to make sense of it.

Autoethnography, like collective biography, is a strategy which might enable a writer to textually represent herself as a subject and simultaneously deconstruct that subject. In so doing, she might draw herself up through the tangles of power and knowledge through

which she is constituted and constitutes her experiences in the world (Davies et al., 2002). In my own work (Gannon, 2002), I followed this practice through four readings and writings of the same event from my lived experience. I *knew* how it was because I had been there (albeit I knew differently in four different tellings). It was my voice(s) each time in each story telling how it was to be there. This was my authority and this is the foundational authority of much writing that is called autoethnographical¹³. It is the reflexive turn(ing) towards memory and experience. Lather warns of its limits and the seductions of the self writing where the “authority of voice is ...privileged over other analyses”:

At risk is a romance of the speaking subject and a metaphysics of presence that threatens to collapse ethnography under the weight of circumscribed modes of identity, intentionality and selective appropriation (Lather, 2000a, p. 20).

Quoting Stewart (1996), Lather criticizes “new ethnography as too much about ‘a discipline of correctives’..., too much within assumptions of ‘cure’, particularly via the ‘solution’ of experimental writing” (Lather, 2001a, p. 201). There are no innocent texts. There are no cures. (Though I wrote my story again and again as a form of cure for a memory that nagged at me like a scab on my knee). The most we can do is to be as explicit and as tentative and as inventive and as subversive of our own positions as we can as writers and researchers and knowers. Lather adopts the metaphor of “ethnography as a ruin/rune” which she says “foregrounds the limits and necessary misfirings of its project” (2001a, p. 202). But a rune is a sign that is both mysterious and magic, a fragment of meaning which can never be read with certainty but which is engorged with possibility, excessive in its potential meanings. Working from ruins/runes is not a negative or reductive practice but an expansion, an opening out. Each opening is particular and specific to the project at hand.

The meaning of what we study, its objectness, is its effect on our knowing, and writing is an affirmative experimentation that displaces skepticism and irony with respect for that objectness, its capacity to surprise us, to exceed us. (Lather, 2001a, p. 212).

¹³ See footnote one in this chapter for a list of autoethnographies.

The book Lather co-wrote about women living with HIV/AIDS became a “deliberately discontinuous mosaic” (Lather, 2001a, p. 211). *Troubling the angels: Women living with HIV/AIDS* (Lather and Smithies, 1997) is a “hypertextual, multilayered weaving of data, method, analysis, and the politics of interpretation (Lather, 2001a, p. 205)¹⁴. The researchers’ stories are a running subtext or underwriting beneath the women’s interviews/ stories on pages that are horizontally split and use different fonts. The text is further disrupted with “factoid boxes” and angel “inter-texts” which defer meaning and prevent linearity. It contains poems, emails, speeches, journals, letters, theory, transcripts and images. Although this book – simultaneously a “K-Mart book” and a theoretical (historical, sociological, ethnographic, feminist) text – acts out a sort of postmodern textuality, Lather, nevertheless, stresses that textual solutions “offer both limits and possibilities” (2001a, p. 201). A poststructural text such as *Troubling the angels* is “a site of the failures of representation” rather than any sort of solution (2001a, p. 201). It disturbs the “metaphysics of presence” through multiplying and destabilizing the voices in the text and refuses the “validity of tears” in favour of an embodied authorial presence that evades “nostalgia-provoking, emotional yanking”, or “Oprah-ization” of the women’s stories and of the story of the researchers coming close to women with HIV/AIDS (Lather, 2001a, p. 211). Refusing the seductions of emotionality can become another way to keep the text open and meanings at play.

Clough’s work (1997, 1998, 2000a, 2000b) is a critique of emotive epistemologies, such as Ellis’s *Final negotiations* (1995), that foreclose critique by their emotionality. She stresses the difficulty of working with such an intimate text: “Who would dare come between Ellis and her story, between Ellis and her readers? What kind of critic would reach beyond her, to touch the dead again--her dead--and more, to touch her, the one who cares for the dying?” (1997, p. 99). She does not locate Ellis’ work as any unique production but as a consequence of the historical and cultural moment. In a later article she maps autoethnography as a technology that produces an “(over)excited subjectivity”, the object/subject of postmodern “trauma culture” (2000a, p. 287) underpinned by a

¹⁴ The hypertextual poetics of Lather and Smithies work has been (dis)placed and magnified by Morgan’s “experiment on an experiment” where she rewrites and multiplies the text with ‘Storyspace’TM hypertext software (Morgan, 2000).

psychoanalytic focus on “troubled memory or history, an incapacity to speak the past” (2000a, p. 289)¹⁵. Ellis’ recent position on autoethnography as a practice of healing situates the version of autoethnography she is author(is)ing overtly within a field of auto(therapy)ethnography. My (multiple) story of the “end of the wedding” (Gannon, 2002) is four stories written at different times about the scene of a divorce. They are organized chronologically. The paper could be read as an acting out of that event in the “repetition that fails to put an end to forgetting and the paralysis of voice” that Clough finds characteristic of traumatized subjectivity (2000a, p. 288). Looked at as a sequence of narratives written at different points in time, the stories might be read as a linear sequence in a developmental humanist narrative of self-knowing, indeed as my reviewer intuited, they were probably written with this intent. But disregarding the axis of time, as the published version of the paper does, the four narratives about the same event – every one of them true and every one of them different – do not bring the writer to a better knowledge of her self, rather I suggest they serve to make that event and the subject constituted through it and through subsequent writings of that event much more complex. The paper traces the writing strategies that were productive of four different (but the same) selves in four different (but the same) stories. In a sort of double move the event is made more knowable and more unknowable at the same time. And there are many more lost stories of the end-of-the-wedding that may never be written.

Clough does not argue from the positivist position that Ellis and Bochner tend to characterize their critics as doing (Ellis and Bochner, 2000), but from a poststructural position of hypervigilance towards the politics and practices of language. She critiques *Final negotiations* because it is not “experimental enough”, because it does not “interrogate... its own mechanism of production, its own writing technology” (Clough, 1997, p. 96). In later writing, Clough suggests that there has already been a “shift of writing from representation to processes of presentation without beginning or end” (2000a, p. 286). Clough argues (against Ellis’ resistance to theory) that it is “staying close

¹⁵ Clough lists common themes of autoethnography as drug abuse, sexual assault, child abuse, rape, incest, anorexia, chronic illness and death (2000a, p. 287). Many of these topics are represented in the chapters of Ellis and Bochner (1996) and Bochner and Ellis (2002) as well as relationship breakdowns, and the ‘otherness’ of non-hegemonic ethnicity and sexuality.

to theory [that] allows experimental writing to be a vehicle for thinking new sociological subjects, new parameters of the social” (2000a, p. 290). Experimental ethnographic writing might be able to point “to a new materiality of writing ... [which] frames the inextricability of the subject and object” and accordingly recognizes that “material integrity of both the subject and the object of knowledge and observation are impossible or impossibly so” (Clough, 2000a, p. 282). There is only a framing which constitutes “an apparatus of observation or knowing ...which is finite but not closed. As such, both reality and agency are inextricable from the constituted apparatus” (Clough, 2000a, p. 282). Thus our sense of agency and our readings of “the real” are contingent, opportune and always discursively constituted. The paradox of subjectivity is that: “[a]lthough the agency of the subject is involved in constituting the apparatus, the subject’s agency also is its effect” (Clough, 2000a, p. 282). We are always caught in this double move which is so difficult to represent (or present) in writing. Clough sees autoethnography as one part of a cultural criticism that plays “with the direction and speeds of reflexivity, cutting into loops of images, adjusting the speed and direction of information off and on bodies and lives”. In this sort of autoethnography, there “need to be cuts away from the life story in shifts to and from various genres, to and from various technologies, to and from various locations and temporalities” (Clough, 1998, p. 12).

Another criticism Clough makes of autoethnographic writing is that it is too far removed from the socio-cultural. It has not “critically engaged the reconfiguration of the public and private spheres and the change in the meaning of labour” (2000a, p. 284). It does not interrogate the structures of governmentality within which subjects (selves) are constituted within the social. She accuses autoethnography of a sort of critically unengaged solipsism: “the experiment of autographing the experimental text has its most severe expression in autoethnographies that have nothing but the ethnographer’s life experiences as the focus” (Clough, 1998, p. 5). Yet, in her defense against Tierney’s similar critique, discussed earlier in this chapter, Ellis claims it is concern for the other that is the hallmark of good autoethnography, which “works toward a *communitas*, where we might speak together of our experiences, and commonality of spirit, companionship in our sorrow, balm for our wounds, and solace in reaching out to those in need as well”

(Ellis, 2002b, p. 401). Interrogating the structures of society, or the discursive lines of power and knowledge that constitute the subject in the social is not part of much autoethnographic work. It would be possible of course to invent another category – a “critical autoethnography”¹⁶ – to add to the elaborate taxonomies of theory, but that implies that an unmarked ethnography need not be critical. I would rather focus on what autoethnography can try to do. A poststructural autoethnography would try to unravel the discursive formations that constitute the subject as this or that (and not-this and not-that) in relation with others in social apparatuses that are particular to this culture, this place, this time¹⁷.

The issues raised by Clough and Lather resonate with other critiques of (and responses to) autoethnography. Probyn’s concerns are also with the framing by which autoethnography makes its sense, concurring with Lather’s point that “it is not a matter of looking harder or more closely, but of seeing what frames our seeing” (Lather, 1993, p. 38). Probyn worries particularly about theoretical impoverishment. She argues that “the force of the ontological is impoverished, paradoxically enough, through an insistence on the researcher’s self” (1993, p. 5). The turn to the autobiographical has become “a panacea for the ills of criticism, speaking from the heart has replaced a much needed theoretical consideration of the epistemological and political stakes involved” (1993, p. 13). Probyn turns to the work of Foucault on technologies of the self, and to Deleuze’s reading of Foucault where *le pli* (the pleat or fold) becomes a strategy for thinking “the operation of the art of living (subjectification)” (Deleuze, 1990, cited by Probyn, 1993, p. 128). Folding fragments and images of her self from past and present in and out of (a queered) theory, Probyn demonstrates a “writing that tries to interweave ‘real life’, personal stuff and the analysis of forms of popular representation” (1995, p. 16). She suggests that as long as experience is understood as an “ontological category” – akin to Lather’s metaphysics of presence - reflexivity is impossible in that “experience is either unknowable...or misleading”(1993, p. 27). Probyn takes up “articulation” (1993, 2000) as a way of re-thinking experience and the self: “[w]hile we are all in some sense the

¹⁶ Which could then be located in another genealogical structure with nods to Church’s “critical autobiography” (1995), to various critical theories (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000), and/or to postmodern theorists who promote “reflexive” and “deconstructive” ethnography (Visweswaran, 1994).

¹⁷ Clough also takes global shifts into consideration in her work on teletechnology (2000)

repositories of past practices, through our actions we ‘articulate’, bridge and connect ourselves to practices and contexts in ways that are new to us” (2000, p. 16). She looks to the body - her body and other bodies - as repositories of past and present practices. She works rhizomatically and using another of Deleuze and Guattari’s metaphors, she thinks through “‘lines of flight’ that break open some seemingly closed structures, including those we call our selves” (Probyn, 2000, p. 17). The subject thus is a “fluctuating entity, neither totally voluntaristic, nor over determined” (2000, p. 17). Writing the subject in process for Probyn means writing theoretically and anecdotally more or less at the same time, folding in and out of where and who she is and has been in other times and places. Space and time are the coordinates of subjectivity and the body as “relational matter” is the point of articulation (Probyn, 2003, p. 290). Probyn’s “self” is very concrete at times in her texts but her detailed personal stories, whether they are the one about “discovering breakfast” after a diet of coffee and cigarettes (2000, p. 15), or the one about being anorexic (Probyn, 1987), are always there because they enhance or provoke theory. For example, in *Carnal appetites* (2000) she enters “the lofty heights of high theoretical argument” by leading “with the stomach” (2000, p. 15). Without the theory, the personal details lack their context. Without the fragments of embodied detail, the theoretical arguments lack a rich dimension. They work together synergistically to produce new thinking.

Another researcher using similar theoretical strategies for locating her self in her work is St Pierre. In her research with southern white women in her home town – women who have known her all her life, with whose lives her own is inextricably entwined – St Pierre also takes up the notion of the Deleuzian fold to think herself in(to) her research. The fold breaks up binaries like inside/ outside, self/ other and “it is the individual who causes the outside to fold, thereby endowing itself with subjectivity, as it bends and folds the outside” (Badiou, 1994, p. 114, cited by St Pierre, 1997, p. 178). Working herself in the folds of her research brings in transgressive data: emotional data, dream data, sensual data (St Pierre, 1997b, p. 180), and returning again and again to Essex County and to her research to “look awry” (St Pierre, 1999, p. 266) at (herself in) the field in her writing enables new thinking each time (St Pierre, 1997a, 1997b, 1999, 2000b). The

poststructural researcher practices a nomadic circling of the text and the field and herself (St Pierre, 1997a). Rather than reify the subject she suggests that poststructural writing practices “welcome the provisional and contingent and recommend confusion as a playful site of possibility” and aim to open up categories – particularly “the subject” – for “contestation and resignification” (St Pierre, 1997c, p. 280). St Pierre’s formulation of methodology as a practice of confusion and deferral of meaning, of books that are lost before they are written (St Pierre, 1997a), echoes Lather’s call for a “methodology of getting lost” (Lather, 2001a, p. 200). St Pierre writes of sitting in kitchens with old women who know all about her, going to lunches and to funerals with those Others whom she has produced as the “subjects” of her social science research, but who have themselves colluded in producing her as subject: researcher, daughter, sister, neighbour, local girl come home/ done good. Despite writing personally, St Pierre does not abandon or diminish theory. On the contrary, like Probyn and like the Magnetic Island collective, St Pierre uses the embodied details of her life and her research to push poststructural theory into new places and ways of thinking.

Onwards...

Critiques of autoethnography from feminist poststructuralist positions emphasise the reductionism of simply reversing the binary from favouring theoretical analytical texts to favouring evocative personal texts. Neither do experimental texts guarantee a more ethical position or a position than is more attuned to the other in the text. The most effective postmodern or poststructuralist autoethnography brings theoretical writing and creative writing into dialogue in the same text to create texts that produce a “parallax of discourses” (Denzin, 1995, p. 8). The possibilities (or impossibilities) are only limited by the numbers of texts that are written and by our imaginations. The writing of Probyn, Lather, and St Pierre show some of the ways that this synergy can be written in order to enhance theory and to bring the personal – ourselves and others – into theory. In the next chapter, I examine how pivotal French poststructural writers - Foucault, Barthes, Derrida, Cixous - have simultaneously written and problematised the self.

Chapter Nine –

The (im)possibilities of poststructural auto/ethnography

Writing the self – in journals, diaries, letters - is often understood as relatively unproblematic, as based on a seamless equation of inner self and outer text. Yet, as this thesis argues, writing is always about the production (rather than the reproduction) of subjects. Poststructural theories, in particular, problematise taken for granted humanist notions of the subject as capable of self-knowledge and self-articulation. At the same time, by troubling positivist research practices and disciplinary boundaries, poststructural theories provide a rationale for incorporating the personal into our research. The body, the emotions and lived experience are texts to be written and to be read in autoethnography. However a paradox arises for poststructural autoethnography in that autoethnographic research presumes that the subject can speak (for) herself, whilst poststructural theories disrupt this presumption and stress the (im)possibilities of writing the self from a fractured and fragmented subject position.

The writers in the final section of the previous chapter looked to the work of French poststructural theorists to trouble notions of the subject and of what sort of writing and thinking might be possible within a poststructural approach to writing the self. In this chapter I sketch the writings of Foucault, Barthes, Derrida and Cixous on writing the self and suggest what they might offer to a re-configured poststructural autoethnography. Of course these French theorists do not discuss a *fin-de-siecle* Anglo-American trend in the social sciences called “autoethnography” as the previous authors do, but their work offers possibilities for a re-configured poststructural approach to writing autoethnography. In this chapter, I begin by revisiting Foucault’s genealogy of writing as a technology of the self, then I look at how each of these writers did (and did not do) autobiographical writing.

Michel Foucault – “one of the most ancient Western traditions”

Foucault’s later work traces personal writing through classical and early Christian time as a reflexive technology of the self. Autoethnography is, apparently, far from new. Taking

the self as “something to write about, a theme or object (subject) of writing activity...is one of the most ancient Western traditions”, says Foucault (1997b, p. 233). Writing has always been associated with the development of the ethical subject and the privileged men of history, whose works Foucault examined, used writing in the conduct of (their) conduct, as a technology of the self. The art of living as a free citizen, as a subject, was not possible, of course, for women or for all men in classical Greco-Roman traditions. For the philosophers whose work he examined, writing was used as a means to “release oneself from oneself” or to “disassemble the self, oneself” (Rabinow, 1997, xxxviii). Foucault traces two contrasting imperatives in his genealogy of technologies of the self: the obligation to take “care of the self” and the obligation to “know the self”(1980, 1997b, 1997d). At different times, one or the other of these has been of greater cultural import. Probyn calls these respectively “an epistemological technology of the self” and an “ontological one” (1993, p. 122). They matter, Foucault suggests, because “[j]ust as there are different forms of care, there are different forms of self” (1997d, p. 228). Writing, as I have suggested throughout this thesis, is a technology for the production of subjects, including the self and others. Foucault’s work is of interest because he disrupts the transparency of ‘auto-graphy’ (self-writing) by tracing a split in a field that appears natural. He traces an inversion in these technologies of the self from classical times when “knowledge of oneself appeared as the consequence of the care of the self,” and modern times when “knowledge of oneself constitutes the fundamental principle” (1997b, p. 228). Writing was associated with the care of the self in ancient times, with *askēsis*, the training of the self by the self, and was essential to the “art of living” (1997d, p. 208). Just as acquiring any professional skill or technique requires attention and training, so the art of living in classical traditions was seen to require training and reflexive attention. Earlier forms of *askēsis* included “abstinences, memorizations, self-examinations, meditations, silence and listening to others” (1997d, p. 208). Writing emerges in this tradition as a type of meditative practice that reactivates thought as it “calls to mind a principle, a rule, or an example, reflects on them, assimilates them, and in this manner prepares ...to face reality” (1997d, p. 209). Writing is a practice for training the conscious rational thinking free man, the subject, in the art of living. It is not a practice of delving into the depths of a self, as journal writing sometimes is taken up in present

times. Elsewhere, Foucault calls the *askēsis*, this training, “remembering” rather than “disclosure of the secret self” (1997b, p. 238). Through journals that are more like account books, the Greco-Roman subject develops “progressive mastery of the self...through the acquisition and assimilation of truth” (1997b, p. 238). The writer would reflect on and rehearse events and situations in order to test his preparation to act and speak in ethical and principled ways in the world. Truth did not originate from within but was acquired by reading and listening and the intent of notebooks was:

not to pursue the unspeakable, nor to reveal the hidden, nor to say the unsaid, but on the contrary to capture the already said, to collect what one has managed to hear or read, and for a purpose that is nothing less than the shaping of the self (Foucault, 1997d, p. 210-211).

Although still a technology for shaping the self, in early Christianity, writing the self shifted to become associated with an ethic that Foucault calls to “know thyself”. This technology prefigured confessional modes of speaking the self which later became widespread:

Each person has the duty to know who he is, that is, to try to know what is happening inside him, to acknowledge faults, to recognize temptations, to locate desires; and everyone is obliged to disclose those things either to God or those in the community and, hence, to bear public or private witness against oneself (Foucault, 1997b, p. 242).

The suggestions in the previous chapter that modern autoethnography is a production of trauma culture (Clough, 2000a, p. 287), that autoethnography should be evocative, emotive and therapeutic (Ellis, 1997; Ellis and Bochner, 2000), reflect Foucault’s second type of ethical imperative in writing the self. To “know thyself” means to bear witness against oneself by uncovering “hidden secrets” and “self-illusions” (Foucault, 1997b, p. 247) within our histories, and being healed (and healing) through writing and sharing them. According to Foucault, “the obligation to confess” is now so pervasive in western culture that “it seems to us that truth, lodged in our most secret nature, ‘demands’ only to surface” (Foucault, 1980, p. 60). Thus the humanist rational self-knowing (self-healing) subject is constituted through the latter mode of technologies of (writing) the self,

through the obligation to “know oneself”. This includes amongst its technologies the social science practices of autoethnography.

In his intricate genealogical work, Foucault marks a turn in the technologies of the self, from the classical interdiction to care for the self towards a different responsibility to “know thyself.” The turn comes at a point in the transition to Christianity where concern with oneself is “denounced as a form of self-love, a form of selfishness or self-interest in contradiction with the interest to be shown to others or the self-sacrifice required” (1997c, p. 284). Some criticisms of autoethnography as solipsistic – or of refusing to pay proper critical attention to social and cultural contexts – also carry traces of this formulation of writing that attends to the “care of the self” as excessively self-centred. Foucault’s attention to writing as a “technology of the self” is critical for understanding why writing the self needs to be taken up and interrogated by poststructural writers. Probyn, for example, finds that his work on the technologies of the self provides an “alternative vector” to the “boom” in “individualism” in cultural studies (1993, p. 119).

Although the other writers whose work I explore in this chapter have each practiced disruptive sorts of self-writing, Foucault, as an (auto)biographical subject, remains elusive in his writings. He is more forthcoming in interviews, such as one (Foucault, 1997e) where he admits to some childhood biographical details but concludes with:

Anyway, my personal life is not at all interesting. If somebody thinks that my work cannot be understood without reference to such and such a part of my life, I accept to consider the question. [*Laughs.*] I am ready to answer if I agree. As far as my personal life is uninteresting, it is not worthwhile making a secret of it. [*Laughs.*] By the same token, it may not be worthwhile publicizing it. (Foucault, 1997e, p. 133)

This is in keeping with his position that “the meaning of the self is less important than the methods we employ to understand it” (Hutton, 1988, p. 139). In Foucault’s theorizing of the processes of subjectification, biographical detail is both irrelevant and relevant. Examining past individual experience in the search for self-knowledge is problematic when for Foucault, “[t]he search for the self is a journey into a mental labyrinth that takes

random courses and ultimately ends in impasses...The meanings we derive from our memories are only partial truths and their value is ephemeral” (Hutton, 1988, p. 139). Yet Foucault locates himself at the center of his writing as a sort of absent presence. His research into madness, for example, began as a response to his two years working in a “mental hospital” as a student psychologist (1997e, p. 123). In classical times, early Christian times, and in the present, for Foucault himself, writing is always work on the self in a process of self-transformation:

It is better to try and understand that someone who is a writer is not simply doing his work in his books, in what he publishes but that his major work is, in the end, himself in the process of writing his books. This private life of an individual, his sexual preference, and his work are interrelated not because his work translates his sexual life but because the work includes the whole life as well as the text. The work is more than the work: the subject who is writing is part of the work. (Foucault, 1986, p. 184)

Foucault’s position might seem to deny the possibility of autoethnography, but on the contrary, as Hutton suggests, “Foucault’s purpose is not to deny the value and importance of recalling the past but to change our perspective on that endeavor” (1988, p. 139). The consequences for autoethnography are profound when:

Even in the deepest recesses of our psyches there are no experiences which, if evoked, will reveal our true identities. But the quest for the self is itself a form of self-care...we are condemned to a quest for meaning whose meaning is that our human nature is continually being reconstituted by the forms that we create along the way. The responsibility to create meanings and values anew is a perpetual task but nonetheless the function of all human endeavor...it is through such creativity that our power is revealed, and it is in our capacity to use it well that our destiny lies. (Hutton, 1988, p. 140)

Autoethnographic writing within a poststructuralist frame leans towards the ancient imperative to care for the self, in a constant practice of reflexive attention to the past, present and future moments of subjectification within complex and contradictory discursive arenas. Poststructural autoethnography would emphasize discontinuities, it would search for disjunctures and jarring moments. It would commit to “personal writing

that is scandalous, excessive and leaky...based in lack and ruin rather than plenitude” (Lather, 2000a, p. 22), rather than to seamless linear stories of coming to “know” our selves. But to the extent that those seamless linear stories do appear, alongside the leaky ones, they are of interest in a Foucauldian analysis, as evidence of the current practices of writing the self, and of producing the self.

Barthes – “I am writing a text and I call it R.B.”

Barthes theorized the self and writing in abstract and in particular terms. In his later works, *Camera Lucida* (1982), *Roland Barthes* (1977a), and *A Lover’s Discourse* (1978), he takes up a peculiar sort of (anti)autobiographical writing. For Sontag these texts are “three installments of one of the most intelligent, subtle and gallant of autobiographical projects” (1993, p. xxxviii). A “brave meditation on the personal, on the self” is, in her view, at the center of these works (Sontag, 1993, p. xxxviii). They are texts unique to this author, ironically the (juridical) author of “The death of the author” (Barthes, 1989), infused with “his flavor, his way of tasting the world” yet at the same time they are “artfully anti-confessional” (Sontag, 1993, p. xxxiii). Sontag locates his work in a way which resonates with Foucault’s self writing as the care of the self, as part of the utopian French “national literary project...the self as vocation, life as a reading of the self” (1993, p. xxxiii). “Inevitably”, then, she concludes, “Barthes’ work had to end in autobiography” (1993, p. xxxiv). His version of autobiography is discontinuous, elliptical, fragmented, sparse. Rather than constructing a coherent story of the self, his autobiographical writings are sites for the dispersal of the self. He uses photographs and fictions as well as realist prose to create what he calls “biographemes.” These are fragments of text that are “open” to readers and “whose distinction and mobility might travel beyond the limits of any fate, and come to touch...some future body, destined to the same dispersion” (Barthes, 1977b, cited by Sontag, 1993, p. xxxv). In *Camera Lucida* (1982), he finds in (some) photographs provocative and open-ended “partial objects” that have “the same relation to History that the biographeme has to biography” (1982, p. 30). In *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, the text that I examine here, he appears to move his attention to himself. It begins with the line “It must all be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel” (1977a, p. 1). The book begins with photos from Barthes’ youth, not in order to reveal biographical truths (details of his family and his formative experiences, or of his social

class and historical context) but as “the author’s treat to himself, for finishing his book” (1977a, p. 3). Reading himself reading these images he concludes that his pleasure in them:

no longer has to do with the reflection...of an identity...(I never look like myself)...[but] such imagery acts as a medium and puts me in touch with my body’s *id*; it provokes in me a kind of obtuse dream, whose units are teeth, hair, a nose, skinniness, long legs in knee-length socks which don’t belong to me, though to no one else. (1977a, p. 3)

He warns the reader who might be looking for a coherent (auto)biography that instead what they will find, “mingled with the ‘family romance’” is merely “figurations of the body’s prehistory – of that body making its way toward the labor and pleasure of writing” (1977a, p. 3). The intent of this book, simultaneously named, authored and denied by Roland Barthes, is to constitute and display repertoires of images and of writing around the signifier Roland Barthes, “without being hampered, validated, justified by the representation of an individual with a private life and a civil status”(1977a, p. 4). The captions to his “album” of family photographs (1977a, p. 1-42) slip away from the personal details with which such photos are usually accompanied. For example, in a description of his two grandmothers he slips from details particular to each of them into wider social spaces and intertextual referents: “Mme Lebouef...had to be lured to the monthly tea party (the rest in Proust). In both sets of grandparents, language belonged to the women. Matriarchy? In China, long ago, the entire community was buried around the grandmother” (1997a, p. 13). A photograph of Barthes as a child being embraced by Mme Barthes is not that specific moment of one mother and one child at a certain place and on a certain date but it has become “The demand for love” (1997a, p. 5). In the second part of *Camera Lucida* where he writes after her death about photos of his mother, he says that contemplating a photograph “in which she is hugging me, a child, against her, I can waken in myself the ruffled softness of her crêpe de Chine and the perfume of her rice powder” (1982, p. 65). The photograph provokes a memory folded deep into the body, not (merely) a rational memory but a visceral memory stored in the olfactory and tactile tissues of his body. In *Roland Barthes’* family album, the photo of the body of the youth who put on weight at the TB sanatorium is captioned “...Ever since, perpetual

struggle with this body to return it to its essential slenderness (part of the intellectual's mythology: to become thin is the naïve act of the will to intelligence)" (1997a, p. 30). The individual self, the biographical details particular to Roland Barthes, are dispersed as the photographs become texts to be read as discursive spaces. The written text which follows (1997a, pp. 43-180) is made up of short titled texts provoking both familiarity and estrangement from the signifier called Roland Barthes. He says of his project:

I abandon the exhausting pursuit of an old piece of myself, I do not try to *restore* myself (as we say of a monument). I do not say: 'I am going to describe myself' but, 'I am writing a text, and I call it R.B.' (1997a, p. 56).

Some of the short texts are written in first person grammatical voice, some in third person. Some are meditations, fleeting thoughts, some are (written as if they are) memories from past times. Some are just a couple of lines, while others are several pages long. They are ordered more or less alphabetically. *A Lover's Discourse* (1978) is similarly organized although the fragments of text are from the writings of others as well as Barthes. There is no chronology of the life of *Roland Barthes* in this book but there are many particular details scattered through its pages. That reader who is in search of biographical detail of this man's life learns, for example, that Barthes spent some time in his youth incarcerated in a sanatorium with tuberculosis. In an autoethnography constituted within trauma culture, this might be reread as a formative experience with consequential tentacles reaching far into the future to form a particular present self. But in Barthes anti-autobiography, we learn bizarre other details that estrange us from any straightforward empathy. His writing subverts any reverence for the past. For example, the fragment called *La côtelette* (The rib chop) begins with: "Here is what I did with my body one day"(1997a, p. 61). We learn that Barthes underwent an "extrapleural pneumothorax operation" in 1945 in which part of a rib was removed. It was given to him, wrapped in gauze, after the operation.

For a long time I kept this fragment of myself in a drawer, ...not knowing quite what to do with it, not daring to get rid of it lest I do some harm to my person, though it was utterly useless to me shut up in a desk amongst such 'precious' objects as old keys, a schoolboy report card, my grandmother B's mother-of-pearl dance program and pink taffeta card case. And then one day, realizing that the

function of any drawer is to erase, to acclimatize the death of objects...but not going so far as to dare cast this bit of myself into the common refuse of my building, I flung the ribchop and its gauze from my balcony, as if I were romantically scattering my own ashes, into the rue Servandoni, where some dog would come and sniff them out. (1997a, p. 61)

So the image from this traumatic memory ends with the sight of a dog disappearing around a corner with Barthes' bone in his mouth. Although this body of the rib chop has a singular materiality, on the neighboring page, in a piece called *Le Corps Pluriel* (The Plural Body), Barthes writes (1997a, p. 60-61):

I have a digestive body, I have a nauseated body, a third body which is migrainous, and so on: sensual, muscular (writer's cramp), humoral, and especially: *emotive*: which is moved, stirred, depressed, or exalted or intimidated, without anything of the sort being apparent. Further, I am captivated to the point of fascination by the socialized body, the mythological body, the artificial body,... and the prostituted body... And beyond these public (literary, written) bodies, I have, I may say, two local bodies: a Parisian body (alert, tired) and a country body (rested, heavy).

A poststructural autoethnography, like collective biography (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d, 2004), would proceed in part from the understanding that memory is enfolded in the body but, as Barthes points out, the lived body is a discursive and multiple but very present space where we do not go looking for any "sacred originary" but for traces and unreliable fragments. Memory writing is not a veridical act that reproduces the original experience as it was lived, but is necessarily always constituted from a particular time and place and discursive frame. Poststructural autoethnography using memories could take up some of Barthes' strategies of estrangement. In an interview on *The Lover's Discourse* (1978), the interviewer collapses the author-lover into Barthes the individual with the question: "*So, then, the lover who speaks is really you, Roland Barthes?*" (1985, p. 304). The lover who writes *The Lover's Discourse* is as much Roland Barthes the interviewee and writer, as the Roland Barthes who writes the book *Roland Barthes*. That is, he is, and he isn't that same person. Barthes answers his interviewer: "My answer may seem to be a pirouette, but it is not. The

subject that I am is not unified. This is something that I feel profoundly. To then say ‘It’s I!’ would be to postulate a unity of self that I do not recognize in myself” (1985, p. 304). The self writing a poststructural autoethnography, both is and isn’t the author of the text, both is and isn’t subject and object of her experience. Barthes’ work has many implications for poststructural autoethnographers. He uses a series of displacing strategies that keep author, writer, present and past in play. He shows how photographs might be used in non-realist ways to provoke and problematise the subject in autoethnography¹.

Derrida – “...it’s me but I’m no longer there”

Derrida on the one hand seems to refuse autobiography, in that he refuses the possibility of a coherent self who might write himself as a being separate from and anterior to, the text that he writes, as an ‘identity’. Yet Derrida claims that “what interests me... is not strictly called either literature or philosophy” but something for which “‘autobiography’ is perhaps the least inadequate name” (Derrida and Attridge, 1992, p. 34). His deconstructive writing practices a limitless deferral and displacement of the self and of singular meaning. Autobiographical writing is a domain of supplementarity, of endless departure/ return or *fort/ da* (Derrida, 1991b, p. 551). Increasingly his writings, such as “Circumfession” in *Jacques Derrida* (Bennington and Derrida, 1991) and more recently, *Veils* (Cixous and Derrida, 2002), inscribe details of his personal life. *Jacques Derrida*, the book I will examine here is written as two texts that speak to and beyond one another. It also contains a number of photographs of moments in the life of a man called Jacques Derrida. In an interview which focuses on “Circumfession” Derrida explains his position on “identity”:

[B]y beating around an impossible thing which I no doubt also resist, the “I” constitutes the very form of resistance. Each time this identity proclaims itself, each time some belonging circumscribes me, if I may put it this way, someone or something cries out: Watch out, there’s a trap, you’re caught. Get free [*dégage*],

¹ In other interesting poststructural work with photographs, Kuhn explores the inevitable duplicity of memory and photographs in *Family Secrets* (1995); twenty-five authors read personal memory and family photography “between the lines and against the grain” in *Family Snaps* (Spence and Holland, 1991); and Langford’s *Suspended conversation* (2001) traces the development and social uses of family albums as impossible repositories of socio-cultural and personal memory.

disengage yourself [*dégage-toi*]. Your engagement is elsewhere. (Derrida and Ewald, 1995, p. 275)

Writing about “oneself” is risky writing. It is difficult to write about the self and to be an escape artist from the self at the same time. Later in the same interview, Derrida elaborates:

[T]he self does not exist, it is not present to itself until that which engages it in this way, and which is not it. There is not a constituted subject which engages itself in writing at a given moment for some reason or another. It exists through writing, *given* [*donné*] by the other: *born* [*né*] ...through being given [*donné*], delivered, offered and betrayed all at one and the same time. (Derrida and Ewald, 1995, p. 279)

“Circumfession” (1991) is a sort of “strange autobiography”, a gesture towards a new sort of writing “within which neither philosophy nor literature, nor in general perhaps knowledge, would reassemble their image or their history” (Derrida and Ewald, 1995, p.279). Like *Roland Barthes* (1997a) and *Troubling the angels* (Lather and Smithies, 1997), “Circumfession” (1991) presents a fragmented text. Bennington writes the “general system of thought” of J.D. across the top half of each page, in a section called “Derridabase”, while Derrida underwrites this with another text on a split page, his “Circumfession” described on the title page as consisting of “fifty-nine periods and periphrases”, equivalent to his age when he writes. Fifty-nine is a de(con)structive code that repeats through the text: “59 [compulsions] that make us act together” (1991, p. 125); “...59 periods, 59 respirations, 59 commotions, 59 four-stroke compulsions, each of them an Augustinian *cogito* which says *I am* on the basis of ...*already I am dead*” (1991, p. 127-8), “59 widows or counterexamples of myself” (1991, p. 255), “59 nations in love with him who want ...to reject-deport him” (1991, p. 257), “surrounding [mother] tightly with my 59 prayer bands” (1991, p. 260), “for 59 years I have not known who is weeping my mother or me” (1991, p. 263), “52+7 and a few times that I have thought I was, like a cascade, falling in love” (1991, p. 267), “59 conjurations without which I am nothing” (1991, p. 272). Bennington positions the experiment of “Circumfession” as engaging with the heart of J.D.’s work, which is to show how systems of thought must remain “essentially open” (Bennington and Derrida, 1991, p. 1). The interest in it lies – beyond

Bennington's lucid and valuable summary of Derrida's thinking – in Derrida's strategy of writing his "circumfession". He takes the figures of circumcision (his own) and of confession (St Augustine's) and weaves these through a text of writing himself, and writing himself particularly as a son whose mother is dying. A sentence came to him he says, one day, just one, but "scarcely a sentence, the plural word of a desire to which all the others since always seemed, confluence itself, to hurry, and order suspended on three words, *find the vein*, what a nurse might murmur, syringe in hand, needle upward" (Bennington and Derrida, 1991, p. 6). Blood and the cuts in the body are closely related to writing, and the author disappears as the text is written:

I always dream of a pen that would be a syringe, a suction point ...once the right vein has been found, no risk of toil, no responsibility, no risk of bad taste or violence, the blood delivers itself all alone, the inside gives itself and you can do as you like with it, it's me but I'm no longer there... (Bennington and Derrida, 1991, p. 11-12)

Derrida's text on the bottom half of the page responds to "G.", the one who writes the "owner's tour" of the systems of thought of Derrida on the top half of each page, "forgetting me," Derrida says, "on the pretext of understanding me" (Bennington and Derrida, 1991, p. 33). Derrida's text is written to Bennington "as if I were trying to oblige him to recognize me and come out of this amnesia of me which resembles my mother" (Bennington and Derrida, 1991, p. 33). Derrida's "Circumfession" is infused with concern for the other and the uses to which he puts others in his text. Derrida's autobiography is characterized by vulnerability and responsibility for the other (Gregoriou, 1995, p. 325). He worries about the moral consequences of writing his mother into this text, and of the impossibility of writing himself alone as an alternative:

"[I] feel really guilty for publishing her end, in exhibiting her last breaths and, still worse, for purposes that some might judge to be literary, at risk of adding a dubious exercise to the "writer and his mother" series, subseries "the mother's death," and what is there to be done, would I not feel as guilty, and would I not in truth *be* as guilty if I wrote here about myself without retaining the least trace of her, letting her die in the depth of another time" (Bennington and Derrida, 1991, p. 36-37)

Tears and prayers and loss and love are Derrida's text of himself, always himself and others, intimate others and distant others. Circumcision is the "hinge" – the space of designating difference and articulation (Derrida, 1976, p. 65) - on which this text of the self pivots, and which marks the loss of himself and his entry into culture:

[T]he circumcision of me, the unique one, that I know perfectly well took place, one time, they told me and I see it but I always suspect myself of having cultivated, because I am circumcised, *ergo* cultivated, a fantastical affabulation (Bennington and Derrida, 1991, p. 60)

Circumcision, he says, is "all I've ever talked about" (Bennington and Derrida, 1991, p. 70). In the interview with Ewald, discussing how he indexes even his more 'personal' writings to those of other great writers or "transferral figures" (in "Circumfession," St Augustine), Derrida stresses that no experience, no matter how intimate or individual, can be explained solely with reference to itself (oneself). Everything, even (and perhaps especially) our bodies, is always already inscribed within culture and all that has been said before:

Even when speaking of the most intimate thing, for example of one's own circumcision, it is better to be aware that an exegesis is in progress, that you carry its detour, its contour, and its memory inscribed within the culture of your body, for instance. (1995, p. 281)

Derrida writes in "Circumfession" of his own illness, a temporary facial paralysis, which leaves him looking at himself in the mirror with a left eye that no longer blinks and a mouth that speaks the truth sideways: "the disfiguration reminds you that you do not inhabit your face because you have too many places, you take place in more places than you should" (Bennington and Derrida, 1991, p. 124). This connects his body in another way to the body of his mother as she lies dying. Death is the mystery at the heart of life and the text and writing has an "intense relation" to survival (1991, p. 191). In "Circumfession," Derrida says he is "trying to disinterest myself from myself, to withdraw from death by making the 'I,' to whom death is supposed to happen, gradually go away... so that at the end already there should be no one left to be scared of losing the world in losing himself in it" (1991, p. 190). Through "Circumfession," Derrida exercises a "continuous citationality" (Gregoriou, 1995, p. 314), a deconstruction that is "not an

enclosure in nothingness, but an openness towards the other" (Derrida in Kearney, 1984, p. 124). Gregoriou elaborates the rhetoric of vulnerability in Derrida's work:

Deconstruction as a writing indebted to the other; writing as the effect of a vulnerability to the other; vulnerability as the impossibility of escaping the responsibility *to* and *for* the other because the other already creates and recreates my body through repeated inscriptions: events of birth, circumcision, sickness, loss, death, and mourning. (Gregoriou, 1995, p. 314)

Thus, in Derrida's circumfessional mode of deconstruction, to write the other is also to pay attention to the body, the body that has its own stories to tell. Derrida's deconstructions are not nihilistic but productive, even in deconstructive autobiographical writing there is multiplication. In "Circumfession", as in other more recent work (Cixous and Derrida, 2002), Derrida's memories of his early life as "a little black and very Arab Jew" (Bennington and Derrida, p. 58) in the particular time and place that was colonial Algeria come into play in the text. This is part of his practice of writing the subject (into play). As Morrissey points out, Derrida has always maintained that: "I don't destroy the subject; I situate it.... It is a question of knowing where it comes from" (Macksey and Donato, 1972, p. 271, cited by Morrissey, 1999). Derrida's subject is multiplicity itself:

I absolutely refuse, a discourse that would assign me a single code, a single language game, a single context, a single situation; and I claim this right not simply out of caprice or because it is to my taste, but for ethical and political reasons (Derrida, 1966, p. 81, cited by Morrissey, 1999).

Derrida's work has many implications for the development of a poststructural autoethnography. On the most superficial level he demonstrates textual tricks of layout and format and voice that are useful models to the autoethnographer wanting to break the hegemony of the self in her text. Derrida provides critical concepts for re-thinking how we approach research as is evident (and not) in some recent autoethnography. Ronai's work (1998, 1999) uses Derrida as she develops "layered accounts" of her lived experience as an exotic dancer. She rewrites vignettes from field notes and memory and places them *sous rature* to show that "this is and isn't what it was like to be an ethnographer/dancer/wrestler" (1999, p. 116). She takes up "identity" as "simultaneously

a process of mimesis and *sous rature*” as identity is “erased, adjusted and readjusted” (Ronai, 1999, p. 126). By living the experience and writing the narrative of the experience, Ronai suggests that (auto)ethnographers “seek to destroy the Self by tearing down the binary opposition created through the existence of the other”. What is left are “layered accounts that leave traces of a play of differences for other selves who read to apprehend” (Ronai, 1999, p. 128). Derrida’s telling of an intimate tale, that of his mother dying, is in stark opposition to thematically similar writing by Ellis. Her mother/daughter tales (1996, 2001) are more or less realist tales that leave much less space for the play of *différance*. They seem paradoxically to be more detailed yet to leave less space for the other (her mother). The second article “With mother/ with child: A true story” (2001) has a double frame which provides an element of displacement as the daughter reflects on reading an intimate tale (Ellis, 1996) about her mother to her mother. Ellis reflects at the end of the paper that though she could have added more layers to the telling: “the plot of the story will become so multidimensional, turning around and around on itself, that it will be impossible to take in” (2001, p. 614). A poststructural autoethnography might embrace multidimensionality, might aim to construct texts that are not easily ingested, that turn around and around so that we are encouraged (or forced or led) to a place of thinking differently and with more complexity about the world and our places within it. Derrida stresses that the dislocation of an author’s life from his work, and the fragmentation of identity that poststructuralism has provoked “doesn’t mean that one has to dissolve the value of the autobiographical *récit*. Rather, one must restructure it otherwise” (1986b, p. 45). A differently structured Derridean (anti)autoethnography might be, like *Troubling the angels*, a “messy text that says ‘yes’ to that which interrupts and exceeds and renounces its own force toward a stuttering knowledge”(Lather and Smithies, 1997, p. 214).

Cixous – “I and the world are never separate”

For all of the authors I discuss in this chapter, the past remains “a very present, up-to-date, and busy site of agency, a productive location” (St Pierre, 2000, p. 260). Some of these authors take up that past in a more linear fashion whilst others fold their past and present selves through complex and contradictory fragments, images, theories and cultural artifacts that change with every reading/writing. Though on the one hand she

does not appear to write autobiography, on the other hand it could be argued that Cixous' writings are allied to her personal history as much as any of the authors discussed in this chapter. It might be argued that her history undergirds her epistemology. Cixous' constant attention through her writing to otherness and to meticulously close observation of the world and of language might be said to proceed from her childhood marked in Oran by displacement in language and space and faith and through her myopia – “the naked, obstinate, defenceless eye of my nearsightedness” (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 3). Nearsightedness and writing are, she says, her “fertile congenital disabilities” (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 89). However in her text “Savoir”, published more recently with Derrida's answering text as *Veils: Cultural memory in the present* (Cixous and Derrida, 2001), Cixous writes of a sort of little death of her ‘self’ after the “astral reversal” of laser surgery (Cixous and Derrida 2001, p. 7) corrected her myopia. Through the magic of new surgical techniques the woman has her sight repaired and can no longer see herself whilst at the same time she sees more clearly than she ever could before. In *Veils* she mourns the loss of “her imperceptible native veil” (2001, p. 3), her “little veil of mist...the veil in her eye...the veil in her soul” (2001, p. 6). Just as it is leaving she sees that myopia “ ‘the other,’ the unwelcome” is “none other than her sweetheart, her modest companion...[h]er dear secret...[her] mysterious misty tundra of always” (2001, p. 11). Her bliss. In the second part of *Veils* (2001), Derrida answers back to her “Savoir” with “A silkworm of one's own,” a deconstructive circular reading of Cixous' text and a production of him-self as a Jewish man, as a child in Algeria, as a traveller. He writes himself as the displaced reader of her text in Buenos Aires, Santiago and São Paulo who writes of their friendship and writes her text again in the three sections of his own text. He writes himself as a man subject to the “coming to self of the shawl, every man having his own tallith,” the prayer shawl with the circumscribed fringes and knots that his maternal grandfather Moses gave him (2001, pp. 43-44). He writes himself as a little boy who raises silkworms in a shoebox in Algeria, who waits for the magic *vérason*, the change from cocoon into moth, but he also writes himself as the man will not, having promised not to, tell us the climax of the tale of the silkworms' transformation into moths. Cixous is the other of his text, but so is the boy with the silkworms an/other, and the man with the tallith, and the man who won't tell. Cixous' other in her text is her self

in memory as “the myope among the swans” of her family (2001, p. 11). *Veils* is a sort of autobiographical-critical-deconstructive double act where Cixous is rewritten through Derrida’s text. Their affinity is evident. Also with Derrida, Cixous shares a sort of “nostalgeria” for a childhood in Algeria (Bennington and Derrida, 1991, p. 330) and refers to this obliquely and directly in her writing:

I and the world are never separate. The one is the double or the metaphor of the other. I doubtless owe this I of two scenes to my genealogy. I was born at/ from the intersection of migrations and memories from the Occident and Orient, from the North and South. I was born a foreigner in ‘France’ in a said-to-be ‘French’ Algeria. I was born in a not-France calling itself ‘France.’ To tell the truth we have to trap the appearances with quotation marks. We are not what we are said to be. (Cixous, 1994c, p. xv)

Despite the recurrence of themes such as myopia in her writing, Cixous denies the possibility of any direct route to the past, to autobiography in the sense of an individual internally coherent life that might be told in a linear fashion. In *Rootprints* (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, pp. 177-206), she presents her own family “albums and legends”. Her family album “like all narratives tell[s] one story in place of another” (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 178). In this story she follows “the bed of blood” to write a “sort of genealogy of graves”: “My life begins with graves. They go beyond the individual, the singularity” (1997, p. 189). Photos of Jewish grandfathers and grandmothers long dead, buildings that were burned, countries that shifted shape or disappeared, relatives who changed nationalities, sometimes by traveling and sometimes by staying still and amongst them, photos of Cixous, her brother, mother, father, children. From her mother’s lineage, in this story of herself, there were two fates, concentration camps or global scatterings, and so Cixous reads also a genealogy that has a “sort of world wide resonance...the echoes always came from the whole earth. From all the survivors” (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 189). In telling the stories of her family album, of photos “that fade to let me pass” (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p.179), Cixous enters into the imaginary to speak these others to life. As in her other writing, there is an incessant slippage between her voice and the voice of the other. At the grave of her grandfather, a Jewish German

soldier buried in a forest in Byelorussia in 1916, she copies and cries and slides into him: “Why these tears? Because I am dead. I am so dead... My name is Michael Klein. I am resting. I have lost my birth...” (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 186). Speaking for the dead, for those who are silenced (but tentatively and with the utmost respect) is part of Cixous’ responsibility as a writer. Calle-Gruber asks Cixous to elaborate her position on (auto)biography. Cixous answers:

The origin of the material in writing can only be myself. I is not I, of course, because it is I with the others, coming from the others, putting me in the other’s place, giving me the other’s eyes. Which means there is something common. You say that there cannot be autobiographical writing, I am quite conscious of this. There can be those intriguing fractures of the self that are called confessions. For me these are works, books. We can call this autobiography, but it’s one version. The blind person’s version. (1997, p. 87)

Autobiography is both impossible and inevitable. Cixous’ lesson in writing for autoethnography is that the particular past of the writer - in relation to the other - is always the water in the rivers that flow in “*in(terre)conscious zones*” (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 88), in zones of the unconscious and interconscious that structure all writing. Cixous’ scene of writing, and of remembering, is the body. Lived experience, memory, is stored in flesh and writing from memories unfurls from the body. Not in a conscious way but as unconscious, subconscious, irrational, subject to an/other logic way. This body is inside and outside at the same time (Probyn, 2001), a Möbius strip (Grosz, 1994), comprising flows and intensities and desires (Grosz, 1994). The body is a landscape that folds outside to inside, and inside to outside at the same time (Davies, 2000b). This body (writing) is also always intercorporeal, experienced in relation to the other: “the experience of being embodied is never a private affair, but is always already mediated by our continual interactions with other human and non-human bodies” (Weiss, 1999, p. 5). This interconscious is the scene of the body, the self, the other and of writing all at the same time. Cixous says she finds her material “[i]n me and around me. What sets me writing is that lava, that flesh, that blood, those tears, they are in all of us” (Cixous and Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 12). Cixous’ lesson in writing auto(ethno)graphy is that it is ir/rational, embodied, it proceeds elliptically and tentatively, in a fractured style,

with the voices of others wound about the voice of the author and with the greatest respect, with love as its imperative.

Onwards...

In these chapters on (auto)ethnography, or the (im)possibilities of writing the self, it is clear that just “being there” is insufficient as any guarantee of truth. This assumes “that there is both a ‘there’ and ‘beings’ who are there” (Britzman, 2000, p. 28). Poststructuralism upsets humanism’s basic tenets: subjects who are coherent and stable, language that is transparent, and knowledge as truth produced through reason (St Pierre, 2000a; St Pierre and Pillow, 2000). When the ontological foundation for truth in autoethnography is the self who was “there,” then personal experience (or what might be called “thereness”) becomes what Britzman calls “the great original” (Britzman, 2000, p. 28). In a poststructural approach to (auto)ethnography, experience is “a category that bracket[s] and even perform[s] certain repetitions, certain problems, certain desires” and the (autoethnographic) researcher questions how “experience [is] structured, how what [is] constituted as experience [is] reminiscent of ... available and normative discourses” (Britzman, 2000, p. 33).

The research and experiments in writing the self of French poststructural theorists provide some leads as to how to proceed in writing personal experience and the self within poststructural (autoethnographic) paradigms. Foucault’s work shows that autoethnography can be traced to the most ancient (writing) technologies of the self in classical Western traditions. The fragments of (anti-)autobiographical work by Barthes, Derrida and Cixous that I have explored in this chapter demonstrate a range of writing strategies for both writing the self and destabilizing the self at the same time. These authors write themselves as unreliable and contradictory narrators who speak the self – the multiple selves that each of them is and has been – in discontinuous fragments informed by memory, the body, photographs, other texts, other people. In different ways they displace the speaking self that is the subject, object and the (im)possible production of autoethnography.

In the experimental autoethnographic text in the next chapter, I bring poststructural skepticism together with close attention to the specificity of fragments of an individual life (mine). In this text I aim to disrupt, disturb and multiply the versions of “being there” that are my experience, the “unique and unrepeatability poetry” (Ermath, 2000, p. 411) of this particular life.

Chapter Ten -

Blackmore Avenue, 1960... Autoethnographic fragments

The autoethnographic text presented in this chapter situates some moments from an educational/ professional story within a fabric woven of other fragments of memories and texts of childhood and young adulthood. It is an incomplete and unfinished text, merely the beginning of an inconclusive experiment in the (im)possibilities of autoethnographic writing. One of the beginnings of this text was a linear autobiographical text of coming to be literate and coming to be a teacher that I wrote in a professional development context several years ago. I have broken up the original text and interlayered several excerpts from it with other texts. Another of the beginnings of this text was a collection of old family photographs that my parents sent me, most of which I had not seen for many years, or at all. Many of these photos appear in this text, along with (italicized) extracts from the work of other authors and new writing provoked by the photos and other texts. Through the process of writing and rewriting, the autobiographical narrative of myself-becoming-a-teacher that I began working with was abandoned and the autoethnographic text in this chapter is instead tentatively presented as the beginnings of a (dis)continuous reflection on self, memory, family, and truth.

The text in this chapter is – in part - informed by the poststructural autobiographical writings that I discussed in the previous chapter. It is also, in part, a disruptive response to the call for narrative inquiry as a reflexive research practice particularly suitable for teachers (eg. Connelly and Clandinen, 1999). This text refuses the separation of working life from other aspects of lived experience and aims to practice another sort of “writing on the bias” (Brodkey, 1996) of an educational-professional-personal history. It is also, in a sense, a partial refusal of the psychological-historical-sociological logic that underpins autobiography and narrative inquiry more generally. It tries to incorporate poststructural themes such as desire and the instability of identity (Morgan, 2002). Research methodologies such as collective biography and memory work make clear that the specific lived contexts of our subjectification are crucial for understanding who we “are”

and take ourselves to be. In collective biography, rather than taking memory to be equivalent to “truth,” re-viewing memories makes the discursive webs through which we understand lived embodied events more opaque and examinable. In this autoethnography I do not analyse discursive regimes but I play with the idea that truth and memory are tenuous and slippery practices. In Chapter Eight of this thesis, I described how I wrote multiple versions of an “ordinary event,” the prelude to a divorce, and how that event became more complex and contradictory, and closer to “truth,” as I wrote and rewrote it (Gannon, 2002). The autoethnographic text in this chapter is likewise an attempt to “circle ‘the truth’ with all kinds of signs, quotation marks, and brackets, to protect it from any form of fixation or conceptualisation” (Cixous, 1993, p. 6). I record some details from my childhood and later, as I have also done in the collective biography workshops I discussed in Chapter Two and Three of this thesis. In this autoethnography text, taking on the instability of a poststructural subjectivity, I resist presenting these memories with an authoritative and certain voice as (singular) “truth”. In this I resist the temptations of positioning autoethnography as an/other search for (a different sort of) author-ity, as I have critiqued in Chapter Eight. Rather, in this autoethnography, I attempt to both embrace and to qualify memories, to use them and to question them simultaneously, to put them under erasure. I attempt also to demonstrate how desire intervenes in memory. In the preceding chapter, Chapter Nine, I discussed how Derrida used “circumfession” (Bennington and Derrida, 1991) and Cixous used “veils” (Cixous and Derrida, 2001) as metaphorical strategies for engaging with, and displacing, the speaking self. In parts of this text I use “(be)longing” (Davies, 2000b) as the trope around which I drape my musings about re-remembering and childhood. The pattern of this text is only one of the multiple versions that could be stitched together in different circumstances and at different times. In its engagement with the subject in relationships, such as the family, this text is an oblique experiment in writing (and problematising) a socially situated self in autoethnography (eg. Ellis, 1996, 2001). Informed by the writers whose work I discuss in Chapter Nine, I have used fragments of others’ texts as well as my own and have used family photos to provoke and to problematise memory (Kuhn, 1995). It brings me necessarily back to the subject. The autoethnographic text in this chapter is an interwoven and tentative writing of subjectivities as student, teacher, daughter, sister, wife, lover. The

categories that I use to construct myself in relation to the world and to others bleed into one another in the text, as they do in the world.

This text is offered in part as a local and specific experiment in applying some strategies of poststructural writing to writing the self. Yet it is not only this. It is also a performance of what I have come to understand, through this thesis, about writing and subjectification within poststructural frameworks. This autoethnography – the final piece of experimental writing in this thesis - is the final performative engagement of the thesis with what poststructural theory makes possible (and impossible) in writing. As well as playing with text and genre and voice, the new text locates subjectivity as in process, embodied, intercorporeal, relational, intertextual, and situated in particular places and times. The poststructural subject is both fragile and resilient. These characteristics are evident in this local and specific exploration of (my) childhood.

THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE
TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

She takes her first steps for the camera...
On her own.
She looks around, turns away, steps
forward
Here begins her story of curiosity,
separation, independence...
(But – perhaps - just beyond the frame
her mother calls her name and she turns
towards her voice and stumbles towards
that embrace).

Blackmore Ave, 1960

—
There's no such thing as autobiography there's only art and lies¹.

—
She recognizes that longing and belonging are counterpoised. She longs for autonomy, courage, adventure, independence. She ventures forth in search of these from the secure places of belonging – to family, community, friends, to particular versions of the past, particular stories of who she is and what she is capable of doing. (Unmoored, now, she tries not to think about what she has done and proceeds one day at a time.)

—
In the stories she spins she tells herself as a unique and special individual. She has her own favourite books, favourite stories, favourite things she does differently to anyone else in the world or even in her very own family. It is in their differences that they each become told as separate and distinct.

—
Amateur photographs are ...traces of a social protocol of integration...intended to reassert the family.²

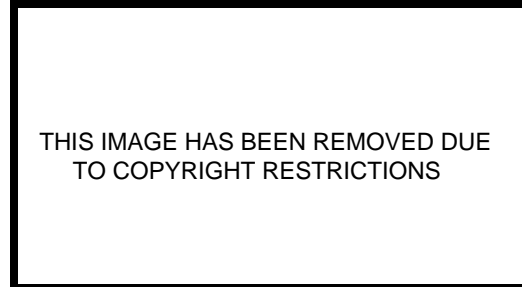
—
She looks at the photos her parents send her as artifacts from a dis(re)membered past.

She has nothing in common, for example, with the devout child, clad in blinding white, veiled...but then her body begins to remember practicing the tilt of the head that turned the eyes towards the floor, the soft shoe shuffle down the aisle two by two, all eyes on the

¹ Winterson, 1994, p. 69

² Barthes, 1982, p. 7

procession, the feeling of long sock elastic cutting into around her legs, kneeling on hard wood on bony bare knees, the body of Christ sticking to her soft palate.



First Holy Communion

Most of all, this photo shocks her with the weight of impending death. Her brother died when he was 18, a tall all-grown-up young man. This glimpse of her, dressed like an angel, holding his chubby baby hand, while he looks straight at the camera, smiling, hits her in the chest, in the stomach, in those places in the body where grief and loss stay always unresolved.

She'd forgotten how small he was then. In the photo he still belongs to her, and she to him, 'big sister' to his 'little brother.'

She cuts the others – still living - out of the photo. She cuts out the dog and her other brother patting it. She cuts out her sister in the red dress squinting at the camera on her other side. She leaves just these two – the oldest and the youngest – the one still here and the one gone.

She tries to approximate how it was, to emphasise the feeling of protectiveness and trust she reads in their closeness, in her hand wrapped around that fat warm wrist. Her intervention makes the photo more true to what she wants the truth to be, to her feelings about him and her and then and later, to the version of the past that she is creating from her grief.

At the same time, she notes it is his *wrist* that the girl holds so firmly. She controls his movements, forestalls the possibility of baby brother diverging from the set-piece of this event (her First Holy Communion). His smile becomes wistful, he knows he's being good yet he still has to endure the controlling hand of his sister. He squints at the camera, knowing already that it will be over in a moment and then she'll let him go.

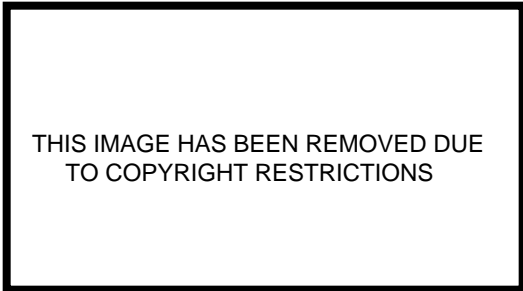
—

Part of her story of becoming (a teacher, a student, a writer, this person who she takes herself to be) is about reading and be(com)ing literate...she tells herself in this story as if

the books she read – *as if reading itself* – is a core part of who she is. (Or perhaps ‘who she is’ is just a palimpsest of those stories she has read and heard and been told written over and over one another shaping her imagination, her desires, her longings).

She asked her mother if she could read before she went to school (looking for confirmation: “Of course you were clever, of course you were advanced”). Her Mum couldn’t remember. She was shocked. How could she tell (herself) her story of prec(oc)iousness if she wasn’t remarkable? Where does the narrative that wends through Dux of the school, university, postgraduate study *begin*, if not at the point where she could already read before she started school? Wasn’t this a *fact*? How could her mother forget?

—



In her Saturday morning uniform...
Belonging *in the pack* with Brown Owl
and all the other girls.
Learning how to behave, learning
necessary skills.
Sewing on the badges for table setting,
for button-sewing.
Caught in her Brownie uniform on the
roof of the Town Hall with her friend.
Not knowing it was bad, not knowing
that it would “bring shame on the whole
pack”.
Relief, finally, at leaving the pack and
relinquishing her responsibilities
towards the uniform, towards the others.

Brownies

Later she tells a story about herself as a good student and then changing schools at 15 and faltering. (This is part of her how-I-became-an-English-teacher-story). It can be told in a bitter voice, an angry voice, of a second-rate education at a parochial girls’ Catholic school. Of a transition into a coed country school at a ‘difficult’ developmental stage. It can also be told as a story of a school with an exemplary and innovative humanities curriculum, where teachers spent their breaks year after year setting up complex choice-driven units through which students worked at their own pace and exercised responsibility for their learning. The transition story in this narrative is to a school where her weaknesses in Maths and Sciences became apparent (but her strengths in the

Humanities were also obvious). There's another story she could also tell of a girl who erratically wandered through her schooling, doing well enough when some topic took her fancy or when she liked a teacher but not outstanding, not the best, not (always) caring so much about being the best.

She thinks of herself as a kid who read everything and who read all the time. She remembers reading her way through every lunchtime at school (but the winters where she lived were long and, if she chooses to attend to them, there are other memories of hitting tennis balls against walls and other games).

She had a dream that when she grew up, she would have a whole wall of books, a roomful of walls of books all the way from the floor to the ceiling. It would have a secret door disguised behind the shelves in one of the walls. And no one would know and all the books would be hers.

But perhaps this is a dream for all children who like to read and who use libraries or pass their books on to younger brothers and sisters. Perhaps it is not her dream at all.

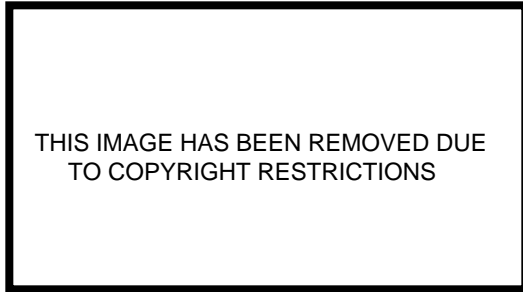
In the process of constructing ourselves appropriately..., we long for a secure relationship, for an affinity, for a sense of being in our proper or usual place. This longing is intricately tied up with becoming the appropriate(d) body...³

Mostly, there were four children in the family. In her memory they fall into shifting sets of pairs: the ones who like custard and the ones who like jelly, the ones who eat beans and those who eat peas, the two who go to Auntie Val's for holidays, the ones who go to Auntie Beryl's, the girls and the boys, the oldest ones and the littlest ones. Always, though, there's her position as the oldest to take into account. There are certain responsibilities.

She doesn't remember reading to anyone at the beginning but she knows she must have because there were school readers to be brought home and sheets of paper where parents had to sign off on homework reading. She only remembers reading on her own, all the time and everywhere: up the apple tree, in the cupboard under the stairs, on the bus, in the library, out in the school yard in a corner, on a bench, bellydown on the grass, behind the bar.

³ Davies, 2000b, p.37

Her Nanna used to tell stories from her own childhood. Like the time the man leaned over the fence and said she was the only redhead in the litter. She realized then, she said, that she did not belong. Adopted. Being unique meant that she was not one of them. Her Nanna was sure that's why her Mother growled at her more often than she did the others. That man called her into the position of the one who does not belong and she made it hers.



She looks me straight in the eye/ I...
What secrets are in her crooked smile,
her straight gaze?
What is it that amuses her so?
She teases with her clear gaze, her
seductive smile, all that hair falling over
her shoulders.

Eye/ I

Family photographs may affect to show us our past but what we do with them – how we use them – is really about today, not yesterday. The traces of our former selves are pressed into service in a never-ending process of making, remaking, making sense of, ourselves – now. There can be no last word about...any photograph.⁴

There's another story she can tell about moving - through the lens of gender - about a girl who was good at Maths, changed schools, had a lousy teacher and met boys in her classes again. She retreated from Maths—despite 'her talent'—and blamed the teacher and the gendered institution of co-ed schooling for her sudden ineptitude. That story becomes bitter when she can't get into an elite university because she doesn't have HSC Maths but to tell the truth she didn't apply for entry to the elite institutions anyway. Frankly, for most of those last two years of school she didn't even know if she wanted to go away at all because she had a boyfriend who loved her and who she loved and they expected to be together. But the gendered Maths story of a talented Maths whizz falls down when she reads her old reports from her Egyptian Maths teacher: "Tries hard and shows considerable interest" and her Year 10 Maths teacher who said: "Sue is finding the Maths a little difficult but is managing to cope by asking for assistance when in trouble". And her story of an inept and unpleasant Maths teacher also falls apart because when she goes

⁴ Kuhn, 1995, p. 16

back to that school, years later, he is the one who is most delighted to see her again.

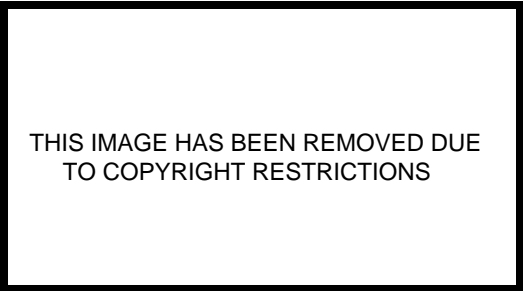
What happened in the family was that after the neat symmetry of four quick children – two girls, two boys - there was another born, eight years younger than the next youngest, twelve years younger than the oldest. A baby girl.

She tells stories about her mother always reading, about her mother loving English and English Literature best when she goes back to school in her 50s. She invests herself in a genealogical-genetic-aesthetic-discursive romance where she makes herself (up as) the (literary) daughter of a (literary) mother.

When her Nanna's youngest brother was born, ten years or so later, he had red hair. They belonged together. He was the missing half of the pair of redheads in the family. Her Nanna was not adopted after all. Thus the memory –the memory of a mistake - becomes a tale that her Nanna knows is worth telling to the granddaughter with the tinge of red in her hair.

“What was my favourite story?” the woman asks her mother but she doesn't remember. There must have been one special one...a story that spoke to her alone, to her unique personality, a story that shaped her desires. She imagines that lost first favourite story like a secret that has slipped away from her somehow, like something she needs to know to understand herself.

She can't remember writing anything at primary school but here's the proof. The left hand on the page to hold it flat, that was part of the lesson, how to sit, how far to lean, how to hold her shoulders and most of all the grip on her pen(cil). Her smile shows the strain. Someone must have fixed her hand like that before the photo. She's never held her pen like that (finger and thumb neatly alongside each other). Perhaps she'd been growled at already that day for wrapping her thumb right over her index finger, for holding her pen too tightly. She knows how it feels to have a good tight grip, a tensed forearm, to be ready to write. It's etched in pain into her muscles and her bones. Now she's always ready to write.

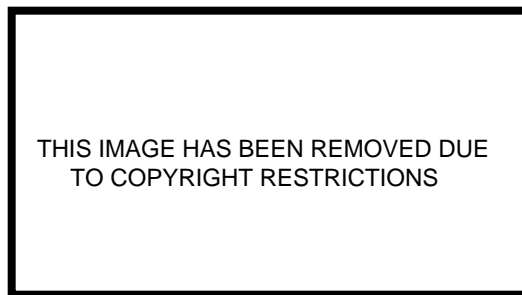


THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE
TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

Getting a grip

*Memories ...do not exist in some pure, veridical state, awaiting the means of revelation. They are not written on the body in indelible and minutely legible ink. Politics, desire, patterns of language use – each play their part in constituting how we read our own bodily (in)scriptions...*⁵

She forgot how much she loved him until she found this photograph again decades later. Her story of loving him was re-lived in her present through re-discovering this photo, through imagining being in the body of the little girl (again) at that moment.



Love

*Telling stories about the past, our past, is a key moment in the making of our selves. To the extent that memory provides their raw material, such narratives of identity are shaped as much by what is left out of the account—whether forgotten or repressed—as by what is actually told. Secrets haunt our memory stories, giving them pattern and shape*⁶.

The symmetry of the family was broken again when the first youngest one, the youngest of the four kids, died when he was 18. That wasn't meant to happen. His story was the artistic one, the boy who could draw, the dreamy one. But he joined the navy and then he died. His story stopped and everyone else's story of who they are in relation to everyone else lost one its threads. There's a hole in the heart of the family. The youngest one is sad that she is the youngest. She thinks that everyone else remembers everything that she cannot because she was not there or she was too little. She thinks that the others remember everything about him and that only she is cursed with forgetting. But forgetting is a tragedy from which they all suffer, even the oldest one. Memories of him come back to her all in a rush when she sees the photo of her holding his hand, holding him still for the camera, when a trace of memory brings back her sense of being his big sister, and the feeling of his fat little hand inside her bigger one...

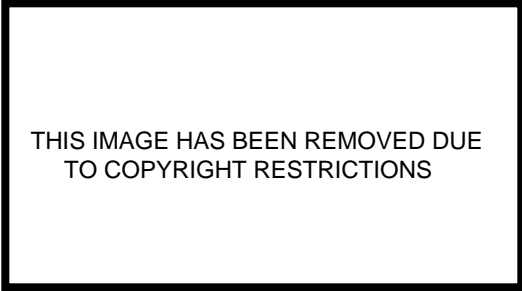
⁵ Davies, 2000b, p. 45

⁶ Kuhn, 1995, p. 2

*The threads of history shift and change and overlap. Continuous being is not passed down from generation to generation intact, but made again and again out of what is possible for this child, these children, in the spaces in which they find themselves.*⁷

Being the first is one of the strands of the stories she spins for herself about ‘being independent’. (Her ex-husband even told her that when he was leaving: “She needs me more than you do,” he said). The family conspires in the story of she who doesn’t need anyone and who can make a life in a new place alone, who travels bravely to exotic and foreign places. Everyone has their own stories in the family. The vagaries and random events of life are woven into the retrospective fabric of ‘who I am’...

The family story is that she was always a good student. Even in the kindergarten photos she can find traces of her diligence. But she wasn’t interested in everything and has never done (been able to do) everything that is expected of her.



THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE
TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

⁷ Davies, 2000b, p. 54

I lend myself to the social game, I pose, I know I am posing, I want you to know I am posing...this additional message must in no way alter the precious essence of my individuality: what I am, apart from my effigy...what I want in short is that my (mobile) image, buffeted among a thousand shifting photographs, altering with situation and age, should always coincide with my (profound) “self”; but it is the contrary that must be said: “myself” never coincides with my image for it is the image which is heavy, motionless, stubborn (which is why society sustains it) and “myself” which is light, divided, dispersed; like a bottle-imp, “myself” doesn’t hold still, giggling in my jar ⁸.

Her other stories in the family are of having a temper. They are legendary. When she slammed the door in the bar when she was 16 and the glass fell out and smashed in front of all those men. What she remembers of some of the times she lost her temper then is a feeling of watching herself from the side – and thinking in a split second but still thinking thoughts like “Now I am going to slam that door and I don’t care what happens.” Making a scene, taking up the position of the one who refuses to be quiet and good, who refuses to be told by her father what to do (being “rebel” to her father’s “patriarch”).

The traces that remain of that moment of fury are in her body - the rush in the muscles in her arm as she slams the door as hard as she can behind her, the crash of the glass breaking in her ears and the faintest trace of memory that it had to do with her Dad’s disapproval of her boyfriend. Who knows?

THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE
TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

Belonging

“I have always loved reading” ... Irrespective of age and position, our interviewees invariably cited the private enjoyment of reading as the main factor which encouraged them to choose English as a specialist subject...The love of reading referred not to the

⁸ Barthes, 1982, p. 11-12

activity of reading itself, not to the reading of all material that had been set before them. It referred very specifically to the reading of imaginative fiction, or narratives with a strong emphasis on character, plot and satisfactory closure. The love of reading actually meant a readiness to engage in a specific reading practice with a specific kind of material. ...

The pleasure of escape, can be identified with the escape from self, the state of existing away from, self that is the ex-stasis, of ecstasy. In the study of English this is the pleasure of being transported by readerly texts, and the voices we have just heard are consistent with those of... 'enchanted' readers... This discourse is characterized by notions of escape, resistance, pleasure and creativity...⁹

She's standing in front of the Grade 6 class reading out aloud. Sister always chooses her because she's good at it and because she loves it. On this slow hot afternoon Sister lets her go on and on through chapter after chapter while the other kids are allowed to have their heads down on the desk after lunch. She stands stiff and straight near the edge of the platform near her desk. Her knees are locked in to hold her up, the book is held at a precise angle straight in front, with both hands. Sometimes she looks over it at the dozing class in front of her. She slows her reading right down to a pace that her voice can keep up with. She concentrates on varying her voice to suit the characters. She speeds up and slows down to match the drama of the story. The story takes her to that other place and even there on the stage her body follows. Her voice is clear and low and projects all the way to the back row. She takes special care with the punctuation marks and uses them to conduct the rhythm of her reading. Although she has so many things to attend to, she is still part of the story, carrying it through her body and her voice out even to the kids who don't like reading. They will love this story too if she can just read it well enough.

She imagines that becoming a teacher would be an entry into a profession where people respected one another, where students and teachers will (be) like the curious and passionate person she sees herself to be. Her influence will open the worlds of reading and the imagination to her students.

One hot afternoon at primary school, the class is sleeping in front of her and she's reading, like she always does. It's hot. She feels like she might vomit, or fall down there in front of them. The words are going all blurry in front of her eyes and she feels hot all over. If she falls down she's afraid she won't be asked to read to the class again. But she hopes that Sister will say she can stop before something dreadful happens.

[I]nduction into the world of ideas about what reading, writing and research are ... [is] a journey as much embodied as cerebral, and as much about being a woman socialized into communities, as an individual choosing to participate in the scholarly life. ...

⁹ Peel, 2000a, pp. 176-177, p. 183

[I]t takes years of experience to realize that life goes through us as much as we go through life, that we are trapped as much as we are free, and that those notions of liberty and constraint are constructs we create together¹⁰.

THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE
TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

Mine

She looks at him, he looks at the camera. “She’s mine”, he seems to say. Perhaps, with her sideways look, it is she who says “He’s mine”. Who can tell after so long? There was a time when they thought they were each other’s and they were happy. This was the year she lived in the country, wore overalls, baked bread and read novels all day long every day while he was at work teaching. Seeing how much he liked his work as a teacher, how much the kids liked him, encouraged her to keep thinking that she would be one too.

When her Nanna was dying – a broken hip and months lying in bed waiting for visitors, for relief, for death, she saw scenes from her life playing on the wall opposite her bed one afternoon. “It’s so strange”, she said to her granddaughter, “I can see a railway station platform, as clear as day, and so many people standing there about to catch the train”. No one that she knew and she did not recognize the station but she recognized the clothes and the hats. She told her granddaughter the names of the fabrics, the styles and cut of the frocks. They were ‘before the war’ fashions. Was this memory or fantasy? Truth or fiction? If she saw a face she could name, would that change it into a memory? As clear as day, she said, although she’d been blind for years...

In any case what sort of truth does memory hold? Just ‘being there’ guarantees nothing, least of all memory itself. So many moments forgotten, erased, obscured. Year after year seems to have slid away from her with nothing but faint traces. There were big years in the story of the family like the year they moved, the year her Poppy died, the hepatitis year, the next year that the new baby came. She can remember those in general, she can reconstruct them through the details of the family archives...

¹⁰ Neilsen, 1998, p. 22

Her sense of childhood is of a romantically solitary child who liked to read and dream and hide away - but that's a sort of a lie she tells herself. In these photos she remembers being the big sister, caring for and fighting with littler ones all the way through until she left home at 18, her youngest sister only 6 and three others inbetween.

Homework

Here's a photo of her with a sparrow on her shoulder. It's summer so she could be home from uni or it's when she's in Year 11. If she's a uni student she's copying and gluing recipes into a recipe book (but she thinks that domestic fantasy—being good at cooking—came a little later). Or she's in year 11 (Form 5 then) and she's doing her Legal Studies homework—making a scrapbook of articles from newspapers and commenting on them. It's unlikely that it's then because she didn't often do that homework. It was boring so she didn't do it. She didn't care at all that her teacher cared so much. She failed it because of non-submission of assessment pieces (the scrapbook) and dropped the subject. She remembers setting similar scrapbook assignments for her own students years later and seeing in herself that teacher who cared (whilst also being the student who didn't care).



THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE
TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

That soft green singlet was her favourite for years. If she wasn't wearing a bra then she might have already been at uni. Perhaps she didn't wear them in Form 5 either. She liked to be provocative by then. Having a pet sparrow in farming country where flocks of bird ate the crops was a provocation. She'd walk around her parents' pub with the sparrow on her shoulder and the farmers drinking beer in the bar would threaten to kill it. She liked to provoke her father too but it was more provocative by then that she was 16 and her boyfriend was 20 and that they drank and had sex every weekend while she kept up with her schoolwork (except Legal Studies) during the week. Her Dad didn't care about the sparrow.

There are lots of photos in the family, slides, snapshots, Super 8 film that's been transferred to video so they can check their collective memories and pull them into the family chronicle every now and then. There are reel to reel sound recordings of the children taking turns to sing into a microphone. Her song was "itsy bitsy spider." Her brother's little baby song is interrupted by him growling shutup to someone else and that's become part of his story of being the naughty one. Lots of her memories hang from these props. They don't tell the 'truth' either, just a split second from a certain angle with the light over there and the squint in the sun that becomes part of her sister's story of being the crabby scowling one, and a long forgotten instruction about where to be and what to do. And someone else's eye making her memory through the lens for her.

—

Your body (and mind) has its own unique history, it has moved through a unique trajectory of coordinations. However it is important at once to note that your trajectory through a myriad of such coordinations ...is meaningless unless it has been narrativized by yourself and others. Your own trajectory constrains what narratives you and others can tell about it; but different narratives render your trajectory meaningful in quite different ways¹¹.

—

When she got a job as a teacher she had no teaching qualification and was thousands of kilometres from a university. She was married now and the deal was that she would stay and he would pay. His company would not employ her anyway after they were married. She fronted up to the Catholic school with her certificates and the results from her BA and offered to work for nothing.

Thus she began working as an English teacher. All her students were from remote Aboriginal communities. Although she had studied Aboriginal languages at university she had never met people who spoke them before.



THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE
TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

¹¹ Gee, 1997, p. xiv

She has her grandmother's voice on tape telling her memories for that book she never finished. They've folded into hers as she's listened to the voice from before her grandmother died, talking straight to her, telling her stories, entertaining her with versions of her memories....

There's a grand narrative of the family that she inserts herself into when she looks for herself in photos of her grandmother and for parallels in her stories. Yes, surely that's her nose too, and if she wore her hair that way, or had glasses like those ones.... Yes, and her Nanna had a temper too, a strong will, independence. She was stubborn and funny. She knew how to tell a story and she lived a very long life. Isn't she like her Nanna? Haven't people always said that to her? She can make her memories do almost anything...

There's no point calling out because he's deaf but she wants to reach into this photo, take her grandfather's hand and turn him around so she can see him properly, so she can re-remember his face from this moment just before he died.



THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE
TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

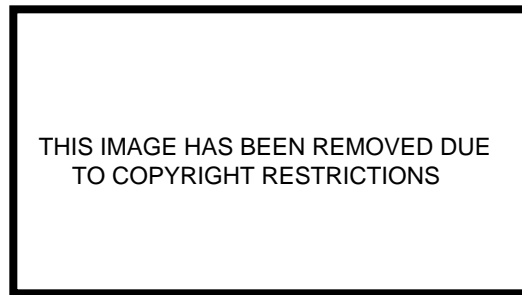
Poppy

If memory is flimsy and untrustworthy and life impossibly complex then what's the point of looking at memory? As Kuhn (1995) says, as my Nanna knew, as we act out again and again when we say tell me about when...or remember that time that...telling stories about the past is an act of memory and of imagination. It is a technology of self-production. I am here now like this because I was that and that and that back then. Remember? Remember me like that? We watch reruns of the old movies of ourselves after Christmas Dinner and collude in our storytelling of ourselves, our collective subject. This family. Our family. This not to say that our stories are not true of course. They're as true as anything. I can open any album and sit on the floor for an hour immersed in whatever stories of myself the album tells me: the adventurer with a rope around her waist leaning into a volcano in Chile. I remember the moment in my body, the hot ground through the soles of my feet, the sulphurous smoke stink in my nostrils and prickling my eyes, the angle of my body as I leaned into the pit. I remember that being brave is also my story. I take it up again into my present self.

How I remember is not (merely) a rational act but one that engages my whole body in remembering...

—

There aren't many photos of the five kids together. This photo sits on top of the piano next to the photo of when there were only four of them. She has the boy baby on her knee in the earlier one. The next one she has of the five of them was one Christmas when her Nanna said "This might be the last time I see you all together". They lined up in the backyard in front of the clothesline, the littlest brother a giant towering over all of them. But it was he who died that year and they were never again in a photo all together.



—

My memories are saturated with (be)longings. My body with other bodies. I can lean against the rope because others hold the other end of it and lean back as I lean forward into the volcano. Those kids, some of them taller than me, leaning into me, draping their arms around my white shoulders. The smell and feel of my Nanna's wet hair under my hand, as I comb and spray and comb and spray and she sighs with pleasure. My little brother's hand in mine. My baby sister in my lap, my arms around her and her sweet baby smell and the skin of her soft baby head against my lips. ...

Onwards...

And so I find myself (almost) at the end of this thesis, the woman I was at the beginning of the thesis, the one who was (t)here all along... the writer writing a PhD thesis for accreditation, attempting to write herself into a space that may or may not exist for her in the academy of the university. She is no longer the child or the adolescent or the young woman in the autoethnographic text but this text is suffused with another sort of longing, a grown up worldly desire to belong to another sort of community. The chapter which I am ending with these words has been the last piece of experimental writing in the thesis, my last creative engagement in this (con)text with the (im)possibilities that poststructural theory brings to writing and research. Although, of course, not wanting to slip into the binary opposition I have deconstructed through this thesis (and attempted to demonstrate in my writing), I argue that analytical writing is also creative and poetic. Although my texts have wider readership (my family, my co-researchers, journal readers, actors, theatre audiences), in this larger text I write to a specific audience – you – my examiner(s). For your sakes, I must draw together the messy threads of this thesis and make explicit what I have found and what I have done in this investigation into writing.

This thesis has been an exploration of what poststructural theory makes possible and visible in writing and I have used my own writing as the exploratory ground of my investigation. In this I pursue a dual line of inquiry suggested by Davies' words: "What I am interested in is both how I can write differently about what emerges out of the research process...and how the act of writing itself is fundamental to that process" (Davies, 2000a, p. 191). One of the threads I have followed through this thesis is the deconstruction of the literature/ science binary, or the creative/ analytical binary, of research and writing in academia. I have demonstrated the possibilities of writing other/wise through detours into collective biography, poetry, drama and autoethnography. These small experiments are indicative of diverse of other possibilities for eclectic and inventive research and writing. In this my writing could be located within the emerging field of "arts-based inquiry" (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Cole, Knowles, Luciani and Neilsen, 2003; Conrad, 2002; de Cosson, 2002; Dunlop, 2002; Neilsen, 2002; Neilsen, Cole and Knowles, 2001; Springgay, 2002). My work brings writing practices that could be located

within this paradigm into an explicitly poststructural theoretical framework. In earlier detours of the thesis I explore poetry and drama and, in this final detour, I have brought autoethnography, another vigorous emergent paradigm in the social sciences, into dialogue with poststructuralist theory. Through my investigation of autoethnographic writing practices, as in earlier sections of this thesis, I have traced how experimental writing/ research strategies tend to be affected by the undertow of humanist inclinations and ways of thinking and writing. Nevertheless, as Davies (2000a) and St Pierre (2000a) argue (after Foucault, 1997a), humanism is a supple and persistent theme that continues inevitably to influence our work. From this position, it has become more interesting to explore how humanism and poststructuralism work in tension in the texts and writing processes explored throughout this thesis than to attempt to argue that one neat paradigm might overturn another. In any case, the version of poststructuralism that I take up emphasizes the positionality of all research. Any research project is embedded in complex discursive regimes. I have become suspicious of grand narratives, including those of research practices and methodologies, and I see “truth” as tenuous, and consequently as (constantly) negotiated and contested in specific contexts.

In each of the detours into writing in this thesis I have explored the throughlines of the *subject*, the *body* and the *other* as they have pertained to that writing project. In the section on autoethnography, the final (or the first) subject – the “sacred originary” of the self who knows herself is explored and destabilized through a poststructuralist suspicion of singular truths or transparent knowledge. The threads of the thesis are brought together in Probyn’s conceptualization of subjectivity as realized through the body and in relation with others: “the body cannot be thought of as a contained entity; it is in constant contact with others...subjectivity [is] a relational matter” (Probyn, 2003, p. 290). In all sections of this thesis I have used *writing* as an active location for the production of (poststructural) subjects through these intertwined threads. Even in the autoethnographic experiment in this chapter, the body is been crucial to re-membling, and “I” makes sense through relations with the others who populate the fragments of memories that I re-presented in this chapter. Such careful work begins to approach what Somerville calls the “practice of love” (1999, p. 218), a practice of “taking exquisite notice and care” captured

for Somerville in a photograph of another woman sitting in the landscape and in Probyn's words a decade earlier: "I insist on a concept of the self that can articulate the theoretical necessity of care, of love and of passion" (1993, p. 169; cited in Somerville, 1999, p. 218). This is the concept of the self in poststructural theorizing that I have tried to work with through all the writing sites I have traversed in this thesis. I hesitate here, rereading the last sentence, reminding myself that this thesis as a whole is not about *myself* as a poststructural subject, but about *writing*, wondering what I have done to subvert my academic intentions. Then the words of Foucault return to me:

This private life of an individual, his sexual preference, and his work are interrelated not because his work translates his sexual life but because the work includes the whole life as well as the text. The work is more than the work: the subject who is writing is part of the work (Foucault, 1986, p. 184).

Which brings me in turn to the most important and perhaps the most banal observation about what I have learned in this study, writing is always a technology for the production of subjects. We write ourselves (in) writing.

Chapter Eleven – (Not) arriving

One has to get going. This is what writing is, starting off. It has to do with activity and passivity. This does not mean that one will get there. Writing is not arriving; most of the time it's *not arriving*. One must go on foot with the body. One has to go away, leave the self. How far must one not arrive in order to write, how far must one wander and wear out and have pleasure? (Cixous, 1993, p. 65).

This thesis has been a series of detours through different writing landscapes: poetry, drama, autoethnography and theory. Arriving back from those detours to the terminus of departures and arrivals is to find that there is no certain ending, no (fore)closure, no definitive answers, no clear conclusion. There is an absence at the centre where she-who-knows would tell you how to think about all of this that has gone before, and what might be the consequences, the ramifications of her study. The problem is that when poststructural theory puts singular truth and certainty under erasure, how can a text like this conclude? It must end provisionally with all sorts of “signs, quotation marks, and brackets, to protect it from any form of fixation or conceptualisation” (Cixous, 1993, p. 6). In the novel *If on a winter's night a traveler*, Calvino's frustrated reader (you, me) says “it seems to me that in the world there now exist only stories that remain suspended or get lost along the way” (1981, p. 203). This conclusion, this chapter, is a moment of suspension in a story that will go on into diverse further detours and returns. None of the texts in this thesis are final, fixed, immutable. And neither is this text that is the thesis. Nevertheless, I might gather some threads together while we hover here, suspended, and I might imagine some of the (im)possibilities of (this) research.

The topic I chose to investigate in this study – poststructural theory and writing research – is huge, boundless. The horizon seems almost as distant at the end as it was when I began, but, as is the way with horizons and journeys, progress has been made. Rather than purely analytical, this thesis has also been performative in its investigation and practice of poststructural theory and writing. I have explored writing collectively, poetically, dramatically and autoethnographically in different detours of the thesis. My

own writing has been the primary research field. In each section, in every genre, one striking finding is the centrality of the subject. In all the writing in this thesis I have explored the subject in and of the writing, particularly the writer herself (or herselfes). Indeed, a poststructural position on writing entails constant awareness of “who the ‘I’ is who writes” (Threadgold, 1997, p. 56).

Subject

The subject is one of the three lines of flight that I have followed through the labyrinth of this thesis. I have interrogated subjectivity in various writing sites: collective biography, drama, theory/ analysis, poetry, dreams, memories, fictions. In this endeavour, I have taken up Probyn’s suggestion that:

[S]ubjectivity is not a given but rather a process and a production...the sites and spaces of its production are central. In other words, the space and place we inhabit produce us. (2003, p. 294).

Spatiality is a dimension of subjectivity-in-process, of subjectification. The spaces and places in which I have interrogated subjectification are the sites of writing that are in this thesis, and myself and others are the subjects who are in process in these sites. In the production of subjectivity it is not possible to choose between humanist and poststructural versions of self. Humanism is always already imbricated in any speaking position (Davies, 2000a; Foucault, 1997a; St Pierre, 2000a). It is inescapable. Our longings for coherence, singularity, identity, self-knowledge are examinable and contestable, and what then becomes possible is the multiplication of the subjects we can take ourselves to be, the speaking positions that we might occupy at particular moments, in specific places and spaces. Foucault envisaged the subject as a position rather than a person, “not the speaking consciousness, not the author of the formulation, but a position that may be filled in certain conditions by various individuals” (1972, p. 115). In the writing experiments in this thesis I have tried to destabilize and multiply the types of subjects produced in these (con)texts. Working with memories reinforces the idea that subjectivity is produced in a dimension of temporality as well as spatiality. The writing in this thesis (and the subjects produced in writing) are provisional and situated. The texts in here are shape shifters, the subjects produced in them (and producing them) remain

mobile, mutable, multiple, contingent as the positions available to them shift about. In Butler's work the subject is neither "ground" nor "product" but always "the permanent possibility of a certain resignifying process" (1995, p. 47). In Davies' work, the subject is "discursive process" and poststructural analysis dislodges the fixity of the humanist self to follow the threads of the "self as a verb, always in process, taking its shape in and through...discursive possibilities" (2000a, p. 137). Whilst stressing the subject's "fictionality," Davies emphasizes "how powerful fictions are in constituting what we take to be real" (2000a, p. 133). In the texts in this thesis, including the autoethnography in the previous chapter, I have attempted to examine - and to experiment with - the production of these "fictions" we call our-selves. But at the same time, despite problematising the subject of humanism, I am also a self who takes herself up at particular moments, within particular discourses, with a reasonable semblance of coherence. I do not wish to abandon the language and ideas of humanism which necessarily remain part of our imaginations, our desires, the ways we take ourselves up in the world and the possibilities in which we find (contingent) foundations (Butler, 1995) from which to launch into action in the world at particular moments. As St Pierre points out in her reading of Foucault, humanism is not "an error" (2000a, p. 478), rather it is an "insufficiency" (St Pierre, 2000a, p. 496). Poststructuralist paradigms draw attention to the effects of language and discourse in the constitution of subjects. Despite the performativity of subjectivity (Butler, 1990, 1997), the trajectories through which we become subjects are so diverse that we and others recognize ourselves as individual and as unique. Ermath (2000) constructs a theory of "beyond the subject" that acknowledges that sense we have of ourselves and of others as unique despite being subjected with/ in discourse. Discourses, for her, are like "codes" within which subjects are taken up (or take themselves up) in what she calls the "unique and unrepeatable poetry of an individual life" (Ermath, 2000. p. 412). In this version of subjectivity:

[W]e no longer have only a subject-in-process, or even a subjectivity-in-process, but something more like subjectivity-in-processes. [I]dentity ...is both sequence and palimpsest. Its singularity exists in the unique and unrepeatable sequence of a life, but not in some essential 'subject.' And its palimpsestuousness derives from

the multiplied discursive condition in which each moment involves a complex subjective specification of multiple codes. (Ermath, 2000, pp. 411-412)

In writing, these multiple codes call together particular provisional subjects, at that moment, at that site, in that position. In the memory texts of collective biography and of autoethnography in this thesis, the subjects produced were versions of “I” and “we.” In the collective poetry, the subjects called up in the text are the girls in the poem and the “you” in the space of reading – who figures as a subject much as the “you” in Calvino’s novel which self-consciously begins “You are about to begin reading...” (1982, p. 9). The script for “The Breast Project” called up subjects in the three characters in the play, the writer(s) in the collective space in which the play was developed, and the singular writer home alone at her computer muttering the dialogue to herself as she wrote, as well as the subjects who lingered like ghosts behind the text. In another space and time, the theatre will call up other transient subjects in the collective space of the performance. Dispersed through this thesis is the analytical writer, me, the one who embrac(k)e(t)s the words of the theorists inside her own, who constructs theory and constructs herself simultaneously as a sort of theorist. These subjects are located in space, time and texts and they spill out into other spaces, times and texts, enriching the necessary “fictions” of our selves (Davies, 2000a, p. 133). This is a “distributed subjectivity,” a subjectivity that is “complex and multilaminated,” that is more “random and radical” and more representative of the complexity of lived experience than humanist (or modernist) versions of a stable self (Ermath, 2000, p. 412).

Poststructural analyses attend to the discursive regimes that construct (us as) certain types of subjects in certain (con)texts. Subjects are called into certain positions through discourses that name us, for example, as “schoolgirls” (Davies et al., 2001), or as women who should remain silent (Davies et al., 1997). Through the writing in this thesis, powerful possibilities for making discursive regimes more visible arose when lived experiences were carefully (re)constructed. In collective biography, discursive analysis became possible through recalling particular lived experiences in loving detail. In the collective poetry, I brought the details of our memories together to create a (dis)continuous text on the ambiguity of adolescent desire and sexuality. I fictionalised

the specificity of the lives of the women in the play, enhancing the possibilities for the audience to enter the collective critical space of a text about women's embodied lives. The poetry and autoethnography wrote the particular whilst they also made visible discourses that constituted particular textual subjects (the "abandoned wife" for example, or the "big sister"). The nexus of the singularity of particular lives and the generality of discursive regimes was the point where I found that writing became both possible and powerful.

My focus on the subject of the writer writing (in) this thesis might be read as heretical in a theoretical terrain where both Barthes and Foucault have problematised the author-function (Barthes, 1989; Foucault, 1998). For Barthes, the figurative "death of the author" signifies that it is the text apprehended by a reader where meaning is made. Writing, he says, "is that neuter, that composite, that obliquity, the black and white where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes" (Barthes, 1989, p. 49). The subject who writes, the author who might say "I" for example, is "*poseur*: a matter of effect not intention" (Barthes, 1993, p. 480). Instead, "the text is a fabric of quotations, resulting from a thousand sources of culture" and the "sole power" of the writer "is to mingle writings" (Barthes, 1989, p. 53). In this thesis, in speaking of and as a writer within a poststructuralist frame, the terrain beneath my feet is treacherous. However, my intent has not been to reify a modernist author(itative) function, but rather to trace how the "effects" of authorship are achieved in texts. Finally, it is the reader, not the writer, who is "the site where this multiplicity is collected...the very space in which are inscribed, without any of them being lost, all the citations out of which a writing is made" (Barthes, 1989, p. 54). Through this thesis in talking of and as a writer, I have attempted to trace "the manner in which the text points to this figure [the writer] that, at least in appearance, is outside it and antecedes it" (Foucault, 1998, p. 205). Foucault says that "[i]n writing, the point is not to manifest or exalt the act of writing, nor is it to pin a subject within language; it is, rather, a question of creating a space into which the writing subject constantly disappears" (1998, p. 206). Thus the work of analysis is to "locate the space left empty by the author's disappearance, follow the distribution of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings this disappearance uncovers" (1998, p. 209). In this

thesis, by elaborating the collective and complex (con)texts of author-ship in collective biography, poetry, drama and autoethnography, I have placed the subject of the author/writer *sous rature* whilst simultaneously resurrecting her and giving her a tenuous and temporary speaking position.

Body

The body is another of my lines of flight through this thesis. The body (of poststructural theories) is produced in discourse and the body produces discourse. Barthes suggests that in writing “all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes” (Barthes, 1989, p. 49). Nevertheless, my investigations and textual experiments suggest that in writing the body is central. The body in this thesis is not an abstraction but a flesh and blood (and textual) *corpus*, the body at the scene of writing. In the texts of this thesis, it is particularly female bodies that are produced in collective biography, poetry, drama and autoethnography. I take up a feminist poststructuralism that does not erase the enfleshed body in favour of a discursive body. These bodies are not oppositional. The body is both / and (nature/ culture, inside/ outside, surface/ depth). Poststructural (and) feminist theory has had a somewhat troubled relationship to bodies of flesh and blood and sinew. For instance, searching for bodies in a recent reader on feminist theory and the body (Price and Shildrick, 1999), Somerville traces the double erasure of the corporeal body through both the “somatophobia of essentialism and the exclusive focus of poststructural research on the constitution of bodies in language” (Somerville, forthcoming 2003). (Even) for Foucault, as Bell suggests, the human body was “the only irreducible” (Bell, 1994, p. 12). Nevertheless, culture has had the upper hand in much poststructural theorizing, with women’s bodies in particular remaining in the missionary position as culture writes them female. Bell, for example, in her discussion of Foucault, whilst acknowledging that bodies are at the same time “biophysical given” and “cultural construct,” goes on to claim that “what has come to be recognized as female is a cultural construct right down to the biosocial level of the body” (1994, p. 12). Braidotti asks: “How are women to elaborate a truth which is not removed from the body, reclaiming the body for themselves?” but she turns to the language of psychoanalysis to speak of the

body in terms of “libidinal forces” and “unconscious foundations” (Braidotti, 1991, p. 8). Braidotti and Grosz both use conceptual tools from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) to move beyond the impasse of psychoanalysis. Grosz has paid particular attention to re-theorising the body starting from the flesh rather than discourse, refusing to choose and holding both ideas together through the figure of the Möbius strip which twists on itself so that “the inside flips over to become the outside or the outside turns over on itself to become the inside” (Grosz, 1994, p. 160). She uses this figure to disrupt binaries of surface and depth, of mind (or psyche) and body. The body for Grosz is “a kind of hinge, a threshold between a psychic of lived interiority and a more sociopolitical exteriority” (Grosz, 1995, p. 33). It is not “in opposition to culture but its preeminent object” (Grosz, 1995, p. 32). Grosz points out that “all the effects of subjectivity ...can be adequately explained using the subject’s corporeality as a framework...Bodies have all the explanatory power of minds” (1994, p. vii). Indeed, it might even be argued that “the mind is no more than an idea of the body – albeit a very powerful idea with material effects” (Davies, 2000b, p. 19). In an interview, Grosz describes the paradox of the body for philosophy: “we have no idea what a body is. This is because in a way it’s the most tangible thing we have” (Grosz and Chisholm, 1996, p. 44). In a different conceptualization of the body, Butler emphasises the performativity of a body that is simultaneously material and that is unique:

[T]he body is not merely matter but a continual and incessant *materializing* of possibilities. One is not simply a body, but, in some very key sense, one does one’s body and, indeed, one does one’s body differently from one’s contemporaries and from one’s predecessors and successors as well. (Butler, 1997, p. 404)

Butler, in another interview, appears to refuse the binary between lived and discursive bodies: “discourses do actually live in bodies. They lodge in bodies; bodies in fact carry discourses as part of their lifeblood. And nobody can survive without, in some sense, being carried by discourse” (Meijer and Prins, 1998, p. 282). Taking up other threads from Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Probyn describes bodies as “assemblages: bits of past and present practice, openings, attachments to parts of the social, closings and aversions to other parts” (2000, p. 17-18). Although all these particular theoretical-philosophical

positions are part of the discourses that circulate around the bodies in this thesis, like Somerville, I wish to retain the fleshy bodies that underpinned this research. This thesis is thus an intervention that writes in the (female) body, that fleshes out the text within a poststructural theoretical frame.

The flesh-bodies of women undergird this thesis. This trajectory began at the *Internationale Frauenuniversität*, in a program that explicitly rejected the disembodied practices of the “new body snatchers,” in favour of a position that saw the body as always “somebody, not something” (Duden, 2000a, p. 10) entailing research that “must leave open the possibility of knowledge that is somatic - from being *in* a state as compared to knowledge *about* a state” (Duden, 2000b). In a sense the literary texts in the thesis – from the poem in the first chapter right through to the autoethnography in the last chapter - have been strategies to write the body (back) in. This body is always already discursive and it is flesh, and that flesh is discursively inscribed. The body is neither cultural inscription nor biological natural but it is both at the same time, it comes into being at the threshold of nature and culture. The body is also always, as Duden reminds me, “somebody” and there are various somebodies in this crowded text that I have not yet introduced but who are here nevertheless. One of the flesh bodies of this thesis happened in a particular place and time that I detailed in this memory story:

Saturday morning. She's lying in bed late, relaxing in the warmth, the sun streaming in on her body. She stretches sleepily and turns over but there's something strange in her right breast. There's a lump. She can't believe it. She presses again just beneath and to the right of her nipple. It's definitely a lump and it's quite tender. This beautiful morning is suddenly sinister and she rushes down the steps to the phone to ring the clinic where she knows there'll be a woman doctor on duty. Visions of her friend who'd had breast cancer fill her head. Disjointed memories of her mother who'd had lots of small surgery around her breasts and lymph glands, of her mother's sister who'd had a radical mastectomy. Cancer seems like it's all around her and now it's inside her.

“I'm sorry,” says the receptionist, “I can't fit you in until Tuesday's evening clinic.” She cries on the phone and the woman says she'll squeeze her in if she

comes straight in. At the clinic, still a bit weepy, she sees a kind Scottish doctor who takes her seriously but reassures her that it doesn't feel like a breast cancer lump. She makes an appointment at the Breast Clinic.

In that clinic the waiting room is pink and full of women of all ages wearing hospital issue towelling robes over their bare breasts and other clothes watching TV, making tea, reading magazines. One old woman has her daughter with her holding her hand and they're speaking Greek. All these women have cancer she thinks.

Her turn with the horrible metal mammography machine squashing and squeezing her small breasts then the ultrasound where the doctor rubs an object all over her gel-covered bare breasts. "It's OK, they're only cysts," says the doctor, "I can see eight of them. I'll drain this infected one right now." She lifts her arm right up over her head and lies on her side, as instructed, facing the wall. The doctor approaches her breasts with a huge syringe, magnified to an even greater size by the sharp shadow it threw on the wall in front of her eyes. It hurts, despite the local anaesthetic, as the doctor draws a thick greenish brown liquid out of her. She can't believe that stuff has been inside her own breast and that are seven more that might erupt at any time.

In this memory there are multiple markers of the flesh as discursively constructed in particular (pathologised) ways by the doctor, the Breast clinic, the mammography machine, the other patients, her own imagination and the memories that crowd around and add to her hysteria. In Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh (forthcoming 2003), we perform a discursive analysis of this text along with other memories of "dangerous breasts". In this analysis we discuss the work of theorists like Lock (1998) and others on the discursive construction of breast cancer. But one fact remains irreducible. The woman in the text had a lump filled with lava in her breast. No discursive analyses can change the materiality of that lump in the way that the syringe was able to. Awareness of the discursive construction of bodies has informed conversations with a friend recovering from breast cancer, yet this knowledge is insufficient. Hers is another body that undergirds this thesis. The last three years and all the writing in this thesis have been enriched by hundreds of conversations we've had about breasts and bodies and mortality

and anger and grief and the joy of living anyway. The thesis is also underpinned by the flesh body of Haug, the theorist I met in Germany as she recovered from a mastectomy. She describes how she was “torn out of [her] political-theoretical correctness” to “end up in the ward where commonalities still exist...the women’s ward.”¹ In this text, as the hospital social workers and public health insurance authorities guarantee her “social integration” by stressing her “right for a prosthesis,” the patient inevitably asks herself “Am I still a woman without breasts?” and reflects on her discursively imposed “duty to appear in public...as if I was a woman...with a visible bosom – real or fictional” (Haug, 2001, p. 147-8). The discursive con(text) of the body without breasts is also one woman’s living body cut by surgeons and her feminist analysis takes place from a position of “deadly shock.” In a more ambiguous textual position, “Sylvia” is another fleshy body underpinning this thesis. She is the breast cancer survivor/ doctoral candidate/ autoethnographer in Ellis and Bochner’s Handbook chapter (2000a). These other stories, the ones I haven’t told in the thesis until now, form another layer of what I did and why and they explain why I must insist on a version of the body that credits both materiality and discursivity. Although the line of breasts through this thesis is surprisingly strong it is not a thesis about breasts, or about breast cancer, but a thesis about writing and feminist poststructural approaches to bodies and texts. Nevertheless, perhaps it is not so surprising that breasts should surface in a thesis that takes up a corporeal feminist poststructuralism, as breasts are among the “particular bodily zones that serve to emphasize both women’s difference from and otherness to men” (Grosz, 1994, p 203), and, as Young observed, women tend to experience their breasted bodies as “blurry, mushy, indefinite, multiple and without clear identity” (Young, 1990, cited in Grosz, 1994, p. 204).

The ambiguity of the body within poststructural theorizing has been problematic for other researchers. Pillow writes of her research with pregnant teenage girls: “I entered field settings filled with critical, postmodern, feminist, and qualitative research theories and practices yet found myself unprepared for the utter *physicality* of my research experiences” (Pillow, 2000, p. 200). Pillow is caught in a familiar theoretical dilemma

¹ This text was translated into English at Frigga Haug’s request by Rike Brisson and myself at the *Internationale Fruaenuniversität*. The German text is available in the journal *Das Argument* 240 (2001).

where she does not want to claim “some essentialized identity related to our female bodies. Yet I did not want to, and indeed could not, ignore the body in this research” (2000, p. 200). (Re)tracing the body is a project that feminist poststructural researchers are taking up in various contexts (Bartlett, 2000; Davies et al., 2003c, 2003d; Somerville, 2003). Feminist theorizing of the body is fraught with ambiguity and (im)possibilities. In an interview soon after the publication of her two highly theoretical philosophical tracts on the body in theory, Grosz admits that “[i]f we actually hit a corporeal feminism in the face, I’m not sure how we’d recognize it. All I know is that it won’t be of the same kind as we’ve had to this stage” (Grosz and Chisholm, 1996, p. 37). In this thesis I have tried to keep (at least) two ideas at play at the same time in relation to the body. I consider bodies to be discursively constructed and enacted. Bodies are shaped in discourse and they carry discourse as their “lifeblood” (Butler in Miejer and Prins, 1998, p. 282). And at the same time I consider bodies to be lived and experienced as fleshy, as personal, as “real.” When a body is cut, it is blood that comes out. The body is both “a thing and a nonthing, an object, but an objectable to take itself and others as subjects” (Grosz, 1994, p. xi). I refuse to choose, echoing Grosz. In this thesis I have attended particularly to the body as a locus of meaning, and a site of speaking, that has its own (il)legitimacy. The manner of my attendance to the body, to bodies (mine, yours, ours) has been by writing bodies in to poetry, to drama, to autoethnography and to theory.

Other

Thus far, I have pretended that ideas - such as the body, the subject, the other - might be kept apart. They are of course, as I intimated in the opening chapter, hopelessly entwined, as Probyn notes:

[T]he body provides us with key knowledge about the working of our subjectivities. The body then becomes a site for the production of knowledge, feelings, emotions and history, all of which are central to subjectivity...the body cannot be thought of as a contained entity; it is in constant contact with others...subjectivity [is] a relational matter. (Probyn, 2003, p. 290)

In poststructural paradigms our subjectivities – in all the dimensions Probyn lists - are constructed and contested in social spaces, spaces occupied by our bodies and other

bodies, spaces contaminated by others rather than the self-contained interior spaces of the becoming selves of humanism. In these relational social spaces our bodies brush up against other bodies in varieties of ways and a sort of osmosis happens between us. In speaking of “the other” in this thesis, I have not invoked psychoanalytical apparatuses such as the “ego” or “the mirror-phase” (Grosz, 1990). Nor have I taken up, in this context, postcolonial or queer theories that would focus my analysis on “others” who might be differently classed, sexed or raced to me. In this thesis I have not defined a particular category of “otherness,” rather I have taken up otherness as a category that is not completely fixed or rigid. Within poststructural theory subjects are constituted within discursive regimes that position us in diverse ways in relation to (each) other individually and collectively in complex social contexts. The “I” of poststructuralism is a multiplicity, a plural self constantly engaged in the (re)negotiation of identity in social spaces traversed by diverse discursive regimes. It is within spaces contaminated by others that the poststructuralist subject comes into being. In this thesis I have stressed the relational (con)texts of subjectivity in many places. How we are in relation to others remains central to poststructural theories. Ethnographers such as Behar (1996) and Denzin identify a dialogic (and ongoing) relationship between the subject/ self and the other(s) in research and writing as a critical component of postmodern qualitative research (Denzin, 1995, 1997, 2000). In writing, that other who is always entailed in the text as a permanent possibility is the reader, and an “epistemology of emotion” (Denzin, 1997) aims to move the reader to feel the feelings and imagine the other in that (con)text, including that other to the reader who was once the writer.

Another idea that is of interest in this thesis about writing is that otherness is also an “interior” experience and that writing the other is a strategy for writing difference. Accessing the other within is a strategy that requires a loving attention to detail in our embodied knowledge of the world, retrieved and re-created by re-memorizing our particular pasts, and those others who populated them, and imagining the multiple perspectives through which we might read and write the world. It requires us to write beyond our own limits. Rigorous exercise of the imagination opens up the possibility of tentatively accessing subject positions that do not match our own embodied experience,

creating other possibilities and discursive positionings that provide momentary but powerful fictions of how the world is and might become. Developing a sense of the other is crucial in what Cixous, who has been so important through this thesis, calls “the infinite domain of the human subject...the primary territory of every creature blessed with the difficult happiness of being alive” (1994, p. xvii). Cixous has consistently modeled this in her theory-practice of *écriture féminine* and lately in her writing for theatre:

Writing is the passageway, the entrance, the exit, the dwelling place of the other in me - the other that I am and am not, that I don't know how to be, but that I feel passing, that makes me live- that tears me apart, disturbs me, changes me, who? - a feminine one, a masculine one, some? - several, some unknown, which is indeed what gives me the desire to know and from which all life soars. . . . Writing is working; being worked; questioning (in) the between (letting oneself be questioned) of same *and of* other, without which nothing lives . . . not knowing one another and beginning again only from what is most distant, from self, from other, from the other within. (1986, p. 85-86)

Thus I return again to the question of writing.

Writing

Writing is the site where the lines of flight of body, subject and other come together in this thesis. It is a busy site because writing from a poststructuralist position is a profoundly political activity. Discourses are political practices that work in subterranean ways to constitute subjects in certain ways, to exclude and include in ways that are marked on our bodies. Writing that collides with discourse (rather than colluding in the reproduction of hegemonic ways of thinking) is both difficult and important. In this thesis I have chosen a route for critiquing discourse that is creative as well as analytical. I do not make great claims about my writing in this thesis, but the collective poem is already the basis of an intervention into sex education (Gannon, forthcoming 2003c) that interrogates “the missing discourse of desire” around female adolescent sexuality (Fine, 1988); and the multi-textual “breast project” has entered discourse around women’s bodies in the realms of sociology (Müller-Rockstroh and Gannon, 2002), philosophy

(Gannon and Müller-Rockstroh, forthcoming 2003) and theatre (with production scheduled in 2004). In each of these projects, and the other textual performances of the thesis, writing brings attention to how the world is shaped through discourse, to the operation of lines of power and force (Davies et al., 2003a) on subjects and on bodies. Rather than being nihilistic or morally vacuous, writing from a poststructurally informed position opens new and exciting possibilities for political engagement.

Writing from poststructural positions is an ethical and political practice. Derridean deconstruction is “a writing indebted to the other...the effect of a vulnerability to the other; vulnerability as the impossibility of escaping the responsibility *to* and *for* the other” (Gregoriou, 1995, p. 314). Writing is a site for the production of an “ensemble of one and the other...infinitely dynamized by an incessant process of exchange from one subject to another” (Cixous, 1981, p. 130). In the work of Cixous (1981, 1986, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1994b, 1994c, 1997, 1998) and Somerville (1999), writing is characterized as the practice of love, an ethical way of working materially and textually in the world. Through this thesis I have attempted to enact this ethical-textual practice in my writing. Cixous found her best opportunity for writing the other in theatre. It is in the very different intimate spaces of the play in Chapter Seven that I have worked through these ideas to the greatest extent. In “The Breast Project,” the journey of the character Judith through the play is towards that place where she begins to turn to those others around her. Her “redemption,” the possibility for her to find more productive subject positions, to resume living, arises when she turns to those others who love her. Subjectivity is inevitably relational. Judith’s others are Sabine, Anna, her mother, Lydia and St Agatha in the past, the present, imagination and memory. They are all each other’s others in various ways and the play – like all theatre – portrays the struggles between the characters in the messy arena of “love, fear and chaos” that is life (Daly, 2001). The play is a fiction but in its turn to fictionality, it became more possible in some ways to play with possibilities for re-presenting my research and thinking about the (female) body. The body – as “the breast project” – is the frame for the drama of the play. The texts inside it – the letters from her mother and particularly the photographs taken by Lydia - are texts of love from the two women who cannot be there for Judith. They are “love

songs” as she says. Sabine asks her, “To you?” and Judith responds, “To me, and to women everywhere.” The play as a whole could be read as a sort of love song from me to the women I have worked with over the last years.

To talk of love in a doctoral thesis is highly il/legitimate. To introduce the idea of love into a text that purports to use poststructural theory is bizarre at the very least. Questions of love, if they arise at all, should be kept out of the body of the text and marginalized in the dedication on the facing pages. But in this thesis I have written myself as poet, playwright, friend, lover, daughter, sister, granddaughter as well as analyst/ theorist. This is another troubling of conventional binaries in research. It resonates with calls for research (writing) that is emotional and evocative (Denzin, 1997; Ellis, 1997), that has recourse to the “validity of tears” (Lather, 2000a, 2001a) and that is appropriate for a moment when researchers realise that “how our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others is and has always been our topic” (Denzin, 1997, p. 27). The writing in this thesis has tried to evoke emotional and embodied experiences by closely attending to the body in the text in her multi-dimensions. Through this thesis I have explored what poststructural theory makes possible and visible in writing, using my own forays into a labyrinth of writing as the exploratory ground for this exploration. Returning from this labyrinth to the starting point, I find Barthes claiming that “the only difference” between literature and Science “is that literature has not *said* what it knows, it has *written* it” (Barthes, 1989, p. 10). This thesis has used writing in different genres and (con)texts to unravel and perform a version of what Barthes’ words suggest. It has enabled me to take up writing as a line of flight towards “a different sense of what is knowable, and of what can be done with that knowledge” (Davies, forthcoming 2003). If the writing has worked, then you will know what he meant and what I have tried to do in this thesis. However rather than ask directly “Does it work?,” my question of you, my reader, shifts to become “Are you with me?” (Davies et al., forthcoming 2003b). What really matters is the (con)text, the intersubjective space of writing and reading and you and I here in this text in this space and time, or another.

Coda: Teaching

Here's another ending, an educational ending, in case you're wondering where this research might "fit" with the discipline of education. This is a story that begins as another research project, and that might lead to several possibilities for future research. This thesis began with me attempting to hold together the contradictory subject positions of English teacher and writer through the Masters degree that was the precursor to this project. I'm a specialist English teacher who has taught students to write in diverse genres including poetry, drama and prose. Over the years I have devised hundreds of writing tasks and evaluated tens of thousands of student texts. Venturing into writing in this thesis was to (dis)locate myself in the disciplinary regimes of subject English. In English teaching there is a persistent binary between theory and practice that reinforces the tired old adage that: "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach." In the UK, Peel has noted that there are "historical reasons why English teachers do not generally regard themselves as writers" (2000a, p. 145). Although children write extensively and in a range of genres and contexts in schools, "those specialists who decide to go into teaching soon find that the one thing that they now do much less of (as teachers) is the very thing that they are asking students do a great deal of" (2000a, p. 145). In Australia too, Sawyer and Watson (1995) note that the dominant paradigm in subject English has been "literary criticism" and they try to imagine what a "production-based, rather than a consumption-based" curriculum might look like (cited in Peel, 2000a, p. 179). Although times have changed, it remains unusual for English teachers to write. Recently, genre pedagogies and poststructurally informed critical literacies have – in different ways - problematised "creative writing." Earlier process writing and whole language pedagogies have been re-read as naïve and as deeply implicated in the disciplinary technologies of schooling as a system of governmentality (Patterson, 2000a, 2000b). In any case, as Peel suggests, the emphasis on creative writing in personal growth models "has not translated itself into a generation of practicing writers" amongst teachers (2000a, p. 179). One area for further investigation would be how English teachers take themselves up (or not) as writers and what the various consequences and effects of this might be. How do those (few) teachers

who also identify themselves as writers² understand, negotiate and exploit the contradictions in these subject positions? What are the consequences for curriculum design in the teacher training of English specialists, if they are envisaged as writers as well as readers and teachers? How would professional development and in-service opportunities for working English teachers change if ongoing development as writers was also part of their responsibilities to the profession, themselves, their students? What new partnerships might become feasible between university Schools of Education and organizations such as writing centres?

A related research trajectory might examine the aesthetic and the creative in contemporary subject English. This work would be informed by work in progress but not yet published by Misson and Morgan in Australia. The direction of this work has been indicated in work by each of these authors (Misson, 1998, 2001; Morgan, 1997, 2002). Morgan notes that she is “keen to investigate the kind of (critical) literacy teaching practice which reinstates the personal, the imaginative, the emotional and aesthetic (but not in old ways according to superseded models...)” (2002). Misson (2001) notes a curious silence around “creative writing” in theoretical discourses around English teaching and learning. He suggests that it is timely to reintroduce notions of creativity, imagination and the aesthetic into discussions about English teaching pedagogy. Misson disrupts the binaries of production/ reception, criticism/ imagination, reason/ emotion, expression/ creation to produce an argument that what we need now “is a powerful, overwhelming rationale for the importance of the arts, including writing, in human life” (2001). In an earlier conference paper (1998), he troubles the opposition of the intellectual to the emotional, sensory, and affective dimensions of texts and traces the aesthetic in tensions between the particular and the universal, the material and the spiritual, the intellectual and the emotional, inspiration and control, form and content. He brings questions of “beauty”, “pleasure” and “truth” back into the texts and textual practices of English classrooms. Rather than advocating a regression to romantic notions

² Although many writers have been English teachers in secondary schools (eg. John Marsden, Janette Turner Hospital), and may continue to work intermittently in schools running workshops or as “writer-in-residence,” few seem able to manage both positions simultaneously (WA award-winning poet Roland Leach is one).

of literary pedagogies, Misson relocates these “archaic” ideas in the very centre of critical literacy paradigms. In reading, he suggests, “engaging with a text can allow us to extend our existential repertoires, it adds to our range of possible subjectivities, it allows us to rehearse other ways of being” (1998). Similarly, a writing curriculum becomes a site for the production of multiple subjectivities as students “write in different ways, imagine different stories that might be told about the same event... [and] come to understand the possibilities within themselves...[to] operate in different discourses, create themselves as different people and relate to their world in different ways” (2001). Davies names her version of this practice of writing as a “*critical social literacy*” wherein “[t]he construction of ...[the]self through discourse, though positioning within particular contexts and moments and through relations of power, is both recognised and made revisable” (Davies, 1997, p. 29). Kamler (2001) calls it a “critical writing pedagogy.” In the context of this thesis, Misson’s language resonates curiously with that of Cixous, Denzin, Ellis and Richardson. He suggests that ultimately, potentially – and despite all sorts of disclaimers - imagination and creativity might be able to lead us towards “a pedagogy of possibility, of hope,” even to a “way of talking about love in the classroom” (Misson, 1998).

References

- Adams, N., Causey, T., Jacobs, M., Munro, P., Quinn, M., & Trousdale, A. (1998). Womentalkin' : a reader's theater performance of teachers' stories. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(3), 383-395.
- Adler, P. A., & Adler, P. (1999). The ethnographer's ball. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 28(5), 442-450.
- Ahmed, S., & Stacey, J. (Eds.). (2001). *Thinking through skin*. London: Routledge.
- Akines, F. Y. (2001). Pahala's last (Bon) dance: The dead are not dead. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(1), 21-34.
- Alvermann, D. (2000). Researching libraries, literacies and lives: a rhizoanalysis. In W. Pillow & E. St Pierre (Eds.), *Working the ruins: feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 114-129). New York: Routledge.
- Badiou, A. (1994). Gilles Deleuze. The fold : Leibniz and the baroque. In C. V. Boundas & D. Olkowski (Eds.), *Gilles Deleuze and the theater of philosophy* (pp. 51-69). New York: Routledge.
- Ballis, H., & Richardson, P. (1997). Conversion stories and their implications for literacy educators. *English in Australia*, 119(20), 110-119.
- Barker, P. (1998). *Michel Foucault. An introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Barthes, R. (1975). *The pleasure of the text* (R. Miller, Trans.). New York: The Noonday Press.
- Barthes, R. (1977a). *Roland Barthes* (R. Howard, Trans.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Barthes, R. (1977b). *Sade/ Fourier/ Loyola* (R. Miller, Trans.). London: Cape.
- Barthes, R. (1978). *A Lover's discourse. Fragments* (R. Howard, Trans.). London: Penguin.
- Barthes, R. (1982). *Camera Lucida* (R. Howard, Trans.). London: Vintage.
- Barthes, R. (1985). *The grain of the voice. Interviews 1962-1980* (L. Coverdale, Trans.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Barthes, R. (1989). *The rustle of language*. New York: Hill and Wang.

- Barthes, R. (1990). *The pleasure of the text* (R. Miller, Trans.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Barthes, R. (1993). Deliberation. In S. Sontag (Ed.), *A Roland Barthes Reader* (pp. 479-495). London: Vintage.
- Bartlett, A. (1998). *Jamming the machinery: Contemporary Australian women's writing*. Toowoomba: Association for the study of Australian literature.
- Bartlett, A. (2000). Thinking through Breasts; writing maternity. *Feminist Theory*, 1 (2), 173-88.
- Bass, L. (2002). *Self-study and issues of privilege and race*. Paper presented at the Herstmonceux IV: The Fourth International Conference on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices, Herstmonceux Castle, East Sussex, England.
- Bayer, B. M. (2002). Critical contact: Psychology, the subject and subjectivity. *Feminism and Psychology*, 12(4), 455-461.
- Behar, R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Bell, S. (1994). *Reading, writing and rewriting the prostitute body*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bennington, G., & Derrida, J. (1993). *Jacques Derrida* (G. Bennington, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (1996). Taking ethnography into the 21st century [Editorial]. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 25(1), 3-5.
- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (1999). Which way to turn? *Journal of contemporary ethnography*, 28(5), 485-499.
- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (Eds.). (2002a). *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature and aesthetics*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Body Project (Ed.). (2002). *Korporealitäten. In(ter)ventionen zu einem omnipräsentem Thema (Corporealities: In(ter)ventions in an omnipresent theme)*. Berlin: Ulrike Helmer Verlag.
- Borbonus, V. (2002). Klangkörper - Antikörper: Die Rolle von Kunst innerhalb der ifu-Strukturen. In Project Body (Ed.), *Korporealitäten. In(ter)ventionen zu einem omnipräsentem Thema* (pp. 44-64). Berlin: Ulrike Helmer Verlag.

Bordo, S. (1993). *Unbearable weight: Feminism, western culture and the body*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Brady, I. (2000). Anthropological poetics. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 949-979). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Braidotti, R. (1991). *Patterns of Dissonance*. London: Polity Press.

Britzman, D. (2000). 'The question of belief': Writing poststructural ethnography. In E. St Pierre & W. Pillow (Eds.), *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 27-40). New York: Routledge.

Brodkey, L. (1996). *Writing permitted in designated areas only*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Brush, P. (1998). Metaphors of inscription: Discipline, plasticity and the rhetoric of choice. *Feminist review*, 58(Spring), 22-43.

Burman, E. (1996). The spec(tac)ular economy of difference. In S. Wilkinson & C. Kitzinger (Eds.), *Representing the other*. London: Sage.

Buss, H. M. (1993). *Mapping our selves: Canadian women's autobiography in English*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1995). Contingent foundations. In S. Benhabib, J. Butler, D. Cornell & N. Fraser (Eds.), *Feminist contentions. A philosophical exchange* (pp. 35-57). New York: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1997). Performative acts and gender constitution. In K. Conboy, N. Medina & S. Stanbury (Eds.), *Writing on the body: female embodiment and feminist theory* (pp. 401-417). New York: Columbia University Press.

Butler-Kisber, L. (2002). Artful portrayals in Qualitative Inquiry: The road to found poetry and beyond. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XLVIII(3), 229-239.

Butterwick, S. (2002). Your story/ my story/ our story: Performing interpretation in participatory theatre. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XLVIII(3), 240-253.

Cadman, K., Friend, L., Gannon, S., Ingleton, C., Koutroulis, G., McCormack, C., Mitchell, P., Onyx, J., O'Regan, K., Rocco, S., & Small, J. (2001). Memory-workers doing memory-work on memory-work: Exploring unresolved power. In J. Small & J. Onyx (Eds.), *Memory-work: A critique*. Sydney: UTS Business. School of Management. Working papers 20/01.

- Calvino, I. (1982). *If on a winter's night a traveller*. London: Picador.
- Caputo, J. D. (1997). *Deconstruction in a nutshell: A conversation with Jacques Derrida*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Cathcart, S., & Lemon, A. (1988). *The serpent's fall: A play for one performer*. Sydney: Currency Press.
- Caxton, W. (1931 (1483)). *The Golden Legend, or, Lives of the Saints*. 3rd edition. (Edited by F.S. Ellis). Retrieved February 10th, 2001, from www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume3.htm#Agatha (The Medieval Sourcebook)
- Chahal, T. (Unpublished paper). Intervening in academia: Making poetry count.
- Chun, W. H. K. (1999). Unbearable witness: Towards a politics of listening. *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 11(1) 112-149.
- Church, K. (1995). *Forbidden narratives: Critical autobiography as social science*. Newark, NJ: Gordon and Breach.
- Cixous, H. (1981). The laugh of the medusa. In E. Marks & I. de Courtivron (Eds.). Brighton: The Harvester Press.
- Cixous, H. (1986). Sorties: Out and out: Attacks/ ways out/ forays (B. Wing, Trans.). In H. Cixous & C. Clement (Eds.), *The newly born woman* (pp. 63-134). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Cixous, H. (1988). Extreme fidelity (A. Liddle & S. Sellers, Trans.). In S. Sellers (Ed.), *Writing differences: Readings from the seminar of Hélène Cixous* (pp. 9-36). Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Cixous, H. (1989). A Realm of characters. In S. Sellers (Ed.), *Delighting the heart: A notebook by women writers* (pp. 126-128). London: The Women's Press.
- Cixous, H. (1991). "Coming to writing" and other essays (S. Cornell, D. Jenson, A. Liddle & S. Sellers, Trans.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cixous, H. (1993). *Three steps on the ladder of writing*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cixous, H. (1994a). Norodam Sihanouk, King of Cambodia. In S. Sellers (Ed.), *The Hélène Cixous Reader* (pp. 139-148). London: Routledge.

- Cixous, H. (1994b). The place of crime, the place of forgiveness. In S. Sellers (Ed.), *The Hélène Cixous Reader* (pp. 149-156). London: Routledge.
- Cixous, H. (1994c). Preface. In S. Sellers (Ed.), *The Hélène Cixous Reader* (pp. xv-xxiii). London: Routledge.
- Cixous, H. (1998). *FirstDays of the year* (C. MacGillivray, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cixous, H. (1998). *Stigmata: Escaping texts*. London: Routledge.
- Cixous, H., & Calle-Gruber, M. (1997). *Rootprints: Memory and life writing*. London: Routledge.
- Cixous, H., & Clement, C. (1986). *The newly born woman*. (B. Wing, Trans.). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Cixous, H., & Derrida, J. (2001). *Veils: Cultural memory in the present* (G. Bennington, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Cixous, H., & Sellers, S. (1988). Conversations. In S. Sellers (Ed.), *Writing differences: Readings from the seminar of Hélène Cixous*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Clifford, J., & Marcus, G. E. (1986). *Writing culture: The politics and poetics of ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Clough, P. T. (1997). Autotelecommunication and autoethnography: A reading of Carolyn Ellis's 'Final Negotiations.' *The sociological quarterly*, 38(1), 95-111.
- Clough, P. T. (1998). *The end(s) of ethnography: from realism to social criticism* (2nd ed.). New York: Peter Lang.
- Clough, P. T. (2000a). Comments on setting criteria for experimental writing. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6(2), 278-291.
- Clough, P. T. (2000b). *Autoaffection: Unconscious thought in the age of technology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cole, A., Knowles, J. G., Luciani, T., & Neilsen, L. (Eds.). (2003). *Provoked by art: Theorising arts informed inquiry*. Halifax: Backalong Books.
- Conley, V. A. (1991). *Hélène Cixous: Writing the feminine*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Conrad, D. (2002). Drama as Arts-based pedagogy and research: Media advertising and inner-city youth. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XLVIII(3), 206-214.

- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1999). *Shaping a professional identity: Stories of educational practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Crawford, J., Kippax, S., Onyx, J., Gault, U., & Benton, P. (1992). *Emotion and gender: Constructing meaning from memory*. London: Sage.
- Currie, M. (1998). *Postmodern narrative theory*. London: MacMillan Press.
- Daly, T. (1999). Technically speaking. In praise of fragmentation: Or life without Rosebud. *Dialogue (ANPC Journal)*, 12-14.
- Daly, T. (2001). Personal communication.
- Davies, B. (1989). *Frogs and snails and feminist tales: Preschool children and gender*. St Leonards: Allen and Unwin.
- Davies, B. (1993). *Shards of glass: Children reading and writing beyond gendered identity*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Davies, B. (1994). *Poststructuralist theory and classroom practice*. Geelong: Deakin University.
- Davies, B. (1997). Constructing and Deconstructing Masculinities through Critical Literacy. *Gender and Education*, 9(1), 9-30.
- Davies, B. (2000a). *A body of writing 1990-1999*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Davies, B. (2000b). *(In)scribing body/ landscape relations*. Walnut Creek CA: AltaMira Press.
- Davies, B. (2002). Psychology's gendered subject. In C. von Hofsten & L. Backman (Eds.), *Psychology at the turn of the millennium vol 2: Social, developmental and clinical perspectives* (pp. 455-473). London: Psychology Press.
- Davies, B. (forthcoming 2003). Introduction: Poststructuralist lines of flight in Australia. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(6).
- Davies, B., Browne, J., Gannon, S., Honan, E., Laws, C., Müller-Rockstroh, B., & Petersen, E. B. (2003a). The ambivalent practices of reflexivity. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(6).
- Davies, B., Browne, J., Gannon, S., Honan, E., & Somerville, M. (2003b). "Truly wild things": collective biography and (female) academic embodiment Paper presented at "(Other) Feminisms" Conference, Australian Women's Studies Association, Brisbane, July 12th-16th.

- Davies, B., Browne, J., Gannon, S., Honan, E., & Somerville, M. (forthcoming 2004a). Embodied women at work in neoliberal times and places. *Gender, Work and Organization*.
- Davies, B., Dormer, S., Gannon, S., Laws, C., Taguchi, H. L., McCann, H., & Rocco, S. (2001). Becoming schoolgirls: the ambivalent process of subjectification. *Gender and Education*, 13(2), 167-182.
- Davies, B., Dormer, S., Honan, E., McAllister, N., O'Reilly, R., Rocco, S., & Walker, A. (1997). Ruptures in the skin of silence: a collective biography. *Hecate. A Women's Studies Interdisciplinary Journal*, 23, 62-79.
- Davies, B., Flemmen, A. B., Gannon, S., Laws, C., & Watson, B. (2002). Working on the ground. A collective biography of feminine subjectivities: mapping the traces of power and knowledge. *Social Semiotics*, 12(3). 291-313.
- Davies, B., Gannon, S., McCann, H., Phoenix, Stewart, D., & Watson, B. (forthcoming 2004b). Reading fiction and the formation of feminine character. *Ethnography*. 3
- Davies, B., & Kasama, H. (2003). *Frogs and snails and feminist tales in Japan*. Creskill NJ: Hampton Press.
- de Cosson, A. (2002). The hermeneutic dialogue: Finding patterns amid the aporia of the artist/ researcher/ teacher. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*. CDRom supplement.
- Deleuze, G. (1990). *Pourparlers*. Paris: Minuit.
- Deleuze, G. (1992). What is a dispositif? In T. J. Armstrong (Ed.), *Michel Foucault. Philosopher* (pp. 159-166). Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Deleuze, G. (1995). *Negotiations 1972-1990* (M. Joughlin, Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. London: The Athlone Press.
- Denzin, N. K. (1995). The experiential text and the limits of visual understanding. *Educational theory*, 45(1), 7-18.
- Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K. (1999). Biographical research methods. In J. P. Keeves & G. Lakomski (Eds.), *Issues in educational research* (pp. 92-102). Oxford: Pergamon.

- Denzin, N. K. (2000). The practices and politics of interpretation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed., pp. 897-922). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K. (2001). *Interpretive interactionism* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000a). *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000b). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed., pp. 1-29). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Department of Education, Qld. (1994). *English in years 1 to 10. Queensland syllabus materials. A guide to genres in English*. Brisbane: State of Queensland.
- Derewianka, B. (1990). *Exploring how texts work*. Sydney: Primary English Teachers Association.
- Derrida, J. (1975). The purveyor of truth. *Yale French Studies*, 52, 33-113.
- Derrida, J. (1976). *Of grammatology* (G. C. Spivak, Trans.). Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Derrida, J. (1978). *Writing and difference* (A. Bass, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, J. (1982). *Margins of philosophy* (A. Bass, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, J. (1986a). *Glas* (J. P. Leavey & R. Rand, Trans.). London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Derrida, J. (1986b). *The ear of the other: Otobiography, transference, translation: Texts and discussions with Jacques Derrida* (P. Kamuf & A. Ronell, Trans.). New York: Schocken Books.
- Derrida, J. (1991a). *Cinders* (N. Lukacher, Trans.). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Derrida, J. (1991b). To speculate-on Freud. In P. Kamuf (Ed.), *The Derrida reader* (pp. 516-568). Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Derrida, J. (1996). Remarks on deconstruction and pragmatism. In C. Mouffe (Ed.), *Deconstruction and pragmatism: Simon Critchley, Jacques Derrida, Ernesto Laclau and Richard Rorty* (pp. 77-88). New York: Routledge.

- Derrida, J. (1997). 'Fourmis': Lectures de la Difference Sexuelle (E. Prenowitz, Trans.). In H. Cixous & M. Calle-Gruber (Eds.), *Rootprints: Memory and life writing*. (pp. 117-127). London: Routledge.
- Derrida, J., & Attridge, D. (1992). This strange institution called Literature: An interview with Jacques Derrida. (G. Bennington & R. Bowlby, Trans.). In D. Attridge (Ed.), *Acts of Literature/Jacques Derrida* (pp. 33-75). New York: Routledge.
- Derrida, J., & Ewald, F. (1995). A certain "madness" must watch over thinking. *Educational theory*, 45(3), 273-291.
- Docherty, T. (1993). Authority, history and the question of the postmodern. In M. Biriotti & N. Miller (Eds.), *What is an author?* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Donmoyer, R., & Yennie-Donmoyer, J. (1998). Reader's theater and educational research - give me a for instance: A commentary on *Womentalkin'*. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(3), 397-407.
- Dreyfus, H., & Rabinow, P. (1982). *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Duden, B. (2000a). Project Area Body: Outwitting the new body snatchers. In K. Meschlinger & C. Bauschke (Eds.), *Towards the future of the International Women's University* (pp. 11-12). Hanover: IFU Press and PR Department.
- Duden, B. (2000b, September 11th). *Disembodying women: Medical rituals and women's participation*. Paper presented at the International Women's University, Hanover, Germany.
- Dunlop, R. (2002). A story of her own: Female *Bildungsroman* as Arts-based educational research. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XLVIII(3), 215-228.
- Ellis, C. (1995). *Final negotiations*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Ellis, C. (1996). Maternal connections. In C. Ellis & A. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing ethnography* (pp. 240-243). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Ellis, C. (1997). Evocative autoethnography: Writing emotionally about our lives. In W. Tierney & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Representation and the text* (pp. 115-139). New York: State University of New York Press.
- Ellis, C. (1998a). What counts as scholarship in communication? An autethnographic response. *ACJ*, 1(2).
- Ellis, C. (1998b). 'I hate my voice': Coming to terms with minor bodily stigma. *The sociological quarterly*, 39(4), 517-?

- Ellis, C. (1999). Keynote addresses from the First Annual Advances in Qualitative Methods Conference: Heartfelt Autoethnography. *Qualitative Health Research*, 9(5), 669-683.
- Ellis, C. (2000). Creating criteria: An ethnographic short story. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6(2), 273-277.
- Ellis, C. (2001). With mother/ with child: A true story. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(5), 598-616.
- Ellis, C. (2002a). Shattered lives: Making sense of September 11th and its aftermath. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 31(4), 375 -- 410.
- Ellis, C. (2002b). Being real: Moving inwards to social change. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(4), 399-406.
- Ellis, C. (2002c). Take no chances. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(2), 170-175.
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (1992). Telling and performing personal stories: The constraint of choice in abortion. In C. Ellis & M. Flaherty (Eds.), *Investigating subjectivity: Research on lived experience* (pp. 70-101). Newbury Park: Sage.
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (1996b). Talking over ethnography. In C. Ellis & A. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing ethnography* (pp. 13-45). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (1996c). Taking ethnography into the 21st century [Special issue]. *Journal of contemporary ethnography*, 25(1).
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (1996a). *Composing ethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 733-768). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ellis, C., & Dent, B. (2002). Rebirthing 'Border crossings'. In C. Ellis & A. Bochner (Eds.), *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature and aesthetics* (pp. 201-208). Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Ellis, C., & Flemons, D. (2002). High Noon: A 'Fictional' dialogue. In A. P. Bochner & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature and aesthetics* (pp. 344-356). Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

- Ellis, C., Kiesinger, C., & Tillmann-Healey, L. (1997). Interactive interviewing: Talking about emotional experience. In R. Hertz (Ed.), *Reflexivity and voice* (pp. 119-149). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ellsworth, E. (1989). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 59(3), 297-324.
- Enslar, E. (1998). *The vagina monologues*. New York: Villard.
- Ermath, E. D. (2000). Beyond "the subject": Individuality in the discursive condition. *New Literary History*, 31(3), 405-419.
- Ferguson, K. E. (1993). *The man question: Visions of subjectivity in feminist theory*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Fine, M. (1986). *The shaky game: Einstein, realism and the quantum theory*. Chicago: University of Michigan Press.
- Fine, M. (1988). Sexuality, schooling and adolescent females: The missing discourse of desire. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58, 29-53.
- Flaherty, M., Denzin, N. K., Manning, P. K., & Snow, D. A. (2002). Review symposium: Crisis in representation. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 31(4), 478-516.
- Foley, D. E. (2002). Critical ethnography: the reflexive turn. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(5), 469-490.
- Fort, B., & Cixous, H. (1997). Theater, History, Ethics: An Interview with H el ene Cixous on The Perjured City, or the Awakening of the Furies. *New Literary History*, 28(3), 425-456.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language* (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *The history of sexuality. Vol 1* (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1983). The minimalist self. In L. Kritzman (Ed.), *Politics, philosophy, culture: Interviews and other writings, 1977-1984*. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1986). *Death and the labyrinth: The world of Raymond Roussel* (C. Ruas, Trans.). New York: Doubleday.
- Foucault, M. (1987). *The history of sexuality. Volume 2*. (R. Hurley, Trans.). London: Penguin.

- Foucault, M. (1997). What is enlightenment? In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 1.* (pp. 303-319). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1997b). Technologies of the self. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 1.* (pp. 223-252). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1997c). The ethics of the concern for the self as a practice of freedom (P. Aranov & D. McGrawth, Trans.). In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 1.* (pp. 281-301). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1997d). Self Writing. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 1.* (pp. 207-222). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1997e). An interview by Stephen Riggins. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 1.* (pp. 121-133). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1998a). What is an author? (J. V. Harari, Trans.). In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Aesthetics, method and epistemology. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 2.* (pp. 205-222). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1999a). Michel Foucault and Zen: a stay in a Zen temple. In J. R. Carrette (Ed.), *Religion and culture.* New York: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1999b). About the beginnings of the hermeneutics of the self (T. Keenan & M. Blasius, Trans.). In J. R. Carrette (Ed.), *Religion and culture* (pp. 158-181). New York: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (2000a). Interview with Michel Foucault. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Power. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 3.* (pp. 239-297). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2000b). Truth and juridical forms. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Power. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 3.* (pp. 1-89). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2000c). The subject and power. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Power. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 3.* (pp. 326-348). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M., & Carrette, J. R. (1999). *Religion and culture.* New York: Routledge.
- Fuery, P. (1995). *Theories of desire.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Fuss, D. (1989). *Essentially speaking: Feminism, nature and difference.* New York: Routledge.

- Gamboro, G., Sampaet, R., Mitra, S., & Sigurdardottir, T. (1995). New stories from old. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 21(Autumn), 55-66.
- Gannon, S. (1999). *Writing as a woman: Autobiographical/ collective and transgressive texts of the self*. Unpublished Med (Hons) thesis. James Cook University.
- Gannon, S. (2001). (Re)presenting the collective girl: A poetic approach to a methodological dilemma. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(6), 787-800.
- Gannon, S. (2002). Picking at the scabs: a poststructuralist/ feminist writing project. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(3), 670-682.
- Gannon, S. (forthcoming 2003a). Bodyscapes (A poem). *LINQ (Literature in North Queensland)*.
- Gannon, S. (forthcoming 2003b). Out/Performing in the academy: Writing "The Breast Project". *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(6).
- Gannon, S. (forthcoming 2003c). Crossing "Boundaries" with the collective girl: A poetic intervention into sex education. *Sex Education*.
- Gannon, S., & Müller-Rockstroh, B. (2000). The breast project: mammae, memory and marginality. International Women's University, Hanover.
- Gannon, S., & Müller-Rockstroh, B. (2001, July 6-8). *Nurturing breasts: Constructions of contemporary motherhood in women's breastfeeding stories*. Paper presented at the International Association for Research on Mothering (ARM), Brisbane, Australia.
- Gannon, S., & Müller-Rockstroh, B. (forthcoming 2003). In memory: Women's experiences of (dangerous) breasts. *Philosophy in the contemporary world. (Special issue on feminist approaches to the body)*, 10(1).
- Gavey, N. (1996). Women's desire and sexual violence discourse. In S. Wilkinson (Ed.), *Feminist Social Psychologies: International perspectives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Gavey, N. (2002). To and beyond the discursive constitution of subjectivity. *Feminism and Psychology*, 12(4), 432-438.
- Gee, J. P. (1997). Foreward: A discourse approach to language and literacy. In C. Lankshear (Ed.), *Changing literacies*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Gregoriou, Z. (1995). Derrida's responsibility: Autobiography, the teaching of the vulnerable, diary fragments. *Educational theory*, 45(3), 311-335.
- Grosz, E. (1990). *Jacques Lacan: A feminist introduction*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

- Grosz, E. (1994). *Volatile Bodies: Towards a corporeal feminism*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin.
- Grosz, E. (1995). *Space, time and perversion: Essays on the politics of bodies*. New York: Routledge.
- Grosz, E., & Chisholm, D. (1996). Volatile bodies: Elizabeth Grosz in volatile conversation with Dianne Chisholm. *Mattoid: A journal of literary and cultural studies*, 50, 37-62.
- Gunew, S. (Ed.). (1991). *A reader in feminist knowledge*. London: Routledge.
- Hadleigh-West, M. (Writer/ Director) (1997). *War Zone* [Documentary film]. USA/Germany: Film Fatale Inc.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *Introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1989). *Language, context and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Martin, J. (1993). *Writing science*. London: Falmer Press.
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in Feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist studies*, 14, 575-599.
- Haraway, D. (1997). *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™. Feminism and Technoscience*. New York: Routledge.
- Haraway, D. (2000). "There are always more things going on than you thought!" Methodologies as thinking technologies. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*, 4, 53-60.
- Harding, S. (1986). *The science question in Feminism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Haug, F. (2000). Personal communication. October 6th. Berlin.
- Haug, F. (2001). Nachrichten aus dem Patriarchat (Messages from patriarchy). *Das Argument*, 240, 147.
- Haug, F., & others. (1983). *Sexualisierung: Frauenformen 2*. Berlin: Argumant Verlag.

- Haug, F., & others. (1987). *Female Sexualization: A collective work of Memory* (E. Carter, Trans.). London: Verso.
- Hayano, D. M. (1979). Auto-ethnography: Paradigms, problems and prospects. *Human organization*, 38(113-120).
- Heath, S. B. (1986). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and at school. In B. B. Schieffelin & E. Ochs (Eds.), *Language socialization across cultures*. (pp. 97-126). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hekman, S. J. (1990). *Gender and knowledge: Elements of a postmodern feminism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Henriques, J., Hollway, W., Urwin, C., Venn, C., & Walkerdine, V. (1984). *Changing the subject: Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity*. London: Methuen.
- Henriques, J., Hollway, W., Urwin, C., Venn, C., & Walkerdine, V. (2002). Afterword. *Feminism and Psychology*, 12(4), 462-467.
- Hertz, R. Introduction: reflexivity and voice. In R. Hertz (Ed.), *Reflexivity and voice* (pp. vii-xviii). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Hoffman, J., & Sutherland, K. (2002). Introduction to a series: Critical performance/s in Canada. *Textual studies in Canada*, Spring, viii.
- Honan, E. (2001). *(Im)plausibilities: A rhizo-textual analysis of the Queensland English Syllabus*. Unpublished PhD, James Cook University.
- Honan, E., Knobel, M., Baker, C., & Davies, B. (2000). Producing possible Hannahs: Theory and the subject of research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6(1), 9-32.
- hooks, b. (1990). *Yearning: Race, gender and cultural politics*. Boston: South End Press.
- Hutton, P. H. (1988). Foucault, Freud, and the technologies of the self. In L. H. Martin, H. Gutman & P. H. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the self* (pp. 121-144). London: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Ingleton, C. (2000). Emotion in learning - a neglected dynamic. *Cornerstones of higher education: Research and development in higher education*, 22, 86-89.
- Irigaray, L. (1985). *The speculum of the other woman* (G. Gill, Trans.). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Jago, B. J. (1996). Postcards, ghosts and fathers: Revising family stories. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(4), 495-516.

- Jones, S. H. (1999). Torch. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5(2), 280-304.
- Kamler, B. (1996). From autobiography to collective biography: stories of aging and loss. *Women and Language*, 19(1), 21-26.
- Kamler, B. (2001). *Relocating the personal: A critical writing pedagogy*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Kearney, R. (1984). *Dialogues with contemporary continental thinkers: the phenomenological heritage: Paul Ricoeur, Emmanuel Levinas, Herbert Marcuse, Stanislas Breton, Jacques Derrida*. Manchester, UK; Dover, N.H.: Manchester University Press.
- Kearney, R. (1995). *States of mind: dialogues with contemporary thinkers*. New York: New York University Press.
- Kehily, M. J. (2002). *Sexuality, gender and schooling: shifting agendas in social learning*. London: Routledge/ Falmer.
- Kemp, J. (1996). *The black sequin dress*. Sydney: Currency Press.
- Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2000). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 279-314). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kirby, V. (1997). *Telling flesh: The substance of the corporeal*. New York: Routledge.
- Knaup, B., Neusel, A., & Stammer, B. (2000). *Ifu's open space*. Hanover: Internationale Frauenuniversität GmbH.
- Kosnik, C., Freese, A., & Samaras, A. (2002). *Introduction*. Making a difference in teacher education through self study. Herstmonceux IV: The Fourth International Conference on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices: Herstmonceux Castle, East Sussex, England.
- Kristeva, J. (1984). *Revolution in poetic language* (M. Waller, Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1987). *Tales of love*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kuhn, A. (1995). *Family secrets: Acts of memory and imagination*. London: Verso.
- Kvale, S. (1992). Introduction: From the archeology of the psyche to the architecture of cultural landscapes. In S. Kvale (Ed.), *Psychology and postmodernism* (pp. 1-16). London: Sage.

- Kvale, S. (1992). Postmodern psychology: A contradiction in terms? In S. Kvale (Ed.), *Psychology and postmodernism* (pp. 31-57). London: Sage.
- Langford, M. (2001). *Suspended conversations: The afterlife of memory in photographic albums*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York: Routledge.
- Lather, P. (1992). Postmodernism and the human sciences. In S. Kvale (Ed.), *Psychology and postmodernism* (pp. 88-109). London: Sage.
- Lather, P. (1994). Fertile obsession: Validity after poststructuralism. In A. Gitlin (Ed.), *Power and Method: Political activism and educational research* (pp. 36-60). New York: Routledge.
- Lather, P. (1996). Troubling clarity: The politics of accessible language. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(3), 525-?
- Lather, P. (1998). Critical pedagogy and its complicities: A praxis of stuck places. *Educational Theory*, 48(4), 487-497.
- Lather, P. (2000a). Against empathy voice and authenticity. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*, 4, 16-25.
- Lather, P. (2000b). Drawing the line at angels: Working the ruins of feminist ethnography. In E. St Pierre & W. Pillow (Eds.), *Working the ruins: feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 284-311). New York: Routledge.
- Lather, P. (2001a). Postbook: Working the ruins of feminist ethnography. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, 27(1), 199-227.
- Lather, P. (2001b). Postmodernism, post-structuralism and post(critical) ethnography: Of ruins, aporias and angels. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 477-492). London: Sage.
- Lather, P., & Smithies, C. (1997). *Troubling the angels: Women living with HIV/AIDS*. Boulder: Westview/ HarperCollins.
- Lau, K. J. (2002). This text which is not one: Dialectics of self and culture in experimental autoethnography. *Journal of Folklore Research*, May-Dec, 243-262.
- Leach, C. W. (2002). The social psychology of racism reconsidered. *Feminism and Psychology*, 12(4), 439-444.

- Lees, S. (1997). *Ruling passions: Sexual violence, reputation and the law*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Levine, M. (1991). Translator's introduction. In S. Weber (Ed.), *Return to Freud. Jacques Lacan's dislocation of psychoanalysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Levy, D., & Lipkin, J. (1995). Identity, sexuality and the body. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 21(Autumn), 115-125.
- Lie, S. (1990). Pour une lecture féminine? In H. Wilcox, K. McWatters, A. Thompson & L. R. Williams (Eds.), *The body and the text: Helen Cixous, reading and teaching* (pp. 196-203). Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Denzin, N. K. (2000). The seventh moment: Out of the past. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 1047-1065). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Inquiry* (2nd ed., pp. 163-188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Linscott, G. (2001). A wound to the soul: The loss of the middle ground in Australian theatre. *Playworks*, 8(2), 3-8.
- Lionnet, F. (1990). Autoethnography: The an-archic style of *Dust tracks on a road*. In H. L. Gates (Ed.), *Reading black, reading feminist* (pp. 382-413). New York: Meridian.
- Lispector, C. (1985a). *The apple in the dark* (G. Rabassa, Trans.). London: Virago.
- Lispector, C. (1985b). *Family ties* (G. Pontiero, Trans.). Manchester: Carcanet Press.
- Lispector, C. (1986a). *The foreign legion: Stories and chronicles* (G. Pontiero, Trans.). Manchester: Carcanet Press.
- Lispector, C. (1986b). *The hour of the star* (G. Pontiero, Trans.). Manchester: Carcanet Press.
- Lock, M. (1998). Breast cancer: Reading the omens. *Anthropology today*, 14(4), 7-17.
- Loseke, D. R., & Cahill, S. E. (1999). Reflections on classifying ethnographic reflections at the millenium's turn. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 28(5), 437-441.
- Luthfi Bellido-Caceres, J., Shahin Meiliani, M., Siwamagosa, C., Sudhakaran, D., & Sumpowthong, K. (2000). Speaking out about silent issues for international students. *Campus Review*, 10(13).

- Lynch, M. (2001). DIRTy work: On being difficult. *Playworks*, 8(3), 21-22.
- MacGillivray, C. (1998). Translator's Preface: Translating Helene Cixous' Book of Days (C. MacGillivray, Trans.). In H. Cixous (Ed.), *First days of the year*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Macksey, R., & Donato, E. (1972). *The structuralist controversy: The languages of criticism and the sciences of man*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP.
- Maher, V. (Ed.). (1992). *The Anthropology of Breastfeeding*. Oxford: Berg Publisher.
- Maher, V. (2000, September 26th). *Breastfeeding and maternal depletion*. Paper presented at the International Women's University, Hanover, Germany.
- Mama, A. (1995). *Beyond the masks: Race, gender and subjectivity*. London: Routledge.
- Mansfield, N. (2000). *Subjectivity: Theories of the self from Freud to Haraway*. St Leonards: Allen and Unwin.
- Maracek, J. (2002). A Reappraisal of *Changing the subject: Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity*. *Feminism and Psychology*, 12(4), 423-426.
- Martin, E. (1987). *The woman in the body: A cultural analysis of reproduction*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Martin, J. R. (1986a). *Systemic functional linguistics and an understanding of written text. Writing Project — Report 1986, Working Papers in Linguistics 4*. Sydney: Department of Linguistics, University of Sydney.
- Martin, J. R. (1986b). *Intervening in the process of writing development. Writing to Mean: Teaching Genres Across the Curriculum. Occasional Papers Number 9*. Sydney: Applied Linguistics Association of Australia.
- Martin, J. R. (1992). *English Text — System and Structure*. Philadelphia: John Benjamin.
- Martin, J. R., & Rothery, J. (1980, 1981). *Writing Project Report. Nos 1 and 2*. Sydney: Department of Linguistics, University of Sydney.
- McCann, H. (2002). *Other lives, other learning: New university students, culture and pedagogy*. Unpublished PhD, James Cook University.
- McWilliam, E. (2000). Laughing within reason: On pleasure, women and academic performance. In E. St Pierre & W. Pillow (Eds.), *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 164-178). New York: Routledge.

- McWilliam, E., Lather, P., Morgan, W., McCoy, K., Pillow, W., & St Pierre, E. (1997). *Headwork, fieldwork, textwork: a textshop in new feminist research* (Booklet and videotape). Brisbane: QUT Centre for Policy and Leadership Studies.
- Meijer, I. C., & Prins, B. (1998). How bodies come to matter: An interview with Judith Butler. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, 23(2), 275-286.
- Mienzcakowski, J. (1996). An ethnographic act: The construction of consensual theatre. In C. Ellis & A. P. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing* (pp. 244-267). Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Mienzcakowski, J. (2001). Ethnodrama: Performed research - limitations and potential. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 468-476). London: Sage.
- Misson, R. (1998). *After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness? Literature in the Post-Critical-Literacy Classroom*. Paper presented at the TATE/ALEA Conference "Literature and Literacy: Weaving the Fabric" 9th May 1998, Hobart.
- Misson, R. (2001). *What are we creating in creative writing?* Paper presented at the AATE/ ALEA Joint National conference.
- Mohanty, C., Russo, A., & Torres, L. (Eds.). (1991). *Third world women and the politics of feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Moi, T. (1985). *Sexual/ textual politics: Feminist literary theory*. London: Methuen.
- Morgan, W. (1997). *Critical literacy in the classroom: The art of the possible*. London: Routledge.
- Morgan, W. (2000). Electronic tools for dismantling the master's house: Poststructural feminist research and hypertext poetics. In E. St Pierre & W. Pillow (Eds.), *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 130-153). New York: Routledge.
- Morgan, W. (2002, December). *'Here be monsters': Emergent discourses of hybrid identity in students' hypertextual constructions*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Brisbane.
- Müller-Rockstroh, B., & Gannon, S. (2002). Brust-Geschichten: Erinnerungen von Frauen. In BodyProject (Ed.), *KorpoRealitäten. In(ter)ventionen zu einem omnipräsentem Thema (Corporealities: In(ter)ventions in an omnipresent theme)*. (pp. 200-220). Berlin: Ulrike Helmer Verlag.
- Murphy, E. (1999). 'Breast is best': Infant feeding decision and maternal deviance. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 21(2), 187-208.

- Neilsen, L. (1998). *Knowing her place: Research literacies and feminist occasions*. San Francisco: Caddo Gap Press.
- Neilsen, L. (2002). Learning from the liminal: Fiction as knowledge. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XLVIII(3), 206-214.
- Neilsen, L., Cole, A., & Knowles, J. G. (Eds.). (2001). *The art of writing inquiry*. Halifax: Backalong Books.
- Neumann, M. (1996). Collecting ourselves at the end of the century. In C. Ellis & A. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing ethnography* (pp. 172-198). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational review*, 66(1), 60-92.
- Norris, J., & Buck, G. H. (2002). Editorial: Explanation through conversation. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XLVIII(3), 203-205.
- Onyx, J., & Small, J. (2001). Memory-work: The method. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(6), 773-786.
- Patterson, A. (2000a). 'English' in Australia: its emergence and transformations. In R. Peel, A. Patterson & J. Gerlach (Eds.), *Questions of English: Ethics, aesthetics, rhetoric and the formation of the subject in England, Australia and the United States* (pp. 235-253). London: Routledge.
- Patterson, A. (2000b). Shaping the specialist: initial teacher training for English specialists in Australia. In R. Peel, A. Patterson & J. Gerlach (Eds.), *Questions of English: Ethics, aesthetics, rhetoric and the formation of the subject in England, Australia and the United States* (pp. 283-300). London: Routledge.
- Patterson, L. (1995). Literary history. In F. Lentricchia & T. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Critical terms for literary study*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- Peel, R. (2000a). Beliefs about 'English' in England. In R. Peel, A. Patterson & J. Gerlach (Eds.), *Questions of English: Ethics, aesthetics, rhetoric and the formation of the subject in England, Australia and the United States* (pp. 116-188). London: Routledge.
- Peel, R. (2000b). Shaping the English specialist: initial teacher training for English teachers in England. In R. Peel, A. Patterson & J. Gerlach (Eds.), *Questions of English: ethics, aesthetics, rhetoric and the formation of the subject in England, Australia and the United States* (pp. 189-232). London: Routledge.

- Peel, R., Patterson, A., & Gerlach, J. (2000). *Questions of English: ethics, aesthetics, rhetoric and the formation of the subject in England, Australia and the United States*. London: Routledge.
- Pelias, R. (2002). For father and son: An ethnodrama with no catharsis. In A. P. Bochner & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature and aesthetics* (pp. 35-43). Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Phillips, L. M. (2000). *Flirting with danger: Young women's reflections on sexuality and domination*. New York: New York University Press.
- Piirto, J. (2002a). The question of quality and qualifications: writing inferior poems as qualitative research. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(4), 431-445.
- Piirto, J. (2002b). The unreliable narrator, or the difference between writing prose in literature and in social science. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(4), 407-415.
- Pillow, W. (2000). Exposed methodology: The body as a deconstructive practice. In E. St Pierre & W. Pillow (Eds.), *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and method in education*. New York: Routledge.
- Poindexter, C. C. (2002). Research as poetry: A couple experiences HIV. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(6), 707-714.
- Prain, V. (1997). Textualising your self in research: Some current challenges. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 29(1), 71-85.
- Pratt, M. L. (1991). Arts of the contact zone. *Profession*, 91, 33-40.
- Price, J., & Shildrick, M. (1999). *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Probyn, E. (1987). The anorexic body. In A. Kroker & M. Kroker (Eds.), *Body invaders: Panic sex in America*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Probyn, E. (1993). *Sexing the self: Gendered positions in cultural studies*. London: Routledge.
- Probyn, E. (1995). Queer belongings: The politics of departure. In E. Grosz & E. Probyn (Eds.), *Sexy bodies: the strange carnalities of feminism* (pp. 1-18). London: Routledge.
- Probyn, E. (2000). *Carnal appetites: FoodSexIdentities*. London: Routledge.
- Probyn, E. (2003). The spatial imperative of subjectivity. In K. Anderson, M. Domosh, S. Pile & N. Thrift (Eds.), *Handbook of cultural geography* (pp. 290-299). London: Sage.

- Rabinow, P. (1997). Introduction. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 1.* (pp. xi-xlii). London: Penguin.
- Reed-Danahay, D. E. (Ed.). (1997). *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social.* Oxford: Berg.
- Reed-Danahay, D. E. (2001). Autobiography, intimacy and ethnography. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 407-425). London: Sage.
- Reed-Danahay, D. E. (2002). Turning points and textual strategies in ethnographic writing. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 15*(4), 421-425.
- Richardson, L. (1990). *Writing strategies: researching diverse audiences.* Newbury Park: Sage.
- Richardson, L. (1995). Narrative and sociology. In J. Van Maanen (Ed.), *Representation in ethnography.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Richardson, L. (1996). Educational birds. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 25*(1), 6-15.
- Richardson, L. (1997). *Fields of play: Constructing an academic life.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Richardson, L. (1998). Meta-jeopardy. *Qualitative Inquiry, 4*(4), 464-468.
- Richardson, L. (1999a). Feathers in our CAP. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 28*(6), 660-668.
- Richardson, L. (1999b). Dead again in Berkeley: An ethnographic happening. *Qualitative Inquiry, 5*(1), 141-144.
- Richardson, L. (2000a). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed., pp. 923-948). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Richardson, L. (2000b). Evaluating ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry, 6*(2), 253-255.
- Richardson, L. (2000c). Introduction—Assessing Alternative Modes of Qualitative and Ethnographic Research: How Do We Judge? Who Judges?, *6*(251-252).
- Richardson, L. (2000d). Skirting a pleated text. In E. St Pierre & W. Pillow (Eds.). *Working the ruins: feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 153-163). New York: Routledge.

- Richardson, L. (2001). Getting personal: Writing stories. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14(1), 33-38.
- Richardson, L., & Lockridge, E. (2002). Beirut letters. In A. Bochner & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature and aesthetics* (pp. 308-326). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Ronai, C. R. (1992). A night in the life of a dancer/ researcher: A layered account. In C. Ellis & M. Flaherty (Eds.), *Investigating subjectivity* (pp. 102-124). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Ronai, C. R. (1998). Sketching with Derrida: An ethnography of a researcher/dancer. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4(3), 405-420.
- Ronai, C. R. (1999). The Next Night Sous Rature: Wrestling With Derrida's Mimesis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5(1), 114-129.
- Rothmüller, N. (2002). Focusing on breasts: Brüste im Fokus. In BodyProject (Ed.), *KorpoRealitäten. In(ter)ventionen zu einem omnipräsenten Thema (Corporealities: In(ter)ventions in an omnipresent theme)*. (pp. 221-230). Berlin: Ulrike Helmer Verlag.
- Sanders, J. (1999). Dissertation as performance [Art script] (Take three). *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 12(5), 541-562.
- Santoro, N., Kamler, B., & Reid, J.-A. (2001). Teachers talking difference: Teacher education and the poetics of anti-racism. *Teaching education*, 12(2), 193-212.
- Sawyer, W., & Watson, K. (1995). *New models: Personal growth for the 21st century*. Paper presented at the International Federation of Teachers of English, New York.
- Schatz, M., Walker, R., & Schratz-Hadwich, B. (1995). Collective memory-work: the self as a re/resource for re/research. In M. Schratz & R. Walker (Eds.), *Research as social change: New opportunities for qualitative research* (pp. 39-64). London: Routledge.
- Scott-Hoy, K. (2002). The visitor: Juggling life in the grip of the text. In A. P. Bochner & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature and aesthetics*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Selden, R., & Widdowson, P. (1993). *A reader's guide to contemporary literary theory. 3rd Edn.* New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Sellers, S. (1996). *Hélène Cixous: Authorship, autobiography and love*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Small, J., & Onyx, J. (2001). Introduction. In J. Small & J. Onyx (Eds.), *Memory-work: A critique* (pp. 1-6). Sydney: UTS: Business. School of Management. Working papers 20/01.
- Smith, W. N. (2002). Ethno-poetry notes. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(4), 461-467.
- Somerville, M. (forthcoming 2003). Tracing bodylines: The body in feminist poststructuralist research. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(6).
- Søndergaard, D. M. (2002). Theorizing subjectivity: Contesting the monopoly of psychoanalysis. *Feminism and Psychology*, 12(4), 445-454.
- Sontag, S. (1966). Marat/ Sade/ Artaud. In S. Sontag (Ed.), *'Against interpretation' and other essays* (pp. 163-174). New York: Dell Publishing.
- Sontag, S. (1993). Writing itself: On Roland Barthes. In S. Sontag (Ed.), *A Roland Barthes Reader* (pp. vii-xxxviii). London: Vintage.
- Spence, J., & Holland, P. (1991). *Family snaps: The meanings of domestic photography*. London: Virago.
- Spivak, G. C. (1976). Translator's preface. In J. Derrida (Ed.), *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore, MA: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Springgay, S. (2002). Arts-based research as an unknowable text. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XLVIII(3), CDRom Supplement.
- Spry, T. (2001). Performing autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(6), 706-732.
- Squire, S. (2002). The personal and the political: Writing the theorist's body. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 17(37), 55-64.
- St Pierre, E. (1997a). Circling the text: Nomadic writing practices. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(4), 403-417.
- St Pierre, E. (1997b). Methodology in the fold and the irruption of data. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(2), 175-189.
- St Pierre, E. (1997c). An introduction to figurations: A poststructural practice of inquiry. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(3), 279-284.
- St Pierre, E. (1999). The work of response in ethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 28(3), 266-287.

- St Pierre, E. (2000a). Poststructural feminism in education: An overview. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(5), 477-515.
- St Pierre, E. (2000b). Nomadic inquiry in the smooth spaces of the field: A preface. In E. St Pierre & W. Pillow (Eds.), *Working the ruins: feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 258-283). New York: Routledge.
- St Pierre, E. (2002). "Science" rejects postmodernism / Reply. *Educational researcher*, 31(8), 25-27.
- St Pierre, E., & Pillow, W. (2000). Introduction: inquiry among the ruins. In E. St Pierre & W. Pillow (Eds.), *Working the ruins: feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 1-24). New York: Routledge.
- Stanley, L., & Wise, S. (1983). *Breaking out: Feminist consciousness and feminist research*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Stephenson, N. (2001). 'If parties are battles, what are we?' Practising collectivity in memory-work. In J. Small & J. Onyx (Eds.), *Memory-work: A critique* (pp. 42-53). Sydney: UTS: Business. School of Management. Working papers 20/01.
- Stephenson, N., Kippax, S., & Crawford, J. (1996). You and I and she: Memory-work and the construction of self. In S. Wilkinson (Ed.), *Feminist social psychologies: International perspectives* (pp. 182-200). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Stewart, K. (1996). *A space on the side of the road: Cultural poetics in an "other" America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Stronach, I., & McClure, M. (1997). *Educational research undone: The postmodern embrace*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Tait, P. (1994). *Converging realities: Feminism in Australian theatre*. Sydney: Currency Press.
- Tarlo, H. (1999). Provisional pleasures: the challenge of contemporary experimental women poets. *Feminist review*, 62, 94-112.
- Tierney, W. G. (1998). Life's history: subjects foretold. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4(1), 49-71.
- Tierney, W. G. (2002a). Get real: Representing reality. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(4), 385-398.
- Tierney, W. G. (2002b). Writing matters. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(4), 427-430.

Tierney, W. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (1997). *Representation and the text: Re-framing the narrative voice*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Torres, C. (1998). Six authors in search of four characters. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(3), 409-413.

Trinh, Min-ha. (1989). *Woman, native, other: Writing, postcoloniality and feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Trinh, Min-ha. (1992). *Framer framed*. New York: Routledge.

Van Maanen, J. (Ed.). (1995). *Representation in ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Visweswaran, K. (1994). *Fictions of feminist ethnography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H., & Melody, J. (2001). *Growing up girl: Psychosocial explorations of gender and class*. Hampshire: Palgrave.

Watkins, M. (1999). Policing the text: Structuralism's stranglehold on Australian language and literacy pedagogy. *Language and Education*, 13(2), 118-132.

Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory. 2nd edn*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Weiss, G. (1999). *Body images: Embodiment as intercorporeality*. London: Routledge.

Winterson, J. (1994). *Art and Lies*. London: Jonathan Cape.