ONE DAY MY PRINCE WILL COME:

THE DISCURSIVE PRODUCTION OF THE DESIRE FOR (HETERO)SEXUAL MARRIAGE

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ABSTRACT

During the twentieth century, marriage, as an ideal and as a practice, has endured through vastly different social conditions and codes of sexual conduct. The concern of the author's investigation and analysis is how the discourses of daily life sustain the popularity of marriage as an institution that embeds the gendered 'truths' of science, God and common sense in law (of church and state), and in personal practice. She argues that it is within discourses and storylines, as these are brought to life by the imagination and practice of speaking subjects, that collective experience and its subjective and political effects are produced.

Working from feminist and poststructuralist perspectives, this thesis investigates the complex discursive dynamic of gender difference and the constitution of subjectivity and desire over time. It does this by "making visible" the discursive interpellation of the subject into the romantic storylines of 'one day my prince will come'. The result is a study of the production of gendered subjectivity as "normal" and "natural" and of how, within the interactively discursive contexts of lived experience, conceptions of "normality" become inclusive of the expectation and desire for (hetero)sexual marriage.

The evidence which informs this thesis is drawn from the lives of seventy-three women who contributed to a major research project using the methodology of collective memory work. This project involved participants in writing stories, and talking about incidents from their lived experience which they considered illustrated their subjection within the romantic storyline of 'One day my prince will come'. Biographical and autobiographical in style and intent, this deconstructive work produces a reframing of taken-for-granted understandings of the individual, of gender, of choice and of relations of power.

STATEMENT OF SOURCES DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other 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 Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

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I would like to acknowledge my father for offering the gift of believing that mutual respect, adventure, affection, good company and song are core elements and expectations of everyday life and relationships.

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE: FOR WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO READ

> Generally discourses and their attendant storylines are taken up as one's own in a way that is not visible, since discourse is understood as a transparent medium through which we see real worlds. Just as we disattend the pane of glass in order to look at the view out the window, so we generally disattend discourse. (It is not until the glass fractures or breaks, for example, that we focus differently.) Precisely because discourse is understood as transparent, then, any text that mobilises that discourse is taken to describe a real and recognisable world. One understands oneself, in reading, to be re-cognising that which the author of the text cognised. A reading that is thus achieved is experienced as a true, even authoritative reading of the text. (Davies, 1993a, p. 195)

This thesis makes visible the discourses through which subjectivity and heterosexual desire are constituted as "natural" (Haug, 1987; Butler, 1990; Davies, 1990a, 1992; Foucault, 1987; Cameron, 1985; Holloway, 1984; Walkerdine, 1990; McRobbie & Nava, 1984; Weedon, 1987). I do this by exploring the ways in which the romantic storyline, 'one day my prince will come', as it is conveyed by discourses of daily life, can be seen to act as a script that 'writes' the subject (Walkerdine, 1985a; Christian-Smith, 1990; Davies, 1989, 1990b, 1993a). I argue that, while being scripted into myth, the subject within discourse is, at the same time, an active participant in the scripting processes (Haug, 1987; Butler, 1990; Davies, 1990a, 1991, 1993a, 1996). To make visible the everyday discourses which convey the romantic myth, my analysis focuses on the stories written by the research participants. I examine how the production, scripting and performance of gender difference occurs through and within the "intricate work of discourses" (Weedon, 1987, p. 126); and, how within these stories the prevailing discourses both convey and refer to, the romantic myth of 'one day my prince will come'. Usually, discourses (which convey this myth) make claims to common sense, God or science as their evidential base. What is made evident throughout my thesis is how, within these discourses, gender difference and the desire for heterosexual marriage is constituted as "normal"

and "natural". The theorising undertaken throughout shines some light on how myth turns history into nature (Barthes, 1972).

From its inception, the style and intent — the method and methodology of this thesis has been purposefully constructed by me to be consistent with the feminist principles which I have made my own. These principles are guided by an ethic of responsibility and a philosophy of openness which (in)form and are formed from my subjectivity as it has been and is continuingly being constituted in my experiences as a girl/woman and from my reading of feminist literature (cf. Cox, 1995; de Beauvoir, 1972; Firestone, 1970; Gilligan, 1982; Haug, 1987; Harding, 1987; Lather, 1991; Stanley & Wise, 1983, 1990). The feminist principles through and within which I position myself and my thesis are at the same time informed by my readings of poststructuralist theorising and analysis (cf. Butler, 1990, 1997; Caputo, 1997; Cranny-Francis, 1992, 1995; Davies, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1993a; Derrida, 1985, 1988, 1992, 1995; Foucault, 1987; Haug, 1987; Moore, 1994; Walkerdine, 1990). Poststructuralist theory opens up possibilities for finding alternative entry points into existing feminist critiques of marriage by making visible hegemonic discourses, and the practices and conditions that they guarantee. My desire for a more just society within which equitable and liberating relationships between men and women are a reality rather than simply a romantic notion of liberal humanism, is what has led me to this research.

Many feminist writers have theorised marriage as a site for women's subordination within patriarchal power relations and as a major contributor to women's exclusion from positions of authority (cf. Davies, 1988, 1993a, 1996; Wolf, 1990; Rowland, 1988; Rowbotham, 1973; Firestone, 1970). Like many feminist inquirers before me (de Beauvoir, Erenreich, Firestone, Rowbotham, Gilligan, Greer, Pateman, Burns, Cranny-Francis, Haug, Walkerdine, Weedon,

and Davies — to name but a few), it is my intention that the investigation undertaken and explicated throughout this thesis will provide new insights into how the maintenance of marriage as an institution, and as a promise of things to come within discourse, has contributed to what Connell (1987, p. 279) described as "the collective failure of our forebears to abolish gender inequalities".

Davies, (1993b, p.145) argues that, "Romantic discourse is one of the fundamental props of the male-female dualism. Central to learning to become male or female, as we currently understand these terms, is learning the appropriate *patterns of desire*". I hold that patterns of (heterosexual) desire (in particular, the desire for marriage as the institutionalised and legitimised form and context for the conditions of romantic love and procreation), are produced within the discursive sites of lived and narrated experience characterised by the conditions of the romantic myth. Within these discursive sites, the 'individual' is the subject of and invested in gendered discourses of rights and responsibilities.

In many ways this is a study of "subjectification" (Haug, 1987). Subjectification differs from concepts such as "socialisation" (as put forward in social theories of gender, such as sex role and socialisation theories) by foregrounding the effects of discourse and the active participation of the subject/ 'individual' in the process of production and reproduction of social conditions. The attention of the researcher/s (and readers) is focussed on "the process whereby individuals construct themselves into existing social relations" (Haug, 1987, p. 33). My thesis elaborates the proposition that, if our understanding of gender and its effects is to become more fertile, it is necessary to acknowledge the active participation of the 'individual' subject in the taking up (and in the resisting) of prevailing social practices and discourses (Haug, 1987; Davies, 1996, 1994,

1993a, 1989; Connell, 1987). This taking-up-as-one's-own (or the constructing of the self into) existing social relations and discourses is central to understanding the constitution of desire and its associated personal and political effects. Connell (1987, p. 97) argues that any analysis of gender that is to move beyond the limitations of existing theories needs to account for "the patterning of object-choice, desire and desirability". My thesis examines how this patterning occurs within the lived experience of discourses which convey and are conveyed by the romantic myth.

As a feminist poststructuralist researcher, I take up the right to question naturalised discourses of biological determinism and of heterosexuality. Within common sense discourses "feminism" is usually perceived to be contentious (as is "poststructuralism" in the Academy). Feminist discourses circulate in both the public and private domains where they are (in)formed by and (in)form prevailing and emerging notions of common sense and common practice. Common sense discourses transparently attribute to feminism an array of contradictory practices such as lesbianism, promiscuity, frigidity, spinsterhood, professional child care, divorce without blame, and bathrooms without razors or make-up. Barthes (1972) warns that discourse is always open to colonisation by myth. I present evidence that this colonisation of lived discursive spaces has fear and desire as its currency. These sexed, embodied emotions (fear and desire) are usually silent, circumscribed by the circumstances of daily life. In silence and in concert with discourse, these emotions affect the possibilities and enabling limits of subject positions and gendered relations of power. In these (post)modern times, to be feminist is to embody the tension of resistance along the Cartesian split of mind and body. Dominant structuralist discourses of liberal humanism and biological determinism, in tension, and with intention, continue to colonise common sites of subjectification. Feminism remains risky and tenuous.

Examining the production of (gendered) subjectivity, its power and its effects is a concern shared by both feminism and poststructuralism (cf. Butler, 1990, 1997; Cixous, 1991; Davies, 1993a, 1994; Weedon, 1987). Central to (feminist) poststructuralist enterprises is the relationship between authority and authorship (of talk and texts) and between talk, texts, subjectivity, power and desire (cf. Steedman, Walkerdine & Urwin, 1985; Foucault, 1987; Haug, 1987, Christian-Smith, 1990; Neilsen, 1998; Richardson, 1997; Davies, 1993a; Derrida, 1968, 1988; Cranny-Francis, 1992; Walkerdine, 1990; Weedon, 1987). My thesis heeds and illustrates Connell's (1987, p. 109) claim that, "if authority is defined as legitimate power, then we can say that the power structure of gender is the general connection of authority with masculinity".

My research and analysis foregrounds the power (and authority of) myth and of narrative as interpretive devices — as ways of making sense, of making meaning from, and of making livable the experiences of daily life (cf. Barthes, 1972; Christian-Smith, 1990; Neilsen, 1998; Richardson, 1997; Steedman, 1986). The process of collective memory work (Haug, 1987) which I conducted to inform my theorising and analysis, produced stories of lived experiences which the research participants considered represented instances of being positioned within and by the romantic storylines of 'one day my prince will come'. The collective memory work project of 'One day my prince will come', produced narrative representations of discursive moments in which the romantic myth can be seen at work within what the Haug Collective have called "daily training in normality" (Haug, 1987, p. 96). The feature of normality that is the focus of my thesis is the production of the desire for heterosexual marriage. What is examined throughout, is how the storylines of 'one day my prince will come' (in)form subjectivity and patterns of desire that are signified by and engender signifying practices of gender difference. My analysis examines the taking up

and resisting of particular subject positions and associated signifying practices made available within particular (often momentary) discursive contexts.

My thesis explores *how*, within (inter)personal and political (con)texts the desire for heterosexual marriage is discursively produced in everyday life and constitutes 'feminine' subjectivity in particular ways (cf. Christian-Smith, 1993; Haug, 1987; Walkerdine, 1990). My exploration follows the ambi-"trace" (Derrida, 1985) of binary logic and the constitutive effects of difference (Derrida, 1978, 1992; Moore, 1994). I examine the interplay of myth, discourse, practice and binary logic as produced within and producing simultaneously, both personal and political projects of desire which (inter)actively constitute "normal" adult status (and associated forms of power and protection); conditions which accord with the romantic myth and discourses of gender difference as contexts of lived experiences. In order to make visible the complex patterning of power and desire within and across the various sites of language, this thesis reflects on the lives and texts, experiences and opinions of others.

My analysis and theorising draws on, and is illustrated by, excerpts from the journals and autobiographical narratives written during the collective memory work project. Viewed through a poststructuralist lens, the stories told and written, and often re-told, highlight the taken-for-granted performance of discourse as gendered. As illustrated in the excerpt from a participant journal entry below, recognition of the apparent inevitability and responsibility of marriage seems to be woven into a self-conscious subjectivity from an early age.

> *I recall an incident when I was about four years old and I was playing in the backyard with my brother, Ken. We were just talking about something (I don't remember the whole conversation or situation) but I remember saying to him, "Ken, when we grow up will you marry me, because I won't (or don't) know anyone!"*

In this thesis I explore how within the discursive field of liberal humanism (the discursive field through and within which the participants in the collective memory work of this thesis have been constituted as speaking subjects), the process of subjectification produces the desire for marriage as an institutionalised state of being 'normal', of being "naturally" gendered, and of being loved and lovable or at least desired and desirable. Within this constitutive site of subjectification, the personal and political effects of the discourses of the individual are critically implicated. As Haug (1987, p.42) has said,

> What makes the reality of monogamy bearable is the assumption that we – every individual one of us – will be exceptional in feeling the life long love on which it is founded. We channel that assumption into our desires and dreams, it colours the conclusions we draw from our suffering and joy. Both morality itself and the way in which we appropriate it, prevent us from even contemplating the precepts it outlines.

For the purposes of this thesis, the romantic storyline of 'one day my prince will come' is understood as the weft through which the threads of experience are woven to form the materiality of the body, emotion, imagination and of associated on-going interactive practices. The taking up of this storyline as one's own, means entering into an encounter of shaping the body and the self as both opposite and attractive to the other (sex) (Walkerdine, 1990, 1984; Davies, 1993a, 1993b, 1992, 1990a, 1990b, 1989; Haug 1987; Connell, 1987; Cranny-Francis, 1995, 1992). The common sense of this opposition and attraction are made ‘real’ through the usualness of inhabiting particular gendered subject positions within discourses that convey and are conveyed by romantic storylines as these are lived, told, imagined and institutionalised (Christian-Smith, 1990, 1993; Davies, 1988, 1989, 1990a, 1993a, 1996; Holloway, 1984; Walkerdine, 1990).

Making sense: shattering the transparency of language

Rather than seeing language merely as a tool for communicating meaning from one speaker to another, poststructuralist theory understands language as a "site" within which meanings are made. A central tenet of poststructuralist theory (as it has been taken up by me) is that language is the constitutive site of the power dynamics of social life and identity formation. Language is conceptualised in this (poststructuralist) way as a populated site within which, at any given moment, there is a field of discourses in play (being spoken into existence, silent or silenced). Re-conceptualised as discursively constituted, social practices and conditions need not be viewed as monolithic (as fixed and immutable 'structures') but, instead, can be seen as (im)possibly tenuous and even fragile (Weedon, 1987). When language is understood as a *site* (rather than simply as a tool that conveys transparent meanings), meanings (and their material consequences) are seen as constituted *within* language rather than being simply communicated *by* language.

Within the site of language, meanings cannot be guaranteed by the speaker but are always subject to interpretation through the multiple subjectivities of those who populate the site of language. As such, meanings are always provisional (Butler, 1990, 1997; Derrida, 1985, 1981, 1978; Weedon, 1987) and open to colonisation by myth (Barthes, 1972). In "deconstruction" language is an infinite process of play and deferral of meaning (Derrida, 1988, 1985, 1981, 1978). Feminist poststructuralism, concerned (as it must be) with the power effects of meanings attributed to gender difference, looks to the historically and socially specific discursive production of conflicting and competing meanings — their power effects and the effects of power conveyed within discourse and practice. These meanings and their effects may only be fixed temporarily but this

temporary fixing often has important social implications — particularly when these meanings and their effects are open to repetition within and across discursive contexts and over time.

Throughout this thesis I use various strategies to help draw attention to the contingencies of language as a site from within which the constituencies of particular practices and discourses are produced and personal and political meanings conveyed. I play around with disfiguring words. For instance I use hyphenation when it seems to me that a word has drawn into itself more than one word or more than the one meaning it is usually taken to convey. I also use hyphenation to string words together to indicate how they suggest usual practice, subject positioning or ways of thinking. At times I shatter the transparent meanings of some words by bracketing parts of words to suggest how attention to or disattending parts of words can shift focus and multiply the meanings conveyed. Sometimes too, I use similar strategies to draw attention to words which, in the course of my analysis, have struck me as having an aural similarity with words usually taken to have quite different meaning; yet, on closer scrutiny, and with consideration for the historicity of the transmutation of talk into texts, suggest the possibility of conveying phonologically and culturally associated meanings. (And, although at times it has seemed to me possible to use both hyphenation and bracketing, I have in each in-stance and (con)text elected to use one or the other.) I also use the established poststructuralist technique of framing these words with single inverted commas when a particular word in and of itself, is seen to convey the power of an ascendant discourse or discourses constitutive of subjectivity and desire. This framing is intended to alert the reader to the need to problematise the use and meaning of these words in theoretical analysis and explanation. When I quote from published texts or words spoken in conversation or usual practice, I use double inverted commas. Often words which need problematising are also

words which are often spoken, frequently used and repeated in ways which produce their taken-for-granted meaning and the transparency of the discourses they convey. Where I use double inverted commas it is also to evoke a sense of hearing the word or phrase spoken according to or striking a chord with memory. Keeping this in mind, at times and progressively throughout the text, I emphasise or draw attention to the spokeness of particular words which, at the same time, I seek to problematise. When I seek to refer simultaneously to multiple possible meanings, to both the singular and plural forms or to both sexes, I make pertinent use of slashes.

Questioning, rights and responsibilities

Much of my theorising, and the theorising accessed and participated in by me as constitutive of the project/s and product/s of my thesis, is embedded in deconstructive conversations and conversations about deconstruction. Deconstruction is a process of opening up possibilities of/and/by troubling the binaries of Western metaphysics and the meanings and practices derived from these. Deconstruction questions that which is usually taken-for-granted. As many women/wives/daughters can testify (cf. Van Every, 1996), questioning that which is usually taken for granted in gender relations (like who will do the laundry/clean the toilet bowl/look after the kids/remove body hair/iron shirts/keep quiet on matters of significance) can cause (or at least not seem worth the) trouble. Within everyday discourses the gendered conditions of family are taken-for-granted and, it is taken-for-granted that adults (especially women) will usually be, or want to be, married. The discursive field within which this taken-for-grantedness occurs produces 'communities' of shared meanings and of practices that are hierarchical and often defensive and fearful of the neighbour and the stranger (cf. Derrida in Caputo, 1997). By examining the gendered binaries of the everyday discourses and practices which convey

the conditions of the romantic myth, my thesis opens to scrutiny these shared meanings, and questions their verity. In speaking of Derrida and the deconstructive process, Caputo (1997, p. 51) says:

> Such questioning arises from the height — or depths — of responsibility (whichever image gives you more comfort or warmer assurance). Whatever trouble Derrida manages to make, whatever seams he manages to expose in our most venerable garments, whatever disturbance can be traced back to him — that is all rooted in the deepest sense of responsiveness to something that is silently astir in these hoary and prestigious structures. ... This sense of responsibility being well understood, we may say that deconstruction reserves the *right* (*droit*) to ask any question, to think any thought, to wonder aloud about any improbability, to impugn the veracity of any of the most venerable verities.

My research suggests that, within everyday life (the production of) the desire for heterosexual marriage becomes a most venerable of verities. Among the questions I privilege as I seek to display in deconstructive ways the constitutive authority of the romantic myth I ask: How is the desire for heterosexual marriage discursively constituted in everyday life? How, and to what effect, is the constitution of this desire within daily life readable in, and constructed by, the romantic storylines of 'one day my prince will come'? How can stories of everyday life tell us about the institutionalising of heterosexual desire and its material effects? How do subjects take up as their own the discourses conveying the romantic storylines as these are both lived and told? I question the state of play within (my) lived experience as girl, woman, daughter, mother, student, teacher, lover, friend, neighbour, stranger and so on. This is a deconstructive enterprise of response-ability.

Contouring the text: organisation and intuition

Between these covers conversations unfold about the positioning of women within myth and how myth shapes in various ways the lived experience, corporeality and desires of subjects within discourse. These conversations are illustrated by autobiographical texts of remembered experiences; of my own and other women's pursuit of understanding, of childhood, of imagining, belonging and desire. These conversations and stories seek to uncover *how it is so* that the thought of marriage influences what s/he says, what s/he thinks, what s/he does (Woolf, 1938).

The organisation and presentation of the text of this thesis is somewhat unconventional. From the outset, stories told in the context of the collective memory work project are displayed to illustrate the ideas, concepts, arguments and experiences presented. This means that the reader becomes privy to excerpts from the data before reading my report and analysis of the process of data collection which appears in chapter 3. Throughout the text, the stories that participants told in the context of the collective memory work project are indented and italicised. To produce a sense of the collectivity/generalisability of these stories I do not attach names or pseudonyms unless the author has done so in the body of the text. The stories told for the collective memory work project were written and selected for the ways in which the particular experience described evoked a feeling among the participants of "that could have been me" or "that reminds me of when". I also included are stories from my own experience that were evoked during the process of my analysis and theorising of the data as I sought to find autobiographical connections between the theory and the data. My own autobiographical stories are woven into the body of the text without shifting font or format.

Setting in motion the autobiographical trace that interlaces the text, the opening chapter inducts the reader into particular, seemingly generalisable experiences,

(con)texts and (ways of) thinking (and speaking) that informed my decision to take up the work of this thesis. Weaving a tapestry of theorising and experiences, chapter two makes claims for the constitutive power dynamics of myth and storylines in the production of subjectivity and, elaborates the theoretical propositions that underpin the analysis presented in subsequent chapters. Chapter three is an explication of the methodology of collective memory work as it was applied by me in this instance. The chapters which follow are organised around the analysis of stories which seemed to draw attention to the discourses at play within the collective lived experiences of participants presented in the data. Throughout these chapters I open to scrutiny the formative effects of gendered binary logic as a subjective strategy in the production of meaning. Both my research methods and my analysis support a conceptual shift from the usual feminist and structuralist positioning of women as victims or pawns in a patriarchal or male dominated system, to one of shared responsibility. This shift is made possible as the transparency and taken-for-grantedness of naturalised gender difference is shattered and makes visible the ways in which girls and women actively participate in producing the state of play within the discourses which convey the romantic storyline and where subjectification takes place.

CHAPTER 1

IN(TRO)DUCTION: THE CON-TEXT

> So we live in a world shaped by the collective failure of our forebears to abolish gender inequalities. (Connell, 1987, p. 279)

> Women and men come to have different understandings of themselves as engendered persons because they are differently positioned with regard to discourses concerning gender and sexuality, and they take up different positions within those discourses. (Moore, 1994, p. 64)

I grew up with my cousin Kim. We spent holidays together. Usually just a day, or overnight. Sometimes a week at her place or mine. Our fathers were brothers. Uncle Barry had married a spirited, blonde, five foot two and eyes of blue, Seventh Day Adventist. Dad married an Anglican, like himself ('though he had never been confirmed). Mum is tall, dark and handsome, rather like my Dad except he had blue eyes like Aunty Elaine. Mum's eyes are hazel and so are Uncle Barry's. Kim's eyes were blue. For me as a child eyes were either blue or hazel, unless you were a "new Australian". I knew too that eyes were the window to the soul. "An honest man will look you straight in the eye". "Look me in the eye and say that," was a family challenge to honesty. My mother tells me she still feels uncomfortable if a person doesn't look her in the eyes when speaking with her. My brother found himself with the ability to look her in the eye when telling a lie.

Kim and I loved one another. I always thought people liked her better than me. She had blue eyes; mine are hazel. We often talked of love and chastity. We would sing romantic songs as we went into the forest with our fathers. Songs of adventure always with a love interest. We had great adventures under the Casuarinas and Paper Barks scrambling along the creek beds. Our fathers naming all of life — Maiden Hair, orchids, Black Boys, tree ferns, bird's nests,

Lilypilly, Forget-Me-Not. Kim showed me a girl could enjoy walking through cow shit in bare feet.

Much of the life named in the forest was taken home. Uprooted. Transplanted into suburbia. My dad was a keen gardener struggling to keep control of his life. When things were good, which was often, he would say, "You wouldn't be dead for quids". Mum is a great organiser. She embodies common sense, she might say when we strayed from the expected or queried a task, "All brains and no common sense". It seemed to me that a great deal of sense was to be made of life through the proverbs and propositions of fathers, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." "The early bird catches the worm." "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach." "You can tell what a woman will be like when she's older by looking at her mother." And the practicality and moral high ground of mothers, "Don't speak to me like that young lady." "Children should be seen but not heard". "Keep your legs together and your head up." "If a job's worth doing it's worth doing well." "You don't want to be left on the shelf." All were agreed on one thing, "Life is meant for living — experience is the greatest teacher." But Kim and I loved books. This made us like bushrangers — at once revered and outlawed. In our family, stories were for telling — reading could be no substitute for life itself. My Dad would say, "Don't believe anything you read and only half of what you hear — seeing is believing." Mum would say, "You know what your father would say." We were often reminded, "It takes all kinds to make a world."

Children in our family never went to funerals or visited the dying. We were "too young to understand." "Out of sight out of mind." The grief would be too much for us, "better to remember them as they were." We never went to weddings either; it was too expensive. But sometimes we were taken to see the bride and talk of her beauty. It seemed being married or at least being a bride

made you beautiful — apparently everyone looked good in white. I played tennis dressed in white. I was my father's pride and joy. My Dad always said, "Be a teacher, it's a great job for a woman, having the same hours as the kids and plenty of holidays." He gave me the gift of knowing what I wanted to be. He stroked the long, soft hair on my arms and told me proudly these were a sign of strength. We imagined our futures from the naming of life. From the stories we were told. From our experience of the present every day, day after day.

Kim was killed by a drunk driver who failed to give way to his right on his way home from the pub where Uncle Barry spent most days these days. Kim was a virgin when she died. She was engaged but never married. Sex had only been something to talk about, something to save yourself for, something decent boys could do but not a decent girl — not before marriage. Her mother, Aunty Elaine, had convinced her (after leaving Uncle Barry and returning amid thick animosity to co-habit with him in lieu of a property settlement) to join the sisterhood. At the time of her death Kim was training at the Adventist hospital where her mother's brother was a surgeon. Her mother could be sure now that Kim could always earn her own living so would never be a burden on her mother again. She had stopped sending me love poems written from the heart of an angel. It was like her wings had been clipped. I couldn't share intimacies with her any more. My wings had spread and within the discursive field where Kim played there was nowhere for me to fly. The ascendant discourses there positioned me as fallen. I didn't answer her letters. I hoped she wouldn't notice. At her funeral we stood around her grave, the big family of our childhood, peering inward believing the Lord had taken her as a pure maiden for his own. "Only the good die young" my Dad would say.

> I am struggling to lay out a proposition that the past remains within the present, not even out of focus, the fragments simply repositioned

> by the disturbance of new presents, everything jumbled and shuffled but extant: knowledge established remains, even if untapped. (Astley, 1990, p. 198)

Woven together in a tapestry of memories, moments, marriages and marvels, our childhoods (Kim's and mine) were at once the same and different. We shared experiences, family structures, desires, cultural values and historical context (we were both born in 1957). At the same time these similarities were interpreted and given expression through our particular subjectivities constituted within differing contexts of family dynamics, schooling and geographic location. I grew up in suburbia, Kim on a small farm. My dad rarely took a drink or raised his voice. Kim's Dad drank too much too often and was sometimes violent. We both loved both these men. Together we experienced the life-death-life cycle as one which includes the desire to be singled out (in life or death) as good enough to be chosen by another, as "being chosen" came to signify the prospect of happiness ever after, of being "good enough", of "knowing the proper standards".

Our parents expected great things of us but especially that we never be anything less than a "lady". My research data (and I offer the story below as an example) clearly indicates that this (gendered) expectation is far from unique. It seems that, within the discourses which convey the romantic myth, being and becoming a lady is synonymous with becoming a princess — being chosen as "the one" and living "happily ever after". In the discursive economy of everyday life, "lady" and "woman" seem linked hierarchically (a binary, lady-woman) — "lady" is frequently spoken/speakable conveying respectability, desirability and worth, whereas "woman", rarely spoken, conveys a doubtful, undesirable, even threatening quality.

> *I can remember looking down our driveway - very steep - while our next door neighbour; a boy of my age got on our tiny dinky and rode down, feet*

> *flying. He hurtled down the driveway, with the only way of stopping tipping the dinky over on the grass, before going over the six foot drop to our backyard. I was determined that I would do it too, because if he could do it why couldn't I? So I sat at the top of our drive and took a deep breath, and let myself go. I have never been so scared, but I made it right to the end and lay panting on the grass, just ecstatic that I had done it. My mother's face was suddenly looking down at me, frowning at me. "Could you try to act like a lady?" she asked.*

My interest is in the probabilities of a discursively produced self — in how identity is shaped within language and social practices which constitute interdependently the ways people experience their daily lives. And in particular, how childhood experiences of "daily training in normality" (Haug, 1987, p. 97) convey the storyline of 'one day my prince will come' in ways that construct the expectations, desires and limitations of personal practice and its collective effects.

Navigating the (con)text

It seems to me that it is from multiple and variously repeated experiences within the boundaries of usual practice and discourse, that we derive meanings about ourselves, the world around us and the possibilities and limitations of our position/ing within it. My thesis displays how the road to marriage and/or motherhood is well sign posted. Our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, neighbours, teachers and momentary acquaintances, will frequently and repeatedly, one way or another, remind us of the conditions and the promise of the romantic myth. The usual daily round repeatedly incorporates implicit, explicit and assumed reminders that gender difference is always the intention and in tension within discourse and in practice. In his commentary on the work of Derrida, Caputo (1997, pp. 133-134) suggests that:

> To desire the impossible is to strain against the constraints of the foreseeable and possible, to open the horizon of possibility to what it cannot foresee or foretell.

Throughout this chapter I describe the constraints of the foreseeable and the possible as characterised within particular events which pre-empted the investigation and explication of this thesis. The contexts and conditions of being positioned as, and of taking-up-as-one's-own the positions of, "wife" and "mother" are central to these events and the theoretical issues they raise and illustrate. My personal and professional experiences of how marital status affects the lives of women, my interactions with students, colleagues, friends and family, and my reading of feminist and post-structuralist theories critically and corroboratively inform this thesis.

From childhood I was fascinated with adult (usually women's) conversations; and my "she's a good-girl-nothing-to-worry-about" status meant my mother (and her friends and relatives) granted me the privilege of being a "participant observer". It was not uncommon for my mother to seek my opinion on matters raised in these conversations, but unless asked, I would (as good girls do), keep my opinions to myself. Recently, while reading Laurel Richardson's critique of William Foote Whyte's *Street Corner Society*, I imagined myself to have been a "street corner observer" for much of my life. Over time, I imagine that my self-reflexive "otherness", my experiences of never quite being equal (for 'structural' reasons of class and gender), have focussed my interests on the politics of middle-class morality, on the bourgeoisie and its value systems. This position has no doubt contributed to my academic aspirations to prove I was as worthy of praise and as clever as my middle-class cousins (on my mother's side). I am the first person in my entire extended family to undertake postgraduate studies and it is only a few of us in my own generation who have had opportunities for university entrance (a situation which may have been different had my mother

had a brother.) For previous generations the prevailing conditions of gender difference were such that the time and expense of academic education would be wasted on girls/women who were expected to make marriage and children their life's work.

The experiences that I describe in this chapter highlight the tensions inherent in "community" and prevailing discourses of gender difference and the family. These are experiences that in no small part contributed to my taking up the work of this thesis. Evident in my own experiences, as in the experiences of others, is the defensive dynamic of community life and how this is engendered in common practices and discourses which convey and institutionalise the hierarchical conditions of the romantic myth.

Marriage - the making of meaning, of identity and community

The institution of marriage, and the discursive fields within which it is produced and maintained, enacts conditions of historically constituted patriarchal gender relations making them difficult to disrupt and change. Marriage regulates and legitimates heterosexual desire and procreation (Foucault, 1972; Greer, 1970). Marriage and the discourses within which the expectation of marriage is conveyed, control women's sexuality and reinforce notions of women's dependency and need for protection. Within the private sphere, positioned as wife and mother, this control and delimiting of women's subjectivity operates as taken-for-granted assumptions about their responsibility for maintaining the "proper standards" of home making and child rearing (Burns, 1986; Greer, 1970; Rowbotham, 1973; Firestone, 1970; de Beauvoir, 1972; Holloway, 1984; Hite, 1987; Urwin, 1985; Caplan, 1987; Van Every, 1996; Walkerdine, 1985a; Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989) and, in doing so, produces women's silence and invisibility in masculinist relations of power

(Rowland, 1988; Laude, 1984; Walkerdine, 1981, 1985; Cixous, 1991; Derrida, 1985). These gendered relations of power and responsibility constitute and contextualise relationships within communities and among women, men and children in particular ways. This dialectic economy of binary logic and the discursively constituted naturalising of gender difference, has produced a defensive, self protective system of semiotic and symbolic communities. Within the context of this thesis, the usual lived experience and discourses of 'community' are mediated through the ideal of the nuclear family headed by the married heterosexual couple. This ideal drives the social policies and associated funding priorities of the conservative Australian government. It is in respect of Derrida's deconstructive concern for the wholesome "community" of liberal humanist tradition that I self consciously evoke a seemingly paradoxical idea of communities of meaning that are at once embodied, symbolic, architectural and dynamic.

> What [Derrida] does not like about the word community is its connotations of "fusion" and "identification". After all, *communio* is a word for a military formation and a kissing cousin of the word "munitions"; to have a *communio* is to be fortified on all sides, to build a "common" (*com*) "defense" (*munis*), as when a wall is put up around the city to keep the stranger or the foreigner out. The self-protective closure of "community", then, would be just about the opposite of what deconstruction is, since deconstruction is the preparation for the incoming of the other, "open" and "porous" to the other, which would of course make one poor excuse for a defense system. A "universal community" excluding no one is a contradiction in terms; communities always have to have an inside and an outside. That is why Derrida's comments on "community" — which is otherwise a mom-and-apple-pie word, at the very sound of which every politician's knee must bend — are extremely guarded, on guard against the guard that communities station around themselves to watch out for the other. (Caputo, 1997, pp. 107-108)

After the birth of my second child, Carlie, I spent six years as the director of a small rural "community preschool". During this time it seemed markedly evident to me that marital status was a primary force which both categorised

and divided women. Although all these women had children of the same age whom they loved and wanted the best for, social boundaries formed according to meanings attributed to marital status. This status was hierarchical and assumed differences in practice and values. It seemed that married women felt sorry for, and superior to, yet somehow threatened by the single women, while single women felt sorry for themselves and alienated from married women. Some of the women in both these categories (married-unmarried) worked outside the home; however, this was always for the expressed reason of supplementing the family income on the basis of the perceived economic needs of the family. Few of these women spoke of working in terms of personal satisfaction and when they did it was in guarded terms and as secondary to (family) economic considerations. The meanings and practices attributed to being married appeared to be a point of resistance, a wall, against women validating alternative ways of being a wife or becoming legitimately adult. This was a discursive field, a community within which a taken-for-grantedness circulated around and produced hierarchical and gendered effects on people's lives. For those mothers who were single, the hope of finding a man seemed to govern their lives and often put stress on their relationships with their children. Many of these women remarked that it would be easier to "meet someone" if they didn't have the kids. Single mothers were marginalised within this community. Although they made up almost 40% of the parents of children at the preschool only once in my six years as director was a single parent elected to the community management committee. The social groups which formed around mothers associated with the preschool were clearly defined according to marital status and then, within each of these groups there were divisions based on class (and even more obviously on race; but that is beyond the scope of this thesis).

Every day I was witness to women struggling to carve an identity for themselves within the confines of idealised notions of what constitutes "happily ever after" — notions constituted in the silence which comes after the story has ended. Speaking and silence work in concert to produce the possibilities and enabling limits of practice within discourses (Foucault, 1987). Family life as a discursive field and as a foundation of community is a site where, without question, a dictate forms which says into the silence, "put your children and your husband first" — children will be happier, healthier — more normal — if they grow up with married heterosexual parents. In this discursive context, women's practice becomes governed by the perceived opinions of men, and wives are inclined to allow their husbands' opinions to become (or to subordinate) their own, and to shape their personal practice (cf. Burns, 1986; Connell, 1987).

Although I became a trusted caregiver and educator of their children, a sought after adviser on matters of parenting, and sometimes confidant on matters of the heart, establishing myself as a member of this community was a struggle. I was married with two small children, yet I chose to work full-time and to socialise with people across and outside the boundaries described above. The experience of this contrary positioning yielded for me a sustainable interest in the production and effects of gender relations and the desire for heterosexual marriage.

The subject and the production of (feminist) knowledge

During 1991 I considered options for pursuing postgraduate studies and was inadvertently introduced to feminist poststructuralist theory and research. My husband, who was at the time engaged in external studies, was mistakenly sent study notes and text recommendations for a course in women's studies. Before realising his error, he had acquired some of the texts and completed several readings. On realising the error he passed these texts on to me saying that I might find them of interest. I had recently read de Beauvoir's classic monograph, *The Second Sex* which had been lent to me by a male colleague and friend of my husband. I found that I read this academic work with as much feeling of connectedness, pleasure and fascination as I had experienced in reading her autobiographies. It now seems ironic that I was introduced to the academy of feminism and to poststructuralist theory by two men.

That year much debate ensued between my husband, his friend and myself, and anyone else we could ensnare, about the ideas posited in the feminist and poststructuralist texts to which we had access. We became particularly engrossed in how the application of hegemonic meanings within discourse were consistently brought to bear on our own (and others') lived experience. These meanings seemed to circulate around the 'structures' and practices that shaped our everyday lives particularly within the institutions of family and school; we constantly challenged each other's interpretations and analyses.

Through these conversations I became increasingly, in fact acutely, aware of the effect of my feminine subject position on the relational (con)texture of these exchanges and my ongoing relationships with these men. It became evident, as I reflected on these exchanges, that I was positioned and positioned myself as "married woman". Predictably, I was the one who offered food and drink and

came and went from the conversation to meet the demands of child care and housekeeping. More interestingly, my voice seemed to go unheard and apparently held less authority. There was a glaring contrast in conversational style. I would repeatedly describe personal experiences to clarify a point or substantiate claims and use inclusive pronouns such as "we", "us", "our", when referring to women or people in general. Both men, though this seemed much more fixed in my husband's case, used "they" when referring to men and people in general and "women" or "you" (directed at me) when referring to women; and when clarifying an idea or substantiating claims, research statistics or academic theory was their preferred point of reference. My internal dialogue was often along the lines of "but where are you?" "don't you see that you are part of they", "how does what you are saying connect with your own feelings and experience?" I did not give voice to these thoughts and my awareness of silence and of being silenced began to take shape. I was afraid to speak for fear of not being heard and mostly for fear of causing disharmony or offence. This silencing and being silenced was most evident in relating with my husband. A feminine subject position inscribes deference in concert with the assumed authority of the masculine position particularly in relation to one another (cf. Tannen, 1990). The men's references to science, and "they", gave their speaking an unquestioned higher status through alignment with rational objectivity as the source of Truth. By comparison, by speaking from the feminine body, my own references to subjectivity seemed to put my speaking, my voice, my self, in danger of being heard as trivial.

One of the texts that both my husband and I read during this time was Walkerdine's (1984) article, "Some day my prince will come: young girls and the preparation for adolescent sexuality". This study of girls' comic strips, highlights how narrative/visual representations of hegemonic cultural ideologies within the patriarchal structure of heterosexuality conveyed by these

texts, become conflated with lived experience in the process of meaning making and of positioning oneself and being as a gendered subject. Curiously, this work of Walkerdine's became conflated with my own lived experience becoming a catalyst for my taking up the particular focus (and the working title) of this thesis.

At thirty-six I lay silently awake beside my husband after yet another aborted attempt at "love-making". Marriage, it seemed, had been like an emotional minefield in an affectionless desert. My husband had turned his back on me saying cuttingly, "You just want a prince". Between us there was never a shortage of intellectual discussion — discussion of other things and other people — yet relationship issues and emotions were always caught on the cutting edge of silence. Why did it have to be like this? What was it about our positioning of one another, the endlessly unfulfilled expectations, misjudgments, misunderstandings — the conflicts and contradictions of our subjectivities that this relationship of marriage seemed to (mostly in silence) produce? How were these silences linked to fear? What was I afraid of? My reading of "new age" personal growth books made it possible/inevitable for me to ask, "What do *I* really want?" Lying there beside my sleeping husband our backs turned to one another the title of Valerie Walkerdine's paper, "Some day my prince will come" stalked into my consciousness. I was certain this is what he was referring to. This phrase had haunted me since he had first mentioned it after reading the article and wanting to interrogate me about it. In that moment I felt sure that to feel that my prince had come was at the seat of (my) feminine desire; and that somehow I expected the 'truth' of his coming to be signified in particular ways — ways that reminded me how I had been recognised and chosen to be the one — special to him amongst all others and that we would live happily ever after. This realisation came somewhat as a surprise. Having come to adulthood in the late seventies, my husband and I had self-consciously

refused to play this romantic game. We had deplored and guffawed about the doctrines of subordination to be found in 1950s Home Economics texts that our mothers to varying degrees emulated. Yet the gendered meanings of the 'timeless' fairytales seemed to be inscribed upon our bodies and emotions patterning our desires and interactive behaviours. Our relationship had changed the day we were married. This was worthy of further investigation.

I began to contemplate how my current situation could afford opportunities to explore my interest in the discursive production of desire for heterosexual marriage in everyday life, with particular reference to experiences of childhood. In February 1992 I had resigned from my position as pre-school director and taken up a position as Associate Lecturer in Early Childhood Teacher Education at a rural Australian university. My intention, and the intention of those who selected me for this new position was that I should pursue feminist poststructuralist research of childhood experience.

The characteristics Walkerdine (1984) identifies in her analysis are crucial to the maintenance of women's submission and subordination; particularly, women's silence, the idealised family as reward for compliance and helpfulness and the emotional conviction that getting and keeping a man signifies being "good enough" to "have what she wants" (1990, p. 99). The struggle for girls is in becoming just that — "good enough" — girl not boy/feminine not masculine, and over time, woman (or more particularly "lady"), not man. This is a gendered state of play within discourse that must be continually renewed and achieved by way of the production of desire and subjectivity. This process charges girls with the responsibility to become deferential, passive and selfless (particularly in relation to boys/men), acting to repress spontaneity and sexuality thus allowing the feminine subject to see herself as constantly

misjudged and misunderstood, characteristics that Walkerdine points out are constantly reinforced in the storylines she critiques.

Liberal humanism: embodying the discursive context of identity formation in a (post) modern culture

My thesis attends to the relationship among language, identity, personal practice, discourse, usual practice and social organisation. The stories displayed throughout, reveal the complex, fragmented sustainability of power within shared historical moments. These stories illustrate how we come to know the "proper standards" of gendered signification and how coming to know these standards is central to the process of feminine subjectification. This is a process whereby women are positioned and position themselves, within the multifarious circumstances of daily life, to take up as their own and to embody prevailing patriarchal discourses of gender difference and associated forms of power and desire (Haug, 1987; Butler, 1990; de Beauvoir, 1972; Cranny-Francis, 1995; Davies, 1990a, 1993a; Connell; 1987). Taking up the usual practices of femininity and romantic desire as our own, as these have been constituted in the naturalised discourses of heterosexuality, women act both to sustain the hegemonies of patriarchy and to stave off the ever present threat of misogyny. My analysis opens to scrutiny the interactive relationships between people and environments that constitute, and are constituted by, the possibilities made available within language, discourses and storylines.

> [P]oststructuralism's concern with the discursive construction of subjectivity, with the role of social institutions and the heterogeneous forms of power governing social relations is motivated by a primary concern with understanding the position of individual women in society and the ways in which they are both governed by and resist specific forms of power. This involves not a devaluing of women's experience but an understanding of its

> constitution and its strategic position within the broader field patriarchal power relations. (Weedon, 1987, pp. 74-75)

Within liberal humanist discourses life is seen as a linear trajectory of developmental stages along which marriage is a signifier of progression into responsible adulthood and a symbol of loving and being loved. Marriage signifies the beginning, the making anew again and again, what embodied discourses constitute as "the family". Within liberal humanist discourses, the family symbolises security, care, acceptance, belonging — unconditionally. Whenever I have workshopped definitions of "family" with groups of students (which I do regularly), "unconditional love" is offered up as a primary defining characteristic. Yet, the stories told throughout the collective memory work project of 'one day my prince will come', are exclusive of "love" and make evident the conditional tendencies of assumed attributes of belonging and positioning within the family. Within discourses which convey and institutionalise the romantic storyline of 'one day my prince will come', marriage and family proffer symbolically and conditionally, the (im)possibility of love.

Within (hetero)sexual relations "love" seems to be in a constant state of deferral of meaning. The stories displayed throughout my thesis illustrate how the prevailing state of play within discourse produces love within an economy of difference. Derrida's (1992) discussion of "difference" as having the same etymological origin as "defer" has implications here. Caught in the binaries of discursively produced gender difference, the female subject is positioned and is inclined to position herself as embodying deference to the authority of men (a position that is institutionalised in the conditions of the romantic myth). This feminising of response-ability within (hetero)sexual social relations has a

temporising effect within prevailing discourses which, within particular discursive moments, can be (sometimes mistakenly) read as deferential.

Within the discourses of liberal humanism, marriage is promoted, organised and romanticised around the individual's freedom to choose (Firestone, 1970; Rowbotham, 1973; Connell, 1987; Pateman, 1986). Marriage is taken for granted as an agreement between two individuals who have freely chosen to enter into a legally binding partnership as an expression of their mutual love and desire. When there is evidence that the partnership will reap economic or social benefits or is a matter of propriety (as in the case of the pregnant bride) the interweaving of the discourse of the individual and of the romantic storyline continues to prevail within the hearts and minds of the participants and onlookers who assume that marriage is a choice that has been made freely and that so long as the couple 'love' one another everything will be alright. Within such societies arranged marriages are frowned upon as barbaric and archaic, an infringement of individual freedom and civil liberty. Love is considered to be the basis of normal family relationships and the family the place where love can be freely expressed. Love, however, is difficult to define — it is described in metaphor and recreated in fiction but rarely has it been the subject of theory or analysis (Firestone, 1970).

If love is possible as romantic discourses suggest, then the im-possibility of love is the question which must be asked of the vow within the rites of marriage which bespeaks that it be indestructible except in the event of death. This institutionalised, indestructibility of love, calls for the deconstruction of what is said to constitute and signify love. In this instance the analytic lens is focused on discursive contexts within which the conditions of and desire for, (heterosexual) marriage are produced. Within the postmodern context of liberal humanism it seems there exists a tension between discourses of the

individual (that constitute the assumed rights and equalities which enable "freedom of choice") and heterosexist discourses of gender difference and of desire and desire-ability, which constitutes love as a paradox of daily life.

The subject of liberal humanism is always negotiating the tensions between the democratic discourses of the individual and those of gender difference. For instance, Pateman (1986, p.179) points out that within legal discourses, "… the status of 'wife' is based on the denial that women are (or can be) 'individuals'. (yet) … if a woman is to give consent to the status she is to acquire on marriage she must — naturally — have the rights and capacities of an 'individual'. However, it is logically impossible for a "wife" to possess these attributes because that would be to simultaneously claim that a woman is both naturally free and naturally in subjection". Constituted in the discourses of liberal humanism which convey the assumption of biologically determined gender difference, the feminine subject experiences herself to be an individual who is naturally free and capable of rational choice and who, at the same time is positioned subordinately in the press towards "normal" acceptable adulthood. The individual is gendered, and so is freedom. Within liberal humanist discourses then, it is quite reasonable to claim women are both naturally free and naturally in subjection (and that these are conditions of love). My thesis explores how, while there are choices to be made throughout the course of a life history, the subject's need to belong to the social group, her sense of identity and the overarching pressure of normative social convention, renders problematic the possibilities which have been taken-for-granted within the prevailing liberal humanist discourses of individualism and democracy.

I (and the participants in my research project) grew up immersed in a taken-for-granted liberal humanist philosophy within which the discourses of the individual, the nuclear (patriarchal) family and (capitalist) democracy prevail.

Within these discourses the individual is valorised and understood as unitary and non-contradictory — a being who is in possession of free will and who must use this free will to make responsible choices and achieve successful adulthood. Responsibility for success or failure of acceptable selfhood is invested in the production of the rational autonomous individual who is at the same time sexed and so subordinate to (the taken-for-granted social implications of) biology and, by extension, to science and the rational mind. The structuralist position of liberal humanism "holds that binaries such as male-female and culture-nature are foundational or fundamental to the human mind" (Davies & Whitehouse, 1997, p. 228). Within the discourses of daily life the "mind" is commonly contestable and contesting: "Do you mind?" "It comes to mind." "He must be out of his mind." "It's all mind over matter." And then of course, there is the question of who does the minding: there is always someone minding how mothers act, how children act, how pregnant women act, and whether a woman is married or not. This play of discourses within which the normal, natural subject is presumed to be unitary, autonomous, and gendered is shot through with contradictions. These contradictions are at once encapsulated and negated in the common-sense sayings oft repeated in (my) childhood, such as: "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach." "Two's company, three's a crowd." "If you make your bed you lie in it." "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink." "Clothes maketh the man"; but, "You can't judge a book by its cover." The liberal humanist discourses embodied in the "self-made man" (who is able to provide comfort, protection and particularly financial support to a wife and children) are the mainstay of democratic capitalism.

My father was a "self-made" man. He always worked for himself, never for a boss. Born during the Great Depression, the fifth son of an oft-absent father, he grew up on an urban dairy farm and left school at thirteen to help run the farm

and support the younger siblings while his older brothers were at war. By the time he married my mother, a daughter of the new middle class, he owned his own milkrun, car and block of land. My mother was a bookkeeper in her father's business, awaiting a husband. She was and is a sociable and outgoing person who thrives on physical activity. She worked tirelessly as homemaker, loving wife and mother. Not until her three children left home did she return to work outside the home. We were a happy family. My father too, until his death by suicide in 1983, worked tirelessly as breadwinner, loving husband and father. It seemed to me that my father's grip on life became precarious as his life entered the (post)modern era. One of my poststructuralist readings of his positioning at that time is that, in the wake of feminism and advanced capitalism (particularly the lending and spending spree of the eighties when he found himself surrounded by "two-bob millionaires", working wives and sexually active daughters) he felt the contingency of recognition of himself as authorial source of meaning and unitary being.

> Liberal humanism, which is still the dominant discourse in Western societies, assumes the unitary nature of the subject and conscious subjectivity. It insists on establishing the appearance of unity from moments of subjectivity which are often contradictory. To be inconsistent in our society is to be unstable. Yet the appearance of the unitary subject, based as it is on misrecognition of the self as authorial source of meaning, is precarious, easily disrupted and open to change. (Weedon, 1987, p. 112)

Choice or consequence: (be)coming married

Living out the romantic storyline, hailing and being hailed as "happy family man" or "good wife" seems to offer a safe haven where (within the contradictions inherent in the field of discourses within which we must live) a man can be certain of recognition and woman is constantly open to re-cognition by men. For, of course, within the prevailing discourses a man is/needs to be

"king of the castle" and a woman's job is to fulfil the needs of a man — keeping her place and peace within the home. The beliefs and values constituted in these discourses resist, subsume or subvert any perceived threat to the hierarchical structure of the family and the authority of the masculine subject as pillars of society. Within the myth of 'one day my prince will come' and the liberal humanist discourses through which it is conveyed, the responsibility of 'individual'/s is to take up as their own the attendant practices of desired or ascribed positioning as gendered. For attendant gendered subjects the success and seductiveness of the romantic storylines is as much dependant upon the boy/man's expectation of being recognised as the prince with authorial rights, as it is upon the girl/woman's expectation of his coming as recognition of her worth.

Connell comments that, "In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre treated the life history as unification with a single principle, the ramifying consequences of some initial, constitutive choice" (1987, p. 221). Within the context of this thesis, this single constitutive choice can be understood as the choice to take oneself up as female and not male (or vise versa); as a necessary condition of achieving acceptable (ie. 'normal' and 'natural') personhood within prevailing liberal humanist discourses. Of course, embodied within the prevailing discursive state of play, being and becoming male or female is not understood or experienced as "choice". Within the discourses of biological determinism and of gender difference as these convey and are conveyed by the romantic storyline, choice is problematised as an illusion which intimates and at the same time delimits freedom. The single constitutive 'choice' to take oneself up as either male or female, as this positioning is lived out within the social reality of the global subordination of women to men, mediates all consequent choices which appear in varied fixed and transitory interactive contexts over time. Taking oneself up as one sex but not the other, as male and therefore not female, as

female and therefore Other to male, means to embody particular gendered social practices of sexuality and desire (Davies, 1993a). The desire for marriage, and the associated expectations and relations of power are produced and maintained wherever discourses convey the interests of the romantic storyline. These interests become embodied as usual practice in the process of gendered subjectification. This is a process within which life history becomes unified with the single principle of gender difference hinged to the possibility of happiness ever after.

Embedded within prevailing historically constituted discursive conditions which continue to institutionalise practices of heterosexuality and imagined futures, the taken-for-grantedness of gender difference unifies men and women as it divides them into separate and unequal categories. Marriage and the expectation of marriage continue to unite men and women (respectively and together) in what Connell (1987) describes as a collective project of oppression.

de Beauvoir in her benchmark work, *The Second Sex*, explores women's complicity in our own subordination and points to institutionalised marriage governed by the church as a key to the maintenance and the understanding of women's subordination and women's subjectivity. This remarkable feminist existentialist asked, "Why is it that women do not dispute male sovereignty?" (1972, p. 16). She explained it in liberal humanist terms as a matter of choice or challenge, a weighing of pros and cons.

> To decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to the deal — this would be for women to renounce all the privileges conferred upon them by their alliance to the superior caste. Man the sovereign will provide woman-the-liege with material protection and will undertake the moral justification for her existence; thus she can evade at once both the economic risk and the metaphysical risk of a liberty in which ends and aims must be contrived without assistance. Indeed, along with the ethical urge of each individual to affirm his

> subjective existence, there is also the temptation to forgo liberty and become a thing. This is an inauspicious road, for he who takes it - passive, lost, ruined - becomes henceforth the creature of another's will, frustrated in his transcendence and deprived of every value. But it is an easy road; on it one avoids the strain involved in undertaking an authentic existence. When man makes of woman the Other, he may then expect her to manifest deep-seated tendencies towards complicity. Thus woman may fail to lay claim to the status of subject because she lacks definite resources, because she feels the necessary bond that ties her to man regardless of reciprocity, and because she is often well pleased with her role as Other. (de Beauvoir, 1972, p. 20)

A woman may well be pleased with her role as Other. But, where that is the case, I suggest that it has more to do with what Derrida might describe as the "im-possibility of the other" (Caputo, 1997) than it has to do with a conscious decision to take advantage of a position which is seen as an easy alternative to the liberty which de Beauvoir presumes men to have. It has to do with how, within prevailing discourses, she has taken herself up and has been positioned as female — as being or becoming a woman/lady whose value is discursively re-cognised as legitimate in relation to, with, and by men and children. The girl child as she lives to become adult/mother is repeatedly positioned within discourse to become both bonded with, yet opposite (and subordinate) to, maleness/men. Within the oft repeated and sometimes starkly remembered or threatening discursive contexts of daily life, few (if any) legitimate or desirable alternatives are made available to her either within or beyond the romantic myth. Within discourses of gender difference and heterosexual desire, diversions and transgression from the interests of the myth are not encouraged. As de Beauvoir suggests, the road may be inauspicious but as my thesis illustrates, to take the well worn path or not, is certainly not a simple or easy matter of choice. Discursively produced within the conveyancing of myth, marriage has become idealised and institutionalised as the condition for the achievement of happiness and of normal adulthood. This discursive production constitutes the conditions of lived experience within which

marriage and family are the central organising principle for the practices and discourses of Church, State, and daily life, which both convey and are reconstituted in myth.

In the complex web of liberalism and human relations choice is ever present yet illusive, elusive and illusion. Within daily life the romantic storyline of 'one day my prince will come' offers an exclusive and socially legitimate resolution to the gendered contradictions and uncertainties of being and self, of belonging and individuality, of rights and responsibilities. Within prevailing discourses of liberal humanism and biological determinism, marriage or apparently successful fulfilment of the conditions of the romantic myth, is presented repeatedly and variously as an expected and accepted resolution of the tensions and tenuousness of the contradictory positions on offer to women and girls. A resolution which constantly re-invents the authority of maleness and the metaphor of patriarchy in a process that turns in on itself the binary dynamic of otherness.

The concept of choice and the power to choose is a central theme within the discourses that constitute and are constitutive of, the individual within the culture of democracy. Within liberal humanist discourses freedom of choice is understood as a basic human right and the ability to choose is taken-for-granted as an innate human attribute. People, however, are social creatures and choice becomes mediated by the desire to belong whether that be to the family, peer group, workplace, community or nation. When faced with a choice the subject is positioned by the interests and expected signifying practices and taboos of the groups to which s/he has or desires allegiance and approval. This is further problematised by who s/he takes her/self to be, which, contrary to the tenets of liberal humanist discourse, can never be unitary or non-contradictory (Davies, 1993a). For instance, the female subject within discourse may simultaneously

take herself to be good girl, woman, childless, feminist, loving daughter, caring lover and friend. These categories and associated discourses were shaping my subjectivity when in the event of an unplanned pregnancy and wanting to keep the child, I felt overwhelmingly caught in a set of binary meanings congregating round a singular binary choice — to marry or not to marry. These binaries included wife-whore, considerate-selfish, good girl-bad girl, desirable-ugly, worthy-expendable, autonomous-bound. In this situation the liberal humanist presumption of individual choice is problematised by the internal contradictions inherent in who the subject takes herself to be and the field of discourses which pattern her reality — "good girls don't have abortions or babies out of wedlock", "mature women make their own decisions", "feminists know marriage is the key to women's subordination", "loving daughters don't bring social disgrace upon their parents", "caring lovers want to make their partners happy", "good girls do as they're told" and "no-one wants to be left on the shelf". It was my relationships with others — particularly those that had been or had the potential to be life lasting — and the conversations that textured these relationships that I most wanted my choice to protect. I did not feel "free" to choose. In the context of competing discourses, although a range of choice points may exist, most appear little more than hypothetical when emotion and responsibility are conflated and measured within the confines of normative social practice governed by the requirements of church and state (Connell, 1987; Haug, 1987). Within these discursive sites of gendered subjectification, women or, rather more significantly, "ladies" appear to embody hospitality as being(s) without sovereignty.

Over time each person becomes invested in the discourses which circulate within and constitute the circumstances of daily life and particular lived and narrated experiences. Within the stories told for the collective memory work project of my thesis the discourses of liberal humanism and the habit of binary

logic prevail where the conditions of subjectification within and to the myth of 'one day my prince will come' are conveyed and constituted.

CHAPTER 2

THE POWER AND THE STORY

> If a story is a seed, then we are its soil. Just hearing the story allows us to experience it as though we ourselves were the heroine who either falters or wins out in the end... In a very real way, we are imprinted with knowing just by listening to the tale...
>
> Among Jungians this is called "participation mystique" - a term borrowed from the anthropologist Levy-Bruhl - and is used to mean a relationship wherein "a person cannot distinguish themselves as separate from the object or thing they behold." Among Freudians, it is called "projective identification". Among storytellers, it is called "sympathetic magic" - meaning the ability of the mind to step away from its ego for a time and merge with another reality, experiencing and learning ideas there it can learn in no other form of consciousness and bringing these back to consensual reality. (Estes, 1992, pp. 387-388)

> Used in psychoanalytic terms, to chart the progress of psychic life, a myth describes something that can be recognised as having happened in the life of an individual, a variant of which will occur in the life of each human being. A myth understood in this way is about a set of relationships and their inevitable outcome, and it needs to be generally recognised as such in some manner. (Steedman, 1986, p.88)

The theoretical premises that I articulate in this chapter make possible a way of exploring the interrelationship of lived and imaginary narratives as constitutive of subjectivity, desire and relations of power. Making use of the map of possibilities described here, the theorising and analysis articulated throughout this thesis focuses upon the narratives produced as text within the collective memory work project. The narratives selected for analysis display how the romantic storyline is conveyed by discourses and practices which have reciprocal personal and political effects within everyday life. My navigation of these stories questions the verity of heterosexuality and gender difference as natural, and marriage as an institution which venerates this veracity.

Various ideas expounded by Derrida (1981, 1985, 1988, 1992, 1995; Caputo, 1997; Champagne, 1995) and by Barthes (1972) have been judicious in affirming the perceptions mapping my course through the data. Coming from and located in very different cultural, scholarly, familial and geographic circumstances and traditions, my work does not intend, nor attempt to emulate theirs. Rather it is informed by them. My deconstructive gaze focuses on lived experiences, whereas Derrida (cf. Champagne, 1995) and to a lesser extent Barthes, privilege the literary tradition as the preferred site of analysis. My work is concerned with con-texts — the discursive, embodied, often momentary localities of signification.

> ... deconstructive thinking is acutely sensitive to the contingency of our constructions, to the deeply historical, social and linguistic "constructedness" of our beliefs and practices. (Caputo, 1997, pp. 51-52)

My analysis makes visible how the reciprocity of lived, told and imagined experience is a dynamic process in which the romantic storyline 'one day my prince will come' is (re)marked upon the feminine (un)conscious and the body from an early age. As contexts for making sense of life experiences, lived, told and imagined narratives become interwoven within and across the many possibilities of our conscious and taken-for-granted ways of being. Embodied as gendered within this discursive context, the subject of and within myth is only able to take up, disrupt or construct other storylines and possible subject positions from within those which are or have been made available and desirable to her within lived and imagined experience. The theoretical and discursive conditions I describe in this chapter provide some insights into the data and the analysis to come.

This chapter articulates the theoretical conditions I use to explore how gender difference, the nuclear family, belonging and romance are all implicated in the

constitution of what is usually understood as 'normal' desire. My intention in articulating these conditions is to open up possibilities for understanding how the magic of romance draws together and produces elements of desire as a politics of community. I argue that myth produces and is conveyed by the normative discourses which circulate within communities and which engender and presuppose the desire for and achievement of (heterosexual) marriage as conditions of acceptance. The efficacy and conditions of normative discourses constitute and are constitutive of signifying practices which represent the constituency of myth. The various ways in which signifying practices are embodied becomes an interplay of compliance and resistance which represents the subjective desire for recognition and acceptance into categories of meaning and belonging. These categories and associated signifying practices are defined by the discourses which prevail within the communities we inhabit (in this instance, the communities inhabited and traversed by the participants in this thesis) and which adhere to the binary logic of gender difference.

> Now, everyday language is not innocent or neutral. It is the language of Western metaphysics, and it carries with it not only a considerable number of presuppositions of all types, but also presuppositions inseparable from metaphysics, which although little attended to, are knotted into a system. (Derrida, 1981, p. 19)

Within (post)modern culture it is in the realm of emotion and imagination, as these are expressed and constituted in language, discourses and storylines throughout lived experience, that the desire for and expectation of marriage is produced (Davies, 1989, 1992, 1993a; Firestone, 1970; Haug, 1987; Rowland, 1988; Tinkler, 1995; Walkerdine, 1984; Weedon, 1987). Story is a potent context for the formation, expression and resolution of desire (Barthes, 1972; Christian-Smith, 1990, Davies, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1993; Radway, 1987; Treacher, 1988; Walkerdine, 1984). Reading and storying are acts of imagination, acts which evoke and are evoked by emotion — emotions of the teller and the told

that connect and construct the story with the lived, imagined and desired experience of the reader. "Reading" in the context of poststructuralist analysis, as I apply it in this thesis, refers not only to the decoding of written (and spoken) texts and their meanings but, more importantly, to the subjects' interpretive and embodied reading of lived experience and how the texts of experience and of imagination intersect, (in)form and narrate each other. We often see our lives (past, present and future) in narrative form, as a storyline that we simultaneously read and construct (Davies, 1990a, 1993; Richardson, 1997). In a multiplicity of ways that have material effects, lived, told, read and imagined stories present reference points through which experience is interpreted, related and understood in embodied ways.

> Narrative displays the goals and intentions of human actors; it makes individuals, cultures, societies and historical epochs comprehensible as wholes; it humanises time; and it allows us to contemplate the effects of our actions, and to alter the directions of our lives. …
> Narrative is both a mode of reasoning and a mode of representation. People can 'apprehend' the world narratively and people can 'tell' about the world narratively. (Richardson, 1997, pp. 27-28)

In the discursive contexts of everyday life, this is a process in which subjectivities are constructed and futures are imagined. This is a dual process of subjectification which "entails a tension between simultaneously becoming a speaking agentic subject and the co-requisite for this, being subjected to the meanings inherent in the discourses through which one becomes a subject" (Davies, 1993, p. 22). Moore (1994, p. 119) points out that, "If narrative makes the world intelligible, it also makes ourselves intelligible."

Throughout this chapter and this thesis I argue that the discourses through which one becomes a (gendered) subject convey meanings which are inherent in and produce signifying practices and desires that serve the interests and relations of power which are historically and discursively constituted in the

romantic myth of 'one day my prince will come'. Barthes (1972) argues that myth serves the interests of existing relations of power. I seek to demonstrate that it is in the context of lived experience, as discourses and storylines intersect, that such interests are served. As I theorise how the romantic storyline/s of 'one day my prince will come' become a script which writes the subject, I use "myth", "storyline" and "narrative" interchangeably.

Barthes (1972, p. 109) claims "everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by discourse". I extend this claim arguing that the conveyancing between the romantic storyline of 'one day my prince will come' and attendant discourse/s is reciprocal: the storyline is conveyed by discourse and the storyline conveys discourse. It is in the context of everyday life through the practices and performance of gender difference as constituted through and within the habit of binary logic, discourses of 'normality' and the desire for belonging that this conveyancing occurs.

Like Barthes, I argue that myth is a source of suggestiveness which, over time, achieves an accepted naturalness for particular significations, forms and concepts; and, that it is in this achievement of 'naturalness' that power is invested. Barthes argues in particular, that myth functions to serve the interests of the bourgeoisie by naturalising and depoliticising bourgeois ideology. Similarly, I argue that the myth of 'one day my prince will come', serves the interests of bourgeois patriarchal economic and social relations by naturalising and depoliticising gender difference and heterosexuality. The tradition and institution of marriage and the nuclear family is central to prevailing bourgeois ideology and to patriarchal relations of power. Significantly, Barthes' quite profound work on myth and culture is gender blind — women are absent from the text: the bourgeoisie is assumed to be male (at least in the signification of the universal 'he') and the myth to act on 'man'. For me, this absence in Barthes'

work is indicative that 'one day my prince will come' may be the most naturalised (and therefore powerful) of all myths.

> ... it [myth] has turned reality inside out, it has emptied it of history and has filled it with nature, it has removed from things their human meaning so as to make them signify a human insignificance. The function of myth is to empty reality: it is, literally, a ceaseless flowing out, a haemorrhage, or perhaps an evaporation, in short a perceptible absence. (Barthes, 1972, pp. 142-143)

Barthes' analysis of the power of myth suggests that the effect of myth is like a conjuring trick, in that it makes something absent or invisible. Much of the work of this chapter is an attempt to unravel and make visible the conjuring trick of myth. A conjuring trick magical enough to create an absence so profound so significant that even *he* who seeks to understand the trick, to perceive the absence, is unable to see it. To wonder how this magic might be "the magic of romance".

Pink is for daddy's girl

As a way of making sense of life and self, (re)cognising, both implicitly and explicitly, the associations of material circumstances and meanings within and between lived and told narratives is an interpretive strategy accessed and often nurtured during early childhood. These narratives will range from the mother or other caregiver providing a running commentary on routine events in daily life — such as nappy changing, food preparation, eating and sleeping ("When you've eaten your dinner we'll change your nappy then it will be time for bed"); to imaginary games with soft toys ("Bear is going to have a sleep too"), to the reading of bedtime stories, the singing of nursery rhymes and songs and the watching of children's television. All the time there is a continuous interplay of action and emotion within and between bodies. "Da da" becomes "dad", "daddy", "daddy's at work", "who's daddy's girl?", "clap hands clap hands 'til

daddy comes home". This is the discursive site of living within and apprehending (our place within) the world narratively — an interplay which weaves together discourse and practice with expectation and desire as these convey and are conveyed by myth and become embodied. Such experiences within discourse are read and cross-referenced by her in her struggle for acceptable personhood and belonging with others. Life becomes a web of meaning into which she is woven and into which she will weave herself.

> It is in language that differences acquire meaning for the individual. It is in language that we learn how to differentiate pink and blue and to understand their social connotations. Language differentiates and gives meaning to assertive and compliant behaviour and teaches us what is socially accepted as normal. Yet language is not monolithic. Dominant meanings can be contested, alternative meanings affirmed. However, the overriding concern of most parents in bringing up their children is with 'normality', the normality [imagined to be] necessary for success in the two privileged sites of adult life, the family and work. (Weedon, 1987, p. 76)

Childhood is perhaps a time when the interplay of lived, told and imagined narratives is most fluid and least encumbered by the conditions of categorical binaries associated with 'rational' adult thought and action — binaries which separate fact from fiction, imagination from experience, thought from emotion, mind from body, blue from pink. But before even the infant emerges from the birth canal supported by the expansive, responsive vaginal wall to the world beyond the lips of the labia, the threads of meaning produced within narratives are weaving the image of the child — emotionally, imaginatively and materially — past, present and future. The world the infant enters is an historically constituted web of meaning — of storylines and material conditions which, as they are always at once the subject and the effect of discourse, are also circumstantially and subjectively particular to the moment and continuous. "Humanity", "community" and the "individual" are always already in, and of, discourse.

Like the liberal humanist discourses of rationality, the romantic storyline of 'one day my prince will come' appears deceptively to be predictable, linear and non-contradictory. Conveyed through the discourses of liberal humanism, as these constitute lived experience, myth becomes schematised by the subject as a form of reality in which certainty is made possible and dreams might come true. The power of the romantic storyline, as a site of subjectification, is engendered through its insertion into the emotions and imaginings of the subject as an organisational and interpretive strategy for daily life and for the production and performance of desire. Through interactive moments of lived experience (such as the one described below) the romantic storyline becomes interwoven with practice through and within discourse. As Steedman (1986, p. 143) explains, "once a story is told, it ceases to be a story: it becomes a piece of history, an interpretive device". In the process of the collective memory work project, I asked participants to recall traditional fairytales they had heard as children. I suggested they rewrite their favourite story and consider ways in which the story could be seen as reflected in their daily lives or relationships. One of the participants made this entry in her journal:

> *My favourite childhood story was Cinderella. I had a copy of the Disney story in a Golden Book and this was always my favourite version but I would listen to others with great interest.*
>
> *Cinderella was a beautiful girl loved by nature and animals, she was hard done by but good and pure and never complained.*
>
> *When she was dressed for the ball she wore a beautiful PINK dress (my favourite colour). The prince danced with her all night and refused to marry anyone else but her - he sought her out to be his bride.*
>
> *Common girl to princess, I always thought it was possible because of this story and in 1980 Lady Diana and Prince Charles reinforced this for me. Unfortunately I was born in Australia and we don't have any REAL Princes.*

As I got older I began to see this story as having the moral, 'Good things come to those who wait'.

Cinderella was a home maker, cook, cleaner, etc - all the qualities I needed for a good wife and I must say I worked hard and take pride in learning how to do these things well.

When this story was presented to the collective memory work group, the author/subject explained how she recognised from an early age that although blonde, she was not beautiful, but that if she worked really hard she could make up for this by honing her housekeeping skills. She also said that, with the help of *Penthouse* magazines, it was possible for herself and her husband to create variations of, and within, the romantic storyline. She did not see this practice as contrary to her Christian values; rather, she seemed to offer this as evidence that, although she held a strong belief in a Christian God and the fulfilment of the romantic storyline, she was not (necessarily) boring, conservative or narrow minded — an anticipated reading of her subject position which she wished to resist. She seemed to take for granted that her position as wife precluded her from being positioned as whore. Her speaking made evident that, being positioned and positioning the self within the explicitly valued and desired categories of good Christian/girl/wife can have the effect of transforming into normal and desirable practices that might otherwise be deemed deviant or immoral (by her and other members of her preferred social categories). Connell (1987, p. 123) points out that "the marital sexual relationship can itself embody power" and that "one way of handling a strong power imbalance is to build a praxis of compliance" — being a "good woman" includes sexual compliance. The how-to-do-it manual Connell cites by way of illustration blends a right-wing religious and social outlook unproblematically with eroticism — "If the husband is to stay at home it is the wife's business to titillate."

In *Cinderella* the good-bad dichotomy is central to the construction of femininity as a condition of uncertainty — of living life controlled by the needs and desires of others. Cinderella symbolises all that is good in a woman; she is beautiful, silent, follows orders and tries to please. She is materially and emotionally dependant on the family who are in turn dependant on her labour. Cinderella works tirelessly to fulfil the needs and whims of others; she does the cooking, cleaning, grooming and preening with never a complaint. And she is rewarded for her efforts and compliance with being chosen by the prince as the one among all others to be his bride. Her goodness becomes an insurance policy for a certain (happy) future.

In "Some day my prince will come: young girls and the preparation for adolescent sexuality", Walkerdine (1984) explains that there is no direct transference of images and practices encountered in stories and in the construction of subjectivity as sociological accounts might lead us to believe. Rather, it is in that emotional space between text and reader (where the story engages the production of conscious and unconscious desires) that meanings are embodied in the subject. For the feminine subject these meanings and desires constantly reproduce feelings of insecurity which, according to the dominant storylines, can be overcome by getting and keeping a man — establishing in psychoanalytic terms, "the illusion of the meeting of needs". In the storylines of the romantic myth, whether lived or imagined or (re)presented in the teen comics critiqued by Walkerdine,

> The arrival of the prince is presented as the final solution which, of course, glosses over the problem that keeping a man is a serious threat to 'happiness ever after'. It is thus a fraught and fragile solution, but one that remains attractive because it is the getting and keeping of the man which in a very basic and crucial way establishes that the girl is 'good enough' and 'can have what she wants'. It is because getting a man is identified as a central resolution to

> problems of female desire that it acts so powerfully. (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 99)

Our ability to predict and insert ourselves into the storylines on offer correlates with the amount of pleasure and security proffered and derived from them. The storylines of 'one day my prince will come', fraught as they are with the oppositional hierarchy of the gender binary, inscribe the subject with the promise of, and possible recipe for, future happiness/harmony — the resolution of the struggle to achieve a unitary, non-contradictory identity, to achieve a sense of belonging, of being "good enough" and of having one's needs met. Familiar storylines, as scripts for making sense of experience (lived and imagined), create the ebb and flow of a discursive life from source to sea — taming the untameable and domesticating life lest it flow outward in some unpredictable fashion.

Being subject of, and taking up the oft repeated, usual practices of daily life which congregate around the male-female binary has naturalising effects — particular signifying practices of femininity (the presence of which it is assumed will guarantee the coming of the prince) become understood as 'natural' attributes of the person, rather than as reflecting the conditions of myth — as myth serves the interests of existing relations of power (Barthes, 1972; Davies, 1993a). Conceptualising or giving meaning to the romantic storyline of 'one day my prince will come' as myth helps to explain how this storyline, as it is exemplified in the widely known fairytales of western culture, intersects with everyday life experience, subjectification and the shaping of individual and collective life histories. Both myth and experience are conveyed narratively within discourse as discourse conveys both myth and experience and, over time, converts them into nature.

Within everyday life and the possibilities on offer within the romantic storyline, marriage becomes synonymous with adulthood and guarantees of happiness, with both adulthood and happiness being tied up with the ability to appropriate the conditions of being correctly gendered. This appropriation is neither natural nor non-contradictory and is not achieved without effort, emotion and instruction (Davies, 1990a & 1993a; Davies & Harre, 1992; Walkerdine, 1990; Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989). We do not passively adopt the practices and positions made available to our gender category but rather, from early infancy we engage in and try out practices and subject positions as these are made available to us, with varying contextually specific consequences (Davies, 1989). These consequences, their internalization and their manifestation in, or effect on, shaping subsequent thoughts, feelings and actions are contingencies of the prevailing discourses and storylines, the relations of power and the subject positions that contextualise experience. While not making explicit reference to particular stories, the narrative of experience related in the childhood memory below, illustrates insertion of the romantic storyline into the psyche of the subject and demonstrates the importance of signifying practices and possible imagined futures in a process of feminine subjectification that serves to maintain existing social relations (Haug, 1987). It is moments such as this, told in the context of a collective memory work project, that form the main body of data in which this thesis is grounded:

> *I was at my grandmother's house for the night. I think I was about eight years old. When I woke up in the morning Granny had a pretty pink flowered dress set out on the end of my bed.*
>
> *I walked into the kitchen in my shorts and favourite 'O'Rielly's Green Mountains' T-shirt. Granny looked upset and asked me why I hadn't worn the dress. I explained that I couldn't play properly in a dress.*
>
> *She replied, 'You won't find a husband if you don't wear dresses.'*
>
> *I can remember walking outside and feeling really worried that I would never get married - even at 8 yrs!!*

The conditions of the myth hold out the possibility of achieving a sense of coherence and legitimacy in the subjectivity of the girl/woman — conditional on getting and keeping a man. Yet, as she negotiates the multiplicity of complex and contradictory discourses which form the dreams and threats of her day to day experience, what remains in the domain of myth (for it is largely unfulfilled by lived experience) is the promise of happiness ever after. Within the romantic myth, happiness is always happiness to come, and is conditional. By producing within daily life both the possibility and the impossibility of happiness, myth conflates fear and desire in the being and experience of the subject.

When there is compatibility between our (discursively produced) view of normality as it legitimates and produces particular desires, and the way the world is (re)presented, then we embrace the storyline making it our own as we imaginatively and materially take up recognisable lived and imaginable subject positions within that storyline and its attendant discourses (Walkerdine, 1990; Christian-Smith, 1990; Davies, 1989). While it might be argued that in a (post)modern world 'anything is possible' with multiple possible scenarios on offer for imagined futures, these are limited by the constitution of desire within the romantic storylines conveyed by the discourses of liberal humanism. Historically constituted in patriarchal social conditions, the discourses of liberal humanism produce and are dependent upon belief in the individual and in gender difference as natural. In this way marriage becomes understood as freely chosen and symbolic of true love in a democratic state. Constituted in patriarchal and heterosexual discourses, desires and associated signifying practices of masculinity and femininity are experienced in moral terms (Davies, 1989, 1990a, 1990b; Haug, 1987; Connell, 1987; Walkerdine, 1990; Firestone, 1970). Just as deconstructive thinking is acutely sensitive to the deeply

historical, social and linguistic constructedness of our beliefs and practices, so are we as subjects which embody this constructedness, sensitive and resistant to any disruption (or perceived attack/questioning) of them.

Taking up the narrative form is a strategy for negotiating and making sense of a competing field of discourses. Known storylines offer a familiar map. Constituted within discourse the subject of and within narrative takes up a position within the narrative based on identification with particular characters/ways of being and desires. Taking up a familiar, widely circulating and approved storyline as one's own, assists the subject to find an acceptable subject position within the contexts of daily life. In so doing, the subject conveys both the narrative and its attendant discourses and practices.

Conveying the storyline: the discursive guardrails and guardians of myth

In everyday life as the subjects and conveyers of discourses and storylines, we participate in the various discursive and personal practices through which meanings are derived and allocated to particular categories and through which 'normality' is constructed. These practices include engagement in stories through which different subject positions are elaborated and from which pleasure is derived.

In her discussion and analysis of gendered literacy practices in the classroom, Gilbert (1992, p. 189) points out that "certain story forms are more closely aligned to particular discourses than others". In postmodern times the romantic storylines of 'one day my prince will come' are variously presented in narratives for cinema, electronic and print media for all ages; and continue to convey the conditions of desire and the possibilities for happiness ever after encapsulated in traditional fairytales. Coexistent within the discursive contexts of daily life, these conditions colonise the reader/subject as the subject is colonised by and populates discourse through and within the limited number of gendered subject positions on offer. Included among these discourses which coexist with, and convey, the romantic storylines engendering possible normalised subject positions in everyday life, are:

• *the discourses of gender difference* (as represented in the portrayal of opposite yet seemingly complementary practices of masculinity and femininity, the sexual division of labour and gendered relations of power) which are usually conveyed through the portrayal of embodied and emotionally fraught binaries such as rescuer-victim, good-evil, beautiful-ugly.

• *the discourses of femininity* which work in concert with the discourses of gender differences and heterosexuality. These discourses convey beliefs such as mothering as normal and natural and biologically determined, and beauty and servitude as virtuous and deserving of reward (in the form of the coming of the prince). The affective contradictions inherent in these discourses are encapsulated in *Cinderella* wherein the (mean) stepmother is portrayed as treating her (ugly) biological offspring with excessive favouritism and instructions about how to act in order to capture the prince. In contrast, Cinderella is portrayed as the 'natural' beauty who constantly and uncomplainingly meets the needs and desires of others, and in so being, wins the hand of the prince and the promise of happiness ever after. In the traditional storylines of 'one day my prince will come', it is usually the stepmother (as persecutor) or the absence of a mother which positions the virtuous girl/woman as victim in need of rescue (from competition with other girls/women).

• *the discourses of heterosexuality* which rely on the two above-mentioned discourses and which ultimately make marriage the legitimate context for the expression of female sexuality while at the same time, holding the nuclear family based on the authority of the (oft absent) father to be the site of material and emotional security and the source of unconditional love

• *the discourses of the individual* in which the subject comes to believe herself to be responsible for her own destiny (for making herself beautiful enough and good enough) and which mask the hierarchical relations of power inherent in the discourses of gender difference, of heterosexuality, and of femininity within the ideal of democracy. Working in concert with the discourses of femininity and heterosexuality (which convey and are conveyed by the romantic storyline), the discourses of the individual engender femininity as competitive — as a matter of being chosen as "the

one" — only to be loved (and therefore safe) if you are the most virtuous, the most beautiful, the most feminine among all others in the eyes of the prince. Every (other) woman becomes a potential rival. In this way each (individual) woman is set up to struggle with fear, jealousy, suspicion and even hatred of other women. The imagined necessity of, and the desire for, being chosen as 'the One' is critically implicated here, as is resistance to feminism — you cannot love and protect/respect (or champion the rights of) those who might usurp your safe place and the possibility of happiness ever after.

• *the discourse of woman as sex-object* which is conveyed through each of the above-mentioned discourses and which positions the subject tenuously on the boundary between fear and desire in heterosexual relations. This discourse is classically presented in fairytales and romantic storylines where the good girl/woman is portrayed as passive object of male desire and victim of gendered circumstances able to be rescued with a kiss. The violence and oppression associated with being positioned within and by this discourse is often masked by and conflated with the conditions inherent in the discourses described above.

> Discourses, in Foucault's work, are ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern. Neither the body nor thoughts and feelings have meaning outside their discursive articulation, but the ways in which discourse constitutes the minds and bodies of individuals is always part of a wider network of social relations, often with institutional bases. (Weedon, 1987, p. 108)

Discourses are not all of one piece but constantly intersect and inform one another. While shot through with contradictions (for example, how the

autonomous individual — particularly when embodied as female, is reconciled with the 'obvious' imperative for deference), these discourses work in concert with (and constitute the limitations of) imagination and desire within the body and the lived experience. The subject takes up and is constituted within these discourses in ways which seem to render the inherent contradictions within and between them, invisible or irrelevant to her consciousness. The apparent irrelevance or invisibility of inherent contradictions is in no small part due to the *naturalness* invested in gender difference as it is produced in the discourses and storylines which convey myth. The assumed naturalness of gender difference within discourses and storylines constitutes, and is constituted within, an often seemingly intractable binary logic. Binary logic presumes, within the unconscious and rational being of the subject, hierarchical subjectification within and between particular categories and subject positions as a matter of course.

> The narrative holds within itself sets of images that represent the social divisions of a culture, and only with extreme difficulty can it be used to present images of a world that lies outside its evidential base. (Steedman, 1986, p. 77)

The evidential base of the romantic myth which proffers marriage as a resolution of fear and desire, and the possibility of happiness ever after, is as much dependant upon what is absent and the pathology of absence as it is on what is present/evident. If the subject were able to imagine the fulfilment of desires and happiness ever after in a world beyond the evidential base of the romantic myth, the power and authority of the myth would be diminished. As it is, within the terms and conditions of binary logic, the construction of absence as pathologised, subordinate 'other' is central to the production of desire within myth. For instance the female subject is positioned within the storylines and attendant discourses of 'one day my prince will come', to desire that which she is not — male, beautiful. Characters and plot are developed around

relationships that are shot through with absences — the absence of the father and the biological mother; the absence of brothers; the absence of other deserving, desirable girls/women; and the absence of other acceptable, desirable ways of being female/feminine.

Caught in the binaries - power and positioning in the telling of the tale

The power of discourses and their social regulatory effects lie in the polemic of a dichotomous language and the belief (constituted in terms of commonsense knowledge) that sex/gender is biologically determined and that this biological determination has particular social implications (Weedon, 1987, Haug, 1987; Davies, 1993a; 1996). Within this discursively constituted regime, power, meaning and desire are constructed in oppositional terms each being dependent upon the other being defined as much by the absence of particular signifying practices as by their presence. Being positioned as 'other' the feminine subject learns to protect, desire and defer to what her genital configuration (seemingly) prevents her from ever becoming (Cranny-Francis, 1995; Davies, 1989; de Beauvoir, 1972; Moore, 1994). In taking herself up as female, and therefore not male, the subject experiences herself and her life discursively situated, within experiences of lived and told narratives, by *his* standards and takes these up as her own (Connell, 1987; Davies, 1993a). This situation of being positioned as, and taking ones self to be naturally 'other' means that the subordination inferred is usually taken-for-granted, rather than resisted; and is implicated in the structure and practices of cathexis and (heterosexual) desire.

The stories told throughout the collective memory work project display how, within this discursive economy of difference, femininity is

characterised by deference to male authority, to men/maleness, to the subject/object of desire. As Derrida (1992) has pointed out, "difference" and "defer" — to postpone, delay have the same etymological origin. Interestingly, "defer" in this sense, and "defer" in the sense of yielding in judgement or opinion, share the same phonology; and, in the stories told throughout the collective memory work project, are frequently seen to share the same (female) body, at the same moment in the same discursive space of gender difference. This is most evident where the female body-subject is positioned within a particular discursive moment as responsible for upholding (or as challenging) the gendered conditions of the romantic myth.

The interweaving of category memberships, personal practice, power and desire within discourse is complex and oppositional. As particular discourses convey and are conveyed by the romantic storylines of 'one day my prince will come', desire for belonging, for acceptance, safety, care and recognition become conflated with (hetero)sexual desire-ability. Taking up the prevailing discourses and practices of gender as our own, and our own and others' reading of our success in doing so, is at once personal, relational and (con)textual (Davies, 1989). We judge ourselves and others by reading the signifying practices (observable behaviours and verbal exchanges) which are interpreted and communicated through the prevailing discourses, storylines, subject positions and associated signifying practices available in specific moments and over time. A dichotomous language based on gender as the site for all possible and probable readings of experience (and the experience of oneself from within an overarching biological dichotomy), renders the balance of power tenuous yet, over time, nurtured, protected, defended, renovated and reproduced.

The storylines of 'one day my prince will come' have been both nurtured and nurturing through generations of childhood tellings and lived experience in which the practices of individual subjects become aligned with the social divisions of the culture. Our acquisition or development of our *sense* of 'self' and how we see and understand the world involves a maze of interconnected and simultaneous discursive processes. At the centre of these processes of sensing and sense-making is the learning of categories such as male and female which include some people and exclude others, sub categories such as father-daughter and associated categories such as wife-whore/witch. Similarly, we come to sense ourselves as having characteristics indicative of, or located within some categories and not others — a sensing that is not always compatible with associated desires to attain particular category memberships. This sense of belonging and not belonging, and of desire, is always mediated from within and without by the possibilities and problematics of inclusion-exclusion based on characteristic male-female genital configuration, around which the availability of particular subject positions within discourses circulate.

The acceptability of signifying practices and verbal exchanges, (repaired and renovated in critical moments of lived experience and category maintenance work, and through particular discourses that ascend and decline in accordance with the interests of the current political and economic order), and the availability of subject positions in which to perform these practices/exchanges, depend upon hierarchies of gender, age, class, race, ability, physical appearance and sexuality. The categories "wealthy", "attractive", "competent", "white", "heterosexual", "adult", "male" are ascendant within the discourses and storylines of western

culture (Davies, 1993a, 1994). What is of sustaining interest throughout this thesis is the ways in which women and girls are multiply positioned and position themselves in relation to these ascendant (usually embodied as male) categories, and the ways this positioning is represented in the lived and told narratives of 'one day my prince will come'. Within the romantic storylines of 'one day my prince will come', power is invested in the maintenance and reproduction of the historically and narratively constant hierarchical binaries:

male - female

active - passive
strong - weak
big - small
speaking - silent
authority - deference
political - personal
worldly - domesticated
rich - poor
worthy - needy
patron - patronised
public - private
adult - child
rights - responsibilities
rational - emotional
knowing - doing
sovereignty - hospitality
hero - victim

father - mother

Despite changes in the last thirty years there are still ways in which women and children (along with all things feminine - including emotion and imagination) are subordinated, excluded and pathologised within public life and its institutionalised relations of power. Feminism has achieved remarkable success in attaining acceptance for equal employment opportunities for women that are now enshrined in law and yet, in practice, disrupting the sexual division of

labour and relations of power remains fraught with tension and resistance. This, in no small measure, is concerned with the way in which desire and subjectivity are constructed in the fantasy space between the texts/storylines of 'one day my prince will come' and the lived experience of the subject (Walkerdine, 1984). Within the dichotomous structure of gender, it is within the private sphere of the family, positioned as wife and mother (both positions being dependent upon the coming of the prince), that the possibility of power, the fulfilment of desire and the attainment of a fixed identity is seemingly legitimated for women (Walkerdine, 1990; Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989). It is the girl/woman who is "good enough" — the best, most virtuous and beautiful (in the eyes of the prince), who will become "wife" and "mother"; and in so becoming, transform her life and the lives of those with who she is related.

The classic romantic storyline of 'one day my prince will come' as portrayed in familiar fairytales and nursery rhymes and often duplicated in a less fanciful form in popular television shows and films, offers strictly gendered subject positions through which the already gendered subject can insert herself into the storyline. These gendered subject positions are presented within and reinforce oppositional and hierarchical categories of meaning. For she who takes herself up as (and is taken to be) female, positioning on the feminine/the 'other' side of the gender divide brings with it the ascription and taking up of particular signifying practices — practices that will be open to historically, (con)textually and subjectively specific gendered readings.

> ... intertwined in modern practices are the workings of desire, which suggest a complex subjective investment in what I shall call "subject positions". These positions, given in the relations of practices themselves, are not unitary but are multiple and often contradictory such that the constitution of subjectivity is not all of one piece without seams and ruptures. (Walkerdine, 1985, p. 204)

'Successful' positioning (on either side of the gender divide) brings with it the apparent need to negotiate and be positioned by a whole 'Other' set of gender specific oppositions, which are to be resisted (even reversed) by/for male subjects but 'mastered' by/for female subjects. For the girl/woman attempting to achieve for herself acceptable membership of her gender category and the possibility of attracting the prince, there are particular gender specific binaries which she is constantly caught up in:

good - bad
beautiful - ugly
deferential - demanding
silent - complaining
modest - vain
responsible - selfish
young - old
daughter - mother
obedient - wilful
fair - dark
hairless - hirsute
small - big
feminine - masculine
passive - active
submissive - dominant
wife - whore

These binaries of femininity are constant and repetitious features of the feminine subject positions on offer within the romantic storylines of 'one day my prince will come' which keep the subject in a constant state of uncertainty as meanings and consequences (in lived and re-presented experience) continually shift and change across and between contexts and over time. These binaries of the feminine (are set to) capture the imagination, body, desire and power of the female subject. Scripted within these binaries the romantic myth presents marriage as having transformative powers: the power to transform prohibitions into duties, girl into woman, poor into rich, compliance to a man and male ideals into authority over children, beast into prince.

Caught in these binaries and the possibilities and desires produced therein, the speaking subject learns as a matter of commonsense the need to adopt particular signifying practices, such as the removal of body hair and deference to authority, that signify and make visible her membership of particular categories and not others. Although touted within the discourses and storylines of lived experience as a matter of commonsense, the tenuous and tentative substance of signifying practices, and the category memberships and subject positions they serve, produces a sense of vulnerability and uncertainty within the psyche of the subject while simultaneously proffering comfort and protection. It is through and within the uncertainty and conditions of feminine subject positioning that women become slaves to fashion and susceptible to debilitating neuroses such as anorexia nervosa. These conditions can be read (through a poststructuralist lens) as the inscription on the body of a pathological struggle to be "good enough".

> ... it is the 'traces' of discourse, the limits and possibilities it provides, its scene setting properties and its storylines that impact on the unconscious. (Davies, 1993a, p. 114)

The romantic storyline and its insertion into everyday life and identity formation, whereby a romantic partnership is constructed as evidence of a girl/woman's worth and beauty, produces conflict and contradiction within and between the various aspects of the subject/reader's being. The authority of the storyline is dependent on the construction of uncertainty about self and life as a critical aspect of feminine subjectivity. This uncertainty is pivotal to the production and experience of heterosexual desire centred around the possibility of being chosen by the prince — to be rescued from the apparent uncertainty of life and rewarded for successful femininity. In this way, the maintenance of patriarchal social relations and of gendered subjectivities can be understood as

critically linked to the insertion of the romantic storyline into the being of its subjects — both men and women. The limited possibilities for, and ways of taking up, subject positions within myth and the discursive circumstances of daily life in accordance with gender category membership, produces conflicts, contradictions and uncertainties in ways which constrain possible ways of imagining the future. Within prevailing discourses life is a struggle to achieve a unitary sense of self and of autonomy and belonging — to gain a "sense of coherence and liveability of social relationships through time" (Connell, 1987, pp. 220-221).

Reading and becoming the text of difference: fairytale, desire and lived experience

The coercive and contradictory discourses of liberal humanism through which life is experienced, engage the subject in an internal struggle for a unitary, non-contradictory identity, a struggle to be normal, rational, lovable — a 'real' person. Marriage — the coming of the prince and the possibility of finding love, offers a resolution to this seemingly subjective struggle played out in the conscious and unconscious mind and body of the subject. The internal dialogue portrayed within the character of Kate Forrester in Robert Cormier's (1979, pp. 54-55) powerful tale, *After the First Death,* encapsulates this psychic struggle:

> Were other people like that she wondered, not simply one person but a lot of them mixed together? Did the real person finally emerge? But suppose that person turned out to be someone terrible? Or someone who never found love? Isn't that what life was supposed to be - a search for love? She wanted to find somebody to love, to love forever. But who? Her few childhood passions had appeared and gone as swiftly as spring snow melting in the sun. Did she deserve to find love? Was she good enough?

The romantic storyline proffers the possibility of triumph over or rescue from the struggle and uncertainty of everyday life. Similarly, it is invested in and interpreted through the prevailing discourses and organising principles of the culture and society in which it appears. The subject positions on offer in the romantic storylines of 'one day my prince will come' signify gender, power, desire(ability) and possible futures in particular ways. The adoption of signifying practices and the meanings they produce within the being of the subject have constitutive political and personal effects. These constitutive effects are particularly strident when the prevailing discourses are represented in the imagery and narrative of myth that is shot through with possibilities for substantiation within the lived or imagined circumstances of everyday life.

The research undertaken by Bronwyn Davies (1989) for *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales* reveals how our attachment to the pleasures and predictability of the established, familiar storyline and its gendered meanings is remarkably resilient. In her discussion with preschoolers of the illustrated children's book *The Paper Bag Princess*, a story in which Princess Elizabeth rescues Prince Ronald by outwitting the fiery dragon but then decides he is unworthy of her and walks off into the sunset alone, some children told how they thought the princess ought to have made herself more beautiful for the prince and how he was right to criticise her appearance. Although the prince had been captured by the dragon and carried off by the seat of his pants, many children were still able to read him as brave and strong and boys were able to see him as a hero - attributes that they claimed were signified by his holding a tennis racquet and wearing a medallion around his neck. Many of the children found little pleasure in this disruptive tale. The reaction/s to this counter-storyline indicate that pleasure and interest in a story(line) is generated by a compatibility between the reality constructed by the author and the lived/imagined narratives, subject positions and signifying practices previously experienced by,

or made available to, the reader/listener that are constitutive of desires and to which s/he has become emotionally committed. Evidently the lived and fictional experiences of many of the five year old children participating in Davies' study, do not open up the possibility of a positive reading of Princess Elizabeth's assertion of intelligence and independence. In fact, it would seem that Princess Elizabeth's assertiveness is so contradictory to many five year old's knowledge of how male-female, and especially prince-princess relations, are to be lived and represented — that Elizabeth's virtuous qualities and Ronald's arrogance are inconsequential or invisible in their taken-for-grantedness. In the children's reading of this ostensibly feminist text is a proverbial evocation of "the end justifies the means". For the children who did not read it as feminist text, in the end what is important is that she (the princess) is chosen by the prince and that the future (presumably "happy ever after") is foreseeable. What this and subsequent work of Davies (1993a) shows, both through the evidence of children's interactions with texts and with each other, is how young children take up as their own the discourses and storylines of gender difference and, in so doing, accept as a moral obligation the inherent mandate to get their's and others' gender right. What is significant for my thesis is the way in which the romantic storyline and its attendant signifying practices appear to prevail and have the power to subvert and resist alternative storylines and discourses.

> ... most girls do not hear the story as a feminist story. Elizabeth is not acceptable in her dirty naked state. Her bravery and cleverness are not powerful enough to override the romantic theme in which princesses are virtuous and clean and have no rights of their own. Nor is it comprehensible that she does not accept his right to dictate her actions, and that she takes her life into her own hands. (Davies, 1989, p. 68)

Myth has an infinite capacity to colonise language (Barthes, 1972). To colonise language is to colonise minds and bodies — ways of knowing, of making sense of and of acting in the world. Defining or giving meaning to the fairytale as

myth is helpful to achieving an understanding of the social regulatory effects of the storylines of 'one day my prince will come' and its interaction with everyday life experiences, the process of subjectification and the playing out of individual and collective life histories.

In her discussion of performative texts and adolescent identities, Lorri Neilsen (1998) provides effective insights into the gendered difference of sense-making strategies. Her analysis is of how David, her adolescent son, and El who is the same age as David and a mutual friend of David and Lorri, make sense of texts; in particular *Catcher in the Rye* and *Pulp Fiction*. What her analysis reveals is that David's approach is to use the text as a source of possibilities for building his own identity, whereas El seems to focus on unpacking the character in the text in an apparently unassisted analysis. Like traditional fairytales, the stories responded to offer few female characters for unpacking and, whenever these are mentioned by either El or David, they are recognised as a catalyst for understanding the male protagonist. For El, the texts offer few symbolic resources for trying on potential identities. For David on the other hand, there are an array of symbolic resources for building his identity (coachmen, footman, hunter, messenger, father, prince). David's talk focuses on action, El's on reaction. El is interested in the depth of the male protagonist's thinking and says, " ... that's just how it happens in real life." David too makes a connection between the text and life, but one which is qualitatively different, "It's just everyday life. ... I think every show has a point. But I don't think it has to be a big one. I think life is like that. It doesn't always have a big point. Just lots of little ones" (Neilsen, 1998, p. 241).

Caught in the web of myth, she must know if the wolf is wearing sheep's clothing. She must know but, as she is, according to binary logic, not permitted to know, she must feel her way into the depths. He need only look at the

surface for, even if things are not as they seem, there seems no imaginable threat for she is only she, who, at the end of the day, of necessity, in one form or another, will be there giving life. She is life, he, death; from mother the gift of living, from father the name that will live on after death in its own credit: to put one's name on the line is to lay beside it one's life as it will live on: the name becomes the text of one's life and with it the possibility of immortality (Derrida, 1985). For him (the prince, father, king, countryman) — life always offers the possibility of the gift of death — of heroic deeds — in practice or principle, and in the naming of everything and its defence (Derrida, 1995). In light of Derrida's discussions (and discussions of Derrida's discussions) of life, death, autobiography and naming, it seems pertinent to suggest that myth and discourse work together to produce a juncture of difference from which he looks to preserve the name (the naming and by extension the authority) that is given meaning beyond life itself (which, according to the myths we live by, may be best spent as the gift of death) — the (male) subject is at once both life and death. At the same juncture, she (who is embodied as female) is positioned to look to life (and its many moments) as that which must be sustained in the living. (Derrida, 1985, 1995; Dutoit, 1995; Smith, 1995)

Barthes argues that the structures and practices conveyed by myth become naturalised within the myth and that this naturalism renders them invisible or at least taken for granted as fixed and immutable or benign. "...myth is experienced as innocent speech: not because its intentions are hidden — if they were hidden they would not be efficacious — but because they are naturalised" (Barthes, 1972, p. 131). In this way, myth can become a perpetual alibi for the taking up and maintenance of prevailing personal and institutionalised practices, social structures and relations of power. "The world enters language as a dialectical relation between activities, between human actions; it comes out of myth as a harmonious display of essences" (p. 142). Myth transforms history

into nature. According to Barthes, as the ideology conveyed by the myth becomes naturalised over time, the explicit and obvious telling/naming of the myth becomes less important; in fact, such obviousness may not be in the interests served by the myth particularly in the face of resistance. Barthes (1972, p. 135) argues that, "it is extremely difficult to vanquish myth from the inside: for the very effort one makes in order to escape its stranglehold becomes in its turn the prey of the myth: myth can always as a last resort, signify the resistance that is brought to bear against it."

Similarly, patriarchal ideologies have been naturalised by virtue of the myth's capacity to colonise language and its meeting with the "resisting core" of feminism. Liberal feminist challenges for universal suffrage took up the discourse of the individual making visible, historically constituted patriarchal laws and structures problematic for democracy. In the face of this resistance, the 'individual' became increasingly important to the maintenance of patriarchal structures that would become nameless/naturalised in the name of democracy. The individual woman would gain legal rights that would be balanced (for patriarchy) by her increasing subjectification to the myth of 'one day my prince will come' (Christian-Smith, 1990; Walkerdine, 1990). A decline in the explicit telling of the tale/myth 'of one day my prince will come' and the dispersal and elaboration of its nomenclature into multiple genres and contexts of media and technology can be read as an effect of its meeting with resistance — patriarchy's resistance to feminism in the state of advanced capitalist democracy. Notably, the dispersal and elaboration of the central themes of popular fairytales into popular literature, music, television, films, fashion magazines and so on, has coincided with a rise in conservative politics, consumerism and associated calls for a return to traditional family values (Christian-Smith, 1990; Walkerdine, 1990; McRobbie & Nava, 1984). At the beginning of the collective memory work project of 'one day my prince will

come', each of the participants believed themselves to be an autonomous, agentic individual. They were resistant to feminism (believing at best feminism to be irrelevant to them as "individuals") and few could recall being told traditional fairytales as children. Each believed her desire for heterosexual marriage and her successful taking up of the signifying practices of acceptable femininity to be at once natural and freely chosen.

The romantic storylines of 'one day my prince will come' present possibilities for the transformation and fulfilment of expectation and desire through the shaping of these into narrative form. My reading of Barthes' (1972) explanation of myth clearly indicates how the romantic storyline of 'one day my prince will come' acts as, in fact *is*, myth — "it points out and it notifies, it makes us understand something and imposes it on us" (p. 117). This notification, understanding and imposition is not solely the work of story, speech and literature; it is inherent in the multiple forms of discourses and practices in context that weave a path through and for our lives and which (in)form the intersections of lived and imagined narratives that constitute the body and desire. The enormous popularity amongst girls and women of romantic fiction, whether it be novels, TV soaps, teen magazines, pop songs or fairytales, is testament to the currency of this storyline across generations and throughout a life history. In the context of this thesis, the focus on storyline provides the possibility of an analysis of lived experience, opening a window on emotional life and glimpsing the meanings and signifying practices that are constituted there:

> The part that stories play in shaping the unconscious, the traces and the enabling limits is difficult to capture. What slides into, informing the unconscious is, by definition, not open to inspection. It surfaces through dreams, in tranquil meditative moments, in poetry and other forms of creative writing and in powerful, inexplicable emotions. It can also provide the storylines through which we organise our talk and our relations with others without any

conscious recognition on our part that we are doing so. Although we cannot know precisely how the unconscious functions, we can nevertheless observe some of its effects. (Davies, 1993a, p. 116)

CHAPTER 3

THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY WORK PROJECT: A METHODOLOGY

> An understanding of how women's consciousness is formed means searching in our most distant memories of ourselves. (Rowbotham, 1975, p. 31)

> Writing stories can be fun. More than this, it expands our knowledge enormously, sharpens our social perception, improves our sense of language, changes our attitudes to others and to ourselves. It is a politically necessary form of cultural labour. It makes us live our lives more consciously. (Haug et al, 1987, p.71)

This chapter reflects upon the process of inserting the feminist research project of collective memory work into a core subject for final year Early Childhood Teacher Education students attending a rural Australian university. This was a process which engaged participants in the writing of stories and which changed our attitudes to others, to ourselves and to the process of learning. This chapter reports and theorises my deliberations and experiences (lived and told), from the contemplation and inception of the research topic to the conclusion of the data gathering experience. This includes reflecting on the beliefs, concerns and experiences of participants as these impacted on decision making, implementation of procedures and the interactive outcomes of the collective memory work project.

It was important for me that my methodology make visible and open to scrutiny what Connell (1991, p. 155) describes as "the historically constructed collective circumstances of life, in which effects of structure can be decoded, to which personal practice is addressed, but which is reducible to neither". In particular, the data was gathered in an effort to make visible how the discursive circumstances of everyday life convey the myth of 'one day my prince will come'. This chapter addresses how the data collection process in this instance, worked with perceived principles of feminist research and practice, to record

for theoretical analysis and discussion, the research participants' experiences of being and becoming women in a gendered society. Collective memory work appealed to my feminist (working class) sensibilities as it offered possibilities for doing research in ways that might begin to erode the boundaries between researcher and researched, objectivity and subjectivity, public and private and which valued women's ways of knowing and women's experiences. Like my own feminist sensibilities, collective memory work is historically constituted in the discourses of second wave feminism and education for liberation. Within collective memory work the writing and discussions of stories generated (and the subsequent theoretical scrutiny and analysis of these) opens up opportunities for research participants, students, women to become active in the process of knowledge production within the academy.

The content and style of this chapter is reflexive and reflective as it presents some of the participants' responses to the methods and theoretical framework of the collective memory work project. These are responses which I interpret as reflecting usual/predictable (liberal humanist) responses to feminist practice and feminist research as pedagogy. In the prevailing historical, institutional and social contexts of the daily lives of the participants, exposure to feminist discourses, and the desire to take up a position within feminist discourses was unusual. I hope this chapter will give a sense of what it was like to participate in the collective memory work project of this thesis and some insights into the process and the various subject positions and meanings available within prevailing discourses that worked within and against this endeavour. My intention in this chapter is to provide a context in which the data presented throughout the thesis can be situated. The weaving metaphor, used by The Personal Narratives Group to describe the meaning of contexts as one which draws together the threads of experience, is helpful in situating and describing

the intentions of this chapter and the process of data collection for "One day my prince will come".

> The word "context" literally means to weave together, to twine, to connect. This interrelatedness creates the webs of meaning within which humans act. The individual is joined to the world through social groups, structural relations and identities. ... Context is not a script. Rather, it is a dynamic process through which the individual shapes and is shaped by the environment. (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 19)

Collective memory work is a process of data collection and analysis which has its roots in the work of feminist consciousness raising groups of the 1970s. As a research methodology it was first evoked, performed and published by the Haug Collective (Haug, 1987). In this chapter I describe and contextualise similarities with, and departures from, the Haug Collective's work which the research project of this thesis self-consciously navigated. The weaving of specificity, generalisability and memory that is the fabric of collective memory work, is at the same time an unravelling of the personal and political effects of everyday life. In an effort to make it more accessible to others, and to strengthen its legitimacy as an accepted research methodology within the academic cannon, some authors (cf. Davies, 1994) have attempted to clarify the method/process of collective memory work (sometimes referred to as collective biography). However, the experience of the Haug Collective and other feminist researchers (cf. Davies, 1993a, 1994; Richardson, 1997; Neilsen, 1998) and my own experience in this project indicate the need for emergent and reflexive strategies rather than a following of prescribed methods.

> 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

> heterogenous methods if it is to be understood. (Haug, 1987, pp. 70-71)

Relocating the methods used by the Haug Collective into a very different interpersonal, socio-political and cultural context required imagination. In responding to the personal and institutional circumstances in which I was able to locate my research, I found the guidance of my supervisor, Bronwyn Davies, and the work of Weedon (1987), Stanley & Wise (1983), Connell (1987) and Haug (1987) particularly helpful.

(Re)locating research and subjectivity

In the three years I taught at the rural university where this collective memory work project took place, over 97% of students who enrolled in early childhood teacher education courses were female. My interactions with these students made evident that many of them undertake the course because they "like little kids" and believe that, even if they don't get a job after graduation, the course will help them to become better mothers when they marry and have a family of their own. Most expressed the belief that it is best for a child to be in the full-time care of its natural mother during infancy and early childhood and that they themselves would choose to give up paid work when they have children, (a 'choice' they expect to be facilitated by the husband/father taking on the role of breadwinner). This belief, as the whole project of this thesis argues, is embedded in the oppositionally gendered discourses of heterosexuality which ascribe mothering and homemaking as 'naturally' feminine yet dependent upon the presence of a husband/father taking up as his own, the authoritative and proprietorial position of provider and protector in ways which separate public from private and paid from unpaid labour.

As the first and subsequent chapters indicate, the process of the research in which this thesis is grounded is one in which I take myself to be participant and subject — this is an important aspect of the feminist perspective from which I approach this task. As Lather (1991, p. 84) says, " ... rather than the erasure under which the 'researcher' typically operates, I assume myself to be a social subject in relation to others. My specificity is assumed to profoundly shape the process and the product of inquiry". Similarly, like the Haug Collective (Haug, 1987) and others (Richardson, 1997; Stanley and Wise, 1990; Weedon, 1987; Personal Narratives Group, 1989; Davies & Harre, 1992; Davies, 1993a; Rowbotham, 1973; Woolf, 1994; Neilsen, 1998), I take lived experience and personal practice to be a legitimate source for the production of knowledge and understanding and for investigating the prevailing order and conditions of human relations.

Although still contested and only tenuously credible in some arenas, this approach is nothing new. More than sixty years ago for instance, Virginia Woolf turned to biography and autobiography in her attempts to explain women's positioning and subordination within society and culture, to understand their lives and the governance of them. It is as though (more than two generations past) she was pre-empting the emergence of collective memory work as a mode of inquiry:

> There is that marvellous, perpetually renewed, and as yet largely untapped aid to the understanding of human motives which is provided in our age by biography and autobiography ... There is thus no longer any reason to be confined to the minute span of actual experience, which is still for us so narrow, so circumscribed. We can supplement it by looking at the lives of others. (Woolf, 1994, p.159)

Making sense of my life and of my knowing had always been done around the "kitchen table" (Richardson, 1997). There have been many kitchen tables in

various geographic, social and ethnic locations where I have engaged whoever would listen in talk about life, about my thinking, my reading, my experience and their own. It is not surprising then that my reading of *Female Sexualization*, (Haug, 1987) interested me in the pedagogical as well as research possibilities of collective memory work. Here, it seemed, was a way to pursue my interest in researching the taken-for-grantedness of subjectification within and through the dominant discourses and storylines of a gendered, heterosexual society. Discourses and storylines that historically have contributed to women's exclusion and under representation in higher education (particularly in the more highly valued, masculine disciplines of science and mathematics), in politics and the paid workforce. These discursive conditions continue to constitute women's participation as concentrated in fields associated with caring and helping whether as a doctor, social worker, receptionist, sales assistant, sandwich hand or office cleaner. A pertinent case in point here is the emergence of teaching (and of early childhood teaching in particular) as an acceptable profession for women — a profession where women dominate in numbers employed but not in positions of authority. It is conversations around the kitchen table rather than the table in the board room or the laboratory that have characterised women's ways of knowing, of producing knowledge. Collective memory work, by providing opportunities and conditions for participants to find a comfortable and safe place from which to speak their knowledge and experience (as if around the kitchen table) offered the possibility of "doing research" that acknowledged the prevailing, historically constituted discursive conditions and feminist intentions of my work.

Within the collective memory work project of 'One day my prince will come' the writing of stories of lived experience helped to make visible the simultaneously subjective and collective course of interactive practices produced within a prevailing field of discourses. These discourses, which are

constitutive of, and (con)textualised within, a broader network of social relations and cultural values, occur in particular historical moments and over time. The collective and subjective project of this thesis is to trace the threads of the romantic storyline as it is conveyed by the discourses gendering experiences of everyday life. Making visible the process of subjectification with discourse is important work for feminism and for education. The stories of lived experience displayed throughout this thesis open to scrutiny the ways in which meanings are generalised along a binary continuum of hierarchical oppositions. A binary continuum which produces the boundaries and limitations of practice within discourse. It is in the tension between binaries that difference is re(in)stated and contested within social and institutional sites of language.

> The historicity of personality can be understood as the reconfiguring, by the dynamic of social relations, of points of tension in personality development and the politics of personal life. (Connell, 1987, p. 224)

Collective memory work as feminist research method

Devising methodologies for understanding and displaying the lived experience of women, in ways which help to unravel the gendered and binary logic that opposes objectivity to subjectivity, knowledge to experience and experience to imagination, fact to fiction, mind to body, culture to nature, control to desire is important work for feminism. My approach to this thesis has been deliberately eclectic. This eclectic approach is intended to blur the boundaries of disciplinary codes and the hierarchical ethos framed by them — an ethos produced within discourses and practices which support and elaborate a patriarchal narrative (Erenreich, 1983; Greer, 1970; Schaef, 1992; McLachlan & Reid, 1994; Neilsen, 1998; Richardson, 1997). By focusing on the discourses evident in the stories told, it is possible to make visible "the small and inconspicuous repetitions that weave the precarious fabric of daily life, that

produce what they repeat" (Caputo, 1997, p. 208). As pointed out by Haug and others (cf. Haug, 1987; Davies, 1993a; Richardson, 1997; Neilsen, 1998), focusing on the autobiographical experience of everyday life is contrary to the order of the academy and disruptive of existing social relations; and as such, suggests emancipatory possibilities and implies the appropriateness of alternative research methodologies to feminist (and particularly poststructural feminist) research endeavours.

> ... with the development of rationally structured academic disciplines in the transition to the modern age, scientific knowledge became irrevocably divorced from everyday experience. In challenging this kind of separation, we are clearly disrupting not only a whole academic canon; we also require enormous quantities of individual disrespect, if we are to demand the right to use experience as a basis of knowledge. The very notion that our own past experience may offer some insight into the ways in which individuals construct themselves into existing relations, thereby themselves reproducing a social formation, itself contains an implicit argument for a particular methodology. (Haug, 1987, pp. 34-35)

Feminism has an explicit emancipatory and humanitarian intent, yet it remains a marginalised ideology resisted within mainstream social life and academe. At the same time it has been appropriated in ways which placate individuals and the educated middle class while maintaining existing relations of power. Women are relied on for "keeping the peace", for "keeping the home fires burning", for "keeping silent on matters of significance". Feminism is an act of speaking out, of disruption and antagonism making visible the expectation that the discursive practices of patriarchy are in the safe keeping of women. Disruption and antagonism are the passage of change. Being feminist means emotional and social (and sometimes physical) risk taking. Such risk taking is necessary to disrupt the structure of gender as it is held firm by personal practices understood as 'natural' and gender specific.

As Fine and Gordon (1995, pp. 175-177) suggest in their proposition for a "political feminist psychology", "desilencing women and interrogating the stuff of relationships", among other things, are important challenges for researchers and for feminism. Collective memory work as it has been undertaken for the project of 'One day my prince will come' and in the work of the Haug Collective takes up this challenge. The differences in context and circumstance between my project and that of the Haug Collective (I believe) enliven the possibilities of purpose and process for feminist research, evading (not without anxieties) the propensity for atrophy and elitism that is heralded in the naming of a methodological approach (or the labelling of anything for that matter). What is important is that this process for conducting research with women is one which works to create safe spaces for women to lift the socially implicit ban on speaking about their subordinate positioning and the experiences of life that have informed the dynamic multiplicity of ways in which each girl/woman has come to take herself up as a gendered being. Weedon (1987, p. 33) points out that,

> The collective discussion of personal social problems and conflicts, often previously understood as the result of personal inadequacies and neuroses, leads to a recognition that what have been experienced as personal failings are socially produced conflicts and contradictions shared by many women in similar social situations.

Collective memory work is a process whereby participants in a research group use their personal recollections (memories) to review how particular aspects and episodes of experience constitute them as gendered subjects and active agents in an existing network of social relations (Haug et al, 1987; Davies 1990, 1993, 1994). As a methodology it relies for its validity on the multiple truths of subjectivity and the common threads of subjectivities as these are constituted in common discourses and structures that contextualise experiences of everyday life — a process which the Haug Collective referred to aptly as "daily training in

normality". Collective memory work as research is a methodology that acknowledges and attempts to make visible, by attending to memories of lived experience, the ways in which "a personal life is a path through a field of practices which are following a range of collective logics, and are responding to a range of structural intersections which routinely intersect and often contradict each other" (Connell, 1987, p. 222).

> In order to develop strategies to contest hegemonic assumptions and the social practices they guarantee, we need to understand the intricate work of discourses, the sites where they are articulated and the institutionally legitimised forms of knowledge to which they look for their justification. The most common guarantees of the 'truth' of discourses are science, God and common sense. (Weedon, 1987, p. 126)

The discursive context of experience, constrained by and representing the pattern of the dominant social order, implies a collectivity inherent in experience that is belied in popular notions of individuality. Displaying how individual identity and experience is constituted in discourses that are at the same time constitutive of (yet confined and subordinated to) prevailing social structures in a complex creative interplay of compliance and resistance, contradiction and coherence, is the intellectual and emancipatory intention and method of collective memory work (Haug, 1987).

Unlike research methodologies that embrace the discourses of individualism, collective memory work makes the research topic or theme (rather than the individual participants), the subject of inquiry. Memories of everyday life experiences, that are recalled and re-viewed in light of the research topic, are the focus of the collective memory work process and of the feminist struggle to theorise lived experience and its political effects. Pointing out that, "in a strict sense there is no such thing as 'individual practice' at all", Connell (1987, p. 222) explains,

> Lives are not monads closed off from others. People experience themselves as having shared pasts and sharing the present; 'for we are members of one another', as the Apostle Paul wrote. (The metaphor is stronger in seventeenth century English: the phrase means roughly 'we are each other's limbs'.) This sharing may be as intimate as the story of a marriage or love affair never spoken of beyond the two concerned, or as public as the proceedings of parliament.

The Haug Collective developed the process of collective memory work not only as a way of liberating individual women from their "chains of socialisation" and subjugation within the discourses of masculinist heterosexuality, but also to develop a political consciousness that might lead to action constituted in collective analysis of lived and remembered experiences. The feminist work of the Haug Collective tracing the production of female sexualization and the project of this thesis both have issues of gender, subordination/subservience, desire(ability) and identity at their heart. Collective memory work projects acknowledge the centrality of language in constituting lived experience and seek to investigate the *how* of this interactive constitutive dynamic and the effects which are experienced as, and organise (prevailing notions of) desire. Adapting the methods used by the Haug Collective, this thesis uses collective memory work to explore the feminist concern acknowledged by Haug (1987) that the enchantment of fairytales and the myth of the prince has inhibited women's liberation from the limiting conditions of patriarchy — conditions characterised by the sexual division of labour, adornment and resources. These discursive conditions position girls/women to take up as their own taken-for-granted signifying practices of femininity. Haug (1987, p. 35) described the feminist intentions of participation in collective memory work in this way:

> However enchanted we may have been by princes and other fairytale heroes whose great deeds - often no more than a kiss at the right moment - released the spellbound from their chains we were nonetheless determined to strip these dreams of their tempting

> character, and instead to rehearse the painful lesson that liberation is dependent upon liberation of the self. Our intervention is itself an act of liberation.

The philosophy and principles of each aspect of participation were introduced at our first meeting and subsequently elaborated and evoked throughout. Conditions of participation included agreement that group dialogue would be tape recorded, that the talking and, in particular, writing produced in the course of the project would form the body of data for my writing of a feminist postgraduate thesis and as such would be subject to analysis and publication.

Anonymity was an important issue for the participants. Throughout the process I repeatedly guaranteed the use of pseudonyms when transcribing text and talk, suggesting that they each choose a pseudonym for themselves and write it on the inside cover of their journals. The letter of consent, also offered a space for pseudonym. Surprisingly few participants chose to name themselves differently. My guarantees included my offer to choose their pseudonym. In thinking through this situation, as I sifted through the data (feeling its texture, rubbing in the methodology, organising its product) multiple possible readings emerged, some rising to cover the surface more readily, others submerged. The most likely readings of the participants' responses to this issue suggest a belief in the security of anonymity and fear of the authorial power of the researcher and, similarly, that lack of authority/authorship invested in their position as student/researched/female precluded the right to name even themselves; and, that belief in the unitary, natural, unique individual self made it difficult to imagine themselves by any other name. The discourses informing these readings include individual responsibility and objectivity (guaranteed by the existence of depersonalised, anonymous data — the objectified subject) as the basis of Truth. These responsive circumstances have led me to acknowledge the variations of interactive sites and subjective conditions in which data was

produced and experienced in my deliberations on how the data could best be displayed and acknowledged within this thesis.

From conception to delivery: The best place to labour

Discourses of academic feminism which argue that making use of the situation at hand is a characteristic of feminist research methodology (cf. Cook & Fonow, 1991; Harding, 1987; Davies, 1993a; Richardson, 1997; Stanley & Wise, 1983; Neilsen, 1998) were enabling in the process of selecting the site for undertaking the collective memory work. Collective memory work as described and carried out by the Haug Collective is a methodology which requires of all participants a significant commitment of time and emotional energy. Logistics of time (on my schedule and that of the participants), and geographical proximity (to enable participants to meet regularly to write autobiographical narratives and to share and discuss the work undertaken for, and insights gained from, participation in the project) were primary considerations in selecting the site for this project. My strongest sense in claiming myself as a feminist researcher was and is a desire to avoid objectifying the people who participate in my research endeavours. These considerations seemed most likely to be accommodated by undertaking research within a context that was already an integral part of my life and by addressing issues that have and continue to affect my life and the lives of those around me. As Neilsen (1998, p. 191) has since pointed out:

> Research closer to home is less likely to be turned into an object, an Other, and the participants in the inquiry are more likely to have a face and a voice. These are situations from which the researcher cannot stand outside, but in which she participates, and often, through the process, inspires or effects change.

I wanted to engage in research that was relevant to my interests and my teaching. I needed to find a way to bring together the threads of my concerns

and interests. In collaboration with my thesis supervisor, Bronwyn Davies, during which we discussed her recollections of the collective memory work projects which she had facilitated as part of her teaching (cf. Davies, 1993a, 1994) I decided to undertake a collective memory work project with students enrolled in one of my courses in Early Childhood Teacher Education. Considerable deliberation with my faculty colleagues about the course structure and my teaching responsibilities ensued. It was decided that the only viable context for the study in the forthcoming semester would be in the core subject for the final year students. It was agreed that I take about 30% of the face to face teaching time and 40% of the assessment allocation for this subject. This meant I would work with each of four collective memory work groups (of up to twenty participants) for three one hour sessions followed by six two hour sessions over a period of fourteen weeks. My project then, would be necessarily different from the work of Haug (1987), and it was not without reservations that I undertook this task.

The original work of Haug (1987) is based on the work of twelve women/feminists who came together out of common concerns to pursue their topic of interest for more than two years. My project involved a far greater number of participants, whom I anticipated would be resistant to feminism rather than entering the project with established feminist sensibilities, for a much shorter period of time. I recognised from the outset that, coupled with the project's insertion into a timetabled subject, having large groups and more than one group of participants could inhibit the development of trust and the productive engagement of participants in the process of analysis. I was also concerned that the elements of trust and collaborative analysis would be inhibited by the time available for the memory work/autobiographical narrative writing phase of the research and by my positioning, and the students' positioning of me, in the teacher-student and conservative-feminist

binaries. These concerns were allayed by my reflections on my prior teaching experiences and established rapport with these students and by the sheer weight of numbers. I reassured myself that by working with so many women who reflected among them a diversity and collectivity of experience that might be considered 'usual' in mainstream Australian culture, a wealth of data would inevitably be produced.

Participation in the project of 'One day my prince will come', engaged the participants in memory work in a variety of ways. Individual and collective participation were subject to four open-ended components.

1. The discussion of concepts and ideas encountered in, or generated by the prescribed readings and my explanations of relevant theory and methodology. The prescribed readings included Connell, 1987, pp. 1-20; Weedon, 1987, pp. 13-39; Davies, 1993a, pp. 27-30, 73-84, 90-95, 150-157; Davies, 1989, pp. 318-382; Walkerdine, 1990, p. 87-106; and a selection of narratives from the Haug Collective's project on *Female Sexualisation* (Haug, 1987, pp. 75-76, 91-94, 105-107, 142-145).

2. Maintaining a personal journal including narratives of lived experience, retellings and reflections inspired by the various experiences of the Collective memory work project such as reading, discussing that reading and telling and listening to each others stories. At various points during the project I suggested journal writing activities to support participants who were struggling with coming to the writing. These included recalling a typical family meal time, retelling a favourite childhood story, describing their fantasy wedding or imagined prince, drawing a "Hand of Trust" (trace around your hand and write the name of someone you trust on each finger) and describing how these relationships of trust were established and maintained.

3. Recollecting/telling stories of everyday life experiences in the context of tutorial discussions and in personal journals, as they seemed pertinent to

uncovering the taking up as one's own the storyline of 'one day my prince will come'; and

4. Writing and reading (to the group) an autobiographical narrative which the participant/s agreed was indicative of the subject's taking up or of being positioned within the storyline of 'one day my prince will come' which was then open for group analysis/response and subsequent rewriting.

Empathy and empiricism

The Haug Collective have pointed out the necessity of critical detached yet subjective analysis of told experiences. A lack of analysis and theorising, Haug claims, is what inhibited the emancipatory effects of "consciousness raising" groups that characterised the second wave of feminism. Failure to take account of the discursive and structural contexts of lived experience left those contexts unruffled; buoyed by the empathy of the group, women were able to tell their stories and experience a cathartic sense of liberation and unity with other women without needing to unpick the fabric that would remain to constrain and construct the gendered weaving of lived experience. This perceived failure of consciousness raising groups led Haug (1987) to argue that collective memory work is a process in which empathy is unproductive. The experience of the Haug Collective was that empathy works to support and disguise, rather than to disrupt or make visible, the obvious, taken-for-granted structures and social relations that mediate lived experience. From this perspective, empathy is seen as smoothing over troubled waters with platitudes of compassion and stoicism such as "it couldn't be otherwise," "what will be will be", "what's done is done", "let bygones be bygones", "put the past behind and move on", "tomorrow's another day". Framed in this way, expressions of empathy are viewed as inhibitive to the analytic project and constitutive of meanings (of experience) that position women as powerless victims of circumstance –

circumstances typically represented in prevailing discourses and storylines of femininity and desire, that are at the same time constitutive of desire and its associated gender identities (Davies, 1993a, 1992, 1990a, 1990b; Walkerdine, 1990; Radway, 1987; Christian-Smith, 1990).

I reported the Haug Collective's concerns about the numbing effects of empathy and my interpretation of this to each of the collective memory work groups. I suggested that it is not empathy in and of itself that is counter productive. Rather, that expressions of empathy which do not explicitly connect the speaker's experience with their own experience or to the social conditions and discursive context of experience, or to theory can inhibit the analytic process and work to silence the subject by giving the impression of "enough said". I asked participants to recognise the discomfiture they experienced when listening to a story that might be difficult to tell, but to withhold the urge to offer usual kinds of reassurances. Instead, I asked them to reflect on the emotions attached to the urge/desire to express empathy and to consider what experiences/memories of their own that these feelings are connected to. I suggested that when an explicit memory of their own is evoked by these feelings that they relate the story to the group and/or to write it in their journal. Over time, through this process of sharing our stories of connected experience, we would build a kind of mosaic of collective memories and shared experience. As well as building this mosaic, we would be able to stand back from it and cast our interpretive and theoretical gaze on it. This withholding of (usual) expressions of empathy helped us to deal with difficult emotions, to be comfortable with and value moments of silence as an acceptable empathic response in which spaces were created to share our common experiences and theoretical insights.

In this way collective memory work makes possible a critical unpicking of the discursive intersections of lived and imagined experience where women knit themselves into the desires and practices that make them complicit in their own subordination. Collective memory work picks up the research possibilities of consciousness raising by tracing the threads of the plain, slip, pearl, pass slip stitch over experiences patterning the knitting of ourselves into collectivity, culture, community and social structure. Extending this feminine metaphor of "knitting the self", I am struck by the fact that the knitter can "slip" (move a stitch from one side to the other without interrupting the flow of the construction), but if the knitter continues to ignore or to drop the stitch (in the way that women continue to be ignored and marginalised within mainstream academy and social life) the fabric (of self, of heterosexuality) will be flawed. The knitting (of body covering/garment, the fabric of society) begins with finding a desirable pattern — a narrative of particularised symbols, to which the subject frequently attends to ensure successful, predictable completion. But knitting, like language and the body, has the potential for rebellious and creative acts that enhance the texture and quality of the product.

Who participated in the project: Reflecting beliefs, concerns and experiences of meanings in process

In Spring semester 1993, when this collective memory work project took place, there were 76 enrolled students (74 women and 2 men) in the final year subject for early childhood teacher education. Although located in a core subject, participation in the collective memory work project was voluntary with an alternative learning tasks and assessment being offered for students who chose not to participate. Seventy-five of the 76 enrolled students agreed to participate in the project. About ten of the participants were mothers aged between 22 and 45. Most of the participants (including the two men) were aged between 20 and

25 and single (although several of these women were engaged to be married) at the time of the study. The vast majority of participants came from rural New South Wales, some from farms and large properties, most from large and small rural towns. Only ten of the participants came from a major urban area such as Sydney. All of the participants (with the exception of myself) were undergraduate early childhood teacher education students enrolled in their final semester of study at a rural Australian university. At that time, I was an associate lecturer in their core professional studies course. A little more than a decade earlier I had been a student in the same course. All the participants expressed the belief and desire that one day they would be parents, and all (except one) expressed the belief and desire that they would marry. About 10% of students were married or engaged at the time of graduation and three others had become pregnant during the course of their undergraduate studies.

I believe students agreed to participate in the project because it offered opportunities to become active in the process of research and knowledge production, to develop skills in critical self reflection, and to learn more about and to challenge feminism. As participants took up reading of feminist and poststructural theories which made visible some of the contradictions inherent in the field of patriarchal discourses through which they had been constituted, a degree of discomfort was produced. Initially, participant reactions to the unsettling of established beliefs and practices through access to alternative discourses, was to react in defence of established beliefs and values that have been nourished in prevailing discourses of liberal humanist Christianity. At the beginning of the project one participant wrote:

> *I resent having feminism shoved at me through university. Through my bible learnings I believe the family is the basic foundation of society – without it society would degrade and destroy itself (as can be witnessed in the world today). I take offence particularly to the inference that lesbian sexuality is to be encouraged. The bible states homosexuality to be a sin, it*

is_wrong. It is every individuals choice, of course, but it should never be encouraged.

At the same time that many of the students participating in the project held a strong Christian commitment and affiliations with the Church, positioned as they were within the context and discourses of (post)modern liberal humanism, they also made claims for women as individuals with the same rights and opportunities as their male counterparts. Each participant came to the project with taken-for-granted beliefs in the self as autonomous individual with individual rights and responsibilities. Through the discourses of individualism that advocate "be yourself", "do your best", "the world is your oyster", "you can be anything you want to be", the gender order is rendered irrelevant in the minds of its subjects and the participants in this project were not exceptions. In the words of one participant (among the most articulate and academically successful students of the year):

I'm getting married because it's what I want. To me it's the ultimate in showing each other how much we love each other — we give ourselves to each other. We also both want to have children and feel marriage is the best environment for that. For us, it is for life - we may separate but never divorce ("What God has joined let no man put asunder" The Bible -— Mathew 19:6). I guess most of the child care responsibility will fall on me because I can work at home (Family Day Care) and Geoffrey can't.

I can remember myself as an undergraduate early childhood teacher education student at the same university, being at times and at once, tentative, ambivalent and passionate about positioning myself and being positioned as 'feminist' for the threat it posed to the possibility of being desired. As Weedon (1987, p. 101) so aptly points out, "No individual ever approaches a discourse unaffected by the memory of previous discursive interpellations".

Memory and how it is given voice and in what forms and contexts it is validated is central to the activation or suppression of power within the subject and collective practice. My contribution to the initial meetings with participants was to explain the relationship between the theory and the methodology and the students' own lived experience by making connections with my own life and attempting to describe the feelings and experiences I perceived to be indicative of my interpellation into the storyline of 'one day my prince will come'. I felt it was important to inform participants of the theory and methodology framing the research and at the same time to avoid confining and defining what might be considered relevant to the notion of taking up the romantic storyline as our own. The only request, besides the organisational and institutional requirements which contextualised the methodology, was that participants keep in mind and reflect upon the storyline of 'one day my prince will come'; and in doing so, identify incidents in which we were positioned or positioned ourselves to take (the conditions of) this storyline up as their own. I encouraged the notion that in this eventuality we consider anything remembered as relevant. One of the participants began her journal with this entry:

> *When the topic of a research project was discussed and the tape recorder turned on I thought to myself, 'Oh no what am I in for?' However, as the project was explained and the reasons of why we are to be involved came out I gradually felt more at ease and became interested in the class. The idea of individual people recording their personal views on a subject and then finding out where those personal views come from can be very interesting. The idea of trying to recall your childhood memory, or things from the past appeals to me very much, as sometimes I wish for my childhood to come back or if I had to go through the process of being a child again, knowing what I know now, would I have done and felt differently about certain issues? I thought that the introduction to the research project was done very professionally and explained thoroughly. Thinking about keeping the topic 'One day my prince will come' in my mind. I will endeavour to write about my childhood and also present issues that relate to the topic.*

Feminism as power and pathology in knowledge production

Reconciling the assumed authority and privilege of the researcher with the taken-for-granted hierarchical relations of power between researcher and researched, and between reader and author has plagued feminist and liberatory paradigms of knowledge production throughout the latter part of the twentieth century. Richardson (1997) points out how the order of the academy, with its prescription, maintenance and defence of writing protocols that presume to authenticate the text by adherence to a loosely defined rhetorical device of "writing science", sustain elitist regimes and limit possible ways of being and knowing within the existing order of the academy.

(Re)cognition of the prevailing historically constituted gendered order of knowledge production is important to understanding the context and process of data collection (as well as the data gathered) for this thesis. Knowledge, particularly when imparted within the institutional context of the University, is usually taken-for-granted as Truth guaranteed by the 'objectivity' of science (Neilsen, 1998; Richardson, 1997; Davies, 1993a; Cook & Fonow, 1991; Harding, 1987; Belenky et.al., 1986; Stanley & Wise, 1983). This is a condition of hierarchical binary logic in which the subject/reader/student grants power and authority to the speaker/author/researcher (who is usually experienced by the subject/reader as an anonymous male expert) and, through which the possibility of power and authority for the student/reader/researched are simultaneously withheld/silenced/rendered invisible. Embedded in hierarchical binary logic, the prevailing discursive context of knowledge production and transmission restricts possibilities for alternative forms of knowledge production. This institutionalised restriction of ways of knowing is in no small part due to, and constitutive of, the naturalised assumption that if (something or) someone is powerful/authoritative (male/masculine), they are

not (and cannot or should not be) female/feminine — to be so would be to go against nature. The following comments from two of the participants' journals are indicative of the effects of this categorical way of thinking.

> *Now I find the role of women in our society, an incredibly interesting topic point and could talk about it for days. But I suppose in a way I get my back up when I hear the word 'feminist'. I know I shouldn't, mainly because I don't know enough about the term, but it has certain connotations in my vocab that are very negative.*

> *I'm quite wary of feminist research - I guess the usual portrayal of a feminist is that of 'man-hater' and someone who just wants to go against the flow and wants/demands everything for women .... which is division between the two genders. I'm interested to see how Sharn looks at bringing the two genders together instead of dividing. I'm open to seeing another side of feminism.*

An important aspect of achieving the willing participation in this project was making my feminist position and the feminist approach and intent of the project explicit at the first meeting with participants. I explained how binary logic engenders the assumption that if you are feminist (ie, *for* women) you must be *against* men, a positioning that calls into question the sexuality (and still for some the 'normality') of the feminist subject. I pointed out that this was a position I did not hold but to which I had been subject and, that I wanted our work together to disrupt this and other assumptions engendered within the habit of binary logic. I made clear that I hoped that our work together would contribute to the possibility of more open and equitable relationships between men and women, that we would become more conscious of the ways in which we participated in the production of gender difference and that this would have positive implications for both their professional and personal lives.

From the outset I understood that the context for introducing my project and asking for co-operation and participation was one in which the prevailing

student discourses would be of the individual, with opportunity invested in academic success and power invested in the teacher. I hoped to both access and disrupt this discourse in a way that would bring into play an array of discourses in the process of collective memory work. I asked the students to consider participation in the project as an opportunity to shift their positioning from being the subjects of hierarchically achieved and received knowledge to being conscious participants in the production of knowledge that was relevant to their own lives and to the lives of others.

The success of our project predominantly rested upon establishing open communication and feelings of trust among participants in each of the tutorial groups. Tutorial discussions which generated feelings of relationship with the project and its content, as well as with other participants, were a critical link to the quality and depth of the data produced. I made it clear from the outset that I was interested in stories which characterised everyday life, that I did not expect deeply personal or traumatic events to be revealed but, at the same time, I recognised that talking about the circumstances of our lives was not usual practice in the academic context and that choosing not to participate in the project was a perfectly legitimate and acceptable option.

While I most wanted this research/data collection project to be collaborative I was under no illusion about the unequal balance of power inherent in its conception and implementation. Ultimately, although I conscientiously made my intentions, the conditions of participation and the alternatives clear from the outset, in choosing to work with students on a feminist project that would form part of their assessment I precluded the possibility of disavowing the power relations inherent in the teacher-student dualism and the hierarchical achievement of academic grades. Although only one student took up the offer of an alternative project for assessment and participation, assessment of

participants' writing for the project emerged as a primary concern in our initial meetings. "What exactly do you want us to do?" "How can you assess something as subjective as our childhood memories?" were the questions most often asked. Another concern of the participants was the use of course time and therefore the relevance of the project to their career. These concerns reflect the participants' relational positioning within the discourses and practices of prevailing individualised meritocratic structures of education and their associated beliefs in objectivity as the basis for assessment and knowledge production. Such discursive positioning and discomfort with the disruption of the established objectivity-subjectivity, rational-emotional, teacher-student binaries is evident in this extract from one of the participant's initial journal entries:

> *OK. I'll admit it - I'm not sure whether I'm going to be the only one who writes it, or says anything about it - but as I said in the tutorial I can't understand the value of the journal nor the heavy weighting of the marks. Whilst I see that the journal will be interesting to the writer and reader, I feel that it holds little value to me becoming an Early Childhood Educator. As for the marking I find it difficult to see how one individual is able to mark another individual's private thoughts feelings and emotions.*

Students were not expected to make a commitment to the project or sign consent forms until after the first three meetings. As reflected in the comments above and other journal entries cited below, however, the initial stages of the project were evidently characterised by concerns associated with the hierarchical power invested in the teacher-student relationship and possibilities of individual academic success. The students were conscious of their own lack of familiarity with the process and the concepts and commitments that framed their insertion into the project. Their discomfort centred around possibilities for resistance as these were mediated by the obviousness of their positioning as students, and its relevance to their futures.

When I first heard about this project I was a little concerned about its relevance to my being a teacher. I thought it had no importance and I was ready to rebel. It was only later at the second tutorial with you that I realised its importance as, not so much in teaching terms, but in personal terms. It is all about deciding who you are and how you became that way. It is also about how you will place those values onto the children you will teach. It is important that you are clear in your own mind about who you are so that you are a more confident leader.

My first impression of the collective biography project are "oh my God what in the world am I going to find to write about, and what a load of rubbish anyway, I mean who cares." I suppose you could say that the above remark came from not knowing enough about what was expected of us. Well after the first lot of readings, I really got thinking and could relate to some of the issues discussed.

Just as Arthur Munby (and many other social and psychological commentators before and since), was the privileged reader and editor/author of Hannah Cullwick's diaries (Swindell, 1989), and the reason for their production (Hannah kept the diaries at Arthur's request and wrote them knowing that he would be their audience), I am the privileged speaker for the research within which this thesis is grounded. The participants in 'One day my prince will come', did not instigate recalling and recording memories of childhood and past events of their own volition or for their own pleasure or liberation. (As the data displayed in this chapter indicates and as many of the participants expressed personally, the project which culminated in celebration, became in and of itself, volatile, pleasurable and self generating). The participants were requested to remember (and to have something to tell), for me, their teacher. As in the relationship between Hannah Culwick and Arthur Munby, the hierarchical relations of power inherent in the teacher-student binary there were "chains and padlocks" (Swindell, 1989, pp. 30-31) — but there were also keys.

My own subject positioning was one in which I felt the feminist discourse as an imperative struggling both within and against the discourse of the individual. I was ever conscious of my own power and the discourse of "teaching-as-usual"

(Davies, 1993a & 1994) within which the practice of deception is inculcated and legitimated. This was disrupted by my commitment to an ethos of honesty as the basis of trust combined with and substantiated by principles of feminist practice. As indicated by the following anonymous comment made on the project evaluation form, some students apparently felt it would have been easier on their consciousness had I adopted more traditional research practice of deception — "I would agree with other students that if we didn't know that it was for your thesis, but rather a journey into ourselves, people would be more willing to participate."

As indicated in the examples from participants' input cited throughout, memories were evoked from readings and from conversations. Within collective memory work groups, in an effort to clarify their own understandings and the understanding of other members of the group, participants actively sought to make connections between the aims and theoretical underpinnings of the project (as I explained these) and their own lived experiences. This was augmented by required readings, by my foregrounding of the theoretical underpinnings, intentions and methodological approach of the project. There was an apparent desire among participants to make connections between each others' experiences which enabled us to make a kind of aural patchwork of lived experience. For some participants, connections with the theme and the possibilities of the methodology were evoked from the outset:

> *I found last night's tute interesting and feel very positive about this journal writing experience. Among all the assignments I have coming up and formalities with interviews and job worries I'm going to find great sanctuary in the journal recording memories of my childhood. With just the talking of Sharn in the introductory tute I started remembering things that would have been appropriate to record. Its amazing what memories flash in your head.*

I had my first class with Sharn today, and was startled at the clarity of the memories that were activated by Sharn's discussions. I feel I must get them down while my perception of the incidents are clear.

The circumstances under which my 'collective' was formed and the limited duration of the project mediated against extended possibilities for concerted collective analysis of the written stories generated by the collective process of re-calling, re-collecting, re-membering and re-viewing events and moments of lived experience. Like the Haug Collective, however, we spent a great deal of time unravelling the effects and masquerades of language use; undermining the re-sort to cliche, tracing the events ensnared in the words we use, asking previously unaskable questions (Haug, 1987, pp. 61-68). For the most part, the exciting, overwhelming, invigorating, sometimes stultifying process and responsibility of theoretical analysis, interpretation and reporting of the memory work and responses produced in the course of this project rested with me. The transcript below however, illustrates how participation in this project engaged participants in exploring the slippery instrument of memory, its collectivity and subjectivity, in diverse imaginative and liberating ways. This transcript is an extract from the second meeting with participants during which I asked them to talk about how they were feeling about participating in the collective memory work project.

M: Yeah. Sure. I found it difficult to start off with. To begin to find, like, early childhood memories but once I got into it, once I started doing one, the other memories seemed to clock really easily. And actually it's made me realise what a good quality childhood I was really lucky to have. I was brought up most of my life on a farm ...
SR: And how are you feeling about doing it in terms of, for this purpose?
M: Umm, oh well, I think it's actually quite good. Because I think that eventually in your life you have to share your ideas and this can help clarify your thoughts as well so, yeah, I think it's good.
SR: L?

L: I went away thinking "Oh my god I really don't want to do this", because we had to do it in first year - (that is, keep a journal). I found it was always the thing I put aside 'til the last minute and do it. But then I went home and talked to M about it and then everything started. I started remembering all these things. And um, I'm finding now I need to carry my journal around everywhere with me 'cause I was writing on all bits of scrappy paper and not getting it in concrete into my journal. Umm, yes, I think it's pretty good.
K: I have to admit I went away thinking, "Oh yeah, it's a good idea and I like to write," but I just don't feel like I was having,
SR: uh um
K: But once I sort of like, (laughs) sort of like, at first, like I rang my Mum and said like, "I don't have any memories. I've gotta write a journal and I don't have any memories." And she'd say to me, 'How 'bout this? What can you tell me about it?' And I'd sort of say, "My memory's not very good." (laughter)
SR: Maybe, I think it would be useful that if it's talking to your Mum that prompts a memory then write that in your journal as well. That then records the process of retrieving the memories that is a part of the process of the project. So, if there's links, if there's something that sparks a memory record that too. So you get a sense of what helps you to recall um memories. Do you know what I mean? So, it might be something that you watch on television, it might be the reading that I'm giving you. It might be a conversation with your mother or looking at photograph album or whatever. So record those links between what prompted the memory and the memory, as well as links between one memory and another so that your writing begins to weave a web of connections that is really you. Do you know what I mean? So yeah. I think that'd be great.
K: Mm. That's good. 'Cause you know, 'cause I'll think of something, I'll remember something and I'll think maybe that didn't really happen. Like I've really got to sit down and like you know even talk to my sisters and think, "Did that happen when we were little?" And she'll say, " yeah," and I'll say, "oh alright". Sometimes I think it's just my imagination really. (laughs)
C: I find myself if you're not sure what you actually remember, or what your parents have told you, or what you've heard them tell other people
(sounds of agreement from other participants)
...
P: You know a lot of it's things you've heard but you're not really sure if you can place yourself there.
SR: Yep. But sometimes in those memories what you can remember is someone telling you and you can record that. That's a memory too. So you can record the retelling - grandad's telling of when you all went/did or whatever. You write that as a memory. ...

B: I think it's really strange that like, I don't know if this has been what is everyone else, but so far all my collective memory's of something horrible like not something joyous.
M: Yeah, even if like, like the good things like I remember, like good things like I remember my brother got a motor bike for Christmas and I was peeved off because I didn't get one. Like they're nearly all painful.
SR: Hmmm
B: It's just really strange that you remember painful ones.
SR: mm mm
J: Probably because you don't deal with them. It's just your way, you know, if you've got those things inside you and it's still kind of bugging you, you know, so this is your way of dealing with of saying well you know ,
(sounds of agreement)
...
SR: ... I guess I tend to think that, that the things that we remember may be both what you're saying J, that they're unresolved things - often unresolved because we never felt we had any right to speak them. But in terms of retrieving memories, M, you know you write that memory then you try to find why it is that you were peeved because your brother got a motor bike and you didn't. Do you know what I mean? Try to find out why you didn't get it and your feelings about not getting it.
...
C: My family always played tennis and I was walking through where we played yesterday and I thought of all these different things. I have looked at those. You know, I used to think I was a bit of a Tom Boy but some of that I have actually looked at you know it's all there you know the role of the mother and everything so ..
SR: Yep
C: I'm quite chuffed actually.
(laughter)
SR: So you're finding out something new about yourself.
C: Yeah. I always used to be one of the boys but I always thought yes but when I started thinking about it in terms of the story line I was well and truly in it all of the time even though I was doing all those "boyish" things I was still well and truly (positioning myself) in the story that one day my prince will come yeah.

Through the experience of collective memory work, the participants became story writers and authors of their own experience. As one participant said, "We became archaeologists of our own lives." At first this seemed a daunting dangerously subversive and emotionally risky business. But as we dived in we

became swept away with the task. We asked ourselves questions similar to those that Richardson (1997, pp. 12-13) has asked of researchers: "What do we write about? How do we write? And for whom do we write?" ... "What constitutes adequate depiction of social reality?" To this list I would add, "Who will become the named author and academic benefactor of the text?" And, "How will this project contribute to the broader feminist project of liberation, equity and awareness?"

Writing and reading meanings into existence: Reconciling individuality with collectivity

Writing of memories, particularly the struggle to shape them into narrative form, and the discussion of these stories in the group, requires revisiting the same experience several times, working to display just what it was like so that the reader/listener is able to take up position/s within the narrative experience and know what it was like to be there. The writing of collective memory work traverses the individualistic and subjective boundary between lived and imagined experience, between fact and fiction.

Through memory work the participants revisited experiences of childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, situating themselves historically within the associated categories to which they had been ascribed, or to which they desired, membership. If we take the stories told to be collective, in the sense that they are recognisable to others, then individual experience can become generalisable and subject to analysis (Haug, 1987). Much of what has been said in the course of this chapter, to be fully explicated, warrants the considerable elaboration undertaken in subsequent chapters. I hope that the reader will take up the threads and begin to darn the gaps and embroider the edges. That each will find connections with their own lived and imagined experiences as the text

continues to ask how it is that individuals make certain modes of behaviour their own, and how it is that they learn to develop a certain set of needs as opposed to others (Haug, 1987). Throughout the thesis I use the data to illustrate, to act performatively, to arouse and to enrich theoretical engagement in the narrative of this thesis.

> *There are stories elicited by the collective memory work process of 'one day my prince will come' that might be considered both 'structural rupture points' (such as death, rape, divorce) and 'daily training in normality'. What is interesting, (regardless of the acknowledged significance of the incident), is the ways in which the subject/s appear in the stories to be working to interpret the experience in order to perform the/ir body, (and relationships with others), in ways that would be perceived as acceptable and normal. It seems that category membership and identity being maintained as congruent and coherent, becomes a transparent element of the performance of gender. The cultural and discursive 'sweeping under the carpet' and 'putting behind bars' of disturbing disruptive acts seems to direct the forum of prevailing discourses and relations of power. (My journal, 22/2/94)*

This raises important questions for all researchers and authors of texts that seek, and which might be taken to purport, 'truth'. Richardson (1997) in an inspiring review of her ethnographic and sociological work spanning more than a decade, is insistent that experimental writing is a valuable tool for sociological view finding and analysis and that the presentation of data, the 'writing up' of the research is a significant process for the achievement and communication of meaning for both the researcher and reader. Richardson plays with the possibilities of poststructuralist theory for feminist academic projects. She is particularly concerned with the questions of *how*: How do we most authentically represent the experiences of others to which we become privy when positioned and positioning ourselves as 'researcher'?

Discussing the production and analysis of narrative as an effective (ethno)methodology, Richardson (1997, p. 30) points out that people use

narrative daily, to report, justify and explain the events of their lives but that few researchers "have explicitly analysed and articulated how the individual's narrated experiences of daily time are linked to larger social structures, linking the personal to the public". This is the purpose of collective memory work.

During the final weeks each participant was asked to select from their journal a narrative which they were willing to read to the group. Interestingly, although many memories had been discussed openly throughout the course of the project, the reading of written narratives was understood as a more powerful and potentially threatening experience.

> ... these stories focused on a detailed representation of past events, described as if in a multi-dimensional film made from the point of view of a visitor to a foreign country, to whom every small detail seems essential, since s/he has yet no criteria to determine what should be considered essential; insofar that it is possible to 'remember' in the true sense of the word, we could expect to find ourselves tracing a number of linkages that appeared new and exciting, even strange, yet were immediately recognisable by the group as credible, since they formed part of all our memories. (Haug, 1987, p. 54)

The reading of narratives was at times intensely emotional as participants read experiences which in many cases they felt had not been told before for fear of rejection or disruption of established or desired relationships engendering grief, shame, guilt. What became apparent, during the course of the project, is that insertion into the discourse of the individual silences the subject by engendering the belief that her experience is unique. This is a process which normalises the tension and contradiction between the desire to belong and to be the singular individual who might become 'the One' who is chosen.

The isolation/separation/uniqueness felt as a consequence of a belief in the individual as a fixed and unitary subject, means that our belief in our own

individuality (and the autonomy of action and uniqueness of experience this assumes) assists in maintaining the power of traditional images and structures as gendered. This too can be understood as an effect of binary logic within which knowledge is understood as public/authored/spoken/male, while experience is understood as private/personal/silenced/female. What is spoken and not spoken to whom and in what context is governed by systems of thinking which have been discursively produced and practiced over time.

I want to draw your attention to the critical link between the ideology of the author (myself) and the choice of methodologies. The link is writing and the production of texts. I start with producing the participants/subjects as authors of their own texts. This is a radical shift, I believe, and is a key factor in opening up relations of power between the subject and the text, between the researcher and researched. To have a voice, a forum in which to speak, to both produce text, to make visible one's own and others' interpellation into the texts of daily life, and to recognise one's own voice and the voice of familiar others within these texts, is a liberating experience. In contrast to the initial responses of resistance to the project, as participants began to write and tell stories many expressed excitement at recognising the possibility of themselves as writers and at having something to say that held meaning and interest for others. This sense of excitement at finding their voices as speakers and writers and of feeling connected with others culminated at the end of the project in a student organised celebration at which I was subject to overwhelming and unexpected outpourings of gratitude.

Focusing on the production of texts of lived experience, the process of collective memory work, creates possibilities for moving beyond the limitations of binary logic as it produces what is usually spoken and not spoken as meaningful, relevant, prudent in particular (especially public or institutional) contexts.

Several less vocal participants found their voice in narrative writing and despite feeling "a tense situation" read very strong personal narratives. Writing in the narrative form, making an effort to write in the third person, seemed to enable the speaker to feel one step removed from the experience. As one participant said, "when reading to others it didn't feel quite so personal." Writing in the narrative form as part of the process of collective memory work allows both the teller and the told to experience the story from within and to trace its discursive origins. Living historically through the performance of reading and writing stories in the collective memory work group, transcends the boundaries of the personal and the individual, illuminating experience as the collective link with the political.

There is a collectivity of experience engendered in language and its dominant discourses. Identifying the discourses that are woven around gendered juxtapositions and threaded through the cultural storylines that shape life histories within modern liberal humanist patriarchy, in particular, the storylines and attendant discourses and practices that speak into existence the belief/desire that 'one day my prince will come', is the focus for theorising and analysis as well as the collected memories. The process and analysis homes in on effects of binary thought as the interpretive schema of sexed bodies in the formation of identity and desire and through which we are discursively shaped and shape ourselves into existing social structures and discourses using available storylines as a map for our progress and success.

> Writing is a transgression of boundaries, an exploration of new territory. It involves making public the events of our lives, wriggling free of the constraints of purely private and individual experiences. (Haug, 1987, p. 36)

As a feminist and poststructuralist researcher, I want to understand and write about the lives of re-cognisable people in re-cognisable situations so that they

engage the reader, in critical ways. However, I do not wish to make the research subjects/participants 'real' by particularising them, by naming them so that they might be recognisable, identifiable, nameable by 'real' people in their 'real' lives or, that they feel threatened by this possibility. Through collective memory work, the process of becoming recognisable in the text is achieved as the subject/participant(s) and reader arrive at a sense that "I know what it was like to be there — it could have been me, (or anyone for that matter)". In lived experience, this recognition of *likeness* rarely foregrounds gender in the mind of the subject/reader. Foregrounding gender by studying the lives of women and the production of (heterosexual) desire is at the heart of this feminist and liberatory project of collective memory work. As a feminist poststructuralist research methodology, collective memory work reverses the (usual) erasure of the author from the authoritative text. Instead, in this instance, it is only me, the author who is named/particularised. This disruption to usual practices of academic writing opens up possibilities for challenging and transcending the binaries of fact and fiction, memory and imagination, subject and object, researcher and researched (cf. Richardson, 1997).

In subsequent chapters I will display the stories of lived experience produced in the collective memory work project as illustrations of the variety of ways in which discourses and storylines are interwoven to form the fabric of collective experience. These stories, which pattern the text of this thesis, are at once anonymous and collective. With the exception of my own words and the words of published authors, the stories told (data) will not be named or referred to by the author's name. In some cases, where the author has written in the third person and given pseudonyms to the subject/s, these have been retained and referred to in my discussion and analysis of the story. Most of the stories which appear in the subsequent chapters have been given a title, and in most cases, it is the title of the story that I use as the marker of reference in my analysis and

discussion. I employ this strategy used by the Haug Collective in an effort to shift the usual focus of analysis from the individual/s in the story/text to the discursive context displayed — the historicity and constitutive effects of the discourses at play.

This thesis takes up "the question of how individuals come to make certain modes of behaviour their own, how they develop a particular set of needs as opposed to others" (Haug 1987, p.24). I focus the lens of analysis on the discourses that are at play within the experience portrayed by the text and which I identify as conveying and conveyed within the storyline of 'one day my prince will come'. In particular, my analysis makes visible the possibilities and limitations of subject positions on offer within these discourses by identifying how the responses of subjects within prevailing discourses of everyday life constitute associated practices and desires as a process of daily training in normality that is (pre)scripted along gender lines. This gendered normality is, further, constituted in, and constitutive of, the habit of binary logic. The ways in which discourses work to convey myth and to shape bodies accordingly, within the habit of binary logic is constitutive of the collectivity of experience.

> Human beings produce their lives collectively. It is within the domain of collective production that individual experience becomes possible. If therefore a given experience is possible it is also subject to universalisation. What we see as 'personal' ways of adapting are also potentially generalisable modes of appropriation. (Haug, 1987, p. 44)

CHAPTER 4

COLONISING THE BODY IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER

> Masculinity and femininity are relational constructs; the definition of either depends on the definition of the other. ... Not only do men as a group exert power over women as a group, but the historically derived definitions of masculinity and femininity reproduce those power relations. Masculinity becomes associated with those traits that imply authority and mastery, femininity with those traits that suggest passivity and subordination. (Kimmel, 1987, p. 122)
>
> When we recognise how the negative term in mind/body dualism is conflated with other concepts such as femininity, then its social and political significance is even more striking. (Cranny-Francis, 1995, p. 5)

If the project of feminism is to move forward in (re)constructive ways, there is an urgent need to shift the standpoint of analysis from one of assigning blame to one of acknowledging shared responsibility. Making shared responsibility the starting point for analysis means "studying the holders of power in gender relations with a view to informing strategies for dismantling patriarchy" (Connell, 1997, p. 603). Within the poststructuralist perspective I am scripting here, the "holders of power" are taken to be subjects within discourse. Power, discourse and patriarchy are effects of the repeated performances of speaking subjects (Butler, 1990, 1997). To scrutinise the relational effects of the performances of speaking subjects within discourses which convey and are conveyed by the gendered, patriarchal conditions of the romantic myth is to reflect differently the workings of power.

How power is embodied, (with)held, produced and maintained as delegated authority vested in maleness and in myth, and how the assumption of male authority is interactively enacted in the lives of boys, girls, men and women is the focus of this chapter. The enactment of the assumption of male authority appears central to the maintenance of relations of power. The maintenance of

gendered relations of power is an effect of the performances of both sexes. Of interest here are performances of, and within, discourses which convey the romantic myth and which colonise the bodies in particular ways. The stories told throughout the collective memory work project reveal various ways in which men and women, boys and girls are (inter)active in producing the assumption of male authority. Within the conditions of the romantic storyline, and of lived experience, gender and sexuality become woven into relations of power and desire. As Walkerdine (1990, p. 200) points out, "We are each Other's Other — but not on equal terms".

In addressing the inequalities of gender difference from within the discourses of liberal humanism, much of feminism has done little to disrupt the ways in which women, as a consequence of their embodiment as female, are positioned as victims within discourse and the lived experiences of daily life — as victims of circumstance, of patriarchal economic and social relations, of male violence and of heterosexual desire. Barthes' analysis of myth and the production of bourgeois culture suggests that this may well be a conundrum of myth and discourse in that feminist discourses, for all the liberatory intentions of their speakers, often corroborate the position of women as they are positioned in myth — as victims, as needing to understand the ways of men/the white male society so that we might be approved, and recognised as of value within, the established masculinist system. The lived experience and discursive positioning of women as victims has women being read as, reading themselves as, and reading themselves as being read as, helpless, passive, powerless — innocent of, and absent from, the production of the conditions and relations of oppression. Reading the positions and subjectivities of women in this way is a reading from within the 'victim' metaphor and from within the transparent, taken-for-granted discourses which convey the myth of 'one day my prince will come'. Living within these discursive conditions, both fear and desire are

produced and become inscribed upon and within the body of the sexed subject. These are discursive conditions in which women continue to feel, and to be positioned as, responsible for their own fate at the same time as feeling, and being positioned as, dependent on the approval of men/a man.

Displayed as text, the stories of lived experience produced within the collective memory work project make visible how girls/women are active in seeking male approval (both implicitly and explicitly) and how we respond (more often complicitly) to male opinion (sometimes solicited but often not), particularly with regard for our practice and appearance. At the same time, girls and women (particularly those positioned as mother, grandmother or teacher) undertake the authority invested in their position as adult to practice surveillance and monitoring of "appropriate", "acceptable", "ladylike" (ie, patriarchal) feminine behaviour and appearance in accordance with perceived standards of the time, place and social position locating the subject within discourse (Cranny-Francis, 1992; Haug, 1987; Steedman, 1986; Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989; Urwin, 1985).

Displayed throughout this chapter are stories from the collective memory work project that characterise moments in which the feminine body becomes a self-conscious site of subjectification within patriarchal discourses and the assumption of male authority. These stories highlight the interplay of desire with authority, compliance and resistance as a politics of gender relations within lived experience. As displayed in the lived experience of social, personal and institutional practices, the maintenance of the assumption of male authority is contextualised by the heterosexism embedded in the prevailing discourses. It is within these conditions that fears and desires are discursively produced, lived out within, and inscribed upon the body of the subject in the complex

array of (often momentary) relational positionings and practices of every day life with sustained effects.

What makes these stories of interest to this thesis, and to this chapter in particular, are the ways in which the father (material and/or symbolic) is at play within the discursive positioning of the speaking, feeling, acting, imagining subject. These stories make evident ways in which the discursive experiences of everyday life, including the maternal voice, pattern the textualised (often silent or silenced) dialogue of the subject with images of paternal presence. This presence and this pattern influence the actions, emotions and appearances remembered and transcribed by the narrator. This paternal patterning is a process of initiation into myth and its historically embedded relations of power which are cumulatively performed by sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, neighbours and strangers. It is a process that shapes images of self and possible futures which appear at once inevitable and tenuous. Lived and told experiences of being subject/object of seemingly arbitrary acts of power and authority within discourse punctuate everyday life pointing out and notifying the subject of the relative success and security of investment in her positioning within the conditions of the romantic myth.

Walking the boundaries, building the sets, setting the scene

Critical readings of the lived experiences displayed in the narratives of collective memory work, make visible how social, personal and institutional practices convey particular historically constituted discourses in ways that give the impression of solidity to the dominant "social structures". Structures form around usual practices and guarantee privileges to members of ascendant social categories such as "white", "heterosexual", "male" while impressing 'naturalness' on gender difference as a matter of course. Critical reading of lived experience

is deconstructive work that throws light on the "dependence of the persons inhabiting the *ascendant categories* on the existence of the *subordinate category* for their own privileged unmarked location" (Davies, 1997, p. 13). What is of particular interest here is the active participation of the female subject in the maintenance of hierarchical gender relations. Within the interpersonal and textual transactions of daily life, difference becomes inscribed upon the body. Difference (from maleness) is inscribed upon and within her body in a process of subjectification within discourses and storylines through which the subject is, and becomes, active in constituting the conditions of her own subordination (Haug, 1987; Connell, 1987). While being recognised as a process of subjectification within the prevailing discourses of daily life (whereby particular sets of practices become aligned with the male-female dualism), the engendering of relational positions of authority and subordination are more often naturalised as a condition of the myth of 'one day my prince will come'. In this usually taken-for-granted conception of gender difference, hierarchies of authority and compliance aligned with the male-female dualism are viewed as located within and emanating from the sexed body.

The emergent (re)cognition that "structure is always emergent from practice and constituted by it", and that "neither is conceivable without the other", flags an important re-viewing of historically constituted ways of understanding the conditions of oppression (Connell, 1987, p. 94). Viewed from a poststructural perspective the usual sociological meaning of "structure" (and the materiality it has assumed through the discursive ascendancy of structuralist ways of knowing) is problematised. From this viewpoint, what we have come to know from within, through its naming as "structure", is better understood as the collective effect(s) of usual practice on a grand scale. Within liberal humanist discourses the collective effects of particular practices (such as the sexual division of labour) have become sanctioned and accorded the status of

"structure" which carries with it a sense of having an immutable core in nature. These structures are lived within institutions such as family, schools and courts of law and are ascribed differential meaning and value in relation to their affiliation with the discursive yet embodied categories of race, class and gender which are regressively aligned with scientific discourses of biological determinism. These collective effects are discursively produced and engender boundaries which have become institutionalised.

> The collective project of oppression is materialised not only in individual actions but in the building up, sustaining and defence of an institutional order that generates inequalities impersonally. (Connell, 1987, p. 215)

The significance of the notion of "collective effects" (or what Connell (1987) calls "the collective project of oppression") to the (de)constructive work being undertaken here is that perceived boundaries constitute recognitions, permissions and constraints (which might be complied with or resisted). As boundaries are perceived to form around categories of meaning and membership usually defined in opposition or relation to another category or categories, these permissions and constraints prevail within, and between, differentially particular and various discursive contexts with gender-specific effects. 'Communities' of practice emerge as boundaries are maintained by sanctions and embargos on particular ways of being and thinking which are taken to define and give meaning to social categories and practices.

In the stories below, the significance of (re)cognition for, and by, self and others within the myths and discourses of patriarchy is clearly displayed. Told within our collective memory work project, each story in the scripting makes available for scrutiny a performance space in the historicity of daily life. All the scripts are produced by and cast with white, able bodied, literate subjects; and yet, each event is located and populated differently with regard to usual

demographic features such as age, geographic location, family structure and socio-economic status. Within the community of the project, these stories hum with the (re)cognition of collective experience.

Women (and girls) through their collective performance of an array of practices taken up as feminine/female, are active (and therefore powerful) in (re)producing the social ascendancy of the assumption of male authority. Women assume and are granted (albeit conditional) authority in relation to the production of beauty, domestic labour and the raising of children that is discursively produced as, and embedded in, "responsibilty". The constitutive effects of this gendering of authority and responsibility extends beyond the forceful, proprietorial or competitive action of individuals or groups of men in relation to women and into the organisation of private life and cultural processes where women assume and are granted (albeit conditional) authority in relation to the production of beauty, domestic labour and the raising of children.

Perceived boundaries (such as between public and private life, and between culture and nature), as these convey and are conveyed by particular discourses, have both contextualising and cognising effects on the interplay of personal and institutional practices, on (intra and inter) gender relations, and on subjectivity, in ways that are taken-for-granted but which are, at the same time, omnipresent as the backdrop for the performance of lived experience. This backdrop is displayed in the first story (below) and runs through the subsequent stories as a transparent current that flows through and propels a collective lived history (in which each of us plays a-part).

The Regatta or Head of the River is a rowing event for elite boys private schools. Although a relatively small and exclusive sporting event, its status in

the social hierarchy of (Anglo) Australian culture is such that it has attracted national (television) news coverage. Reading this story brought back memories from my childhood when "The Regatta" was talked about with an odd combination of reverence and excitement. It was a time when my parents would mention people we knew who had attended the select schools participating in the event. From a young age, I was aware that this was an event of social significance (something like mixing with royalty); and I remember daydreaming about being there ('though I never have been), and of being admired. For young girls (and their mothers) the Regatta is not particularly about rowing, but is more about the possibility of romance:(row mans/Romans).

The Regatta

What a day, hey? It had finally arrived and mum had made me a new outfit. Tartan pants were all the rage. I had a new pair of red and navy blue tartan pants. A new crisp white shirt and my school duffle coat, a navy one. My shoes were red lace up boots and I had changed the laces to red ribbons.

The trip down to the Hawksbury River to watch the "Head of the River" caused all sorts of emotions. Excitement, butterflies, timidness, shyness. Boys galore, seeing my wonderful big brother, lots of people and big brother's friends. He was three years older than me. Picnic food. Oh, and the rowing.

The atmosphere was buzzing once we got there and we found ourselves a place to sit. We found my brother at last and earnest and sincere hugs and kisses were exchanged. There was a definite feeling of comfort and relaxation. We met up with family friends who had a daughter of a similar age to me. We always had days like this together and it always seemed a relief to see each other. It was always better to have some kind of female friend on days like this. We decided a walk along the bank of the river would be good.

Weaving our way through the hoards of school boys, through one school after another, all chanting their own school war cries. It felt incredibly powerful and emotional when the voice of a school boomed out their war cry with a feeling of patriarchy (?) So we walked on.

Then, deciding to turn back we walked up the bank. We came across two boys sitting by themselves on the pathway that we were to take. Feeling a

little shy we strode on pretending to be engrossed in our own conversation but 100% aware of the two boys who began to snigger. My heart began to race a little and our conversation seemed to stop. We were almost beside them when they both held up signs, one with a large "3" the other a "2". We knew straight away that we were being judged on our looks and appearance.

I felt humiliated, I felt ugly and I almost wanted to cry. How dare they? They had no right. They certainly weren't the most dashing boys on the bank themselves. Egocentric bastards! I so wanted to react in a way that I didn't care but I did. We just walked on. I wanted the day to end, I wanted the sun to go down and a new day to begin. I remember hating boys that day. I thought if these boys thought I was only a "2" or "3", then all boys thought that also. "All men are bastards".

The conversation between us two girls continued, but on a more superficial level. We knew each other was hurting, but we didn't know how to fix the feeling. We abused boys for a while to each other. "Who cares?" "What do boys know anyway?" "They're all a bunch of idiots". But we did care because being attractive to the opposite sex was important, is still important.

I have since realised that a feeling of contentment and happiness inside and with yourself, I think is just as attractive. Looks can be superficial but feelings and attitudes are real and true to the person who holds them.

I did eventually get over this humiliation, there have been other times when I have felt it though. But now I feel more confident about who I am and how I can make myself attractive in other ways, because I'm certainly no Elle McPherson or Claudia Schiffer, but then again how many of us are. But that's what we all want !!! isn't it?

On the river bank, the chanting of the hoards of competitive school boys make the patriarchal backdrop of social life (at least in retrospect) almost tangible (*It felt incredibly powerful and emotional when the voice of a school boomed out their war cry with a feeling of patriarchy(?)*) In the context of the collective memory work project, this *incredibly powerful and emotional* current that propels the girls forward is tentatively named as a *feeling,* while at the same time the narrator seems to be asking, *What is this "thing" patriarchy?*.

With the going down of the sun and in the morning, mother/daughter, girl/woman will remember them and, in so doing, become both at one with and objectified by the desires constituted therein — this *feeling of* patriarchy. 'Patriarchy' as a powerfully constitutive, evocative and usually nameless metaphor, densely inscribes experience with the symbols and myths of the dominant masculinist social order. An order of hierarchy, allegiance, battle and conquest in which emotion becomes pathologised and subordinated into the category "feminine" and desire becomes a play of power.

As if there is no other way, the girls set off on a path and stick to it as if knowing that coming face to face/being coupled with the opposite sex is inevitable, desirable and a challenge to be prepared for and which must be met and resolved in silence. This emotional journey seems remarkably like that of a fairytale narrative. The two boys in the story are like the two hands of the clock that strikes midnight and the glass slipper is the mirror to the soul that says, "you have made yourself worthy of a prince". As a performance space for myth and metaphor, "The Regatta" is emotionally fraught (*excitement, butterflies, timidness, shyness*) leading to humiliation and hatred that are resolved in/by inner contentment and happiness. The good and respectable girl is a model of self-control.

Mother for father

Within the home when positioned as mother — a position most legitimately achieved through marriage — is one of the few (if not the only) discursive position within which women are granted authority. Positioned as mother, women are granted the right to nurture, teach and discipline children in conjunction with the right to determine (or at least regulate) standards and establish rituals and routines to be adhered to by other members of the household — particularly children. As a matter of course within discourses which convey the romantic myth, mothers are inclined to regulate the household in deference to the preferred or imagined standards of the father (Connell, 1987; Davies, 1993; Walkerdine, 1990). Gender difference remains a powerful strategy for the organisation of private life and domestic labour. During the course of conversations about family life, participants in the collective memory work project frequently reported that they were expected (usually most explicitly by their mothers) to perform domestic tasks such as laundry, dishes and cleaning up after themselves and others — expectations that were often significantly modified or not extended at all to their brothers (or fathers) — a situation that, although felt to be unfair, was rarely if ever openly or successfully contested. Reportedly, on the other hand, brothers and fathers were likely to shore up their position with comments like, "One day you'll make someone a lucky man." It is more usual that (while sons are granted greater personal freedom from responsibility), mothers explicitly (and fathers implicitly) expect daughters to assist with domestic tasks such as cooking and cleaning, and to maintain the conditions of the romantic myth at all times.

> *The thing about living with Mum is the surveillance, the constant requirement to adhere to proper standards and the feeling that she always knows or will find out what you've been doing. We have a household policy, Mum's policy, of always leaving doors open. Even Mum and Dad's bedroom door is rarely closed. Of course the toilet door*

> *is closed — mostly, unless you are a little kid. It is Mum who corrects table manners, makes sure we give adults a title, has taught us to take pride in moral responsibility and to feel the burden of stoic adherence to duty — all in the name of the father, her father, Our father, my father. A breach of standards would put the father's name at risk. When I ask, "Why not?" She replies, "You don't want to upset your father."*

It is usual practice for women to become mothers and mothering has become freighted with moral obligations produced and maintained by the authority of common sense, scientific and religious discourses. Within these discourses the conjugal couple is the basis of the family; the family is the "fabric of society"; and 'patriarchy' is the metaphoric loom on which this fabric is discursively woven. A pertinent illustration of the durable quality of this fabric is that it remains usual practice for (even feminist) women to give their children the father's name (although it is not uncommon — but still often problematic and unusual — for women to retain their own father's name after marriage).

Haug (1987) argues that "knowing the proper standards" is the discourse through which women become complicit in both their own subordination and the maintenance of patriarchal class structures. In *Democracy in the Kitchen*, Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) reveal the ways in which, with the advent of democracy, mothering became the subject of scientific discourse — a discourse that produced and reproduced hierarchically different class and gender effects. While mothering continued to be hailed as normal, natural and biologically determined, it nonetheless was deemed to be in need of regulation and control. Mothers were to (and have) become the subjects of a hierarchy of authority in relation to mothering. Governments invested this authority in doctors (usually male), social workers, child care nurses and teachers. The biological instincts of the mother were not to be trusted (this even extended in the mid 20th century to a concerted, government funded campaign against breast feeding). Mothers were (and are) to be the guardians of democracy — responsible for the

production of the normal healthy citizen and the suppression of "the ever present threat of revolt" (Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989, p. 40). In the absence of overt authoritarian rule, the masses were to be controlled by the discourses of mothering.

> This task not only demands that women want to do this, a desire which first has to be produced, but that the task is different for the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Working class mothers have to be watched and prevented from being authoritarian, while bourgeois mothers have to nurture and promote rationality at all costs, especially since they and their children are to be the normal individuals who uphold the order and the professionals who do the surveillance. (Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989, p. 42)

Positioned discursively as rightful mother and home maker, it is in the context of the family that the woman is able to experience herself as powerful. In the family, "the positions of wife and mother, though subject to male control, also offer forms of power — the power to socialise children, to run the house, to be the power behind the throne" (Weedon, 1987, p.19). Wife and mother are essentially two of the few (in many contexts, the only two) normal, legitimate, authoritative subject positions on offer to the female subject within the discursively patriarchal field of social relations. As in the case of my own father advising me to become a school teacher (because it would accommodate the responsibilities of my apparently inevitable motherhood), all other possible subject positions on offer to she who would take herself up as the successful good girl/woman are mediated, referent and deferred to the conditions of these positions that are discursively produced as essential and/or inevitable.

Discourses of mothering are central to the maintenance of the prevailing social order and its gendered notions of democracy, freedom, desire and love (Urwin, 1985; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989; Rowland; 1988). Hegemonic discourses of mothering position the middle-class mothers as responsible for guaranteeing

the production of the 'normal' rational individuals of the future (Urwin, 1985; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989) as a condition of having claim to legitimate authority within the private sphere of patriarchal social relations.

Within usual practice and the assumption of male authority, discourses of biological determinism, of common sense and religion override democratic discourses of the free and autonomous individual to take for granted and valorise a family structure in which the breadwinning father is supported in his paternal authority by the dedicated and sensitive wife/mother who will make home a place of *comfort and relaxation* where familial relations are *earnest and sincere*. In "The Regatta", the mother is recognisably sensitive to both her daughter's needs and to the needs of the market place — she has *made (me) a new outfit* for the occasion that emulates the current fashion trend (*tartan pants were all the rage*). Mother is presumably also responsible for the starching and ironing of the *crisp white shirt* and shopping for the other accessories necessary to complete and individualise (*I changed the laces to red ribbons,*) the daughter's appearance for The Regatta where there would be *boys galore.* In this preparation there is created a sense that what is being attended is a fertile part of that sea in which there are plenty of fish — a place to land "a good catch". Landing a good catch, however, is evidently more than simply a matter of being in the right place at the right time; it is also a matter of training.

Preparation for Marriage

I awoke excited with the prospect of attending my cousin's wedding, the first wedding I had ever been to. I hurriedly ate breakfast and was anxious to go and make myself beautiful, as I had always seen that's how people, especially females, look at weddings. My mother had laid out my clothes to wear on my bed, my sisters were both already dressed and looked pretty in their frilly dresses, I expected I would wear something similar.
Instead when I entered my room, there was a white blouse and blue slacks, "Where was my dress?" I thought frantic. I ran out of my room and found Mum in her bedroom.
"What am I wearing to the wedding?" I asked.
"What I put on your bed," replied Mum.
"But Nichole and Karlene are wearing their dresses?"
"Yes I know," replied Mum. "But until you learn to sit like a lady you have to wear pants."
"But Mum", I pleaded, "I will, I'll try really hard".
"NO," said Mum firmly, "We have been through this before, I'm not going to be embarrassed by you, now go and get dressed".
I had been in trouble for about 4 months already for not sitting nicely with my knees together or crossed. I felt so angry I had already really tried to sit nicely but it just wasn't comfortable and the moment I started watching TV I would just forget to sit nicely.
So that day I wore what my mother had chosen.
Every female at the wedding had a dress or skirt on. All day I felt "boyish", unfeminine and too shy to talk to anyone. I nearly cried when I had to stand in a photo with all my female cousins, them with all their frilly dresses and me with my ugly slacks.
I was so upset I had to look, what I thought, ugly at my first wedding when I knew everyone was supposed to look beautiful.
My mother did not let me wear a skirt or dress for about six months. This did not worry me, except for at the wedding as I felt comfortable in pants anyway. My images of what you had to look like at a wedding made me lose confidence and esteem when I wore pants, its obvious I associated a dress with being feminine and beautiful.

In their analysis and concern for the production of feminine subjectivities in relation to mothering and to fantasy and desire, what Walkerdine (1984, 1985) and Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) note is that a whole range of "negative" emotions such as jealousy and anger are forced underground by being labelled as "silly nonsense", naughty or wrong. In fantasy stories such as fairytales or the teen romance comics that promise One day my prince will come, antagonistic or negative emotions are ascribed only to the

evil/ugly/unworthy/undesirable characters (Walkerdine, 1984). The good girl/woman endures in silence because she is above (the expression of) such feelings. Davies (1993a), notes that boys tend to see freedom in terms of being able to take action and to have control over objects and others, while girls are more likely to see freedom in terms of having control over the self. The work of Taylor, Gilligan and Sullivan (1995), Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) and Walkerdine, (1990) indicate that the problem and mandate to self control heightens in the conscious struggle to achieve acceptable femininity as girls enter puberty. As a matter of sending emotions underground (by honing housekeeping skills in lieu of beauty, by acting like a lady rather than a dare devil, by telling yourself it's what's on the inside that counts or by telling yourself it doesn't worry you because you're more comfortable in pants anyway) this theme of controlling (your)self (responsibility for the production of which appears most explicitly as a mandate of mothering) weaves its way through the stories told throughout the collective memory work project.

Subjectification within familial discourses, discourses of mothering and the relations of power and emotions which permeate family relationships activate and affirm already gendered discourses and the hierarchical and competitive alignment of subject positions available within them. The subject makes sense of and validates her experience and her ability to control herself through and within the authoritative discourses available and familiar to her. Making sense of her (silent) emotional response to being hierarchically rated by the boys, the subject/narrator of "The Regatta" calls on a range of available discourses, including discourses of comparison (*they certainly weren't the most dashing boys*), of psychology (*egocentric bastards*), of stoicism (*I so wanted to react in a way that I didn't care but I did*), of stereotyped feminism (*all men are bastards*) and of the silent feminine (*we just walked on*). Evidently, the subject can access an array of discourses within which she can take up a position in response to prevailing

circumstances — all with the effect of justifying the demand for self control as a way of being 'free' (or protecting the self) from the (feeling of being in the) control of others. Being in control of the self means not forgetting the self — being constantly self aware and self sacrificing — (*I had already really tried to sit nicely but it wasn't comfortable and the moment I started watching TV I would just forget to sit nicely*). Over time, the belief in the self as autonomous individual (as constituted in discourses of liberal humanism and biological determinism not otherwise visible in the story) position the subject to take up as her own the practices demanded in the process of "category maintenance work" and "daily training in normality" effectively making them appear 'natural' — desirable femininity must be at once natural and contrived — (*who I am and how I can make myself attractive in other ways*). Taking up this position, each subject adds the strength of her personal practice to the prevailing order of gender relations that offer those embodied as female, relational positions as subordinate, sexualised Other — (*But that's what we all want !!!* isn't it?*).

Being the King of the castle

> Who is the super uncle who hasn't prevented a girl from flying, the flight of the thief, who has not bound her, not bandaged the feet of his little darling, so that they might be exquisitely petite, who hasn't mummified her into prettiness? (Cixous, 1991, p. 8)

Large numbers of men support and enter into marriage and family relations because it is within marriage and family that the sustainability of male authority is invested; and it is within marriage and family relations that the expression of patriarchal authority by individual men, positioned as father, is sanctioned (Buchbinder, 1994; Connell, 1987; Erenreich, 1983; Firestone, 1970; Kimmell, 1987; Rowbotham, 1973). In the process of subjectification whereby each subject takes up (or resists) the gendered subject positions made available within the prevailing discourses and storylines of the dominant culture, the

promise of power has a hegemonic effect in the production of masculinities (Davies, 1989; 1990a; 1993a, 1993b). Various discourses entreat all good subjects to support and aspire to marriage and manhood (or womanhood) as synonymous with heterosexuality and normality evidenced in the collective taking up and imposition of a complex array of gendered signifying practices. Desiring or being ascribed positioning within these discourses as the mature and worthy man/hero/prince, an obvious reading of (and usual way of taking up) the storyline is to become provider, protector and author of women (and children). From this position, the compliance, deference, beauty and servitude of (particularly) female family members (and his performances of authority in relation to them) signify (at least to himself) that he has successfully taken up and been ascribed his (rightful) position within the family/storyline (which, in turn, symbolises successful manhood).

Fashion parade for Dad

For as long as I can remember, dad has always looked at women. At how attractive they are and how they are dressed. Perhaps that is why the following was so important to me at the time when it occurred.
I am 5 years old. I have been shopping with mum for some new summer clothes. We have bought two new outfits and a pair of swimmers. I am waiting for my dad to come home from work. I am excited at what I have to show him. With my Mum's help I have prepared a fashion parade, I have put mats on the carpet to form a catwalk, I have chosen some music, and I have layed my outfits on my bed, ready to parade.
I am sitting in the chair closest to the window. My heart beats faster with the excitement as I see Dad's car turn into the driveway. As he walks up the front steps, I run into my bedroom at the end of the hallway, to prepare for the parade. I call out to mum, she comes into my room and tells me everything is ready. I can hear the music in the loungeroom. I am already dressed in my first outfit. It is a summer dress. It is blue floral with dark blue trim and straps that tie on the shoulders. I run to the hall door and slowly open it. Dad is sitting in his chair, the one that directly faces the TV. It's almost a throne, if anyone sits on it, they move when dad wants to sit down. I walk along the mats, twirling and dancing to the music. When I reach the end of the catwalk, I do a slow turn before returning to my bedroom. I quickly put on my swimmers, and over the top, I put my new pink T-shirt and thigh high denim skirt that made me feel so grown up. I run back up the hallway and push open the door. As I walk up the catwalk I

feel like I am a model from the TV and magazines. I twirl and dance to the music. Now behind the door, I take off my skirt and shirt. My swimmers are a pink one piece that ties at the back of my neck. I parade my new swimmers. Mum turns the music off and dad claps. I sit on his knee and he tells me that I am his little Miss Australia. I feel very content and special.

But the interpersonal transaction between father and daughter, and their relationally gendered subject positions within the mandate of beauty as synonymous with successful (sexualised and objectified) femininity and desire-ability, is not always so seemingly cosy and unproblematic.

Ruth is about fourteen, living in a small town but larger than she is used to. She finds the number of children her age alarming and desperately wants to be accepted. With summer coming on she has decided she needs a new pair of swimmers as she feels sure her old ones will be the cause of much ribbing. To this end she has been saving all the money she gets so she can buy a good pair of swimmers. She has finally saved enough money, and, after much deliberation has decided on a costume she feels looks good on her and is fashionable. She is very excited, feeling her worries over acceptance will now disappear as others appreciate her looks and clothing.

Once home, she models the swimmers for her mother who agrees she looks good and lifts Ruth's self-esteem through saying so. When her father returns home he asks to see the swimmers and, although embarrassed, Ruth feels confident enough to model them for him. Once again, she is pleased as she prepares to model the swimmers.

Her father's first reaction is a smile and a wolf-whistle (which Ruth thinks is inappropriate but she is glad he approves). She turns around and all appreciation stops. Her father says "Oh yuck ! It's a pity you've got such a fat bum and legs. You could be quite attractive. Actually, your stomach's getting a bit big too. You'll have to work on that. Fat girls are so ugly ."

Ruth returns to her room feeling ugly, worthless and rejected. She gazes at herself critically in the mirror and, although fat on her body is non-existent, she sees an overweight and ugly person. Immediately she decides she doesn't need breakfast. Later she will also skip lunch and not have any snacks……..

What the boys/men in all the stories are certain of is their maleness (the penis in their pants) that is taken to extend to them the right to be judge and author of

the feminine. Amongst the data there are various subtle (as well as overt) signifiers of this right — including the many instances in which participants told of such things as: asking father/brother approval/advice about dress; not feeling happy with a haircut until father/brother/boyfriend had approved; removing body hair after only passing comment from a boy/man — all of which draw attention to the ways in which girls/women collude in the assumption of the male right to power. At the same time, boys/men are able to ensure their own position within discourse as members of the dominant gender category through taking up practices of masculinity which engender fear and uncertainty of self and other producing the female subject as turning in on and against herself as both object and subject of male authority.

Will children be seen but not heard ?

Anne Cranny-Francis (1992, p. 79), focusing her analysis on versions and interpretations of *Little Red Riding Hood* asks, "So what are boys learning from this tale?" She says:

> First they learn what is correct female, or patriarchal feminine behaviour: chiefly compliance with authority. They also learn what happens to little girls who refuse that role: they get eaten — and they deserve it. So they learn that women, members of the sex with whom many of them will want to form intimate relationships, should be characterised by compliance and that, if they are not they deserve to be punished.

The political and personal effects of the genital configuration that a person happens to be born with is the location of particular interactive practices and expectations within and between sexed bodies. The sexed body becomes the discursive site for the construction of particular forms of masculinity and femininity which produce collective practice in hegemonic ways. The research undertaken by Davies (1989; 1993a) reveals how, from an early age, the young

child recognises that there are particular (differential) ways for girls and boys to be and to act. In her analysis she shows how young children often work conscientiously to get their gender right (particularly in the eyes of others) and will assist others (often by punitive means) to do the same — the process she describes as "category maintenance work". In her 1993 analysis, Davies links this process with the desire to achieve a sense of control over one's world through the achievement of knowing and being knowable. Connell (1987) argues that the power differential that exists between gendered ways of being is inherent in the construction of masculinity and femininity. He points out that (unlike femininity) masculinity has long held an ascendant position and that masculinity is constructed in the context of the overall subordination of the other sex — a state of play made possible and sustained by the option of compliance being taken up as a preferred pattern of femininity. Taking up compliance as a central signifier of acceptable personhood is produced in a variety of ways which become conflated with (hetero)sexual desire.

Living life as subordinate Other within the heterosexual and gendered social and political contexts of liberal humanism requires girls/women (and children) to play boy's/men's games by their (individual/subjective interpretation/imposition of) rules and (t)heir assumed right to rule. Even when the girl/woman is a welcome participant in the games and contexts constructed by boys/men/the white male system her participation is conditional upon her maintaining/accepting her subordinate position, collusion in and deference to, the authority of the male/men — a position which, through repeated and varied experiences within the discourses which convey the romantic myth, she must/will come to learn is assumed to be natural and desirable. The story below, provides an unusually vivid illustration, of the many ways in which the lived and told experiences of girls and women, suggest that any attempt to speak her own truth (particularly if that truth is read as

bringing into question the superior strength, skill or position of the male) can lead to retaliation. And it will be his very maleness and the authority assumed and ascribed to maleness within discourse, as represented by his possession of the phallus/penis, that will be used to punish her transgression.

In or Out

Molly had a good relationship with her brother. This was because living on a farm, there weren't many children to play with. Molly often played tom boy games with her brother. Molly's father had built a tennis court on the farm, as he loved to play tennis. Molly and her brother often used the cement court, to ride skate boards, roller skates and push bikes.

This particular warm spring morning seven year old Molly and her brother decided to have a hit of tennis, whilst they waited for dad to have his smoko break. They dragged out a couple of old tennis rackets and balls, and started hitting the balls. After some time, they became bored with hitting balls. So they devised a primitive scoring system, where once the ball went over the back line it was out. It was a close game and there were very few points between each player. Molly would hit the ball into the corner, causing her brother to run, and a rally would be had, before the ball went out.

After each rally Molly would ask her brother to swap ends. He would refuse, he didn't want to play with the sun in his eyes. Molly didn't argue, but continued to play in the sun. It was Molly's brother's turn to serve. He hit a rather fast ball for his size, and Molly had to really run and stretch her racket out to return the ball. She managed it though, and what a shot it was. Molly's brother in turn had to really run to hit the ball. He whacked the ball with his racket but just a little too hard as it landed just the other side of the back line. Molly yelled "out". That was another point for her, and she felt quite pleased with herself. Her brother stood there, red in the face.

After a moment he blurted out, "It was not". Molly couldn't believe it, it had definitely gone out. Molly started walking straight towards her brother yelling, "It was out!" Molly's brother picked up his racket and began shaking it at Molly. It was only a few seconds before Molly's brother was running towards Molly shaking the racket. Molly began screaming and a game of cat and mouse began, with Molly's brother chasing Molly trying to hit her. They ran and ran till Molly could run no longer.

But she had to get the racket off her brother so he couldn't hit her. She stopped running and turned and faced her brother. As he approached with the racket thrust above his head, Molly put her hand out and grabbed the racket as it headed for her. The battle then commenced for control of the racket. After much pushing and kicking Molly gained control.

> *Molly's brother was absolutely furious. For a moment their eyes locked. Then, in an instant, Molly's brother pulled down his pants and held his penis. He smiled wickedly then urinated up Molly's legs. Molly stood there for a brief moment as the warm urine trickled down her legs and into her shoes. She didn't know what kind of action to take. She had lost all her power and her brief moment of control had disappeared. She realised she had no choice but to seek power from higher authorities – this was the only way to win this unfair battle. She ran towards the house yelling, aiming to gain her parents attention. She did gain her parents attention and her brother was punished. The battle was ended, but Molly had not had the power to successfully win on her own.*

The production and maintenance of the assumption of authority being invested in the male body is reliant upon the production and maintenance of a stereotyped femininity representative of compliance and dependence (*Molly had not had the power to win on her own*). Played out on the site constructed by and for the father (*Molly's father had built a tennis court on the farm, as he loved to play tennis*) the female body-subject plays out the ambivalent struggle of compliance (*Molly didn't argue but continued to play in the sun*) and resistance (*Molly started walking straight towards her brother yelling*) to male authority, she realises the possibility of becoming victim of male violence (*she had to get the racquet off her brother so he couldn't hit her*)

In the struggle for dominance/the right to authority, Molly's brother seems to recognise that authority is only effective if it affects compliance and that it is his penis which gives him the right to the compliance of the Other (*Molly's brother pulled down his pants and held his penis … She had lost all power and her brief moment of control had disappeared*.) The inscription of authority and compliance on male and female bodies respectively is critical to the centrality of Western metaphysics as constitutive of belief in difference as natural and biologically determined. As Cranny-Francis (1995, p. 53) points out, "Since the process of producing difference must be concealed so that discrimination can be officially

sanctioned, it is constructed as natural". An effect, Barthes (1972) would argue, of myth entering discourse.

One of the most striking portrayals of young boys awareness of their relative positioning in relation to females (regardless of age) appears in Walkerdine's analysis of a preschool teacher's encounter with two four year old boys engaged in block play. In this encounter, the boys undermine the authority invested in the woman as adult and teacher by evoking the discourse of woman as sex object. They do this by making reference to the teacher's gender specific and sexualised underwear and body parts demanding, "take your bra off, take your knickers off, take your bum off" (1981, p. 15). This discursive positioning of the adult woman teacher as sex object has the effect of silencing the subject and naturalising the behaviour of the boys. The meanings engendered in this silence include the (re)cognition that maleness/men can (successfully) assume the right to authority over all women/girls regardless of age or other categories of social meaning or binary positioning.

The metaphor of patriarchy

> A man's right to confer judgement on any woman's beauty while remaining himself unjudged is beyond scrutiny because it is thought of as God given. That right has become so urgently important to exercise because it is the last unexamined right remaining intact from the old list of masculine privilege: those that it was believed that God or nature or another absolute authority bestowed upon all men to exert over all women. As such it is daily exercised more harshly in compensation for other rights over women, and the other ways to control them, now lost forever. (Wolf, 1990, p. 87)

The discourses which convey the romantic myth produce "patriarchy" as metaphor — a metaphor for usual practice and for the lived experience of gender relations. Responsive to the historicity of discursively constituted conditions of lived experience, "patriarchy" as a metaphor has been produced

within, and achieved ascendancy through, a balance of interactive signifying practices taken up by men and women, girls and boys. These conditions, usually taken-for-granted as normal and natural — as "just the way things are", (more often than not) render invisible the agency of action and the possibilities and enabling limits constituted in discourse. Lived within the metaphor of patriarchy, "We might make our own history, but within conditions which are not of our choosing — that is, in relations of domination and subordination/subjectification" (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 198).

The patriarchy metaphor is given meaning within myth (particularly the heterosexist myth of One day my prince will come) in the way that it is conveyed by discourses and (re)constituted through practices that have been naturalised as gender-specific. This metaphor is exemplified in myth, discourse and practices which display and presume sex based differences conflating masculinity with authority and femininity with compliance. As a metaphor produced within myth, 'patriarchy' is transparent, naturalised, unproblematic.

Constituted within the discourses which convey and are conveyed by the romantic storyline and binary logic of 'one day my prince will come' gender relations become relations of power and desire. As an effect of emotion and imagination, associated beliefs and hopes choreograph within the being of the subject the performance of desires as a matter of compliance and resistance hewn and tempered by experience. Within the being of the subject, within emotion, imagination and the oft repeated circumstances of life, paternal presence (both of the symbolic and the material father) are ideologised as arks (large, powerful, structure and saviour) — patriarch, monarch, Noah's ark — safe haven, protector of the future, heterosexual, authorial, omnipresent manifestation of fear and desire.

The collective effects of these metaphors, as they are lived out within prevailing discourses and the binary logic of meaning making, are at the heart of the production of feminine fear and desire. Taking up the practices of femininity as one's own within the terms of the romantic myth, womanhood continues to be metaphorically, emotionally, morally and literally associated with home and hearth, virtue and beauty — all of which continue to focus the labour of women's concerns within private life as this is ordered in relation to male authority.

Embodied as male, the speaking acting subject imagines the possibilities and power of becoming the patriarch, the monarch, building the ark. At risk of being invisible, overlooked, denigrated in her presence, the female subject hears and feels the responsibility, obligation, apparent necessity of decorating and maintaining the arks and herself to please him. Sentimentally, marriage becomes the ark, the vessel that promises to transport one from the ordinariness of life, from being one of many, to being chosen, special, to having a faithful ally with whom to share life long memories. Imaginatively, socially and subconsciously marriage becomes a fortress in which fears are contained or appeased, a vessel in which to ride the waves of uncertainty, a castle in which desires can be legitimately fulfilled.

Within the dynamic interplay of materiality, discourse and identity, the availability of subject positions and possible meanings appear to be dependant upon whether the subject is recognisably embodied as male or female (Davies, 1993a). In the process of subjectification, possession of the penis becomes understood as guaranteeing authority, in particular, authority of the male/masculine in relation to the female/feminine.

Dream Legs

This particular morning Molly felt like being a young lady. Molly always chose the clothes she would wear based on her mood. It was a beautifully warm day and deciding to go to the library to return a few borrowed books and borrow a few more, Molly put on a blue body suit and a navy blue short skirt.

Molly was happy to reach the library in this warm weather. She pushed open the door, and was immediately welcomed with a cool gush of air conditioned air. There were quite a few people in the library listening to the hum of air conditioning and the turning of pages. Molly found the row she was looking for and turned into it.

There were two other males in the row trying to find their books. Molly didn't pay much attention to the males, and politely said "excuse me" as she skimmed past the first male to find her book. She scanned the shelves intensely, trying to locate the exact call number she was looking for. She did not notice the male at the end of the row coming towards her with his found books. He brushed past Molly, then stopped and turned back to face her. Molly looked up at him. In an aggravated voice he said, "Why don't you go shave your legs ?" Molly was stunned, she turned the other way. She heard the male turn and briskly, but confidently stride away.

The words he voiced, went over and over again in Molly's mind. Molly walked herself out of the library in a daze. She began to ask herself why he had asked the question. Was it because she dressed like a lady, but had hairy legs. Or was it because he had felt her hairy legs as he brushed past her. Molly couldn't figure it out, and recalled the incident over and over again in her mind.
For the rest of the day Molly was paranoid about her hairy legs. Everybody who looked at her, seemed to be looking at her legs. That night when Molly got home she went straight to the bathroom to shave her hairy legs. She couldn't stand the ridicule.

Molly Comments:
I can't understand why it had such an impact on my feelings. I was so shocked I could not tell you what this male looks like. Every time I recall the event the male is faceless. I am nearly positive that I would not have shaved my legs if the statement had been made by a female, as prior to this event some female friends were making some rather blatant comments about my hairy legs !

Molly's concluding comments act as a reminder that, although category maintenance work occurs between members of the same category, the efficacy of such work is strengthened when it is engaged with members of the

ascendant opposite and desired category. It is the work that occurs on the boundaries between categories where there is the possibility of negotiated meanings and where acts of resistance are written on the body-subjects located within the romantic myth and discourses of desirability that shore up the metaphor of patriarchy. At the Regatta (as in the fashion parades for dad or in the library or on the street or tennis court), boys/men are positioned on the literal and metaphoric path that the feminine subject and her moral support (*It was always better to have some kind of female friend on days like this*) both choose and become destined to follow. These men/boys embody the authority of collective effects and gendered meanings within the discursive field of lived and imagined experiences which position female subjects within ascendant discourses, as both object of desire and Other to those embodied as male (*I thought if these boys thought I was only a 2-3 then all boys thought that also*.) The specificity of particular boys and experiences is lost, rendered invisible within the usual (patriarchal) discourses of gender relations that position girls/women as legitimate objects of the male gaze. Produced within the transparent metaphor of patriarchy (of which "The Regatta" is a symbol) the legitimacy and interdependency of the positions (male:author-female:object) is repeatedly signified throughout lived experience — whether it be by the mother's and daughter's preparation of the daughter for The Regatta or the Fashion Parade for Dad or for the Preparation for Marriage, or by the historically constituted and ritualised gathering of the fathers and sons or their individual acts of sex-based authority or aggression.

What is made visible for the reader of "The Regatta" is the position of these two boys as outside or on the fringes of the main arena, like fathers at home they are not amongst their comrades chanting patriotic war cries or doing battle behind the oars on the river, they are more like guerilla fighters targeting the unwitting and too confident enemy on the fringes (the effort that has gone into the

subject's appearance is eminently readable as at once individualised and sexualised).

I wish to posit two (among other) possible readings of the boys' position on the path at *The Regatta* that are neither mutually exclusive nor static but which open up possibilities for understanding the positioning of men/boys who act punitively in relation to women/girls in particular historical moments. The first is that these boys have been unsuccessful in achieving coherent membership of the dominant group/hegemonic masculinity often finding themselves at variance with the institutionalised practices and authorities of the regime (possibly as a consequence of the cultural capital they possess being devalued by the institutional order and its participants). The second reading is that these boys have taken up the discourse of individualism as their preferred discourse - believing it to be "uncool" to be doing what everyone else is doing and expected to do, they were doing their "own thing". Either or both (or some other) of these readings/storylines ("the misunderstood youth' or "the valiant individual") are likely to have been taken up as a consequence of the boys experiencing their membership of attendant gendered categories as unsuccessful or tenuous. These boys can be read as experiencing an uncertainty in the social requirement of simultaneously signifying belonging and individuality; and as resolving this uncertainty by expressing in definitive and punitive ways the certainty of their authorial rights in relation to females.

In the process of embodied subjectification, possession of the penis becomes understood as guaranteeing authority — in particular, authority of the male/masculine in relation to the female/feminine. Living within the hegemony of contemporary patriarchal heterosexuality means living within the romantic storyline of 'one day my prince will come' simultaneously and variously in synchrony and contradiction. Within the romantic stories that

promise happiness ever after, life from girlhood to womanhood is to be a process of coming to appreciate, to value, to support, and to experience the (male) 'need' to (be seen to) do heroic deeds, to adventure, to do business and to rule; but, above all things, the female subject is to 'naturally' desire becoming another's treasure. Becoming another's treasure mean(s) to lose your 'self' in 'self' consciousness. This loss of self is institutionalised in practices such as taking the husband's name in marriage, assigning of the father's name to all children regardless of gender, continued use of language and practices which assume the universal "he" and alignment of particular occupations with one gender (or the Other). Embodied as female in inter and intra personal transactions a loss of self occurs in any practice or discursive position, that assumes or assigns authority with maleness.

Over time the (post)modern (re)production of liberal humanism continues to engender a concerto of change in which an increasingly complex array of discourses and practices of familial, institutional and street life act to sustain the metaphor of patriarchy. The metaphor and its effects are produced in a cacophony of discursive experiences that point out and notify (the conditions of) the romantic myth of one day my prince will come. Emotional and imaginative conditions in which the tensions and contradictions of experience are scripted into a melodic narrative where the alignment of maleness with authority leads the feminine subject into the compliant dance of questing to be desired and treasured. This concerto is a romantic and sentimental one. Imbalances of power foregrounded by quavers of fear and humiliation are subverted, rendered inaudible or made harmonious by the passionate refrain of desires, of recognition, of the possibility of love, and of living happily ever. Throughout a life history within metaphoric patriarchy each person is subject to these conditions which include, among other things, acceptance of authority/God as male, fear of male violence and desire for male approval.

CHAPTER 5

LIVING THE FEMININE

> Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern. Neither the body nor thoughts and feelings have meaning outside their discursive articulation, but the ways in which discourse constitutes the minds and bodies of individuals is always part of a wider network of power relations, often with institutional bases. (Weedon, 1987, p. 108)

> None the less, a man does acquire sexual rights to a woman by virtue of marriage and a woman who is not visibly under the protection of a man can be regarded as fair sexual game by others. Fear sexual violence and harassment is also one means by which women are policed and police themselves through a range of disciplinary practices — from restricting their own access to public space, to where they choose to sit on a bus or train, how they sit and whom they avoid eye contact with. (Jackson, 1996, p. 25)

The shift in the patterning of patriarchy that has come with the weaving of second wave feminism into the fabric of society makes the myths and metaphors through which gender is constituted ever more chameleon like. Variously in tension with and colonising feminist discourses, the prevailing discourses of democratic capitalism are underscored by the discourses of the individual and of biological determinism. These discourses are commonly at play together in particular moments of subjectification that constitute the possibilities and enabling limits of what it means to be embodied as one sex and not the other. The available subject positions within these discourses, where we come to know ourselves and others as one sex or the other, are constituted within the boundaries of difference and, are hierarchical. This chapter focuses on what it means to be embodied as female within the permissions and constraints of social relations where our subjectification as subordinate other is in-tension with the rights and freedoms of the 'individual'. This tension on the boundaries of difference and desire is most evident when taken-for-granted

signifying practices of masculinity and femininity are juxtaposed in particular discursive moments. Such moments also make evident how a feminine subject position becomes aligned with deference. This is a discursive state of play in which fear and desire become conflated in the production of the gendered subject. Positioned to embody deference within competing discourses of liberation and subordination has produced conditions in which, as Wolf (1990) suggests, to live as (desirable, acceptable) female in these (post)modern times, requires working three shifts of social production: money making, home making (including child bearing and rearing and domestic labour) and beauty making. All of this labour of women and the interpersonal transactions required therein, marks each body-subject in both particularised and collective ways that reflect positioning in and by prevailing discourses. As she experiences moments of fear and desire within everyday discourses, the struggle of living the feminine in the midst of the "discursive battle for the subjectivity of the individual" (Weedon, 1987, p.105) has colonising effects on the emotional life and practices of the subject. To be embodied as female within everyday discourse is to be repeatedly positioned as the self conscious subject of the differential reading and writing of her body for and by others.

> The affluent, educated, liberated woman of the First World, who can enjoy freedoms unavailable to any women ever before, do not feel as free as they want to. And they can no longer restrict to the subconscious their sense that this lack of freedom has something to do with—with apparently frivolous issues, things that should not matter. Many are ashamed to admit that such trivial concerns—to do with bodies, faces, hair, clothes—matter so much. But in spite of shame, guilt and denial, more and more women are wondering if it isn't that they are entirely neurotic and alone but rather that something important is indeed at stake that has to do with the relationship between female liberation and female beauty. (Wolf, 1990, p.9)

Theorising what it means to live the feminine within the stories told for the collective memory work project of 'One day my prince will come', I continue to

be confronted by the oppositional and colonising effects of binary thought in the process of subjectification by prevailing discourses. Positioned to embody "home and hearth", virtue and beauty, living the feminine means living with the ever present possibility of being positioned oppositionally as home wrecker, whore, frigid, ugly. The social relations of living as female body-subject is to live within the simultaneously ever present possibilities of opposition and desire — the desire to be acknowledged and appreciated as an 'individual' worthy of love, security, protection.

In this chapter I examine strategic performances within discourse which produce fear and where desire is implicated and intertwined with the sexualising of the body-subject as object on the boundaries of difference. Fear and desire are told and read as conflated discursively in ways that affect women collectively. Fear, of not being good enough, of not being deserving enough, fear of being judged and fear of deserving the judgement of others is produced within and sustains the ever present threat of misogyny as a shadowy backdrop for the metaphor of patriarchy. The fear of oppositional potential engenders the sense and sensibilities of women as defined within discourses of heterosexuality at home, at school and in the wider social milieu. These discourses are underscored by acts of violence and of silence that have collective effects. The fear of being judged by other women (and men) and of jeopardising valued relationships, makes being the subject of gender violence often unspeakable within the inter-personal discourses of daily life. Within "the discursive battle for the subjectivity of the individual", something important is at stake — the right to authority and to a legitimate and valued position in social relations. Engendering fear and silence in the body of the subordinate subject is a colonising effect of discourse.

The disruptive effects of feminist discourses engender possibilities for fulfilling multiple desires and of taking up multiple positions within prevailing discourses. Contained by and within feelings of threat and uncertainty within the discursively constituted (hetero)sexual self, these desires and subject positions continue to be taken up as contingent upon the conditions of the romantic myth. Uncertainty about being "good enough", about being "desirable" and about being "normal" (as defined within the prevailing historically constituted discourses of femininity) overwrite and underscore the effects of significant ground swells of feminist discourse. Possibly the most salient effect of feminist discourses for the lives of women in general, is the diversification and elaboration of codes of conduct and appearance. These effects are produced within the field of play of discourses conveying the romantic myth and are particularly attendant to competitive discourses of the individual. Positioning within this play of discourses compels subjects to produce a desirable "look" that signifies both individuality and belonging. This positioning opens the subject to Capitalist discourses and practices of consumerism and, in so doing, lending support to the ascending discourses of economic rationalism. In this way, the discourses which convey the romantic myth, draw opposition and resistance into themselves.

As an effect of binary logic, gender relations position female/feminine being as opposite to, or other than, male/masculine being with power effects which ultimately make being a woman subordinate to the being of a man. This is a discursive process conflated with personal, social and institutional practices which produce as taken-for-granted, physical differences between male and female bodies. These differences are exaggerated by 'naturalised' practices of femininity associated with the production of beauty and practices of masculinity associated with 'natural' strength. Taken-for-granted embodied understandings of what it means to be man-woman, boy-girl are played out in

multifarious and collective ways throughout the course of a life history within everyday discourse where the subject is positioned as gendered. For those who take themselves up as female and not male, having been positioned as subordinate other in the binary of mind and body, the focus on body becomes central to identity and to relationships. Girls learn from an early age that their value is intimately tied up with appearances and the opinions of others — particularly men (Firestone, 1970; Haug, 1987). The appearances and opinions of others, when spoken by women through the performance of gender (Butler, 1990) and voice, which includes silence (Foucault, 1987), embody the collective desire for desire-ability. The desire for desire-ability as it is constituted within liberal humanist discourses as an economy of appearances and opinions, defines within the realm of emotion and imagination, the worth of women/girls/"ladies" in accordance with the conditions of the romantic story line. Within prevailing heterosexual social relations, the requisite of this desire-ability produces a girl/woman's worth as imagined by her and by others to be granted the apparent ability to be attractive (and attracted) to men. This discursive dynamic forges the authority of men within and across the gender boundaries of embodied space and time. This chapter addresses how living the feminine means living within a prevailing consciousness that our bodies are scripts which are constantly available for reading and (re)marking in social relations.

As we are positioned and position ourselves within the discourses that convey myth, the ways in which we collectively take up signifying practices of gender difference characterises a state of play within gender relations that Connell (1987) has described as "emphasised femininity". The female body-subject is multifariously positioned within everyday discourse to take up as part of her "daily training in normality" practices which locate her subordinately in regimes of 'truth' and, which reinvest the authority of masculinity in her body.

How we take up and resist particular practices in this volatile social landscape of heterosexuality is contingent on the way in which we (re)mark our bodies and the ways our bodies are (re)marked upon (or made unpass(re)markable). In particular and multiple ways as we actively (re)write our bodies in the images of discourses which convey the romantic myth, we each take up the desire for desire-ability, (which is never without threat to our security and stability). In the words of Grosz:

> Body writing relies on the one hand on extraneous instruments, tools for marking the body's surface — the stylus, or cutting edge, the needle, the tattoo, the razor; and in interior, psychical and physiological body-products or objects to remake the body — moisturising creams, makeup, exercise, the sensations, pleasures, pains, sweat and tears of the body-subject. The subject is named by being branded on its surface, creating a particular kind of 'depth-body' or interiority the subject identifies as its (disembodied) core. Subjects thus produced are not simply the imposed results of alien coercive forces; the body is internally lived, experienced and acted upon by the subject and the social collectivity. (1990, p. 65)

These practices make readable various subtle signifiers of our interpellation into and interpretation of a preferred 'normality'. Other practices, positioned oppositionally and devalued within the binary logic of myth are pathologised but continue to circulate as a threat to the security of "normal" positioning within prevailing discourses. Fear is produced in the conflicts and contradictions that "point out and notify" body-subjects of the competitive and hierarchical conditions of 'normal' gendered positioning within the discourses that convey the myth of 'one day my prince will come'.

The stories told throughout the collective memory work project 'One day my prince will come' help illuminate the complexion and complexity of the processes through which categories attain and sustain oppositional meanings that constitute (hetero)sexual experiences as relations of power in a social

economy. In activating or inserting oneself into prevailing discourses of heterosexuality and adopting the signifying practices of gendered subject positioning as one's own, the feminine subject renders herself and is rendered subordinate, colonised, victim.

Speaking of the identity politics of race and drawing on the work of Fanon, Bhaba and hooks, Anne Cranny-Francis explains that within colonialist discourse:

> the 'appropriate' response is for the colonised to experience both fear (of his own abnormality, his essential badness, evil, meanness, ugliness) and the desire to be other (not black). ... The 'other' is positioned to desire sameness, for there is no otherness in the stereotype; there is just a negative sameness, a fixity in terms that validate the colonialist. The colonised is positioned to fear and hate his own body as the marker of an 'otherness' which is not a difference but a denigration. (1995, p. 55)

Similarly, the body of the subject is colonised through an interplay of fear and desire constituted in the lived experience of the discourses which convey the conditions of the romantic myth. Real and imagined threats (to the body and its desires) and the responsibility invested in the 'individual' open up a (silent) space for colonisation by the discourses that convey prevailing myths and metaphors. The discursive and material splitting of public from private is central to the discursive colonisation of the female body-subject. This splitting of public from private can be as obvious or as subtle as the fence or the door that separates the home from the street and, like the sexual division of labour is valued and embodied differently along gender lines.

Embodying difference

> *I remember always having to curtail activities at school because doing handstands or bending over or sitting with your legs apart caused your pants to show and that was deeply humiliating for both boys and girls,*

except by wearing shorts, boys had an easier time preventing it from happening. ... - In year six I was informed that I had been voted to have the best body in our class (by the boys). Of this accomplishment I was very proud. My legs also received numerous compliments through out my adolescence (these were no doubt associated with the fact that my brother, sister and I were made to do at least an hour of running training three to six days a week, whether it be track work or a 10km jog, from the time I was eight). ... I remember being lined up for class one day when a peer suggested I should shave my legs. (I am blonde and have therefore never had a problem with exceptionally noticeable body hair). A few others agreed (some boys too) so I went home and asked permission of my mother. She refused but that night I shaved from my ankle to my knee, such was the importance I felt for this action. Since then the shaving has gradually increased to include all my legs, my armpits and bikini line. I can't stand body hair on women. If I was dark-haired I would probably remove all the hair from my face, chest, back, stomach and arms. Thank goodness for small mercies.

From birth, the subject is positioned and is engaged in the task of positioning herself, according to the biological presence or absence of a penis. It is very difficult to sex babies with their nappies on. If it wasn't for the pink and blue bunny rugs or the bow sticky-taped to the head, it would be difficult to avoid causing offence by calling he "she" or she "he". It seems to be an imperative of society, a mandate of parenting and a responsibility of 'individual' subjects to exaggerate differences along gender lines. In so doing, tensions are maintained along the boundaries of gender difference that resist transgressions and indifference (Connell, 1987; Cranny-Francis, 1995; Davies, 1989, 1993; Moore, 1994). In the development of identity and (hetero)sexuality a preeminence on presentation of the self as gendered is established in early childhood. In accordance with the discourses of gender difference and heterosexuality, babies and children are clothed, regardless of climate, for the sake of propriety and appearances of "knowing the proper standards" (Haug, 1987) of category and (con)textual location which are to be taken as "naturally" residing in the gendered body. Within liberal humanism it is the body of the subject/individual which is taken to be the origin of the discourses and practices in circulation. Discursively produced in this way, successful category

membership brings with it the promise of unity and belonging with other members of that category. Together, subjects within discourse become bound in a taken-for-granted alliance for the maintenance of particular meanings and associated signifying practices. In this discursive 'community', where the body is taken to "naturally" re-present the (discursive) gender category to which we belong, it is without reason: it is emotion and therefore inexplicable when the body is other than what is taken-for-granted.

Being too big

She could feel the corners of her mouth begin to twitch and she pressed her lips together. Her eyes showed the anger and embarrassment of the words spoken to her. She felt the burning roll of tears down her face, as the sun licked them up, dry like the desert. She slowly crouched to the ground with her head in her hands. She felt Miss Smith's hand on her back, rubbing it up and down, like a roller coaster where she thought she'd be sick. I wish you wouldn't touch me, Jo thought. Leave me alone, go away, she yelled in her mind.
She lifted her head,
and looked through red, puffy eyes,
they were still there.
All those girls who were 'girls'.
The small, skinny beautiful girls,
gazing at her in disbelief.
They had no idea of her torment.
No idea what it was like to be bigger and taller than everyone else.
No idea to not fit in with the 'girls'.
Jo knew she could never be like them, and was glad.
She didn't want to be another 'girl' she wanted to be Jo, an individual who wasn't like the rest.

Faced with the material evidence that her body does not fit the taken-for-granted mould of femininity, the subject is able to find refuge and consolation in taking up as her own the discourse of the individual. The ways in which being embodied as female means to be positioned as being the same (as other females) and at the same time different is not always a matter of appearing different, and is not always reconcilable within the discourses of the individual. Sometimes being treated differently, being judged differently, being singled out

is a matter of power and powerlessness — of confusion at being caught at the interface of authority and deference — of being simultaneously positioned and embodied as deferential, desirable, sexual, silent, responsible. These are feminine conditions of the romantic myth that, when taken-for-granted and juxtaposed with the authorial rights ascribed to the male body in particular discursive moments, throw into stark relief the dangers inherent in the desire to be "the One". This was evident when during the course of the collective memory work project, the participants, in their capacity as final year education students, attended a colloquium on equity which included a session on child abuse. This experience prompted the telling of the story below, a story which in the telling also illustrates various aspects power and positioning that are the subject of discussion in this chapter:

> ***The boy next door***
>
> *I really related to the video about the two abused children as I was abused (sexually and emotionally) by a neighbour (who was my brother's best friend) for about five years. It started when I was seven years old and continued till I was about twelve years old. The only reason it stopped was because I told my best friend Cassie, and she told me to tell him that I would tell my Parents, so it stopped.*
> *I never told my parents or anyone (except a couple of close friends) and I never will tell any one as that part of my life I would rather forget and never remember again.*
> *Mum used to send me over to my neighbour's place every weekend as his sister was only a year younger than me, he (the abuser was twelve years old at the beginning). I used to cry heaps and cause trouble so they wouldn't send me over there, but it was no use as I always lost. I remember one occasion when he was fingering me and he put two marbles inside me. I recall bleeding and the sharp pain when he was fingering me. Once his parents caught me in the nude, he was sitting next to me with his clothes on and his ...*

The boy next door, he who inhabits the other side of the boundary, illustrates the powerlessness of the girl child and the silencing of his (sexualised) power. Even now with access to discourses of child abuse and with recognition that she is not alone in this experience, the author who is able to reveal and

acknowledge her feelings of abuse, is still rendered speechless at the point of describing the abuser's positioning in relation to her when *she* was caught. Already constituted within the multifarious discourses of gender difference and the binary logic of myth, it's as if there are no words with which to speak. Like many girls:

> *I too did not have a name for my 'wee hole' yet I knew my brothers had a penis. Why is that? Both boys and girls at an early age know the names, maybe not the proper name but a name for a boy's genitals. Whereas a girl's genitals may be referred to as a fanny or a vagina, yet a name such as 'labia' is never heard of. Not only at a very young age but also as adults, some women and most men wouldn't know the location, use, or the name of the 'labia'. Even on my visits to the doctor, never once have I heard any of my body parts (genitals) being referred to as anything other than vagina.*

This silence, this lack of words makes her body mysterious and threatening: threatening that which might (not) be spoken: threatening her understandings of herself and her desire to be hailed as good girl/woman. Although she is able to define and to "know" the experience as abuse, at the moment of re-embodying the self in the experience, he is still clothed in authority and protected where she is naked, vulnerable, transgressive. Taking up the prevailing discourses as her own, she positions herself, and is positioned as responsible for the transgression — (*his parents caught me in the nude*). The possibility of resisting, of moving beyond or outside that positioning is uncertain and unsubstantiated in the conditions of her discursive constitution. The child growing up steeped in liberal humanist discourses of the rational subject understands herself to be and to be read as responsible for her own actions and, at the same time to "get what she deserves". She is positioned, particularly by attendant discourses of mothering and teaching, as an autonomous free individual who is at the same time girl, child, (power) less. Maleness and the power and associated exemption from (moral) responsibility are taken-for-granted unspeakable, indefinable for she who takes herself to

belong to the category "good girl" and as such, responsible. After all, "boys will be boys" and "all men are bastards", "mean and selfish as usual". The multitude of prohibitions and sanctions that define and confine the limits of gendered normality within discourse, leave unnamed unspeakable the sexual body and its endeavours. "Don't touch yourself *down there*", "don't be *dirty*", "it's a *sin*", "if you do *it* you'll go blind" and possibly most powerful of all "good girls don't". When these prohibitions are taken to be embodied as female, the material and discursive spaces where difference is constituted as oppositional are open to colonisation by the taken-for-granted authorial rights of men/boys in concert with the deference of women/girls.

In her discussion of signifying practices of masculinity made available to the reader/listener/viewer in popular children's stories such as *Red Riding Hood* and *Batman*, Cranny-Francis explains how these narratives naturalise within masculinity the dichotomies of mind-body, man-animal, culture-nature, rational-irrational each constructing the other within and between the male protagonist/s. "The two [hunter and wolf, hero and villain each representing either and both sides of these dichotomies] are locked in combat over a prize which is almost invariably a woman; so the boy is taught that women are prized objects, for whom he must battle not only other men, but (beastly) elements of his own nature" (1992, p. 83). The victor, hunter, hero, prince, knight in shining armour, is he who is able to successfully battle other men but more importantly, he is able to battle the animalistic forces within himself — to control his rapacious sexuality and confine the use of his competitive and aggressive 'nature' to the maintenance and protection of the properly feminine 'other'. This almost schizophrenic complexity of masculinity that became evident in Victorian versions of folk and fairytales and which persists in popular contemporary representations of these storylines is intricately tied up in the production of the fears and desires at the heart of female heterosexuality

and the maintenance of marriage as a sanctified patriarchal institution. The 'nature' of men has been discursively produced within the lived and told stories of popular culture to be inclusive of male violence against women not only by the wolfish villainous male but also as the "transgressive side of the otherwise responsible man who must be excused his transgressions to some extent because they are 'natural'" (Cranny-Francis, 1992, p. 82).

In the production of femininity the signifying practices associated with being positioned as child or as female are often confused and conflated with one another. For both women and children emotional outbursts are taken for granted as 'natural' and usually irrational (ie. performed without due cause); and both (good) women and children are expected to be virtuous and compliant to authority. For the child/woman who takes up or is positioned as sexual being there is no legitimate discursive space within which to speak the experience into existence for powerful others. Within existing discourses the child/woman has no sex and no power — except as child/woman, (a position clearly subject to the hierarchy of gender). The only recourse to power and protection perceived as available is to act in ways that signify membership of the category "child" even if these may be read as "difficult child/woman", "naughty child/woman", "resisting child/woman", these are apparently perceived as more legitimate, less disruptive, safer than signifying or speaking the self as 'sexual child/woman'. It is at least normal, unpassremarkable for a child to cry, throw tantrums, not want to do what s/he's told, but to signify oneself as or to be read as sexual is abhorrent, the gravest of transgressions that might bring into question the child/woman's normality, acceptability, forgiveability, lovability, her right to be treated as a good girl/child/woman. Within the discourses of gender difference, of heterosexuality and of the normal, natural sequence of child development, the girl child is constituted as sexless and at the same time, the achievement of the sexless body is attained

through prohibitions that recognise the body as necessarily sexed, and as necessarily silent, passive. It is not only in circumstances that might constitute a family secret that the contradictions of experience and oppositional practices of gendered subjectivity are sexualised and silenced within their discursive constitution. The authority of such silences and silencing is invested in usual practice.

Travelling in the Car

Keeping my legs together as I sat was never a real issue in my growing up. I remember my dad used to say that it did look better if girls sat with their legs closed but I can't remember ever being told to sit with my legs together. I think I did this almost automatically anyway because growing up with two brothers travelling in the car with them was absolute murder. They'd sit near the windows (because they were older), and I would have to sit in the middle with my legs together, feet placed on the hump in the centre of the floor while they sat spread eagled. I would complain about having no room but they would say, "We have to sit this way." When asked, "why?" They would laugh and say it was too uncomfortable otherwise. At the time I really didn't understand and thought that they were just being mean and selfish as usual.

Identifiable in *Travelling in the Car* are the taken-for-granted meanings and power relations of a gendered social order: The mother is silent/silenced/invisible. The father's authority lies in his taken-for-granted knowledge and wisdom. The hierarchical power of age relations (*They'd sit near the windows because they were older*) points out and notifies from earliest childhood the hierarchical organisation of social relations; her brothers are well aware of the power invested in maleness as biologically determined and the way in which the sexualisation of discourses has power effects in opposition to girls. This recognition of power invested in possession of the phallus allows them to colonise the space and to speak with authority. She has learned that *she* is a girl and as such takes her confinement by maleness for granted as she understands it in common sense terms of "boys will be boys" — *mean and selfish as usual*. As usual the boys' delight in the power of the taken-for-granted rights

that they assert and embody. These boys lay claim to and define the discursive and material space positioning the girl/sister as less knowledgeable and less entitled. Repeatedly and subordinately juxtaposed within material and discursive spaces against the taken-for granted rights of maleness, it does not seem surprising that girls/women have taken sanctuary in (by taking up as their own) the naturalising explanation of usual practice. Viewed in this way, deference can be seen to keep the wolf from the door or at least to keep him dressed in sheep's clothing.

The right to lay claim and to define is constitutive of exclusionary practices that position bodies subjectively in hierarchical relations. Exclusionary practices that come from and constitute the splitting of meanings into oppositional categories is at the heart of the politics of everyday life. The embodiment of this splitting into male and female means that to live life embodied as either male or female is to live life within the ever present potential for opposition. For speaking subjects, living life through the body they were born with, that has come to signify exclusive and ascendant subject positions such as "white", "educated", "male", the sense of self gleaned from within this body and its discursive positioning, is of being (and needing to be) "right". This right(eous)ness, born of the tendency for oppositional splitting is conveyed and affirmed by the stories-we-live-by. When a person is born white, wealthy or middle class/educated (the ascendant positions within the community of discourses that frames this thesis) it is likely that person will experience within themselves a sense of right(eous)ness. But, if that person happens to be born female, the subjectivity and political effect of her experience will be different as it is defined in relation to maleness/masculinity as relatively of less value and authority. This relative positioning as female is likely to engender feelings of being (relatively) worth-less and power-less or at least tenuous-ness. At the same time, being white and educated offers the subject positioning within the

interactive discourses of the individual and of democracy that is invested with the 'right' to power and worth of wealth (or at least happiness). Some women who successfully take themselves up (and are recognised) as "good girl/woman" within ascendant and exclusive categories of social worth, use the power-in-righteousness to further the cause of traditional (patriarchal) femininity and to oppose feminism. A clear example of the power-of-righteousness spoken from ascendant and exclusive categories of social worth, is the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the U.S.A. that was celebrated by women as a "great victory for women" and as a "great achievement by women"' (Ehrenreich, 1983, p. 143). Embedded in the splitting of meanings into relative hierarchical oppositions, this sense of right(eous)ness, the achievement of a moral high ground for particular beliefs and discourses, engenders colonising effects within the discourses, practices and bodies of its speaking subjects. Sexism is co-articulated with colonialism (Cranny-Francis, 1995, p. 49).

More or less often experiences of daily life "point out and notify" the subject of these contradictions that signify privilege(s) and oppression(s) of being embodied differently within the prevailing field of discourses that shore up established relations of power. In today's society, 'being' white, western, middle-class is to come to take for granted 'rights' of passage. The struggles and contradictions inherent in experience become lost in the usualness, the minutiae of life and reinvested in the embodied self which is understood as biologically determined and as such, intransigent. The body becomes the evidential base for what is "right". Embodied as female within the prevailing discursive conditions of gender difference, life's lessons teach us that right-ness is a constant play of compliance and resistance, and that the authority to (re)cognise and to sanction the right(eous)ness of self, dwells outside the self.

These are conditions within which we (girls/women) are positioned to become at the same time self-conscious and self-less.

Within the discourses of the individual and the liberal humanist mandate of achieving a rational autonomous self, fear of violence is converted into fear of the self and of being judged as lacking. Fear and desire, constituted in the production of feminine subjectivity, open up the female body-subject as a market place of discourses through which those who are privileged by their membership within dominant social categories profit.

> However, no discourse is of itself 'natural' or inevitable, though it is the task of ideology to make it seem so. Society is made up of a diversity of people with many needs, experiences, behaviours and attitudes. There are therefore, many discourses operating in the culture, and the presence of any one discourse or kind of discourse necessarily means that other possible discourses (which may offer different positions and relations of power) have been excluded or temporarily jostled away. If those privileged or preferred by the culture are dominant discourses, we may think of these others as alternative or oppositional discourses. (Buchbinder, 1994, p. 30)

The defining and colonising effects of gender mean that the stories embodied subjects live by, are at the same time, the same and different. Within the romantic storyline of one 'day my prince will come', is the story of heroic deeds, adventures and business (busy-ness) in the wider world and of ruling family life — "a man's home is his castle" and "a woman's place is in the home". These subject positions are dependant upon the Other being invested with the fantasy of becoming the subject of heroic deeds and of becoming the ruler's most valued treasure. Debold, Wilson and Malave (1993) explain, that coming to and living within romantic storylines embodied as male or female (one thing and not the other), means to enter and to live within these stories, differently. Constituted in the contradictory discourses of the individual, of femininity and of biological determinism, and embodied as female within oppositionally

binary logic, the girl/woman comes to experience herself as split between fear and desire. These binary-like emotions are constitutive of the ways in which "living the feminine" is experienced through and within, lived and imagined experiences and storylines that promise happiness ever after.

Living within the discourse of woman as sex object

Possibly the most powerful and contradictory discourse of heterosexuality within patriarchal social relations is the discourse of woman as sex object. As well as providing a position for and positioning all 'male' subjects, regardless of age and other signifying categories, as having power over all female subjects, the discourse of woman as sex object is also the discourse within which female/feminine (hetero)sexuality is constituted. Variously experienced as complimentary and confrontational, the discourse of woman as sex object evokes a conflation of fear and desire within and upon the body-subject. Produced within relative positions of power and powerlessness, discourses of heterosexuality produce desire within the boundaries of difference as signified by the body. The practices that are evoked within the ever present possibility of being positioned and of positioning one's self within the discourses of heterosexuality, as object of the male gaze, is a volatile landscape of interiority and exteriority that writes the subject as the subject writes the self through interpersonal and intertextual transactions across time and space.

For she who takes herself up and wishes to be read as "good woman" sexual expression and sexual activity remain strictly regulated within and without by the collective effects of social and cultural expectations that are explicitly gendered. My mother-in-law has often been heard to say, "it's okay for a man, he can just do up his fly and walk away." The girl/woman who wishes or is forced to act outside socially and culturally sanctioned codes of sexual

behaviour does so at her own risk. The good girl/woman heeds the warning to, "keep your knees together and your mouth shut". Within the discourses of liberalism prevailing notions of sexual morality and actual sexual experiences seem contradictory but each is constituted in the power relations inherent in the institution of marriage and romantic love. The discourse of "free love" rather than liberating the woman, further complicates her negotiation of practices of acceptable femininity and makes it more difficult for her to discern the prince from the werewolf.

Within the splitting along gender lines of public from private spheres, femininity and particularly the female body and sexuality, is constituted as 'private life'. The prevailing code of 'proper standards' that is embedded in middle class morality says, that in the name of privacy and the individual right to privacy, "private life" is something not to be discussed. A silent space is created (by what is 'not to be discussed') into which the romantic myth conveys the metaphor 'one day my prince will come'. Colonised by discourse this space constitutes the text that speaks to the self in the daily contexts of patriarchal social relations, this text — the internal dialogue, the emotional life of the body-subject, is where the 'battle for the subjectivity of the individual' is waged.

The silence engendered by the fear of being judged and judging the self, as these fears threaten the certainty of daily interpersonal transactions, has meant that the "place from which to speak" of violence against women, justifiably insisted upon by feminist discourses, has been colonised within the public sphere. This positioning within the public sphere and within the discourses of individual rights and responsibilities and the discursive embodiment of gender difference does little to disrupt or give voice to the political effects of fear constituted within the social ascendancy of masculinity and attendant acts of brute force. Spoken from within the public sphere a woman's private life can be

made a public scandal and for all the impact of feminist discourses it remains clear that a woman's body and violence against her body is an apparatus of the prevailing 'State' of play — rape is a crime against the State not against her. In a recent article on rape law reform, published in the popular Australian middle-class women's magazine *marie claire* , Jacqueline Lunn and Sarah Marinos report:

> The defendant is regarded as innocent until proven guilty, but women who take the witness stand often feel guilty until proven innocent. "Despite the vast amount of law reform over the past 15 years, women, on the whole, continue to be treated as if they were the perpetrator. They end up being reassaulted in court, " says Easteal." There is still the underlying mythology that the victim somehow asked for it: her skirt was too short, she was flirting, she didn't fight back, she'd had too much to drink or many lovers. Women are still depicted as a vestal virgin or a whore." (1997, p. 49)

It is not only within the oppositional splitting of public and private life that the subordinate position of women within social relations is sustained. The materiality of the body and the legitimate contexts within which that materiality is valued and defined is lived out as a struggle to negotiate a whole 'Other' set of gender specific oppositions such as madonna-whore, beautiful-ugly, silent-complaining, that are defined in relation to (hetero)sexual desire and conveyed by the romantic myth of 'one day my prince will come'.

The (discursive) body of desire

Within the romantic myth, her sexuality, something she imagines as her 'true' self, is experienced as hidden behind the significations of fear and desire that have become inscribed on her internal and external mind-body. Within the romantic myth the 'true' self becomes her unique hidden treasure that will eventually be recognised and desired by the 'true' prince. The constitutive

power effects interplaying fear and desire throughout lived and imagined narratives come of being positioned oppositionally within binary logic and the discursively gendered experience of daily life and its texts and doctrines. Many of the stories told throughout the collective memory work project illustrate how from a young age, one way or another, girls/women become aware that within the circumstances of daily life there is an everpresent possibility of becoming object/subject of the forceful, proprietorial and/or competitive actions of individuals or groups of men. Usually sexualised, this possibility holds both fear and desire within itself and has far reaching effects.

When I Was Five

My brother and I were playing in the backyard, running in and out of the backlane. Our back fence had been pulled down because mum and dad were building a pool and this was the only way the trucks could get in.
It was a nice warm day. Tom and I were playing cowboys and Indians, running in and out of the mounds of dirt the bulldozers had dug out to make our pool. I felt very safe and happy, my father had just come back from a 9 month separation from mum and everything felt good.
Tom was the cowboy and he was chasing me around the clothes line.
'Hey you two.' We heard someone call out.
Tom and I looked up to see two big boys who lived up the lane from us. I felt scared and held Tom's hand.
'Come over here,' they said.
Tom and I walked slowly to the edge of our backyard where the big boys stood.
They pointed at me and said, 'Come here.'
Tom squeezed my hand and stepped forward.
They pushed him backwards. 'Not you her.' Again pointing at me.
Suddenly nothing felt good anymore, I was scared and felt sick. Somehow my feet moved and I was standing near the big boys, - too near the big boys.
I saw their hands reach out for me, they were very dirty and seemed to be large. The smaller of the two boys grabbed Tom and held him while the other held my shoulder with one hand, then quickly pulled down my shorts and underpants with his other hand.
Then I felt that big dirty hand touch my vagina. I felt like everything was dirty, not only the big boys but my backyard was full of dirt too. Suddenly Tom was free. He pulled up my pants, grabbed me and started running to the house. I could hear the big boys laughing as they ran back down the lane.
When we got inside Tom went to tell mum what had happened. I went straight to the bathroom and hopped in the bath. I scrubbed myself from

head to foot but the dirt wouldn't go away. Tombo came and got into the bath with me. He knew I felt dirty and wanted to make it go away for me. Whenever I think that day I see brown dirt everywhere. All over my backyard, my body and face. Even Tom is dirty.

Again the interweaving of fear and desire, with power invested in both age and gender relations within contradictory subject positions on offer in the romantic storyline are brought into play. Tom apparently recognises himself as protector and rescuer but as protector his powers are rendered impotent by the "big boys" who take it as their right (maybe even their responsibility) to conquer the feminine body, to possess it for their own amusement. It is only once the violation has occurred that the rescue can take place.

In this story the shifting availability of gendered subject positions adhere to the interactive contexts of power that are historically constituted in discourse. The playing of "Cowboys and Indians" is familiar territory of childhood. That Tom is the cowboy and she the Indian reflects the taken for granted hierarchy of the male-female dualism within which she feels *safe and happy*. Tom, as representative of the dominant white western colonial authority, is the pursuer and she the pursued — the way it's meant to be, as the romantic storyline in all its guises tells us repeatedly. When the *big boys* appear, their size and age invest them with power and authority, their position on the boundary where previously there had been a protective fence, suggests danger. Tom quickly shifts position from pursuer to protector — a position he is unable to maintain against the power and authority of the "big boys". She no longer feels pleasure in being pursued — fear has entered where desire reigned. No longer pursued by the prince (a position understood as normal, natural, desirable, pleasurable, a positioning that offers her some agency through acknowledging the right to run, to play "hard to get") but, confronted by the wolves the opposite (re)action seems to be evoked. Suddenly she does not run, she recognises herself as

victim, ultimately subordinate passive. She cannot run, she does not speak but fearfully accepts her fate.

At a swimming carnival, the body-subject is located within a public space where the semi-naked display of the 'naturally' gendered body is desexualised by the 'common-sense' usualness of the practice. In this next story, 'public' participation in the swimming competition wins the author/subject wider public recognition, but it is her desire(ability) and her reading of the 'boys' reaction to her as a member of *the* group that is the subject of the-text-that-speaks-to-her/'self'.

At the swimming carnival

Ruth is a quiet girl of about twelve years who has been living almost eighteen months in a very small country town of approximately 700 people. As her age suggests she is beginning to become aware of boys and her personal attractiveness. She is not very confident in herself or her appearance, feeling inadequate in all areas but schoolwork and athletics. However, her class is very close-knit and she has some very close friends in the group considered popular.

Yesterday was the school swimming carnival where Ruth performed very well and was chosen to represent her school at the Regional Carnival. However, the most pleasing aspect of the day was being included in the few girls of her class who spent the day with the most popular boys in the area between the bushes and the fence. To Ruth, this meant she was accepted and liked and at this thought she was overjoyed. She had made it! Even more exciting was the fact that some of the boys had paid her more than a little attention and, although she couldn't figure out what they found attractive, her confidence had taken a great leap.

As she walks into the school grounds to begin today's classes she is thinking happily of yesterday but is a little frightened, wondering if it will be the same today. As Ruth walks towards her room, full of conflicting feelings, a boy from the group yesterday approaches her and butterflies immediately flutter in her stomach. The bleak walls seem to crowd in and she desperately tries to carry on casual conversation.

"Guess what?" he says.
"What?" says Ruth, wondering what could have happened that sounded so important.

"Well, us boys had a vote this morning about which one of the girls in our class had the best body……" he says confidently.
"Yeah" Ruth continues, the butterflies increasing and her confidence feeling (had she been voted the worst ?)
" Yeah, so guess who won ?" excited now, like a child who stole a lollipop.
"I don't know, who?" asks Ruth, becoming annoyed, she didn't really need to hear this . "Zana?" she says, naming the girl she considers prettiest.
"You!!" the boy announces smiling at Ruth with sparkling eyes. "What?" Ruth almost reels with disbelief "me?" and as the realisation that this is the truth hits her she feels better than she ever has before. A little self-conscious now but fantastically on the top of the world.

The multiplicity of discourses at play in this lived narrative of daily life and of 'normality', (including, stages of life discourses - *as her age suggests* , discourses of heterosexual desire - *she is beginning to become aware of boys and her personal attractiveness,* and of gender difference *feeling inadequate in all areas but schoolwork and athletics*) are embedded in and constitutive of a hierarchy of values within which, what is valued in boys/men decreases in value when located in her female body-subject. Discursively positioned in this way, the body-subject spends much of her lived experience navigating the space between what it means to be not one thing but the other — "it's one thing for a boy but an-Other thing for a girl" which is created on the boundaries of the binaries within which she is constantly located. Navigating the boundaries between the gendered binaries and various discursive contexts of daily life is an emotional journey that destabilises 'self' confidence which is nurtured by achieving a sense of belonging to the dominant "popular" social group.

Walkerdine and Lucey's (1989) study, *Democracy in the Kitchen*, revealed how middle class girls who were the enviable subjects of middle class mothering with its emphasis on rationality, logic and helpfulness were engaged during preadolescence in a self deprecating struggle with feelings of not being good enough. These feelings of not being good enough, undermined the girls' sense of self worth so that they underestimated the value of their academic and social

achievements for possible futures. These feelings of not being good enough are invested in the fixed (gendered) cultural meanings of good and bad as opposite and mutually exclusive and the subject's having experienced bad feelings as located in herself. This struggle to achieve oneself as good enough and to be always found wanting makes the young girl extremely vulnerable to the promises of the romantic storyline (Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989; Walkerdine, 1985)

Constituted within the conditions of the romantic myth inscribed on the interiority of the body-subject, the desire to be recognised as acceptable in the eyes of the group/category becomes conflated, subverted and individualised by the ways in which she is positioned and positions her-self within the discourses of heterosexuality and of gender difference. Positioned in this way the fulfilment of her desires and the allaying of her fears is dependent upon the approval of the dominant group embodied as male. Her internally experienced "self'" confidence and security of her position within existing social relations becomes tied to the (re)cognition of (a) man. She is located within existing social relations of everyday life which assure her by repeated experiences that her position as 'naturally' a matter of 'common-sense': Once upon a time, although the subject who had first experienced the approval of the (possible) prince/s at the swimming carnival (read ball) *couldn't figure out what they [boys] found attractive*, by the next day the uncertainty of her *truthful* position is at once resolved and sustained by her being chosen by the popular boys/princes as (having) the best (body) *as the realisation that this is the truth hits her, she feels better than she ever has before. A little self-conscious now but fantastically on the top of the world.*

> Individuals are not simply subordinated to some alien power; they absorb it into themselves, living their being-within-the-order as an act of free will. Knowing the system of rights and duties is an ideological competence; conformity to the system brings the reward

> of being left in peace (by legal institutions for example). (Haug, 1987, p. 200)

Within lived experience, the corporeality of day-to-day life requires the crossing of material boundaries between the institutionalised discursive fields of family, school and various contexts of public life. As she (the female body-subject) crosses the material boundary between the public space (of the swimming carnival) and the more 'usual' context (of schooling) where the discourses of 'normality' are institutionalised, uncertainty about the acceptability and stability of her position within the preferred social group is experienced bodily: *butterflies immediately flutter in her stomach. The bleak walls seem to crowd.* It is at the moment of uncertainty in the metaphoric crossing between the discursive realms of lived and imagined narratives when the body speaks of fear, that the material body's signification of desirability is experienced as most valuable. Reconciled in this moment of approval, of recognition, the bodily sensations of fear become conflated with being chosen. In this moment desire becomes shot through with the capacity to be desired which is at once understood and experienced as located within and signified by the body and heterosexuality. This crossing of material and discursive boundaries is constitutive of uncertainty within the body-subject's coexistence in lived and told narratives and the ever present possibility of fear and desire.

Sharing memories of childhood and reflecting on the effects of the metaphor of patriarchy illuminates how the ways in which we live life in the name of the father, means that our memories ache with being captured within a body and at the same time, becoming disembodied. When a person lives her life embodied as female, identity and belonging are experienced within contradictory mandates: to attend self consciously to the appearance of your "own" body, and to come to accept that your body is not your own. Living within the metaphor

of 'patriarchy' as it is embedded in and historically constitutive of the romantic myth of 'one day my prince will come', the feminine body is potentially the property of all men but, ideally, will become the property of one man (and of the market place). In the process of daily life we come to expect, accept (even depend on) being defined by others. This dependency is constitutive of and constituted in both fear and desire. If we are "good enough" someone will claim us as their own.

CHAPTER 6

(CON)FORMITY, RESISTANCE, DIFFERENCE AND AMBIVALENCE

> Poststructuralist theory suggests experience has no essential inherent meaning. It may be given meaning in language through a range of discursive systems of meaning, which are often contradictory and constitute conflicting versions of social reality, which in turn serve conflicting interests. This range of discourses and their material supports in social institutions and practices is integral to the maintenance and contestation of forms of social power, since social reality has no meaning except in language. (Weedon, 1987, p. 34)

> ... in any given context there are a very diverse number of discourses which can be employed, and that whilst certain discourses may be predominantly employed at one level or in one particular context, they effect claim procedures at other levels and in other contexts. (Moore, 1994, p. 99)

The data and theorising I have presented thus far, highlights the press towards existing practices and expectations which form along oppositional gender lines. Postulated within and by the habit (and 'structure') of binary logic, this press to conformity within discourse is oppositional and hierarchical in multiple ways which position each of us to act in accordance with the production of "patriarchy" as a metaphor for usual practice. Discourses and signifying practices shot through with patriarchal metaphors convey myth in ways constitutive of the desire for heterosexual coupling as a pre-condition of normal subject positioning and the possibility of happiness. The possibility of happiness is hinged on the constitutive contingencies of being embodied within prevailing phallocentric discourses — the lived experience of which produce a conflation of fear and desire. As well as the many, varied and repeated episodes of "daily training in normality" that we each have in common, there are the violent, invasive episodes, particular to the lived experience of a relative few; but which transport through discourse, an everpresent threat of misogyny as a condition of the daily lives of women. These episodes and the often inexplicit or unacknowledged fears invoked by them, seem frequently to be

enacted at the intersection of the discourses of woman-as-sex-object and of the assumption of the right to authority being embodied as male. Taking up the romantic storyline as one's own conflates fear and desire in ways which elide the multiplicity and contradictions embodied within our discursive constitution as speaking subjects.

As we make our way through time and space there are always multiple and often contradictory discourses on offer within particular historically constituted moments. Different discourses provide for a range of modes of subjectivity — "and the ways in which particular discourses constitute subjectivity have implications for the process of reproducing or contesting power relations" (Weedon, 1987, p.92). To act in the interests of prevailing relations of power includes speaking or not speaking and taking action or not taking action within the prevailing discursive circumstances at particular times and in particular locations. Our embodied arbitration of the discourses of day-to-day life is a process of being continually (re)positioned and (re)positioning ourselves in relation to various 'other' subject positions on offer. For every subject position within discourse there are binary other positions which are resisted and against which the 'One', the ascendant position, is defined. The habit of taking up an either/or position within discourse serves the interests of particular power relations even as we seek to resist them. The competitive discourses and binary logic which are embedded in the conditions of the romantic myth appear to reduce the multiplicity and viability of possible alternative, "different" subject positions within (other) discourses.

This chapter draws attention to, and attempts to make sense of, the discursive interplay of conformity, resistance, difference and ambivalence which takes place in the emotional space between the binaries as we take ourselves up to be, and are taken to be, one gender and not the other, one individual and not an-

other. Here I present a detailed analysis of two stories. Together these stories and my analysis make visible the embodied experience of contradictory or conflictual discursive moments in time and space where ambivalence opens up a possible space, an interstice for the re-cognition of our positioning and associated participation in particular signifying practices (and their personal and political effects). The discourses of the individual, of gender difference, of femininity and of heterosexuality as taken-for-granted are critically implicated here; where it seems that, within particular discursive moments and over time, each of us is unceasingly woven together in a tapestry of ambivalence, difference and resistance displaying and elaborating in our movements the conditions of the romantic myth.

Embodying the intersection of particular, often competing (sometimes simply geographic or generational variations of) discourses, the subject becomes a responsive space within which the assumed or taken-for-granted position can be shored up or altered. The subject's response to an alternative position on offer within particular discursive moments, appears to be mediated through established (and embodied) binary relations of power within the prevailing discourses and the subject positions and signifying practices which she has taken-up-as-her-own (and which are referent to the material and affective contexts of subjective historicity) within myth. In these moments, the person who experiences herself as contesting or embodying an-'other' subject position within discourse appears to be caught within and between fear of misrecognition and rejection and the desire for acceptance, approval and identification as the 'One' — a positioning which is constitutive of ambivalence and resistance. Within ascendant discourses and associated categories (where she is always already subordinate to the masculine subject position), ambivalence holds fear, uncertainty and promise within itself; such that, these constitutive moments evoke the signification of desire-ability. Within the

phallocentric web of binary logic, faced with resistance to (or alternative possibilities which challenge or disrupt) her established way of being, of 'seeing' and of understanding her-self, the subject who has or who desires claim to an ascendant, legitimate, "normal" position will (more often) resist the alternative positions when embodying an intersection with what are taken to be competing, oppositional discourses. This resistance as conformity (or conformity as resistance) is a resolution of the uncertainty and ambivalence produced within the emotional space between the binaries. This space is where fear and desire are conflated when (seemingly) contradictory discourses intersect through the body of the subject across time and space. Resistance is often momentary and is variously conscious, unconscious, ambivalent or naive and is always open to multiple readings and colonisation by dominant discourses.

Conformity and resistance: The binary that is not one

Through subjectification within the romantic storylines, in different ways and in their opposition to one another, girls take up multiple and often contradictory practices and modes of interaction that sustain the interests and power relations which characterise the metaphor of patriarchy. Relationships between girls, positioned in wider social relations as members of the subordinate, naturalised categories, girl/woman/female, are in tension. This tension is characterised by a competitive taking up of practices of desirability that are played out on the boundary between being positioned and positioning the self as good girl-bad girl/wife-whore. Within the multifarious discourses which convey the romantic myth, and where the female subject is presented with multiple and often contradictory possibilities for signifying desirability, both the "good girl" and the "bad girl" define themselves and are defined in opposition to one another; and, at the same time, take-up-as-their-own the

desire to be desirable. For subjects constituted within the discourses of the individual, and liberation discourses that resist the repressive sexual attitudes and practices of previous generations, negotiating the boundaries and associations between wife-whore, good-bad, desirable-undesirable becomes ever more complex and fraught with danger.

Possibly nowhere more than during our years of formalised schooling, is the pressure to conform to standardised and idealised forms of 'normality' and competitive 'individuality' greater. Similarly, nowhere more so than in the context of schooling, are such large numbers of girls (and boys) brought together. The usual institutionalised discursive practices of schooling are frequently at odds with the liberal democratic philosophies on which contemporary curriculum policies are founded; it is only recently that discourses of "community" and the possibility of hospitality have emerged. Within the discourses of schooling-as-usual (as in everyday discourse), positioned as 'other' to both boys and adults, girls become each others' other. Always positioned as other within the prevailing practices and liberal humanist discourses of schooling, girls' legitimate personhood is seemingly bound to the unlikely (and not necessarily desirable: not every girl longs to be the teacher's pet) possibility of being chosen as the (best) One by the teacher or the boys. Within the discourses and practices of schooling-as-usual, desire (and sex and sexuality) is taboo, repressed, silenced or at best controlled, marginalised, trivialised.

Having taken up an alternative set of practices in relation to particular discourses and category memberships, each of the subjects in the story below, can be read as resisting or being ambivalent about particular aspects of usual practice within schools. Similarly, each subject within the discourses at play,

can be read as signifying individuality through their resistance, ambivalence or (in)difference to particular normative standards.

From the authoritative position of the storyteller in "Hey You" there is an obviousness about the signifying practices that differentiate between good and bad, attractive and unattractive and about how these are embodied. Her reading and writing of the signifying practices of femininity taken up by herself and the 'other' girls illustrates how, the conflation of desire and fear (of difference) (re)constitute (gendered) relations of power and authority within myth. An interplay of resistance, difference, ambivalence and conformity occurs when what is obvious and therefore invisible or un(pass)remarkable to the subject is called into question and remarked upon by 'others'.

> ***Hey you***
>
> *It was just one of those school days, the usual lessons, the usual routines - almost a perfectly normal day for a Year 8 student. Almost but not quite. Not for Amy.*
>
> *The bell had rung signalling for all students to make their way to class. Amy made it to class, in fact most did. Except for three girls. Three Year 11 girls. For them classes were optional - you went if you felt like it. After all, who's going to make you go? Certainly <u>NOT</u> the teachers.*
>
> *The names of the three girls are not important, though you would certainly know them if you saw them. Take this for example, typical winter uniform: long sleeved shirt, long sleeved jumper, stockings are a good idea but then comes the SKIRT - just below the hips and way above the knees. Hmmm. Anyway, all three wore make-up and lots of it. Two had long hair and one short. They sat outside the garden shed smoking away and waiting.*
>
> *Meanwhile, Amy sat in her art class taking notes with the other students. Amy is a quiet girl, not too worried with trends and fads that perhaps other girls her age are concerned with. In comparison, Amy's winter uniform consisted of long sleeved shirt, long sleaved sloppy joe and long trousers. A few of the girls wore trousers but they were more like tailored pants with pleats. Amy chose to wear 'Levis' just like the guys at school but why not? They are cheap, durable and much warmer than slacks or skirts - which she didn't like wearing. The teacher, Mrs Crouch asked Amy to take a message*

to the principal's office. So off Amy went, down the stairs between blocks one and two.

The message delivered, Amy headed back to class but decided to go a different way - straight down to the art rooms via the garden shed. As Amy approached the shed she saw the three girls sitting along the wall. Amy slowed down though her thinking went faster. "These girls should be in class! My goodness they're smoking, anyone could walk by and see them. They're in Year 11 aren't they? Help I'm only in year eight, I hope they don't think I'll dob them in. Of course I wouldn't, not me!"

"Hey you!"

Amy stopped still. Her hands came together and rested in front of her body. She gulped and looked up at the girls - what could they possibly want from me? One hundred and one thoughts went through Amy's head as she tried to imagine what they could possibly want to know!

When the girl in the middle saw she had Amy's attention, she proceeded to ask her question. The question that all three wanted to know. The question that would later bring Amy to tears and change a lot of what she knew and the way she lived.

The girls eyes focussed sharply on Amy's, the two girls beside her just stared. And then she said it.

"Are you a boy or a girl?"

Ouch! Amy felt her heart beat hard and fast. How dare they ..... but they did! Amy's eyes itched, she dropped her head slightly and lifted it once more, she smiled as best she could and said quietly, 'a girl'.

The three girls turned to each other and giggled to themselves, but Amy didn't find it quite so funny. She walked as quickly as she could. Tears rolling down her cheeks, she stopped at the bottom of the stairs. Her mind a flutter, "How could they?" Yet it wasn't the first time she'd been mistaken for a boy! In the past it had been adults who had mistaken her gender and she had consoled herself with the belief that they couldn't remember what it was like to be young while her mother had consoled her with the words,
"Some people just don't look do they?"

Amy comments:
The next thing I remember is being at home and crying. I explained to mum what had happened. She was very comforting. But as a result I decided to buy a long skirt, (I never wore trousers to school again), I still prefer not to wear skirts or dresses though. The other thing I remember deciding then, was to grow my hair long - I actually told this to mum that afternoon! (And my hair is long today still!)

Having been chosen by the teacher as "the One" to convey the message of authority she, Amy, then takes herself as having the authority to (ad)venture into unfamiliar territory as she returns to her "class". Along the boundaries she enters a space of difference within the usual institutional discourses where she occupies a privileged position. Here she is confronted by her 'other' — the sexualised girls — girls who speak, girls who have taken up their femininity differently, visibly; but who, from the privileged position of the subject, are not seen as worthy of "individual" status (*the names of these three girls are not important*). These girls are threatening in their otherness. In this discursive moment there is a meeting, an intersection of the binaries where these girls' subjectivities have been constituted. The free flow of discourse as usual is interrupted and claims are made (by the other/s) for the adjustment of signifying practices of gender difference and desirability.

Both Amy and her antagonists are engaged in (re)constituting existing hierarchies. Amy is at pains to describe in detail the obviousness of the other girls' subordinate status as signified by their appearance and personal practice. At the same time, it is Amy's appearance and personal practice (of failing to make her sex obvious) that the Other girls challenge; that she might fail to be recognisable as (good) *girl* seems inconceivable. The passivity of her oppositional position in relation to these 'other' girls is constituted in, and constitutive of, fear of the Other and fear of not being admired/desired as "the One". Afraid (*she gulped and looked up*) of these girls (*outside the garden shed smoking away and waiting*) and of positioning herself and of being positioned as 'other' (*what could they possibly want from me?*) she responds to protect (*Amy stopped still. Her hands came together and rested in front of her body*) and to re-form her position as good girl (*decided to buy a long skirt, (I never wore trousers to school again), I still prefer not to wear skirts or dresses though. The other thing I remember*

deciding then, was to grow my hair long - I actually told this to mum that afternoon! (And my hair is long today still!)).

In this moment as the other girls painfully draw attention to Amy's failure to correctly signify her gender, it would seem that it is they, "the others", who have the authority. Their speaking is inscribed on Amy when she takes up differently the signification of her worthiness. In the midst of these hierarchical binaries of feminine subject positioning, such as good-bad, virtuous-vain, silent-demanding, virgin-whore, and within the prevailing discourses of gender difference, of heterosexuality and of the individual, the oppositional action between subjects continues to serve the interests invested in gender difference and in existing gendered relations of power.

Within the ever shifting (often momentary) discursive contexts of daily life, the potential for competitive opposition and confrontation is everywhere. Each subject always holds (potential) membership of multiple categories (sometimes at odds with each other and always hierarchical), which makes achievement of the stable identity expected of the liberal humanist individual always tenuous. With sex/gender taken-for-granted in discourses of biological determinism, until the moment of interruption (*Hey you*,) her discursive struggle for belonging had constituted her desire as focused on achieving and sustaining membership of the category "good" which she had recognised as requiring her engagement in particular practices and not in others. On the other hand, her subjectification within the discourses of gender difference as biologically determined, embodied her as 'knowing' that she was a girl and as assuming this precluded the possibility of her ever being a boy. Until now, she had not been concerned with other-wise signifying her gender difference.

This story, *Hey you*, captures an historical shift in the discursive struggle of subjectification that is everyday life. In struggling to achieve herself as good, Amy has constructed herself in opposition to the bad girls who are equally recognisable (*you would certainly know them if you saw them*) in that they draw attention to their sexuality, they don't do what they're told, they ask questions, they demand to know things. For those who wish to take themselves up as "good girl" it is bad girls (rather than boys) who are their subordinate other — their goodness is defined in opposition to, as an absence of what is obvious about "them" — the bad girls (*SKIRT - just below the hips and way above the knees ... make-up and lots of it ... outside ... smoking*). Confronted by these girls who are positioned subordinately within the romantic myth as her opposite and her difference, Amy (re)forms herself as good *girl* in response to the interruptive moment captured by the story. She re-covers her body in order to become eminently readable within the discourses of gender difference and to resist positioning or reading as 'other' than good "girl". She (con)forms to the conditions of her preferred category membership which, she now knows, requires the taking up of signifying practices that will mark her body as unquestionably and recognisably female. Amy is at once complying and resisting. As she resists positioning as 'other' in the dichotomous web of femininity (of good-bad/wife-whore/obedient-wilful/accepting-demanding/modest-vain) she conforms — remaking her body anew as a (con)text of gender difference.

In large part, the certainty of belonging to some categories and not others is derived from the achievement of a particular "look". This *look* through which she might be *seen* (by the prince) also endows the subject with the possibility of entry into the prince's scene (the ticket to the ball). It is only possible to be *seen* when in the *scene*. Within the dominant discourses of femininity and gendered binary logic where successful femininity is aligned with silence, modesty and

absence, this requirement for visibility makes achievement of transparent positioning as female highly problematic and contradictory. In order to be *seen* and considered worthy, it is necessary to be both visible and invisible.

From a morally ascendant and discursively valued position within the binary logic of gender difference (particularly within the discourses that usually prevail in schools and the wider community) these girls who are seen, are positioned as "bad" (the subordinate position against which "goodness" is defined) particularly among adults/teachers in relation to children/students and men/boys in relation to women/girls. The question remains why these girls (who Amy sees as adversaries) would take up the particular signifying practices which position them in this way. It seems that, rather than (or as well as) resisting socially valued, contextually specific forms of femininity, these 'Other' girls are achieving a sense of confidence and authority by taking up the democratic discourses of equality of individual freedoms and rights (often espoused but rarely practiced within schools). By taking these discourses up as their own, they position themselves as resisting the usual power relations of adult-child/teacher-student/inside-outside which characterise schooling-as-usual. Within the usual (middle-class) discourses of schooling these "other girls" are defined by their absence — absence from the class(room) and absence from possessing the 'natural', usual signifying practices (of) socially valued (in) "class". Within the prevailing discourses which align femininity with invisibility, the literal and metaphoric absences from, and of, these girls makes them at the same time highly visible and present. These 'other' girls are resisting positioning as demure, deferential, compliant, chaste which Amy has so righteously taken up as her own. Within the context of populated, authoritative and marginalised discourses through and within which their subject positions and category memberships have been constituted, there is no value for these girls in conserving the status accorded particular positions and

signifying practices. As well as refusing to be the subordinate pupil to the authoratative teacher, viewed through the poststructuralist lens, these girls can be seen as attempting to position themselves as adult, (sexual, desirable, authoratative) women not girls. Significantly, they can be seen to be reinscribing their otherness with authority by taking up as their own the discourses of (hetero)sexuality which are conveyed as having currency within the romantic storyline where sex and marriage are taken to be synonymous. Amy and her challengers can be read as having taken up different, competing, yet co-existent discourses of desirability. Having taken up competing positions and associated signifying practices within the same field of discourses, Amy and these 'other' girls together produce an ever diversifying range of practices through which to perform the script of the romantic myth — to attract the prince.

Viewed through the terms and conditions of myth and the subjective desire for a legitimate and valued position within available discourses (which include the discourses of the individual, of sexual freedom and of women's liberation), these (resisting) girls can, at the same time, be read as having taken-up-as-their-own the discourses of woman-as-sex-object. This reading is one of having turned the contradictions inherent in the wife-whore binary to their advantage in the "competition" for the prince and of having, in conjunction with the other above mentioned discourses, opened up the possibility of positioning the self as both desirable and authoritative. Within this constellation of discourses, from within the positions they have taken up, it is not passive, silent femininity which is taken to be natural but rather, heterosexual desire as predatory which, like 'femininity', is understood as biologically determined. It is here that resistance turns in on itself. These girls can be seen to have taken up signifying practices of sex-appeal (or availability) as a powerful signifier of desire-ability within the normative discourses of heterosexuality which convey the romantic

myth. By taking themselves up as, at the same time, autonomous individual and object of (sexual) desire, these girls are able to imagine themselves as having the power to evoke and control the 'natural' instincts of man. Here, the magic trick of myth is that it conjures resistance in its own interests.

As elaborated by Barthes (1972), acts or discourses of resistance can work to re-present the myth which is constitutive of that which is being resisted. From their position of resistance, the 'other' girls in Amy's story, have the effect of causing Amy to take up more clearly her position as "good girl" — to resist being positioned other-wise. These girls are apparently confident about their membership of the category "girl" but ambivalent about (who determines) what it means to be "good". It may well be that for these girls, 'goodness' is signified by the ability to "get a man" and so, have taken up as their own the discourse of woman-as-sex-object. The acts of resistance by and between these girls occur from relative and oppositional positioning within the category "girl" and so shore up rather than disrupt the male-female binary — a transgression of which was apparent (at least to the bad girls) in Amy's act of personal preference — wearing Levi's. It would seem that all these girls would agree upon the importance of their femaleness being taken-for-granted. In the particular interruptive moment described, all these girls can be seen to be resisting while, at the same time, (con)forming to various discourses of femininity all of which affirm the hierarchical determinacy of discourses of gender difference which adhere to and convey the myth of 'one day my prince will come'. Within the discourses of gender difference and of the individual, resistance more often produces competition between subjects over the value and authority of particular signifying practices. Acts of resistance are a disruption or revaluing of the ways in which dominant discourses convey myth through the body of the subject rather than a resistance to, or a dismantling of, the myth they convey.

Locality and the particularity of signifying practices

We all desire to be hailed in ways which affirm our sense of ourselves as members of particular social groups, and we engage in signifying practices promoting recognition of the categories (and communities) to which we belong or desire membership. What might be intended as a matter of personal preference, individuality, practicality or resistance, is always open to reading as stupid, wrong, abnormal or bad within the scene where we are being seen. Within the consensus of everyday discourse, to achieve, sustain and resist membership of particular discursive categories referent to the complex interplays of gendered binary logic and desire, constitutes a competitive antagonism to difference. Conveyed by ascendant discourses, localised practices and speech acts define a priori differences contemporaneously within historically constituted time and space. This, combined with competitive antagonism to difference, means that there is rarely a free flow of discourse between categories and contexts.

> The co-existence of multiple discourses[however]produces a situation in which the different discourses on gender are hierarchically ordered. This ordering may be both contextually and biographically variable, as well as being subject to historical change. The result is that some discourses over determine others, and various sub-dominant discourses develop in opposition to dominant ones. ... oppositional gender discourses are not only structurally and hierarchically dominant, but also hierarchically stratified internally. (Moore, 1994, p. 59)

Within the terms of contemporary popularised versions of the romantic myth, the sexualising of femininity and desire-ability is generally accepted and signified through practices such as wearing short skirts and being rebellious or at least provocative in relation to institutionalised authority such as parents, adults, teachers and schools. Within the contemporary context of multiple discourses of desirability girls can take up oppositional positions in discourses

of femininity and of (hetero)sexuality displaying an array of associated signifying practices for the legitimate purpose of achieving the prince. Within the storylines of 'one day my prince will come', the end justifies the means. In the end, it is being chosen as the one (by a boy/man who signifies himself as the prince by virtue of the act of choosing) that is, for the girl/woman, the proof of being 'good' enough and deserving of happiness ever after. Or, at least, of achieving a 'normal' subject position within wider social relations.

Understood in this way, conformity becomes resistance to being read as positioned contrary to the desired or taken-for-granted position occupied by the subject. The specificity and range of practices which signify membership of particular categories within hegemonic discourses, is variable within and between localities and between discursive contexts. This is fraught and fertile ground for the taking up of oneself as (liberal humanist) individual in post modern times. Personal practices and codes of dress which, in one context might threaten subordinate positioning as bookish, whore or hippie for instance, in a different context can be read/seen as valued signifiers of successful (feminine) individualism.

The story below of *Leaving Home* displays the discursive interplay of co-existing discourses traversing space and time and intra-discursive boundaries. Once again the multifarious and gendered discourse of the individual is at work. The subject becomes conscious of the coercion produced by the currency of particular signifying practices within the localised discursive contexts and feels responsible (and liable) for producing her-self in particular ways. Hairlessness is again summoned and produced as a critical signifier of gender difference but, in each localised discursive context there are other discourses which offer the possibility of resistance to this practice. Here, in the coastal home town that intersects, exploits and pathologises Australia's hippie trail, where capitalism

prevails in the name of progress, the good girl/woman's Other is she who rejects the trappings and practices of what money can buy. She must avoid being read as "just another hippie". As Moore (1994, p. 61) points out, "the mutual imbrication of sets of salient differences means that one form of difference can be made to stand for another and/or that differences invoked in one context can be used to reformulate differences relevant to another".

Leaving Home

I can remember when I was in Year 9 at High School. We were all sitting down the back of the school and planning something to do on the weekend. There were six of us – three boys and three girls. (I think these guys may have even been our boyfriends at the time.)
Anyway, I never used to shave the hairs on my legs. (I had really dark hairs on my legs.) I can remember one of the guys saying to me, "Sam, if you would shave all of your legs and get your hair permed you would look really pretty." This was the first time, I had become so self conscious of the hair on my body and how ugly it looked. I remember thinking I like having my hair long and straight and I like having hairy legs, but if the most popular boy in the school thought that would make me look pretty to him then I would look pretty to all guys. I didn't do anything about it straight away, mainly because I didn't want him to think he'd gotten to me. So a few weeks later I shaved the bottoms of my legs.
Then one night I was going out with my new boyfriend. I wanted to wear my new shorts. When I put my shorts on, I looked at the hairs on the tops of my legs and decided to shave them off as well. I didn't want this boy not to like me because my legs were hairy! I can also remember thinking how the hairs on my legs will grow back twice as thick, (this was something mum has always told me).
I also think that living on the coast has a lot to do with this image. Women are expected to run around in shorts and swimmers and if you do that with hair on your legs people will think you're a hippie. That's one thing I really like about [living in the rural town in which the study took place]. There isn't so much of that pressure that you have to look good every minute of everyday. If you want to look like a dag everyday you can. But as soon as I get into [my coastal home town] it's like I've turned into a different person. The first thing I have to do is shave my legs so I can fit back in with that lifestyle and probably also with my friends. Being away has automatically made me a bit different to them so I suspect that looking good when I go home helps me just slide back into my spot.
It's funny when I go home and see all my friends. Things that used to be important to me don't seem to matter anymore – like getting a sun tan, having the latest beach wear etc, and money. So many of my friends are

really well off but all they do is worry about their money. I think I'd rather be happy than rich. (But rich would be good.)
I still shave my legs today and get my hair permed so maybe that boy's comment (the most popular boy in school at the time) had more of an affect on my life then I realised).

Emotional engagement with, and investment in, the discourses through which one's identity has been formed over time (but from which one has been removed through relocation in time and space or narrative (re)presentation), make possible the individual's simultaneous re-producing of dominant discourses and recognition and re-forming of the contextual specificity of the signifying practices of discursive interpellation. The simultaneity of (re)cognition and (re)production of prevailing discourses, made visible through relocation or reentry into an historically constituted discursive space, subjectively construes ambiguity with ambivalence. Subjectification is a process of being surrounded on all sides together in the possibility of being affected by the re-actions of others. The subject again finds herself in the emotional space where fear and desire, resistance and conformity are conflated through the binary logic which assumes their oppositional difference. For instance when a/the male subject/protagonist suggests certain practices would make her *really pretty*, she assumes this means (in the eyes of men, in the way she is seen in the scene) she is really ugly. Here her feelings about herself (*I like having my hair long and straight and I like having hairy legs*) are subverted by her desire to be desired (*then I would look pretty to all guys*). Her desire to be desirable and to be "good enough" is shot through with fear of relinquishing control and responsibility for 'getting her gender right' and for being an independent and autonomous 'individual' (*I didn't want him to think he'd gotten to me*) and fear of rejection (*I didn't want this boy not to like me because my legs were hairy!*).

Within the context of the (gender blind) discourses of the individual (which assume the unitary and autonomous subject) and the habit of (gendered) binary logic, there is no legitimate place for (or signifier of) ambivalence. Within this prevailing discursive context the inability to decide, to know, to represent the self unequivocally is to be considered "unstable". For girls/women as we necessarily traverse the boundaries of binary logic in the process of constituting ourselves and being constituted within discourse as 'individual', to experience ambivalence is surely inevitable. That this ambivalence is silenced within and by the subject and pathologised within discourse is significant. The ambivalence evident in particular moments of subjectivity opens up possibilities for ways of being that were absent, or at least different, from the contextually relevant ways of being and practices at play for the subject prior to the moment of interruption/disruption/intersection of alternative discourses constituting such ambivalence.

Produced and mediated within the discourses of the individual, as well as within the gendered conditions and predictability of both the binary logic and the narrative forms of the romantic myth, concerns, uncertainties and contradictions are inherent in the endlessly repeated, multifarious and historically constituted moments of time and space where subjectivity and social life are played out. The ambivalence here produced (as illustrated in *Leaving Home*) calls for the subject's resistance to an alternative subordinated discourse, subject position and/or set of practices on offer. In response to the authoritative (re)mark of her male counterpart, she conforms to the conditions of the romantic storyline, to the desire to be desirable. At the same time she resists and subverts her fear of rejection and feelings of loss-of-self by simultaneously taking up as her own the competitive discourse of the rational, autonomous individual and of gender difference. Significantly, this competitive dynamic plays the individual into resisting the (im)possibility of

her-self (who liked her long straight hair and hairy legs). The effect of movement through time and space is critically implicated here — she delays her act of conformity in an effort to distance her actions from his authority. In this way she is able to imagine that she has, and that others will perceive her as having, freely chosen to shave her legs. The delay in time and space (... *a few weeks later* ...) enables her to sustain her belief in herself as autonomous, as able to subvert or at least mitigate his authority (with her own) through ambivalence and compromise (*I shaved the bottom of my legs*). Subsequently she will "go all the way" (*Then one night I was going out with my boyfriend*). She reconstrues his authority, his desire, as her own (*I wanted to wear my new shorts*). Belief in the self-as-gendered and at the same time as an "individual" — ie. having (in particular) taken-up-as-her-own the prevailing discourses of the individual, of gender difference, of femininity (and of heterosexuality) as these convey and produce the terms and conditions of the romantic storyline — the subject is able to imagine herself as freely conceding to, and conscious of, localised readings of particular signifying practices. Even though the subject recognises that *living on the coast has a lot to do with this image*, and that one thing she really likes about living in the rural town (where this study took place) is that *there isn't so much pressure that you have to look good every minute of everyday*, she is unable to resist reinstating the signifying practices which help her to *just slide back into [her] spot*. Her "spot" is defined by the ways particular practices signify acceptability and desirability (or otherwise) in localised versions of the discourses of gender difference and of femininity. Conveyed as conditions of desirability (bound to the romantic storyline and to binary logic), the swathe of "usual practice" wraps the subject into fear of difference and of being seen to be different. Within the romantic storylines of 'one day my prince will come', the naturalising of usual practice, the ways in which myth and discourse transform history into nature (Barthes, 1972) positions the female subject as victim of circumstances beyond her control (*it's like I've turned into a different person ...being away has automatically*

made me a bit different to them). Dominant discourses rely on recourse to usual practice as evidence of their validity and authority (Weedon, 1987). In the process of subjectification, this alignment of fear with difference engenders the colonising effects within and between discourses which give a seemingly intransigent, *naturalised* quality to particular signifying practices of gender difference. This has been made obvious to me whenever a child has 'seen' the hair that I do not remove from my armpits, face or legs. I am most often asked, "Are you a man?" Or told, "Only men have hair there." And (assuming I will be wounded by these words) any parent or other responsible adult within ear shot will chastise the child for speaking them. These colonising effects are only possible and only intransigent to the extent of collective practice. Through time and space, as the acceptability and value of particular subject positions and signifying practices alters within the ever shifting sands of discourse, dominant discourses (or at least speaking subjects who have taken these discourses up as their own) produce new categories of meaning for particular practices which can counter the flow of resistance and colonise these practices in the interests of the prevailing order.

For instance, the term "hippie" emerged in the 1960s as a label to categorise people aligned with the "counter culture" who positioned themselves within alternative lifestyles and political discourses which developed in direct opposition to discourses and conditions of capitalist individualism. These alternative and oppositional discourses included discourses of free love and anti-marriage. Significantly, this label for the liable subjects of these alternative, and at times flagrantly oppositional, discourses and practices was coined within, and bestowed as, a term of resistance to, and subordination within, the conservative mainstream; which, over determined and over time, colonised the emergent discourses and practices of opposition. Many of the signifiers of hippie culture and practice, particularly food and fashion, such as "handmade",

"original", "organic", have become qualities central to contemporary middle-class consumerism. These qualities were once cheap alternatives to the material products of capitalist mass production, now they signify an exclusive price tag. Now these qualities signify elitism rather than radicalism. Other qualities, such as hairlessness, more closely associated with the discourses of gender difference and heterosexuality, based on the premise that opposites attract, have been sustained as points of resistance and subordination. The inscription of gender difference as binary categories (which both open up and defy the possibility of multiple femininities), shapes and textures ways of being female, by favouring the competitive and exclusive discourses of individualism through which capitalism prospers.

Stories like *Leaving Home* highlight the ambivalence constituted within the subject's movement through time and space and the tensions and contradictions of reentry into subjectively and locally constitutive contexts. As the subject moves between the two geographically distinct locations, within which she has experienced residency and achieved a sense of belonging, she has come to recognise the ways in which particular signifying practices of acceptability are expected and read differently within each. As she moves between each location she (re)marks her body according to how she imagines and knows bodies are remarked upon or how they appear un(pass)remarkable. The contradictions and ambiguities of the discourses through which she has been constituted, are reconciled by taking up the particular signifying practices (con)forming (to) her subjective historicity and desire within prevailing localised conventions. (Con)forming to standard localised practices is experienced as a pre-condition of accept-ability suggesting the possibility of happiness and presumably, the avoidance of unhappiness — unhappiness being the implied ('logical') binary 'other' subject position within the promise of the myth.

The subject's prior experience and established relationships within particular discursively and geographically contextualised localities over determines the possibility of resisting the conventional practices through which the subject is identified. The historicity of subjectivity means that particular localities and relationships encumber and encode (re)entry with reputation. Reputation, we know through experience, is something we are expected to establish and maintain — it is formed alongside identity and personhood and is something we are expected to live up to. In her discussion of Holloway's (1984) concept of "investment", Moore (1994, p. 66) points out that, "concepts such as reputation are connected not just to self-representations and social evaluations of self, but to the potential for power and agency that a good reputation proffers". The way we come to understand ourselves, and to act in the world, is conflated with the way we perceive others 'see' us. Reputation is conveyed and conflated with the name, naming and making a name for one's self. This brings with it and carries on the history of the family name — the "proper" name and naming of, by and for our fathers. In this way, personal practice becomes encumbered with *duty* to the (family) name, to usual (ritual) practice, to what (we come to believe by way of experience and instruction) ought (morally and responsibly) to be done (Derrida, 1995). Within the discourses that convey the romantic myth and the structure of binary logic, practices signifying compliance, deference, obedience, acceptance (of responsibility) and so on, are aligned with femininity and position girls/women to be dutiful, to embody duty as a matter of hospitality, and, in so doing, "turn history into nature" (Barthes, 1972). The gendered embodiment of duty holds within itself a tension and tenuousness that opens to question the moral authority the dutiful presume to have or within which they take refuge. Derrida (1995, p.9) says:

> … what is at issue is the concept of duty, and of knowing whether or up to what point one can rely on it, on what it structures in the order of culture, of morality, of politics, of law and even of economy (especially as to the relation between debt and duty); that is to say,

> whether and up to what point one can trust what the concept of duty lays down for all responsible discourse about decisions, for all discourse, all logic, all rhetoric of responsibility.

As we dutifully take up particular and gendered signifying practices as our own (and as others take us to be) within particular discursive moments and contexts, there is always at play within and between subject positions, the threat and tension of hierarchical positioning within prevailing regimes of intersubjective and institutionalised meanings. Constituted within the gendered and often sexualised discourses of liberal humanism the 'individual' is taken to be both biologically determined and, at the same time agentic, capable of rational choice and hence, taken to be responsible for his or her personal success or failure within the terms and conditions of prevailing regimes of meaning.

Taking up of particular 'naturalised' signifying practices such as the removal of body hair, codes of dress and adornment, and the acquisition of particular localised symbols of knowledge, wealth and power — of "good social standing" — continue to hold the gendered hierarchy of difference, and associated meanings and contingencies in place. Representations of difference which play on fear and desire continually reinscribe dominant categories and discourses whilst appearing to embody challenge, resistance and change (Moore, 1994; Cranny-Francis, 1995). Within liberal humanism, differences are interpreted through the assumption of, and recourse to, the discourses of biological determinism and 'naturalised' individualism. This recourse to nature, and hence to science (believed within liberal humanism to be the source of truth), in no small part contributes to the resistance of, and resistance to, change. Being at once individual, daughter, wife, mother, sister (for instance) and named accordingly (for/by the father), the subject is both responsible to and for the self and others. Being female is a fertile site for ambivalence which holds both

within itself and within femininity the subject of hospitality. Derrida (1995, p.8) points out that, "Doubtless it would be impolite to appear to be making a gesture, for example in responding to an invitation, out of simple duty. It would also be unfriendly to respond to a friend out of duty. It would be no better to respond to an invitation or to a friend out of duty". This principle is made problematic for the female subject within myth and discourses where adherence to duty and to "proper standards" become conflated with (naturalised) concepts of self and with conditions of desirability and acceptance.

Within any site of subjectification there are numerous discourses at play, (or in "battle") activating and positioning subjects to take sides along the boundaries of divisive binary categories (often on several teams and along several fronts, at once). Which, and to how many discursive communities or subject positions you believe you categorically must, or have a right, to belong is discursively constructed as determined by biology — for example by the presence-absence of the penis, the presence-absence of breasts, the presence-absence of body/facial hair. Positioning oneself within the dominant discourses and promoting their adherence to the body through the practices that we take up and which create the "front" of resistance for definitive binary opposites, is likely to engender feelings of approval and authority. To subjects within ascendant categories the competing alternative will usually and initially appear as opposite, other, threatening, less. When an alternative subject position is on offer within a particular discursive moment and over time, and if this subject position is open to reading and positioning by the subject within discourse as 'Other', to the positions that she already comfortably inhabits or feels allegiance to, resistance will always be a two-eyed darning needle stitching the subject and discourse back into her/it/self as the One. If these practices (which are initially read as representing an alternative/oppositional subject position or discourse) persist and are increasingly taken up they will be come to be read as

representing differently (or individually) the established meaning of a particular category or categories and, over time will be taken-for-granted as signifying legitimate category membership and/or desire-ability.

"Resistance" is not only resisting the taking up of conventional subject positions within dominant discourses; it is also resisting the possibility of being positioned by, or of taking up a legitimate position within, the alternative discourses on offer. Alternatives 'logically' appear to the subject as singular and opposite — as an either/or, us or them, me or you, in or out, presence or absence, and always as part of (and a party to) a competitive and hierarchical possibility which is often contextually specific. Within the habit of binary logic, alternative discourses are usually read in oppositional terms with those who take up an alternative discourse as their own, being read and positioned within dominant discourses as other than normal — usually subordinated, trivialised and subject of, at best innuendo, and at worst, pathology and/or violence. This resistance to alternative discourses (or to discourses of resistance) was evident in the collective memory work project through the participants' initial resistance to the possibility of being positioned as, or of taking themselves up as, "feminist" in the early stages of the collective memory work project. The popular discourses about feminism within the discursive contexts of these participants' daily lives, position feminists variously as lesbian man-haters, as 'rat-bags', whingers, frigid or whores (usually taken to be signified by the presence of body hair, willingness to contradict a man's point of view, non-compliance with prevailing codes of fashion and beauty — ie. failing to take up usual, naturalised practices of femininity). In concert with hegemonic discourses of heterosexuality and gender difference which convey the romantic myth of 'one day my prince will come', such discourses of resistance to feminism put anyone who could be identified as being associated with, or as taking up these discourses as their own, is at risk of being positioned as

abnormal and unnatural. Positioned in this way within discourses that are resistant to alternative ways of being and knowing, subjects are pressed to maintain the ascendancy of normative discourses through the taking up of practices which maintain the conditions of historically constituted relationships and which assure the legitimacy of the myth they convey.

Day-to-day life engages each person in a persistent negotiation of control and verification within discursive contexts. Fear of difference and fear of being different is intricately embroidered over possibilities for resistance. Difference is desirable only within the terms and conditions of our subjective historicity within localised representations of dominant discourses and associated category memberships. Acceptability of signifying practices within and between gender categories varies between localities as the historically constituted discourses which prevail there (and the practices taken to signify them) have formed a 'community' of meaning. It is only within particular discursive and often localised terms and conditions, that 'individuality' can be legitimately or unproblematically expressed. To inhabit any discursive context is to be positioned in an interplay of discourses and subject positions that are hierarchically ordered. What positions we take up, and the satisfaction, power and meanings we derive from these positions, will be determined in the context of certain sanctioned modes of subjectivity and personal historicity (Davies, 1993a, 1996; Holloway, 1984; Foucault, 1987; Moore, 1994).

Faced with contradiction, confrontation, competition or opposition between the various categories to which we claim or desire membership and those representing the alternative binary other, a disruption and adjustment of meaning and practice occurs within the body of the subject. Such conflict is experienced and resolved in ways that leave marks on, and convey associated

discourses in particular ways through the action or inaction of those subjects positioned within and by the discursively antagonistic moment.

Subjectification within prevailing discourses of a preferred 'normality' is never fixed but always open to (re)interpretation and adjustment in particular and often momentary contexts. We take up and resist particular practices in this volatile social landscape of discursive interpellation into the narrative of daily life. Scripted within the myths and metaphors of patriarchy, we (re)mark our bodies and our bodies are (re)marked upon, or made un(pass)remarkable (Davies, 1993). Our location in particular social, familial, institutional and geographic spaces is always inevitably discursive and constitutive of hierarchical shifts in the particularities of subjectivities and signifying practices within and between each. As we move from one location to another we are able to (re)mark and (re)make ourselves in ways which inform, and are informed by, the discourses through which we imagine and predict the remarking upon us of those who in-habit the time and space that we (are preparing to) enter (or, which is created momentarily through an interplay of particular discourses and subjectivities). Whether we desire remark-ability or to be unpassremarkable accords with the (imagined) response-ability of our investment in historically constituted relationships, discourses and categories through and within which particular forms of our subjectivity and desires are engendered. The imagining of ourselves within, or feeling swept away by, particular discursive contexts, is constitutive of ambivalence, resistance and compliance and makes visible the possibility of multiple subjectivities as we move between discursive spaces and material places or geographic locations. The transporting of our selves between spaces, places and locations occurs through embodied and imagined, lived and textual experiences, and over time. The process of prediction and reflection of the body's movement through time and space within and between institutional, social and geographic locations, opens up possibilities for making visible the

ambiguous, contradictory and determining character of discourse in the constitution of the subject.

CHAPTER 7

BEING AND RESPONSIBILITY - THE ECONOMY OF MYTH

> The concept of responsibility, like that of decision, would thus be found to lack coherence or consequence, even lacking identity with respect to itself, paralysed by what can be called an aporia or an antimony. That has never stopped it from "functioning," as one says. On the contrary it operates so much better, to the extent that it serves to obscure the abyss or fill in its absence of foundation, stabilising a chaotic process of change in what are called conventions. Chaos refers precisely to the abyss or the open mouth, that which speaks as well as that which signifies hunger. What is thus found at work in everyday discourse, in the exercise of justice, and first and foremost in the axiomatics of private, public, or international law, in the conduct of internal diplomacy, and war, is a lexicon concerning responsibility that can be said to hover vaguely about a concept that is nowhere to be found, even if we can go so far as to say that it does not correspond to any concept at all. It amounts to a disavowal whose resources, as one knows are inexhaustible. One simply keeps on denying the aporia and antimony, tirelessly and one treats as nihilist, relativist, even poststructuralist, and worse still deconstructionist, all those who remain concerned in the face of such a display of good conscience. (Derrida, 1995, pp. 84-85)

This chapter is an attempt to display and to unravel the incoherence, the alchemy, the disavowal and the consequences of responsibility and response-ability in the chaotic process of change and of chance in the conventions of gender relations. My analysis gives rise to a discussion of sovereignty and of hospitality as being embodied and in tension as gendered. I argue that silence, reputation and desire are conditional consequences of the assumption of sovereignty and of hospitality. These are conditions of being and responsibility that, constituted as binary within the discursive economy of myth, each produce the possibility and the impossibility of the other. The discursive conditions of being girl/woman within the metaphor of patriarchy means to be positioned as being-without-reason — he is (her) reason, she is emotion. The stories I attend to in this chapter foreground experiences of family life making visible the threat and promise of taken-for-granted discourses and practices at

play within gender relations. Embodying responsibility as "wife" and "mother" is particularly fraught with the paralysis, with lack of identity and reason that functions to obscure the conditions of change and of subordination.

When my youngest daughter was just a few months old I lay breast feeding her in the old-fashioned bed, in the old fashioned house I shared with my husband in an old-fashioned town. As my baby drew nourishment from my breast and my husband lay apparently sleeping beside me, my curly headed four-year old came to our bed shrouded in the remains of sleep. She was carrying Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar:* "One Sunny Sunday morning the warm sun came up and… pop! …out of the egg came a tiny and very hungry caterpillar". A morning story was a ritual we both enjoyed. The early morning sun, already hot, streamed in throwing shards of light across my naked breast, my naked buttocks and my family strewn across the bed draped in sleep and coloured linen. Not wanting to disturb my husband (as much for my own sake as for his), I did not move over to make room for her. As she leant her elbows beside me there with her chin in her hands our bed was to her chest high. Making metaphors for the moment, my arms held within them both the text and the baby to my breast as I read and turned the pages. With stealth I read on, "...He started to look for some food." I feel the warmth of his abdomen as he stirs, rolls over and nestles in behind my back that is turned. Against him, I turn the page, "...On Saturday he ate through ...". As he silently finds his way between my legs I concentrate on the script "... One piece ..." A piece of me? (I've heard men say, "She's a nice piece," or just as often "a nasty piece" — "of work".) My responsibility, my children, my-self nourishing, my arms protecting, my voice speaking only the authored text, "He built a small house called a cocoon around himself" ... He invades, as it suits him, my body, my (im)possible pleasure, to come inside and keep my secret as I am expected for love, for marriage, for security to keep the secret of his pleasure. In this silence, her silence, my

silence, his rights and his pleasures as (if he is) the sovereign can simply be taken-for-granted and need not be mutual. He enters me coming into the cocoon that my silence weaves. I keep reading myself and my children into the text that promises protection and transformation "... He nibbled a hole in the cocoon", I imagine ... "He was a beautiful butterfly!" And my children smile up at me (im)possibly lovingly unsuspecting that the everyday business and busy-ness of chatter and stories disavow the absences and denials that reside in the silences obscuring the abyss of responsibility.

In her home, when her home is his castle, a woman can be lost in anguished silence unable to find the words to speak in his language, the language of his desires, or to claim her feelings and, not taken-for-granted, be heard. Silent, individual, feminist in limbo. The im-possibility of pleasure in being Other in, and to, that moment, as in many Other moments, was tempered by an as yet un-nameable, unfathomable abyss of responsibility and resentment for the tireless display of good conscience, of being wife and mother. I could neither accept nor deny that my husband was able to assume a taken-for-granted right to my body and to absolution from responsibility for the needs, the demands, the desires of our children, of myself, of others. In moments such as this and at other times, such as when on occasion he was seen ("in the scene") pegging out the nappies, neighbours, sometimes strangers, would comment how lucky I was to have a husband who helped around the house, his 'right' was made visible, consolidated and turned to righteousness. The troubled waters of consciousness and of power are too easily glossed over with the oil slick of usual practice and romantic notions. In the silent moment that marks the story's end as a new beginning, I knew there and then as I know more clearly here and now in the depths of my woman's being, the double anguish that Cixous speaks of when she says that in the possibility of speaking there is not only the anguish, the risky business of transgressing the binaries of gendered

subjectivity but that, my/"[her] word almost always falls on the deaf, masculine ear, that can only hear language that speaks in the masculine" (Cixous, 1992, p. 152). And I knew then, as I know more clearly now, that to speak what the masculine ear refuses to hear can summon the shock of violence disavowing responsibility and the (im)possibility of response-ability.

Coursing within me for many years the power of this story of lived experience has mostly remained untold, unspeakable. At the time I seemed lost for words that in my consciousness were maybe not yet invented to describe how I *felt* (ir)responsible, un-response-able, lacking coherence and fearing consequence. In this state of being, in speaking and in silence there were too many contradictions and too much taken-for-granted that was all too easily romanticised. Any thought of speaking seemed to hail the possibility of hurt, the (im)possibility of love, chaos. I've never spoken of this to my husband or children nor they to me. Foucault (1980, p. 27) has said of silence that:

> Silence itself—the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, ... is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than the element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies.

For me, that silent moment of being, wife and mother, encapsulated and epitomised what it meant to live as wife and mother — to be a silent host — hospitable to all — speaking only as an act of hospitality (or of community). This hospitality speaks differently to the One with assumed and ascribed rights than it does into the silence that is embodied and contained as responsible. The other-self speaks into the silence (of words unspoken) the discourses which protect what is and threaten to close in on desire. Hospitality is in-tension with sovereignty, hospitality being embodied as female and sovereignty embodied as male — he claims her hospitality as his own as she relinquishes (the im-

possibility of) her sovereignty to him. The possibility (and the impossibility) of hospitality Derrida says, is the ability to retain sovereignty, "mastery of the house" while at the same time being open, porous, welcoming; and that hospitality is not about "knowing" something, it is about "doing" something (Caputo, 1997). In the home it is (usually) she who is ritually, habitually, daily doing what is taken-for-granted to sustain a 'normal' family life. Within heterosexual social relations as these are constituted in the everyday discourses which convey the metaphor of patriarchy as a romantic script, "wife" and "mother" are positioned without sovereignty — of (her)self, of (her) body — without "rights" and without the right (words) to speak and be heard. Within the home which is his castle, he (usually) knows and she (usually) does, accordingly. The (im)possibility of her sovereignty becomes invested in her (response-ability to maintain) relationships with others as evidence of love and of being legitimate. Constituted within the discursive economy of the romantic myth, her being embodies the impossibility and the possibility of "love" — a state within which she becomes "love sick", "love struck", "love lorn", "fallen in love". Responsibility for maintaining the metaphor of patriarchy and for its disruption, is invested in the signifying practices of "(m)other" where "mother love" is taken-for-granted and where she becomes responsible for the emotional life, the comfort, the 'normality' of the family.

Being responsible as being without sovereignty

The sexual division of labour, of wealth, power, of conventions of beauty and conduct continue to be central concerns of feminist discourses. In poststructuralist terms these divisions are manifestations of the hierarchical alignment of gender with the dualisms of public and private, culture and nature, knowing and doing. This organisational strategy has a long history of attachment to assumed and usual differences between male and female bodies.

The assumed biological determinism of these divisions masks the discursive production of practices and relations of power associated with being positioned as male or female on either side of the binaries and the ways in which each is in-tension with the other. Paradoxically the hegemonic position of masculinity in the production of gender differences is dependent upon the individual's ability to control nature and, at the same time, depends upon the individual believing "nature" to be the source of 'truth' which supports the conditions and practices of gender difference and heterosexual desire. Within this discursive configuration, the gendered divisions and taken-for-granted practices of masculinity (taken to be determined by, and at the same time, able to control nature) and femininity (taken to be the embodiment of nature), produce hierarchies of discourse and practice which institutionalise social relations that hold in place the conditions of the romantic myth. Of these, the discourses and practices of "the family" and of "the community" into which we are each born, is centrally implicated.

As we co-habit the various discursive spaces of our daily lives we take up practices of speaking and not speaking in ways which we have come to imagine will fulfil our desires in ways that will not rock the boat, that will continue to give stability and security to the arche we become, that is apparently keeping us all afloat on the times and tides of "patriarchy". We are the arche of myth where we are together constituted in and constitute an economy of relationships bound together by a hierarchy of opposition in which we are always taken-for-granted, being-without-reason, being-without-sovereignty. Within the discourses of heterosexuality, we embody that which he must not be and, at the same time, that which he must desire. Within the conditions of myth, where we are positioned together in the production and interests of patriarchal economic and social relations, girls/women come to embody deference, compromise, good humour — hospitality — as the responsibility of our being.

Family dynamics

Coming from a family of eleven children, six boys and five girls, the main differences I found were in chores (not so much my parent's doing as the only real chores we had were to clean our rooms, wash and wipe up and cut the wood). The boys cut the wood but if we (the girls) wanted to have a go it was encouraged. We were all timetabled to wash and wipe although this didn't get rid of arguments as was the intention. The boys always claimed it was "women's work", but it never went over real well and never got them out of doing it. (Washing and wiping up at my place – what a blast! It took at least an hour after the arguing was settled and mum always ended up cleaning up after us as it generally ended in a water fight.) Cleaning our rooms was one thing the boys just refused to do, except Jason who always made his bed. This was generally accepted and left to mum but us girls were in all sorts of trouble if we thought for a minute we could get away with it. Oh, another thing we (girls) had to do our own washing once we reached about twelve, but the boys only had to make sure they took their's from their room to the laundry.

Somehow, sometime, again and again within discourse, girls will come to always already know that we/I will be taken up as feminine, emotional, soft, object, negligible (of consequence), responsible. Somehow and in many ways we (are positioned to) take that for granted; and at the same time we position as taken-for-granted the authority of masculinity, of reason and of hardness. Our outrage, our love, our emotion is, of course, without reason and we are without reason to expect outrage, love or responsibility from others. Maybe this is why it is not with outrage or embarrassment but rather with humour and acceptance, that we tell the stories of a neighbour commiserating with our father when our mother had yet another daughter; or of being that daughter and growing up as our father's side-kick with our father having given us, as a pet name, the name with which he would have Christened a son (if he had been fortunate enough to have one); or of having brothers who weren't expected to do as much around the house as us, who were allowed to go out on the streets after dark, who were more often the topic of our parents' conversations, who got pushbikes or motor bikes for Christmas when we were given dolls, when

we would get what (*He* judged) we deserved. As Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan's (1995) research made evident, some of us as children will have protested loudly at these injustices (as loudly as some of our sisters protested at not being given the doll she wanted); but, as the conditions of myth and its promise to come loom with the omnipresent possibility of being other-wise singled out or positioned transgressively within discourse, we take up as our own the silence which becomes taken-for-granted — only noticed when it was "broken", a transgression. Deeply rooted in the multifarious repetitions of everyday discourse, these stories of lived experience while they remain disattended, taken-for-granted, "cute", "amusing" are powerful investments in (re)producing the prevailing economy of myth.

The female subject relinquishes the possibility of sovereignty as a condition of her responsibility and her desire. Within the domain of every day life this is contingent with the discursive conditions of the particular category memberships that she has taken-up-as-her-own and, within which she is positioned and positions herself to be accommodating (him). This is a discursive state of play within which it could be said that being *for* him is her "reason for being". As the Other of reason and of him, it is not for reason but for emotion — for fear and desire — that she is for him. The contingency of being embodied as female is to be (otherwise) without reason: "she" is emotion — not to be spoken — "*she*" *is the cat's mother*.

Within the discursive economy of myth the female subject is positioned to embody and to signify (her) hospitality, her response-ability, her desire-ability as evidence of his sovereignty. The effects of her body's positioning as different, as opposite, are both constituted and invested in the discursive site and conditions of myth and of binary logic where, being "female" is always to embody the responsibilities of being Other to the One, who is at the same time,

her "other" as she is or might possibly be, if she is "good enough", *his* One — "the One *for* him". She is his "other half". (My Dad would often reply to a request or an invitation with, "I'll check with my other half", or sometimes magnanimously, "my better half.") As the Other of reason, of knowing and of authority, she is positioned and positions herself to embody and contain emotion and action as the evidence of her desirability and hospitality. In this circular economy of myth, discourse and binary logic, to be *for* him is to *be* and to *do* in his interest — to accrue interest for him, in ways of being that invest the self in his sovereignty, in his reason as the measure of her hospitality and responsibility.

Within binary logic and the multifarious discourses of gender difference, she is constituted as embodying emotion and as being 'other' to reason. At every turn in the economic circularity of myth there seems to be no space into which she might speak her reason as being other than "unreasonable". Yet being positioned as the Other of reason, for her its seems that reason holds emotion within itself — that emotion is often reason enough for belief or action — that how she or others do or might feel constitutes a reasonable explanation. Positioned as Other within prevailing rationalist discourses of reason, her emotion is unfathomable, unspeakable, signifying transgression, an unreasonable threat to his being in control — to his sovereignty and authority. Within the discourses of the rational, autonomous individual and of gender difference, she is positioned as wholly responsible for her emotions, which she must see as other to and separate from her reason or otherwise she may be threatened with pathology — labelled neurotic or mad or simply ignored and trivialised. Multiply and tenuously positioned in this way, she is open to reading herself as, and to being read as, being-without-sovereignty for this would be sovereignty without reason. She embodies hospitality — she is the cocoon that he spins around himself where he will take himself to be (and will

be positioned as) sovereign to whom she will be hospice for he is her neighbour and stranger — and, as neighbour or stranger she must welcome him (in *his*) home. Within the romantic myth she is multiply and typically positioned within the discourses of gender difference, of heterosexuality and of femininity as loving mother and dutiful wife she is (dis)possessed in the privacy of the home that is his castle.

Her *being* becomes as (she imagines) he desires. Embodying hospitality as being-without-sovereignty she works hard to make herself as she imagines he will desire her and to believe his desires are her own. When her hospitality (often taken to be signified by her silence) positions him to believe that this is so (that he is naturally sovereign authority) hostility is at work in the hospitality of the myth which she is positioned to embody. Woman is to embody hospitality at the same time she is at the mercy of the hospitality of the One. "The word "hospitality" means to invite and welcome the "stranger"…Derrida's interest is drawn to the fact that, by virtue of its etymology, the word carries its opposite within itself …The word "hospitality" derives from the Latin *hospes*, which is formed from *hostis*, which originally meant a "stranger" and came to take on the meaning of the enemy or "hostile" stranger (*hostilis*), + *pets* (*potis, potes, potentia*), to have power" (Caputo, 1997, p. 110). Hospitality holds within itself the possibility (and the impossibility) of hostility. Hospitality is itself a binary that, like other binaries within myth, constitute gendered effects of power and desire. Within this discursive economy, myth points out and notifies the conditions of its performance (Barthes, 1972) through the efficacy of chance (Derrida, 1995).

Positioned as being-without-sovereignty in the economy of myth, as the story below, "When I was a virgin", goes to show, when we are raped, when for his comfort, for his desire, for his authority our body is taken-for-granted, we are

caste in silence like Snow White or Sleeping Beauty — *I froze and did nothing, I pretended to be asleep* — awaiting him, awaiting his authority, his desire, his absence. Living within the discursive economy that is constitutive of heterosexual desire as a metaphor of patriarchy where the 'hostility' within 'hospitality' can be seen to be embodied as male and where her body is taken to be 'hospice' — responsive to, and responsible for, his needs, his, deeds, his demands, his desires. As the story below illustrates, the contingency of chance within this economy re(in)states and revalues the conditions of myth.

When I was a virgin

I used to be really trusting until I was seventeen years old and then whatever trust I had in my body left, as I was raped. This was my first sexual encounter and the only people who know about it are Kersty and Shaun (and one old boyfriend, Philip). I never told my parents and never will. Actually the only other person I ever told was Doreen my sister-in-law.

It happened when I went to Weston for a Bachelors & Spinsters ball (B&S) when I was in year eleven at boarding school. I went to Weston with my girlfriend Alice and we stayed at Alice's grandmother's house with her uncle as well. I hated him from the start. He was creepy. The first night at Alice's house when she was in the shower and I was in bed, her uncle came in and felt me on the bum. I froze and did nothing, I pretended to be asleep and he left.

The next night was the B&S. I got really drunk on rum and coke (I haven't drunk it since the smell brings back bad memories). At 3 o'clock after the B&S finished I went home because Alice cracked on to a guy and they slept in a car.

When I walked in the back door Alice's uncle grabbed me (he was behind the door) and pushed me to the ground and jumped on top of me. I could of screamed (as her grandmother was in the room next door) but I have never been so scared in all my life, so I didn't scream or fight. I remember opening my mouth to scream but nothing would come out. He raped me but I was so drunk thank God, that I can hardly remember the actual sexual part of it. I remember him pulling my hair so that my head was pushed down and he made me give him a head job. I dry reached so he soon gave up on that idea. I was a virgin when this happened and that was the worst thing. I'm so glad I can't remember much of the rape, sometimes I have flashbacks and remember some things which happened. I used to have nightmares, nobody knew why but the nuns took me to the doctor and without telling him a thing (because a nun was in the room) only that I had nightmares, he gave me a packet of fifty Valium. I only took them every now and then.

I never reported the rape to the police or told my parents. It's all so embarrassing and I just want to forget the whole thing. But I know that it has affected me greatly, especially my relationships I have with men. I dumped my boyfriend Philip (who I lived with and went out with for four years) because he said that I deserved it and that it was all my fault. I used to think it was all my fault (sometimes I still do) but after nearly six years passing I realise that it wasn't my fault and there was nothing I could have done. I'm so glad I was drunk and extra glad I bled everywhere (because I was a virgin).
When I told Shaun I felt like he didn't believe me he didn't want to know anything about it, and at times I really wanted to talk about it, but there is something I never told him and that was in what town it happened and who did it. The person who did it was Shaun's uncle (as Shaun and Alice are cousin's). I really worry that when Shaun and I get married I'll see his uncle and he'll recognise me or something and that scares me a lot.
The whole concept of 'one day my prince will come' is my dream. I want security and stability. I also want my independence etc. but that's not that important to me anymore, as I feel that I have obtained all the independence I need. Now all I want is to become a great teacher, marry, have lots of babies and continue working. I have also been thinking of doing an external course on psychology, it's something I've always wanted to do, so after I've done my two years part time teaching I'll definitely do it.

This chance encounter of hostility within hospitality points out and notifies the subject of the contingencies of myth as it reels her into its narrative fold. Positioned within myth and discourse to be silently receptive and hospitable to men/masculinity in all its forms, being subjected to hostility seems to reaffirm rather than to disrupt the taking up of the romantic storyline as one's own. Her position serves to maintain his hostility as tenable within the conditions of myth. Viewed poststructurally, his hostility can be seen as arising from a thwarting of his rightful position within the romantic myth — his home is not his castle. He may be the (only) man in the house but he is not the man of the house. The house is his mother's. He is without his 'right' to sovereignty. His hospitality becomes hostility without responsibility. As Moore (1994, p. 66) points out:

> …it is possible to suggest a link between the thwarting of investments in various subject positions based on gender and interpersonal violence. Thwarting can be understood as the inability

> to sustain or properly take up a gendered subject position, resulting in a crisis, real or imagined, of self-representation and/or social evaluation. Such crises can be of various degrees of seriousness and of variable duration.

"When I was a virgin" draws attention to the efficacy of reputation in the discursive economy of myth where girls/women are positioned to embody responsibility and where fear and desire are conflated in the process of subjectification: (*he said that I deserved it and that it was all my fault … I bled everywhere (because I was a virgin) … I really worry that when Shaun and I get married I'll see his uncle and he'll recognise me or something and that scares me a lot.*) It is likely that this uncle is trading on, and protected by the reputation of his family and by the reputation of girls/women as silent, compliant, subordinate. Reputation is constituted within and through relationships with others — to be positioned within discourse is always to be positioned in relation to others (Holloway, 1984; Moore, 1994; Walkerdine, 1990). For girls and women, possibly the strongest motivation for action, inaction, speaking, not speaking (and the taking up or resisting of particular signifying practices) in particular contexts, is the preservation, maintenance and production of relationships (Gilligan, 1982; Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan, 1995; Walkerdine, 1985b; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989). Silent conformity parades as the facade of 'natural' femininity with the confidence to silence ambivalence as the Other of fidelity — the lynch pin upon which is hinged the pendulum of identity and emotion which mark time and space across and through the body of the subject. The way that we perceive others see the world, and our being in that world, affects the confidence with which we take up or resist particular practices and discourses and how openly we imagine possible ways of being *and* belonging. The call to conformity speaks loudest and longest when the discourses and practices through and within which we have been constituted (and/or within or against which we are expected to take up a position) are the

discourses conveyed by and constitutive of (the practices of) governments, the law and the taken-for-granted conditions of daily life. It is within the discourses of institutions such as the family, school and courts that the value of investment in reputation becomes most apparent.

> The loss of reputation could mean a loss of livelihood, and the lack of good social standing can render individuals incapable of pursuing various strategies or courses of action… While non-dominant discourses certainly provide subject positions and modes of subjectivity which might be individually satisfying and which might challenge or resist dominant modes, those individuals who do challenge or resist the dominant discourses on gender and gender identity frequently find that this is at the expense of such things as social power, social approval and even material benefits. (Moore, 1994, pp. 65-66)

The ways in which the right to sovereignty and to authority are produced within everyday discourse, where women are positioned to embody hospitality and responsibility, is connected and in-tension with myth — all will be made all right when I/we marry: if I keep silent I can have my dream: *The whole concept of 'one day my prince will come' is my dream.* Silence everywhere, everywhere the ambi-valence of silence: silence all around on both sides interacting with and affecting the behaviour of an-other. The silence of common-sense speaking loudly about "girls who sleep in the back of cars" and that "girls who drink too much deserve what they get", the silence of the church speaking loudly the go(o)dliness of the virgin mother and the sin of the other, the silence of science, of the medical profession speaking loudly of the neuroses of womanhood, the silence of not being heard — of him not wanting to know anything about it because to him emotion is threatening, incomprehensible, unspeakable, *her* responsibility, *her* being not his. This is the silence of lack, of absence, of obscurity, of incoherence, of paralysis (*I remember opening my mouth to scream but nothing would come out.*) — of not having an opening in the dis-course(s) of our daily lives into which the hostility, the contradictions, the responsibility of

experience can be spoken without threat, without fear — a discursive space where emotion as reason, will be hospitably received. From our silence we speak in the same breath of compromise, of sacrifice, of attainment and dreams — that *I have obtained all the independence I need*, — that *the whole concept of 'one day my prince will come' is my dream* — that *to become a great teacher, marry, have lots of babies and continue working*, will provide *security and stability*.

Growing up steeped in liberal humanist discourses of the rational subject the girl child/woman is positioned and positions herself to be, and to be read as, responsible for her own actions which, at the same time, constitute the value, legitimacy, form and effects of (her) actions as scripted within the conditions of the romantic myth. The established moral order, as it is constituted a discursive economy of power and desire, is embedded in a hierarchy of difference. This order positions girls/women as at once subordinate within and responsible for maintaining relationships in ways which are contingent upon silence and the possibility of violence. In this economy, hospitality and responsibility become taken-for-granted as taken care of (by wo-men) in the interests of (male) power and desire which men are positioned to invest in "naturalised" displays and contests of sovereignty and authority (mostly among themselves).

To speak into the space between men and women is to stop short as if "wo" is what connects her with him — wo-men. To speak is to in(ter)ject — wo, woa, woe. The possibility of speaking suggests disruption — "be thankful for what you receive" — "you get what you deserve" —" you make the bed you lie in" — the position of woe. Therein lies the threat of fear and desire — the lie of silence that calm, balance, harmony reside in the silent space.

Always in a state of being and receiving in the (im)possible tension between sovereignty and hospitality, we are positioned within discourse as receptacle for what life offers as what we are expected to offer back — to give as if to receive what is given — as what we deserve. We are positioned to give our selves, our bodies, our labour and our silence for the desire and the sovereignty of the other which, myth promises, will fulfil our desire to be desirable and to have stability and security. Within this intricate pattern of being within discourse, we are repeatedly and multiply positioned to believe we can have the promise of happiness or at least *security and stability*, if we are, or if we can make ourselves, deserving. Within the scripted subject of the romantic storyline, relinquishing independence (or at least its growth) is subjectified as a condition of "goodness", of "responsibility" and of "hospitality" embodied as female. As we take up as our own the sovereignty of the One — for our heart's desires we are positioned within myth to sacrifice (or at least compromise) the rights and autonomy we have been promised within the discourses of the individual. *For* him we will be all things (madonna, whore, cook, cleaner, mother, teacher and, if need be, psychologist) in an everyday ritual sacrifice that makes us deserving and responsible. As many women will testify (and sometimes complain) this is a thankless position. I wonder that this might be another "stroke of genius called Christianity" (Nietzsche in, Derrida, 1995, p.82), another magic trick of romance that nobody notices this sacrifice (or at least the daily rituals of cooking and cleaning, of mothering, of beauty and sex) that women "naturally" make for men. This taken-for-grantedness, this not noticing, this invisibility of domestic labour ("women's work") has brought into common vernacular the term "domestic blindness" to describe (good humouredly and to excuse) men (and children) who invest responsibility for the daily rituals and sacrifices of "home making" in "mother" and "wife". For women this is a matter of being without reason, of being without sovereignty, of being, of embodying hospitality — for there is no other reason, no "normal" condition of the body

which prohibits the sharing of this burden. In the emotional economy of myth finding happiness in making others happy is, after all, a feminine virtue invested in silence.

Love: the circular economy of silence and subordination

Living within the discourses of gender difference the subject of myth is positioned to spin herself (into) a shroud, a cocoon or a merry-go-round of romantic love — of objectification and subordination where love "becomes complicated, corrupted, or obstructed by an unequal balance of power" (Firestone, 1970, p. 124). In this discursive economy the absolute right(eous)ness of the masculine subject and his fleeting but powerful insertion into the romantic storyline guarantees his agency in the submission and passivity of the feminine body to the satisfaction of his interests and his desires. Arguably, there exists a contradiction between romantic desire and practices of 'normal' masculinity which precludes the expression, possibly even the experience, of love (Firestone, 1970; Greer, 1970; Rowbotham, 1975; Connell, 1987, Williams & Gardener, 1989). Practices of 'normal' masculinity have adhered to the romantic storyline and become non-contradictory as sex is understood as "making love" so that sex and love become understood as synonymous with each other as well as with 'normality'. Love and sex, sex and love, "making love" is what differentiates romantic relationships and what is taken-for-granted as a condition of marriage, of "private life" — the bricks and mortar of home and hearth, of sovereignty, of hospitality, of response-ability and of silence. "Never talk sex, politics, religion (or money) with your friends".

Amongst the hundreds of stories written and told for the collective memory work of this thesis, amongst all these stories (that were offered as a way of understanding how it is that we come to expect as a normal part of life history

that we desire and become marriage) there is no mention of love (nor did I suggest that it be spoken of); and the only mention of sex are stories of sexual violence. This is worth questioning. Is this silence fear of the impossibility of love, of not being able to have what we desire? Is this silence the limit of our desire, of being on the brink of falling, of being struck, of becoming sick? Is silence the limit and possibility of that four letter word he reputedly finds so hard to say? Is it that our desire to be desired, which is so evident in the stories told, the mask that obscures the abyss and denial of responsibility? How does silence render incoherent and circular the verity of love which surely must be to be loved, to be worthy of love, to love honour and cherish, to be loved honoured and cherished in a "gift of no return" (Derrida, 1995; Caputo, 1997)? As we are constituted within the discourses that convey the romantic myth, love and the possibility of love become conflated and invested in the Other. In the romantic storylines of 'one day my prince will come', there is always the tension, the promise, the possibility and the impossibility of 'love to come' — love that will be embodied as the other (sex). In Derridean terms the "im-possible" is something the possibility of which is sustained by its impossibility. It seems to me that the "idea of love" (as the idea that makes marriage possible or impossible in the discourses of democracy) is like the "idea of justice": something seemingly irreducible, all consuming, affirming, selfless, boundless, necessary. Derrida (in Caputo, 1997, p. 141) speaks of justice in this way:

> The "idea of justice" seems to be irreducible in its affirmative character, in its demand of gift without exchange, without circulation, without recognition of gratitude, without economic circularity, without calculation and without rules, without reason and without rationality.

In discursive contexts and storylines where men/maleness is produced as the embodiment of rationality and reason — as being reason enough — there is no reason to respond to nor take responsibility for emotion — for love. Embodied

and positioned in this way within discourse, to speak of love would be to speak without reason, without rationality. When I was a girl I did all the things that boys do. I knew that I was a girl, that boys were not girls but somehow better, privileged, loved more. I wanted to be like a boy and somehow I knew that this meant being better, the best (a girl could be) and I broke limbs trying. Climbing the highest tree, jumping from the highest wall, quelching my fear in the face of an over excited dog, doing well at school, always obedient, honourable, a good girl. I desired the approval, the love of those in authority — mothers and teachers but particularly boys and men. Over time I found as Cixous (1992) did, that "victory" always comes down to the same thing: things get hierarchical. Organisation by hierarchy makes all conceptual organisation subject to man.

Romantic storylines write scripts for the gendered-body-subject in which desire prevails and where fear and violence within everyday myth and discourse are rendered invisible, (dis)attended in the silence of hospitality. Within the discourses of femininity and of heterosexuality, ambi-valence, as it holds fear (and silence as engendered by fear of rejection, of disruption or of male violence) is constituted and conflated within the naturalising of oppositionally gendered difference and desires. Here emotion and action, 'e-motion', is woven into a discursive pattern of comparison and com(pli)ment. Within the discursive hierarchies of binary logic and the conditions of choice within myth, compare; com(pli)ment; commitment; could be posited as the narrative frame of subjectification. Mirror, mirror on the wall who doth the glass slipper fit? Within myth, fear (which can be both produced and allayed by com(pli)ment and, which is paralysed in silence or pathologised and subordinating in its expression) functions alongside desire as a powerful strategy for the hegemony of male authority. Positioned everyday to embody hospitality and as having much to be afraid of, the limited discursive spaces from within which the

female body-subject might speak her reason and be heard are readily colonised by prevailing discourses and gendered relations of power.

Caught in the gendered binaries of Western philosophy, we-she-I are silent and silenced, yet speak loudly — proclaiming in every action, inaction, interaction and reaction, the discourses through which our subordinate, silent womanhood is constituted. Embodied as girl/woman within the accepted storylines of living the feminine we become locked in the silent territory between public-private, normal-deviant, accepting-demanding, love-fear. The details in the sequence of the narrative interplay of myth, of discourses, of subject positions, of emotion lost in bodies, in need, in desire, in silence we reside in the 'other' side of "knowing" where he fears his very being, his manhood and his authority is threatened. Experiences inscribed on our bodies, live on in our emotions and imaginations and, even if only given silent voice there, impress our practice in discourse and desire. The conflation of fear and desire appear as a strategy of notification, as a contingency of subjectification within the conditions of myth. Fear arises by way of the conveyancing within discourse of chance encounters with sexual violence, with or as sexualised other. This is the contingency of chance and the chanciness of contingency (Smith, 1995). Desire reluctantly preserves its own pleasure in the harsh light of necessity/truth/chance/fear.

Our romantic desire is as much a myth as it is a desire for what the romantic myth offers. Our desire constituted with us in myth is taken (by others) along with us to be dismissible — as having no worth beyond the conditions and (con)texts of the romantic storyline — as "nothing but myth". The Enlightenment hailed the dismissal of women and myth within discourse where both are positioned as being without reason. The authority of the One, His authority, the authority of that which we cannot be but can only be with (or against) is invested in our silence. We are to be dismissed for we embody the

possibility of the opening of (im)possibility that resides in silence as the responsibility (and the possibility) of the other within discourse. The romantic myth transforms the other into the One (possibility).

The narrative form of lived and told experience, reflects both the historical specificity and the historical continuum of constitutive effects within everyday discourse (and silence). The analysis of the story below makes visible the colonising work of binary logic and the intergenerational effects of discourses of gender difference. The experience speaks into existence the discursive economy embedded in three generations of speaking subjects — grandfather, mother, daughter. The scene is set by the juxtaposition of, and embodiment within, the gendered hierarchical binaries of inside-outside, presence-absence, sovereignty-hospitality, knowing-doing, mind-body, culture-nature, speaking-silence. In this story the (m)other, in the absence of the father is the conduit for the flow of prevailing and emerging discourses and their possibilities and enabling limits. The story below, *Fixing the fence*, is the last of the stories I tell in support of my thesis and as such, I present it differently. I in(ter)ject the story with my analysis as a way of drawing attention to the interrelatedness of being and knowing as these are usually opposed to one another. The competitive and historical dynamic of gendered binary logic within discourse, usually both conveys and constitutes the lived and told narrative of experience and its meaning or analysis. The story (indented and italicised) can be read separately from, or interwoven with, the analysis.

Fixing the fence

It is bitter cold and windy when (13 year old) Ruth and her mother arrive at the house. They unpack quickly and laugh as the wind pushes and pulls at them. Once inside they put the heater on and prepare to make a relaxing cup of tea for themselves while they chat.

Outside, mother and daughter are silently buffeted by the elements of nature which unite and exhilarate them and from which they seek refuge. Inside, accommodated in his castle, they are the beneficiaries of his sovereignty. Here they feel safe secure, comfortable. Once inside, in the private space of the (grand)father's home, and in his absence, they are able to speak. Their speaking is defined by the authorship of the father and historically and discursively constituted intergenerational relationships.

> *On the bench in the old-fashioned kitchen, Ruth's Grandfather has left a note:*
>
> *"Janice, Hope you arrived safely. Help yourself to the cupboards and the fridge. Don't think I'll get to see you before you leave so have a safe trip home. I am a little worried as two planks have fallen off the side fence. I thought perhaps Nathan could fix it. There are nails and a hammer in the shed. Will see you soon, Dad."*

In the private space of the home, patriarchal lineage determines who speaks, who is spoken to, and who and what is spoken of: he is author even in his absence. He is positioned and positions himself as sovereign, as author of the text, as knowing. This positioning is made possible through the historically constituted discursive relationship and speaking with his daughter who is the (m)other of the son (potential heir to his position). The daughter of the (m)other does not figure in his speaking. He speaks through and within the discourse of gender difference signified by the sexual division of labour which is formed around the gendered division of space, public-private, inside (the home)-outside (the home). It is the son who is named to maintain the artefacts and signifiers of culture, of difference, of property and investment — the boundaries, the fences between spaces, people, nature and the meanings which they (might) together produce. In the absence of the father it is the (m)other who is (as)signed within discourse, to assume responsibility and to affirm the discursively constituted conditions of gendered subjectivity.

Ruth's mum says, 'Well Nathan's not here so I guess the planks will have to stay where they are.'

Within the phallocentric web of binary logic, the daughter is multiply positioned as other. She is other to the mother, to the (grand)father and the brother. She is other both in her positioning within relationships and within the binary categories of social meaning produced within and conveyed by, the constitutive discourses within which she is at once absent and taken-for-granted. Her otherness is written over her body for she is a girl child. Her personhood, her self, her subjectivity within discourse, the resistance, ambivalence and reconciliation of her positioning as other, are embodied in her thoughts, feelings and capacity for action. Her response-ability is defined by, and given meaning within, the available historically constituted discourses and relationships which she values and to which she has access.

Meanwhile Ruth has been thinking, 'Why did he ask Nathan? It can't be that hard. Mum hasn't even thought of me.' And with the prospect of showing everyone she can do anything Nathan can, she says, 'I'll do it.'

Constituted within the prevailing discourses of liberal humanism, the subject finds a place to speak and the capacity for action by taking up as her own the competitive discourses of the individual, of equality and democracy. Taking herself to be 'individual' the historical specificity of her subjective position assumes a taken-for-granted discursive space within which to contest her (m)other's response and assumed authority. The mother, whose subjectivity is engendered in an earlier generation of discursively constituted significations and 'truths' of biological determinism is ambivalent in the face of a contestation between legitimate historically constituted discourses embodied by her daughter.

Ruth's mother looked at her daughter doubtfully, 'Are you sure?'

Ruth is now more determined than ever and haughtily says, 'Yeah. Probably do it better than Nathan.'

The (m)other is surrounded on both sides positioned tenuously by prevailing and often contradictory, discourses. As being-without-sovereignty within the patriarchal discourses of the father (where, by his grace she is granted authority in his name) she is at the same time positioned within liberal humanist discourses which constitute the mother and mothering as responsible for guaranteeing the production of the autonomous individual. Her (m)other's ambivalence serves to create a gap, a discursive space into which the child/subordinate other, can speak, can take up the discourse of the individual and the associated signifying practices. Hearing the confident voice of competitive reason re-cognises the ambivalence of the (m)other overwriting the authority of the father with the speaking of the daughter.

Her mother then looks pleased and proud and smiling says, 'Well off you go then.'

Permission granted by the (m)other (who represents the sovereignty and authority of the father), the daughter is able to move beyond the usual conditions of her gendered subjectification. The speaking subject takes up responsibility for the discourse, to which she has laid claim and spoken into existence in the historically specific moment and, for her position within that discourse. The rush of confidence with which she crosses the gender divide is soon mediated by the gendered alignment and signification of the culture-nature divide as she leaves the comfort of the home and enters the domain of men.

Ruth forgets her cup of tea and rushes outside to the shed. When she finds the light she looks about curiously. 'Ugh', she breathes in disgust, 'Yuk.'

> *Everything is covered in layer upon layer of dust. Ancient furniture is stacked in the corner (none of it any good) and cobwebs hang everywhere. After much searching and disgusted lifting off of layers of junk, desperately trying not to cover herself with dust or come into any contact with spiders, she finds the hammer and a jar of rusted nails. 'Oh fabulous. I guess these will have to do,' she thinks and goes outside to look for the fallen section of fence.*

Having taken herself up as 'individual' she enters the male domain outside the home. (In this instance, the shed — an icon of Australian masculinity celebrated in the popular John Williamson song, *All Australian Boys Need a Shed*). As she enters, this once dark and mysterious space is illuminated by her responsive presence. Her response makes visible her gendered subjectivity as oppositional, com(ple)mentary and interdependent within her 'individuality'. Her internal (feminine) response to this external (masculine) space reinscribes and reconstitutes the interdependency of difference and emotional response to the maintenance of gendered subject positions. Her commentary reaffirms her femininity. Good girls/women keep things clean and orderly, are afraid of spiders, are disdainful of the habits of men in ways that suggest that men could not survive without them/their (m)other. This storyline enables the girl/woman to position herself (silently) as rescuer and makes imaginable her (otherwise subservient, subordinate) subject positioning as authoritative in her hospitality and tolerance. Within usual readings of the romantic storyline (and lived experience), when she ventures, or is cast out from the home, she may become the hapless victim of circumstance but, once rescued/chosen and instated as keeper of the castle, she is able to imaginatively reposition herself within the rescuer-victim binary as rescuing him from the folly of his (domestic) incompetence. Metaphorically speaking, she moves out her nature and within his culture she finds the rusty nails of patriarchal discourses which she uses to close the gaps in the fence of binary logic. In the act of doing so, she

refunds and refurbishes the boundaries of difference and discovers that refashioning difference is challenging, risky, painful.

> *She feels a mixed sense of nervousness, excitement and challenge as she sets to work on the first plank. She leans it against the fence and finds a nail long enough. But there is a problem. She has to hold the plank against the fence off the ground, hold the nail steady as well as hammer. She tries holding the nail and the plank but, damn, her hand isn't big enough and she's got a splinter. She slowly pulls out the splinter with her finger nails and thinks about the problem.*

Her hand is not big enough (the underlying assumption being: "this is only natural" and, that a boy's hand would "naturally" be bigger). When she finds her finger is pricked, she (re)discovers, re affirms that her body's difference has value, *She slowly pulls out the splinter with her finger nails* ("naturally", you wouldn't expect a boy to have fingernails). Her difference is re-valued, re(in)stated (as) invested in the discourses of gender difference as biologically determined. It bears thinking about. She knows she doesn't "know", that she lacks the authority of his body, but she does know that thinking *and* doing will help.

> *Then she tries holding the plank with her knee, the nail with one hand and hammering with the other and succeeds. Her heart surges. 'This is so much fun'. She feels proud and exhilarated.*
>
> *Finally, not without many injuries to her thumb, both the planks are neatly in place. Pride overwhelms her and she feels as though she can tackle anything. With great satisfaction, she carefully replaces the nails and hammer in the shed (where they can be found easily) and rushes inside to tell her mother.*
> *'Hey mum', Ruth yells as she walks through the door, 'Come and have a look'. Her mother, feeling the excitement, does a little skip as they both go outside.*

This is so much fun. Her *mixed sense of nervousness, excitement and challenge* by her own hands, is transformed, despite *many injuries to her thumb, her heart surges. She feels proud and exhilarated. Pride overwhelms her and she feels as though*

she can tackle anything. With great satisfaction, and, as good girls do, *she carefully replaces the nails and hammer in the shed (where they can be found easily).* "Feeling" as she does she desires the re-cognition and approval of the (m)other. Her mother, *feeling the excitement,* responds to her *emotion*, her body *is* emotion, her *being* is emotion, her reason (for communicating) is emotion.

> *When Ruth's Mum sees the job has been well done, she gives Ruth a hug. 'You did good,' her mother's pride shines through her eyes, 'I'm going to tell everyone about this. Let's write a note to Grandfather.'*

Her (m)other names her being, "good". Good girls, the (m)other knows, deserve the approval of the (grand)father. Within the discursive economy of the romantic myth, being "good" is something to be proud of, to re-present to others as evidence of being worthy. In his absence the (m)other becomes author of the text for him. Emotion and doing are transformed into her "knowing" and re-instating his authority.

> *Ruth still feels immense satisfaction over her achievement but she wonders why her mother wants to tell everyone. Is it so strange?*

Movement through time and space, between and across emotions, discursive contexts and relational subject positions, is constitutive of ambi-valence: all around on both sides affected by the behaviour of the (m)other and the authority of the One. To be thought strange is not a desirable position. A risky business, a challenge of a different kind. To be thought strange is to be without reason, not right in the head. It was because of her head, her thinking that she was able to overcome what she experienced as the limitations of her body, her difference. Having done so, and in light of her (m)other's response-ability, it seems that maybe it would be better to keep quiet

Crossing boundaries by engaging in practices ascribed to 'other' category memberships is a risky business. What is at risk is a sense of achieving a rightful and acceptable position in relation to others. Traversing the boundaries of usual practice and category memberships that form around the binary logic which sustains relations of domination and submission which are shot through with the metaphor of patriarchy, is a crucial step in the process of personal and political liberation. To become a whole person it is necessary to achieve a balance of practice, of understanding, of awareness and of value on both sides of the gender divide (Davies, 1993a). To date, feminist discourses which have entered the mainstream political arena have resulted in a "girls can do anything" campaign, that in effect, has devalued what girls and women have traditionally done and, added value to practices, category memberships and ways of knowing that have been produced from within and remain the power domain of men. In these historically and discursively constituted post-modern times of advanced capitalism, "riches", the richness of life has been contingent in discourse and practice over time, with "investment" of money and profit. In this discursive economy, to profit is to receive more than you give. This capitalist economy of myth is with "reason", masculine, individual, calculating, earning, expecting profit. Although women are in increasing numbers in business and in the Academy, their riches are rarely displayed. When we move into the male domain of "work" we are expected to leave behind, relinquish what we "know" and what we "do", silenced, trivialised in the world of know-ledge.

The discourses at play in any given context circulate beyond and all around the texts which are being spoken in any meeting of speaking subjects in any populated discursive space and time. These are all the traces of ancient and recent history written over the self being constituted as gendered individual. As the story of *Fixing the Fence* goes to show "girls can do anything" (as the

Women's Info Link bumper sticker claims). But what we can do and what we do, is steeped in ambi-valence. This is the sticky web of discourse. The tapestry into which we have stitched ourselves is both threat and comfort. We are well placed, with all the things we can do to rework the space, interstice, to move beyond the annulus that binds us in (to its wedding ring) and back into ourselves. We can do more than jump to either side of girls doing boys doing girls (or not): men's things making more money, more profit, having more invested; women's things being marginalised, trivialised, privatised, colonised, mass produced. We can create the riches of "impossibility" we can remake responsibility with our response-ability. Our contrariness, our difference makes what is possible.

During the time of this study I was working with a critical, feminist academic, senior lecturer in physical education. Joan would knit, embroider, applique, tapestry throughout our staff meetings all the while engaged in the discourses at play. It was only a short while before another woman, an admin. assistant, had herself taken knitting into the scene. These women and all those men and women gathered, knew this practice was "going against the grain". Later, in a different town, I met a woman finishing her lunch break before heading off to a staff meeting. She wrapped up her knitting and picked up a book. "Why don't you take your knitting?" I suggested. "I couldn't do that!" She protested seeming shocked. "They'll all comment." We agreed. "With your knitting you can sit and listen and watch and speak in a focussed way, as our mothers and our grandmothers and, to a much lesser extent we have done." In this domain where authority of the text is privileged, having a book in your hands is much less disruptive. Being totally distracted, although embodied in the scene, being counted present in the business at hand, not hearing, not able to listen and to read an-other text at the same time, unable to find a space within which to do/speak, this is democratic management, this is "Democracy" at work. The

Democracy we live in, which is constituted in the discourses of the individual, of rights and freedoms without the deconstructive responsibility of attending to, without questioning the established conditions of the romantic myth and of gender difference, is an im-possible democracy. We can only hope that with attention to the constitutive conditions of myth and discourse, that what we are making possible is a "democracy to come" (Derrida, in Caputo, 1997, p.44).

CHAPTER 8

IN(CON)CLUSION

> The distinction between expression and performativeness is crucial. If gender attributes and acts, the various ways in which a body shows or produces its cultural signification, are performative, then there is no preexisting identity by which an act or attribute might be measured; there would be no true or false, real or distorted acts of gender, and the postulation of a true gender identity would be revealed as a regulatory form. (Butler, 1990, p. 141)

> Agency is never freedom from discursive constitution of the self but the capacity to recognise that constitution and to resist, subvert and change the discourses themselves through which one is being constituted. It is the freedom to recognise multiple readings such that no discursive practice, or positioning in it by powerful others, can capture and control one's identity. (Davies, 1991, p. 51)

Looking back and looking forward, across and through the weaving of this thesis, there is both an overwhelming and inspiring endlessness of discursive constitution. In this (in)conclusive chapter, I turn to loosening the fibres binding meanings into discourse and practice (or silence). I want to make fringes that reach out from the edges of the lived and text(ur)ed experiences that weave together our daily lives where the rug (which smothers the flames of passion) touches the floor, the fabric (of society) caresses the skin, the bookmark (of personal practice) shows the place, the wall (of resistance) meets the picture that paints a thousand words. The metaphors of our lives pattern and possess the edges, the boundaries and the overlap of meanings that are produced in their performance and backstage. In our pallogocentric culture what is observable, seeable is evidential. Yet much goes on behind the scenes where public and private life overlap — behind closed doors, in homes, in boardrooms, backrooms, and in the corporeal. Where sight is the privileged sense, text is privileged and bodies become readable texts written over with the (usually) invisible threads and traces of experiences of power and

subordination. In this chapter, as in this thesis, I continue to tease into view the fringes of the fabric of daily life experience where these invisible threads and traces produce tensions in the text and texture of personal and social life. It is at the points of tension on the boundaries of meaning that the enactment of discourse is responsive to desire.

Throughout the production of this thesis, it has become evident that the body, and the performance of the body within discourse, is central to a political analysis of personal practice. In the triad of discourse, practice and body, the body is extant — the conduit of discourse. Without the body there is no evidence of, or channel for, discourse. Without the body, discourse, practice, experience cannot exist nor be conveyed across time and space. Discourse is "dependent upon bodies: eyes, ears, mouths, hands and brains are prerequisite for all acts of textual production/reception, encoding/decoding" (Wilton, 1996, p. 109). At the same time, bodies are inscribed by, and ascribed meaning within discourse. Bodies, like discourse, are gendered. Gender, as a discourse of difference, is the authority and the central point of departure around which "collective practice on a grand scale" is produced and organised within public and private life.

Feminist poststructuralist concerns for making visible the discursive constitution of bodies and experience, erases neither the body nor experience. The body, experience and discourse are ubiquitous and enmeshed in the production of knowledge and the organisation of power and desire. The (in)tension of this feminist project is making visible (and hearable) how experience is always inevitably discursive and embodied; how discourse is gendered and how, within phallogocentric discourse and the binary logic on which it is premised, the body, and the lived and narrated texts the body

produces, become the evidential base for the truth and naturalness of discourses of gender difference and the interests served within these.

The process of collective memory work as feminist research project, in which the theorising of this thesis has been grounded, opens up a space for the (re)presentation and interpretation patterning the complexities and particularities of subjective experience. Making visible the production of subjective experience as collective practice on a grand scale, is achieved through focusing the lens of feminist analysis on the definitions and enabling limits of the discourses at play in the experience described. This bringing together of the concerns and technologies of feminism and poststructuralism in the project of collective memory work, has helped untangle the feminist 'truth' that the personal is political. The link is how difference is produced as necessary to the normalising and naturalising of relations of domination and oppression; how transparent liberal humanist discourses of the individual and Democracy make the power effects of gender invisible to the objects/subjects within discourse; how power produces desire as the (trans)formative technology of difference and imagined futures through and within myth.

The stories and the endless moments of lived and narrated experience which affirm our relational positioning within the conditions of daily life are the discursive sites within which we make sense of our past, present and (imaginable) future. Each time we look back or look at, we see, we feel, we perform (with and within our body) what might be; and the possible conditions of that being made imaginable through experiences, lived and told, in waking or asleep. We play within our imagination, the performance within, between and across our bodies, (re)creating experience in accordance with the perceived rules, risks and rewards of compliance and resistance. As Scott (1992, p. 37) points out, "experience is at once always already an interpretation *and* is in need

of interpretation". How we make sense of experience depends upon the discourses and storylines made available to us, and the bodily sensations arising in response to lived and narrated experience. Our bodily responses, visceral and visible, and the discourses and storylines through which we have been constituted and which might be on offer in any given moment, are imbricated with prior experience. We actively work over and make sense of our experiences through the interpretive processes that link our experience and practice through the body and emotion.

Interpretation is a process of meaning making. Meanings are derived within the intersections and imbrication of discourse, body and experience. It is in the making of meaning that the power of discourse is derived. The making of meaning has personal and political implications. The availability of possible meanings is defined by the limits of prevailing discourses. As Weedon (1987, p. 79) explains, "the experience of individuals is far from homogenous. What an event means to an individual depends on the ways of interpreting the world, on the discourses available to her at any particular moment".

The complex of indices and intersections of category memberships and subject positions within 'individual' experience over time, means that no one experience can be the same for one, as for an-other person and, no two experiences can be the same for any one person. This phenomenon of the constitution of subjectivity across time and space, disguises the persistent repetition of dominant discourses within experience: at the same time engendering the often contradictory multiplicity which characterises subjectivity and sustains the discourses of the individual. While giving this matter only brief attention, Jackson (1996, p. 18) warns that a poststructuralist focus on multiplicity might be "at the expense of continuities, thus playing down the resilience and flexibility of patriarchal domination under changing

historical conditions". The bringing together of feminist and poststructuralist concerns, through the process of collective memory work as produced in my thesis, has heeded and substantiated this warning.

The conundrum of poststructuralist theory is that it is both iconoclastic and iconographic. It speaks of, and so is, at the same time, at risk of, (re)producing, that which it seeks to expose and possibly dismantle. The same can be said of discourses of resistance such as feminism. It is necessary to speak of that which is constitutive of the conditions of our existence in order to change those conditions. Each of us is always at once object and subject of the discourses through which we are constituted and which pattern our daily lives. Whenever we speak of others we speak of ourselves for it is only through the existence of the other that we are able to define ourselves and it is from, and within, these mediums that meanings are derived.

Experience, lived or imagined, enacted or vicarious, is always embodied and discursive. Our perception is endlessly tempered by our experiences within discourse. We are always starting from where we've been, which is where we're at — the past always implicated and imbricated in the present. Past experiences are recalled to the mind's eye, felt in the gut, reenacted in the performance of gender and our interpretation of experience, and are written over the surface of the body as at once a display of, and a protection from, our understanding of the conditions of gendered being, and of imagined futures. The notion of gender as a performance as explicated by Butler (1990), and the theatre metaphor it evokes, is useful for making sense of, and describing, the embodied interpretation of experience and its visible effects. The stories told throughout the collective memory work project support Butler's theory of gender as performance, and indicate that our responses to the subjective and institutionalised conditions of discursively produced gender difference are cued

by the sense we have made of experience within the body and discourse. In any given moment the cue to act comes from the backstage of consciousness, from the interiority of the embodied performance of discourse. In this unseen space we (trans)form the understandings derived in those moments where we/*I didn't want him to think he'd gotten to me,* where I/we knew we were not as beautiful as the princess but that we could be as good and kind and clean and neat, where we/*I so wanted to act in a way that I didn't care but I did*, where we/*I didn't want this boy not to like me because my legs were hairy*, when we/I have been *caught between the bushes and the fence*, when our brothers piss on us or fail to defend us against the big boys who are our ever present neighbours and then comfort us in their/our failure, when we seek the protection or approval of our fathers, when we *act like a lady*. This is where the historicity of subjectivity determines how we imagine what we do or say, within the terms and conditions of any given moment — how our memorable, (re)cognisable, evidential self, will impact upon (what we imagine to be) our desired (fantasised, romanticised, mythologised) future. The present, and imaginable futures are always imbued with possibility, responsibility and history. This is the discursive site of our responsiveness and its effects. The responses of the subject who takes up the romantic myth as her own, are produced for the phantasm of a safe and happy future bound by (heterosexual) love. Not, as Irigaray says, that love has been or is today simple to establish.

> Historically, the female has been used in the constitution of man's love of self. ... It involved — as I have already said, nostalgia, faith and hope, returning to the past, suspending the beyond, the inaccessible, the transcendent, a recourse to the existence of the soul, labour, creation of work, and, primarily of one particular work, the family: home, wife and children, extensions of the self. (Irigaray, 1984, p. 62)

The tranformative effects, and the conditions of the romantic myth — 'one day my prince will come', are such that the possibility of love (and/or of rejection)

is everywhere. The future is at once, immediate, delayed and forever after. Marriage and the possibility of the coming of the prince is forever after both the one, and one of many desired futures. For the girl/unmarried woman, within any experience the possibility and expectation of marriage is forever cued and cues the possibility of being seen through the others' eyes in the call to act. And for the married woman the call to act is cued by what it means to be married forever. The omnipresent sense of an audience who must be pleased is central to the historicity of female subjectivity and the production of gender as a performance. Within this self-conscious process we are active in our own subordination/subjectification within discourse. Taking up the romantic storyline as our own is not simply a matter of desiring sexual relations with men (a desire that must first be produced) but more importantly, it is a matter of text, a script within which desire can be recognised, performed and positioned as normal within the social relations of daily life. What it means to be a normal woman has been, and continues to be, defined by and subject to the approval of men. Being a woman within the discourses of gender difference means being defined as "for men" with the conditions and possibilities for alternative discourses and ways of performing gender within heterosexual private and social life, being subject(ive) to the agreement and approval of the men with whom we inhabit time and space (cf. Van Every, 1996).

The political and economic effects of discourses which convey the mythology of 'one day my prince will come' are such that we (women) ply the trade of producing beauty and service as (his) fetish (Connell, 1987; Irigaray, 1984; Haug, 1987) while he plies women as his trade of appropriation, colonisation and gratification. The phallogocentrism of discourse constituted in, and constitutive of, hierarchical binary logic means that neither he, nor his trade, are possible without the Other against which these (himself and his trade) are defined. Within this discursive logic and the state of play it has produced, the

subordinate Other is feminised and the feminine subordinated. Each girl/woman takes up as her own the discourses of gender difference or is positioned within and by these, to embody and become the material evidence of the 'truth' of the discourse. Within the ascendant discourses of femininity she is positioned to become Other, to become that which she is not — not a boy, not "one of those girls", not other than good and deserving — his Other at the same time she is other to the school girls with their hems too high or the one who did not get her gender right. These are the others we see as our opposition; who (re)present what and who we must guard against within the communities we inhabit and, within ourselves. The other we cannot see is he whom we presume is representative of his kind, whom we presume we can never be (like), whose authority we both fear and desire and whose possession we fear and desire becoming. "Love is blind."

Our vision is contained within the site of language which defines (and opens up) what it is possible to see, to think, to do and to say. Within the discourses that convey and reconstitute the romantic myth, we become more concerned about what might be said or thought about us, than about what we might (possibly) think or say. We come to think that, *if these boys thought I was only a '2' or a '3', then all boys thought that also* and proceed to miss breakfast and skip lunch as *she gazes at herself critically in the mirror and, although fat is non-existent on her body, she sees an overweight ugly person* — the person seen through the authority of the others' eyes: the other we can never become but only desire (and fear). Within phallogocentric discourse, vision and myth are defined for and by the interests of men. This effect is also constitutive of (and constituted in) competitive and divisive practices associated with the desire to become the 'one' — to be chosen amongst all others, to be the one that the slipper fits; and at the same time, to avoid becoming the one who will become the subject of male violence or, "left on the shelf". This competitive effect engenders a tendency

towards silence, compliance, perfectionism, self criticism and criticism of and by other girls/women. In the dynamic of phallocentric binary logic, if woman has, as Irigaray (1984, p. 63) claims, been used in constitution of man's love of self, then woman has necessarily been and continues to be, constituted as embodying a lack of self love — "man"/the valorising of masculinity projects insecurity on to others. Being positioned as the silent opposite of man, the meaning of "woman" has been cast with doubt and with guilt.

In the particularity of subjective historicities and, the competitive desire to stand out from the rest — to be "the One", phallologocentrism is the discursive site of verification and qualification. This site contains and colonises the multiplicity of subjectivity made imaginable in transparent readings of discourses of the individual, and of democracy. Derrida's theory of *differance* assists theorising the relationship of authorship and responsibility within the conception of gendered binary logic and the discourses and practices which inscribe texts and bodies as evidence of the logic of difference. As Derrida (1992, p. 111) points out in his theorising of difference as active, verb rather than noun:

> … in the delineation of *differance* everything is strategic and adventurous. Strategic because no transcendent truth present outside the field of writing can govern theologically the totality of the field. Adventurous because this strategy is not a simple strategy in the sense that strategy orients tactics according to a final goal, a telos or theme of domination, a mastery and reappropriation of the development of the field. Finally a strategy without finality, what might be called blind tactics, or empirical wandering if the value of empiricism did not itself acquire its entire meaning in opposition to philosophical responsibility.

The trace thread of relations of domination, the metaphor of patriarchy imbued with mythological powers, is an invisible web of meaning the strength of discourse, which naturalises difference as hierarchical and produces

accordingly the business of daily life: a heterosexual life founded in the patriarchal metaphor of the Arche/ark as necessary for survival. Derrida's suggestion that writing be opened up by putting into question the value of arche, begs an elaboration of the evocative meaning and constituency of this word as it is heard in its various forms — patri-arch, mon-arch, Noah's ark, suggested in chapter 4. A deconstructive analysis of the arche/ark as metaphor, suggests that it is constitutive of discourses and practices which convey the myth that survival is dependent upon a man/masculinist discourse shepherding heterosexual couples onto the ark/(arche) where they will live and breed in monogamous cohabitation protected from the troubled waters which threaten those who resisted the Noah/knower.

This play on the sound of words rather than the historicity or origins of the particular arrangement of letters in the script, can be read as peculiarly feminine/feminist. Both feminine and feminist are scripts constituted in phallogocentric discourse ground in *differance* which is always in a constant state of deferral of meaning. For the female/feminine/feminist speaker, this deferral of meaning includes being constantly positioned within discourse as embodying deference (particularly in relation to men, the male speaker/author) to the other than male speaker, author. The tension created within this positioning will be variable in producing conformity, resistance, difference and ambivalence in accordance with particular historicities of subjectivity and desire. The desire to be normal, to be silent and deferent as the necessary other to speaking and authorship effects listening as a sense making strategy and as personal practice — listening for small sounds, listening for authority, listening for those three small words he supposedly finds so hard to say, attending to the spoken, the sound of words. "It's not just what you say, it's the way you say it," my mother cautioned and criticised. The two sets of meanings which coexist within any binary coexist within any experience but are subjectively

differentiated within the body, as it represents the experience and the performance of gender difference, forming the primary point of departure for the differentiation of meaning and of practice.

Discursively constituted within prevailing conditions of gendered binary logic, hearing and seeing rather than speaking and writing, can be understood as the technology and the evidential base of feminine ways of knowing. This play on words is given added significance for feminism through the authority of Derrida's (1992, p. 111) explanation of the concept of play as keeping itself beyond opposition, and "announcing on the eve of philosophy and beyond it, the unity of chance and necessity in calculations without end". Feminism means taking a chance out of perceived necessity for survival beyond the immediate. The survival of feminism is about the will to change practice, to take the risks involved in learning and speaking differently, to play with each other and with meanings and words as they are spoken out loud and with the narratives of history which freight the foundation of the future. The poststructuralist site of language defines and opens up possibilities of what it is possible to think and say in a field of discourses in which a Derridean play would open up the possibilities and enabling limits of imagination and fantasy where past and present weave possible futures.

Whether we take the arche/ark to be lived or imagined, the belief that survival is dependent upon the authority of (an) 'individual' man — monarch/prince, patriarch/father, is constituted in myth. The discourses and practices through which myth is conveyed, combine the values of the founding principle of gender difference with government and private life by the controlling principle of masculinity's greater strength and authority — the arche which contains and produces the lived experience of gender relations — the value of which resides

in the metaphor of patriarchy and the maintenance of existing relations of power.

Within phallogocentric discourse, which is reducible to biological determinism, both male and female are produced together, as necessarily heterosexual, as a matter of survival. For the oppressed and the colonised, concerns for survival are as immediate as a decision to change a nappy, cook a meal, change clothes, say nothing; for the oppressor and the coloniser, survival is projected into the future and is concerned with naming, with power and with immortality (Derrida, 1985, 1995; Dutoit, 1995). The effects of this difference in conceptions of future in time and space, serve the interests of male freedom and domination through constituting within the romantic storyline her concern as the immediacy of a safe and happy future/(home) bound by love as dependant upon, and at the mercy of, his approval and authority. These gendered differences in conceptions of the future, and the conditions upon which they appear within myth and discourse to be guaranteed, produce practices which make her (oft-unpaid) labour valuable to the economy of male freedom and pleasure to produce the future for himself beyond his own lifetime. With the naturalising of myth within discourse, these practices are constituted as evidence of her 'nature' thus precipitating colonisation through appropriation of difference. Moreover, the in-visible practices of attending to the perceived needs and desires of others, position women as evidently responsible for the immediate present, for children, and for the imagined possible futures constituted in experience. In this way, the appropriation and defining of women's labour as for men, and as responsible for the future which their children are expected to freight, positions authority as male and responsibility as female. This suggests that embodying authority without responsibility is a technology of myth and the prerogative of men.

The colonising effects of phallocentric discourses are such that the traces of difference must be faint and feigned. *Differance*, as active, performative, is an effect whereby obvious difference from the other (category) is produced as a technology of colonisation whereby, the members of the other category take up the signifiers of difference as their own. Positioned as 'other' in this space of sameness female subjects will compete to differentiate themselves from one another in an effort to become "the One". The effort of differentiation is traced across the body and emotion in a faint and feigned interplay of presence and absence as gendered and hierarchised within the discourses of hetero-sexual desire. For girls and women the (necessary) absence of body hair and the obvious presence of breasts, the wearing of jewellery and makeup, concerns about the length of skirts, hair and keeping our legs together are cases in point. Each represents the interweaving of absence and presence, speaking and silence in the play of discourse through, across and between the performance of bodies which forms a 'naturalised' iconography of gender difference. The elements of the trace of difference across the body, discourse and experience are the residue of all the moments in everyday life where discourses have left their mark/marked the (embodied) subject. The trace is formed over time and space as a palimpsest of faint, or unreal semblances of order which become taken-for-granted as the order of nature.

Stories such as *Leaving Home*, draws attention to how the absence of a particular signifier, such as hairlessness, threatens discursively, the subjective possibility of heterosexual desire-ability. In other stories, in other spaces and at different times, the same absence threatens the possibility of mistaken gender or sexual identity. Such an absence comes to threaten the possibility of acceptance within the social network through which one's personal history has been inscribed. This absence which creates a presence in the form of the 'natural' body, opens up possible subject positions, desires and practices which through discourse are

constructed as unnatural thus establishing the natural biological condition of the female body as a pathology within naturalised discourses of gender difference, heterosexuality and patriarchal social relations. The maintenance of the signifier 'hairlessness' requires constant vigilance sustained by the pathologising of the presence of body hair, as variously and synonymously unattractive, slothful, socialist, communist, hippie, radical, feminist, intellectual, homosexual — none of which characterise or position the female subject favourably within the romantic myth. When my own body hair became a concern during the emergence into consciousness of my positioning within discourses of gender differences as object of male desire — as female subject within the romantic myth, my father would stroke the hairs on my arms and tell me that they were a sign of strength: but it was always taken-for-granted as a sign of my coming to womanhood that I would shave my legs and underarms, pluck my eyebrows and disguise or remove other "unsightly" facial hair. This taken-for-grantedness was signified by silence on the part of my father (he never mentioned that I should or would do these things or commented on my having done them); it was my mother who made this expectation explicit, speaking of when I would be old enough, giving advice about method and providing tools in ways which left no doubt in my mind that this was a 'natural' part of growing up. One of the most common features of the journals produced within the collective memory work project, is stories about (expressly or inclusive of) the removal of body hair or the pain, confusion or distaste associated with the absence of this signifying practice, that is, the (remarked upon) presence of body hair. Hairlessness is understood as a 'natural' sign of beauty and of the gender difference upon which liberal humanist discourses of heterosexuality is premised. In all the stories told, it is the mother who explicitly regulated such practices but it is subjectification within the lived narratives of heterosexual relations and the romantic storylines in moments shot through with fear and desire that produce individual practice.

My own experience and the experiences recorded in the collective memory work project suggest that the act of shaving our legs for the first time is symbolic of transference of desire from desire for the approval of the mother to desire for approval from the other as well as of fear of being positioned as other/(different) yet desiring (the) other/s' recognition as the one/unique/(different).

The projected lack of self love suggested by Irigaray, and of being in competition with others of the same sex, seems to produce adornment and grooming as (an integral component of) the social semiotics of subjectification within the discourses of gender difference, in which the feminine, embodied as female is produced as fetish. And, in particular, of producing the gendered body in ways which signify positioning within the configurations and conditions of heterosexual desire — configurations and conditions which are valorised and mythologised within the storylines of one day my prince will come, in all their historically and contextually specific forms, as central to normalised versions of femininity, and of imagined futures.

Casting my mind back and forth among the many stories told for the collective memory work of One day my prince will come, I am struck by the recognition that, wherever (female) pleasure was implied or explicit, as we walk on the river bank, show off our new fashion purchases, play in the backyard, search for a book in the library, it was usually interrupted by or subordinated to male/(m)other pleasure or authority. In this interplay of heterosexual social life over time, it seems that interruption becomes a technology of subordination. A dynamic which created the presence of silence and the impression of absence in embodied ways with subjective and political effects. The only stories which told of uninterrupted pleasure, were fantasies of the ideal wedding; of grooming for the debutante ball (which is experienced as a kind of rehearsal for

the wedding day with the transparent difference that, it is the girl/woman who chooses her partner), or for public or private gathering where there was an implicit or explicit prospect of (heterosexual) romance. The private pleasure of grooming usually takes place in the company of other women. In this private pleasure among women, it is more likely to be inter-fear-ance rather than interruption which acts as a technology of subordination within, and to, the romantic storyline. We inter-fear saying, "You'll never get a husband if you don't wear dresses," and by not walking the streets after dark, and by not speaking on matters of importance. In so doing, keeping fear alive as a salient factor in constituting hetero-sexual relationships: fear of not being good enough, fear of male violence, fear of the unknown consequences of our speaking and being heard: evidence for the justification of which is readily available in the collective experience of girls and women. At the same time, the absence of stories of love and affection, suggests the im-possibility of love between subjects constituted in the discursive economy of the romantic myth as it conveys the metaphor of patriarchy.

As we come to understand ourselves to be, or at least as necessarily *seen* to be, one thing and not another, we come to believe that the rituals and practices associated with the performance of gender are natural expressions of a true, essential, unitary self. The political and economic effects of these practices are as invisible to us as the discourses through which they are constituted.

> That gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex and a true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender's performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality. (Butler, 1990, p. 141)

To change practice is to threaten the stability of self, the rituals of intimacy and the fulfilment of dreams and desires. Not a simple matter — 'the reconstruction of personal life is always done under pressure and at risk (Connell, 1987, p. 234). As women attend to the needs and desires of others than our selves, we form the silent and silenced warp of corporeality and the fabric of society. Speaking and silence display fear and desire conflated within and through our bodies in discourses which convey myth and constitute relations of power. In this interplay of speaking and silence we together produce subjective understandings and parameters of usual practice and common-sense as gendered which inscribe the body of the subject endlessly and momentarily within the material circumstances of daily life.

Within the triad of discourse, body and practice, which constitutes the field of discourse in any given moment, any variation of discourse or practice which suggests that the body is not as it appears, or as it is believed to be, is experienced as oppositional. This effect in no small way implicates binary logic in the monitoring of relations of domination and submission produced as a monology in which women are positioned as the absent hearers. When 'hearer' is positioned as opposite to 'speaker' and taken to be embodied as female such that she must be either opposite or oppositional to men, there is a closing down of discursive spaces into which the hearer can speak, be heard and be respected as author(ity). Within daily life, speaking without being heard has a silencing effect. Silence as an effect, and as a technology, within discourse, operates differently according to the gendered time and space of public and private lives. Through domestic labour and love, silence, embodied as female (and the disattending of women's voices), reinscribes the metaphor patriarchy; or, leaves only a faint trace of feigned difference to be displaced and appropriated by the dominant discourses, or marginalised. The feint, the feminine swoon: feint/faint/feigned evokes the woman as parchment ruled over with the

faintest lines — feints: the impure spirit which comes over first and last: a binary is reproduced: outside-inside, true or false, internalised. He, the outside making marks, rema(r)king, ma(r)king time, ma(r)king her invisible inside, inscribed, insecure. The effect on the feminine body within discourse in moments such as hearing the wolf whistle or the score out of ten, where the obvious meaning/reading is a comment on outward appearance, is such that, marks are traced definitively yet differently across and within the body of the subject who learns to feign the appearance of being unmarked as a matter of survival.

A feigned performance within discourse can (be seen to) have the effect or object of deceiving an adversary, giving the appearance of supporting one part or point, when another (point or part) is the intended subject. Such that, ladies swoon — it is their delicate disposition, but beware the clever temptress who will swoon a feint to divert attention from the one more worthy, always adversary, such that a wife can claim to have authority because she is able to convince her husband that her idea is a good one, by making him think the idea was his. The symbolic order drawn with the faintest lines of lightest weight, the tale-fairy carving the deepest divisions as ribs of the arche of patriarchy, of monarchy. A symbolic order the normality of which is narrated as an autonomous male individual, inviting only heterosexual couples to choose the safety of his arche — the arche/ark he has built himself in the image of his knowing (the need to be protected from the unknown tempest/temptress). Faint, feminine, feigned, fiend, always in a subordinate position, the subjectivity, safety and authority of the female subject/object is always tenuous and constantly under threat.

Poststructuralist reconceptualising of language as a populated site within which meanings are made and where meanings cannot be guaranteed by the speaker,

disrupts the sense of inevitability which pervades reproductive theories embedded in structuralist ways of knowing. As evidenced in the theorising of experiences explicated throughout this thesis, what have become known and accepted as monolithic, fixed, immutable 'structures' and 'conditions' according to structuralist theories, are, within a poststructuralist framework, reconceptualised as the monumental encrustation of dominant discourses upon the organisation of social life and upon the bodies of those who inhabit the discursive field. This is what Connell (1987) calls the collective effects of usual practice on a grand scale. Practices congregate around and within (gendered) social categories through and within which discursive and personal meanings are derived as attendant to binary logic. These practices of congregation, aggregation and competition have determining effects on the conditions of our lives, the appearance of our bodies and the balance of power which are always tenuous, tentative, contingent. This insight has lead many feminist researchers such as myself to take up poststructuralist theory in the hope that it would make possible the dismantling of the structures and conditions that had been for so long held to be responsible for the oppression and subordination of women. At first glance it might seem that this dismantling would be a simple matter of changing individual practice. But practice is entangled with the workings of desire and embodied at the dynamic interface of discourse and subjectivity. Many of the practices which gender the body are the conduit through which we come to know ourselves and construct a sense of stable identity — a moral imperative of the binary system through which we come to know that to be unstable is synonymous with madness/ abnormality — not being fit to cope with the conditions of normal subject positioning. Through the ritualised practices of gender differentiation we enter into an intimate relationship with ourselves through our bodies. We stroke our thighs and arm pits to check whether the razor has done or needs to do its job; massage body lotion all over, brush our own hair until it resembles skeins of silk, we peer into

the mirror where our own eyes stare back at us as we dress or undress these windows of the soul and the body which is host to the self; then, stand back to admire or critique the full effect, the composite of body, self, grooming and adornment, all the time seeing ourselves through the other/s eyes. Always and at once longing for *a feeling of contentment and happiness inside*, sensing and anticipating by way of our subjective historicities, subjection to judgements of others seen and unseen which presume to affect the fulfilment of our desires and dreams. We look at our own appearance and the appearance of others through what we imagine to be the eyes of the (m)other, or "The Prince", whom we have learned keeps account of looks by scoring us out of ten, voting for who has the best legs, assuming that we can't fix the fence, making our new outfit, saying *I'm not going to be embarrassed by you, until you learn to act like a lady you have to wear pants*. In this way we come to know that looks can be superficial but feelings are real and true to the person who holds them. But this knowing is only ever partial, tenuous, transitory, contingent.

We are always and already in discourse, and discourse is gendered. Within rationalist discourses of gender difference we are always already male or female, always already different, more or less powerful or powerless, author-submitter in sublimation. We need only cast a superficial glance across the landscape of culture and lived experience as represented in the stories of collective memory work to see the evidence of this 'truth'. Discourse is more than the site within which meanings are made (Weedon, 1987): it is the site within which the performance of gender is directed. We know the conditions of gender difference intimately. The intimacy of "knowing" conflates heterosexual social life with the desire for institutionalised marriage which is constituted and romanticised in the mythology of 'one day my prince will come'. In the process of subjectification we are forever imagining the future. Within the constant and persistent experience of usual practice within discourse, heterosexual relations,

and more specifically, an exclusive, particularised heterosexual relationship legitimised and protected by, and within the institution of marriage, assumes a taken-for-grantedness as fundamental to a normal and natural life history. Once something becomes understood as, or believed to be normal and natural, it is experienced in moral terms, and enters the realm of the construction and defence of 'truth'. In this way, within gender relations, expectation (of self and, of, for and by others) constituted in existing relations of power, becomes conflated with, or assumes the guise of, desire. If a condition of subjectivity within gendered binary logic and the discourse of the individual is that we both fear and desire difference, then a condition of normality would be the conflation of familiarity and difference with desire. In this way fear and desire are conflated as the familiar site where expectations of imagined and imaginable futures are produced.

Many pictures that can paint a thousand words of our daily lives nag at the selvedges of discourse and the constitution of subjectivity and experience. The selvedge of discourse is the borderline, the emotional territory between speaking and silence, culture and nature, public and private, solid and transparent, stable and ethereal, rational and spiritual. One over riding, overwriting, stitching over the other with an invisible mending of discourse through the endless persistent yet momentary and so never seemingly repeated exchanges of daily life. Rationalist discourse's colonisation of the spiritual, demands order without ritual, valorises the material and neglects, denies, colonises or trivialises as object of desire the hidden — diamonds, gold, a good woman, having no value except in their appropriation/mine-ing, shaping by man and myth kept secret, silent, safe or preyed upon. Man, myth, monism, money, monitor.

Rational discourse's rule is that what exists is all that, and only that, which has material form: that which is seeable is tangible evidence, that which is seeable is hearable as truth: that is the Law. This is the emotional territory where fear and desire are conflated through the politics of difference as it is lived internally and externally through the narrative performance of the gendered bodies who navigate its terrain. Once emotion exceeds the body it enters discourse and becomes subject to it. When the body speaks emotion it is the gender of the subject we pay attention to so that the performance of emotion is materialised as and contained within the gender differentiated individual. Liberal humanist discourses of the rational autonomous subject both valorise and pathologise emotion as the basis of our humanity. Within the canonised discourses of Church and State, and of Science, it is emotion, thought and language, and the capacity for the individual subject to rationally control these through a linear process of determining logical consequences of cause and effect as organic and unequivocal, which constitute our humanity. It is these same discourses which institutionalise the myth of one day my prince will come and the binary logic on which this myth is premised and on which its naturalising effects depend.

For the subject constituted within liberal humanist discourses there is a responsible consciousness for constructing the self as rational, independent and autonomous. At the same time, each female subject is positioned in and by the taken-for-granted contradictory logic of discourses which position her as responsible for making her self desirable as the Other and worthy, even needy of support (Weedon, 1987; Haug, 1987). This is the conundrum of feminine/female subjectivity in the (post)modern times of advanced capitalism: we must be all things to all people within reason of our subordination. Constituted within liberal humanist discourses and taking ourselves up as 'individual' we are faced with the constant dilemma of being 'equal but different'. Through space and time our being is within social and discursive

conditions which variously, and at times simultaneously, pathologise, colonise and subordinate difference. Taking up the romantic storyline as our own we overwrite ourselves as we underwrite the material conditions of our subordination. The possibility of romance, of happiness ever after embroiders over the contradictions with threads of nature at once holding them in place and rendering them invisible. The confounded and silenced rub of contradiction, containment and uncertainty within discourse which frays the edges of ourselves, is darned by the script which writes the subject with the promise of unification and identification as 'the One' (in Holy matrimony, or at least in cohabitation or sexual relations). It is a myth which positions the female subject as (necessarily) granting authority for re-cognition of her self, for (re)producing desire and for the distribution (or containment among men) of power, within heterosexual social relations and for future survival, to an other or others whose subjectivity is defined in opposition to her and to whom she is subordinated. Yet the promise of this storyline is a treacherous and false promise. It means absolving herself of rights and of responsibility for herself and the personal and political effects of her particular and collective practices.

In the face of the many contradictions inherent in discursive constitution of lived experience and subjectivity, it is not surprising that the production of knowledge (and power) has been a search for the identification of underlying structures. Structures give the impression of (a much desired) security, stability and predictability to the material and corporeal world of lived experience. The belief systems produced within structuralist ways of knowing, reduce structures such as the sexual division of labour and identity, and the institutions such as marriage, governments and scientific thought which hold them in place, to biology, or more importantly to 'nature', thus making these structures appear immutable and inevitable. The alignment of female/feminine with nature in the culture-nature binary is critically implicated here. Aligned in

this way, it is the collective practice of women positioned as Other, through and against which culture is defined.

In apparently disruptive (feminist) rewritings of the traditional fairytales, such as those Bronwyn Davies read to preschoolers for her thesis in *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales*, the hearer/subject of the story listens for and anticipates what is familiar. Constantly projecting into and predicting a story of fulfilment for their hopes and expectations. Hopes and expectations which have been formed through and within the interweaving of romantic storyline with daily practice within discourse. Each time the story is told the reader, listener/subject of the story seeks out and expects to find, familiar signifying practices through which the story is given meaning. In a story such as *The Paper Bag Princess*, the presence or absence of particular signifiers such as Princess Elizabeth's lack of concern for her appearance, and her preparedness to reveal her intelligence and courage are contrary to the bidding of acceptable positioning within the usual discourses of gender difference, heterosexuality and day to day experience. On the other hand, Prince Ronald's possession of a tennis racquet and a medal signify an expected masculine interest in sport, competition and power, which position him within the subjective interweaving of lived and imagined narrative, as having the right to confer judgement upon and, to choose or to reject Elizabeth — the (sexualised) female object/subject of his gaze. Elizabeth, positioned within and by the absence of 'naturalised' taken-for-granted signifiers of femininity, becomes the subject of blame and guilt in the mind of the reader/listener/subject for the failure of the storyline to fulfil her/his hopes and expectations. The presence of particular signifiers affirms Ronald's rightful masculinity — the possibility that the prince might fall captive/victim of a fiery dragon is predictable and, within myth, heroism, as a signifier of masculinity, is evidenced as much by a lack of fear of the dragon as by the dragon's slaying (which only occurs in exceptional circumstances).

Without attention to the formative effects of foundational binaries such as presence-absence, the disruptive effects of narrative strategies such a repositioning the female subject as intelligent and authoritative will be overwritten by the expectation, familiarity and hoped for rewards of gender difference. There is enough evidence in usual practice for the disruptive tales to be read as warnings: men/boys/princes are not impressed by displays of courage, intelligence or altruism by girls/women/princesses: such practices are the domain of boys/men, if taken up by a girl/woman, particularly if coupled with unconcern for her appearance, she puts at risk the possibility of finding her prince and living happily ever after.

As we live each day of our lives, day after day, repetition serves as an authoritative technology of discourse and experience in constituting our beliefs and our knowing. Repetition is a textual devise which precludes narrative form — there is no beginning and no ending. Each moment is a moment of truth yet incomplete. Words become attached to the person in an effort to materialise and contain the emotion within the body given meaning in the pauses, the silences of discourse, the body and experience where passion and power reside. It is the pauses and silences between the notes, that colour the illustration of our experience, the fabric of society, the picture that paints a thousand words.

To assume our whole body appears on its surface, as a dismantling of the binaries of exteriority and interiority might suggest, seems both incomprehensible and logical in a culture where the system of justice and the presumption of truth privileges visual evidence. If, as Butler (1990) suggests, the soul is inscribed upon the body as lack, or, as she points out Foucault suggests, the body is the prisoner of the soul, there lies within a cautionary tale: that a binary reversed remains a binary. It would be a mistake, for instance, to take these (a woman's and a man's) perceptions of inhabiting "the compelling

metaphors of the spacial distinctions of inner and outer (Butler, 1990, p. 134)" to have the same meaning, as if the genital configuration of the embodied subject within discourse was of no consequence. To reverse the binary, to make visible what has been invisible, to make the private public, absence present, silent speaking is to open to surveillance that which has long been clandestine and to position the subject to take up as her own the phallogocentric discourses which privilege visual evidence. The body is more than text. Text cannot exist without the body. To envision takes more than seeing with the eyes. To read the body as text requires reading with the whole body. The text does not read the body, the body reads the text. What we see with our eyes is the surface tension between the body, discourse and practice within discourse. A surface tension easily confused with sexual tension. When the body is assumed to be text, the female body is read (and so is experienced) as lack, absence, silent, recipient in need of substantiation as the binary opposite of the always already substantive male presence, speaking, visible. Within this conception, sex in its discursive absence from social life, public and private, is like a third dimension colonised as a silent/silenced technology — the private side of private life, the power of a secret. Within the prevailing myths and metaphors of patriarchy the tension between the body and experience within discourse is the difference upon which gender is imbricated with discourse and sexuality.

In our struggles to be, or to become, the one, the other of ourself is lost in the oppression of desirability. Each must be but one to herself and a couple two. And in that third which is love two might again become one (Irigaray, 1984).

> However, when love manages to achieve this goal of oneness, it can do so only in exceptional cases. After great effort and never by decree. ... Currently there is a kind of oneness built on the division of labour, of goods, of discourse, a one which is merely an enslaving complementarity: yet, love cannot but be free. (Irigaray, 1984, p. 66-67)

We can imagine and create futures through the acknowledgment and account of others' and other storylines. Through the production, enactment and critique of the storylines through which we script our being and possible futures in the present and in the presence of others, we can affirm love and life in ourselves. We can reclaim the love and the value of our being and of life. We can more consciously understand and enact the investment of our dreams, our desires and our daily life in the possibilities of shared sovereignty and response-ability. We can claim rather than blame. We can recognise and take responsibility for the authority we (collectively) produce in the broader network of social relations.

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