GIRLS READING CULTURE:
AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS INQUIRY INTO TEACHING THE BODY,
THE ROMANCE, AND THE ECONOMY OF LOVE

by

Zandra Lesley Shore

A dissertation submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

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AUTobiographical narrative as my methodology, I weave a tapestry from the threads of memory, educational theory, newspaper articles, and popular culture to examine questions of gender and female socialization. I begin by investigating adolescent female psychological development and proceed to consider the relationship of literature to life through a close reading of the cathedral texts of my childhood and youth. I used literature as a road map for life, as girls often do. This dynamic becomes problematic as the compelling ideology of romance channels girls narrowly toward heterosexuality and marriage. The high price that may be paid for investing in the promise of romance is examined against the backdrop of Virginia Woolf's understanding that "intellectual freedom depends on material things."

The solution to these problems (if there can be said to be one) is not simply a matter of changing the stories girls read. In a rapidly changing social world the romance is increasingly fundamental to the maintenance of order, critically embedded in the workings of the economy, and a pathway into the compelling archetypal world. I interpret the current frenzy in the educational realm as 'backlash' against the great gains and newfound liberties of women and girls. I trace the twinned trajectories of girls and the women who teach them through feminist literary, philosophical, and cultural theory back to the deeply buried history of the archetypal realm to find the answers I seek. Women teaching in a 'girl-poisoning' culture can begin to mitigate the effects of that culture by listening to girls and by honouring their own memories. Using my scholarship and my life history as a template, I reinterpret the mythology of love, thereby hoping to genuinely make room in the classroom for the experiences, voices and values of women and girls.
Preface

What I have wanted to know and have tried to find out was how that decision to become a teacher looked to them, what alternatives there were to most women; what kind of life they anticipated as teachers. And what the satisfactions and disappointments turned out to be. (Jane Miller, *School for Women*.)

The human drama is first and foremost a somatic one. How is it, then, that things such as emotions, or more generally the life of the body, gets left out of academic history? How is it that historians remain oblivious to the amnesia of their enterprise in its present form? How is it that that which is *most* important in human life gets omitted from virtually all accounts of the past? (Morris Berman, *Coming to Our Senses*.)

At the center of this process [studying female adolescence], many women found themselves drawn by girls' voices into remembering their own adolescence and began to recall their own experiences of disconnection or dissociation at this time. Such remembering seems essential if women are not going to justify or reimpose on girls losses which they have suffered. (Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan, *Meeting at the Crossroads*.)

It is repeatedly observed that women living within a patriarchal civilization are in a position to act as vanguards in the process of societal and cultural transformation, because women are at once inside and outside the class system, because women are increasingly inside as well as outside of the various societal institutions that preserve and transmit culture across generations, because women have such a direct hand in raising and educating the next generation. (Carol Gilligan, Jill McLean Taylor, Amy M. Sullivan, *Between Voice and Silence*.)

If you must put books on one side and life on the other, each is a poor and bloodless thing. But my theory is that they mix indistinguishably. (Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*.)

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For we think back through our mothers if we are women. (Woolf, 1929, 72-73)

... and sideways through [our] sisters. (Marcus, 1981, xiv)

Memory – the mother of the muses. (Greek aphorism)

My process of thinking back is about memory, as memory is in the body, as thinking is about education; it is about being embedded in a web of relationships and about what we have learned from them. It is about my late mother, Frances Zimmerman, who taught me about the body and her mother, my late grandmother, Bessie Brener, who taught me about the mind. It is about the message I would leave for my children, Benjamin, Eliane and Alysha Shore, about how to live lives where “body is not bruised to pleasure soul” (Yeats, 1962, 22). It is about Virginia Woolf, who is the mother of all thinking women and whose voice resonates behind each thought that I would be bold or foolish enough to claim for my own. The methodology that I have chosen to employ, that of autobiographical narrative, is hers as well.

It is about my sisters in the embodied world: Margie Levitt, Susan Sommers, Lillian Glowinsky, Elaine Steiner, and Ida Rubinoff, and about my sisters in the academic world: Dr. Leslie Crawford, Dr. Christabelle Sethna and Dr. Carole Ann Reed. How I could not have done it without them, my life and my work. It is about two men who listened when I talked: one who came early, my late father Edward Zimmerman, and one who came late, my husband, Stan Cohen.

It is about my step-children, Dana and Jonathan, and their partners Adam and Melanie. It is about my new mother Becky and about the Cohen, Rose, Rubin, Greenspoon and Friedman families, all of whom have opened the doors of their lives to my children and me. In the shadow of their respect I moved from silence into speech. It is about my Winnipeg family: the Zimmermans and the Yellens, about my ninety-one-year-old aunts Rueth and Sadie, who stuck with me through dark days. It is about my adopted Toronto family: the Usters, Binstocks, Shoomans, Beck-Rubins, Loebs, Burtons,
Nefskys, Sevitts and Margolises, who welcomed us unconditionally. It is about Elsie Hignell, Helen Danyluk, Sharon Thompson and their families, friends, who are now kin. It is about Ruth Brodie and Roslyn Silversides, who got me thinking long ago and my business partner Pearl, who keeps me thinking today. It is about the fullness of friendship that has endured through lifetimes and acts of kindness that changed my life.

It is for their mothers, their sisters, their husbands, their children, all their precious children, for Hayley and Jason most especially and for their grandmother Dorothy Riseman. It is for my young friends Caroline, Emily, and Madeleine, who read stories with me, and for Grace, Noah, and Joshua, the readers to come.

It is about two women teaching – Marjorie Colpitts, who taught me when I was thirteen years old, and Deanne Bogdan, who taught me when I was past forty – who changed my life because they believed in me.

It is about reading. It is about how I learned to read as a girl and how I came, many years later, to understand what it means to read as a gendered subject.

The feminist reading is not the one that phenomenology discovers. It is under cover. It must be dragged up through associations, etymology, through the denial of human history and human relationship. That is what Lacan and Freud mean when they say that coming to know and coming to be gendered are one and the same process. (Grumet, 1988, 74)

“Psychoanalysis,” says Shoshana Felman interpreting Lacan, “is a prodigious act of reading” (Felman, 1987, 22). To learn to read is to learn to read your culture. To learn to read is to learn to read your self.

Writing this story as a student of philosophy, I would revisit Peggy Means McIntosh's (1988) memory of “Feeling like a Fraud” in terms of the male-dominated discourse of the Father. Reinterpreting in a broader way the meaning of that discipline, I would uncover its Greek roots to claim that I am a philosopher as a “lover” of “wisdom,” as one who will always love to know and that, as Lorraine Code (1991) has pointed out, it is crucial to consider the implications that the gender of the knower has for what she can know.
I came back to graduate school in the fall of 1986. Two people I loved were dying: my kind and gentle father, Edward Zimmerman and my feisty and talented friend, Liz Axmith. Beginning the academic journey sustained me through their loss, through the loss of my first marriage, which came years later. In the summer of 1996 a group of my OISE friends met to celebrate a birthday at the Madison pub. Jacqueline Brooks told me how she had asked her family to encourage her through the writing of her thesis, how she needed them to tell her that she would do it. I had begun the writing of this dissertation twice and stopped: first to shepherd myself through the process of divorce, then to care for my mother through serious illness. My fierce and loving mother was dying now. Remembering Jacqueline's words, one of the questions I asked her in the days before she died was: “Will I finish it, my dissertation?” “Definitely,” she answered, repeating “definitely.”

As the luminous source of energy that was my mother freed itself from the burden of embodiment and joined the cosmos, it showered blessings on those she had loved with special passion. I was an only child. Her greatest fear on dying was to leave me alone. She saw to it that I found a partner. My mother and I shared a deep, intense, fractious bond. I think I believed that nothing could ever separate us. From the next world she asked me to write about her, to create some record of her passage here on earth, as footprints in the sand. I wrote about the last months of her life, about how brave she had been in facing death. I needed to write her story before I could begin writing this dissertation for the third and last time. Virginia Woolf explained that women writing think back through their mothers; I had to write her story first in order to think back through it in mine. So I came to understand the gift she had given me in letting us share in her process of dying. How many are the ways that I have come to write out of her death. Out of the many deaths, the many losses – new beginnings.
Acknowledgements

The voices, thoughts and encouragement of many people, young and old, are woven into the completion of this project. I am grateful to them all, named and nameless. I deeply value the insight and encouragement of my committee members. Meeting Dr. Deanne Bogdan has changed my life; this work is hers in so many ways, inspired by her thinking and writing about literature, encouraged by the quality of her teaching, sustained by her integrity and the stunning example she sets of passionate, incisive scholarship. Deanne was generous enough to supervise the writing of this work though she was officially on a year's study leave.

My work is much enriched by Dr. Cecilia Morgan’s painstaking and meticulous examination of my text from a feminist educational historian’s perspective. I thank her for that and for the many illuminating historical references she has provided.

I am indebted to Dr. Clive Beck for his consummate respect of new ideas and ongoing dialogue across differences and for creating the kind of classroom where students felt safe to explore their lives openly. It was in Clive’s class that I first began the integration of theory with memory that became the methodology of this dissertation.

Dr. Johan Aitken has long been a generous supporter of my writing and ideas. In Jo’s class I first realized how important it was to think back through my education as a student in order to understand myself as a teacher; I learned how memories believed lost are really just stored in hands that type words across a computer screen telling a story.

I am grateful to my external examiner Dr. Susan Laird of the University of Oklahoma for her bold, brave, persistent insistence upon our recognition of what we learn at home about how to live fully human lives and for her ethical commitment to the identification, inclusion, legitimization and valuing of that profoundly decent pedagogy in the educational agenda.

It was my great good fortune to have had the privilege of working with Dr. Mary Kooy who joined my committee less than a week before my defense. She enriched our discussion immeasurably and I am flattered by her vivid enthusiasm for my ideas.
To Jeanie Stewart in OISE’s Education Commons and Tom on the telephone help line who slayed the demons in the computer, I am eternally grateful. Thank you to Janet King and Audrey Weaver for their help in technical production.

I cannot end without thanking my students, the adolescent girls I taught so many years ago and the spirited grade fours of my more recent past. Together we pushed back the walls of what we did not know and honoured the ties of relationship that bound us.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Women who teach have to learn (and write) out of the history of the accommodations they have made to male theories of culture and education. (Jane Miller, School for Women.)

When teaching is so complex a set of practices, when it is so important to the development of individuals and of society, when it is culturally and economically of such importance, how is it that it can be so negatively positioned? (Josie Levine, qtd. in Jane Miller, School for Women.)

I never wanted to be a teacher. It was what so many people, foremost among them my mother, thought best for me. She called it something to fall back on. Those words have resonated within me as I have considered how women use their backs/bodies as economic currency.

I went into teaching reluctantly because I had tried other occupations and found them wanting, or perhaps found me wanting, wanting more. When I graduated with my B.A. in 1967, three jobs came to me directly from the university placement service. One was as a hostess representing Canada at the Expo to be held in Montreal that summer; the second was as a management trainee in advertising at Eaton's department store in Winnipeg writing fashion copy (a friend's dream that I had merely borrowed); the third was at the National Research Council in Ottawa, doing “top-secret, highly confidential communications research.” Twenty years, one husband, and three children later, simmering and sweating in my basement laundry room, I came to realize that the job was to be a spy.

The interview, conducted by three men, took place in a narrow rectangular room dominated by one long mirrored wall, end to end. Was it, then, only my imagination? I was tall, dark, slim, long-haired, attractive (I can write that now, at fifty, though at twenty I would never have dared even dream it). I had been a student of languages – French,
Spanish, Greek, and, most importantly, Russian. The RCMP had interviewed all the neighbours on the neat, middle-class, tree-lined Winnipeg street where I lived.

That was the job I didn't take. Would I have had that kind of courage? And yet the course my life would take would ask for courage of a different sort. From the proud and heady experience that was Montreal that summer of Expo '67, I came to Eaton's, where an ad that I wrote in my first two weeks won an American advertising award. I was an accomplished student; new things came easily to me.

Since I had plucked each word with infinitely exquisite care, it pained me to watch my supervisor, an unmarried career woman in late middle-age, slash red lines through my fashion copy. As if words mattered. I remember writing an ad for a $9.98 dress sale. The buyer came to see me the week after the ad ran; he threw his arms up in the air, ecstatic. The ad had produced an unprecedented response. Not one dress was left in the store. How could words and images have so much power?

I was not happy as I imagined women with meagre incomes washing their new dresses and finding them wanting. I asked myself questions about the moral import of what I was doing. Youthful, presumptuous, idealistic, I wondered "Is this why G-d gave me talent? To deceive people, to deceive women?" Now that my days at Eaton's were numbered, what would I do with my life? Not that what I was searching for mattered to anyone else. I knew what others expected of me though I have not one memory of any person ever articulating it to me. I knew it from the time I was very young, perhaps five or six.

A casual acquaintance coming to Toronto to do a Master's degree supplied another dream that I could latch onto. We could be roommates. Why, I wonder, was my own dream so hard to catch? Or was it that I had many dreams but chafed under the understanding that it was essential to choose one? I was accepted to do a Masters in Linguistics at the University of Toronto. It was the first year the program had been offered. My roommate had her own problems to work out. When we walked down the
street together, men looked at me. But I saw only her envy and took the words of her vicious tongue deep inside my heart.

When that didn't work out, I came back to Winnipeg and went to bed for a couple of months. What was I going to do with my life? Like the protagonist of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1899/1973), whom I was to meet in fiction many years later, I talked to the people in the walls. Like Virginia Woolf, I heard voices. Somehow the prospect of a summer in Europe roused me from my deep depression. Off I went that spring, my mother urging me to make sure I sent in my application for teacher training. She hoped that I would return to Winnipeg in September and learn to be a teacher, so worried was she about my falling back.

As a middle-class girl my relation to money was always strained and constrained. On the one hand, I had grown up taking things like a trip to Europe for granted, though I knew my parents' resources were now limited; on the other, the expectation that I might need to earn a living coexisted peacefully alongside the implicit assumption that a husband would support me. The metaphoric richness of "falling back" captures for me how precarious my situation was; how much money would I need to earn to support myself and how would I earn it? Working-class girls have been clearer about their relation to money; they know they have no choice.

Sitting at my desk, staring through mullioned windowpanes at the deeply-green, deftly-trimmed trees of the London street where I lived the better part of that summer, thinking of the teachers whom I had loved and who had believed in me, honouring the memory of my grandmother who was my first teacher, who taught me Aesop's fables in Yiddish as she drew me with her into mystic worlds, I wrote my application — a long essay about why I wanted to teach. I wish I could read it now. The only part of that decision that was really mine was a commitment to do the very best I could as a student. Though I had always done well at school, with erratic and inconsistent bursts of effort, now I set myself the goal of working the very hardest I could. The gold medal was where I took my aim.
I won two gold medals, standing first in a class of 430 would-be teachers. No one before me had carried off the award for the highest academic standing and the one for the best student teaching as well. My hard work had paid off. (Not literally of course.) And all those women had been right, after all. I was a born teacher. I type this and the letter "i" comes out in lower case. The "I" in me that was a born teacher never felt very good about herself in that capacity.

I never wanted to be a teacher. It was a poorly-paid, low-status career, and I had no delusions about that. When I was very young, I told my mother that I wanted to be a doctor like her brother, my doting, childless uncle, the Jewish director of a large Catholic hospital in the 1950s. People would come to line the streets outside the synagogue at his funeral, for there was no room inside for all those whose lives he had touched with his care. "It's too hard for a girl," she said. "What do you need it for?" It was the very best advice she could have offered me, caught up as she was in the heyday of post-war capitalist ideology. It has taken me many years to forgive her for it.

When my own son was small, I asked him what he might like to be when he grew up. "Well, I would like to be a doctor, but that's only for girls," he replied. His pediatrician, the only doctor he knew at the time, was a woman, a mother. It was tempting to romanticize how the world had changed.

It is no accident that so many of the women I know at graduate school wanted to be doctors just like me. But they weren't good at science; the mysteries of math eluded them. Good students, they became instead, good teachers, pursuing doctorates. So they moved from the embodied practice: teaching into the mindworld which had already been a minefield for them and which, revisited, would be one nonetheless. It would ask them to forsake their bodies and the world of their lived experience. A dangerous move. As it has asked me. But I have refused.

*   *   *
U Of M Gold Medallist Seeks Rewarding Career

By FRANCES BIDEWELL

Leslie Zimmerman has been looking for a "rewarding" career — and she thinks she's finally found it.

"After a series of post-bachelor of arts jobs, she turned to teaching and found it "not only creative but also personally rewarding." And in the one-year teaching diploma course at the University of Manitoba she managed to accumulate three awards, including two gold medals.

Miss. Zimmerman, 23, said in an interview that when she graduated from University College with a bachelor of arts in English, she went to Expo '67 as a hostess, and from there became an advertising copywriter.

"After three months, I realized it was not sufficiently rewarding. I felt I was playing a little game... it was creative but it was also impersonal and cold."

Then, in 1968 she enrolled at the University of Toronto in a master's program in linguistics. Dissatisfied with that, she dropped out; came back to Winnipeg and, planning to go to Europe in the summer, worked at a series of part-time jobs.

"Back-stage work at the Manitoba Theatre Centre, modeling anything." Even after she started the education course Miss. Zimmerman wasn't happy. In her first practice teaching session she found that "nothing went right."

"I was trying to be a typical teacher — very authoritarian — and it didn't suit me.

"But during the third session I liked the school and I liked the kids. I didn't try to be Our Miss Brooks or Miss Grundy and it worked out."

Next fall she'll be teaching grades 9 to 11 English at a private girls' school in Toronto — Branksome Hall. She went for the interview in Toronto two weeks before her first exam this spring.

This summer she's going to teach a communications course at summer school at the university during July. Other than that, she's still looking for a job.

The prizes awarded to Miss Zimmerman were: the Fletcher Gold medal for teaching competence, the Manitoba government gold medal for highest standing in first-year exams and the French consular book prize for highest marks in French.

"The ironic thing about it," she said, "is that the person who came next to me won a money prize."
I never wanted to be a teacher. Teachers were overworked and underpaid. Popular wisdom said, 'Those who can, do, and those who can't, teach.' When this article appears in the newspaper, I regard the young woman it describes as a stranger. I am not this enterprising young lady of print. In my own mind I am somehow lazy, a failure. Teaching is a second-class profession, not really a profession after all. I am humiliated that the last line of the article should refer to money. It is like being caught with your pants down in public. Nice (middle-class) girls don't talk about money. "Women have had centuries of training to consider money impure, undeserved, mysterious, not our worry, or, as this mind-set is sometimes reflected even inside current feminism, a male-imitative and politically incorrect concern" (Steinem, 1994, 171). What is being said here and what is most definitely not being said?

I think about money, and women on their backs comes to mind. One way or another, as women, we are always on our backs; some ways are simply more honest than others. Teaching, then, is a way to get off your back, to get them off your back, to back away from the whole struggle of male-female relations through which I have been subtly programmed by my cultural moment to find a husband. Someday my Prince will come, my boyfriend of six years has assured me. He knows it is not him. Maybe the Prince will see my picture in the paper and find me.

I, the gold medallist, come to Toronto to teach. And teaching is all that I say it is in the article. It is rewarding, meaningful; I am skilled at relating to the girls in my classes who are only six years younger than I am. I look at myself in a photograph taken then by one of my students. I am wearing a tight turtleneck, a brown suede mini-skirt with opaque cream tights. I could come right out of this fall's fashion magazines, so 'with-it' do I seem. We had more in common, my students and I, than I could ever have admitted then.

I come to Toronto to teach, but that is not the only item on my agenda. I come to Toronto to teach and find a Husband. What is said and what is not said. But while my time at the Faculty and my practice-teaching experiences have prepared me well for the
classroom, no one has prepared me well for finding a husband. Is it surprising, then, that I choose for what I now know are all the wrong reasons? I choose a man who is tall because I am tall. I choose a man who is Jewish because that is what my mother wants for me, and I am desperately trying to make my mother happy, to justify her career as a mother; as an only child, everything depends on me. I choose a man who seems ‘nice’ because I think that “nice” is only that which seems. I choose a man who drives a yellow Jaguar because I have learned that money is important. I do not choose a man whose intellectual interests match my own because I am still pretending that I don't have any intellectual interests, or that, if I am very careful, I can keep them hidden down the basement with my dolls. Intellectual interests, like sexual interests, are improper concerns for girls like me, just like money.

*   *   *

It is nearly twenty years till I encounter Virginia Woolf in a graduate course in the history of education called “Woman's Emancipation through Education.” How timely is our encounter, as I am struggling through year fifteen of a “troubled marriage.” I read Woolf once before as an undergraduate in a novel course taught by a male professor who managed to make To the Lighthouse (1927/1965) an entirely opaque experience. Perhaps it was me, then, and what I could allow myself to know, about women making art, about women and their mothers? How I clasp Woolf's words to my heart now, how she speaks to and through me as I struggle with the intellectual interests I have kept quite successfully in hiding for the better part of two decades.

Locating the cerebral within the material world of everyday existence, Woolf made connections no one had ever made for me before. Money had never been a topic for consideration (not since my fateful comment, blurted out to a newspaper reporter). If the pre-eminent English woman of letters could talk about money, then maybe I, too, could think about it and the role it had played in my life. It was not simply subsistence living that Woolf desired for the women to whom she addressed the text of A Room of One's
Owing, the women of Newnham and Girton (the first female colleges of Oxford and Cambridge) in 1928 when she told them: “[a] dinner of beef and prunes will not light the lamp in the spine” (Woolf, 1929/1977, 19). As Alastair Cooke explained in his introduction to the BBC production of Eileen Atkins' reading of Woolf's treatise, Woolf's famed ‘five hundred pounds’ was a great deal of money in 1928. She wanted women to earn for themselves and in their own right the kind of lifestyle to which only men had previously been entitled. Only then would they be free to create.

Championing women's right to a separate space where they could be temporarily freed from the demands of domesticity, Woolf (1929/1977) surveyed the supposedly separate-but-equal spheres that Mary Wollstonecraft had envisioned a century earlier and found their presumed equality lacking. “Why was one sex so prosperous and the other so poor?” she asked. “What effect has poverty on fiction? What conditions are necessary for the creation of works of art?” (26).

Like her foremothers Astell and Wollstonecraft, Woolf understood the part that education played in the socially-constructed nature of human existence and insisted that women's minds were as capable of rationality as men's and as entitled to claim an education. She extended her analysis to claim, in 1928, what Carl Jung was to elaborate later so extensively – that the mind was androgynous, that

in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female; ... the normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating. If one is a man, still the woman part of his brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her. Coleridge perhaps meant this when he said that a great mind is androgynous. It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilized and uses all its faculties. (Woolf, 1929/1977, 93-94)

So with Woolf we move beyond the rational woman to the creative one.

A Room of One's Own (1929/1977) is about education, exclusion and creativity. When its thinly-disguised narrator scurries off to Oxbridge to use the library, she is told that “ladies are only admitted ... if accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished
with a letter of introduction” (9), one of the many exclusions and absences she will encounter in the course of her inquiry.

“Making a fortune and bearing thirteen children – no human being could stand it” (Woolf, 1929/1977, 23). While man was engaged in war and politics, woman, it seems, was “holding the looking glass up to him, possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size” (35). But why, then, were the men still so angry? Perhaps women's right to vote and to earn their own living in the professions was a threat, Woolf suggested ever so delicately. “Anything may happen when womanhood has ceased to be a protected occupation” (40). Woolf saw clearly that the chasm that separated the public from the private worlds would not be bridged in her own lifetime. We may well ask how far we have come toward bridging it in ninety years. But Woolf was brilliant in understanding the role that money played in maintaining two rigidly separate spheres.

Looking for female role models whose lived lives might illuminate the problem of the disparities between the sexes, a search that remains central to feminist work today, Woolf turned to literature. The picture of woman was a confusing one:

A very queer, composite being thus emerges. Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history. She dominated the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband. (Woolf, 1929/1977, 43)

Woolf saw clearly how sexuality, marriage and property were conflated. No wonder women weren't exercising their creativity to make art. In the life and death of her imaginary creation, Judith Shakespeare, William's extraordinarily gifted sister, Woolf collected her thoughts about women's historical absence from artistic production:

Any woman born with a great gift in the sixteenth century would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village, half witch, half wizard, feared and mocked at. For it needs little skill in psychology to be sure that a highly gifted girl who had
tried to use her gift for poetry would have been so thwarted and hindered by other people, so tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts, that she must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty. (1929/1977, 48)

Contrary instincts indeed! Sixty years separate Woolf's writing from my own, but why does it seem that she is whispering in my ear? Women need a different kind of education than the “unpaid-for” one they are getting from life if they are going to survive. And that education will have to address the economic as it relates to the intellectual.

Intellectual freedom depends on material things. Poetry depends upon intellectual freedom. And women have always been poor, not for two hundred years merely, but from the beginning of time. Women have had less intellectual freedom than the sons of Athenian slaves. Women, then, have not had a dog's chance of writing poetry. That is why I have laid so much stress on money and a room of one's own. (1929/1977, 103)

She enjoined women to write books of their own, all kinds of books “hesitating at no subject however trivial or however vast” (1929/1977, 103). She would rather have the history of the shopgirl behind the counter than the hundred and fiftieth life of Napoleon (86).

“Thank God,” Woolf wrote in her diary on October 27, 1928,

my long toil at the women's lecture is this moment ended. I am back from speaking at Girton, in floods of rain. Starved but valiant young women – that's my impression. Intelligent eager, poor; & destined to become schoolmistresses in shoals. I blandly told them to drink wine & have a room of their own. Why should all the splendour, all the luxury of life be lavished on the Julians & the Francises, & none on the Phares & the Thomases? (1980, 200)¹

In the layered intertextuality of Woolf's words with the work of Madeleine Grumet (1988), Jane Roland Martin (1981, 1985, 1992, 1994b) and Jane Miller (1990, 1992, 1996), whom I read sometime later, I was drawn to one particular historical absence in the long chain that Woolf had elaborated, one that had continued to haunt me from the time I was first setting out to teach in 1970. Where were the stories of the

¹ Julian Bell was Woolf's nephew, the son of her sister Vanessa Bell. Elsie Phare, a student at Girton, became an authority on Gerard Manley Hopkins and Andrew Marvell. Margaret Thomas was one of the women who had asked Woolf to speak at Girton.
women who teach? What were their economic considerations? These questions simmered in my brain as I teased myself: “When you conjure up a vision to accompany the word ‘educator’ what do you see?” I saw a gentleman, with grey hair and glasses, not unlike the professors Woolf described in Room. Why, when most of the people who taught me were women, did a man’s face appear in my inner eye? It was some years later when I read Miller’s School for Women (1996) that something inside me exploded. For if Martin had opened the question by imagining an educated person who was a woman, and Grumet had extended it by asking for stories about women teaching, their worlds seemed all light with no shadows. I felt obliged to offer them something entirely beautiful. Miller gave me permission to examine my own story with more honesty and less beauty than I had ever dared approach it before. Mine would be an insurgent reading, a subversive one. Examining my story in terms of all these women teachers writing, I refused to refuse to know.  

What then are the multiple subjects of my inquiry? What does a close reading of that newspaper article hold and according to whose terms may I begin to unravel it? “What readers do with texts matters as much as what texts are purported to say,” maintains Deanne Bogdan, as she bears witness to the power of literature and the arts to shape reality negatively as well as positively (Bogdan, 1992, xxv). Bogdan comes to her Re-Educating the Imagination (1992) steeped in the theory of her mentor, Northrop Frye,

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1 I was introduced to the field of teacher narrative through the writing I did in Johan Aitken’s class “Becoming a Teacher” in the fall of 1992. Her recollections of a reading childhood in Masques of Morality (1987) were highly evocative for me and brought me back to my own deeply buried memories of learning to read as a girl. Those memories have provided a framework for this dissertation and I am grateful to Johan both for her teaching and her text. In Masques of Morality Aitken considers what it means to read as a girl by exploring twenty-five fictional female lives. She maintains that literature may provide a more accessible and authentic version of how women’s lives have been lived than sociology or history may. “Art makes it possible for us to experience how closely aligned the seemingly separate worlds of the personal and the political may really be” (Aitken, 1987, 11). Literature encodes ideology. The moral framework of these texts interests her; the females that inhabit them are strong-minded; in the face of setbacks, they refuse to become victims; they need to “do something” (13). Aitken honours the power of children’s literature to influence lives. “Probably at no stage in our life-long learning is the influence of story so potent” (19). Two of the fictional females she includes are Anne of Green Gables whose story is so important to my own and Jo March in Little Women. Both of these girls grow up to teach. Jo’s mother, Marmee, provides a rich pedagogical framework to which Alcott returns in subsequent novels. A recent validation of Marmee’s pedagogy by educational philosopher Susan Laird (following Jane Roland Martin) is discussed in my last chapter.
but not convinced that his liberal humanist universalist perspective on the way literature works satisfies her. It is the feminist literary theory that I encounter in my classes with her that will become the immanent ground out of which I will come to rethink my lived experience as student and teacher. Feminist literary theory is the silent, invisible mother, mater, the material base that allows me to understand what my education has really been about and what I have taken of that education with me into the classes I have taught. It interrupts the malestream discourse of the academy to create a space for me to tell my story and examine it, as Woolf, Grumet, Martin, Miller, and Bogdan have urged me to do.

Examining my story, I am indebted to Shoshana Felman's concept of "self-subversive self-reflection" (1987, 90). In the practice of psychoanalysis, the analyst positions herself in the patient's unconscious and attempts to bring to the fore its hidden content. Felman, who begins her psychoanalytic career as a graduate student investigating her own particular area of academic interest, explains that the subject who practises self-subversive self-reflection enacts the analyst's role herself, interminably peeling away the layers of what lies beneath conscious thought. "It is not a question of knowing whether I speak of myself in a way that conforms to what I am, but rather of knowing whether I am the same as that of which I speak" (Felman, 1987, 5). "There is no psychoanalytic understanding that can dispense with narrative or truly go beyond it," Felman maintains (14). Lacanian psychoanalysis, with its interweaving of practice (clinical event), concept (theory), and metaphor (literature), and its original insight into transference and the dialogic psychoanalytic situation, has taught her "to think beyond her means," has illuminated a way of reading that enacts an unending struggle to become more and more aware, to become attentive to messages that were formerly invisible, "to keep an entire system of signification open, rather than foreclose it" (16).

3 Adrienne Rich, in "Notes toward a politics of location," uses "material" exactly as I intend it here: "Begin, we said, with the material, with matter, mma, madre, mutter, moeder, modder, etc., etc." (Rich, qtd. in Laird, 1998, 1).
Felman extends this insight into thinking about what it means to read and write, to teach and learn. Reading is not simply a matter of bringing to light the content of the unconscious; it is a process in which the unconscious reads at the same time as it is read. The unconscious is both subject and object of the psychoanalytical investigation; psychoanalysis itself is “the outcome, in Lacan's eyes, of an unprecedented, prodigious act of reading” (1987, 22). What then does it mean for me to read my own story? What do I know and not know at the same time? I will discover that the unconscious is a writer too as I wake, morning after morning, filled with the words that sleep has forged within me.

Alice Miller (1981), a psychoanalyst who comes to analyze her own life after years of working with troubled children, explains how bright children learn easily to be good, to do what their parents expect of them. But the price of this learning is high. Sensing the need to gratify their parents' needs, and getting the measure of their security from this, they develop special sensitivities to others and foreclose on themselves. They inhabit “false selves,” living out lives that are not really theirs. How many good girls cum bright students cum academic women have followed Miller's path?

At least one of them is psychologist Mary Pipher, whose *Reviving Ophelia* was published in 1994. Pipher, whose earlier book is about eating disorders, comes to psychology from a background in cultural anthropology. From her twenty years' experience counselling girls she understands that ours is a “girl-poisoning” culture: “[o]ne way to think about all the pain and pathology of adolescence is to say that the culture is just too hard for most girls to understand and master at this point in their development” (1994, 13). Beyond supporting and nurturing girls through adolescence, Pipher wants to change the culture. “We can work together to build a culture that is less complicated and more nurturing, less violent and sexualized and more growth-producing” (13). It will take a long time to change the culture.

More remarkable for me is the fact that, though many books have been published on female adolescence in the eleven years I have been thinking about the subject, this one
has sufficiently captured the public imagination as to be 154 weeks on the New York Times Best Seller list. When the book was first published, I stood in a bookstore for a couple of hours and skimmed it. It didn't seem to say anything I didn't know. I didn't need to buy it. But clearly there were a lot of people who did. The stories it holds are not meaningful to the women reading them simply because they will help them through the tangled process of parenting a girl through adolescence. They are meaningful to these women as they remember their own imperiled passages, as they consider whether we, as women, ever really leave the struggles of adolescence behind. If mothers and daughters are struggling with the same questions, "[e]ven sadder are the women who are not struggling, who have forgotten that they have selves worth defending. ... When I ask them about their own needs, they are confused by the question" (Pipher, 1994, 25).

As I begin to write, I realize that I want to think back through my body as well as my mind. I want to remember what it felt like to sit in the classrooms of my past. Are there butterflies in my stomach? Does my hand ache from writing? Can I look down and see again the raised red callous on the first joint of my second finger stained with Peacock Blue ink from the Schaeffer cartridge pens I loved? I remember going out for recess with one raisin that someone had given me, taking twenty miniscule bites out of it so that it would last the whole time we were outdoors. I remember the smudge of chalk in my nostrils as we clapped the blackboard erasers out in the frosty autumn air. I remember the bone-chilling cold of the frozen Winnipeg rink where we skated in grade eight, how the steam of the hot chocolate misted my thick glasses, how our hands shivered as we brought cups to mouths, how our lips were bitten blue. My body was there too, getting an education and then giving one. I could never manage to teach without touching, without hugging, without crying.

As I return to the newspaper article about the young woman who was me, three issues still hold me through the long passage of some thirty years: 1) the adolescent girl's search for the role models she seeks in the culture around her and remembers in her lived embodied experience as guides to what womanhood will mean; 2) the relationships
between women, teaching, and romance ideology; and 3) women's guilt-ridden engagement with the issue of money. I see myself again as a young woman, divided against herself, standing on the bridge that separates her from the adult world, incandescent with hope and brimming with possibility. That was 1970, a specific historical moment in late capitalism. I was white, middle-class, western Canadian, Jewish, and privileged. All of what I know is filtered through the standpoint engendered by that accident of birth and that historical location.

At the same time as I claim my subjectivity, I admit that charges of essentialism, the assumption that women who speak as women claim monolithically to speak for all women, have dogged my progress through the academy. I acknowledge that the category ‘woman’ is a fluid one: women, like men, are constituted differently within and across markers of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, able-bodiedness, age, and a host of other signifiers that make it impossible and undesirable to generalize, universalize, or even definitively define ‘what woman is.’ Carol Gilligan, whose work has been central to my project, has seen her work labelled essentialist. Fear of being so strongly identified with that debate made me hesitate before including the work of Jane Roland Martin, whose alternative views of educational philosophy have been disparaged both for their insertion of women’s values into the androcentric realm of “standard” analytic philosophy and for their essentialist character. Though Martin’s work has been critical to my thinking, I was prepared to silence her voice in mine out of fear. I find it unspeakably ironic that, in the search for a woman-authored alternative to the education in patriarchy that we have received and against the backdrop of a new pedagogy of care whose founding premise is to create safe spaces for women to learn to speak, the problem of essentialism still threatens to silence many of those new voices.

I grew up in the fifties, when, as educational philosopher Susan Fransoza remembers in *Ordinary Lessons* (1999), her collection of the 50s memoirs of a group of her contemporary colleagues, there was strong social pressure to flatten out and homogenize experience towards a prevailing illusion of classlessness and uniformity.
What I write here is very much informed by my chafing at the imposition of that false unity upon me. Yet I struggle today against how that ideology, much as I resisted it trying to claim my own sense of difference from proscriptive norms, must inevitably have formed me too and created in my thinking a tendency toward generalization. The fifties, as Fransoza describes them in her introduction, were and still are depicted either as “happy days” or as a time of coercive conformity. “Forced upon us by existing official histories as well as popular media recreations,” Fransoza writes, “[these alternate versions] affected – and must still affect – our abilities to see things as they were” (1999, 18) and, I would maintain, are.

As much as I understand the partiality of my perspective as a privileged white woman, I feel morally obliged to speak out of the opportunity granted by that privilege, not for those women whose material circumstances might not enable them to speak but out of respect for their struggles and honouring the courage and tenacity with which they confront the asymmetries and inequities of their embodied lives. “Intellectual freedom depends on material things,” as Woolf wrote (1929/1977, 103), and it is because I very nearly did not have the material opportunity to undertake this intellectual journey that I so much appreciate the opportunity to write about it.

It is a question of holding the tension between the poststructuralist analysis of difference, which no other methodology has managed to capture with such precision and potency, and using the rhetorical space of someone who speaks from the point of view of an “I” that is itself continually shifting but is nevertheless speaking out of its developing insight, an insight that grows out of a dialectical interaction between destabilization and centring. I am not prepared to give up either of these ways of knowing, not prepared to locate myself in the land of either/or; I trust, instead, in the possibilities of both/and. I need the healing power of the feminine to temper the awesome voice of the still largely masculinist academy.

To find my own voice – is to give truthful expression to how I experience myself and the world I live in. I might or might not be “right” by others’ standards and measurements. But I can be truthful to my experience and to
my way of expressing my experience. Such expression is unique to me and to this moment.

Sometimes, we silence our beliefs in the face of self-doubt, self-criticism, fear of judgment, or lack of confidence in our capacity to express ourselves in the way that we believe others will respect and understand. While forces in the environment certainly push against our finding our own voice, all too often the force that silences comes from within. (Woodman and Mellick, 1998, 88)

I found my voice in Deanne Bogdan’s classes in feminist literary theory. The concepts she taught and wrote about, her “poetics of need” and of “everyday existence,” and most specifically, her designation and explication of the “feeling, power, and location” problems (1992, 140-150) enabled me to speak after long silence as they provided a methodology for analyzing the respective power positions that are always shifting depending on one’s situatedness and as such, a heuristic which I consider applicable to all women differently situated.

To what extent is the recent proliferation of ‘performativity’ in performance art and performance theory born out of the ashes of postmodern deconstruction as a redesigned and reinvigorated attempt to rework and reclaim a personal need for the voicing/acting out of one’s subjectivity? If the Speaking Subject silences Others, as Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989) has powerfully claimed and many others, following her, have confirmed, then the Othered (those who are silenced) can also “other” (see my graduate school presentation at the end of Chapter Three). Neither location is comfortable for either party, but both locations and both discomforts seem to be necessary for learning, growth, movement, and shifting to take place.

Jane Roland Martin’s (1994a) critique of the essentialism debate asks questions that remain pertinent today. How can those who view many women’s theories as seriously flawed not subject male-authored theories to the same rigorous criteria? (1994a, 651). How is it that Foucault’s work can count so much within feminist academic

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4 In “Censorship, identification, and the poetics of need” Deanne Bogdan (1990a) examines the “feeling, power, and location” relation by reflecting deeply upon her own experience in a feminist literary theory class where a group of her students refused to consider a text worthy of their study because of its sexist underpinnings.
discourse when he paid so little critical attention to women while Gilligan, who surely did, is scorned? I believe, as Martin does, that the debate around essentialism is a crippling one for feminist scholarship, an enactment of the shadow side of women’s power, an indication of how progress is always only two steps forward and one step back, because new freedoms are frightening even to those who are granted them. Women have internalized their culture’s misogyny well. I have always experienced the accusations of essentialism that have been levelled against me as a painful attack, a violent reminder of the extent to which binary oppositions and dualities hold our thinking. Martin’s analysis points to the twin tyrannies of essentialism and difference as being equally potential enactments of false consciousness. Both serve to limit and stifle women’s voices so long sought.

In a discussion of the direction feminist theory has taken, Evelyn Fox Keller said, “It is almost as if we have sought to defuse the force of external censorship by becoming our own harshest critics” (Hirsch and Keller, 1990, 384). But we have not merely become too hard on ourselves. “I feel like a lot of conversations are getting cut off by using the ‘club’ words – essentialism and things like that,” Hirsch said to Miller and Gallop (Gallop, Hirsch, and Miller, 1990, 350). “What revisionism, not to say essentialism, was to Marxism-Leninism, essentialism is to feminism: the prime idiom of intellectual terrorism and the privileged instrument of political orthodoxy. Borrowed from the time-honored vocabulary of philosophy, the word essentialism has been endowed within the context of feminism with the power to reduce to silence, to excommunicate, to consign to oblivion,” Naomi Schor wrote in the Summer 1989 issue of differences (1989, 40). (Martin, 1994a, 650)

Citing Susan Bordo, Martin maintains that, from a methodological point of view, nothing could be more counter-productive for women than the “self-made trap” of false difference.

Cutting us off from the developmental insights of feminist psychologists and denying us the chance to discover even limited cross-cultural and temporal commonalities, it encourages us to construct not just other times and places but also other women as utterly Other. (Martin, 1994a, 646)

There is, Martin acknowledges, a genuine problem of power hierarchy between white academic women and women of colour, but she points out that while white middle-class feminists may need the constant surveillance that the fear of being labelled
essentialist provides "if we are to stop using the tools of the master" (1994a, 650), she knows of "no law saying that to make room for one type of feminist scholarship, it is necessary to repudiate other types, no reason why feminists should not strive to establish a warm and welcoming research climate for all" (650-651). This, I believe, is her most significant contribution to the ongoing debate around this highly fraught topic.

Martin insists that the commitment to diversity that is honoured in other areas of feminist scholarship be extended to the methodological realm. She looks toward a climate that is "as inclusionary on the methodological level as on the personal" (654), that respects the both/and position and remains open to new possibilities. Nonetheless, Martin's conclusion is that the debate between essentialism and antiessentialism is likely to go on as long as greater effort is not made to understand just what is really being said. Martin quotes Maria Lugones who pointed out that in interpreting the "problem of difference" as a problem of theory, feminist scholars directed their attention to theory and not to racism. Bell hooks wrote that theory can be used "to promote an academic elitism that embraces traditional structures of domination" (1989, 36). Martin confirms Susan Bordo's important observation that the shift to theory may mask the need to attend to the "professional and institutional mechanisms through which the politics of exclusion operate most powerfully in intellectual communities" (Bordo, qtd. in Martin, 1994a, 655). I believe, as Bordo does, that attention to the flaws of theory often masks a critical look at the institutional power structures in whose shadows we live our little lives because the extent of their power is so alarming. Yet day by day these inviolate structures take greater control of our lives. Martin asks, and I do with her, that we investigate our fascination with essentialism to ask if it has not been one more form of resistance to sharing power and privilege.

As Marianna Torgovnick (1994) explains, charges of essentialism have also been levelled at those who seek to defend the unity and coherence of the subject position in a poststructuralist world that has exploded the prism of difference. Feminist theory demonstrates that differences in race, class, and gender imply very different
subjectivities. Catherine Belsey (1993) points out that to try to locate a single unified subject position within the "contradictory discourses" of liberal humanist agency and feminist submission and inadequacy can be almost impossible. The subject is, in fact, "perpetually in the process of construction" (Belsey, 1993, 65). Some poststructuralists would deny the possibility of sustaining any one tenable subject position. But abandoning the notion of the self is problematic for women who, as reluctant as they are to speak out of their subjugation, are finding they have "selves" precisely at that intellectual moment where the concept of a "self" is being hotly contested. As Jane Flax notes, "If there is no objective basis for distinguishing between true and false beliefs, then it seems that power alone will determine the outcome of competing truth claims. This is a frightening prospect to those who lack (or are oppressed by) the power of others" (1990, 42). Teresa De Lauretis finds hope in the multiplicity of women's speaking/writing voices and the discourses that these new ways of thinking and forms of subjectivity may reveal.

Though many feminists have generally embraced the liberatory agenda of poststructuralism, they do not accept the death of the subject so readily. Some theorists who defend the discursive subject maintain that "no writing (even writing in the third person) can really avoid 'the subject position' - so that the poststructuralist point can be both conceded and seen as having no consequence" (Torgovnick, 1994, 158). Torgovnick refers to Paul Smith's (1988) distinction between "subject" and "agent." Smith wants to "redeem the idea of the acting or writing being who claims no absolute power in the world or absolute coherence of being" (Torgovnick, 1994, 158).

The most eloquent articulations of the difficulties of difference come from those women working and writing today in the fields of Queer pedagogy. In the introduction to their collection Radical In<ter>ventions, Suzanne de Castell and Mary Bryson honour the need to "speak as one" (1997, 281) while acknowledging the provisionality of the speaking voice. They look to Queer praxis to open up possibilities of rupture "so as to deliberately take the wrong route on the way to school" (284) and towards "an eclectic mélange of the wonderful, the awful, and the in-between" (285). But most importantly,
they seek a “safer” pedagogy for students and teachers of difference, “for the construction of, and participation in, democratic, engaging, pleasurable, interesting, generative, and non-violent learning environments,” for dialogue across differences, for an “ethic of consumption and of production” (285-286). By citing these authors here, I do not wish to engage in a colonizing and voyeuristic form of what they call “intellectual tourism” (De Castell and Bryson, 1997, 286). As feminist philosopher of education, Maxine Greene observes in her foreword to their collection, many of us have begun to realize how much we have repressed “in our shame at being marginal, how much we pretended, how much we masked” (Greene, 1997, x); these are our similarities across differences. I would join my voice to de Castell’s and Bryson’s, who write that they do not imply that “charges of racism or classism are innocuous, but that in academic discourses, these critiques are, so often, formulaic and rarely result in (or even intend) significant transformations to subsequent work” (288).

In her foreword to their book Greene cites Audre Lorde’s assertion in Sister Outsider (1984) that “we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals” (Lorde, qtd. in Greene, 1997, ix) because, as Greene explains, “[i]nstitutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which sees outsiders as surplus people” (1997, ix). This seems all the more possible remembering Fransoza’s descriptions of the 50s (see p. 15). What separates us, Greene maintains, is not our differences, but “our refusal to recognize those differences and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectation” (Greene, 1997, ix).

It is time also, to acknowledge the fearful power of fixed standards, paradigms, models. The more the intoxication of the so-called free market increases, the more a communication marked by sound-bytes replaces deliberative communication and reflective conversation, the more invisible will be the workings of hegemony.” (Greene, 1997, x)

It is toward an “attentive” conversation that the healing pedagogy of care revealed by feminist educational theorists aims. Ann Diller writes in 1997 that “[t]o create, maintain, and enhance caring relationships among ourselves constitutes the central moral
task" of feminist pedagogy (1996c, 161); this new perspective "lessens the power of differences to build barriers and to maintain fences of disregard" (164). It will be examined further in my final chapter.

Acknowledging in the light of Freud, Jung⁵, and the feminist psychoanalytic theorists that what I knew and what I refused to know matter here, I postulate that there is value in exploring my life story as it was subsequently written, that in this momentary slice of one particular and 'situated'⁶ life there may be some helpful implications for how we teach and what we teach the young women and men who will fill the classrooms of the future.⁷ I question the importance of any academic investigation that does not acknowledge the investigator's deeply personal need to consider the questions that will be asked. What are the economic and emotional consequences of the stories we teach girls about love and marriage? And why consider them now, at this specific historical moment?

I maintain that young girls are a major focus of consumer culture, that huge sectors of our economy depend on their being educated just exactly as they have been, that the ideology of romantic love is the glue holding a giant slice of our culture and much of our North American economy in tandem.⁸ The "learned doubleness" (J. Miller, 1990, 65) that characterized my adolescent education is alive and well today; it thrives. When I was a child, I remember being told that even though there was little likelihood of our going to war, we needed to maintain an army because our economy depended on it.

⁵ When I began this writing I had no idea how important Jung’s thought, particularly as it has been interpreted by analyst Marion Woodman, would become to my thinking. The powerful hold of the deeply buried archetypal world is fundamental to my understanding of the issues discussed in this paper.

⁶ Donna Haraway (1988) coined the term 'situated knowledges' to expose the power dynamic which is hidden by appeals to objectivity. All knowledge is "situated" in the embodied experience of the knower. "To see from below" is Haraway’s suggestion to the subjugated for avoiding the "god trick" of objectivity (524), a strategy that is reminiscent for me of Woolf’s Outsider perspective in Three Guineas (1938).

⁷ It is not my intention to write about men and women teaching equally in this text. I honour the fine men who have taught me and taught with me. But I would borrow Grumet’s explanation that this is told as a woman’s story "in order to avoid the emulsifying and idealist standard of androgyny, which distracts us from the analysis of our experience of reproduction by stripping it of gender" (Grumet, 1988, xix).

⁸ "North Americans spend a great deal of time and money producing, promoting, gazing at, and consuming goods and services (clothing, hair/makeup, fitness, weddings, fiction, movies, music, videos etc.) that are at least part of the promotion of romantic love. Almost invariably, the 'voices' of actual women and girls play little or no part in all of these processes," writes Cecilia Morgan in her comments on my work here.
Today's economy is intimately allied with our adherence to the mythology of romantic love. Be it love or war, the economic bottom line is what counts. For all the changes that the twentieth century is reputed to have brought us, some things change slowly. That education is a patriarchal project where women have been seduced and then abandoned, endures. That there are huge economic stakes in keeping women in their place – up there on the billboards or down there on their backs – is a notion worth considering. As a culture, we are not terribly interested in hearing from young girls or the older women who would listen to them and teach them.

Cultures are defined by their mythologies. Northrop Frye maintains that “[a] mythological universe is a vision of reality in terms of human concerns and hopes and anxieties; it is not a primitive form of science” (1976, 14). Whenever one culture supersedes another through the elaborate process of negotiation, resistance, and accommodation, the old mythology will no longer carry authority. As long as patriarchal culture prevails, the mythology of romance will be problematic. Even though the ideology of romance is, in many ways, the glue that impedes the advancement of women, complex processes of resistance and accommodation are negotiated and renegotiated by romance readers with every successive reading act. Nevertheless, there is some merit in Gloria Steinem’s observation that “[t]he more patriarchal and gender-polarized a culture is, the more addicted to romance. These myths embody our yearning to be whole” (Steinem, 1992, 255). The mythology of romantic love, to which our culture is so powerfully addicted, is straining at its seams. Ever more vigilant and multiplied efforts are required to sustain it.

What happens to a civilization when its mythology no longer holds? I would claim that with Princess Diana's death there can be no “happy-ever-after” anymore in a way that far outstrips our disappointment at the fairy-tale marriage that ended in hell. Every little girl's dream of marrying the prince is altered now at a deeper level than we can yet understand. And every little boy's burden of becoming the prince, the white knight in shining armour, is correspondingly changed. The moment is right for
conceptualizing a new kind of love. Perhaps it is time to return to the model of mother love that inspired the cult of romantic love in the first place, but has been primarily reinterpreted for the masses through male consciousness, even when women were also doing the writing. What if it were woman's turn to rework the fantasy, to return first to maternal love and reclaim nurture, through the process of the feminine, for men as well as for women? The connections between conventional romantic love and tragedy, unhappiness and abuse are played out on a global scale. The interweaving of romantic ideology with economics has life-threatening consequences. Diana's battles with bulimia underscore the urgency of what it means when material things and printed images are meant to stand in place of love. The spectre of worldwide poverty, for children and the adults who love them, unprecedented hunger and the human anguish that accompanies it demand that we engage with the deeper, dangerous workings of our cultural myths. Too many girls reading too many romances have too many children they don't have the resources to support decently.

Invoking Diana's story here, I do not intend to privilege her tragedy or to suggest that her death is more important than that of any other woman who has been the victim of the dangerous alliance of mythology with money, power, and fame. But Diana has become Everywoman, in fantasy, constellated as she has been, at the incandescent borders of fact and fiction. What the public saw in its Princess, what enabled that extraordinary connection with people, was her naked, admitted vulnerability. Fame, fortune and the love of the Prince did not bring her the happiness they promised; they made her lonelier. No wonder she yearned for the common touch. We know her childhood left her feeling needy, insecure, unworthy.

But no irony is greater than the one that tells us that, like all famous romantic heroines, she is worth more to the culture dead than alive. Is it not curious that, though her kingdom was the world, there was no more appropriate lover for her than Dodi Fayed? Is it not curious that Fayed has been transformed into her companion, that though Diana, in life, was quite prepared to be frank about her sexual life, in death she is being
sanitized? It is perhaps cold comfort that death took her when she felt herself happy, when she had known the physical love that she so desperately and humanly craved.

It is not just the monarchy that will never be the same again. We were, as a culture, slouching (like rough beasts to Jerusalem) along this self-same road before the events of August 31, 1997. Groundswell movements of people reaching out to help others have been well documented. In Canada the spirit of volunteerism is thriving (McDonald, 1996), motivated by more, I believe, than the need to fill the vacuum created by federal, provincial and local governments' abandoning much of their responsibility for social welfare. But we have been catapulted into a view of the next millenium by this one story that transcends nationality and unites continents of people by touching them at their most human. This is a tragedy equal to one by Shakespeare, its players as noble, its princes as lost. It holds out to the world the possibility of transformation, not through reason but through emotion. I see a culture aching to feel, aching to touch, aching to explore the power of love that holds us all, rich or poor, white or brown or red or yellow or black, in its thrall. "Citizen – Dare to care" exhorts the graffiti in the neighbourhood ravine. In our shared desire to love Diana and to mourn her death, we gave voice to our own private, inarticulate, legitimately human need to love and be loved. In the wake of her death we are perhaps obliged to pursue the compassionate in ourselves and explore the many different articulations of love that life has to offer.

For though the media made Diana their sublime subject and the British press engaged with the deeper meanings of her life and death, North American media commentators have created little space for that sort of analysis. Is there something in her death that we dare not probe? Perhaps the death of an archetype, an archetype grown too large, with roots too deep and a society too dangerously addicted. Literary and cultural critic Vivian Gornick ends her recently-published book of essays, *The End of the Novel of Love*, with this thought:

Put romantic love at the center of a novel today, and who could be persuaded that in its pursuit the characters are going to get to something large? That love is going to throw them up against themselves in such a
way that we will all learn something important about how we got to be as we are, or how the time in which we live got to be as it is. No one, it seems to me. Today, I think, love as a metaphor is an act of nostalgia, not of discovery. (1997, 165)

Unquestionably I come to this writing disabused of the notions of romantic love that swept me away when I was an adolescent girl wondering about how I would weave teaching and romance into my life. But why is it so important to me to understand where I am today in relation to my culture? A search like mine begins with what British educator Jane Miller calls “the autobiography of the question.” Miller wants to suggest that

women teachers are beginning to develop a new kind of analysis of their work, which I believe to be invaluable. It is one which challenges conventions of academic writing and – perhaps even more importantly – undermines the mostly spurious claims of detachment and objectivity inscribed in a good deal of education research. (1996, 258)

As a professor at the Institute of Education, University of London, Miller asks her students to begin by writing the story behind their own interest in their area of academic research. This may proceed to linking the particular with more general themes in the public arena:

This becomes a way of historicizing the questions they are addressing and of setting their lives and educational history within contexts more capacious than their own. It is also a way of formalising a particular kind of self-consciousness; and that in its turn may reveal the absence of women, or of girls, or of gender, in the history and the debate within which they are seeking to find a place for themselves. (1996, 259)

To those who may criticize what they see as a narrow subjectivity reclaimed here, Miller answers merely that “it works,” as she takes pains to assert that her agenda is not grandiose or totalizing, that “only the most modest moves will be made towards theoretical transcendence or gross generalisability” (260). These stories may provide a window into the difficulty the woman teacher has in being “the one who initiates procedures designed to expose and rupture precisely those social relations which buttress her own always ambiguous position of power” (261).

Holding the tension of these ambiguities, Miller acknowledges the difficulty of broad claims about what works:
For there is no easy way of knowing for certain what is productive, expedient, necessary in teaching; and any commitment to a pedagogy which presents itself as certain ought to arouse our instant suspicions. There is not very much educational research, after all, which escapes the pattern of gathering in data to illustrate the proposition you started from.

The benefits of autobiographical writing are communal and not just individual as they have been accused of being, "[f]or books continue each other, in spite of our habit of judging them separately" (Woolf, 1929, 77) and, "masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice" (63). We discover ourselves in the stories of others, just as I have claimed to have discovered myself in Woolf's words. I will come to claim, in the pages that follow, that I both searched for and discovered my "self" in the stories of others from the time I first learned to read. June Levison, a student of Miller's writes:

Perhaps the most crucial discovery, and this applies to the dissertation as a whole, is that I cannot write without hearing others' voices – the voices which make up my entire reading history. I have a very real sense that these are not my words and my reading of Bakhtin ... tells me that in a sense they are not. (Qtd. in J. Miller, 274)

In our supposedly autonomous writings of our lives, we are beset by Bakhtin's (1981) "dialogic imagination," by what Woolf called "invisible presences." The "self" that writes her/his autobiography is "constituted from the polyphonic voices of discourse" (S. Smith, 1987, 48). On this view self-writing emanates no longer from the "essentialized ideology of individualism that makes of the 'self' an atomized privacy"; it is languaged in cultural stories that are "'populated – overpopulated with the intentions of others’ in the sense that they carry in them those cultural expectations and systems of interpretation through which a culture makes palpable its effort to understand and makes durable its power to name the world, itself, and others" (48). So that, while this is my story, it is not only my story. It is resonant with the cultural forces that made me who I have come to be and as such, may evoke and explain other lives than mine.
Smith continues to explain that “[t]he meaning culture assigns to sexual difference, that is, the ideology of gender, has always constituted a, if not the, fundamental ideological system for interpreting and understanding individual identity and social dynamics” (1987, 48). Literature and autobiography themselves are embedded in the phallocentric discourses of western culture where woman has existed primarily, as Woolf put it, to “hold a mirror up to man reflecting him back at twice his natural size” (1929/1977, 35). Because historically it has not been her place to write autobiography, to usurp “the authority to name herself and her own desires,” the woman who does so is “doubly estranged” (S. Smith, 49). Insider and outsider at the same time, she experiences a “particularly troubled relationship to her reader,” understanding, at least until the twentieth century, that the “men” who are her readers hold the power of her reputation in their hands. As Smith explains, drawing on the work of Foucault (1978), it is the silent reader who wields the power in this exchange, as the confessional mode of autobiography reverses the traditional power dynamics of subject and object (49) To further complicate matters, “she” may be marginalized additionally by her age, race, class or colour. So the woman who attempts autobiographical writing is many times divided against herself. At the very least she has not been taught to appear in public naked. Commanding public attention by her very act of speaking, she becomes a “phallic woman” (S. Smith, 55).

As good woman or male impersonator, neither cultural script seems to fit her; she is uneasy, too, with her own body and its sexual desire. In her writing, she is aware of having to protect herself from the dangerous cultural alliance between woman’s speech and unleashed sexuality. Balancing all these dichotomies, women writing today in this genre are responding to a moral imperative to share what they have learned through the lives they have lived. Literary theorist Jane Tompkins explains her desire to write embodied criticism as a response to Alison Jaggar’s observation that Western epistemology is shaped by the belief that “emotion should be excluded from the process of attaining knowledge” (Jaggar, qtd. in Tompkins, 1993, 25). To separate reason from emotion is a false dichotomy and Tompkins has no patience for it:
It's the same person who feels and who discourses about epistemology. The problem is that you can't talk about your private life in the course of doing your professional work. You have to pretend that epistemology, or whatever you're writing about, has nothing to do with your life, that it's more exalted, more important, because it (supposedly) transcends the merely personal. Well, I'm tired of the conventions that keep discussions of epistemology, or James Joyce, segregated from meditations on what is happening outside my window or inside my heart. The public-private dichotomy, which is to say, the public-private hierarchy, is a founding condition of female oppression. I say to hell with it. The reason I feel embarrassed at my own attempts to speak personally in a professional context is that I have been conditioned to feel that way. That's all there is to it.

I think people are scared to talk about themselves, that they haven't got the guts to do it. I think readers want to know about each other. Sometimes, when a writer introduces some personal bit of story into an essay, I can hardly contain my pleasure. I love writers who write about their own experience. I feel I'm being nourished by them, that I'm being allowed to enter into a personal relationship with them. That I can match my own experience up with theirs, feel cousin to them, and say, yes, that's how it is. (1993, 25)

If what I write is an autobiography of my self as student and teacher, it is also an autobiography of my self as a girl reading the texts that mattered and the signposts of the culture I breathed. As the story of 'how we become what we read,' it is an enactment of what Lorraine Code (1995) calls 'epistemic responsibility,' an answer to my question, "What do I need to know about reading in order to teach?"

Grounded as my work is in feminist research across all disciplines, committed to inclusion rather than exclusion, to making connections rather than reifying differences, I have always been wary of "taking a stand." What Code articulates in defense of "fence-sitters" is what I felt, long before I read it in her work, first as student, then as teacher and later as student again. The certainty of a solitary, unified essence of rightness, a "nugget of pure truth," has always eluded me (Woolf, 1929/1977, 5). The possibility of pure truth seems reductive and provisionary. It is with no mean sense of relief that I join my small voice to her more eloquent one when, staking her claim for a feminist epistemology on an imaginary middle ground, Code writes:
My claim, however, is that a well-mapped middle ground offers a place to take up positions of strength and maximum productivity from which exclusionary theories can be tapped critically and creatively for criticism and reconstruction. Occupancy of these positions is compatible with a strong commitment to engagement in practices designed to eradicate women's oppression and to the creation of environments ecologically committed to the promotion of social/political well-being. It draws on the theoretical and practical resources that surround it to incorporate what is best in them and to reject what is damaging and oppressive. From these positions it is clear that analyses of damage, constraint, well-being, and empowerment are all themselves situated and revisable, based on the best understanding available at the time, open to renegotiation. The provisionality – the revisability – of the resources no more leaves them ‘undecided’, unstable sites for theory building and activism than a ‘fallibilist’ standpoint in scientific inquiry would make it impossible to proceed with research. Like scientific research, politically informed activism and theory building have to go on, from where they are, for the gaps in their knowledge will not become visible except in practice, in further research that shows where revision is demanded. ‘Second wave’ feminists made remarkable progress working from the hypothesis that women could be analyzed as a class; that same progress destabilized the hypothesis, yet while it was in place it made quantities of high-quality, emancipatory research and action possible. (1991, 318)

The epistemic relativism that Code chooses recalls the Outsider stance that Woolf maintained in Three Guineas (1938/1986); some women, located on society's margins, may turn their disempowerment into distance, and, doing so, see more clearly. Like Code, and Woolf before her, it is not my intention to write a proposal and to argue it; it is “to do something quite different.” It is to chart my own pathway, perhaps to "break the sentence" of more traditional academic work, not to stake out new territory along these lines but to broaden the field to other possibilities. I stretch the boundaries because I believe this is the best way I can say what I have to say. As such it is a performative gesture, but it is not a grand one in anyone's terms but my own. It is grand for me because it has been a long time in the thinking.

I understand that “[d]escriptive analysis does not sit easily within the analytic tradition” (Code, 1995, 8). I acknowledge my privilege in having had the opportunity to construct this ‘epistemology of everyday life.’ As the speaking subject, I necessarily

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9 It has always been possible for those women who have been closer to power, as Woolf was herself, to use the benefits accruing to their social position and class over women of lower class and influence.
silence Others; I construct their positions relative to mine, as Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989) has pointed out. But relativism, as Code maintains, “is stopped in its feared slide into nihilism, solipsism, or subjectivism by the ‘brute facts’ of the world and by the discursive limits of speaking positions” (321). In de Beauvoir’s words: “To say that [existence] is ambiguous is to assert that its meaning is never fixed, that it must constantly be won ... it is because man's [sic] condition is ambiguous that he seeks, through failure and outrageousness, to save his existence” (qtd. in Code, 1991, 322).

I have discovered in the course of my studies that every idea has its shadow side, that a thing is both itself and its opposite, that my strengths are my weaknesses too, that to look only to the oppressor without is to ignore the tyrant within. As much as I longed for the relief of a peaceful embodied existence, the tangled thoughts simmering in my brain held me prisoner. Urgently, persistently, relentlessly, they demanded that I engage with them. I was living out my personal version of the dilemma of the Father’s Daughter, brilliantly theorized by Marion Woodman and to which I will refer repeatedly in this text: “[o]n some level she always feels banned from life and yearns for what other people take for granted. Yet while part of her feels abandoned, part of her knows that were she to forsake her own creativity she would be abandoning her own soul” (Woodman, 1985, 34). Exploring this conceptualization at some length here, in my introduction, I intend it to function as a backdrop for what is to come, so that the thinking that follows may be set against the resonant vibrations of Woodman’s analysis.

A woman living in a patriarchal society, finding it difficult to accept her destiny (because her psychic centre radiates around her father), as Woodman (1985) explains, will be compelled to go through the initiation into mature womanhood by seeking “[her] own inner story” (33). Though she consciously rejects collective masculine values, she may find, in working through her story, that she continually comes into conflict with them. Instead of escaping the strictures of patriarchy, as she intended, she falls victim to them. “The internal father, who in the soul-making process [she] sought to please, turns on [her] – or appears to – as soon as that father-image is projected onto a man, or [she]
seek[s] recognition and reward in those creative fields still largely dominated by men” (33).

The psychic drama outlined here begins in childhood when the father, a man of vision and sensitivity, who may himself have felt uncomfortable with the demands of patriarchy, projects onto his admiring daughter his unrealized dreams (his anima). As Woodman (1985) explains it, this invisible “spiritual incest” is all the more dangerous than the physical variety because neither partner will be aware that anything is wrong. The daughter functions as the pathway to the father’s inner reality, the “connecting link between her father’s ego and the collective unconscious” while she feeds on his dreams to soar to spiritual depths and heights, exercising her animus. “That dynamic interplay continues to be her life-source as a creative woman, and without it her life becomes empty” (35). If a girl’s father values her inner life, she will follow that pathway on her search for authenticity; doing so, she runs the risk of alienating herself from her contemporaries (whom she may judge frivolous or superficial). If her father is not mature, the girl will become his “star performer” (36) and will exhaust herself trying to please him. Both these girls will grow into anima women. Aiming to make life a work of art, both will come to realize they have never really lived; they will be inevitably cut off from their own feelings.

Abandoning the body to live in the mind, estranged from her femininity (in part because her primal relationships with her mother has failed), the Father’s Daughter is not able to live a full, grounded, embodied life. Her mother, in her turn, has not made peace with her own body, so great is her fear of the darkness of the chthonic, sexual realm. The nugget of unconscious bodily rejection sits heavily within the daughter’s soul, a core of despair. “The security of the mother’s body world is not present for her in the original matrix, nor is there reinforcement for her maturing body as she moves toward puberty, attempting to differentiate her own boundaries from those of her mother and the external world” (Woodman, 1985, 37). Cut off from her body and her instincts, neither her
feminine soul nor her masculine spirit will be able to develop fully. Intimate relationships will be difficult.

The fact that she is living in psychic symbiosis with her father complicates this further. Her primal matrix, from which she will draw emotional sustenance, has, in fact, become a primal "patrix" (Woodman, 1985, 40). She has bonded psychically with the wrong parent. This gender confusion may result in her looking for a man to be her "cuddle bunny" because her sexuality is not sufficiently embodied for a mature sexual relationship. There is no safe place within her body to protect her ego. Meanwhile "[h]er preoccupation with the world of the imagination makes her view the mundane world with scorn and fear." In relationship with a man she will, at first, appear to function superbly because she understands so well how to meet and become his projections. She becomes invested, too, in what she projects back onto him. Their relationship becomes larger than life, magnificent. However, should he fail to meet her projections, she will fall back to earth with a thud. Cut off from her body and now from her positive masculine guide, she will begin to identify with the demon lover who is the dark side of the father archetype. "There is no one to mediate between her terrorized ego and the chaos through which it is falling. The abyss is bottomless. Her masculine solar consciousness asks questions for which there are no answers; her feminine lunar consciousness is not sufficiently mature to accept apparent meaninglessness" (Woodman, 1985, 40).

Colluding with the demon lover because she has done everything she can to make herself attractive to the real lover and failed (a dangerous echoing of her primal abandonment), she realizes that the password to her life becomes "renunciation": "the animus-magician becomes the trickster with whom she has colluded in relinquishing herself" (Woodman, 1985, 40). "The relationship of the woman to the demon is sadomasochistic, and her battle with him fascinates because it has within it the elements of violent eroticism" (41). Because she is insufficiently grounded in the instinctual, having
no strong feminine container to hold her psyche safe, she “sets herself up for murder either by the man who is carrying the projection or by her own inner lover. The strength she projects onto her demon lover is no longer available to her. In fact, the projection drains her, leaving her fragile, physically and emotionally” (1982, 136).

Woodman points out that women writing are especially vulnerable to the demon lover and that Woolf was one of them. Women in fiction regularly fall victim to him too. A perfect example of the death marriage to the demon lover is supplied by Heathcliff, “with the dead Catherine in his arms rejoicing that now she is his” (1982, 136). Balanced by a powerful drive to be a part of life is an equally compelling desire to escape it in the perfection of death. “The heart breaks, overwhelmed by rage against the inevitability of loss.” The father animus, with its appeals to reason and justice, cannot explain the loss of her real-life lover, the death of her child or the failure of her creative efforts. “Without a compensating feminine consciousness, which would accept the deeper mysteries of Fate, life becomes a losing battle against meaningless suffering” (1985, 41).

The Father’s Daughter, in her “addiction to perfection” (Woodman, 1982), compulsively rewrites and revisions her work, never satisfied no matter how many nuances of meaning she uncovers. Nonetheless, returning and revisioning the same themes need not necessarily be fraught with anxiety; it holds the possibility of pleasure. I am indebted to Woodman once again for her conceptualization of the process of learning as a relaxed spiral:

Linear thinking does not come naturally to me; moreover, it kills my imagination. Nothing happens. No bell rings; no moment of HERE and

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10 Woodman is careful to point out that “resistance to the words masculine and feminine lies in our inability to accept that each of us contains both masculine and feminine energy and that both energies are divine” (1996, 2-3). Her understanding of femininity moves increasingly toward recuperating the feminine consciousness of the Great Goddess of history as Her energy is presently being expressed in the collective psyche. It is not a question of the social construction and genderization of attributes that concerns Woodman but a Jungian construct of the complementary energies working together to balance the individual psyche. Yet I would argue that this position is not incompatible with the social construction of gender. These different energies are viewed similarly in Freudian terms; Shoshana Felman explains that “femininity inhabits masculinity “as real otherness,” as its own disruption. It is “that which subverts the very opposition of masculinity and femininity” (1993, 65). Woodman and Felman, like Woolf, Gilligan and so many of the theorists whose work I cite throughout my own, are attempting to break down the boundaries and polarizations that plague Western thought.
NOW. No moment that says YES. Without those moments I am not alive. And so, rather than driving toward a goal, I prefer the pleasure of the journey through a spiral. And I ask my reader to relax and enjoy the spiral too. If you miss something on the first round, don’t worry. You may pick it up on the second or third or the ninth. It doesn’t matter. The important thing is that you are relaxed so that if the bell does ring you will hear it and allow it to resonate through all the rungs of your own spiral. The sound of the feminine resonates. Timing is everything. If it doesn’t ring, either it is the wrong spiral or the wrong time or there is no bell. (1982, 8)

As I learn, I return again and again to the same places each time diving deeper. I have long been uncomfortable with the safe structures of beginning, middle and end. I knew that what I would write here would not move in the traditional pattern, arguing positions toward a foregone conclusion, that it would be instead “a meandering journey” (Frye, qtd. in Bogdan, 1992, xxxiv), more ‘process’ than ‘product,’ as an art teacher with whom I taught used to insist. It was then, with some surprise, that I heard a more feminine plot structure described, at a recent lecture by Carolyn Heilbrun, as a series of circles revisited and as such, a form of resistance to the malestream master plot (1997a).

Searching for a metaphor to describe my process here, I find words like ‘web’, ‘quilt’ and ‘tapestry’ appealing for their suggestions of the interweaving of synchronicities\(^\text{11}\) and the many layeredness of meaning-making which I will attempt to peel away. My belief in the intertextuality of world and word inspired me to draw from a wide variety of academic sources and combine them with excerpts from novels, newspapers, magazine articles, advertisements, opinion editorials and analyses of films. (It was Woolf’s burgeoning file of newspaper clippings that motivated her to write Three Guineas.) But I am drawn also to the image of a sundial and the movement of degrees.

\(^{11}\) Woodman and Dickson (1996) explain that synchronicity is “affective, not intellectual” (226), that it is not “ordinary chance or meaningless coincidence, but closely allied to the archetypes” (223); it arises “out of the collective unconscious or the world soul, which contains all possibilities, the proliferating womb of Sophia” (223). My understanding of this Jungian concept is articulated simply in the charged “coincidence” of events in time (ideas or events bonded in moments) so that I will read in the morning paper about a topic that has been the subject of my previous night’s dream, I will hear from a friend about whom I have been dreaming or I will read in two seemingly unrelated texts a message that is similar. “The images of the dream all contribute to a sense of what the alchemists called the unus mundus – one reality of the physical and psychic realms, a vision of the ultimate harmony between inner and outer reality – a harmony that Jung calls synchronicity” (Woodman, 1985, 189). Here is a letter to the editor of the Globe and Mail that articulates one way it works for me: “An interesting configuration of headlines occurred in your May 30 paper. On one page we had, ‘Hutterite Communities Rocked By Sex Charges’ and below that ‘Report of Gang Rape At Military Base Denied.’ A subhead on the front page reported on the popularity of Viagra, ‘Men Swear It Rekindles That “Crazy, Blind Need.”’ Oh, good” (Pym, 1998, D7).
What is written here is somehow circular, as the spiral of learning moves. Throughout the text I separate sections not with sub-headings but instead by using the symbol of three stars (* * *). This indicates that I am revisiting the previous topic but that my angle of vision on it is now six degrees of separation from where it was.

Remembering my own adolescence, I begin by tracing the passage of female development as it has been theorized in the rich wake of second-wave feminism. Viewed broadly through the lenses of psychology, history, sociology, and literary theory and refracted by the cornucopia of popular culture, the perils, pressures and dubious pleasures of being a girl are examined in Chapter Two. Nowhere is the old adage that children should be seen and not heard more fitting than when describing what the culture expects of adolescent females. As Carol Gilligan and her colleagues have so aptly pointed out, the world is not yet ready to hear what young women know. Realizing this, girls learn to comply with the cultural injunction to silence and begin to police and silence themselves. What counts now is how they look as they are everywhere subjected to the tyranny of the Gaze.\textsuperscript{12} Insistently scrutinized and muffled, girls have difficulty growing up without experiencing some degree of physical and emotional assault. There are few safe places.

In Chapter Three I focus on the gendered nature of the reading experience. To learn to read is to be brought into the culture, to learn the lessons it teaches explicitly and implicitly. Tracing my earliest memories of textual encounter through the novels that were of critical importance to me as I negotiated the ‘dangerous passage,’ I begin with a close reading of \textit{Anne of Green Gables} (Montgomery, 1908/1956), the cathedral text of my youth. I examine the depth and power of my early reading experiences in the light of Valerie Walkerdine’s psychoanalytical theory and Deanne Bogdan’s observation, quoted above, that “what readers actually do with texts matters as much as what the texts are supposed to do” (1992, xxv). I honour the influence that those texts, mere words upon a page, had upon my life. What stirred me as a young girl reading were texts where the

\textsuperscript{12} See my footnote 14 (p. 48) for an explanation of Foucault’s Panopticon, which illustrates how the Gaze operates to maintain a constant surveillance of young women both from within, as they minutely scrutinize themselves and from without, as they are observed and judged by others.
female protagonists had agency. The limited plots and predictable characters of the ubiquitous series romances that came later disappointed me, but I did not have the confidence to refuse them as girls reading today (with sensitive teachers guiding them) might, I hope, have the power to do. Tracing my relationship with books through my adolescence, undergraduate and graduate education, I honour what I knew as a beginning reader but learned to ignore. Silence or visibility – either way there was a price to be paid.

The love story may become overwhelming as the coercive mythology of heterosexual romance channels girls into the social order. This potent genre is examined in Chapter Four, both as it exists for women in conventional novels like Harlequins and in the many incarnations of it aimed at younger readers and often distributed by teachers in schools. Literary theory offers many ways for female readers to understand, resist, and, to some extent, renegotiate the powerful archetypes constellated in the reading of romance. But theorists remain conflicted: is the romance a liberatory or conservative genre? It is the best society can offer to console women for their lives under patriarchy in late capitalism, a pleasurable opiate. Plato’s decision to ban poetry from his Republic, recalled in the context of the power of literature to harm, is the bedrock on which the analysis of this chapter rests.

Chapter Five deals with the real-life consequences of romance reading. It attempts to make connections between immersion in fantasy worlds and the poverty, violence and despair which are, too frequently, their logical conclusions. I trace the notions of romance and marriage, which were my mother’s legacy to me in order to ask how those notions served me as my life took its course. Women like me learned to be good girls, to wait quietly, to serve. It was through sacrifice that our own desires would be granted. I analyze in some detail the material and legal consequences of divorce for women. Virginia Woolf’s analysis that intellectual freedom depends on material things, highlighted in the introduction, is revisited here as “material” is understood to include both the financial and the physical.
The sixth chapter deals with teaching, its contradictions, joys and disappointments and what it is like to live in the eye of the paradox. The analysis of women teaching in the work of Jane Roland Martin, Madeleine Grumet and Jane Miller is the starting point for me to examine why “I never wanted to be a teacher” and to move on to an exploration of what teaching was and was not for me. I retrace my experiences as a student, both positive and negative, to understand the lessons I learned. I draw links between current ‘back-to-basics’ rhetoric and what Miller calls the ‘feminisation’ of schooling in order to look deeply back to what Marion Woodman sees as the repression of feminine consciousness. Doing so, I come to understand how I am a product of the education I received and to speculate about a better way to learn and more important lessons to teach.

The more I thought, the less I could claim for certain. So, in the course of this inquiry, the adolescent girls I was considering began to seem more and more like the middle-aged women I knew, so short did the distance grow between them. And I remembered that adolescence was a social construct, not a biological one, and that it had only been in existence since the advent of romantic love. The questions I had asked myself as a girl child became tortured and urgent in adolescence. The answers I sought so desperately then are surely woven through these pages.

Honouring the recognition that “room must be made for what has surfaced from the unconscious mind while the conscious mind diligently takes pains in doing its own work” (Rosen, 1996, 27), I realized that what I would add to the curricula for girls mirrors my project here. The performative act of writing has been a way of mourning loss (Phelan, 1997), testimony to what has fallen away, a small enactment of what Sharon Rosenberg (1997) has called “philosophical grieving.” It is an also an act of recovery, an assertion against death, as all self-writing is, an insertion of self into the order of words. I am here; I have passed this way; here are my footprints in the sand. “In our creating, we are created” (Woodman, 1996, 173).

Each word of this dissertation has been “hewn out of the hard rock of an addiction to perfection” (Woodman, 1982, 7). Writing it, I have been the quintessential Father’s
Daughter, and all my metaphors have been of striving upward into the convoluted murky chambers of the mind. I, who am so compellingly grounded in the embodied world by a new marriage, three children, the demands of food and drink, the sustenance of the flesh. I am no courageous climber of mountains; this is writing as an exorcism of a dangerous addiction. Only the real world could have held me sane through it, kept me here, alive, in the warmth of the love I received from my husband and children.

Examining my story, I will tell other stories, honouring the important role that stories still play in the process of learning. Perhaps because I tarried so long in the world of everyday existence, weighing my desire to know against my fear of what I might learn, I yearn for that place where academic knowledge might walk hand-in-hand with the long-disparaged learning of the embodied world. For twelve years it has been my project to bridge the chasm between those two worlds. I maintain my hope, in the face of impediment, that the insights of the one might finally be enacted in the classrooms of the other.

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What falls away – loss, the inexorable human truth of being of body born, animal, mortal, bound in the cycle of birth, copulation and death. We do not teach this. Instead we teach fantasy, hard work, technology, numbers. We do not honour memory, the emotions, the play of the personal in family, friend. Because we are ‘of woman born’ (Rich, 1976), nurtured in her arms, we will blame her for our mortality. Near her death my mother said to a care-giver. “I am neither beast nor angel, I am human.” That is what we need to know to live and to die. Through her life and death she taught us how to live and when it was time she taught us how to die. Preparing for Rosh Hashanah, I leaf through her recipes, looking to taste the sweetness of the new year, her recipes for the food she lovingly prepared for us to taste and savour in our bodies, her comish broit, her apple pie, her noodle pudding, her coffee cake. Where are her passover recipes? I tremble. Where is my grandmother’s recipe for hamantaschen, winey and tart? This I cannot have lost, this taste of Russia, of our roots. I open a green file folder. The recipes are here. I have not
lost them. But what I enact in my little drama of loss, in each little panicked, shallow-breathing rehearsal of loss, is *the loss*, the loss of being born human, the many losses of those I have loved, from whom I am separated in body and forged in spirit forever. At these holiday times, these incandescently charged spiritual times, I long for their bodies, their twinkling eyes, the sound of their laughter, to feel their soft hands in mine. In my frantic little losses I enact the larger loss. To remind me of the joy and the pain I have felt in knowing them.
CHAPTER TWO

ADOLESCENCE: DIVING, DIVIDING, DROWNING

As the river of a girl's life flows into the sea of Western culture, she is in danger of disappearing. (Carol Gilligan, *Making Connections*.)

is not so gd to be born a girl (Ntozake Shange, *is not so gd to be born a girl.*)

The world tells us what we are to be and shapes us by the ends it sets before us. To men it says work. To us, it says seem. The less a woman has in her head the lighter she is for carrying. (Olive Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm.*)

I'm a perfectly good carrot that everyone is trying to turn into a rose. As a carrot, I have good color and a nice leafy top. When I'm carved into a rose, I turn brown and wither." (Qtd. in Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia.*)

If representational visibility equals power, then almost naked young white women should be running Western culture. (Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance.*)

I never wanted to be a teacher. I come to Toronto to teach but I am not that girl in the article. Her confidence is not mine, though certainly her paper qualifications for it are. What we both have in common, that girl and the girl who teaches, is determination. I am ambitious; I am determined; I am dedicated; I am caring. Both of us are. And I am out to make my way in the world. Why wouldn't I be? I have devoured all the stories of quest and adventure that are my birthright as a child of Western literature. It is up to me to make my mark. I am an only child, the only child; the world revolves around me, doesn't it? So why don't I have any confidence? Why do I feel so torn apart, so rent asunder, so of two worlds? What is my birthright as a girl?

When I trace the roots of this, what I will come to understand as my "learned doubleness" (J. Miller, 1990, 65), I am returned to an adolescent memory. I sit in the pink
and blue bathroom of the home where I grew up. This should be a time of celebration. My period has finally come. Now I can be what the other girls are. Cursed. I have passed the great divide. Though I have yearned fervently for this moment, to be cast at long last into the same stream, I am not happy. I understand presciently that the adult world will be difficult for me, that I am not ready to leave the luminous world of childhood behind. I wonder if I can still manage to hide in the basement and play with my dolls. What I do not understand in entering this other realm is that there are some things I will never have to leave behind, some pieces of my life as a child that I may take with me, keep with me, treasure.

What can be legitimately encoded in my newspaper biography are the desires of my mind. I can count on those. In the world of the mind I can make things happen. In the world of the body I have no control. The greatest disappointment of my journey towards adolescence has been my body. There is nowhere I can talk about it. Even if I could stammer and blush out the words, who would listen? “You're nuts,” my mother would say, believing all to be well. My body is as she has told me it is – fine and that's it. Thirty-five years later I watch my thirteen-year-old daughter lift her T-shirt in front of the mirror to examine meticulously the geography of her chest. The mirror – Lacan’s, Winnicott’s, mine. What encourages me is that she includes me in this process. She is not shy. I am not her enemy, though she blames my genes for this protracted absence of breasts. There is no question that I have let her down here. And I understand her pain. Memory is in the body.

I, too, examined myself in the mirror and found myself wanting. How could a girl with no breasts find a husband? Surely she would need something to fall back on. I never wanted to be a teacher. I examined my body. It was something to fall back on.

* * *

Body – of water, body of life – body born, life out of life, life out of water. Childhood – a time of amorphous oneness, gender silence. Only with the onset of female adolescence, not the first separation from the mother, but a hollow echoing of it – the
second separation in the movement from subject to object. Of the gaze (Berger, 1972). A silent separation with no one to hear the pain. Internalized in the body. Which is always found wanting. Demi Moore, highschool dropout, is paid 12.5 million dollars to appear nude in the movie Striptease: “I was probably fifteen or twenty pounds heavier. Striptease director (Andy Bergman) asked me to lose weight and I did. I felt a little tortured as I was doing it, because he seemed unhappy that I wasn't super, super skinny” (Denis, 1996, 12).

Long a child with an active imaginary life, in adolescence I dove deeply down inside myself and stayed there. Inside my head, ideas buzzed; inside my body, desires burned. It was all I could do to contain myself. I did not know why I wrote poems that I stuffed under the white paper lining of my dresser drawer. I did not know till I came back to graduate school thirty years later that I was writing for my life. In my most holy secret centre I nurtured a fantasy that I would be a writer. Only a fantasy, I reassured myself. ‘What could you possibly have to say?’ I knew that people who wanted to be writers wrote every day to hone their craft, and I didn't. I knew that writers wrote the truth about their bodies and I couldn't. Nice middle-class Jewish girls didn't do that. It was like saying you wanted to be an actress. To be an actress was like being a whore. Writer, actress, whore ... I never wanted to be a teacher.

But for all the interior drama that raged within me, I felt myself judged, measured, evaluated every day by what was happening on the outside. How could my body betray me so shamelessly?

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The wind of tradition blowing through women is a chill wind, because it brings a message of exclusion – stay out; because it brings a message of subordination – stay under; because it brings a message of objectification – become the object of another's worship or desire, see yourself as you have been seen for centuries through a male gaze. And because all of the suffering, the endless litany of storm and shipwreck is presented as necessary or even good for civilization, the message to women is: keep quiet and notice the absence of women and say nothing. (Gilligan et al., 1990, 26)
The disciplinary power that inscribes femininity in the female body is everywhere and it is nowhere; the disciplinarian is everyone and yet no one in particular. (Bartky, 1992, 114)

Now I understand that one of the most important dualisms in Western thought is the distinction between Nature and Culture. Nature is woman's realm; Culture is man's. Out of this emerges the struggle for women's education. Woman is nature, m/other, Other. Her place, Geraldine Rose maintains, is home, that intimate and enclosed space which is "the ultimate sense of belonging to place" (1993, 47), site of emotion, passion, the experience of the body. The world of action, movement, unbounded space, is man's. To be a male child means to move out of the embodied world and into the world at large. The road from innocence to experience is a process of differentiation, negation and opposition that leads to autonomy.

A girl, on the other hand, identified by gender with her mother, will not feel compelled to leave that world behind in her journey to become a woman, or so female psychology (as it has been developed by Nancy Chodorow, Dorothy Dinnerstein, Janet Surrey and Jean Baker Miller) would have it. Possessing more permeable ego boundaries, she will grow and develop in the context of relationship. Her challenge in moving from Nature into Culture is to balance the painfully dichotomized realms of reason and emotion, mind and body, the private and the public, aiming for wholeness.

Chodorow (1978) posits a triangular model of femininity in her classic psychoanalytical account of mothering, where the heterosexually-determined female child, because of the persistence of pre-oedipal ties to her mother throughout the Oedipal period, focuses her genital and erotic desires on her father while she maintains a deep emotional commitment to her mother and the world of women. The young girl's desire for agency is part of the erotic creative masculine within.

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13 This dualism between Nature and Culture, while acceptable in other disciplines, represents an oversimplification from the historian's point of view. As Cecilia Morgan has pointed out in her comments to me, "white, middle-class women have at particular historical moments (especially in the histories of colonialism/imperialism) been seen as bearers of culture and civilization to untamed 'wilderness' and 'savage' environments; they have often been brought in to marry white men who were having liaisons with indigenous women. There have also been times when white, middle-class men have tried to re-craft masculinity around themes of 'Nature' (i.e., more physical, less cerebral) in order to repudiate a 'civilization' suspected of becoming effeminate."
A young woman's entry into culture is further complicated by the mirrors she will find there. Everywhere she will see images of girls like her, but they will be more beautiful, thinner than she is, perhaps taller, perhaps whiter, but surely happier. “Literature is impoverished beyond our counting by the doors that have been shut upon women,” wrote Woolf (1929/1977, 80). It is not just literature, as Woolf well knew. It is history; it is our entire cultural record; there are so few respectable role models no matter how hard a girl searches for them.

She will be bombarded by media images of what it is to be female – on the billboards, in ads, on the slick and glossy pages of fashion magazines, in newspapers, at the movies, on TV, in the words and images of popular music and rock videos, on the subways, in the clubs, in the shopping malls and on the streets. What becomes lost in this dizzying panoply of try-on identities that the media offers girls is the question of who they really are?

Claudia, the young narrator of Toni Morrison's novel The Bluest Eye, describes the process by which her friend's mother, Pauline, received her adolescent cultural education visually, at the movies:

Along with the idea of romantic love, she was introduced to another – physical beauty. Probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought. Both originated in envy, thrived in insecurity, and ended in disillusion. In equating physical beauty with virtue, she stripped her mind, bound it, and collected self-contempt by the heap. ... She was never able, after her education in the movies, to look at a face and not assign it some category in the scale of absolute beauty, and the scale was one she absorbed in full from the silver screen. (Morrison, 1970, 97)

Ninety-three percent of teenage girls in the U.S. rank shopping as their favorite activity. Alan Durning, a senior researcher at Worldwatch Institute, maintains that “[m]alls have become the town squares of our public life, and the brand names and chain stores they host have become the icons of our popular culture” (1992, 18). The authors of Generation on Hold: Coming of Age in the Late Twentieth Century explain: “Young people have been targeted as consumers rather than as producers by the service, leisure, information and high-technology sectors of the advanced industrial economy” (Allahar
and Cote, 1984, xvi). Buying into the bill of goods offered by adult profiteers has created an “epidemic of socially produced identity crises in advanced industrial societies” (xvii). It is difficult to know who you are if you can’t buy what you need. Adolescents growing up today are being trained by the media for careers as consummate consumers at the same time as the likelihood of their securing stable employment grows dimmer and dimmer. No wonder North American teenagers will kill for an item of clothing.

While the faces in the ads grow younger all the time, child prostitution has become big business. “The men who leave their wives and children in safe suburbs in North America, Europe and Asia to troll for prostitutes in Dhaka, Toronto, and other cities around the world have a marked preference for the waif-like girl child. Pedophilia by any other name” (Armstrong, 1994, 18). In the Business Section of the morning paper an article explains how Bell Canada is marketing its new mobility phone with the image of an eleven-year-old girl. It is her youth, innocence and vitality that they would pirate. What strange connection is being construed between this very young girl and the men, old enough to be her father, who would buy telephones from her? (Bourette, 1997, B13).

My fifteen-year-old daughter, commenting on the dress code of the seven-year-old girls she helps teach at our Temple’s religious school, is amazed at the sophistication and standardization. “I never cared what I wore when I was that age,” she says, recalling the paint-splattered, sand-caked baggy sweatpants and hand-me-downs that were her uniform until she got to grade seven. “They’re wearing what I wear now,” she sighs, knowing that there is something troubling about this. The same day that this conversation takes place I read in the “Style” column of the Sunday New York Times about the writer who takes his nephew, aged 3½, on an outing to the Central Park Zoo, stopping at Barney’s department store on the way:

With its oversize exotic aquariums (on the first and seventh floors), ironic displays and, of course, escalators, Barneys is a veritable playground for the next generation of materialists. Instead of running through sprinklers, we ran through perfume spritzers. “This is a base of green tea,” said a woman as she sprayed a cloud over us. “It’s nontoxic.” So is the new Bulgari cologne for children, Petits et Mamans, $38. I bet my nephew is
the first in his play group to have smelled its top notes of chamomile and
talc. After the high-end buzz of Barney's, the cloyingly appropriate
Central Park Zoo was a bit of a downer. (Morris, 1998, 87)

Girls and boys alike are being targeted as mini-consumers at the same time that the sexual
abuse of children and the pornography attached to it proliferate. The extent to which Big
Business is invested in younger and younger children is chilling at a time when child
poverty figures continue to rise.

Girls are expected to look right for a gaze which is masculine, explains Geraldine
Rose. Like Susan Faludi in Backlash (1991), Rose maintains that history teaches us how
"intense disciplinary moments for the female body" (moments like the present one with its
fixity of gaze directed at the image of a young female body, how it is dressed, made-up,
exercised and coiffed) coincide with periods when women's actual political, economic and
social activities are in conflict with the images of womanhood offered by the dominant
culture" (1993, 145). Woolf observed that it was woman's role to "hold the mirror to
[men's] greatness, reflecting [them] at twice [their] natural size" (1929/1977, 35) rather
than to exercise their energies in the service of their own desires. Instead of looking
inwards towards self-examination, men have responded to women's new lives by turning
their gaze outwards to produce a proliferation of female images. There is no product that
the face of a young girl cannot sell. If older women have difficulty operating outside the
constraints of the media's compelling imagery, how can we expect young girls to?

From the moment she first begins to understand herself as Other, the cultural
message a girl receives insistently but covertly is a message about the body. Measuring
herself against the media's models, she will judge herself inadequate. Because the
connections between body-image and self-esteem are intimate and profound, she will
begin the challenging journey through adolescence at a disadvantage. If a girl does not
believe that her body is good enough to meet the standards set by her society, it will be
difficult for her to believe that anything she does or thinks is worthwhile.

Drawing on Foucault's (1979) insight that the body, in contemporary society, is
under surveillance in a historically unprecedented way, philosopher Sandra Lee Bartky
exposes what Foucault’s analysis\textsuperscript{14} eclipses, that the female body is subject to even more
diligent discipline. She addresses the cultural obsession with thinness:

Dieting disciplines the body’s hungers: appetite must be monitored at all
times and governed by an iron will. Since the innocent need of an
organism for food will not be denied, the body becomes one’s enemy, an
alien being bent on thwarting the disciplinary project. Anorexia nervosa,
which has now assumed epidemic proportions, is to women of the late
twentieth century what hysteria was to women of an earlier day: the
crystallization in a pathological mode of a widespread cultural obsession.
(Bartky, 1992, 105-6)

Bartky explains that “in contemporary patriarchal culture a panoptical male connoisseur
resides within the consciousness of most women” (110). That surveying male
connoisseur is implanted in adolescence; it tells young women that no matter how much
space the culture makes for their images, the very real space their bodies inhabit is
excessive. A student in a study on anorexia explains:

The anorexic is always convinced she is taking up too much space, eating
too much, wanting food too much. I’ve never felt that way, but I’ve often
felt that I was too much – too much emotion, too much need, too loud and
demanding, too much there, if you know what I mean. (Rose, 146)

It is not simply the tyranny of the Gaze or the silencing of the voice but the simultaneity
of these two powerful forces that collude to shrink the girl, literally and metaphorically.

Iris Marion Young explains that the “threat of being seen and evaluated is one of
the most objectifying processes to which the body is submitted” (qtd. in Rose, 146). To
be accepted, to be popular, to be loved, a girl may have to starve herself or undergo any
combination of a cornucopia of tortures euphemistically called ‘beauty treatments.’ The
end result of this will make her “attractive to men.” And getting a man of her own is what
it’s all about. It is crucial to remember, in considering the passage of female adolescence,

\textsuperscript{14} Foucault saw the powerful institutions of the modern era (army, school, hospital, prison and
manufactory) as exercising a “policy of coercion” on bodies to render them “docile” (1979, 138). His
model for this was Jeremy Bentham’s model prison, the Panopticon, where each inhabitant was alone in his
cell but visible at all times to the supervisor in the tower. Because there was constant surveillance, each
inmate became, in effect, his own jailer. In Bartky’s terms, “the woman who checks her make-up half a
dozens times a day” has become self-surveilling in her obedience to the Patriarchy as surely as the inmate of
the Panopticon. (Bartky, 1992, 116) In a society where visual images are so powerful, “a woman may live
much of her life with a pervasive feeling of bodily deficiency. Hence a tighter control of the body has
gained a new kind of hold over the mind” (117).
that the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, the prize that the culture offers in exchange for the cost and pain (physical and financial) of aiming to emulate its standards, is the promise of heterosexual romantic love.

Historian Joan Jacobs Brumberg (1997) maintains in *The Body Project* that the concerns of American girls and their responses to their bodies reflect the larger cultural changes of this century. "Girls may no longer be constrained by corsets or the tyranny of virginity, but they are girdled nonetheless, she believes, by a crippling obsession with their bodies" (Brumberg, qtd. in Orenstein, 1997, 25). At the beginning of this century girls were concerned with character. An adolescent girl of the 1890s wrote in her diary:

Resolved, to think before speaking. To work seriously. To be self-restrained in conversations and action. Not to let my thoughts wander. To be dignified. Interest myself more in others.

One hundred years later a girl writes:

I will try to make myself better in any way I possibly can. ... I will lose weight, get new lenses, already got new haircut, good makeup, new clothes and accessories. (Qtd. in Brumberg, 1997)

Girls today mature physically at startlingly young ages without the corresponding emotional maturity. Meanwhile "society's protections of young women have withered away, leaving girls prey to manipulation by pop culture, advertising and peers," (Orenstein, 1997, 25) and the subtle promise of romantic love.

The body story that girls today would tell is complicated even further as their sexuality unfolds. Adolescent sexual feelings, once domesticated by the ideology of romantic love and channelled narrowly down the marriage path, have become commodified too, by the mass media "from a dark and profound adult mystery to a product that is available to everyone – let us say, like mouthwash" (Postman, qtd. in Kostash, 1987, 196). The 60s, as Canadian journalist Myrna Kostash explains, may have led us to believe that the "instant gratification of sexual desire was a categorical imperative" (196), but the 80s and 90s have proven that very little has happened to revolutionize the teenage girl's experience of her sexuality. She will still be defined by
her relation to the pleasures of the flesh. Either way, like Woolf's fictional Judith, Shakespeare’s sister, she will pay the price.

Woolf wrote:

[Judith] stood at the stage door; she wanted to act, she said. Men laughed in her face. The manager – a fat, loose-lipped man – guffawed. He bellowed something about poodles dancing and women acting – no woman, he said, could possibly be an actress. He hinted – you can imagine what. She could get no training in her craft. Could she even seek her dinner in a tavern or roam the streets at midnight? Yet her genius was for fiction and lusted to feed abundantly upon the lives of men and women and the study of their ways. At last – for she was very young, oddly like Shakespeare the poet in her face, with the same grey eyes and rounded brows – at last Nick Greene the actor-manager took pity on her; she found herself with child by that gentleman and so – who shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body? – killed herself one winter’s night and lies buried at some crossroads where the omnibuses now stop outside the Elephant and Castle. (1929/1977, 47)

Statistics show that in 1950 only 4 percent of American babies were born to mothers out of wedlock; now almost a third, more than a million infants a year, are born to unwed American mothers. Melissa Ludtke (1997), a journalist who is herself an unmarried mother, explains how many young girls who are doing poorly in school and have little to look forward to decide that adolescence is a fine time to have a child. Some of these girls, particularly those who receive help from their own mothers, manage well; others, many of whom have had no good parenting experiences themselves, fail to parent any better. I would suggest that in having babies, many of these girls are trying to mother themselves. In a society that has abandoned its protective role, they need mothering any way they can get it (Lewin, 1997, 20). The body story these girls are telling is a defiant one; they will do what they want with their bodies rather than comply with the media’s prescriptions. But it is a body story all the same.

As I flip through the pages of a teen magazine, I am surprised by the curious juxtaposition of these two articles: “I Almost Starved to Death: One girl’s nightmarish need to be thin” (Ahrens, 1997, 70) followed directly by a fashion feature entitled “Romeo & Juliet” with headlines: “An urban love story does not have to end in wardrobe
tragedy. This fall, romance hits the street and rocks the classics. ... He's street smart; she's decked out and dreamy. Will their love last? ... When an outfit works, it's pure heaven. Sorta like a love story" (Hill, 1997, 76-78). I want to draw attention to these words, to ask how the classics will be rocked, shaken up and changed by these all-powerful words in a too-potent medium. I want to know what it means that he is 'street-smart' while she is 'decked out and dreamy'? 'Decked-out' means "on her back" to me. Who is helping girls today to disentangle the subtle messages and tragic endings that are the logical conclusions of our 'classic' love stories? Thirty years after me a copywriter is choosing her words here with the exquisite egocentric care that I once chose mine. Does she problematize the strength and breadth of her power any more than I did?

Canadian writer Evelyn Lau (1989) explores her troubled journey to adulthood in Runaway. Lau explains how she knew from the age of six that she wanted to become a writer though her immigrant parents thought differently. "By kindergarten, I was already expected to excel in class, as the first step, in my pre-planned career as a doctor or lawyer" (1). Struggling to maintain control over their daughter, her parents insisted that she stay in her room after school and study. In adolescence, Lau remembers how "clothes became the standard for judging people" (3). Her parents did not respect her need to look like other kids. From the moment she entered the schoolyard in the morning till she left it in the evening, she was taunted. In the bedroom where she was banished to study, Lau learned to become a writer. Profoundly isolated from parents and peers, she became bulimic, depressed and suicidal.

Lau's two years on the streets are a story of drugs, sex and prostitution – options not significantly different from what they might have been for Judith Shakespeare. But Lau survived to tell her tale and prosper as a writer. Though her parents had high hopes for her, they refused to acknowledge the pressures of her peer group or the urgency of her own desires. Canadian journalists Myrna Kostash (1987) and Marlene Webber (1991) and American therapist Mary Pipher (1994) chronicle many stories like Lau's of adolescent girls forced by the stresses and pressures of the 80s and 90s to negotiate the
dangers of the city. If these girls leave abusive homes, what they encounter on the street is hardly better.

Puberty hits girls like a slap in the face. Literally and metaphorically. Menstruation is, in Jane Miller's words, "the abrupt recognition that I was after all, and inescapably, exactly what I had grown up to despise: a girl" (1990, 123). Miller's recognition is the logical outcome of being educated and enculturated in Western patriarchy. Being female isn't worth much. Betrayed by their bodies out of the rousing feistiness of childhood into stunning visibility, girls are told too often and in too many ways that only their bodies are now required. What they really are, what they really know, can disappear. What they are not told but what hovers, a looming and unspoken absent presence, is their culture's underlying misogyny. That misogyny is expressed as bodily assault in a myriad of forms, cross-culturally. But body and mind are not easily separated. Bodily insult undermines and erodes self-esteem. Adults are not likely to help make this misogyny visible, so for girls coming of age in urban North American patriarchal culture, the real journey from innocence to experience takes place underground.

* * *

In novels of education written by women, the astute and outspoken and clear-eyed resister often gets lost in a sudden disjunction or chasm as she approaches adolescence, as if the world that she knows from experience in childhood suddenly comes to an end and divides from the world she is to enter as a young woman, a world that is governed by different rules. (Gilligan et al., 1990, 3)

It is crucial to consider Carol Gilligan's research on what happens to the growing girl's mind against the backdrop of what I have described as her bodily education. "A girl's education hinges on the strength of her knowledge and the fate of her resistance" (3). Entering 'culture' and by entering, disrupting a tradition in which being 'human' has meant being male, this is her struggle. A girl asks, "What would happen if what was inside of us were to enter the world?" (4).
Tracing the process whereby the girls in this five-year study gradually lose their power to qualify knowledge for themselves and to make decisions, Gilligan turns to Shakespeare, who, in his last play, The Tempest, considers a daughter’s education. King Prospero attempts to answer his daughter Miranda’s unsettling questions about the shipwreck, storm and human suffering that begin the play. Miranda wants to know why he has not used his power to stop the suffering. She asks where the women are. Her father proceeds to outline for her the story of Western civilization. For all its heroic adventure and high intrigue, it is all a tempest – of storm, shipwreck and suffering. But grisly as it may be, it offers to Miranda, as it does to all well-born daughters, the promise of “hono[u]r, riches, marriage, and her father’s blessing” (7). And the price that the daughter pays, in return for the many gifts promised her, is her insight. She must silence the still, small voice that asked those vexing questions.

Gilligan recalls a political science student in her earlier study of women’s moral development who would write her thoughts about Hannah Arendt on little slips of paper and stuff them into her drawer, leaving the top of her desk clear for Locke, Mill and Rousseau. Hannah Arendt, the student explained, “wrote well and was interesting, but she was not a political scientist” (7). Viewed in terms of Lorraine Code’s work (1995), we see that there was simply no “rhetorical space” within the discipline of political science for the theoretical perspective Arendt was articulating.

Jane Roland Martin (1981, 1994b) has drawn attention to the androcentric bias of what counts as knowledge across all disciplines. Few women possess accomplishments, developments and ideas that are worth studying and wherever women do exist they are seen through male eyes. “The educational disciplines into which a person must be initiated to become an educated person exclude women and their works, construct the female to the male image of her and deny the truly feminine qualities she does possess” (74). The “ideal of the educated person,” which is the starting point of R. S. Peters’ philosophy of education, puts women in a double bind: “[t]o be educated they must give up their own way of experiencing the world, thus alienating themselves further from
themselves. To be unalienated they must remain uneducated (Martin, 1994b, 77). So the young woman who was interested in Arendt's thought stuffed her notes into her drawer; what Arendt had to say to her became somehow a covert lesson. Coming to know for girls is precisely this kind of process: separation, segregation and burial. When Gilligan asked her clinical psychology students to pose a question, a real question to which they urgently wanted an answer, she noticed their difficulty in being able to clear their minds to ask really good questions. The conflated aims of education as educere: to draw out, bring away, raise erect and educare: to bring up, train, rear, produce are implicated here. Somehow in the process of being educated (educare), Gilligan's students had lost the ability to know and value what they really knew.

Introducing herself to the girls at the Emma Willard School where she conducted her first study, Gilligan recalled:

I finished my presentation and asked for questions, A student, to my left, about midway back, raised her hand: "What could you possibly learn by studying us?"

Like perfect pitch, her question caught the tradition in which she was living. How many others in effect had asked: what could you possibly learn by studying girls? And yet now that tradition was ending. ... I was interested, however, in adolescence – the time when, in Erik Erikson's terms, the intersection between life history and history becomes acute, the time when what Hannah Arendt calls "the urge toward self-display" becomes pressing – the human impulse "to respond by showing to the overwhelming effect of being shown." In one of Virginia Woolf's stories, a character asks, "When the self speaks to the self, who is speaking?" and answers, "the entombed soul, the spirit driven in ... the self that took the veil and left the world – a coward perhaps, yet somehow beautiful." Innocently, artfully, under a placid surface of self-deprecation, my questioner in the morning assembly had touched upon the heart of the matter. In learning to think in the terms of the disciplines and thus to bring her thoughts and feelings into line with the traditions of Western culture, was she also learning to dismiss her own experience, so that it seemed implausible that someone would learn something of value by listening to her?" (Gilligan et al., 1990, 2)

That Gilligan frames her questions around literary role models is critical. Shoshana Felman draws attention to a central dilemma in women's reading and writing. It is not simply drawing our attention to better role models and presenting new stories that will
solve things, as Carolyn Heilbrun (1988) has urged in *Writing A Woman’s Life*. For the meanings of our stories are not always readily accessible to us. We cannot necessarily completely understand our own stories – which is why Felman, like British theorist Valerie Walkerdine, argues the importance of psychoanalysis to feminism in spite of the gender bias of its founder. Psychoanalysis offers an “unprecedented way of listening” to our own stories, to the stories of others, to its own story. Through stories we come to understand ourselves, no matter how partial that understanding may sometimes seem.

In claiming for the girls she studies the right to own their own embodied knowledges, Gilligan implicitly stakes a similar claim for herself. It is clear throughout her writing that what she has learned from literature is an important part of what she knows and that through that knowledge she is inspired to ask the questions that she comes to ask. How is it precisely that the spirit becomes “driven in,” that the self leaves the world? What is this process? She continues to describe her introduction to the study:

Once, at a time when I was asking women to solve moral problems that men had framed, like the dilemma whose premises eleven-year-old Amy called into question, a woman – a college graduate – looked at me and said, “Would you like to know what I think or would you like to know what I really think?” thus conveying that she had learned to think in a way that differed from the way she really thought. Listening to Amy at fifteen become deeply confused as she answers the question which she resisted so steadfastly at eleven ... I heard evidence suggesting that girls' development in adolescence may hinge on their resisting not the loss of innocence but the loss of knowledge. And I became interested in the ability of girls to resist that loss.” (4)

Gilligan's understanding of women's moral development explained how being a good woman meant showing “a willingness often to sacrifice oneself for others in the hope that if one cared for others one would be loved and cared for by others” (8). Though she was writing out of the matrix of the self-in-relation model of female development developed by Janet Surrey (1985), Jean Baker Miller (1984; 1986) and their colleagues at the Stone Center at Wellesley, she moved beyond it at the same time. Her motivation to study adolescent girls was to explore how, for the sake of “relationship” and to answer
cultural expectations of goodness, girls have to give up self-knowledge (relationship with the self) and learn to testify against themselves.

That Gilligan has been taken up by the culture as an icon of “difference feminism” when she was so clearly disturbed by the sacrifice of the female sense of self at the altar of feminine goodness is deeply ironic. Lorraine Code, examining criticisms of Gilligan's reworked moral philosophy and others aimed at the scientific reliability of her research, explains the writing of *In A Different Voice* (in 1982) as a ground-breaking and particular historical moment. Because there was no room within traditional philosophy, no rhetorical space into which this kind of thinking could fit, the only way to deal with her work was to attempt to dismiss it. Gilligan, writing out of the selfsame “different voice” that she was describing, could only testify against herself (Code 1995). It is perhaps not at all surprising that Gilligan should want next to study adolescent girls.

To my mind Gilligan's work has been revolutionary. Having pointed out that the subjects of psychological research had been overwhelmingly male, she now focused a very different kind of attention on adolescent girls than anyone had ever done before. The studies that Gilligan examined reveal that in childhood boys react more negatively to stress than girls, a pattern which reverses in adolescence. Teenage girls are more prone to depression and manifest more psychological difficulties; they are more disparaging of themselves and reveal more disturbances in self-image. Bearing this in mind, Gilligan interpreted her own findings to mean that girls suffer more from ‘lack of connection’ in their relationships than they do from problems of separation and individuation. They are disconnected from their childhood selves. The culture teaches them not to trust their mothers. Jungian therapist Marion Woodman (1982, 1985), whose work on the “Father’s Daughter” is explored in Chapter One, is deeply concerned about what happens when the tie with the mother is interrupted and the girl moves her identificatory bond to her father. At the same time that all this is taking place, girls also come to understand that best friends are now arch rivals too in the competition for the masculine gaze.
Gilligan concluded that the traditional model of adolescence, devised by Erik Erikson, which consistently measured females as inferior in their ability to attain the appropriate developmental milestones on the road to maturity, had very little to say to girls (Erikson, 1968). Language remains a problem here. Needing to gather under one rubric what all these problems were, Gilligan chose the term "connection." Had she used "disconnection" instead, which is the real topic here, her work might have been viewed as not so entirely separate from Erikson's. Both models consider disconnection; in Erikson's disconnection is the desired outcome, in Gilligan's it is mourned. Educated in a patriarchal system, we have a propensity for binary thinking. So if Gilligan had new insight into the drama of adolescence, her insights were pitted against Erikson's, not simply placed beside them, one set illuminating the other.  

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15 Naomi Wolf accused Gilligan et al. of "beautiful and insightful work that describes a woman's consciousness focused on connection and intimacy and averse to competitiveness, achievement, or 'masculine' forms of power." (1993, 261) Wolf was convinced that "their view overlook[ed] a submerged, forbidden half of the feminine psyche." Gilligan's was what Wolf termed 'victim feminism' as opposed to her own brand of 'power feminism.' Wolf suggested quite convincingly that girls and women (had been socialized to and therefore) were quite comfortable reporting their wishes for intimacy but not quite so at ease with "fantasies of rage, competition, victory, fame, wealth, control, conquest, and dominion, no matter how real those fantasies are." (1993, 261) I see Wolf's insight as possible only on the back of Gilligan's work, as I see her analysis as a logical progression on the historical continuum. There is no question that Gilligan's insights about the centrality of relationships of care, concern, and connection can and have been taken up by the culture in a way that has harmed women. Women thinkers have often been interpreted to testify against themselves. At the particular moment at which they emerged, Gilligan's insights were a necessary and valuable part of feminist revisioning. Martin (1994a) points out that Gilligan did not retreat in the face of the criticism leveled against her; she went on to conduct further research that addressed some of the issues that were raised against her and so enlarged her valuable contribution to women's psychology and girls' development. Wolf was not the first to consider how women felt about success in the public world, although she was perhaps the most publicized. The writing of In a Different Voice (1982) was much influenced by the work of Matina Horner (1972), who explained how women fear success because it implies the rupture of key relationships and a concomitant loss of femininity. To be female meant to be in relationship even more in the 70s than it does today. Wolf, writing in the 90s, could afford to push the boundaries of women's fear of success, first in her own life and then in her theory. In 1993 it was perhaps not too high a price to pay. Or perhaps it became only one of a variety of prices to be paid, now that feminist theory had made the others more visible. Wolf's work distinguishes younger academic women who have been educated in more gender-sensitive ways from older women like me, and presumably Gilligan, who had a gender-blind education. This would indicate that feminism has produced some change for the better. At the same time it is important to note that women like Wolf were educated in a more liberal era (when feminism was not a dirty word) and we need to consider what the long-range outcomes of being educated in an anti-feminist climate like today's will bring. More directly to the point, Gilligan was insisting on "another half of the feminine psyche" (as Wolf sought at the beginning of this footnote). She was perhaps not yet enabled by her historical moment to draw the complete picture of what that other half would look like. Wolf came to struggle with bringing this part of the female psyche to our attention as a result of the massive discomfort she experienced (at the age of 26) with the success of her first book The Beauty Myth (1991). The trappings of success - notoriety, adulation, money - along with the experience of being noticed, of standing alone in the limelight, separated her from her friends. This is precisely the dilemma that Gilligan described, in short: 'Do I say what I have to say because I have an urgent need to say
Gilligan suggested that a girl's involvement in and sensitivity to relationships at home alerted her to social disconnection in a global sense just as Martin Luther's questioning of authority in the medieval world was set in motion by the corruption of authority experienced in his family. (Gilligan et al., 1990, 11) She described the knowledge of *educere* gleaned by "seeing and listening, by piecing together thoughts and feelings, sounds and glances, responses and reactions until they compose a pattern, compelling in its explanatory power and often intricate in its psychological logic" (Gilligan et al., 1990, 14). The struggle of female adolescence was perhaps a struggle with and of too much insight. A commitment to *educere* should enable adults to listen to girls and learn to share their burden.

Girls will share their knowledge when they feel that someone is sincerely listening and prepared to sustain the conversation past disagreement. In this way Gilligan posited that the "fate" of girls' knowledges and their education is very much embedded in their relationships. One girl in the study told Gilligan: "It's a lot easier to fight with someone you love, because you know they will always forgive you, at least usually they will ... and you know that they are still going to be there for you after the disagreement" (1990, 20). As "resisters," girls watch the women around them, vigilantly sensitive to women's compliance to male authority. They want and need to be able to talk about what they see.

Teachers, warned Gilligan, might find twelve-year-old girls bossy and outspoken. They might be dismayed at their experiments with "inclusion and exclusion - the tortuous clique formations" (1990, 11). Are these, as Gilligan suggested, a "dark mirroring of the adult world that girls are seeing?" (12). Or are they also, and perhaps more importantly, attempts to retain the power that Naomi Wolf (1993) insists they feel (but are not given a forum to discuss) and that they realize is about to be severely circumscribed by the social roles they are being groomed to play? As de Beauvoir revised it or do I stick with the crowd and keep a low profile because if I say what I have to, my friends might not like me any more?" Reliving Gilligan's question, Wolf has extended the conversation significantly.
Freud's analysis, it is not 'penis' envy but 'power' envy that girls suffer as they realize that they are no longer subject in their own lives:

[B]ut when her company, her studies, her games, her reading, take her out of the maternal circle, she sees that it is not the women but the men who control the world. It is this revelation – much more than the discovery of the penis – that irresistibly alters her conception of herself. (1952, 323)

In response to this realization, "girls stop being and start seeming" (De Beauvoir, qtd. in Pipher, 1994, 22, emphasis added).

Referring to the hostile games girls play, Canadian journalist Myrna Kostash observed:

The fact that all such mortifications have as their source sexual insult, and that the nature of the insult seems to have been borrowed and learned from male sexual hostility towards women, would suggest that female solidarity – that touching inseparability of young "best friends"—is broken in the transition to heterosexual social codes. (1987, 31)

As they are brought into their culture, girls understand, without being able to articulate, how their power is about to be circumscribed and channelled narrowly down the romance path. No longer free to be themselves, they take their power any way they can get it, often hurting those they once loved the most. The anger that they feel cannot be encoded in words.

Gilligan drew attention to the "I don't know" and "You know" that enter girls' speech at this time as the password to the underworld of repression of self-knowledge. For the twelve-year-old girl experiencing it, this remains a problem without a name, a future that can be only vaguely drawn, a dream that can't be claimed. At thirteen she will have more insight into her own process, knowing enough to keep things to herself and hold back her anger at the step-father who may abuse her verbally and at the mother who may fail to protect her. The binary thinking of her culture threatens her own embodied knowledge of human relationship:

To understand psychological processes means to follow the both-and-logic of feelings and to trace the currents of associations, memories, sounds, and images which flow back and forth connecting self and other, mind and
body, past and present, consciousness and culture. (Gilligan et al., 1990, 19)

"To separate thinking from relationships and thus to make a division between formal education and powerful learning experience" (Gilligan et al., 1990, 19) is the central dynamic of growing up female. For Gilligan "the knowledge about relationships and the life of relationships that flourish on this remote island of female adolescence are, to shift the metaphor, like notes from the underground" (24).

By age fifteen girls told Gilligan that their most powerful learning experiences were taking place outside of school. In her three-hundred-page study of Canadian adolescent girls, Kostash spent only thirty pages on "Classrooms" and "Schools." The real lessons were being taught by 'the culture' now. Female adolescence, as she explained, has had a relatively short history; only since romantic love became the norm have girls had a youth open for their own personal exploration and development. Before that the onset of puberty meant working in father's home and then in husband's, or perhaps being sent elsewhere to work long hours as a servant. Boys had a more developed youth culture because they tended to leave home to find work (and generally had some free time to pursue their own interests). When girls today enter culture, they can "deny or transcend" their gender and do what the boys do. But they do so at their peril. Kostash asked whether it was in a girl's best interest to "participate in the anti-romantic ethic of teenage culture, with its emphasis on impulsive, uncommitted, earthy sex when it was she who bore all the risks; when it [was] she who [became] sexually devalued, pregnant, impoverished?" (1987, 263).

Entering what there is of "girl culture" brings a girl into the ideological domain of the romance fantasy where she need do little more than prepare herself for marriage in myriad ways.

Her culture provides her no access to the escapes from traditional sex roles except at the risk of "failing" as a woman, and she has no unambiguous means of experimenting with independence and defiance and sex. Until girls collectively accumulate experience of their youthfulness outside the female norms of domesticity, the claim that "girls
just want to have fun" will remain a utopian slogan shouted at the future. (Kostash, 1987, 264)

In her early work on British teen girls' magazines researcher Angela McRobbie confirmed Kostash's findings, reporting that "girls play little role, if any, in shaping their own pop culture and their choice in consumption is materially extremely narrow" (McRobbie, 1991, 86). However, McRobbie returned to her topic in 1994 and found that apparently hegemonic discourses of femininity could actually provide opportunities for resistance and renegotiation and that these magazines offered, in addition, in their question-and-answer columns, a broad spectrum of advice about transgressing the boundaries of normative femininity.

Australian researchers Carrington and Bennett (1996) confirm McRobbie's more recent analysis:

In particular, we refute the assumption which pervades much of this research that girls are the passive victims of a hegemonic culture of femininity and that culture is prepacked, sanitised, and sold to her through her consumption of "girls" magazines. Quite apart from the fact that there is no simple correspondence between these magazines and the pedagogical formation of adolescent femininity, the girl we argue is the product of a distinctively modern form of personage with attributes and characteristics which are historically specific and culturally diverse. The formation of such personal characteristics do not lend themselves to such levels of overgeneralization and determination. (Carrington and Bennett, 1996, 148)

Engaging with these magazines girls access the pleasure of their sexuality and information about it which is less prudish than what is available to them through the more official sources of self-instruction manuals, biology classes and parents. These authors cite Mica Nava (1987), whose Foucauldian perspective affirms this more nuanced view. Nava, too, recognizes the potential for pleasure and power here.

In the later studies Gilligan conducted with Lyn Mikel Brown (1992) researchers confirmed that girls experienced an elaborate process of disassociation of psyche from body, of voice from thought, moving from genuine relationship with self and others to the approximation of a cultural ideal but, at the same time, they revealed new pedagogical possibilities for resisting this process. It was true that open conflict gave way to more
covert ways of dealing with negative feelings of relationship, that some girls came not to
know the signs of physical and emotional abuse. The education that they were receiving,
in and out of school, was a kind of “psychological foot-binding” in which they were kept
from “feeling or using their relational strengths” (Brown and Gilligan, 1992, 218). The
resilient feistiness that had sustained them throughout childhood had become a political
liability. “People, as many girls were told, did not want to hear what girls know” (218).
And girls stopped sharing what they knew even with each other.

Here, as throughout Gilligan's work,

[v]ice is central to our way of working – our channel of connection, a
pathway that brings the inner psychic world of feelings and thought out
into the open air of relationship where it can be heard by oneself and by
other people. The physicality of voice – its sounds, resonances, vibrations
– gives our work its naturalistic grounding, and the re-sounding by girls of
voices that may have been muted or covered over by women is key to the
physics of relationship and the relational nature of our psychological
work. Voice, because it is embodied, connects rather than separates
psyche and body; because voice is in language, it also joins psyche and
culture. Voice is inherently relational – one does not require a mirror to
hear oneself – yet the sounds of one's voice change in resonance
depending on the relational acoustics: whether one is heard or not heard,
how one is responded to (by oneself and by other people). (Brown and
Gilligan, 1992, 20)

Gilligan and Brown saw that the possibilities for resistance and rupture that
McRobbie would describe in 1994 could be opened and extended by women teaching.
When the teachers in this 1992 study began to realize the implications of its findings,
they turned their awareness back on themselves to retrace the loss of their own voices.
They found that “[u]nless we, as grown women, were willing to give up all the ‘good
little girl’ things we continued to do and give up our expectations that the girls in our
charge would be as good as we were, we could not successfully empower young women
to act on their own knowledge and feelings” (221). These teachers came to see that they
could be “intelligently disruptive” without “destroying anything except the myths about
the high level of female cooperativeness” (221).
Gilligan and Brown's 1992 study revealed that the "staunchest resisters" of cultural messages were girls whose colour or class put them on the margins, girls "who [were] so clearly at odds with the dominant models of female beauty and perfection as to reveal the cultural hand behind the standards" (1992, 226). At the same time, these girls tended to have closer, more confiding, more open relationships with their mothers where anger and conflict could be tolerated and where both mother and daughter were honest about the "power they have to affect one another and thus the depths of their connection and love" (1992, 226).

Addressing the race and class inequities arising from her earlier work with middle-class, mostly white, privileged girls, Gilligan focused in Between Voice and Silence (1995) on these "staunch resisters." Girls of colour and girls from less privileged classes were even more startlingly ignored. "[N]obody listens, nobody cares, nobody asks what they are feeling and thinking" (Gilligan et al., 1995, 1). Twenty-six girls from working-class ethnic minorities, labelled "at-risk" for highschool dropout and early motherhood, were asked to consider what they felt and thought about themselves, their relationships, their lives, their futures, their experiences in school and their decisions around sexuality.

Girls from more materially-privileged classes, Gilligan pointed out, who believe the riches of the world will one day open up to them "will change their voice and give up their questions in order not to jeopardize their chances, committing what Virginia Woolf conceptualized in Three Guineas (1938/1986) as adultery of the brain" (3). Here again the researchers intended to "expose the paradox: that girls and women give up relationship with one another for the sake of relationships in which they often live in depression, in poverty, and with little or no voice" (211). But the girls in this most recent study stood sufficiently outside the established social order to be more honest, to hold more tenaciously to the views they had developed through the lived experiences of their childhood. Studies which show that black girls do not suffer the tyranny of body image to
the extent that white girls do echo and augment this research. Here is Lauren Martin writing in the girls’ zine *Princess Charming*:

An article I read in the Winter 1996 issue of *Hues* magazine (new mag aimed at young women – I highly recommend you pick yourself up a copy) entitled “The Big Picture – Do Black Women Have Better Body Image Than White Women?” backs this up. They cite a study done by the University of Arizona that found that 90 percent of White junior high school girls don’t like their bodies, while 70 percent of African American girls of the same age do. They cite the fact that having the ability to choose to starve is viewed almost as a privilege, and is none too appealing to many Black women who have seen so much poverty in their history. (Martin, qtd. in Green and Taormino, 1997, 163)

Gilligan found that, as in her former studies, these girls want careers first and relationships later. This may not be so easy for them given their very real lack of social, economic and educational supports. Raising aspirations cannot be the issue; real opportunities must be provided: “[w]hat they need are more opportunities, more connections and more information to allow them to explore their interests and plan ahead” (198). These girls need real-life encounters and time spent with women working in a variety of fields, some with women who have worked to enter the middle-class, and the moral support that comes from being told, ‘Go on, you can do it.’

Real life has taught these girls to be skeptical about the promise of romance. Because they have had to cope with more responsibility and less privilege, they are more sanguine about life’s possibilities. More grounded in the real world, they are not so likely to be swept away by notions of love and marriage, just as they have not been so susceptible to the tyranny of body image. The ties of female relationship run strong here, and conversations between mothers, aunts and daughters are more unguarded than they were with the girls in Gilligan’s earlier studies. But, perhaps because of these strong emotional ties, it remains even more difficult to carve out a life different from mother’s.

Moving beyond their mothers is psychologically difficult for many girls, filled with the ambivalence of wanting and not wanting a different life for themselves, of feeling guilty, and at the same time, of recognizing that their mothers may likewise want and not want a different life for their daughters. (Gilligan et al., 1995, 177) Gilligan refers
to Constance Williams' study of black mothers to point out that "becoming a mother as an adolescent represents the repetition of a cultural pattern." Though their mothers do not explicitly tell them not to get pregnant or to marry, "if one considers the socialization process as occurring through implicit as well as explicit" messages – or do as I do, not as I say – these teens are indeed socialized to motherhood (Williams, qtd. in Gilligan et al., 1995, 127).

Pregnancy may provide the girls in this study with a different story of their bodies than the middle-class girls told. As Catherine Steiner-Adair (1986) observed in her study in Making Connections, "the primary quality that makes the [white] Super Woman superior is her total independence from people" (Gilligan et al., 1990, 171). Interestingly, Steiner-Adair noted that the privileged white girls in her study who took on the ideal of the Super Woman were also those who "scored in the eating-disordered or anorexic-like range on diagnostic measure" (qtd. in Gilligan et al., 1990, 185). The body story that working-class black girls tell of pregnancy may be one that rejects the cultural ideal (certainly of the Super Woman) and inscribes instead a desire for relationship. Relationships with women, and particularly with mothers, are highlighted as being of great importance to well-being. Girls may fight with their mothers as a way of self-definition, but they need to feel connected with them, intimately and intensely.

Public discourse around "teen pregnancy," as Gilligan's researchers reveal, is only one of many discourses socially constructed "to speak about the poor" (1995, 5). She asks why, when half of the fathers of these babies are twenty years of age or older are adult males not brought into the cultural dialogue of responsibility. How has this "problem" been constructed and institutionalized to position young women negatively as it obscures the realities of their lives? "Older men impregnating teens, study finds" is front-page news in this morning's paper (Mitchell, 1997, A1). To these editors, it seems, this is a brand-new discovery:

This is the first study in Canada to examine who is fathering the babies born to teen mothers. The most serious limitation of the study is that the age of the father is missing in the records of some of the births to teen-
aged mothers. For example, among mothers 15 to 17, the age of the father was missing for 42 percent of the births. For births to older teens, 30 percent of the fathers' ages are unknown.

The statisticians extrapolated the missing fathers' ages from the ones that were known, but they cautioned that the missing fathers may actually be older than the ones whose ages were reported. Nevertheless, several sociologists said it could shatter the way Canadian society thinks about teen pregnancy and how to prevent it.

Teen pregnancy has often been cast as the fruit of back-seat fumbling between high-school students. Now, it may be wiser to see it as a phenomenon involving teens and far more sophisticated adults.

By continuing to label this a problem of "teen pregnancy," the media perpetuates the problem as a discourse of adolescent girls and continues to keep their male partners in hiding. Several months later, the same writer who has brought this insight to public attention will persist in addressing the problem as one of "teen pregnancy" (Mitchell, 1998, A1). Naming the problem differently might begin to destabilize prevailing notions.

A complex web of societal factors is involved in determining how a girl will negotiate the passage through adolescence. In spite of the culturally-acknowledged importance of her peer group, the relationship a girl has with her mother matters significantly. An earlier study by Terri Apter (1990), based on interviews with fifty mother-daughter pairs in Britain and the United States, determined that adolescents (both male and female) continue to care deeply about their parents as they claim their separate identities. Confirming the co-existence of connection and individuation that Gilligan's girls clearly maintain throughout her research, the challenge of the adolescent here is to "shake the parent into a new recognition and appreciation of her new and emerging self" (Apter, 1990, 2). Apter argues for a new model that would legitimate the continued love between parent and child as a source of support, a bulwark against the pressures of educare and sustenance for educere.

When I was about seventeen, my mother and I disagreed constantly. The family doctor suggested that I see a psychiatrist. On my first visit his opening line was "You hate your mother, don't you?" He followed this up with the advice that I'd never be able to run away from her, no matter how far I travelled geographically. The culture has
become adept at using the natural disagreements that occur as a daughter attempts to define herself as separate from her mother to teach a girl that she hates her mother. I remember understanding that it wasn’t “cool” to continue to like my mother as I grew out of childhood. Teaching girls to hate their mothers is an effective strategy; it masks the extent to which the culture-at-large has hated/betrayed girls and their mothers.

Girls want to know ‘how to fight back in this world,’ and they want parents and teachers to listen to them and help them. ‘Listen’ seems to be the password into the mindspace of adolescent girls throughout Gilligan's many projects. As much as girls want teachers to teach what is meaningful, teachers “often found that what was meaningful to their students was meaningful to them” (Gilligan et al., 1995, 190) and that to respond to the girls “they often had to undo dissociative processes in themselves that had led them to dismiss their own interests and knowledge as trivial or parenthetical or irrelevant” (191).

What do we tell the girls we teach about becoming women who teach? Do we leave unexplored our own notes from the underground – the ambivalence of being part of a profession that is and is not one, our personal struggles with and fears about money, the long hours of preparation and the scathingly bad press? Today everything is blamed on teachers and mothers. Do we explore that fact with the young women in our classes who would teach?

Like Cassandras to their culture, teenage girls possess dangerous knowledges. Nobody wants to know what they know. Everybody wants to know what they know. It is as if what they knew were to enter the culture, there would be no turning back. We would do well, as women, to ask ourselves what are the things that remain most difficult for us to discuss. These are the very things girls need to know, may, in fact, know already but are unable to speak about. These are the buried truths of our embodied female lives. It will not be easy to push past the barriers of our reticence. It will not be easy to grant all our daughters the pleasures and the freedoms we have not had.

Gilligan’s first two studies are based on girls in single-sex schools. Peggy Orenstein (1994) and Myra and David Sadker (1994) have formalized the findings of a
number of recent American studies that show the many ways that coeducation fails to grant girls an equal share: of teacher time, of resources, of attention, of nurture. Boys are praised for being clever; girls are rewarded for being good, helpful, clean, neat and cooperative. Here are stories we have heard before, of the need to segregate girls for high-school math and science so that they need not concern themselves about how they might appear to the boys. And new stories of how standardized college achievement tests are structured so that boys have a greater advantage and therefore will score higher in spite of the fact that their actual school grades are lower than their female counterparts. What if the cure for cancer, ask the Sadkers, is now incubating in the mind of a girl who will be streamed out of science?

It is interesting to note that these studies were commissioned by the American Association of University Women; the considerable presence of women in the educational field provided the impetus for this long-neglected field of research. Perhaps the best summary of the implications of coeducation for girls is Sandra Bartky's. Using the AAUW findings in her article "The Pedagogy of Shame" (1996) Bartky traces the many ways in which a girl, in the process of getting an education, learns that she is Other, lesser, always second, and not entitled. What she learns at school may be duplicated by what she learns outside it, in her family, her church and her workplace. No wonder she is ashamed of herself personally and intellectually by the time she gets to university. The problems mentioned above are augmented by the following:

Women may well receive less praise than men for work of the same quality, for studies have shown repeatedly that work when ascribed to a man is rated higher than the same work ascribed to a woman, whether the work in question is a scholarly paper, a short story, or a painting. There is evidence that men's success generally is viewed as deserved, women's as due to luck or the easiness of the task.

Women are interrupted more than men both by their teachers and by their fellow students. Teachers are likelier to use a tone of voice that indicates

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interest when talking to men but to adopt a patronizing or dismissive tone when talking to women. Teachers have been observed to make more eye contact with men than with women; they assume a posture of attentiveness when men speak but look away or look at the clock when women speak.

Ignorant of the fact that styles of communication are gender-related, instructors may assume that women’s use of “women’s language” means that women have nothing to say. On the other hand, women may be viewed negatively when they display stereotypically masculine traits such as ambition, assertiveness or a pleasure in disputation. The female student may receive direct sexual overtures in the classroom, but even if this does not happen, she is far likelier than her male counterpart to receive comments about her appearance: this may suggest to her that she is primarily a decorative being who is less serious and hence less competent than the men in her class. (Bartky, 1996, 233)

Sexist comments, the exclusion of women's accomplishments from history, literature and science, and the doubled jeopardy of being a woman of colour contribute to intellectual disparagement. Bartky continues,

College teachers have been better mentors to men than to women; they are likelier to choose men for teaching and research assistantships and to contact men when professional opportunities arise. In laboratory courses, instructors have been observed to position themselves closer to men than to women, giving men more detailed instructions on how to do an assignment. They are likelier to do the assignment for women or just allow them to fail. In such courses, men are often allowed to crowd out women at demonstrations. Classroom teachers are unlikely to recognize, hence to try to alter the dynamics of mixed-sex group discussion which are not different in the classroom than they are elsewhere.

These behaviors, considered in toto, cannot fail to diminish women, to communicate to them the insignificance and lack of seriousness of their classroom personae. When one considers the length of this catalogue of microbehaviors and senses what must be its cumulative effect, one is tempted to regard the shaming behavior visited upon women in the modern classroom as the moral equivalent of the dunce-cap of old. (Bartky, 1996, 233-234)

The findings of the AAUW reports alerted journalist Peggy Orenstein to the people stories behind the statistics. In SchoolGirls (1994) she gave voice to the real girls who were living out the processes described, girls like fourteen-year-old Marta who told Orenstein, “I wish I was a boy” (xv). Orenstein drew attention to the economic implications of coeducation, emphasizing that, for girls more than for boys, enjoying
math was linked to aspiring to a professional career. “As adults, women who had taken more than two math courses in college were the only ones who subsequently achieved pay equity and even earned more than their male counterparts” (Orenstein, 1994, 18). Studies confirmed that African-American girls grew to adulthood retaining their self-esteem more surely than white girls did. However, in spite of this consistent finding, that pride in themselves had not, for many, translated into academic excellence. This suggested the existence of a doubled sense of “self” – the public (embedded in community) and the private (formed at school). Often stigmatized by teachers for those very skills which have helped them survive, these girls learn to reject achievement and identify aiming for scholastic success as “acting white” (160). A study by Charles Richman of the effects of gender, race and class on self-esteem showed that high-achieving white girls were “subject to unrealistic standards of success”; when they failed to meet their goals “they overgeneralized failures with an intense self-punitiveness; by late adolescence, their self-esteem had spiraled downward” (38). Orenstein points out that without a strong sense of self-esteem girls are “less able to fulfill their potential, less willing to take on challenges, less willing to defy tradition in their career choices, which means sacrificing economic equity” (xxviii).

“Girls emphasize being lovable when they lose faith in their competence”; doing so, they become “more vulnerable to sexual manipulation” (Orenstein, 1994, 63). “Study after study shows that girls know, in spite of the overt messages of success and achievement proffered them, that their body is their most valuable commodity, indeed they believe it defines them” (93). Girls who embrace their sexuality are summarily ostracized from their female friends. Shame is so heavily identified with sexuality that even thinking about sex or admitting desire is shameful. A thirteen-year-old Orenstein interviews who is just “awakening to her own sexuality,” has learned “she must suppress it immediately; she has learned, in fact, to convert it into feelings of disgust, and to make girls who express sexuality into untouchables – ‘sluts’” (55). Negative attitudes to sex and failure to acknowledge sexual desire work powerfully against the practice of safe sex.
Taken together Orenstein’s stories of embodied girlhood illuminate the dilemma of growing up female and joining the world of men. Girls are “boldly encouraged to leave behind the limits of tradition,” but repeatedly reminded “that their abilities alone will not ensure a place at the table of success: in order to ‘have it all’ they must also conform to an impossible, media-driven standard of beauty which holds that ‘you can never be too thin’” (Orenstein, 1994, 94). The impediments to girls’ academic success and the achievements in the real world which may follow it are legion.

Ironically, when girls do manage to succeed academically, despite all these obstacles, continued resistance to their accomplishments is now expressed in terms of what boys are losing as girls are making progress. Fear of girls’ academic attainment, writes teacher-educator Jane Miller,

is by no means a new fear, and its contemporary manifestations are unprecedented only in so far as they are disguised by the apparent even-handedness of current educational discourse on the subject. ‘He and she’, like so much ‘equal opportunities’ rhetoric, can operate to deny specific and telling gender differences in teaching, curriculum, management and academic outcomes and in the debates and documents accounting for them. (1992, 1)

Rhetoric alone does not effect change. A recent Time magazine cover story (Bellafante and Labi, 1998) that headlines the ‘death of feminism,’ infers in its cover photographs that the spirit of Susan B. Anthony is alive and well in TV’s Ally McBeal. It would be tempting but dangerous for girls to think that the hierarchies of gender have been overthrown while so many women continue to live wretched lives.

The ambivalence around education for women is echoed in attitudes towards the education of girls. Jane Miller (1992), commenting on the British educational system, links back-to-basics anxiety and the concomitant cutbacks to education to the larger question of what it means to educate women. The educational victories that have been wrought in the last 150 years, most significantly, education for women, “ha[ve] profoundly changed all social arrangements and relations throughout the world” (20). When women in developing countries become literate, they use their skills to better the
health and education of their families, thereby enriching the community at large. (I will return to this topic in Chapter Five.) Miller, pointing out that more girls than men are now applying for admission to universities, writes that “John Major’s expressed contempt for higher education may in this context be construed as rather more than sour grapes; indeed, it sounds more like a timely reminder that ‘real men’ who do well in the world, can do so without the kind of education which – since it appeals more to women than to men – is probably too liberal and wishy-washy and out of touch with the tough demands of a modern technological world anyway” (1992, 17). She points out that the discipline of English has always been seen as ‘soft’; this ‘softness’ has been countered, at the university level, by ensuring that “departments with a majority of women students were balanced by a preponderance of male lecturers and professors” (19). Why, she asks, are these subjects perceived to be ‘feminine’ and why does that fact alone draw the contempt and criticism it has? It would seem that girls can’t find any safe spaces in the educational realm.

My younger daughter has a friend who left the confines of the girls' school they attended together to begin grade nine in a public high school. It was hard getting used to the boys, she reported, hard to have them watch her when she raised her hand to answer in class, hard to watch them watching her eat lunch. She feels self-conscious about how much she eats, she tells my daughter, though all of us know she's very thin.

Kostash cited Canadian studies which found that male science teachers teased their female students rather than encouraged them, that the number of women teaching in high schools was declining so girls would see fewer role models there, that even though suffrage and other women's issues were on the official curriculum, few teachers chose to teach them. Ironically, now that there is a women's history, history is no longer part of the core curriculum. “The public school is,” according to Kostash, “an arena of considerable ambivalence about the education of the daughters of the middle-class, as though to educate them fully would be to lose forever the ideal of the happy, stay-at-home wife and mother of the bourgeois family” (1987, 81). So the vast majority of middle-class girls are
still being streamed into predictable programs of study (arts, humanities, social sciences) that offer more limited vocational opportunities or consign them to financially limited careers. Eighty percent of teachers, nurses and social workers are still women. When large numbers of women gain access to professions that have traditionally been high-status and lucrative, as, for example, law and medicine, social changes erode the rewards that women may reap from them, and the real money moves to sectors of the economy where women have just begun to tread, as, for example, computers and finance.

How “equal” an education can young women get, asks Lisa Maria Hogeland (1994) in Ms. magazine (20) when they must run the risks of getting to university libraries unescorted at night? Body and mind under attack together. In the four years that separate Hogeland's words from mine, most women need no longer go unescorted but there is still great risk in being young and female, on campus or off.

It is the body, what is being done to it and said about it, this tender body that is the unbidden subject of such quantities of discourse in patriarchal culture and is at the same time the object of such virulent material attack. The most profound echoes emanating from the case studies in Pipher's Reviving Ophelia (1994) hinge on sexuality. Whatever lessons we are teaching young women, we are teaching their bodies too.

Girls cannot tell their parents about being raped; instead they act out their anger. They are angry, too, at parents who do not seem to have protected them and who do not seem to be able to help them deal with the pain. One client, aged 15, after six therapeutic sessions, is finally able to tell Pipher in detail about her experience because she understands that healing will not come without the articulation of the story. Having planned to slip out late one evening to meet a girlfriend at the bowling alley, she was surprised to find that her friend had not come or called.

She said, “I waited for an hour. I wasn’t feeling all that great; I had a headache and these high school boys kept staring at me. I wasn’t scared of them, but I was embarrassed being there all by myself.”

Her voice grew huskier. “I left the bowling alley about twelve. I noticed those guys were leaving, but I wasn’t that scared. They pulled up beside
me and offered me a ride. I didn't know them so I said no. They circled
the lot and returned. Then they stopped the car and two of them got out
and pulled me in."

Her voice was dead now. "There were four of them. I couldn't see their
faces very well in the dark car. Two of them held me down in the backseat
and they drove into the alley behind the bowling alley. I started to cry and
one of them said: "Let's not do this." But his friends called him a weenie
and he shut up. I don't think he raped me though. Only three guys raped
me.

Ellie stopped and looked out the window. Her eyes were dry but filled
with pain. She caught her breath and continued. "The driver raped me
first. His buddies pulled down my jeans and he jumped on top of me. He
didn't kiss me or anything."

Her voice broke, but then she continued. "I never had sex before and I felt
like I was being split open. When he finished he encouraged the others to
do it too. The two in the back seat took turns. I threw up. Later they used
my shirt to clean up the puke."

Ellie was shaking now as if she were chilled. Her voice was flat and dead.
"All the time they did this, they were laughing and joking. The driver said
I must have wanted it or I wouldn't have been out alone. They didn't
threaten to hurt me or anything. They just wouldn't let me go. They
treated me like an animal, like I didn't have any feelings."

"Afterwards, they dumped me out of the car and threw my shirt after me. I
put it on so I wouldn't be topless and walked home. I was crying so hard I
thought I might have a stroke or something, but I didn't go in the house till
I stopped sobbing. I slipped in my window and lay in bed till morning.
Then I took a bath and rinsed out my shirt."

Ellie looked at me. "I was amazed that the next morning my parents didn't
notice anything. At breakfast they talked about my little sister's dental
appointment." (Pipher, 1994, 222-223)

Alone, late at night, she wasn't 'scared.' She was 'embarrassed' at being there all by
herself. They offered her a ride. She said no. Does she believe she must have wanted it?
The boys who raped her 'didn't hurt' her, they just treated her 'like an animal.' She put on
her shirt not to be "topless" as she walked home. She didn't go into the house until she
stopped sobbing. She slipped quietly back into her house and waited till morning to wash.
At breakfast no one 'noticed' that she was different. What is said and not being said in
this story? Who is guilty here? What stops girls who have been raped from telling their
parents? Pipher points out that in spite of all the gains feminism has wrought (or, given the current backlash (Falludi, 1991) against feminism, perhaps because of them) girls are more bodily unsafe today than they have ever been before.

One in four women in America are raped. Forty-one percent of rape victims expect to be raped again; 30 percent contemplate suicide; 31 percent go into therapy; 22 percent take self-defense courses and 82 percent say that they are permanently changed.” (230) What, Pipher asks, can we as a society do to prevent sexual violence?

The story that goes underground in adolescence, the one that Gilligan repeatedly hovers so close to examining, is a story about the body. It is their real thoughts about the real world of their bodies and the pleasures and dangers of that world that girls have no forum to discuss. These are discussions that girls cannot easily open up amongst themselves, without the help of a trusted adult. As an adult woman, I submit that there are huge silences here, even among the best of friends.

I find it unusual that Pipher barely acknowledges her debt to Gilligan when her conclusions and questions point so clearly in the same directions. (It is tempting to think that she assumes that Gilligan’s work has become so mainstream as no longer to need acknowledgement.) How do we not abandon girls when they need us the most? How do we remain in relationship with them when they know “the Cosby family and the people from 'Northern Exposure' better than anyone [they] know on their block?” (Pipher, 242).

How do we encourage the survival of their authenticity?

Me and my mother, we're real close. I mean we joke around all the time and we sit there and sometimes we wrestle and make fun, and we sit down and sometimes we bake – but I can't tell her what's happening to me, how it's happening to me ... I never tell her what I'm thinking about ... I never told a lie to my mother, but then again, I never really told her anything ... I keep it all to myself. (Mary, Irish American tenth grader from the chapter on sexuality, in Gilligan et al., 1995, 95)

Theorists as diverse as Angela McRobbie, Valerie Walkerdine, Katherine Dalsimer, Gisela Konopka, Sue Lees, Constance Nathanson and Naomi Wolf all deal with the confrontation between the “law of the father” and female adolescent sexuality.
"The most poignant account of the perils that attend young women's transition from girlhood to womanhood" is provided by the classical figure of Juliet, Nathanson (1991) reminds us. (207) In patriarchal societies, "sexuality is permitted only males – girls threaten to disrupt the entire system of economic and social relationships based on the assumption that each individual woman and her children will be supported by an individual man" (208).

Katherine Dalsimer points out that Freud defined away the possibility of pleasure, delight, or pride on the part of the female in her own genitals as they are, and in her own femininity. In this context, menarche, the signal event of female puberty, has been most often described as if it were a fresh wound, which confirms yet again the sense of damage that has burdened the girl since her discovery, as a young child, of the difference between herself and boys. (Dalsimer, 1986, 11, emphasis original.)

How many girls experience menstruation as wounding? That recognition is the logical outcome of educare, of being enculturated into Western patriarchy. De Beauvoir puts it this way:

The little girl ... in order to change into a grown-up person, must be confined within the limits imposed upon her by her femininity. The boy sees with wonder in his growing hairiness vague promises of things to come: the girl stands abashed before the "brutal and prescribed drama" [quoted from W. Liepmann, Jeunesse et Sexualite] that decides her destiny. Just as the penis derives its privileged evaluation from the social context, so it is the social context that makes menstruation a curse. The one symbolizes manhood, the other femininity; and it is because femininity signifies alterity and inferiority that its manifestation is met with shame. The girl's life has always seemed to her to be determined by that vague essence to which the lack of a penis has not been enough to give a positive shape: but she becomes aware of herself in the red flow from between her thighs. If she has already accepted her condition, she greets the event with joy – "Now you are a woman." If she has always refused to accept her condition, the bloody verdict stuns her; most often she falters: the monthly uncleanness makes her inclined to feel disgust and fear. "So that is what is meant by the words 'to be a woman'!" The set fate that weighed upon her indistinctly and from without is crouching in her belly; there is no escape; she feels she is caught. (De Beauvoir, 1952/1974, 354)
Sue Lees, in a study of girls at three London comprehensive schools in the early 80s, found girls open and willing to talk about their sexual lives, in spite of the fact that they were aware of society's silences around these issues and of the absence of a "language" in which to speak. Once again – what do we not want girls to tell us? Lees found that whatever their social class, girls were defined in terms of their sexual reputations rather than their attributes and potentialities, "a crucial mechanism in ensuring their subordination to boys and men." In spite of the fact that they were more successful than the boys around them at school, they saw their futures in terms of marriage and family, conceding to "constraints on the expression of any independent sexuality" (Lees, 1986, 15).

What is striking in the work of all these theorists is the consensus. Girls know things about their sexual selves and are willing and able to talk about what they know, but no one seems to want to listen. There is no forum for their thought and no language in which they can speak themselves. From this we might conclude that their knowledges are dangerous for adult women and men alike. Knowledge that cannot be spoken goes underground, but what is repressed will always find a way of returning. The desire that wells up in a girl's body during adolescence will not go away. If we cannot provide a better container for it than the stories of romance the culture is selling, all of that hot energy will move only in that one compelling direction. Acknowledging the range and depth of archetypal yearning that is constellated here, it becomes a question of where parents and teachers encourage girls to direct this yearning – within, toward the development of self or without, into the fantasies?

Valerie Walkerdine approaches this area from a psychoanalytical perspective asking "how do we come to want what we want?" (1984, 164). She traces the girl's shifting of desire from mother to father as enacted in cultural production through the process of fantasy. It is because these products are operating at levels much deeper than we might first imagine that they manage to reproduce heterosexuality so effectively, as they reproduce conventional notions of femininity – selflessness, victimization, passivity.
In the stories girls read (Walkerdine examines comics but the patterns persist in other genres), strong bonds link cruelty with sexual excitement and sexuality with death. But girls do not simply slip easily into the identities determined for them; identity is a process of repeated struggle and resistance, continually negotiated and renegotiated. Like Felman, Walkerdine questions the validity of merely changing the stories for girls because what cannot be seen are the deeper psychic workings of desire and the complex relational dynamics of the family in which desire operates.

For American writer Sharon Thompson romance for teenage girls is merely a "euphemism or metaphor for sex ... an introductory code word signalling permission for a discussion of sex ... an amalgam of relationship, passion, sex and desire" (1989, 355). Speaking openly about sexual pleasure though, is not yet possible. "It is far less forbidden to say 'I had sex,' than to say 'I had pleasure'" (Thompson, 1989, 362). Many of the old sexual bargains hold firm with the girls Thompson interviews, and she argues that "consciousness raising at puberty could be very important to young girls coming of age sexually because it is precisely at this point that many take on femininity like stigma" (377) and that, if we do not take on these issues, we leave girls "out on the jagged cutting edge created by the separation of sex from reproduction" (378). The sexual arena remains a minefield.

Kostash sums up how it feels to be a teenage girl: "At the heart of her experience, however, is her utter lack of belief that she has the right to dispose of her body, her self, as she sees fit. Where on earth would she have acquired such a belief?" (1987, 108). So the dangerous dynamic of dissociation that Gilligan named works on the body as well as the mind.

To listen to what girls tell us is to begin to make a change, as all Gilligan's projects have shown. But to listen is to take another kind of risk.

There is also risk in girls' continued healthy development. That risk is the risk of change. To listen to girls whose voices are ordinarily met with silence in the larger world is to invite disruption, disturbance or dissolution of the status quo. To support the strengths, intelligence, resilience, and knowledge of girls whose culture or class is marginalized
by society is to support political, social, educational and economic change. It may be easier to sacrifice girls than to support their development, and when girls sense this, it may be hard for them, with the best of intentions, not to give up on themselves and sacrifice their own hopes. (Gilligan et al., 1995, 202-3)

It is at the onset of adolescence that girls are suddenly made aware of the consequences of their gender. They can no longer avoid noticing the urgency with which their culture is telling them what they may and may not do and how it would use them. The wide world which is supposed to be theirs grows more and more narrow the more they understand themselves, friends pitted against one another, in the crucial competition for the best available men. Clever, ambitious, driven to careers they may be, but they will share, in their most intimate spaces, the understanding that what they really need and what they are expected to get, is love.

With startling synchronicity I can recognize, with the detachment of forty years that, at the same time that puberty catapulted me into embodied femininity, the surrounding culture offered me few stories about how to live a successful embodied female life. The stories that it did provide, in abundance, were pale, wan, insipid tales that had the blood sucked out of them, stories that failed miserably to speak to the burgeoning desire of my new body. Once discernibly, visibly, unmistakably female, you could no longer make anything happen. Things happened to you. Desire, power and agency – who would have understood? I never wanted to be a teacher. Teachers lived pale, wan, insipid lives. I wanted to be a bride. I looked in the mirror and found myself wanting. I never wanted to be a teacher. It was something to fall back on.

*   *   *

To be brought into the social order as a girl is to understand that your body is all that counts and that it is not yours to dispose of as you see fit. It is to understand that the world is not ready to hear what you know. It is to see that there are few women’s lives for you to emulate which are not encoded in the story of romance. No story evokes more resonantly the perils of being born a girl into a patriarchal culture that has no place for
her than the story of Diana, the real life Princess who waited patiently for her Prince to come and give her the embodied love she needed:

At the age of 14 I just remember thinking I wasn't very good at anything, that I was hopeless. I couldn't understand why I was perhaps a nuisance to have around, which, in later years, I've perceived as being part of the [whole question of the] son. The child who died before me was a son and both [parents] were crazy to have a son and heir and there comes a third daughter. "What a bore, we're going to have to try again." I've recognized that now, and that's fine, I accept that. (Morton, 13 Oct. 97, 100)

No wonder that …

[t]he bulimia started the week after we got engaged. [Charles] put his hand on my waistline and said: "Oh, a bit chubby here, aren't we?" That triggered off something in me. And the Camilla thing – I was desperate, desperate. I remember the first time I made myself sick. I was so thrilled because I thought this was the release of tension. The first time I was measured for my wedding dress I was 29 inches around the waist; the day I got married I was 23½ inches. I had shrunk into nothing from February to July. (Morton, 13 Oct. 97, 104)
CHAPTER THREE:
A GIRL READING, A GIRL WRITING:
DESPERATELY SEEKING JANE

Children's books, mythology, stories, tales, all reflect the myths born of the pride and the desires of men; thus it is that through the eyes of men that the little girl discovers the world and reads therein her destiny. ... In novels of adventure it is the boys who take a trip around the world, who travel as sailors on ships, who live in the jungle of breadfruit. All important events take place through the agency of men. (Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex.)

As a girl or woman learns to read, she learns to imagine alternatives to her situation. But if what she reads leaves her out, she may see these alternatives as unreal – making her more, not less disempowered, the more she 'learns'. (Peggy Means McIntosh, Women's Review of Books.)

The first word I can remember learning is “picture.” I am sitting in the highchair in the kitchen of the apartment on Broadway Avenue, the darkly-green boulevarded downtown street where I live, when the linguistic and the aesthetic are first bound together for me. My grandmother, her grey hair pulled neatly back in a bun, her thin arm pointing to the wall to indicate something, says “Picture.” “Picture,” she repeats in her heavily-accented English, so that it comes out more like “Piktcha.” Do I really remember understanding, at that precise moment, that spoken words represented things? My grandmother taught me to speak, was my first teacher, loved me with an intensity I cannot even approximate, created a magic world in which I lived my childhood. What I cannot remember is much of my mother. She slept late in the mornings, dressed beautifully, and went out, shopping or with friends. I spoke Yiddish before I spoke English; my grandmother wanted it that way. My world was filled with words.

My grandmother, so the story goes, spoke seventeen languages, had a university education in Russia where her father was a gentleman farmer until things got bad for the Jews. She was clever, a rebel, fell in love and married someone her family didn't approve
of, went off to live in Argentina, found she couldn't have children with this man, wrote to her father, who agreed to send her passage back to Russia on condition that she get a divorce, reluctantly accepted his terms because she wanted children passionately, emigrated to Canada with her family, and married my grandfather (a widower who drove a cart selling coal and wood and who needed a wife to look after his young daughter). She did not really love him. He was handsome and charming, according to her daughter-in-law, my aunt. My mother, born when her mother was forty-six, did not like her father. He was stingy and mean, favoring his first daughter, child of the wife he loved. When I was born, my grandmother came to live with her daughter to take care of me, and my grandfather went to live elsewhere. So I guess my grandmother was twice divorced.

She was a brilliant woman with an abundant classical education, who met with her friends to discuss books every Sunday night until she died, a radical political thinker in the Labour Zionist tradition, a heretic who put milk in the mashed potatoes when she was serving chicken (thus breaking the rules of Kashruth), a mystic who would sit at the end of my bed when I was sick, the room darkened, intoning prayers from her tattered red leather prayer book as if she would beseech all the spirits of the other world to make me well. I mattered. Her life has woven itself into mine. She has been my role model with her love of children, her gift for languages, her intellectual life and the insistent demands of the everyday/everynight world which kept her away from it. I have no conscious awareness of setting out to make my life hers.

My grandmother read me Aesop's fables in Yiddish. The stories that she made up for me, my Baba's "meinsas," were reworked versions of classical mythology. Once I asked her where babies came from. She told me they sprang from their mother's foreheads. Nearly twenty years later when I was an undergraduate Classics student, I drew my breath in deeply when I learned that Athena, goddess of Wisdom, had sprung from the forehead of her father Zeus. It was my grandmother's story in more ways than one. It was not the world of the body that she would have chosen to give me. Her

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17 I am indebted to Dorothy Smith for this way of conceptualizing the quotidian (D. Smith, 1990, 56).
embodied life brought her little pleasure; she rarely tasted the splendid delicacies she carefully prepared. It was the mind world that she gave me, laid out like a feast upon a silver table, the world she had shared with her father, the fathers' world.

When I was four, I left my grandmother's world to attend nursery school at the synagogue where my family were members. We travelled there in a taxi, about five of us, because our fathers took the cars to work. The same taxi driver picked us up every morning. His nickname for me was "Gigglewater." I was a somewhat nervous child. But I was happy. Memory asks me to question how much I enjoyed my "formal" education.

Moving from the deeply evocative, mythical and mystical world that my grandmother created at home into the pale and public world of school was a precarious transition. In grade one I threw up every morning before I went out the door. What was happening there that I wanted no part of? They couldn't teach me to read. My mother had already taught me at home. I can remember wishing the pages away as I searched for word from Jane. What did I care about Dick? Little girls and their ways were what I longed for. Perhaps I understood that for all that 'private' women had the power to produce the home world, from the moment I stepped through the door into formal education, 'public' women used their power differently. Women teaching seemed too large (from the vulnerability of a child's perspective) and too small (from the perspective of the larger world) all at the same time. Was this what growing up was all about? No wonder I threw up.

Nonetheless, "[w]e enter our language, are changed by it, and change it," explains Margaret Meek (1992, xiii). She continues:

Before they discover literature as an academic institution, children read with the whole of themselves. Their bodies arch over and around the books that help to sort out both language and the world. Possession, a construct explored by A.S. Byatt at great length in a novel (1990), is something they know as part of the experience of stories. They first come to take it for granted, then lose, and afterwards try to rediscover it as thought and feeling, separately." (Meek, 1992, xiv)
But if I was an engaged reader, I was a critical one too. I knew what I was looking for. I turn to the shelf of books that I have saved from my girlhood. It is not the picture books of early childhood that beckon me. Though it was my parents who read these to me and not my precious grandmother, it is easy to remember the stories that counted. I loved *Molly and the Sabbath Queen* where ten-year-old Molly, the only girl in the family, saves the day and prepares the Sabbath meal when her mother is needed to deal with an emergency. But it was *The Little Engine Who Could* that dominated the mythology of my childhood, though I know my grandmother introduced me to finer fare. What was the nature of my charged connection with that little (female) engine? "What readers do with texts matters as much as what texts are purported to say" (Bogdan, 1992, xxv).

I can remember searching the library shelves in late childhood for chapter books about girls. Feeling the absence. Wanting more. I was ten when I met *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) and was whisked away into the world of Montgomery's girls (plenty of teachers there). But when I had finished those, there was nothing left to read. Here are the polite, pale followers of Anne: Cherry Ames, Nancy Drew, Polly-What's-Her-Name (I'm not making this up), Lisbet Leads. Of course I wanted to read stories about girls.

Books and illness are linked in childhood memory. When I am sick, my mother reads to me. One winter a perilously high fever makes me delirious but my mother is reading aloud the autobiography of Pavlova, and I am past being captivated: I am utterly swept away, trance-like, drugged with fever, carried up and off into the dancer's life. I am Pavlova. So biography and autobiography begin to satisfy my cravings for agency, my need to locate a space where women do things with their lives. Where women's lives do not look like my mother's. I read science fiction voraciously. I need the promise of future worlds.

There are days when I cannot go to school. It's all just too much for me; my mother is indulgent. I lie in bed and read all day. It's lucky there's a public library on my corner. The characters in books are more than real to me, an only child who needs the inhabitants of imaginary worlds. I take these "mental health days" to fill myself with
words, though it will take me many years to possess a theoretical understanding of how the books that I read become me, restructure my being, how (reworking Tennyson's "Ulysses") "I am a part of all that I have [read]" (1958, 66). Somehow a teacher notices me in grade four. I have made quite a science out of not being noticed at school, so I can spend my days out the window dreaming. A quiet, polite, obedient child, I will come to claim my years of silence as resistance. I wanted not much of what school had to offer.

Two early childhood reading experiences hold me incandescently. One is a long out-of-print book called *The Swish of the Curtain* (1943), written by an English actress named Pamela Brown, her only book, the story of a group of children (mostly girls) who formed a theatre company on their own and put on plays for their neighborhood (surely autobiographical). I crossed the great divide of ocean with these British children whose names and lives were so different from mine, revelled with them, worried with them, held my breath in suspense before opening night as they did. I, too, would come to try my hand at writing plays for friends.

This book was given to me during a childhood illness by Noli, the beautiful young bride of the much-loved orphaned older cousin who lived with my family. It was a thick book with an orange cover and picture plates in it which Noli, the divine, had painted in water-colours. She was an accomplished artist. Though my mother read it to me when I first received it, there is no counting the number of times I reread it on my own. There is no discernible reason why the book should have been so resonant for me. Conflated in my response were the ebullient initiative and agency of the children, the aesthetic of the water-colour paintings and their imbrication in the whole cultural dialogue of marriage which surrounded me at that time.

I was about five when they married, this handsome, prince-like older cousin/surrogate brother and his very beautiful bride. They asked me to be a flower girl at the wedding. Dressed in a creation of pale pink tulle layered with satin, I became a princess. Was fantasy born there, in what I made of that experience? In the ‘Social’ columns of the Winnipeg papers dreamy photographs and long descriptions of weddings
were published. Something happened when my mother showed me my name in print, in the newspaper. She had to teach me to read so that I could read the wedding columns for myself. **I learned to read so I could read the wedding columns.** In spite of all the genres I was to encounter later in my self-designed reading curriculum, the romance remained the most powerful story of them all. It was the beginning of my formative education.

* * *

By the end of her freshman year, a woman student would have learned something about intellectual neutrality; she would be learning, in fact, how to think like a man. And so she would go on, increasingly with male professors to guide her. (Showalter, 1971, 855)

Most of us read books with this question in our mind: what does this say about my life? (Drabble, 1978, 54)

The analysis of the texts that follows is not a conventional textual analysis. My objective here is to show how, from childhood, I fashioned my life out of the information I found in books, how I took books quite literally and very seriously to be road maps for behaviour. The strategies of New Criticism (popular from the 1930s to the 1960s) which denied the role of both the author and the reader in the construction of meaning, strategies that I learned to emulate in my undergraduate literature classes, never managed to satisfy my particular need to know. The reader-response theory that followed it, somewhat utopian in its assumptions, nevertheless provided feminist theorists with a better place to begin, now that the reader’s presence in the textual experience was at least recognized; in John Harker’s words, “the reader is no longer the receiver of meaning but rather the maker of meaning” (1992, 29).

As Patrocinio Schweickart explained in 1986, feminist criticism is a form of *praxis*, and as such, it intends to change the world. It is through the act of reading that literature is enacted as *praxis*. Schweickart’s insight that “[l]iterature acts on the world by acting on its readers” (1986, 39), invites us to recall Woolf’s insight (1929/1977) that (white middle-class) women writing had to think back through their mothers, to unearth and recreate a woman-authored literary tradition in order to understand themselves more
fully in the present. Long before the reader-response theorists began to acknowledge it, some women understood, without perhaps being able to articulate, that books changed lives and that the powerlessness of the women portrayed in the classic texts delivered a profound message to the middle-class women who were privileged enough to read them.

The androcentric literary canon prompted Woolf (1929) to exhort the young women to whom she was speaking in *Room* to write new books from their own perspectives. It was not enough to see the world through men’s eyes. “I should remind you how much depends upon you, and what an influence you can exert upon the future” (1929/1977, 105). Learning to read, as we have known it, is learning to read as a man, as Showalter pointed out in the quotation above. The process by which this occurred was later termed “immasculation” by Judith Fetterley (1978), whose work will be further considered shortly. To counteract the powerlessness that results from an “endless division of self upon self” (1978, xiii), which Fetterley saw as the natural outcome of reading the androcentric canon, she proposed the model of the “resistant reader.” “The reader can submit to the power of the text, or she can take control of the reading experience. The recognition of a choice suddenly makes visible the normative dimension of the feminist story: she *should* choose the second alternative” (Schweickart, 1986, 49).

Making this choice hinges upon the critical notions of engagement and detachment and assumes that a strenuous effort will be required for women to make their detachment steady enough to ensure questioning and resistance. What the female reader would have to resist most carefully was her own desire, as it was stimulated by the reading of male-authored texts. It was the profundity of this desire that “swept her” away and foreclosed her judgement. But if women have been “seduced” by male-authored texts and theories, Jane Miller (1990) suggests that they have also been complicit in their own seductions.

Coming to consciousness is an important part of learning to re-read as a woman. The canon must be augmented by woman-authored texts. Language must no longer be viewed as a transparent medium, but as a highly political artifact, forged by men. Each
individual reader will approach knowledge from a particular 'situation' as Donna Haraway's has pointed out (see footnote 6, p. 22). All these issues are best addressed for me in Bogdan's (1992) articulation of the “feeling, power, and location” problems of literature teaching. She advises that

awareness of the political context of the engaged reader is a logically and psychologically prior question in respecting readers’ individual, collective, and imaginative identities. That is the motivating force behind the project of the re-educated imagination in raising the feeling, power, and location problems. If literary literacy is to be truly emancipatory, it must acknowledge patterns of dominance and control of the culture and provide for recognition of those patterns as part of its educational mandate. (Bogdan, 1992, 153)

Moreover there is a moral dimension to reading. Before Plato’s banishment of the poets from his ideal Republic, to which I will return, “the poets (especially the tragic poets) were understood by most Athenians to be the central ethical teachers and thinkers of Greece, the people to whom above all, the city turned, and rightly turned, with its questions about how to live” (Nussbaum, 1990, 15). Novels, continues Nussbaum,

take our common humanity for their theme, implying that what is at issue is not merely some idiosyncratic event that actually happened, but a possibility or possibilities for human life....novels conduct a philosophical investigation into the good of a human being. (1990, 390)

Politics and morality must be explored in the literature classroom at the same time as the genuine pleasure of reading must be honoured. Margaret Meek’s description above of the depth of the young child’s engagement with the text honours my own memories of it. I was swept away by the stories I read and I loved the feeling of being borne aloft on the wings of books. All the theory I subsequently learned at school is very much backgounded now as I examine closely (and idiosyncratically) the critical texts of my youth to illuminate the correspondences between the lives I read passionately about and the life I created for myself in the wake of that reading.

*     *     *

“Isn't that beautiful? What did that tree, leaning out from the bank, all white and lacy, make you think of?” she asked. “Well now, I dunno,” said Matthew.
"Why, a bride, of course — a bride all in white with a lovely misty veil. I've never seen one, but I can imagine what she would look like. I don't ever expect to be a bride myself. I'm so homely nobody will ever want to marry me — unless it might be a foreign missionary. I suppose a foreign missionary mightn't be very particular. But I do hope that some day I shall have a white dress. That is my highest ideal of earthly bliss. I just love pretty clothes. And I've never had a pretty dress in my life that I can remember — but of course it's all the more to look forward to, isn't it? And then I can imagine that I'm dressed gorgeously. This morning when I left the asylum I felt so ashamed because I had to wear this horrid old wincey dress. All the orphans wear them, you know. A merchant in Hopeton last winter donated three hundred yards of wincey to the asylum. Some people said it was because he couldn't sell it. But I'd rather believe that it was out of the kindness of his heart, wouldn't you? When we got on the train I felt as if everybody must be looking at me and pitying me. But I just went to work and imagined that I had on the most beautiful pale blue silk dress — because when you are imagining you might as well imagine something worth while — and a big hat all flowers and nodding plumes, and a gold watch, and kid gloves and boots. I felt cheered up right away and I enjoyed my trip to the Island with all my might." (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 17-18)

Carolyn Heilbrun maintains that "[o]nly in the last third of the twentieth century have women broken through to a realization of the narratives that have been controlling their lives" (Heilbrun, 1988, 60). What narrative control did Montgomery's feisty Anne of Green Gables exert on the girl who had learned to read in order to read the wedding columns? Anne's love of clothes, her desire to believe the best of people, her active engagement with the power of the imagination — inside she could have been me. How devoutly I wished to become her, I cannot say. Anne who feared nothing, Anne who spoke her mind. Anne who dreamed of being a bride. There would be no way to estimate what Montgomery's book meant to me, nor to say how many times I read and reread it. What did it mean that Anne became both a teacher and a bride, that her late mother was a teacher who abandoned teaching when she married? "A husband was enough responsibility" (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 50).

"It's such a relief to talk when one wants to and not be told that children should be seen and not heard" (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 20). Anne tells Matthew as the novel

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18 Cecilia Morgan has pointed out that Anne's mother would not so much have abandoned teaching as she would have been forced out of it by the marriage bar.
opens. "She's got too much to say," Marilla insists, "but she might be trained out of that" (54). Anne will make her voice heard, as she will insert her insurgent life into the social order of Avonlea. She will ask provocative questions: "Which would you rather be if you had the choice – divinely beautiful or angelically good?" (23). She will claim more than once that it is the power of her imagination that has helped her survive her many trials.

When Anne and her friends form a club for writing stories, Marilla scoffs: "You'll get a pack of nonsense into your heads and waste time that should be put on your lessons. Reading stories is bad enough but writing them is worse" (268). Anne’s promise to include a moral fails to reassure Marilla who has no more patience for Anne's recitations than she does for her stories. They, too, are "rank foolishness" (245).

I don't approve of children's getting up concerts and racing about to practices. It makes them vain and forward and fond of gadding. ... All I hope is that you'll behave yourself. I'll be heartily glad when all this fuss is over and you'll be able to settle down. You are simply good for nothing just now with your head stuffed full of dialogues and groans and tableaux. As for your tongue it's a marvel it's not clean worn out. (246)

In spite of the moral injunctions around her, Anne does not abandon the fantastic in the stories she writes. "It's so much more romantic to end a story up with a funeral than a wedding" (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 267). Dead heroines have such appeal for her that she chooses to act out Tennyson's poem "Elaine" and nearly drowns in the process. If she could she would change her name to Cordelia, Rosamond, or Geraldine – all women who have come to bad ends. Even poverty is romanticized; "[t]hat is one consolation when you are poor – there are so many more things you can imagine about" (297).

Anne manages to indulge her imagination while keeping both feet firmly on the ground, refusing to give the handsome, clever, persistent Gilbert Blythe the time of day. She makes mistake after mistake: giving Diana currant wine instead of raspberry cordial, using hair dye that turns her own hair green instead of black, pouring liniment in the cake instead of vanilla. The long litany of these mishaps can be analyzed in the terms which Valerie Walkerdine uses to analyze girls' comics, as vehicles which "provide solutions
and escapes, ways out, in fantasy and in practice, by the proffering of what and who one might be" (1990, 92).

The major narrative device which renders these difficult circumstances palatable is precisely that they are fantastic. That is, they are removed from the everyday in various ways: a different historical period or geographical location, and the overwhelming use of ‘surrogate’ parents and siblings. In the majority of stories, the children do not live with their biological parents or siblings but are removed by various tragic circumstances to surrogate families who are cruel to them. It is my contention that it is these devices which help make possible the engagement with difficult material. That is, identification is possible at the level of fantasy – where an identification with a ‘reality’ presented as mirroring the life of the readers may well be rejected as ‘not like me’ or indeed ‘too close for comfort.’ The argument is, then, that the distance, the difference, renders these stories more, not less effective, and such effectiveness is not to be easily countered by a simple realism. ... The concept of fantasy being put forward here is one which presents not a rational or passive appropriation of an image, but an active engagement with, and construction of, the imaginary fulfillment of a wish. It is in this sense that fiction is not a mere set of images, but an ensemble of textual devices for engaging the reader in the fantasy. Because the fantasies created in the text play upon wishes already present in the lives of young children, the resolutions offered will relate to their own wishes or desires. In this conception of change, there is no simple response to a positive image but a complex psychic organization. So the reader who engages in this fiction lives a ‘real’ life which is at the same time organized in relation to fantasy. (92-93)

One of the major themes that Walkerdine discerns in the comics she studies is the “production of girls as victims”; difficult personal circumstances are “potentially exciting because they are the subject of adventures” (1990, 95). The way of dealing with cruelty and violence is through “selfless helpfulness.” But if selfless helpfulness is the singular lesson of growing up female, as Walkerdine maintains in the context of the contemporary texts she is analyzing, then she prompts me to ask what Anne, created at the turn of the century, does with her anger. Though she never tires of aiming for the best in herself, and despite her many setbacks, “never make[s] the same mistake twice” (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 226), there is not much room in the text for her anger, beyond the tantrum provoked by Mrs. Rachel Lynde when they first meet:
“Well, they didn't pick you for your looks, that's sure and certain,” was Mrs. Rachel Lynde's emphatic comment. ... “She's terribly skinny and homely, Marilla. Come here, child, and let me have a look at you. Lawful heart, did any one ever see such freckles. And hair as red as carrots! Come here, child, I say.”

Anne “came there,” but not exactly as Mrs. Rachel expected. With one bound she crossed the kitchen floor and stood before Mrs. Rachel, her face scarlet with anger, her lips quivering, and her whole slender form trembling from head to foot.

“I hate you,” she cried in a choked voice, stamping her foot on the floor. “I hate you - I hate you - I hate you -” a louder stamp with each assertion of hatred. “How dare you call me skinny and ugly? How dare you say I'm freckled and red-headed? You are a rude, impolite, unfeeling woman!”

“Anne!” exclaimed Marilla in consternation.

But Anne continued to face Mrs. Rachel undauntedly, head up, eyes blazing, hands clenched, passionate indignation exhaling from her like an atmosphere.

“How dare you say such things about me?” she repeated vehemently. “How would you like to have such things about you? How would you like to be told that you are fat and clumsy and probably hadn't a spark of imagination in you? I don't care if I do hurt your feelings by saying so! I hope I hurt them. You have hurt mine worse than they were ever hurt before even by Mrs. Thomas' intoxicated husband. And I'll never forgive you for it, never, never!”

Stamp! Stamp!

“Did anybody ever see such a temper!” exclaimed the horrified Mrs. Rachel. (83-84)

What a brilliant portrait of female anger this remains! As a child who had tantrums too and was humiliated for them (they called me Sarah Heartburn), I know what great consolation I took in reading this. When Anne refuses to go to school because she has been shamed there, Marilla uncharacteristically decides to leave Anne alone to make her decision about when to go back. This anger and its accompanying agency are subversive at a time when Victorian women were socialized to be good, polite, selfless and controlled. “What has been forbidden to women is anger,” writes Carolyn Heilbrun in 1988, “together with the open admission of the desire for power and control over one's own life” (13).

“'Good girls' are not always good – but where and how is their badness lived? What is the struggle which results from the attempt to be or live a unitary identity?” (Walkerdine, 1990, 103). Walkerdine's questions underscore her conviction that there is
no fixed and measurable unity in the construction of personality. The taking on of identity is a dynamic process, endlessly renegotiated. What is important is to "understand the relationship between those practices which not only define correct femininity and masculinity but produce them by creating positions to occupy" (103). The taking on of femininity is a continual struggle for girls. Through her many trials, tribulations, and acts of entrenched resistance Anne struggles valiantly to be a 'good girl,' though she admits that it's easier to be good if your clothes are nice and that she would rather be beautiful than clever.

What is suppressed in all these accounts of striving for goodness is the role of female sexuality, both in the girls and in the women around them, – an apt reflection of the mores of rural Canadian society in 1905. Even the arrival of a lady teacher in Avonlea is a "dangerous innovation" (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 232). Something of a rebel, Miss Stacy will lead her students to "think and explore and discover for themselves," as she will encourage "straying from the old beaten paths" to a degree that will shock Mrs. Lynde and the school trustees “who viewed all innovations on established methods rather dubiously” (325).

Prissy Andrews' infatuation with Mr. Phillips, Avonlea's young schoolmaster, the first of many romances with teachers that I would encounter first in literature and later experience in life, was inspired by the real-life flirtation that sixteen-year-old Maud Montgomery shared with her highschool teacher, John Mustard (Doody, 1997, 13). Imagining Diana's wedding, Anne provides us with an articulation of the demands of "compulsory heterosexuality" seventy years before Adrienne Rich (1980) coined the term and twenty years before Woolf (1929/1977) wrote that "Chloe liked Olivia": "Diana dressed in snowy garments, with a veil, and looking as beautiful and regal as a queen; and me the bridesmaid, with a lovely dress too, and puffed sleeves, but with a breaking heart hid beneath my smiling face" (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 152). I was ten years old when I first read Anne's life and ten years old when I met Rachel, my first "kindred spirit"; the intensity and devotion of Anne's love for Diana Barry was mirrored by my own passion
for my real-life best friend. In the same school year that we met, our class play was the story of Sir Frances Drake. Rachel played Queen Elizabeth while I was the lady-in-waiting. I wished for the power to freeze time and hold our precious relationship inviolate. The look in Rachel's eyes when she spoke to Sir Frances entirely excluded me.

Despite the air of Calvinism that breathes heavily upon Avonlea, Montgomery does not abandon the passionate/sexual realm as resolutely as might appear. Diana's name, recalls the pagan Diana of the Ephesians and their refusal of Christianity. Diana is the “fierce goddess of chastity and the hunt, of the wild wood and of the shadowy groves” (Doody, 1997, 25). Surrounded, in the text, with references to the colour red in varying hue, her nature is passionate, Dionysian; she is an apt alter-ego for the rebellious, red-headed Anne. And it is Diana who can think “perhaps it would be nobler to marry some wild, dashing, wicked young man and reform him” (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 306).

Montgomery wrote in her diary of a profound sexual attraction to a man she considered beneath her and subsequently refused as a suitor. The presence of these elements in her novel suggests that she comes about as far with her enactment of female sexuality as her historical moment will allow. It is interesting that Diana carries the associations of sexual passion around her. Anne, the central character, imaginative as she is, remains untainted, untouched, innocent, practical. Montgomery has ambitious designs on her, career aspirations.

Romance in Montgomery's novels, as Elizabeth Epperley notes, “chiefly a matter of representing heterosexual love as it leads to marriage,” is in Anne, “clearly subordinated to the larger romance themes of quest, of search for identity, of imaginative reconciliation” (qtd. in Doody, 1997, 20). Anne is romantic in the tradition of the Romantic poets; she honours the imagination as a form of true perception. But as much as Anne validates romantic traditions, she is not trapped within them. “Young men are all very well in their place, but it doesn't do to drag them into everything” (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 306). The man she chooses is not a callous cad. He has pursued her devotedly for years. His name is a brilliant turn-around on all those storied women whose names
have echoed the virtues they embodied. He is no dark and moody Heathcliff. He is bright, of the light – blithe. He and Anne are intellectual equals. With him as her partner Anne can claim some agency for herself, and, more importantly, she can live beyond the ending, beyond the many endings of the novels Montgomery wrote about her.

If Anne is loved unconditionally, it is by Matthew – as I felt loved without qualification by my own father. It is Matthew who urges her not to give up on the romantic entirely. Marilla, on the other hand, is strict, judgmental, withholding and unromantic. “When I was a girl I wasn’t so much as allowed to look at a novel” (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 308). She loves Anne and is proud of her but refuses to show it. As ‘mother’ to an adolescent daughter, Marilla is expected to be Anne’s stern moral guardian:

The lesson of a love that should display itself easily in spoken word and open look was one Marilla could never learn. But she had learned to love this slim, gray-eyed girl with an affection all the deeper and stronger from its very undemonstrativeness. Her love made her afraid of being unduly indulgent, indeed. She had an uneasy feeling that it was rather sinful to set one’s heart so intensely on any human creature as she had set hers on Anne, and perhaps she performed a sort of unconscious penance for this by being stricter and more critical than if the girl had been less dear to her. Certainly Anne herself had no idea how Marilla loved her. (305)

Margaret Doody explains that “[t]his relationship, of a talented girl with an apparently emotionless or stern older woman, forms a staple of Montgomery’s fiction” (1997, 17). It replicates the orphaned Montgomery’s own relationship with her maternal grandmother, perhaps the central relationship of her life. The development of the story, as the authors of its annotated version point out, really follows the emotional education of Marilla, who is an apt mirror for Anne’s own emotional deprivation. The real love story of the novel, they claim, is the “difficult, evolving love between Anne and Marilla,” (21) and in it, the “Child is Mother to the Woman.” (Doody, 1997, 27).

Marilla observes that some of the things Anne says, though she is only a child, “were what [Marilla] herself had really thought deep down in her heart for years, but had never given expression to” (106). This is precisely the silenced wisdom that Gilligan's
research would recover for us. Anne's admission that "there's such a lot of different Annes in me" (205) remains an apt summary of what it is to be a pre-adolescent girl today.

I identify so strongly with Anne whose 'mother' loves her more than she can show or tell. Her life is so like mine. We share difficult relationships with the women whom we love so deeply, our 'stern moral guardians.' We share small families: Matthew, Marilla, Anne; Edward, Frances, Lesley. Matthew develops heart trouble. My father will too. But Anne pushes on with her school work, succeeding in spite of the fact that she can't do geometry. So do I, though math terrifies me. Anne wants to please Matthew. I want to please my father, to live out the academic enterprise that he abandoned too early. Anne thinks it is a "worthy purpose to want to be a teacher" (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 311). In her mind it is a "very noble profession." My father would have called it that.

Jane and Ruby are going to study to be teachers. That is the height of their ambition. Ruby says she will only teach for two years after she gets through, and then she intends to be married. Jane says she will devote her whole life to teaching, and never, never marry, because you are paid a salary for teaching, but a husband won't pay you anything, and growls if you ask for a share in the egg and butter money. (312)

Anne can talk about money and wonder why women can't be ministers. She can rejoice when she finds her name at the top of the list of 200 students who write entrance exams for Queen's (not King's, as it was in Halifax, but Queen's in that quietly, covertly feminist way that Montgomery mastered). "That moment was worth living for" (336). She can set her sights on the Avery scholarship, delighted to be so ambitious. "Just as soon as you attain to one ambition you see another one glittering higher up still" (361). As I would come to set my sights on the gold medal some years later. My argument is that, in so many ways, deeper than my memory of it, my life became hers. Literary knowledge, as Felman says, is "knowledge that knows it knows but doesn't know the meaning of its knowledge, does not know what it knows" (1987, 92, emphasis original). When I read that Anne has won the Avery, after all these years and beyond all 'knowledges,' I still cry.
The triumphant climax of the novel is not the winning of Gilbert's heart; it is the winning of the Avery scholarship, 250 dollars a year for four years at Redmond College, to pursue, not simply a teaching certificate, but a BA. When he hears that Anne has won, Matthew, ill by this time, says: “[w]ell now, I'd rather have you than a dozen boys, Anne. ... I guess it wasn't a boy that took the Avery scholarship, was it? It was a girl – my girl – my girl that I'm proud of” (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 376). He dies the next morning.

But Anne doesn't take the scholarship. Remembering the “selfless helpfulness” of the girls in the comics Walkerdine analyzes, her decision is a selfless one – to stay home with Marilla, who cannot be left alone at Green Gables with eyesight that is failing. But she is not entirely a victim. She sets aside her plans for college to teach school. Mrs. Lynde is happy to hear this. “You've got as much education now as a woman can be comfortable with. I don't believe in girls going to college with the men and cramming their heads full of Latin and Greek and all that nonsense” (392). My mother was in good company when she asked me, every time I undertook another step up the academic ladder, what I needed it for. And Anne's consolation prize, the reward for selflessness, is Gilbert, forgiven at last. The novel ends with these “good enemies” planning to become good friends.

But here is the curious thing, in terms of the claim I am making that this book influenced me much more profoundly that I realized until I undertook this close reading and remembering of it. I wrote most of what is written above without having reread the last fifty pages of the novel. Here is the passage I had written to end this section before I read those last fifty pages:

*Approaching the end of the novel Mrs. Rachel admits,*

*I did make a mistake in judging Anne, but it weren't no wonder, for an odder, unexpecteder witch of a child there never was in this world, that's what. There was no ciphering her out by the rules that worked with other children. It's nothing short of wonderful how she's improved these three years, but especially in looks. (318)*
So Anne, the quintessential outsider, the consummate rebel, has been brought into the social order at last. God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world. The process of female enculturation lumbers on. And yes, she is beautiful.

When I do reach the last page of the novel, I draw my breath in sharply as I read what Montgomery has actually written to end it: "'God's in his heaven, all's right with the world,' whispered Anne softly" (396). Somehow I have retained a memory of these precise words through more than forty years. How I came to read, the way in which I read, what I retained of the words, cadences, rhythms and themes of the texts I read remains, after much analysis, still mysterious. What I do know is that what I read taught me how to craft my life.

* * *

Mary Henley Rubio attributes Montgomery's "staying power" to Anne's shrewd questioning of the cultural values that come from her personal experiences:

Cultural historians have only begun to map Montgomery's international impact – in empowering women and, more generally, in undermining authoritarianism. When Poland's communist government tried to ban Anne and Montgomery's other books after the Second World War, those bureaucrats knew exactly what they were doing: Montgomery's vision is a subversive one. She despises cant, hypocrisy and power trippers. When little red-haired Anne first rode into Avonlea, she flamed into a tinderbox of puritan repression. But she herself was a positive force, and her fireball qualities breathed life into the pinched Presbyterian souls of Avonlea. (Rubio, 1997, D9)

Could I claim that Anne took root inside me then and that I kept her deep within me for years, patiently nurturing the instinct for rebellion? "Narrative," continues Rubio, "is a powerful medium that gives people the stories by which they live" (1997, D9).

Anne of Green Gables and the series of novels that followed it were written as children's novels at a time when the line between adult and juvenile fiction was not so clearly demarcated as it is today. Perhaps Montgomery realized that her message was too subversive to achieve publication as adult fiction. Astutely observant of the fact that romantic poetry managed to escape the strict Calvinist censorship that prevailed, and understanding that anger must be concealed at all costs, she disguised and "transmuted"
her social comments and her complaints about the status of women. It would take twenty years for Woolf to write: "It is fatal for a woman to lay the least stress on any grievance; to plead even with justice any cause; in any way to speak consciously as a woman. And fatal is not a figure of speech; for anything written with that conscious bias is doomed to death" (1929/1977, 99).

That critics have undervalued and dismissed Montgomery's work is more than a matter of simple Canadian self-deprecation. (The first full-scale academic study of her work was not published until 1992). This novel was subversive, insurgent. For Anne went past marriage to make a life for herself, albeit a life constrained by the domestic fictions of her time. After the first world war, Montgomery turned her hand to Emily's life, and Emily was a writer and not so sweet.

Anne's sturdy endurance in literary life and the broad appeal of the TV series created from it provide their own rebellious reading of her plaintive cry at the beginning of the novel: "You don't want me because I'm not a boy" (Montgomery, 1908/1956, 31). But, for that very reason, because she is not a boy, and perhaps also because she is an unruly girl, her story is rarely taught in schools and certainly not given its due in Canadian letters. I remember canvassing the parents of one of my grade four classes before teaching Anne as the core novel only to be told that the protagonist and her experiences were too distinctly female. In the end I chose lesser novels, with female protagonists all the same (though that was not made obvious in their titles), for the best of juvenile Canadian fiction is written by women and peopled by girls. The literary experiences we had in those texts provided windows into important historical moments and political issues. Anne's story would have taught more directly about growing up, developing character, setting goals and experiencing relationships in a turbulent emotional world. We would have taken a moral journey, questioning the way the world worked.

When my younger daughter was in grade eight, I received a call from one of the English teachers at her (girls') school. "We're looking for a Canadian coming-of-age
novel for the grade eights, so that we can retire *A Separate Peace* (Knowles, 1960/1975). Have you got any ideas?” I passed over Anne. She never even entered my mind. I judged her life too white-bread and prissy; orphanhood was out of style. Yet *Party of Five*, the successful TV series about a family of five siblings left on their own by the deaths of their parents, enjoys a wide audience. Children from intact nuclear families are reworking-through-fantasy the experience of orphanhood to their own needs and purposes. In the end the school did not retire *A Separate Peace* after all. That was the core novel my daughter read, in grade eight, in 1997, at an all-girls’ school: a novel about boys in an all-boys’ school....

What I am claiming in recreating Anne's world here is the powerful hold that a literary role model had on me at the same time that I affirm Walkerdine's conclusion that it is not simply a question of better role models, but a process of continuous reconstruction of identity as it occurs in the deeper negotiations and conflicts of the psyche. Intriguing is the fact that, in the surrendipitous process of writing, I am led back to my long-ago experience with Anne now, when I am one year an orphan myself. When I am feeling so keenly what it is to be alone, memory leads me back to Anne.

As a girl, I read all the Anne books, devouring them, savouring them, treasuring the moments I spent lost in that fragrant, tree-swept, full-blossomed, evocative world. And from Anne I went to Emily, reading the novels chronologically as Montgomery had written them. By the time I read Emily I was somewhat older, the pressures of adolescence were hard upon me, my father's family business was doing poorly, and I had more to worry about than I had ever had before. Emily did not engage me the way Anne did, the way she engaged other girls who read her. By the time I was thirteen or fourteen, books held me differently. More skeptical of the correspondence between word and world, I watched the chasm grow between them. How could books help me now when my life seemed so different, so modern, so material, so Jewish? As my obsession with reading waned, my passion for writing emerged. But I did not recognize that as positive. Unlike Perri Klass, pediatrician and writer, who remembers how reading the Emily books
changed her life by inspiring her to become an author, I was ashamed that I needed to write. Something must have been wrong with me. No one else I knew did this.

“Emily, why do you want to write? Give me your reason.”

“I want to be famous and rich,” said Emily coolly.

“Everybody does. Is that all?”

“No. I just love to write.”

“A better reason – but not enough – not enough. Tell me this – if you knew you would be poor as a churchmouse all your life – if you knew you’d never have a line published – would you still go on writing – would you?”

“Of course I would,” said Emily disdainfully. “Why, I have to write – I can’t help it ... I’ve just got to.” (Montgomery, qtd. in Klass, 1992, 1)

As Klass points out, “Anne is an original and spunky girl, with a certain amount of talent for writing verses and romantic tales, but Emily is a writer” (Klass, 1992, 36). Would abandoning Anne and her vocation in favour of Emily and hers have seemed to me a callous betrayal? Maybe the prospect of being “poor as a churchmouse” was just too terrifying for the realist in me, at a time in my embodied life when poverty seemed imminent. I did not understand, as Klass clearly did, that writing was “solace and balm” though I certainly felt it (Wiggin, qtd. in Klass, 36). Reviewing stories for girls about girls who write stories, Klass notes:

Whether they write from inspiration or because they must, these young women are not purists. They are keenly aware that a person can earn her living with her pen. They are, after all, orphans (Anne, Emily) or semi-orphans (Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm) or in straitened circumstances (Jo in Little Women). They will need to make their way in the world – and writing offers professional opportunities, a confluence of destiny and opportunity. For an aspiring writer growing up on these books, there was a fascinating element of professionalism, a hardheaded assumption that after the “flash,” the “writing fit,” there were manuscripts to submit, editors to second-guess, rejection slips to rise above. (37)

When I was ten, I found Anne and Rachel and lost my grandmother. Her death was an unspeakable loss. The major project of my grade five year at school was to write
and illustrate a storybook. Writing, I understand today, is an assertion against death/loss. My teacher, Mr. Peters, brash, young and innovative, spent the summer that separated grade five from grade six taking a special course in Evanston, Illinois, to learn to better teach us “gifted” children. He took my storybook along with him, proud to show that he had managed to get his students to produce such fine work. Then he sent my little book, “From Disaster to Fortune” (the adventures of Faline, the flying fish), off to a publisher. It was not accepted. There was a rejection slip in the book when, the following September, he handed it back to me. “They don't publish stories for children written by children,” was his explanation. It is difficult for a teacher to know just how much encouragement a student needs, yet that problem is seldom addressed in pre-service classrooms. Without support, encouragement, a mentor, it was too hard for me to hold onto my dream of being a writer. Would I be good enough?

In this rereading of Montgomery, I am recapitulating a process that has already become familiar to me in my graduate work. I am again in the realm of the autobiographical. It is not the route to teaching that I am tracing although I realize that the one is embedded in the other; now it is the recreation of my reading self. As I read and write, I am flooded with insight as it crosses with remembrance. How did I bypass Anne's shameful punishment at being forced to sit with the boys and not remember that, at best within a year of my first reading of the novel, Mr. Peters meted out the same punishment to me? I did not rebel as Anne did, by refusing to go to school, though my punishment was at least as unfair as hers had been and further fraught with the silence of my best friend Rachel (Mr. Peters' favorite), implicated in my crime, who did not take a stand. I complied. In my body I can still feel the humiliation of my punishment as an attack on my gender, the cruelest, most crippling attack. Sitting in the boys' row for what seemed like weeks or months, I sank like a stone into silence. And remained there for years and years and years. How much that speaks of the difference between my fictional alter-ego and myself!
For though I wished myself feisty, as high-spirited as legend held that my mother and grandmother had been, there was something in the way I was being brought up and in my inherent nature that made me 'sweet,' that created a need for me to be sweet. There was no question that unlike my mother and her mother before her, I was to be created a 'lady.' When I was born, my grandmother sewed lumps of sugar into the corners of my pillow to ensure that I would be sweet. _Zeesa_ was the Yiddish middle name they chose for me; _Zeesa_ – 'sweet one.' Together they wrote a narrative of what my life might be and alone, I lived it. And to be sweet meant also to be silent:

and even a generous mother, who sincerely seeks her child's welfare, will as a rule think that it is wiser to make a "true woman" of her, since society will more readily accept her if this is done. (De Beauvoir, 1952/1974, 317)

Beyond all the obvious correspondences between my life as I lived it and Anne's earlier one, there are questions I must ask. Reflecting on the close affection between Marilla and Anne, I see how Anne is enabled by her historical moment to live a freer life than was Marilla by hers and therefore that Anne, as adventurer, sallies forth into the larger world and brings news of it back to Marilla. For though Marilla has been an obedient student of her culture's injunctions against women, there is the sense that she wonders too, about the workings of the world outside Green Gables' gates. Perhaps the urge for rebellion is bred in all those whose lived lives hold little power. I am reminded of my mother's continual "What's new?" and of my supervisor's recent comment about her daughter, home for a visit: "She lights up our lives." It is the girls who are charged with this responsibility of taking the measure of their culture and bringing the news home. The boys are too busy making culture to take the time. And no one expects them to. It is the girls who lead the doubled lives, in the public and the private worlds and negotiating the spaces between them. If doubleness has been a problem for women of my era, then it is one so much the more keenly for today's young women. Who is listening to help them through?
I fought school for a long time, dilly-dallying, day-dreaming, maintaining a stiff and steady reluctance to be brought into my culture, to being enculturated. I did not come easily to wanting to be a student. So why would I have wanted to be a teacher? To do it better than Mr. Peters? I used to think that it was in adolescence that I divided into two, but now I recognize that the process began when I was six, when I came to school, when I came to ‘formal’ reading, so that by adolescence I was quite accustomed to living on two levels – the inner me (who wanted to be a writer), the outer me (who would become a teacher). In girlhood I took my inchoate understanding that the real world had no place for girls in it and sidestepped that world by reading. In adolescence I became a writer. But I hid my stories and poems beneath the white paper lining of my drawer until what was beneath the lining filled the entire space. There was no room in the real world for what I thought and felt.

Meanwhile, what I was supposed to be reading held me limply. I had enough judgment to know that the ‘Scholastic Book Club’ romances that all the girls in my class ordered obediently every month and devoured devotedly did not belong in the same ballpark as Anne. I yearned nostalgically for what we now call her agency, for her ability to make things happen, to be a student, and yes, along the way, to get her man. Marcy, protagonist of the only one of those many junior romances that I have retained, taught me to wait, to expect others (a man) to make me happy. Anne earned her own happiness. (I will return to Marcy in Chapter Four). So I felt cheapened and cheated by these books while none of my friends seemed to notice. Struggling to accept these new terms, I strenuously mourned the loss of my childhood freedom to define myself individually, idiosyncratically. I wrote poems of protest and complaint. With the wisdom of hindsight, I honour how much I knew.

When I was fourteen, at the end of grade nine, the last thing we did as we left our junior high school for the very last time, was to bury a copy of Lady Chatterley's Lover (Lawrence, 1928/1997) in the playground. It had been banned in Canada, and a friend's older sister had brought a copy back from the States. All that school year we had
circulated it among ourselves, seven or eight of us, who were tight friends. We disguised it in a brown paper cover (as we had covered all of our school books for years, to keep them nice and clean), and wrote the words Roget's Thesaurus (!) on the front. It was about the same size. On weekends we hid in our beds, sheets pulled up over our heads, and read of a woman's passion. What did it mean to me? Nothing specific of it remains, except the excitement of having access to covert knowledge, of breaking the rules, of shared fellowship around the possibility of female pleasure. We were one. Together we buried a book about female sexuality. Our shared experience with that text was perhaps more liberating than discussions of the topic which many girls can entertain today.

Still and all, the lure of story held me, continued to 'seduce' me, as I would understand it now. Though I dimly understood my poor adjustment to the world around me, I would never have placed the blame on the stories I read. I read for my life although I did not know it. I read for my love too, though who would have understood?

* * *

To "think like a man" has been both praise and prison for women trying to escape the body-trap. No wonder that many intellectual and creative women have insisted that they were "human beings" first and women only incidentally, have minimized their physicality and their bonds with other women. The body has been made so problematic for women that it has often seemed easier to shrug it off and travel as a disembodied spirit. (Rich, 1976, 40)

At university I revisited the same feelings of exclusion I had felt as a girl but barely recognized them anymore. Sitting in classrooms managed by men, chafing under the power of the classic texts, wanting to find myself there, my boredom told me that I did not belong, that the price of admission was the denial of my gender. When my heart leapt at the beauty of the words and passion rose in deep crescendoes within me, I wasn't sure what I loved. Did I love the words or the men who taught them to me? Exacting silence from the woman inside me who clamoured either to be subject or object of their stories, I read as a liberal, humanist 'person.' 'The brain has no gender,' I said to myself.
Beauty was truth, truth beauty. That was all there was to know and all I needed. Wasn't it?

And why, when I think back to all my literature courses in English and in French, are my most powerful memories of dislocation those of the American literature classroom, where I committed the ultimate rebellious act of refusing to read, either Emerson or Whitman? I can't remember which, nor can I remember the grounds of my agnosis, my “resistance to knowing” (Moffett, qtd. in Bogdan, 1992, 136-7), but I had no desire to wander there. My agnosis was conscious and deliberate. And the stack of poems stuffed under the white paper lining of the drawer grew and grew.

I forced myself to plough through Moby Dick (Melville, 1851). I couldn’t refuse it all, could I, when I claimed to love stories? This was a book too archetypal, too universal, too “significant” not to be applicable to me, wasn’t it? Was there a mute, irretrievable memory of the girl who once searched for stories about girls? What fueled my forceful objection to self-inflicted schizophrenia, to testifying against myself? What consolation I felt in second term when we read Willa Cather's (1915/1963) The Song of the Lark; what a profound sense of coming home at last, though I could never have explained it.

It was as if the protagonist Thea Kronborg took over where Emily had left off. Thea, for whom singing was easier than speaking, “had a curious passion for jewellery” (Cather, 1915/1963, 18), appreciated clothes as much as Anne had, and knew from the time she was very young that she wanted to be an artist. ‘Does everyone grow up thinking themselves different?’ I found myself wondering, rereading Thea's dreams. Once in a graduate class, listening to my classmates' memories of exclusion, I raised my hand to ask who could have been ‘included’ if all of us bore witness to memories of its not having been us. When Thea was thirteen, Herr Wunsch, her eccentric German music teacher, sensing her ambition, explained: “Nothing is far and nothing is near, if one desires. The world is little, people are little, human life is little. There is only one big thing – desire. And before it, when it is big, all is little” (95). Desire. Had I ever encountered that word so nakedly in a text that was not Lady Chatterley's? I was eighteen
when I first read Cather. Thinking in Gilligan's terms, I wonder how far along I was along the continuum that would have allowed me, at thirteen, to dream of being a writer. That dream at eighteen was substantially submerged.

But I notice on rereading that I have bracketed in pen the section that reads:

From the time when she moved up into the wing, Thea began to live a double life. During the day, when the hours were full of tasks, she was one of the Kronborg children, but at night she was a different person. On Friday and Saturday nights she always read for a long while after she was in bed. She had no clock, and there was no one to nag her. (Cather, 1915/1963, 73)

So I was interested in Thea's life as a reader. I have marked this passage too:

There is no work of art so big or so beautiful that it was not once all contained in some youthful body, like this one which lay on the floor in the moonlight, pulsing with ardour and anticipation. It was on such nights that Thea Kronborg learned the thing that old Dumas meant when he told the Romanticists that to make a drama he needed but one passion and four walls. (177)

Thea had passion (nurtured by books), desire, and confidence in her very much embodied dream of being a singer. Bolstered by the many adults (including a powerful cheering section of strong male characters) who supported and nurtured her talent, she would pursue her vision even at the expense of alienation from her large, essentially loving family. Who was I, an only child, a Jewish girl from the Canadian prairies, to tune my heart to a blond, pig-tailed, Swedish, minister's daughter, one of seven children, from Moonstone, Colorado? Where did I build the bridges of connection? Only in the passion she felt inside, the desire to make something of her life. Passion and desire. And being eighteen. And like Thea, one day I, too, would go away forever. But it would take me a much longer time to admit my dream.

Can I describe how my heart swelled in the iilt and cadence of modern French poetry, how Paul Valéry taught me how to climb inside, how to inhabit words? The explication I wrote of his poem, “Le Cimetière Marin,” was over twenty pages long, all of it a close reading of the poem. I did not want to do a literary review invoking the opinions of others. I wanted to dive nakedly and deeply into the poem's words, to challenge the
intentionality of the poet. The grade on the paper was A-plus; the comment that it was written at a graduate level, “the quality of a Master’s thesis or beyond.” Until I wrenched the dusty essay from the crammed cardboard carton in my basement labelled “Memories,” I hadn’t dared remember. I never allowed myself the indulgence of academic pretensions. No swelled heads for me. I wasn’t smart enough. I was a girl.

In Manitoba, in the late 60s, all of us ‘bright’ girls who won all the prizes at university understood that we were really only sojourning there. We would go on to marry and have children and all the lesser men would get the jobs we might have had, in another world. Teaching, nursing, social work – we would end up there – as something to fall back on. Like Humpty Dumpty tumbling unexpectedly off the wall, never to be put back together again.

* * *

We need to start somewhere else; with seduction itself and its pleasures; with art and literature, perhaps. For these activities and their products are hardened seducers of women, enticing us with their accounts of who we are and indefatigably dodging our replies and provisos and denials. (J. Miller, 1990, 26)

A woman writing is always writing for her life. With gloved hands, she hoists the burning blocks of language to construct her self, languaging her subjectivity. Daring, taunting, cajoling, she wields the “master’s tools,” the same tools that have often made of her an object, a container, a resting place, a silent receptacle. Using these same tools she builds a room of her own. She plants herself firmly in its centre and sings. Tentatively, understanding the high price of misrecognition, she weighs and balances each word of her song.

Entering discourse she chooses a treacherous path, dances through a minefield. She trembles that she might not know how to think and how to speak. Can she communicate just what it is she thinks she feels? Can she pluck from the tree of life, teemingly tangled, green-leaved and flourishing inside her brain, a fair enough fruit? Will she be worthy?

The woman who writes for her life is me.
I was nearly forty years old when I began to understand what had happened to me as a girl reading and writing. The good student, the good teacher, the married lady, the mother, now coming back to graduate school in education, the obvious justification a planned return to the classroom after a long absence in the domestic world. I did not choose to study literature again because, curiously, in a Graduate Faculty of Education, literature wasn't quite there as a legitimate discipline. But I came back to graduate school angry at literature; it had seduced and then abandoned me.

I came back to graduate school a silent, silenced woman. Silenced in my body by years of an abusive marriage, silenced in my mind by years of a patriarchal education, I came back to graduate school understanding neither of those two silences. Tremulous, timid, deferential, I watched thunder-struck as young women who were doctoral candidates eloquently expressed their original ideas, words flowing lyrically from their literate mouths. In women's psychology and history I first encountered the work of Tillie Olsen and re-encountered Virginia Woolf and began to contemplate the stunning, haunting, echoing enormity of women's absence and silence throughout recorded history. The mute understanding of a six-years-old girl. Olsen's story “As I Stand Here Ironing” (1954/1976) spoke so directly to my embodied life; it was a truth I had lived through, years of standing in the laundry room, thinking. The “poetics of ordinary existence”

19 On the Facts and Arguments page of the morning paper a woman writes about ironing and the thought process it inspires. She reflects on the beautifully embroidered linens which have been passed on to her as she irons them. I am interested in the process by which domestic labour affords a window into memory, and the train of thinking that leads from memory to deeper reflection (which I would claim to be an articulation of woman's philosophy). “As I am pressing my four napkins, I think about my drawers full of the painstaking, and in some cases, loving labour of women. ... Table linens are women's art, some would say women's craft. They can be beautiful, but in the end they are utilitarian: they are meant not merely to be admired, but to be used, soiled, put in service to the most basic of human needs, eating. I deliberate about whether my drawers filled with women's work are sad reminders of lives tied irrevocably to the drudgery of household labour, or if they are keys to a civility, a grace, that is all but lost to us now. I decide that they are both, testaments to the valiant and never wholly successful effort of women to merge necessity and labour with beauty” (Bradshaw, 1998, A28). I notice the links Leah Bradshaw makes between labour, necessity, beauty and civility and remember reading some years ago about manners being the beginning of morality. Here we are surely involved in the curriculum of the maternal/domestic that Jane Roland Martin and Susan Laird elaborate and validate and to which I will return in Chapter Six.
How could it be that after so long a search I could finally find myself reflected in the written word?

For all the dinners cooked; the plates and cups washed, the children sent to school and gone out into the world. Nothing remains of it all. All has vanished. No biography or history has a word to say about it. And the novels, without meaning to, inevitably lie. (Woolf, 1929/1977, 85)

It was the “infinitely obscure lives” of women that Woolf longed for. To the adolescent girls of the first women's colleges, she insisted: “it is much more important to be oneself than anything else” (105). For Woolf, being oneself meant pushing past the barriers of propriety to discuss topics where women historically had been complicit in their silences: sexuality, money, anger.

How could I refuse literature any longer? I came back. To classrooms where feminist literary theory and the enactment of feminist pedagogy saved my life. Can I really say that? Is it the truth? Where do we locate the truth in any narrative, novel or not? (6) “There is no truth that, in passing through awareness, does not lie. But one runs after it all the same” (Lacan, qtd. in Felman, 1987, 1). Mindful of the traditions of my literary foremothers, I understood their duplicitous and complicitous use of irony, humour, sarcasm and understatement to cloak and gild the unvarnished truths of women's lives. I wrote like that too, using that tradition to subvert myself.

Until graduate school, literature study, for me, had consisted of “plot, character, theme”; it had been an intense excavation of words, *explication de texte*, to probe the pathways of truth and beauty. I had never before considered the vast domain of “literature,” in whatever language I had met it, to be anything but virtuous. It had to be virtuous, didn't it, or why would they have taught it in school? Of course I knew that some literary products were better than others. Now, in my graduate classes on literary theory, the questions posed were like the ones I had asked myself many years earlier about writing advertising. Politics and morality were involved. We honoured the social function of literature, its power “to name, to form attitudes, and to condition behaviour”
This was more than entertainment with a few life lessons thrown in. It began with Plato. Could it be that my grandmother hadn’t read him?

* * *

In Book Ten of the Republic, Plato banishes the poets from his envisioned ideal state. This is not a decision taken lightly; in Plato’s terms the imagination, the most “uneducated” faculty of the soul (Bogdan, 1992, xxxvi), is a too-powerful educator. Deanne Bogdan explains Plato’s epistemology, his system of knowledge, in terms of the hierarchical pre-eminence of Beauty, Truth and Goodness and the ever-ascending journey that the lover of truth must take to get there. However, equal access to this pinnacle cannot be assumed:

[i]f the lover of beauty were a philosopher, the imaginative impulse would be guided by reason, that aspect of the soul that is capable of distinguishing truth from falsehood. The lover of poetry, however, is typically not one engaged in the upward ascent, as is the lover of beauty. By its very nature as an artifact made and made up out of words, the poem imitates at a third remove from reality. Though it pretends to communicate truth, poetry is an unreliable, insubstantial thing, whose proper end is not the vision of Absolute Beauty through which this Truth can be revealed, but celebration of those very “pollutions of morality,” “colors,” and “vanities of human life” which the Platonic philosopher as the lover of beauty would – and should – leave behind. (7)

Plato, Bogdan goes on to explain, is concerned about the gap between word and world, between what language is “supposed to do and what it actually does” (8). Through the magnet metaphor he introduces in his dialogue, Ion, Plato explains how poetry possesses its reader; “it reproduces a kind of master/slave relationship between the poet and the respondent.” The poet “is a puppeteer with total control, and the respondent, a captive audience whose suspension of disbelief is by its very nature unwilling, or at least involuntary” (10). Like the ladies who bought the dresses at the $9.98 Dress Sale. Or my fourteen-year-old daughter, who sits transfixed, rigid before the screen watching the movie Seven and has nightmares about it for months afterward. No matter what she knows about how this is not good for her, she is unable tear herself away from this
violently powerful experience. Is it real, her terror? Differently from my grandmother, Plato understood the power of the imagination.

Because he wrote at a time when Athenian oral culture was being replaced by the alphabet, Plato was concerned about “how to live the moral life in an increasingly technological society” (Bogdan, 1992, 10). He was disturbed by the fact that Homer, justifiably a great poet, was not a more moral human being. When the story-teller was present and could be questioned by his audience, there was a smaller margin for misinterpretation than when the poetic work was consigned to the medium of print. Plato asked how the “lie of fiction” could establish a claim for Truth (11). He wondered how it could be trusted to act unerringly for the Good. What he understood completely was its power as an indoctrinary educational force; he wanted no part of it. Poetry was pharmakon, both poison and cure (Derrida, qtd. in Bogdan, 1992, 27). Only the authority of rational [male] discourse could tame it.

Bogdan refers to Eric Havelock's (1963) explanation of how poetry functioned as an agent for enculturation in pre-literate Greek civilization. Students received the poetic message from

a performer, who first memorized the poem and then incanted it with gestural expression and rhythmic accompaniment. The resulting impact was so overwhelming in its power to imprint itself on the respondent that he would actually hear voices of the gods. (Bogdan, 1992, 14)

This was a much more embodied process than encountering words on a page may be. And the gap between word and world that concerned Plato is, in some senses, far greater now. But feminist literary theorists writing today would reclaim the embodied literary experience, banished by Plato and his follower Descartes, to honour the power of the imagination, defined by Mary Warnock as

a power in the human mind which is at work in our everyday perception of the world, and is also at work in our thoughts about what is absent; which enables us to see the world, whether present or absent as significant, and also to present this vision to others, for them to share or reject. And this power, ... is not only intellectual. Its impetus comes from the emotions as much as from the reason, from the heart as much as from the head. (Qtd. in Bogdan, 1992, xxxi)
Emotions will no longer be banished from the scene of intellectual inquiry; they will be educated instead so that their power may enhance learning.

Bogdan's "re-educated imagination" will claim that literary experience is real emotional experience. Reflecting on the journey I took with Anne, can I deny that? While Northrop Frye, Bogdan's mentor, maintained that "the world we desire is more real than the world we passively accept" (Frye, 1947, 27), Bogdan's notion is informed by "the poetics of ordinary existence, which attempts to shorten the distance between what Frye sees as two worlds – of everyday life and imaginative experience" (xxxii). There are three premises on which the "re-educated imagination" rests:

first, that literary experience is a form of real experience; second, that literary response is an embodied form of knowledge, in which the capacity for aesthetic experience is shaped by readers' situation in the world; and the third, that the ethical import of literature education is associated with the transforming function of poetic power. (Bogdan, 1992, xxxiii)

I would claim that the distance between Anne and me became, in the intensity of my textual engagement, like the skin of an onion. Laying my life like a translucent film over hers, I attempted to trace hers onto mine, animating fiction. Overwhelmingly I have asserted that my experience with Montgomery's texts was a positive one, but though many possibilities existed for how I could remake my life in the image of Anne's, there was one important area that was not negotiable. I could not remake my Jewish self into a Christian one. That was beyond the pale.

Side-stepping one's Jewishness has been an issue for more readers than me. Consideration of the parts of ourselves we choose to hide has been powerfully embodied for me by Carolyn Heilbrun, who wrote a series of detective novels under the pseudonym of Amanda Cross. Heilbrun feared that her hobby would not be judged acceptable in a tenure-seeking female academic at Columbia University (1997a) in the 70s so she did not admit to writing her detective novels until she was well established in her academic career. She is now retired from her teaching position at Columbia. In the series of lectures she gave at the University of Toronto last year she revealed that she, too, was Jewish, though she has never, to my knowledge, raised this in her many books. In Toronto,
interestingly, she spoke about 'liminality' as the condition of women today at a time when locating a fixed position seems impossible, when, more than ever, as she stated it, women are poised on the margins, attempting to stand on boundaries which are themselves shifting continually. Beyond the liminality of being female, there was and is liminality in being Jewish when the Western world of arts and letters is so predominantly and unselfconsciously Christian.

Memory calls. I am five years old. We have just moved into our house, the house my mother built. I am playing on the street and a new playmate asks me if I am Jewish or English. I answer: “I guess I'm both because I speak both.” Growing up as I did in an assimilated Jewish culture, where we did our best not to call attention to our Jewishness, I think my parents presumed that I would imbibe my religious heritage through osmosis as very little actual ritual was practised in my home. And because the worlds I entered and experienced so powerfully in books were profoundly real to me, I know I grew up divided again, feeling quasi-Christian. I sang Christmas carols with delight. So it was no large leap for me to come to Toronto and teach in a private school, whose indebtedness to the church that originated it was large. I have sent my children to these schools, although not without understanding that, of the many prices that are paid for their education, the transcending/side-stepping of their religious heritage is but one of them. I can still pass for a Christian in the books I read.

I am sure that I entertained the thought that, had she met me in real life, respectfully Christian Anne might not have approved of me because I was Jewish – and Virginia might not have either. Literature is always a guilty pleasure, for though I can pass, I am always inauthentic. These are problems of “feeling, power, and location” which Bogdan explores (1992, 140-150). The broad purpose of her work is to “redraft the borders between the literary and the political while preserving the ethical primacy of readers' experience” (Bogdan, 1992, xxxix), never forgetting Plato's hypothesis that literature can work for ill as well as for good.
For women, ideals of the organic whole and totalizing experience become harbingers of death because of ... women's post-tragic stance – their ongoing recognition of themselves as Other within the assumptions about and the structures of male entitlement to “fulfillment.” (xl)

Gender as a category can no longer be ignored, subsumed, backgrounded. So that what I felt as a six-year-old reading was now incandescently no longer buried, silent, inadmissible knowledge. “[E]very woman in this century and in our cultur[al] sphere who has ventured into male-dominated institutions – ‘literature’ and ‘aesthetics’ are such institutions – must have experienced the desire for self-destruction” (Christa Wolf, qtd. in Bogdan, xli). Yet, Bogdan asserts, no matter how dangerous this territory may be for women, we are drawn to it all the same:

I would contend that there is an unmistakable ethical, even religious, demand, broadly construed, entailed by the desire for and experience of affective aesthetics, an imperative which persists despite critique upon critique of their hegemonic implications. (xli)

The divided consciousness of the woman who reads in patriarchal culture replicates the “learned doubleness” that Jane Miller (1990, 65) explains learning to read has meant to the child who is born a girl. It brings into focus “the double-edged power of literature” (Bogdan, 1992, xlv), the “double-cross” (Meese, 1986) that will have to be negotiated with each reading act.

*   *   *

The theory that I study is embodied for me in a seminar I prepare for Deanne Bogdan's class. I review two articles on feminist literary criticism. One is an article by Lawrence Lipking from which I choose to emphasize the following quotation:

And how else can a woman estimate what's missing in literature, after all, than by measuring it against what she herself has not been allowed to say? (Lipking, 1984, 91)

Looking at women's poetry throughout recorded history, Lipking revisions it as a poetics of abandonment. The second article is written by Judith Fetterley, whose concept of “immasculation” (the willed male-impersonation that a female must undertake if she is to actively participate in the literary journeys of malestream canonized texts) creates a moral imperative for women to read as “resistant readers.” I highlight this passage:
Feminist criticism is a growing, changing, constantly self-transforming phenomenon characterized by a resistance to codification and a refusal to be rigidly defined or to have its parameters prematurely set. (Fetterley, 1981, vii-viii)

In the synchronicity of these two articles are articulations of the very issues that have backgounded my reading consciousness since I first learned to read, as a girl. Structuring my presentation of them, I do not choose to present in traditional, time-honoured academic fashion.

I begin my presentation by telling a story. It is the story of how I came back to graduate school, how, after years of domestic drudgery, I made my break from the world of husband, children, Kraft dinner and toast crumbs:

Standing in the sweaty haze of the laundry room, I applied all my ingenuity to getting out the stains they devoted themselves so passionately to accumulating in their relentless exploration of the world around them. "I have a PhD in stain removal," I used to joke with my friends. "Domestic truth," says Lipking, "deserves as much attention as the fate of princes." Indeed, Mr. Lipking, but I want to ask, "what do you know about domestic truth? Can you throw in a load of laundry and have it come out white?"

One January morning, the temperature in my kitchen soared. The older two had gone to school, the baby was upstairs, sick and still asleep, a trail of toast crumbs, sticky apple juice spots, congealed oatmeal—all waiting for me once again. I grabbed the phone book and dialed OISE's number. How desperately I needed to get back to a world where people thought.

I describe my academic re-entry by looking backwards through my life, through the cultural messages about marriage and children I imbibed as a growing girl. Coming back to school is no bed of roses either as I struggle to balance the public and private realms. I admit that I avoided literature completely for my first two years back:

Literature, for all that I had loved it, had abandoned me in a way I never fully understood until at OISE I met up with Tillie Olsen and Virginia Woolf and understand again now in Fetterley's concept of immasculation. And feminism is a lived politics. From the fall of 1986 when I came back to OISE until the summer of 1992, I read not one male-authored book (except those that were required reading in my courses). I was reading as an act of survival. I was redressing the balance, living out my own personal poetics of need, having spent most of my life reading and discussing the texts of the patriarchy in the contexts of those who spoke
the father’s language and taught the lessons of reason. How good it was to link my voice to the lost voices of women writing the poetry of abandonment, to think back through my mothers and read sideways through my sisters.

Because the imperative for action was not available for women, Lipking continues, their province became the world of “common experience and common suffering” (Lipking, 1984, 96). The potential of women’s poetry remains highly subversive. This poetry does not deal with

seduction or betrayal, or unrequited love, or loneliness, or victimization or rebellion – though each of these comes into play. It deals instead with abandonment, abandon, the abandoned. But the word itself carries a double meaning in every dictionary: “Abandoned: 1. Forsaken or cast off; 2. Unrestrained or shameless.” The abandoned woman, in common usage as well as in this book, is both physically deserted by a lover and spiritually outside the law. ... This verbal duplicity hints at the roots of power beneath the desolation of abandoned women – are they chattels or do they belong to themselves? – as well as the uneasiness with which most cultures regard them. Those who are banished are also let loose; utter surrender resembles utter freedom.” (Lipking, 1984, xvii)

An abandoned woman has nothing left to lose. She tells her story. Again and again I find myself with stories. But there is more. For me, story is a way into theory, a vehicle I take to understanding, my epistemology.

Story as a legitimate epistemology is not received as such by my fellow classmates. Or at least mine wasn’t at that time. My story, simple as it would appear to be, comes from the real world of feelings that side-step criticism and defy rational analysis. How do you criticize someone’s life story? Instead of providing a window into the theory as I try to tell them it has done for me, it sets up a wall. Of silence. No one in this normally loquacious and decidedly articulate group says anything.

But silence speaks too, as I come to understand in the stories of others. Magda Lewis (1990) explains that, for women, silence has been a place to resist that which is not desired; silence is a place to resist patriarchal culture. Madeleine Grumet, drawing on the work of Merleau-Ponty, suggests that “we must uncover the silence that speech is mixed together with” (qtd. in Grumet, 1988, 88). Acting teacher Jerzy Grotowski, Grumet continues, configures silence as a via negativa, “not a tirade of instructions or a manual
of codes but a series of exercises designed to create some space between the defenses that constitute our personalities, space that will provide the room for new forms of expression" (Grumet, 1988, 88). Woolf, Tillie Olsen, Hawthorne, Melville, Conrad and Kafka have all prized silence. Woodman exhorts us to “hear the language that lives in the Silence as surely as it lives in the Word” (1985, 11). The deep silence of those classroom moments is a sure sign that something profound is happening.

The professor, aiming to dispel my discomfort, directs the students to write their responses in their notebooks; she will crack the silence with the scratching of pen on paper. Very little actually gets said, and the next presenter begins in traditional academic fashion. The relief in the classroom is palpable. Reasonable discussion follows her presentation. All is right with the world.

But not for me. I am as outcast as I have always known myself to be. The professor calls me at home that evening. She is concerned. But I am brave and blithe, immersed again in the world I have publicly disparaged that afternoon and wildly grateful for the safety that immersion provides. “I’m off to Parents’ Night at my daughter’s school. Don’t worry. I’m okay,” I tell her. But I am not okay. I am anything but okay. And in the weeks that follow I feel as though I am about to lose my mind.

The students with whom I once exchanged jokes at coffee time now avert their eyes when they pass me in the halls. No one talks to me in the moments before and after class. A lone woman whose life experience has been close to mine has handed me a note at the end of class on my presentation day. In it she has thanked me for my story, so close to hers. That note comes to mean everything to me through the isolation of the weeks ahead. What I had done, at the simplest level, was to bring the world of everyday existence, that messy, turbulent, emotion-laden realm with its love, anger, passion and betrayal into an academic setting. There seemed to be no room for that in the androcentric land of higher learning, even in a class in feminist literary criticism.

The presence of emotion in a graduate school classroom was intrusive, unexpected, transgressive. The price of that transgression was psychic alienation. On one
level writing my life into my work, blurring the boundaries between life writing and
criticism, had become a pattern for me. But I must have known before I did it as part of
that presentation that I’d be causing trouble. Why did I need to do it? I am reminded of
Walkerdine’s continual negotiations and renegotiations of the psyche through the
formations of fantasy. No one magnificent act, no single bold gesture, no isolated act of
self-assertion, transgressive as it might be, could have the power to turn back forty years
of behaviour. Bursting from silence into visibility, of course I did it clumsily. It had
seemed to me, when I first read the theory, that my everyday life was somehow a
reflection of it. To begin there felt entirely natural. Of course on another level, I knew
exactly what I was doing. Of course what I did there was a cry for help though it would
have been impossible then for me to have recognized it as that: ‘Hey guys, I’m telling
you something about that story they told me all my young life about marriage. It’s not all
it was cooked up to be.’ But what could I really afford to know then, when I was still so
committed to the illusion of living out the happy marriage, still dancing as fast as I could,
though hairline fractures in the facade were breaking out everywhere, so fast I could
hardly control them? Literary knowledge, says Felman, is “knowledge that knows but
does not know the meaning of its knowledge” (1987, 92, emphasis original).

“We have a long tradition of trying to dispense with, or at least to control or
neutralize, emotionality, rather than embracing, valuing, and cultivating its contributing
strengths,” writes Jean Baker Miller (J. B. Miller, 1986, 38). From early life men are
encouraged to be “active and rational” while women are trained to be sensitive to the
emotional contexts of all situations. So women come to feel that what is important in life
must take place “within the context of emotional relatedness,” to believe that all activity
should lead to “increased emotional connection with others,” and that “if they act and
think effectively they will jeopardize their chances for satisfying emotional experience”
(39). So strength here becomes weakness, liability. Double vision, double-cross.

Men have been trained to repress and mistrust emotion and in good Platonic
tradition, have taken that training with them into the academy. If, as Miller and her
colleagues have explained, women have come to symbolize emotionality, have come to bear responsibility for carrying the emotional baggage of our culture, then men have come to despise that baggage because it is womanly, subordinate, lesser. Women bring to the academy their own needs to work in ways that maximize their relational connectedness, their fears that the high cost of thinking might be the loss of relationship. Miller's analysis illuminates my own experience. But have academic women too, using the "master's tools," come to mistrust emotion?

Growth, as Miller goes on to explain, cannot occur without risk. Making the personal so present in that classroom was the risk I had to take to become authentic, to take a stand: 'This is how I am and you did not know it.' It is in the struggle for authenticity, Miller maintains, that women unleash their personal creativity. "The closer the mind can connect with what one is actually experiencing the better its inherent creativity can flourish" (112).

The authors of Women's Ways of Knowing elaborate the difficulty that the female student has in "taking a stand":

Although she may be exhilarated inside that she, too, can be freed from the stricture of external authority, she also feels at times overwhelmed with options and fearful of ultimately being alone in her choices. To take a stand against others means to isolate herself socially. She fears that engaging in combative measure in support of her opinion may antagonize and jeopardize her connections to others. (Belenky, Field, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule, 1986, 65)

Curious. Standing in the centre of that feminist classroom, I chose to story my life as good mother, obedient wife, dutiful daughter. Why, with one graduate degree behind me, midway through the next, did I not choose instead to locate myself differently, to claim some tiny corner of an academic space for my podium? What hidden and unbidden truths lurked beneath my blithe banter, my chatty prattle of domestic disarray? I was in a dual subject position. On the one hand telling my story was standing to my own truth (Woodman, 1985). On the other, I was impelled to practise Felman's "self-subversive
self-reflection" (1987, 90) to try to understand why I told that story at that moment and in those circumstances.

I told one version of the truth and let the others simmer between the lines, just there on the other side of language. What could they have understood? Did they somehow intuit what I could not bring myself to say? No wonder they were frightened. Weaving through the poetic tradition that Lipking had unearthed for me and ineffably linked with my early experience as a reader of *Anne*, my performative act in that classroom broke the academic sentence, linked me intimately with my venerable literary foremothers.

Week by week, chapter by chapter, we continued to work our way through the professor’s *Re-Educating the Imagination* (Bogdan, 1992). We struggled with literature's power for good and ill, the what, why and how of literature teaching. Situated in the knowledge of the politics of “literary literacy,”20 I wondered whether my introducing a “story” into a theoretical presentation was just my crude attempt to remember and validate what we were all there for in the first place – a literary experience? Was it my way of claiming the insight of critical pedagogy and cultural studies and reclaiming at the same time my need for the voice of aesthetic pleasure?

Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989) drew my attention to the hidden power relations in any classroom and the essentially patriarchal nature of education itself. She asked me to confront not the oppressor without, but the oppressor within. I was shocked to find I had one. I began to understand how much I was implicated by rational discourse in colluding with the oppressor, how languaging myself into subjectivity I silenced others, how limited my understanding of another's life and theirs of mine would necessarily be, no matter how good our intentions.

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20 "Literary literacy" in Bogdan's terms refers to the set of theoretical literary signposts teachers give students to help them “unpack” the meanings of texts, it is “defined as that which facilitates perception of the distinction between appearance and reality” (1992, 139), while “literary experience” refers to the actual embodied experience undergone by the student during the process of reading the text. One comes from without, the other from within. "Re-educating the imagination also means repositioning literary experience from something that is a given to something whose logical priority to criticism takes on the status of an ethical demand" (159).
Ellsworth highlights how the notion of “lost” or “silenced” voices had been taken up by the culture, suggesting that these might more accurately be seen as inauthentic voices, or voices declining to/refusing to speak. Within each of us there was a multiplicity of authentic voices, conscious and unconscious, and it was impossible to speak from all of them at once. What got said in her class, what got said in our class was the product of “highly complex strategizing for the visibility that speech gives without giving up the safety of silence” (Ellsworth, 1989, 305). She asked me to consider “trust, risk, and the operations of fear and desire around such issues of identity and politics in the classroom” and pointed out that I was complicit in my refusal to know.

Beyond this I was left with “confronting unknowability,” with accepting that while I would make some connections with my classmates, I would fail to make others. But none of us would be left off the hook: “everyone [was] someone else's Other” and, extending her analysis, I might even be Other to my self (Ellsworth, 1989, 322). How well could I articulate the struggle between “Inappropriate/d Other” and “privileged speaking/making subject” in that classroom?

Nonetheless, what was extraordinary in that class was that, once I had braved the terrain of the personal, others, in their presentations in the weeks that followed, trod there too. At the last meeting of the class, a brilliantly articulate student and teacher, who was also a professional writer, began her assessment of two articles on censorship and pornography by telling us that she was bisexual and four months pregnant. She, too, wove her life in and out of her analysis. Meanwhile in my journal I wrote:

*Was the class attempting to censor (silence) me by disallowing the merging of genres in an academic setting? ... Where was the “accompanying critical operation of aesthetic distance” (Bogdan, 1992, 5) in that classroom? Were my classmates somehow ‘swept away’ by the power of story but angry at themselves at the same time for allowing that to happen?*

The price I pay for visibility has always been high. Since Mr. Peters’ grade five class, I had been a submerged, silent student, conscientiously avoiding articulation.
Silence that was resistance. Silence that said, ‘You don’t know me, you can’t for a moment know what I am thinking.’ My years of undergraduate school were a blur of furious note-taking, as I tried to capture every sanctioned word, so that I would never have the time or space to raise my hand and make a comment or ask a question. Silence was solace; silence was safe. Here, in my literary theory classes, sitting beside the professor, in the shadow of her protection, I first began to dare. Tentative but within earshot, *sotto voce*, I answered her questions: muffled answers that slipped past the guardrails of my lips. “You can say it out loud,” she said, “It’s okay.” So deeply did I fear speech and the visibility it brings.

Back and forth was my movement along the mind/body split; I was no longer content in either realm. What did I want? Reclaiming the academic life, why did I need to bring my “real” life into it? What was it that told me that my body and the stored experiences of my nearly fifty years could no longer be set aside while I did my thinking? But what was it that the women in that classroom did not want to hear? How was I trespassing on the ‘enabling fictions’ (Barreca, 1993)\(^1\) that allowed them to believe secretly, with the youthful, vivid, urgent passion of their bodies, in a vision of romantic/domestic bliss that I was repudiating, no matter how far my tongue was in my cheek? Mine was not a happy story, there was no doubt about it. And what does it mean that so many of those young women were Jewish? I knew the intimate demons they wrestled with around the personal desire for a career and the cultural prescription for marriage. George Eliot understood it when she wrote *Daniel Deronda* in 1876:

> You are not a woman. You may try – but you can never imagine what it is to have a man’s force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl. To have a pattern cut out – “this is the Jewish woman; this is

\(^1\) “Enabling fictions are the stories we tell ourselves to maintain equilibrium ... the internal monologues we rehearse and the silent arias we sing to tell ourselves that we live in the best of all possible worlds. They are the narratives we create for our own lives so that we won’t have to confront our anger, or disappointment, or unhappiness.” Barreca explains that this term originated with Dr. Mary Ann Caws, Professor of Comparative Literature at City University of New York, who used it to describe the story the character writes for him/herself inside the larger story created by the author. The concept of the ‘enabler’ originally came from psychologists’ work with the families of alcoholic and substance-addicted adults; it was the term used for the person responsible for maintaining the fiction of a stable house while the house was anything but. (Barreca, 1993, 197-198)
what you must be; this is what you are wanted for; a woman's heart must be of such a size and no larger, else it must be pressed small, like Chinese feet; her happiness is to be made as cakes are, by a fixed receipt.” That was what my father wanted. He wished I had been a son; he cared for me as a makeshift link. His heart was set on his Judaism. He hated that Jewish women should be thought of by the Christian world a sort of ware to make public singers and actresses of. As if we were not the more enviable for that! That is a chance of escaping from bondage.” (Eliot, 1876/1995, 63)

Or would I sum it up in Lorraine Code's (1995) terms and claim that there simply was no “rhetorical space” for what I had to say in that classroom? A woman's entry into the studded terrain of philosophy can only be uneasy. The knowledge that the body brings is fraught with danger, divided against itself. Judith Butler (1993) prompts me to consider how my body's prolonged refusal to conform to the image of conventional femininity afforded me the space to consider transgressing in the male-inhabited world of the mind in the first place? If I have claimed here to be thinking through my grandmother, I know that I was thinking through my father too. My father took me to the library, typed my essays with two furtive fingers into the witching hours of the night, passed onto me the family legacy of working with words. I was a Father’s Daughter too. But was my body too much like his? Would I fail on my romantic journey because my body would let me down? I never wanted to be a teacher. I looked at my body and found it wanting.

Returning to Woodman’s concept of the Father's Daughter that I discussed at length in my introduction, I would ask if all creative and intellectual women are not Father’s Daughters, as Woolf was. Are all Father’s Daughters so tortured about the constraints of gender, so uneasy in their bodies, as I was? Nurtured in her mind, from the time she was a very young girl by her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, the pre-eminent English ‘man of letters,’ deprived of her mother, Julia, first by having to share her with too many other family members and then, when Virginia was thirteen, by her mother's untimely death, she was body-unloved. In the memoirs she begins to write in 1939, she recalls “feeling ecstasies and raptures spontaneously and intensely and without any shame or the least sense of guilt, so long as they were disconnected with my own body” (Woolf, 1976,
68). She admits: "I must have been ashamed or afraid of my own body." Exploring further she recalls how when she was five or six, her half-brother Gerald Duckworth molested her as she sat on the ledge outside the dining room of Talland House, the family's summer home in Cornwall:

I remember how I hoped that he would stop. ... I remember resenting, disliking it — what is the word for so dumb and mixed a feeling? It must have been strong, since I still recall it. This seems to show that a feeling about certain parts of the body; how they must not be touched; how it is wrong to allow them to be touched; must be instinctive. (69)

Or were they learned, stunning silent lessons from the culture? Little wonder that she left the murky confines of her body to dwell in the heady atmosphere of her mind. Though she left us with such an exhaustive record of her thinking, telling "the truth about [her] own experiences as a body" was something she never managed to do (Woolf, 1976, 288). What father would empower his daughter to do that? Certainly not Sir Leslie Stephen, whose own conduct with his daughters Stella and Vanessa, after the death of their mother, was highly problematic.

Danielle House, dethroned Miss Canada, returns home to Daniel's Harbour, Newfoundland, to consult her father, a lobster fisherman, before agreeing to sign with Playboy magazine. Her mother died unexpectedly last spring, at forty.

Dad said, "It's your choice. You know I'll be here and I'll always be here."

Then he laughed and said, "But I'm not going to see it." ... "Mom would have wanted to come to L.A. with me," says House, her eyes misting over. "She'd be buying copies of Playboy and handing them to all her friends." (Wong, 1997, D1)

In Bodies That Matter, Judith Butler (1993) asks,

Moreover, why is it that what is constructed, is understood as an artificial and dispensable character? What are we to make of constructions without which we would not be able to think, to live, to make sense at all, those which have acquired for us a kind of necessity? Are certain constructions of the body constitutive in this sense: that we could not operate without them, that without them there would be no "I," no "we"? Thinking the body constructed demands a rethinking of construction itself. And if certain constructions appear constitutive, that is, have this character of being that "without which" we could not think at all, we might suggest
that bodies only appear, only endure, only live within the productive constraints of certain highly gendered regulatory schemes. (Butler, 1993, xi)

And I think reading is one of these.

A submission to the “Facts and Arguments” column of the Globe begins: Let me tell you a story about how I knew I was different from the other girls. From the time I could sound out words bigger than “see Jane run,” I sought out books that featured adventurous gangs of super-sleuthing kids, like the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew series. My mother plied me with British children's literature by Arthur Ransome and Enid Blyton, letting me pick out a new Famous Five installment at the Cloverdale Mall on my birthday.

It ends:

This is one of my strongest reasons for supporting a change to the marriage act that would recognize gay and lesbian marriages. I'm not trying to assimilate and I have no desire to be like June and Ward Cleaver. I know I'm different. (Farrow, 1997, A20)

Difference here is, as I am claiming, constituted at least in part by early choices in reading.

So what does it mean when a friend tells me that her six-year-old daughter, reading one of the recently-published Nancy Drew books that she loves, asks her mother, “Mummy, what does it mean when it says that he gives her a ‘long, lingering kiss’?” Is this mere entertainment? Will it roll off her back like water off a duck's? Every other page of this book presents another sexual conundrum – will she, won't she, should she, must she, have sex? One character attends meetings of a feminist club where posters of Virginia Woolf are displayed on the walls. Is this lip service to a feminist agenda that the new Nancy is paying? Ambivalent as this may be, no clarion calls have alerted us to Nancy's metamorphosis. Or have they? It is just the culture, that lumbering giant, working in its covert, insidious, complicit ways. And the girls, brighter than ever, reading earlier than ever, are only six years old.

The last page of the Nancy Drew novel describes the happy couple, fresh from the ceremony of their marriage, arriving at their honeymoon suite:
Stephanie giggled as he swept her inside and shut the door. A moment later he popped open a bottle of champagne and held up two glasses.

"I love you, Stephanie," Jonathan said tenderly, tipping his glass to hers.

Stephanie sipped the champagne, then set down her glass and kissed her husband. She flashed on all of the movies she'd seen about weddings and honeymoons. They were all so different from what today had been. And yet today had been absolutely perfect.

Now that the vows had been spoken and the wedding cake had been eaten, there wasn't a dreamy fade-out like in the movies. There wasn't the fizzy rush or roller-coaster ride that Stephanie had imagined. Instead there was only the sense that what was happening was very real, and so was the man opposite her. It was real and Jonathan was real.

Stephanie felt something deep and quiet form inside.

Maybe it's happiness, she thought. Or maybe it was peace. Or maybe it was just the feeling that she'd found a way to be. A place she could come home to. And best of all a person who really loved her. (Keene, 1997, 182-183)

* * *

Against the wealth of cultural messages directed at my body as I grew into adolescence, I asserted my mind – first as a reader and then as a writer. The recreation of my reading/writing self in this chapter attempts to account for the gendered implications of learning to read as a girl in a patriarchal society as it negotiates the dichotomies of being female in the logo/androcentric world of knowledge. I turned to books for alternatives to the cultural script that robbed a girl of agency as it consigned her to marriage. Some stories were better than others, but it wasn't so much the stories themselves as where I could locate myself in relation to them. Literature was, for all that I loved it, the alienating place it had seemed to be when I was six years old, searching for Jane and Sally. As a young girl, I became a devoted reader of all the stories about girls I could lay my hands on. But the more educated I became, the more difficult it was to maintain that female vision. Grown women really didn't do much that ended up in books, historical or literary. The beguiling lies and bubbling laughter of my early childhood were silenced as
I made my way to adolescence. Silence was a safe place from which to regard a world that seemed to offer me no place I wanted to go. But if silence was safety, it was submission too, to the prevailing ideology that told me nothing I might have to say could possibly matter.

When I was ten, in Mr. Peters' class, we put on a play about Sir Frances Drake. Though one-third of us were girls, there were only two female parts. Rachel played Queen Elizabeth and I, lucky to get a part at all, was her lady-in-waiting. I had no speaking lines. The boys got all the action, and all I had to do was stand, try to look beautiful, and wait. I wore the pink tulle dress I had worn as a flowergirl at my cousin's wedding. Somehow it still fit me. I hated feeling that the possibility of real adventure was closed to me simply because I was a girl. I hated standing and waiting. But I was only entering the fray.
CHAPTER FOUR:
LOVE STORY, THE ONLY STORY:
SEDUCED AND ABANDONED

When women try to picture excitement, the society offers them one vision, romance. When women try to imagine companionship, the society offers them one vision, male, sexual companionship. When women try to fantasize about success, mastery, the society offers them one vision, the power to attract a man. When women try to fantasize about sex, the society offers them taboos on most of its imaginable expressions except those that deal directly with arousing and satisfying men. When women try to project a unique self, the society offers them very few attractive images. True completion for women is nearly always presented as social, domestic, sexual. (Ann Barr Snitow, "Mass Market Romance.")

[L]iterature is impoverished beyond our counting by the doors that have been shut upon women. Married against their will, kept in one room, and to one occupation, how could a dramatist give a full or interesting or truthful account of them? Love was the only possible interpreter. (Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own.)

One of the impressive qualities of Charlotte Brontë's heroines ... is their determined refusal of the romantic. ... Jane Eyre is a passionate girl and woman ... [but] the thrill of masochism is not for her, though it is one of her temptations. ... Jane, young, inexperienced, and hungry for experience, has to confront the central temptation of the female condition — the temptation of romantic love and surrender. (Adrienne Rich, On Lies, Secrets, Silences.)

The world that can make Harlequin romances appear warm is indeed a cold, cold place. (Ann Barr Snitow, "Mass Market Romance.")

I remember very little of what I read as an older adolescent. When I canvass my bookshelves, I find that I have kept few of those books. Somehow over the years, I was able to part with them materially in a way I was not able to separate myself from the cherished texts of my childhood. Those early texts were the ones who became me; I became them. What I read later seemed inauthentic to me, though I could never have explained that inauthenticity. Nevertheless I layered those messages uneasily upon me, as warily as I accepted the lessons that Seventeen magazine wanted to teach. I bristled, lying
on my friend Ruth's bed, as she opened her closet door, to mark a checkmark on the checklist she had taped there, cut from the magazine. The list told her what she was to do each night before going to bed: brush your hair one hundred strokes to make it shiny, file and buff your nails. Me? I was too lazy.

So I was the struggling and unwilling object of these lessons. The only books that captivated me through these years were those that managed to harness my desire. And that desire grew large and hot and unmanageable within me. It was, in de Beauvoir's terms, almost religious:

On her knees, breathing the odor of incense, the young girl abandons herself to the gaze of God and the angels: a masculine gaze. Erotic language and the mystical language of women bear striking similarities.... The fact is that when feminine sexuality develops, it is pervaded with the religious sentiment that women ordinarily direct toward man from early childhood. True it is that the little girl experiences in the presence of her confessor, and even when alone at the foot of the altar, a thrill very similar to what she will feel later in her lover's embrace: this means that feminine love is one of the forms of experience in which a conscious ego makes of itself an object for a being who transcends it; and these passive delights, too, are the enjoyment of the young feminine devotee lingering in the shadowy church. ... The child can find it also through many other roads: everything invites her to abandon herself in daydreams to men's arms in order to be transported into a heaven of glory. She learns that to be happy she must be loved; to be loved she must await love's coming. Woman is the Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Snow-White, she who receives and submits. In song and story the young man is seen departing adventurously in search of woman; he slays the dragon, he battles giants; she is locked in a tower, a palace, a garden, a cave, she is chained to a rock, a captive, sound asleep: she waits. (1952/1974, 327-328)

Should she fail to find love, "she may find poetry" (404) de Beauvoir admits, or she may turn to nature to experience transcendence, again in a mystical, quasi-religious way:

Scents and colors speak a mysterious language, but one word sounds out triumphantly clear: the word *life*. Existence is not merely an abstract destiny set down in city records; it is the rich fleshly future. To have a body no longer seems a blemish to be ashamed of; in the desires that under the maternal eye the girl repudiates, she can recognize the sap that rises in the trees; she is no longer accursed, she lays claim proudly to her kinship with the leaves and flower. ... The flesh is no longer a defilement; it means joy and beauty. At one with earth and sky, the young girl is that vague breath which animates and kindles the universe, and she is each
sprig of heather; an organism rooted in the soil and in infinite consciousness, she is at once spirit and life; her being is imperious and triumphant like that of the earth itself. (407)

If the onset of unambiguous femininity has isolated her from the drama of human agency, it is through her body, reclaimed in the burgeoning power of her desire that she may again be made one with the world. No wonder the young girl who experiences feelings like this is so susceptible to seduction. No wonder the stories of romance provide the perfect place for her to explore her passions. No wonder her mother's eye was watchful; she was once an adolescent girl herself. No one knows the dangers more than she.

De Beauvoir's articulation of the power of the young girl's desire is almost mystical in itself, an eerie foreshadowing of the wave/particle theory of quantum physics, though I doubt she would lay claim to conscious knowledge of it. Several pages later de Beauvoir quotes from Woolf's The Waves, the novel in which Woolf subconsciously and presciently articulated a worldview uncannily like the one which the quantum physicists would come to describe.

In the context of describing the emotional range of an adolescent girl's desire, de Beauvoir turns to Woolf's interior portrait of her fictional character, "the young coquette Jinny" (her alter-ego perhaps, since they share the same name):

I feel myself shining in the dark. Silk is on my knee. My silk legs rub smoothly together. The stones of a necklace lie cold on my throat. ... I am arrayed, I am prepared. ... My hair is swept in one curve. My lips are precisely red. I am ready now to join men and women on the stairs, my peers. I pass them, exposed to their gaze, as they are to mine. ... I now begin to unfurl, in this scent, in this radiance, as a fern when its curled leaves unfurl. ... I feel a thousand capacities spring up in me. I am an arch, gay, languid, melancholy by turns. I am rooted, but I flow. All gold, glowing that way, I say to this one, "Come. ..." He approaches. He makes towards me. This is the most exciting moment I have ever known. I flutter. I ripple. ... Are we not lovely sitting together here, I in my satin; he in black and white? My peers may look at me now. I look straight back at you, men and women, I am one of you. This is my world. ... The door opens. The door goes on opening. Now I think, next time it opens, the whole of my life will be changed. ... The door opens, Oh, come, I say to this one, rippling gold from head to heels. "Come," and he comes towards me. (Qtd. in de Beauvoir, 410)
Could anyone have captured more beautifully that brimming plenitude of feeling, that blossoming sensuality, Arendt's urge toward 'self-display,' "to respond by showing to the overwhelming effect of being shown"? (qtd. in Gilligan, 1990, 2). To see this in terms of the mere resolution of Cartesian dualism seems almost paltry. This is the quintessence of union. "I am rooted, but I flow."

"Can one admit the rhapsodies?" Woolf recorded in the notebook she kept while she was writing *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Virginia Woolf knew rapture. In her diary, she writes of the "infinite capacity of enjoyment hoarded within me, could I use it" (Woolf, 1953, 38). Not simply bound by her maternal legacy of proper Victorian womanhood, Woolf was her father's daughter too, aligned with the demanding forces of reason. Insufficiently grounded in the feminine matrix, pursued by the demons of her masculine consciousness, she foundered in depression. My heart breaks when I read this rich articulation of emotion, knowing how much Woolf possessed the secret of joy within her, and how little she was able to enact her passion. What are the connections between being bodily loved, valued and nurtured in young womanhood and a mature ability to access and experience a full range of emotional experiences? It is no accident that Woolf's apt and eloquent artistry (in the above passage) should be an enactment of the psyche of an adolescent girl.

Without the ability to enact emotion in her life, "cut off from her roots," identifying with her father as Marion Woodman would explain it (1985, 34), Woolf took on the burden of the patriarchy. She drove herself mercilessly, continually setting unrealistic deadlines, writing and rewriting endlessly, plunging again and again into despair. Near the end of her life, war raging, bombs falling, her beloved nephew Julian dead, the fear of German invasion all around her, even a bath a luxury, she wrote in her diary:

Why is life so tragic; so like a little strip of pavement over an abyss. I look down; I feel giddy; I wonder how I am ever to walk to the end. It's a feeling of impotence; of cutting no ice. ... Melancholy diminishes as I write. Why then don't I write it down oftener? Well, one's vanity forbids. I want to appear a success even to myself. Yet I don't get to the bottom of
it. It's having no children, living away from friends, failing to write well, spending too much on food, growing old... I think too much of whys and wherefores; too much of myself. I don't like time to flap round me. Well then, work. Yes, but I soon tire of work — can't read more than a little, an hour's writing is enough for me. ... Unhappiness is everywhere; just beyond the door; or stupidity, which is worse. ... And with it all how happy I am — if it weren't for my feeling that it's a strip of pavement over an abyss. (Woolf, 1953, 29)

What are the connections Woolf would make, tries so hard to make, about the insufficiency of the life of the mind, about what happens when the rich joys and fulfillments that only the body can bestow are missing from human existence? That capacity for rapture that she felt so keenly, remembered so aptly here though she was fifty years old when she wrote this, died hard within her. For all that she has left us of her brilliant mind, the absence of embodied pleasure cost her her life.

The Father's Daughter, in Woodman's terms, "walks a tightrope over an abyss, putting one foot carefully ahead of the other in a precarious balance between not living at all and living in a highly charged spiritual world" (1982, 136). Her collusion with her demon lover (the projected anima of her father) manifests itself in "overly critical attitudes, drivenness, migraines, and other symptoms of tension." Without secure grounding in the feminine, "she is not sufficiently connected to her own instincts to stay in life" (136). This is a portrait of adolescent female desire thwarted and turned inside, against itself. It is "the entombed soul, the spirit driven in ... the self that took the veil and left the world" (as I have quoted Gilligan quoting Woolf in my earlier chapter on female adolescence). It is in adolescence that this emotional range blooms; if it cannot be made real in the life of the body, it turns inward and works its ravaging energy on the mind. So it will empower the mind to shine brilliantly as it gnaws away at the forces which sustain life. Or it will be magnetized by the prevailing fantasies of cultural production, swept away by all the available incarnations, high and low, of romantic love. It is desire that the adolescent girl brings to the seduction scene. And it is desire that holds her there.

To have been seduced is to have let yourself be seduced, to have been seducible. ... being a reminder of the seductive degradation of knowledge, of any knowledge, anywhere, at any time. (Edward Said, in J. Miller, 1990, 117)
It has been one thing to understand how I have been seduced by the many stories that literature has offered me. It is quite another to comprehend how powerfully, palpably, in the mind and heart, all women have been culturally seduced by the visions and systems of patriarchy, included by our exclusion, as Miller phrases it. Felman asks, referring back to Fetterley,

*from where* should we exorcise this male mind, if we ourselves are possessed by it, if as educated products of our culture we have unwillingly been trained to “read literature as men” – to identify, that is, with the dominating, male-centered perspective of the masculine protagonist, which always takes itself – misleadingly – to be a measure of the universal? How should we come, in other words, in possession of our female mind as distinct from the male mind into which we have been coerced? (Felman, 1993, 5)

If all the knowledge we have received in the process of being brought into our culture is written in a language forged by men, is it that we have been complicit in our own seductions, or have we been raped? Could it be that complicity here is just another version of blaming the victim?

Living an illusion is uncomfortable, and often women hover on the point of exposing the illusions of their lives. But most back off, preferring the illusions to the difficulty of personal change. And this is ultimately what I mean by complicity. Complicity is about not telling the truth – to other women or to ourselves – and not confronting men about the areas of our lives that don't fit the illusions. This complicity means that women don't pass on information and knowledge about their condition, and disparage those who try to do so. (Coward, 1992, 194)

Autobiography, argument, and rereading are the ways Jane Miller (1990) comes to examine and explain herself. Recognizing how well she has been seduced by men's theories of knowing (“the deadliest and least resistible of seductions for feminists”), she attempts to construct one of her own (1990, 8). While she disdains the “master's tools” and would prefer to “turn for real wisdom to the anecdotal, the personal and private, to narrative, to fiction” (9), she admits her terror of being seen as anti-intellectual and longs for compromise, for new ways, new forms. This kind of work is now being undertaken by feminists across a wide range of academic disciplines:
Yet feminism's origins as a politics require such engagement to be doubly vigilant and self-conscious, not least because the presence of women within the academy has so short a history and is still by and large so circumscribed and unequal, and career routes and traditions of teaching and research are so little affected by women's arrival as workers (or indeed as students) in universities and polytechnics. (9)

How has women's entry into the academy "disturbed" things there, for Miller illuminates a feminist tradition of disturbance that emanates from Eve's first radical reading? Are academic women also included in their exclusion, good male-impersonators? Why are they so "little abashed" by their ease with the "merciless intellectualism" of academic form? (18).

But there is more to seduction for me than another take on restating difference:

We need to start somewhere else: with seduction itself and its pleasure, with art and literature, perhaps. For these activities and their products are hardened seducers of women, enticing us with their accounts of who we are and indefatigably dodging our replies and provisos and denials. (J. Miller, 1990, 26)

This is somehow exactly what I've been looking for, a place to acknowledge the depth of my seduction by art and literature, the enormity of my desire, the passionate intensity of the emotion I bring to the seduction scene and the stunning realization that I would not give up one jot of it, for that would mean to live as Other than I am. All I can do is understand as painstakingly as I can, unravelling the weave strand by strand, peeling back the layers of the onion, "burning away the veils of illusion, gradually revealing the essence" (Woodman, 1985, 20). All I can do is hope for a different education for the daughters to come. Literature is a "dream for awakened minds" (Frye, qtd. in Bogdan, 1992, 17), and it is not easy to wake up. It is a poetics of "need," a problem of "feeling, power, and location" (Bogdan, 1992, 140–150) once again as I bear witness to the overwhelming role of desire in my own life, how I scream in scary movies, weep at the drop of a hat, how I am so massively determined. Emotions play an enormous role in my life.

What did it mean to fall in love with all those English professors, year after year, swept away by a Romantic vision, "full of yearning" (Bogdan, 1992, 106), hopelessly
desiring them, their bodies, their minds, their ability to act in the world, to teach in the academy? A power that I had only in the intensity of my desire but could never somehow make real in this world. “[W]omen tend to eroticize all experience since until recently it was only through a male intermediary that women were allowed access into the public realm, whether to experience the joys of the intellect or of restaurants” (Baruch, 1991, 43). Where did I learn to desire so intensely? Was it there, innate, always in me, or did I learn it reading, listening, watching the stories my culture gave me that I loved?

Language is not a transparent medium. Miller questions theorists like Said and Raymond Williams, whose illuminating analyses of social relations have consistently ignored the experience of half the human race. It is precisely with that human experience that Miller is concerned, with what Kurt Spellmeyer calls “the deep politics of experience, deep because it unfolds at the boundaries between life-worlds in dialogue or contestation” (1993, 26). Miller turns to Toni Morrison's Beloved not “in an attempt to upstage the male discourse of scholarship and revolutionary incitement by listening to the beguiling rhymes of narrative,” but because she believes that “divorced from the specificity of experience of those who were slaves” (1990, 133), slavery becomes an abstraction and our understanding of it impoverished.

What, then, is behind my complicity in all my seductions? The understanding that there is a place for experience in knowing, for “embodied criticism” (Bogdan, 1992, 195-227) and “embodied pedagogy” (228-260). In a misogynistic culture Eros and Thanatos must necessarily be linked, and women who claim their desire must die. But if women reading can situate themselves differently in terms of what their culture has to offer, they can read the endings newly. “Women win power by exchanging safety for risk” (De Lauretis, qtd. in Bogdan, 1992, 222). It is a question of how we read what we read. Of feeling, power, and location. There is some choice implied in remaining a victim. So seducere is transformed into se educare (Bogdan, 241-244), to the injunction to get a different kind of education, to be led out of ignorance, to become aware, to wake up, to know thyself, to listen to the still small voice within. This is what we would teach our
daughters: how to manage desire differently, how to take apart the culture, how to laugh right in its face, how to balance our checkbooks and our hearts. But first we need to acknowledge, understand and perhaps, for a time, to mourn that we have been swept away for so long.

"Men can be men only if women are unambiguously women," Deborah Cameron has written. What does it mean to be unambiguously a woman? It means to put a man at the center of one's life and to allow to occur only what honors his prime position. Occasionally women have put G-d or Christ in the place of a man; the results are the same; one's own desires and quests are always secondary. For a short time, during courtship, the illusion is maintained that women, by withholding themselves, are central. Women are allowed this brief period in the limelight – and it is the part of their lives most constantly and vividly enacted in a myriad of representations – to encourage the acceptance of a lifetime of marginality. And courtship itself is, as often as not, an illusion: that is, the woman must entrap the man to ensure herself a center for her life. The rest is aging and regret. (Heilbrun, 1988, 20-21)

What does it mean to be educated as a young woman today that moves beyond an education in romance? Romance is a morally dangerous and politically risky genre for women, but it offers them possibilities for experience they can have nowhere else in our culture. Adolescent girls are brought into the social order on a steady diet of romance, particularly ubiquitous in the TV shows they choose to watch. Beverley Hills 90210 has galvanized youth culture for the last eight years. Six-year-olds watch it; so do sixteen-year-olds and twenty-six-year-olds. No wonder a new academic inquiry maintains to "show how the program contributes to the construction of [its female viewers'] identities" and illustrate "the media's role in both forming and reflecting cultural reality" (advertisement, Women's Review of Books, Oct. 97, 19). Billions of young women watch it every week. What is the addiction? What is the message here? At the very best, it is cold comfort in a harsh world.

Elaine Hoffman Baruch explains that for women, love has

provided reparations for social injustice or has served as a giant pacifier. And because until recently women were prohibited from seeking knowledge directly, love has also been the chief agent of their development of self. It had once been primarily the husband or the tutor/lover that could bring them to intellectual and experiential
A social historian who believes that literature and the social reality around it are closely connected, Baruch argues that the courtly love tradition that began in the Middle Ages did affect the lived relations of men and women first in the upper classes and then, filtered down through the rest of society.

Romantic love, whether it is courtly love or the subsequent version that emerged out of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Romanticism, involves the idealization of the love object, fueled by passion. In earlier centuries love and sex were clearly separated, as the women to whom the knights of courtly love directed their attentions were usually inaccessible through age and social and marital status. Courtly love did not depend on physical consummation. Like the forms of romantic love that followed it, it thrived on impediments to it. In this century, perhaps because of available contraception, love and sex became conjoined again, though as a result of the feminist insights of the 60s and 70s love began to seem more dangerous than sex. “For perhaps the first time in history, women saw emotional entrapment as more dangerous than physical indulgence. For a while it seemed as if the new object of idealization was the self itself” (Baruch, 1991, 2). In the 90s the scourge of AIDS has brought with it a return to romantic love.

Baruch quotes French psychoanalyst Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel who asserts that, “[s]uccessful love is love which accepts the limits that are inherent in the human condition” and counters this to assert that it is “part of the attraction of courtly and romantic love that they refuse to do so” (qtd. in Baruch, 1991, 46).

For Baruch, the romance of Tristan and Isolde that became the prototype for love stories in Western literature represents a “regression to that childhood bliss that can exist again only in fantasy” (1991, 48). Death alone, Freud has assured us, can return us to that mythic sense of oneness. It is language, though, and only language that has the power to bring the living to the edge of paradise. Linda Kauffman explains, “Because desire lies between the needs to which the body responds and the demands that speech articulates, it is always a gap in language that cannot be filled, and consequently, every discourse of
desire is a critique of language. It cannot encapsulate, enclose, sum up desire – much less satisfy it” (Kauffman, qtd. in Baruch, 49).

Traditional psychoanalysis and radical feminism join hands in their objection to the courtly love tradition. Analysts condemn it because of its intense, neurotic fixation on the mother, which prevents the achievement of mature male genitality. Many feminists believe it is oppressive to women, sexist in its assumptions of sexual fear and inadequacy. Both are wrong, according to Baruch, who argues that some feminists forget that some of the women courted had real power, greater than that of the men who worshipped them and analysts must pay attention to the fact that “when literary conventions are so widespread, something more than neurosis must be involved” (31). Courtly love attempted to deal with the psychological pain of being human and alone while mitigating “sexism and rampant lust” (49). And interestingly, Baruch maintains, “by increasing desire it increased humanity (animals are not noted for their sexual delays when in heat), and at the very least took away the palm of victory from those former heroes, the seducer and the rapist” (50).

Courtship, according to Sandor Ferenczi (one of Freud's disciples), though traditionally seen as necessary for the purposes of wooing the woman, really provided the man with opportunities to get familiar with this Other to whom he would eventually be entrusting his “most precious organ” (Ferenczi, qtd. in Baruch, 1991, 52). The novels of courtship which came out of the eighteenth century, maintains Baruch, were the equivalent of a feminine Bildungsroman whereby the heroine was educated and brought to a higher level of consciousness through a series of experiences. Unlike the male Bildungsroman, where the hero roamed the world in search of experience, the feminine version revolved around courtship and marriage. “[T]he heroine longs for a love marriage that will increase her knowledge, often in some wide experiential sense” (123). But “[w]hat men want is not what women want in marriage,” Baruch reasons. The desired education, she explains, whether it is intellectual, as Dorothea (in Middlemarch) seeks from Casaubon or passionate, as she later seeks from Will, will be affected by
what Juliet Mitchell first noted: men come to marriage looking backward to pre-Oedipal times of oneness while women approach it with a view to the future. Baruch does not see marriage, in the novel, as the royal road to autonomy, for women are more frequently colonized than colonizing in it. It is Lady Chatterley, she believes, who most successfully escapes the cage of marriage and her husband's crippled body, moving from aspirations of a mental education to the real possibility of an embodied one; not much real movement is permitted her in keeping with the Victorian tradition out of which she emerges. I would agree that Lady Chatterley marks some progress, though the celebration of that progress is somewhat tempered by the fact that the portrait of the sexual woman could only be drawn by a man.

Literary and social critic Vivian Gomick (1997) wonders whether the genre of romantic love has anything left to say to people in the last years of the millennium. She believes that love can no longer be seen as the vehicle for self-transformation that it has been in the novels of Western literature for the last hundred and fifty years or perhaps that the journey to personal change is a solitary one with the analyst a contemporary version of the lover. She remembers, with cynical regret, believing as she grew up that love would be “the supreme accomplishment.”

Love, we knew, would put us at the center of our own experience. In fact, only if we gave ourselves over to passion, without stint and without contractual assurance, would we have experience. ... One might be risking the shelter of respectability if one fell in love with the wrong person, but in return for such loss one would be gaining the only knowledge worth having. The very meaning of human risk was embedded in the pursuit of love. (154)

Gornick insists that such a belief cannot hold in today's world because there are no “penalties to pay, no world of respectability to be excommunicated from. Bourgeois society as such is over” (158). Romantic love, mindful of its origins in courtly love, thrives on obstacles. Where there are no obstacles, there can be no love. The search for experience is also implicated in the hold love will have on a woman's life.

Only forty years ago most of us occupied a world remarkably free of direct experience. We grew up expecting to repeat our parents' lives;
certainly, we repeated their platitudes. However much some of us may have acted the girl or the boy of advanced ideas, we all (secretly or otherwise) subscribed to Aristophanes' fable: somewhere out there was our fated "other half," the one true love that would rescue us from loneliness and drift. This expectation was central to our lives: what is otherwise known as a self-fulfilling prophecy. (159)

Gornick believes that in our disillusion with marriage as the answer to self-transformation, "[w]e became fond of responding to irony in novels of love as one would to a finger pressed against the flesh near an open sore" (1997, 160). The deeply ironic tales of modern novels of love, like Cheever's or Updike's, coupled with the rise in the many forms of psychotherapy "conspired to make us know" (161). No matter how many times we loved and loved again, we knew in our embodied lives that love alone could not make us whole. For Gornick, novels that encode that familiar passage from hope to disappointment merely repeat a ritual which "sustains the status quo" (163) and do not provide the flash of illuminating insight that can transform. And so goes her conclusion that love, as a metaphor for self-discovery, no longer has the power to move us.

For women like Gornick, who are enabled by the changes in the real world to exercise their freedom there, perhaps love is not the issue. I, for one, am not entirely prepared to give it up. A quick look at the best seller lists would confirm that novels of love are no longer what many people want to read. The world of discourse has grown large and various. What readers choose to read is more than what can be canonized on a best seller list. One way or another we are always reading. Messages assail us on the elevator, in movies, on the TV, on the subway. In the pages of the personal columns we are storied. And women reading quietly in the privacy of their homes, homes which may

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22 Rephrased in Woodman's terms, love is recognising that what we are left with is 'being alone together': "Relationship ... has to do with the exquisitely tuned harmonics between two people who are attempting to become conscious of their personal psychology. ... It demands honesty, steadfastness, humility, humor, detachment, the capacity to endure the pain of withdrawing projections. ... Each is pioneering new territory because each is attempting to relate not through the manipulating complexes but from a conscious center. This is human relationship, 'I love you as you are,' the kind of relationship that is not possible as long as people are enslaved to archetypal patterns, whether instinctively or spiritually. It is freedom as opposed to bondage. It is looking at another human being and, instead of wanting to be loved, loving — loving the beauty and courage and fidelity of a separate maturing soul. It is not 'togetherness,' it is psychological separateness. It leaves a 'clear, unpeopled space' [from Rilke's Sonnets to Orpheus], open to 'the possibility of being.' (1985, 152-153) I will return to Woodman's definition in Chapter Six.
not be so easy to leave as Gornick's was, are still reading romances. Gornick is correct: in an irreligious, amoral, psychoanalytical world, the transcendence of self-discovery may no longer be available here, but women's deep emotional needs are still being met between the covers of books.

Janice Radway, writing in 1984, was the first to consider Harlequin romances from the point of view of the women who read them. She asked a question that remains enduringly valid today in the context of adolescent women today:

If we want to know why more people are reading romances in the 1970s and 1980s, it is necessary to ask, then, in addition to a question about the story itself, what precisely is "getting said," both to readers and to others each time a woman turns her attention away from her ordinary routine and immerses herself in a book. (1984, 8-9)

What was getting said? For the women in Radway's study romance reading was a liberatory activity within the confines and constraints of patriarchal society. "All popular romantic fiction originates in the failure of patriarchal culture to satisfy its female members" (151). And the products of the romance genre remain no less so for adolescent girls.

The extraordinary rise in romance novel sales was not part of a vast conspiracy; it was a result of improvements in marketing and publishing strategies and though coincident with feminist backlash, was not a part of it, Radway maintained. The focus of publishing had changed from "that of locating or even creating an audience for an existing manuscript to that of locating or creating a manuscript for an already-constituted reading public" (43). Romance readers themselves controlled the choices publishers made through publishers' focus groups.

Radway's readers (as I would assume readers reading today) feel an intense need to indulge in romantic fantasy, a need they cannot fulfill with "their own imaginative activity" (1984, 50). They feel they have a right to "please themselves in any way that does not harm others" (54) though their repeated justifications suggest that these are guilty pleasures. Are all pleasures for women guilty pleasures? Lurking in the shadows of Radway's descriptions of the reading process of these women and in the halting narratives
of the women themselves are sexual overtones so insistent that they beg the question of whether romance is pornography, as many critics claim it is.

The women who participate in Radway's study devise strategies to ensure that once immersed in these fantasies they will have time to arrive at the endings. They gauge their time carefully, choosing "fat" books when they have time for them, "thin" when they have only an hour or two. Reaching the ending is a profound need for all these women, another indication of the repressed sexual content. Busy as they may have been, these women are almost addicted to the release these books provide. They refuse, however, to discuss "whether they themselves are sexually excited by the escalation of sexual tension" (67) in the novels.

Romance writers (the best of whom are drawn from the most avid readers) deliberately understate the sexual "so that the reader will supply what is missing" (67). Readers repeatedly insist that the emphasis is on love and the workings of emotion and not on sex. Radway maintains "the romance cannot be dismissed as a mere pretense for masturbatory titillation," (70) and I would agree with her. The roots of fantasy run deep into the need for love, the love lost in the initial infant separation from mother. So in the conflation of love and sex, powerful mechanisms are at work. The cultural production that encodes this conflation will be a powerful commodity in a society whose values are constellated in the realm of the material.

While Harlequin men are rarely presented positively, except in the few moments of mystical transformation at the end of the novels, Radway disagrees with critics who see in the violence and brutality of their actions an underlying misogyny. Violence is presented "not because women are magnetized or drawn to it, but because they find it increasingly prevalent and horribly frightening" (72). She cites Molly Haskell's essay on female rape fantasies (1976) to claim that by imagining rape, a woman "makes projections about how she would react or whether she would survive" (141), thereby
gaining some control over a situation which, in reality, she can neither control nor predict.23

Romance readers ironically believe that it is up to them to control their sexuality if they do not wish to be raped, at the same time that they hold men responsible for their sexual awakening. Though Radway discounts “backlash” as in any way contributing to the escalating sales of romances, she does want to claim it to justify their increasingly pornographic content. She manages to admit that rape in the romance “continues to justify and make possible the repression of female sexuality” (143).

Harlequin heroines are virginal until marriage; unleashed female sexuality would rock the world. Romance reading becomes therefore a “strategy for adopting and managing some attitude changes about feminine sexuality by making room for them within traditional institutions and structures that [readers] understand to be protective of a woman's best interests” (74). These women are struggling with the “promise and threat” of the Women's Movement and with their culture's “now doubled capacity to belittle the activities and intelligence of 'the ordinary housewife'” (78).

In Radway’s view, real women reading romances become, for the moment, the heroines of the novels, taking on an agency and enjoying the nurturance and care they do not enjoy in their embodied lives. Seventy percent of romance readers are women with children under eighteen involved in the “emotional drain of nurture” (57). The imaginative experience they undergo in their reading allows them to move from nurturer to nurtured and, in doing so, to answer deeply felt emotional needs which are not being satisfied in their lived experience. These needs are not acknowledged and addressed in a culture that has no respect for the real-life roles of the women who own them. They are not addressed in a culture that puts no economic value on the roles of homemaker and nurturer when everything else of value is measured in economic terms.

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23 Feminists in the anti-anti-pornography camp have explained Haskell’s reading of ‘rape in the romance’ slightly differently by claiming that this is the only available articulation of a preference for a more violent form of female sexual pleasure than the limiting normative version permitted by patriarchy.
Radway turns to Chodorow's (1978) argument "that behind a woman's desire to mother a child hides her own wish to be mothered" (155). Mothering a child, she nurtures herself vicariously. At the same time as she identifies with the moment of greatest triumph in the heroine's (her own) life, the moment when she gets a man, she regresses to that state of blissful infant oneness she knew in the arms of her mother. This revisits the triangular model of female development that Chodorow first elaborated, whereby the girl comes to focus her genital and erotic desires on the male while her emotional attachment remains focused on the female:

Adolescent girls in our society tend to remain attached to their mothers and preoccupied with preoedipal and oedipal issues in relation to her even while becoming "heterosexual." These preoccupations persist not for biological reasons, but because their mother is their primary caretaker. Her father has never presented himself to a girl with the same force as her mother. He is not present as much, and is not involved with his children in the same way. Even if he is idealized, adored, and an object of internal fantasy, he is not the same primary, internal object as her mother and therefore cannot, finally, counteract his daughter's primary identification with and attachment to her mother. ... Girls in our society have normally remained externally and internally in relationships with their preoedipal mother and have been preoccupied with issues of separation, identification without merging, mitigation of dependency, freedom from ambivalence. Girls cannot and do not "reject" their mother and women in favor of their father and men, but remain in a bisexual triangle throughout childhood and into puberty. They usually make a sexual resolution in favor of men and their father, but retain an internal emotional triangle. (Chodorow, 1978, 140)

I cannot overemphasize the importance of this dynamic to the workings of the romance fantasy. A heterosexual girl, of woman born, by woman raised, shifts her erotic attachment at puberty to her male parent but never gives up her relational attachment to her mother and other women. In relational terms she will yearn for a man to give her the love she knew in her mother's arms. In my experience there is no time more urgent for her to maintain that female emotional attachment with her mother (or other supportive women) than when she, in her turn, gives birth. There is crisis around what she will know in how to care for her infant, crisis in the fact that she will be immediately displaced by the infant (in patriarchal cultures, particularly if the infant is a son), crisis in her
realization that in the version of "perfect motherhood" her culture endorses, she will, from the very moment of her child's birth never, for a very long time, put her own needs first without feeling guilty for it. Yet her culture in no way prepares her for this.

There is other 'pre-natal' preparation, of course, but none of it will deal with who she is and what her needs will be. She will be invisible in the process, the transparent medium on whose stage the main event will occur. Caring for her child will be a continuous drain of her emotional energy. If she is lucky, she will be supported by a nurturant husband, by her own mother who understands how crucial her love and support still are to her adult daughter, by caring friends who support each other. But in our culture, there is no better way to address a woman's need for love than in the stories of romance. It is no accident that women turn most powerfully toward literature of this genre when confronting the emotional drains and unprecedented stresses of motherhood. As a culture we are so little motivated to consider what women's deep, authentic emotional needs really are, to respect them so very poorly, to value them not at all.

So I remember myself as a new mother, utterly bewildered by the process that swept me under, longing deeply for my mother's care. She was thousands of miles away. I told no one what I felt; who would have understood? Many interested people told me not to bother breast-feeding my son. My breasts were too small. And when my mother finally came, she agreed. The child was colicky; he was starving. With what great joy did I arrive home from the first visit to the pediatrician to report that the baby had gained three pounds in one week. I fought them all in continuing to nurse for nine months: my husband no longer interested in sharing my body although he was never in twenty years of marriage happier with me than when I produced a son; my mother, never understanding why I wanted to do it in the first place, to whom the appeal to what was 'natural' meant absolutely nothing. But I knew as I held my suckling infant son in my arms, and he turned his eyes to mine that what my body told me was right. I did not go to Harlequin romances to be nurtured then. They would have been "beneath me."
Does the genre of romance serve men more than it does women? It certainly gets men off the hook, in terms of meeting their wives'/partners' emotional needs. And there are enough women who claim to need it. Do the men who publish these stories control them? Do the women who write them knowingly betray themselves or are they complicit in their seduction by the genre? Readers and writers alike – what do they get out of it? Cold comfort in a harsh world.

Reading provides privacy, escape, adventure and emotional catharsis when there is no room in real lives for self-directed pleasure:

They [romances] are a static representation of a quickly changing situation – women's role in late capitalism. They offer a comfortable fixed image of the exchange between men and women at the very moment when the actual society is confusing, shifting, frightening. (Snitow, 1983, 253)

In pre-industrial societies women took strength from community. With increasing suburbanization and secularization, they began to find themselves more and more isolated. Ironically, reading romances (as does watching 'soaps' on TV) enables them to participate in a community once again, but it is a silent one, a 'virtual' one. Radway's Smithton women (who meet to talk about the books and to report to the booksellers which titles they prefer) got as much pleasure out of the community of shared readers that they chatted with at the bookstore as they did out of the books themselves. In the elapsed time since Radway published her study, book clubs have exploded all over North America. We have only to contemplate the recent success of Oprah Winfrey's television book club to honour the needs addressed by reading communities.

Nearly 10 million copies of eight serious novels, including Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, have flown out of bookstores on Oprah's word. Morrison, the first black writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, says admiringly, “This is a revolution.”

Oprah is simply returning a favor. Books have been her friends for as long as she can remember, sometimes her only friends. And, she says, they made her who she is today. ... “No one ever told me I was loved. Ever, ever, ever. Reading and being able to be a smart girl was my only sense of value, and it was the only time I felt loved,” [she says]. (M. Johnson, 1997, 44- 47)
“We read books so we won't cry,” the Smithton women explain to Radway (1984, 98). The sadder they are about their lives, the more they need their fantasies. Like fairy tales for children, romances create hope. Women reading claim to be transformed by them as much as they are unwilling to admit that they might be addicted to them too.

Radway tells us that she came to these women prepared to discuss the connections between love and sex, between romance and pornography and the “continued validity of traditional definitions of femininity” (107). But all the women wanted to talk about was the “encyclopedic nature” of romance fiction, about all they had learned in the exotic locales of their reading. If this was the only kind of instruction they felt ready to discuss, Radway was not prepared to push them further. Women's reticence in discussing things of the body has a long historical tradition as Woolf pointed out early in this century. I suspect that there is more than simple reticence here: there is a disguised sense of shame that their bodies might actually be getting something out of these books, that their bodies might need to get things from books that they cannot get from real life. Satisfying an imaginative need is considered legitimate in their own eyes, even enobling. I wonder how the Smithton readers might feel about Radway's acceptance of their silence now that they have (presumably) read her book and her conclusion that

[i]f oppositional impulses or feelings of discontent such as those prompting romance reading can ever be separated from the activity that manages them in favor of the social order, it might be possible to encourage them, to strengthen them, and to channel them in another way so that this very real disappointment might lead to substantial social change. (18)

It seems to me that Radway sidestepped the opportunity to initiate some of that social change herself. Much as I would not rob these women of their pleasure, I found myself wishing that Radway had pushed back the boundaries more than she did to explore the maternal narrative that grounds the romance, to grapple with questions of sexuality, to locate herself in her research question.

The issue of the separation of researcher from researched was raised when Radway's study was first published. Why was the distance between them so great? What
exactly was her personal interest in choosing to do such a study? In her latest research, Radway frames her inquiry "with a kind of intellectual and social autobiography:"

In Part 2 she recaptures how some of the club's selections like *Marjorie Morningstar* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* affected her when she read them as a girl, and tries to understand the content of middlebrow culture through her present rereading of them. Thus, Radway attempts to step down from the analytical detachment in which she was trained and into the processes of growing up through reading and of writing this very book. ... Her university training taught her, however, to read with analytical distance rather than passion and to condescend to her earlier reading pleasures. And yet those pleasures made her skeptical enough of "the secular religion of high culture" to choose popular culture as her field and, eventually, to study the very books (romances, book club selections) she had been made to feel guilty about having enjoyed. (Robinson, 1997, 38)

Radway is motivated by the desire to engage with the power these texts had over her and her sense of discomfort/guilt around it. "Exchanging safety for risk" in undertaking the present study, she takes power over her life and its work (De Lauretis, qtd. in Radway, 136).

"It is my thesis," writes Jan Cohn, "that power, not love, lies at the heart of fictions of popular romance" (1988, 3). Locating the strategies through which romance communicates fantasy in the development of bourgeois society, Cohn shows how the novel comes into being to help women accommodate to their changing social roles. If romance is the glue that holds patriarchy together, there have been plenty of women working in the factory. "No classic novels of courtship and marriage have contributed more to the development of the romance than Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*" (4), maintains Cohn. (It is no accident that Woolf's Lily Briscoe, the young woman artist in *To the Lighthouse* (1927/1965), "accidentally" leaves her copy of *Middlemarch* behind on the train.) Because women have traditionally had no other route to power and wealth, the love story becomes a "trope for what would otherwise be a forbidden exercise in female self-realization and the will to power" (5). Romance answers desires which cannot be spoken because what is desired is agency itself.
A recent British film production of *Wuthering Heights* stunningly portrays "Emily Brontë's timeless tale of love and passion" (from the video jacket, P. Kosminsky, 1992). Producer Mary Selway and director Peter Kosminsky, give us a Heathcliff the way I have long envisioned him. Ralph Fiennes is a man driven wild by his passions, a wife-abuser, a dark incarnation of love-gone-all-wrong playing to Juliette Binoche's enigmatically seductive versions of the two Catherines. No wonder Woolf maintained George Eliot was the only writer for grown-ups! Remembering Maggie, in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860/1980), her insurgent desire to claim an education and her refusal of the imperative of romantic love, one cannot interpret her tragic ending as other than a reflection of Eliot's conviction that the world was no more ready for Maggie's autonomy than it was for the one Eliot lived out in her own life. How is it, given the recent cultural obsession with Austen, Eliot and the Brontës, that this film, its two stars fresh from *The English Patient*, does not play to large houses in North American theatres? We hesitate before the awesome power of our classic stories when we see Isabella Linton's battered face. What magical transformation could turn a Heathcliff kindly? "Patriarchy requires violence or the subliminal threat of violence in order to maintain itself" (Steinem, 1992, 259). "Statistically, the man most likely to physically attack or even murder a woman is not a stranger, but someone to whom she is romantically attached" (261).

What is behind the many recent incarnations on the big screen of the stories the baby boomers studied in highschool? Is it simply the romance of history and nostalgia for simpler times? Perhaps thirty years later the lived reality of the romantic tale is wearing a little thin and it's time for refuelling. Perhaps boomers yearn desperately to believe in that worldview against the knowledge of how blindly they have been led astray by it. Is it a question of trying to understand the passage from there to here? Romance is about power for those without it and the lengths they might have to go to to get it. Sometimes the lessons must be learned many times.

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24 Mariana De Marco Torgovnick points out the subtle manipulation behind using "we" the way I do here. Using it, I co-opt your consent and insert myself into a community of knowers. Who is included and who is left out of this "we"? It is a "shortcut to authority, dishonest in its relationship to existing traditions because it leaves out the personal voice." (1994, 142) I agree with Torgovnick and use the term advisedly.
Love, Cohn reminds us, was once suffered by men enthralled with women (courtly love), but the men in contemporary patriarchy are too busy making money to have time for love. The emergence of “marriage for love” in our civilization, as Klaus Theweleit (1994) points out in Object Choice: All You Need Is Love, “is closely linked to the medium of writing, with letters which emancipate themselves from the texts of the Bible and encode particular areas captured from the public realm with the words ‘woman’ and ‘love’” (2-3). Though Ovid tried but failed to make love a turning point in literary history, it did not become important to literature until the ninth century in southern France, and since then has only been important to relatively small numbers of people. Widespread marriage-for-love came into vogue only after the First World War when even those classes who could not afford the luxury of such marriages experimented with them. Theweleit is careful to point out that marriage for love makes no sense in socio-economic terms and that historically and cross-culturally marriage has been arranged around an exchange or an alliance. Freud, too, maintained that marriage for love was madness. Living in Germany, Theweleit is concerned about the Western conception of love that is now bombarding the East:

In the WEST, from where the message is broadcast, ‘love’ is not regarded that highly by enlightened Westerners as a way of conducting one’s life. Although the majority believe that one way or another All you need is Love, there is relatively little faith that one will actually find or receive ‘the love’ that one needs. What counts here is experience, not some belief: love is an unloved feeling.

Happiness is sought elsewhere, in work, in relationships at work, in other social ties, in commodities, on the real estate market, in cultural settings, in the production of art or children, in self-improvement, in peace and unpeaceful movements, in pills one pops: elsewhere. LOVE here is a waste—or by-product, turns up in passing, remains a while and is then allowed to move on. (Theweleit, 1994, 2)

This chilling portrait of love in late-capitalism is not how love first looked when it was encoded in letters, diaries, slips of poems stuffed under the lining of drawers. When woman took pen in her hand, she wrote about her feelings, the whole underbelly of
emotion that could not be discussed in polite society. It was an explosion of feeling trapped on paper that women writing unleashed. Radway would agree with Cohn’s conclusion that romance is a “female fantasy, but a female fantasy within the confines of conservative ideology” (Cohn, 1988, 36). The romance plot creates a space for female sexuality that does not exist elsewhere in Western literature. More than just reconciling women to patriarchy, romance answers desires that “cannot be spoken, so powerfully would they subvert authority. … Desire, however, must be heavily masked since, at the deepest level, what is desired is authority itself, the power and autonomy the social system denies women” (5). Cohn cites Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre (1847/1968) as the first example of the “redistribution of the literary signs of the hero” to a dark, sexual man. Jane, refusing the pale ascetic St. John Rivers to marry Rochester, is embracing the dark, sexual side of herself. As Cohn point out, the heroines of contemporary romances do not, unfortunately, have the freedom Brontë gave Jane to experience their passion. They become sexual only through the agency of men.

According to Linda Zwinger (1991), “Stories of heterosexual desire are always about power” (9), reminding us that “romantic love is the most effective stratagem of compulsory heterosexuality” (Rich, qtd. in Zwinger, 102). Love is not a metaphor for power; it is power. “When you take it apart it looks just like business. Or politics. Or violence. And as with power in our culture men (generally and generically) wield it and women ask for it” (45).

Friendship between women became the model for romantic love with the introduction of the “sensitive” man. When women began writing novels and putting their own feelings in them, they increased the genre's potential for social change. Moving toward the sensitive man uncovered the voice of a maternal narrative in the romance, reinforcing Radway’s assertion that it is the desire for nurture that the Smithton readers fulfilled by romance reading. Joanne Pagano, referring to the work of Elizabeth Abel, maintains that the underlying unspoken narrative of the romance is the mother-daughter bond. The “Minoan subtext” that Abel revealed in Mrs. Dalloway “both predates and co-
exists with heterosexual orientation” as it validates Chodorow’s model (Pagano, 1990, 122). Mrs. Dalloway was published in 1925 at a time when Woolf was interested in the theories of Freud and Melanie Klein, which highlighted the importance of the maternal realm. In the 30s, as she saw these theories corrupted by the ideology of fascism, Woolf turned away from them. Abel maintains that reading A Room of One’s Own (1929/1977) and Three Guineas (1938/1986) together reveals “the central disjunction in Woolf’s career to be a shift from maternal to paternal genealogies” (Abel, 1989, xvii).

Angela Miles also argues that “the hero is, in fact, a mother figure for the reader/woman” (1991, 93). Like Radway she is interested in what Harlequins do for the women who read them (she admits that she is one of them), but Miles argues that we should not presume our “own reading [is] a legitimate rendering of the meaning of the genre for those who usually read it” (95). Harlequins are all about not having to mother men, she points out, and this brings women pleasure in itself.

In Harlequins it is not what happens that counts (because their outcome is predetermined) but how, writes Geraldine Finn. If this can happen in fiction, perhaps it can happen in fact.

That they are written and read in such quantities testifies to the fact that women are not entirely defeated by their circumstances, not entirely reconciled to their fate, nor entirely convinced by the white-wash of male-stream ideology. (Finn, 1988, 63)

Harlequin heroines are not afraid to stand up to their heroes’ anger and rage or to criticize their behaviour. Readers clearly identify with these vicarious and risk-free opportunities to stand up to the real men in their lives.

But Harlequins perpetuate the myth that female failure is personal and not systemic, glossing over the real causes of women's pain and maintaining the status quo. Harlequins are not about finding a husband without seeming to want one or enjoying sex, without taking responsibility for it, or the love/power conflict of heterosexual relationships. The central problematic of the Harlequin, according to Finn, is the central prescription of contemporary femininity: “that of loving a feared and hateful man who
has control over you and upon whom you are ultimately dependent” (58). Finn explains how here, in the private silence of the reading page, is where women need not admit what they cannot dare to, that Harlequins may help them cope most effectively with their embodied, daily experiences.

Like Cohn, Ross and Zwinger, Tania Modleski would recover the positive power of the romance to claim that it conceals a revenge fantasy. She insists that women who write popular fiction register protest against the “authority of fathers and husbands even while they appear to give their wholehearted consent to it” (1984, 25). Modleski maintains that Harlequins allow both the women who read them and the women who write them to understand how they got from there to here, from the freedom of girlhood to the submission of marriage – without seeming to have collaborated in the process. They provide them with strategies for understanding the loveless behaviour of the men they live with. It must be remembered that in the publisher's guidelines it is clearly specified that 187 of the 188 pages of the text must be devoted to the process, the struggle against a destiny which seems inevitable. There is a lot of opportunity here for women to vicariously work things out.

Regina Barreca observes:

Oscar Wilde wrote that “I am afraid that women appreciate cruelty, downright cruelty, more than anything else. They have wonderfully primitive instincts. We have emancipated them, but they remain slaves looking for their masters all the time.” Wilde's flippant statement is no less poignant for its “bitchiness.” He focused on the drive that some women have to find the man who will colonize their emotions, enslave their passions, and rule over their lives – and so in the name of finding love, they find a fascist. (Barreca, 1993, 146)

Like Barreca, Jessica Benjamin, Michelle Masse, Ann Kaplan and Ann Barr Snitow see things in a darker light. For these writers, romance is culturally-induced masochism. While all of them, in various ways, absolve the victim, their insights underscore the location and validity of the female agency claimed by the theorists discussed above.
In her influential article "The Alienation of Desire: Women's Masochism and Ideal Love," psychologist Jessica Benjamin explains that women are not looking for a man who will hurt them per se, but are instead looking for a man who will "tame" them in some crucial way. They do not desire pain, but they do desire someone who will require their submission. "The idea of ‘pleasure in pain’ is misleading," Dr. Benjamin explains, "insofar as the crucial point in masochism is not the experience of pain, but more often pain is a symbol or metaphor for submission." They want to submit to a man in order to subdue their own fears and anxieties, and paradoxically, submitting to a man who they know will cause them some measure of distress allows them to have a feeling of control. (Barreca, 1993, 149)

Benjamin's master/slave dynamic lays the groundwork for this approach:

Examined closely, sexual eroticism appears as the heir to religious eroticism; that is, in sexuality we have a new religion or a substitute for one. The original erotic component, the desire for recognition, seems to emerge in sadomasochism, as it once did in the lives and confessions of saints. The common psychological root of these erotic experiences can be found in the earliest issues of intimacy and separation in infancy. (Benjamin, 1983, 281)

Because of our early child-care arrangements, the nature of all our subsequent relationships is organized around the poles of dominance and submission. But "the secret of love is to be known as oneself" (280). It is a search for recognition by the Mother/Other.

Benjamin recovers de Beauvoir's definition of masochism as a desire for subordination to another, not a desire for pain. "Masochism is a search for recognition of the self by an other who alone is powerful enough to bestow this recognition." (The Harlequin hero?) "But it is a search for recognition that is alienated or distorted because the element of freedom is replaced by the element of force" (286). Like the Harlequin romance, the master-slave relationship "actually perpetuates the problem it is designed to resolve" (292).

It may be, then, that the primary motivation for maintaining inequality in the erotic relationship, and ultimately for establishing the master/slave constellation, is the fear of ego loss – the boundless. And perhaps the boundless infinity of plenitude is as fearful as the infinity of emptiness. (Benjamin, 1983, 292)

Retaining the balance of power seems essential to keeping the male ego intact.
The real transcendence of two differentiated, well-developed individuals engaged in mutual recognition that Benjamin describes is not the stuff of romance, as Woodman has pointed out (see footnote 22, p. 141). Romance, as we know it, hinges upon maintaining the power imbalance of the master/slave relation. And “the power of a fantasy, the fantasy of rational violence, must be attributed to the interplay of great social forces and deep human needs” (297).

Michelle Masse extends Benjamin's analysis of the masochistic nature of romantic love. What characters in these novels represent, is “the cultural, psychoanalytic, and fictional expectation that they should be masochistic if they are ‘normal’ women” (Masse, 1992, 2). The plots of these stories gloss over the social construction of masochism in order to point insistently at the happy ending the ideology promises. Referring specifically to the process of Gothic novels and of psychoanalysis itself, but in terms which are readily applicable to romance, Masse maintains that these novels stage what Freud calls “the beating fantasy,” in which

a spectator watches someone being hurt by a dominant other. Each narrative simultaneously avows that the spectacle was just make-believe and that the spectator should leave her bystander's role to become a participant. (3)

The interweaving of love and pain is neither natural nor specific to individual women. Women are taught masochism through fiction and culture, and masochism's causes are external and real. They stem from the “originating trauma” of separation and the denial of autonomy for women.

Women's schooling in masochism, the turning inward of active drives, seems to naturalize that denial and makes it appear to spring from within rather than without. Insofar as a Gothic protagonist internalizes these lessons, she sees her trials as unique to herself and avoids systemic inquiry about the source of her suffering. She carefully monitors herself, finds her virtue in her renunciation, and teaches other women to so do as well. (3)

This is the “turning inward of active drives,” Woolf’s “entombed soul” again. As long as Western culture persists in denying autonomy to women, in masking their desire, the
heroines of our novels will continue to insist that suffering is really love and that love is all they really want. Masse continues:

What seems to me important about this is that if cruelty is seen as exciting and works at the level of fantasy to romanticize difficult practical and emotional circumstances, this suggests a passive, not an active, response to the violence (which in psychoanalysis would relate to the displacement of angry and hostile feelings on to others). (1992, 95)

As Walkerdine has observed in her inquiry into girls’ comics to which I have referred earlier, overcoming difficult and possibly violent circumstances by selflessness actually works to prepare girls for the arrival of the prince:

Although there is little overtly sexual about the significations here, girls may be prepared in certain important ways for current adolescent heterosexual practices which appear to offer a way out, a resolution to their victimization. That is, although heterosexuality is not an overt issue, the other features of femininity are so produced in the pages of the comics as to render ‘getting a man’ the natural solution. (1990, 97)

The good girl will be rewarded for her selflessness as the victim by the prince who will save her. But Walkerdine is concerned with the connection between female sexual pleasure and passivity into which this theme so easily slips. Citing Rosalind Coward, she draws attention to the conflation of “female sexual pleasure, submission and the ultimate passivity, death” (Coward, 1982, 19). This construct does not simply apply to pornography, Walkerdine insists, it is ubiquitous in the culture. “It is the relation between the representations at the level of fantasy and the production of meanings through which desire is understood and into which desire is invested which is important,” she continues to reiterate (1990, 98).

Walkerdine cites Angela McRobbie’s (1991) analysis of romance in Jackie, a British magazine for teenage girls, to point out that “romance, not sex, is the key to sexuality: it is the moment of bliss as signified by the first kiss which is made predominant” (McRobbie, 1991, 99). The cycle of jealousy and possessiveness is constantly replayed between girls who are competing for male attention. But, Walkerdine points out, there is no fixed solution possible; getting a man subsumes the reality that keeping him will be an ongoing challenge, one way or another. It is this very power to
subsume reality that makes the myth of getting a man such a powerful one. Getting a man continues to mean that the girl is good, worth something, that she “can have what she wants” (99). And when getting a man is understood to be only provisional, she must direct her energies not at an expression of her loss but towards making herself attractive for the next man. She must suffer in silence.

If fiction therefore presents fantasies by the use of textual devices which engage with the desires of the reader, this would suggest an understanding of the development of gender very different from one which is most commonly asserted. Those approaches stressing roles and stereotypes suggest a girl who is already rational, who takes in information, or takes on roles. By contrast, psychoanalysis offers a dynamic model in which no simple or static reality is perceived by children. Central to psychoanalytic accounts is the production of complex and tortuous conscious and unconscious relations, centred upon the girl's relations with her family. The account psychoanalysis offers presents a subject both more resistant to change than a rationalist account might suggest and engaged in a struggle in relation to the achievement of femininity and heterosexuality. (Walkerdine, 1990, 99)

Correct femininity and its correlative heterosexuality are the result of a long struggle.

Ann Kaplan, in her analysis of film, reminds us of Karen Horney's cogent observation in her 1932 article “The Dread of Woman”:

men have never tired of fashioning expressions for the violent force by which man feels himself drawn to the woman, and side by side with his longing, the dread that through her he might die and be undone. (Qtd. in Kaplan, 1983, 311)

Horney's insight speaks to the spectre of the castration complex as it recalls Benjamin's contention above that the fear of ego loss necessitates the establishment of the master/slave relationship. Perhaps those deep terrors that are most feared are also the most submerged, the topics that are the hottest to handle. It is the sheer dread of becoming engulfed by the female, of the *vagina dentata*, of being swallowed up by the mother as one was in infancy, that psychoanalysis posits to explain men's fear of falling in love and their need to be vigilant in maintaining their position of power. Kaplan, like Benjamin and Masse, asks us to consider “how sexuality has been constructed in
patriarchy to produce pleasure in the dominance-submissive modes” (317). Woman cannot conceive of love as anything but submission, an end to autonomy.

Ann Barr Snitow moves the discussion further to consider romance as pornography for women, though I would suggest that her definition of pornography is a recuperative one. In the nineteenth century “romance novels were considered a decadent pastime for weak-headed females: to that audience, which recognized romance as a sexual fantasy, the illicit aspect of reading them was clear” (1983, 245). Snitow is interested in considering the primal structures that are addressed by romances beyond their liberatory or conservative elements.

Their particular sort of unreality points to what elements in social life women are encouraged to ignore; their distortions point to larger distortions culture-wide; their lack of richness merely bares what is hidden in more inclusive, more personally controlled works of art, the particular nature of the satisfactions we are all led to seek by the conditions of our culture. (247)

When women try to picture excitement, maintains Snitow, the only possibility open to them is romance.

It is more than a little ironic that Snitow’s forthright assertion of the pornographic intent of the romance is borrowed from a man. Peter Parisi, in an unpublished talk, hypothesizes that they are “pornography for people ashamed to read pornography” (254). Sex is their “raison d'être,” and the escape and release they promise is specifically sexual release. “Parisi argues that the books' sexual formula allows both heroine and reader to feel wanton again and again while maintaining their sense of themselves as not that sort of woman” (255). Snitow suggests that Harlequins may contain an affirmation of female sexuality in a misogynistic culture (at the same time that other critics see them as circumscribing it).

Snitow’s redefinition of pornography is worth considering in the light of our discussion of romance and the maternal narrative:

Pornography is not only a reflector of social power imbalances and sexual pathologies; it is also all those imbalances run riot, run to excess, sometimes explored ad absurdum, exploded. Misogyny is one content of
pornography; another content is the universal infant desire for complete, immediate gratification, to rule the world out of the very core of passive helplessness. (1983, 256)

She goes on to explain that there are two pornographies in our society, one for men and this one for women. What the double standard really harms in women (to the extent that they succumb to it) is their sense of self-respect, of “having a right to [their] bodily feelings.” Snitow emphasizes that socially-imposed sense of shame about one's body (as Erich Fromm explained) keeps people submissive to societal authority by “weakening in them some inner core of individual authority” (258). Though Snitow frames body shame in terms of genital deprivation, I would open the field to the further possibilities that recent years have revealed. All the body tyranny that the culture imposes on young girls is crippling to self-esteem. How can a girl feel good about herself when she doesn’t feel good about her body?

On the whole ... the female burden of genital deprivation is carried meekly, invisibly. Sometimes it cripples real interest in sexual interaction, but often it does not; indeed, it can deepen a woman's need for the emotional rewards of carnal contact. What it most reliably cripples is human pride. (Snitow, 1983, 258)

It is on this much-disparaged, no longer proud body that the titillation of the Harlequin formula depends. Snitow honours the delicate balancing act in which Harlequins are engaged in trying to bring together in the same fantasy “romantic tension, domestic security and sexual excitement” in the right proportions (259). Snitow maintains that the Women's Movement has overlooked the importance of the romance to the female imagination. For her, honouring women's need to place sex in the context of relationship, Harlequins may be closer to describing women's hopes for love than the work of more respected women novelists.

In Pleasure and Danger, the collection of essays that emerged out of the Barnard Conference on sexuality in 1982, Paula Webster, Amber Hollibaugh and Sharon Thompson seek to claim the autonomy of the feminine subject position to which so many of these critics and today's power feminists would aspire. Claiming power for women begins here with honest conversation about sexuality.
Looking back to that time now, it remains quite curious that given our commitment to explorations of the mundane and the marvelous, we devoted so little time to open and direct discussion of sexual pleasure. While we spent many meetings talking about our bodies and their particularities, the erotic contours of our imaginations remained buried in layers of propriety and ambivalence. Face to face, when it came to describing our desire, we were strangely mute. Our discussions of sex were barely audible. (1989, 385)

Women must begin to be braver in print. In spite of the feminist commitment to address deprivation in other areas of women's lives, sexual deprivation has not yet been adequately theorized. "To get what we want (once we know what it is) is a taboo that needs to be broken" (393). We have been taught that "social status drops dangerously low for the woman who seeks pleasure" (392), and the bodily shame that we have internalized from these teachings, just as Snitow maintained, prevents us from pushing back the boundaries of our experience and our analysis.

"Women in this culture live with sexual fear like an extra skin," writes Amber Hollibaugh:

We live terrified that other people will discover our secret sexual desires. Much is forbidden even to women's imaginations. We are deprived of the most elementary right to create our images of sex. It is a hard truth that far too many women come up blank when they are asked what their sexual fantasies look like. Sexual fantasies are the rightful property of men, romance the solid female terrain. (1989, 404-405)

"Romance," according to Sharon Thompson, is "goal-directed promiscuity" (1989, 365), the teenage girl's codeword for sex. Have adult women reading romance circumscribed their sexuality by using these texts as the encoded euphemisms for the sex they want but can't claim?

What then are the alternatives to this rendering of romance? Naomi Wolf cites Anita Hill's story as the "myth of origin for the turning point of an insurrection" that transforms victim feminism into power feminism as it alters the "old story" of romance, the story of elevation through marriage (Wolf, 1993, 40). She names Scarlett in Gone With The Wind (Mitchell, 1936) as prototype for a new kind of heroine who is "vain, sexy, power hungry, and bad, and we adore her. ... Though she does not win a lasting
love, she succeeds in rebuilding a world on her own terms, and becoming a breadwinner for her dependents” (Wolf, 1993, 41).

Kathleen Rockhill, in “Longing to Be Somebody” (1987), posits a new kind of romance for women - education, and through it the romance of a career, perhaps a profession. This romance can feed a woman's desire to move out of her working class life, a desire that even marriage rarely offers her. Holding this much promise, no wonder education poses such a threat to heterosexual relationships! Education is thought to be the pathway to independence and success, a way out of the patriarchal order of things. Maybe Radway's readers invest so much in the “educational” component of their narratives because, they, too, honour this alternative route to feminine agency.

Alice Kaplan (1993), Duke University French professor, writes a memoir about growing up and falling in love with the French language. In Minnesota, as in nearby Manitoba, the girls who grew up close to Yiddish excelled in French. Chomsky (1975) would explain this as opening the brain’s second language cells at an early age so that the acquisition of any subsequent language is already a familiar process. Kaplan’s own explanation gestures toward the hiding place another language provides when one’s own identity is in crisis with the surrounding culture (being Jewish in a Christian world) and when one’s own body is experienced as alien (female adolescence). The childhood incidents that formed her occurred when she was eight years old: the sudden death of her much-loved father, a lawyer at the Nuremberg trials, followed too quickly by the discovery in her father’s desk of the photographs taken by American soldiers when they liberated the concentration camps, photographs which had been used as evidence in the trials. It was too much knowledge for an eight-year-old, and it literally drove Kaplan out of her English-speaking mind towards the refuge of another language system. “I know that my passion for French helped me to put off what I needed to say in English, to the people around me” (Kaplan, 1993, 214). Her early adolescent fantasies were of a man in a suit coming to rescue her from the schoolroom, taking her down to the riverbank and covering her face with kisses. “It didn’t help my mood to know I was an adolescent;
knowing I was one seemed like part of something awful that was happening to me” (36). Her body develops in ways she cannot control; friends provide examples of how to starve yourself. She is sent to study in France where she discovers the pleasure of skiing. “At home I was the worst in sports; here, miraculously, I was good. It felt like my life had been given to me to start over. French had saved me” (57); and then later, “French got me away from my family and taught me how to talk. Made me an adult. And the whole drama of it is in that ‘r,’ how deep in my throat, how different it feels” (141). Kaplan is careful to explain the physicality of speaking French, how differently the face, the jaw, the tongue, the body must behave in order to pronounce the sounds of French correctly. It is all part of the performance, the privilege of “living in translation” (140). What she wants from the young French men with whom she falls in love is their language. She turns to French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan to explain

that the child gains access to language only when it perceives the existence of the father, which allows it to break out of infantile dualisms – self and mother, inside and outside. “Somewhere out there, somewhere else, is my father”: this, says Lacan, is the child’s inauguration into language, the symbolic order, and the law. But it is mothers, traditionally, who teach language, who listen and correct, it is mothers who are the first to hear new words. It is mothers who break or heal a child’s tongue. (99)

Here we have the language of the Fathers and the teaching of the Mothers all over again. It is the double cross, the double whammy of finding what you have lost through the language of the one who stole it from you. “All my life I’ve used and abused my gift for language” (216) is Kaplan’s conclusion. What French allowed her to do was leave her family, what Grunet calls the “place of feeling” (63), but Grunet also warns that “[t]he place that is familiar can be the place where we are most lost” (65).

Many younger women today who eschew the label “feminist” even as they embrace the feminist agenda for social change would write another story of women’s development in which ambition, power, agency and mastery in the world move into the centre along with romance, perhaps even nudging it out. But the strength of the care–concern–connection model of female development that emerged in the 70s was elaborated
in the 80s, and vitiated in the 90s, had a particular rationale which is importantly remembered here as a way of understanding the way that romance holds us, male and female.

"Love, perhaps more than childbearing, is the pivot of women's oppression today," wrote Shulamith Firestone in 1970 (142). "Women are not creating culture because they are preoccupied with love" (143). In 1977 Dinnerstein in *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* took this further to blame "human sexual arrangements"; it was the assignation of social gender roles that contributed profoundly to human malaise and not biology. We have taught ourselves to be ashamed of physical pleasure because "the person in whose arms we first felt it belongs to a category of human being we can afford to despise" (Dinnerstein, 1977, 147). Despising women, we repress the beauty of the flesh to avoid the pain of its loss, "the inexorable loss of our pure infant sense of omnipotent oneness with the world" (145) and ironically enough, come closest to recapturing that pleasure only in erotic intercourse.

"Woman is the focus of our ambivalence to the flesh not because she gives birth to it but because she is in charge of it," Dinnerstein (1977) maintained (155). When "women's lone dominion over early flesh" is abolished and child-care arrangements change, "she will no longer be peculiarly available as a dirty goddess, a scapegoat-idol, a quasi-human"; and when these changes have taken place, "we may find ourselves able to free the potentially pure human joy in exercising competence, exerting will power, making things happen, from the joyless, corrupting burden of carnal desire that it now carries" (156).

How far we have come in attempting to change these social arrangements remains open to interpretation, but Dinnerstein's work strikes a cautionary note for those who would easily reclaim and reunite pleasure and power. Wanting to change gender arrangements, we must acknowledge that real change comes very slowly. Needing to look beyond Joanna Russ's question in 1973 ("what myths, what plots, what actions are available to a female protagonist?"), we must remember, as Felman has pointed out, that
the underlying structures of our desire will need to be changed as well. Bogdan, reading Jane Miller (1990) asks, “what besides the magical charms of the aesthetic can sweep a woman up into complicity with a theory, the very breadth of whose explanatory power excludes her?” (Bogdan, 1992, 216). Awesome archetypal power is constellated here. Can it be changed? In a culture so long divided along the jagged poles of Cartesian dualism, perhaps it is possible to see our love stories as healing that long historical disruption that has seemingly seeped into our genes. In our process of reading these stories and making them ours, we are taken up both bodily and intellectually; the painful rupture that is at the heart of our culture is, momentarily, individually, uniquely, healed. In my beloved's arms, I am Home at last. Demon Lover he may be, but with him I am returned to Mother. The power of that feeling is honoured only by the urgency of our individual and collective search for it. The perversion of that power may persist as long as "mother," all she did and all she does, continues to be valued so little. To really understand, we must confront how deeply the psychological dynamic of romantic love is embedded in immanent matter, in the materiality of embodied female life.

Nina Auerbach (1985) believes that these powerful myths confer power on women. “As an essentially metaphysical creature, one whose very presence brings eternity into time, woman enlarged by myth has more in common with fictional creations than she does with living men; her fictionality is one source of the energy that aggrandizes her” (qtd. in Baruch, 1991, 20). Baruch believes that romantic love could survive without myths. But it is awareness that is essential, explains Raquel de Zak Goldstein, an analyst in Buenos Aires, in order to confront the depth and breadth of fears and longings directly. “The reciprocal knowledge of the psychic and sexual diversity between males and females would contribute to the awareness of the persecutory contents involved in the prejudice against the female and would give the carnal body its place, even though the anxiety of the limits re-emerged as well” (Goldstein, qtd. in Baruch, 1991, 21). And perhaps, Baruch concludes, new myths will arise in time to replace the old.
In the late 80s and early 90s, theorists began to consider the effects of romance novels on younger women. Pam Gilbert (1988), writing in Australia, found that these stories provided both consolation for girls and preparation for life. She was, however, more hopeful about girls' writing than she was about their reading. Gilbert asked teachers to provide strategies for girls to read as women who read as women. (I might ask if we yet know what it is for a woman to read as a woman.) The tales of "helpless selflessness" that girls read were dangerous fantasies, "tales that [bore] little resemblance to the practicalities of divorce, single parenting, physical abuse of women and children, unemployment and poverty" (11). The methods of resistance to stories like these were, ironically, embedded in patriarchal discourse. Fairy tales and animal stories, two genres which were available to girls as models for their writing, were inevitably androcentric. The adventure plots available to girls were filled with boys. In spite of the heavy weight of bias, the texts girls wrote themselves were resonant with resistance and rupture. Gilbert asked that teachers notice and value this rupture, explore, enlarge and build on it.

In *Becoming a Woman Through Romance* Linda Christian-Smith (1990) reinforced the ambivalence of this genre for girls,

Like Radway's adult-romance readers (1984), teenage readers read as an antidote to loneliness and experience feelings of specialness during reading. Reading romances and the fantasies of life they set in motion represent ways of counteracting the increasing anomie and coldness of life today. Through romance reading, readers transform gender relations so that men cherish and nurture women rather than the other way around. The readers' collective rejection of a macho masculinity represents their partial overthrowing of one aspect of patriarchy. However, their final acceptance of romantic love and its power structure undercuts the political potential of these insights. Romance reading does not alter the girls' present and future circumstances, but rather is deeply implicated in reconciling them to their place in the world. (134-135).

For working-class girls who read them, the worlds of romance were worlds of conspicuous consumption to which they might aspire only in fantasy. But banning romances from the classroom is not the answer.

Christian-Smith advises teachers to use romances to teach girls how to read against the grain. Teachers may use these problematic texts in many strategic ways: to
open up discussions about male-female relations and the influence of popular culture on students’ lives; to question the inevitability of happy endings and ask students to provide alternative visions of life-scripts. "Much of what has been condemned by first-wave feminist analyses as politically suspect and hegemonic constructs of normative femininity," writes Carmen Luke, referring to Carrington and Bennett's paper on the revisioned possibilities of resistance in girls' magazines (cited above in Chapter Two, p. 61), "can in fact provide counter-discourses to traditional concepts of femininity" (Luke, 1996, 10).

In the course of reading Christian-Smith's text I suddenly remember Marcy. The synopsis of one of the novels she considers closely begins to seem more than merely familiar. Returning to my bookshelf, I reach for the turquoise-blue cover of *Wait for Marcy* (du Jardin, 1960), the lone representative of this genre that I have indeed kept as a reminder of the hundreds of books I read during my early adolescence. Murray, the older cousin who lived with me when I was young, my surrogate brother, is long gone. He has deserted me doubly, first by marrying, then by moving to Calgary, which seems to be at the other end of the earth. Though I am growing up surrounded by adult men, my devoted father and many uncles fail to provide me with any insight into what boys are like. There are no boys in my real life, so I invent an imaginary older brother who will look out for me and guide me through what I sense will be a troubled passage. He is away at university in California. I keep this fantasy going for a long time. The only other place I can go to learn about boys, this alien species, is to books, to these series romances which, even in the paper on which they are written and the soft covers between which they are bound, are such insipid substitutes for *Anne*, for the biographies I have devoured, for the science fiction in which I have boldly dreamt. But I need these books because there is a world out there, of male-female relations, which is urgent and compelling for me to understand now, as I stand on the edge of it, knowing that I need to jump in, not having a clue as to how to take my first leap.
The economic realm of these novels is a comforting fantasy for me. These girls and boys are never poor. They do not worry, as I do, about having the money to buy the right clothes. Discussing the transactional nature of the boy-girl relationships in *Wait for Marcy*, Christian-Smith (1990) points out that though the heroines generally recognize the emotional exchange in which they are engaged, they rarely glimpse the economic one. The only novel that alludes to the fact that economic factors are involved in romance is, curiously, Marcy’s, where they are conveyed through “a character who is the adolescent version of a ‘vamp’”:

Unlike Marcy Rhodes, Devon Merriott is only too well aware of her attractiveness, and she collects a string of boys. Devon’s various romances involve a strong economic component; she expects boys to spend lavishly for the privilege of her companionship. A telling episode involves her birthday – she had previously hinted at several gifts which she hopes to receive. That her expectations are realized is later seen from the room full of roses and expensive presents. It is clear that romance for Devon involves the exchange of a good time for her companionship. However, the text negates the importance of Devon’s insight through her identity as a vamp whose actions and opinions are neither legitimate nor representative of “proper” adolescent femininity. (19)

From this book I learn about birthdays; I learn about the connection between sexuality and economics; I learn that if you are too flamboyantly sexual, no one will pay attention to what you know. What I cannot articulate is the subtle process by which the messages of this text have been stored in my brain, how my exceptionally good memory has drawn on the examples set here to make real judgments in my real life. No matter who my boyfriend was, I was always disappointed on my birthday.

Three years later, in *Texts of Desire*, Christian-Smith (1993) anthologizes studies from the United States, Canada, England and Australia which replicate the findings described in the adult women’s studies earlier in this chapter. Romance reading offers females of all ages questionable consolation in a harsh world; it inscribes them into the economic order as consumers without offering them tools to provide for their economic self-sufficiency. The publishing industry has succeeded in marketing junior romances to schools and in school book clubs, thereby legitimizing the “retailing [of] gender” and the
commodification of female desire (Christian-Smith, 1993, 2). Teachers provide their own mixed messages, asserting that reading anything is better than not reading at all; yet to criticize the genre is to perpetuate the gendered hierarchy of high art and low culture. In a Canadian study conducted by Meredith Cherland and Carol Edelsky, girls are revealed to be more resistant readers than were Radway’s women. They read series fiction and horror stories to protest against the boring reading offered to them in school and to assert some limited control over their own lives. “Even when the fictional texts they read suggested one model of female agency, girls sometimes read those texts to explore another” (Cherland and Edelsky, 1993, 32). The extent to which their limited agency can empower them becomes problematic in the reading of horror stories. It is harder to resist messages of violence against females, the warning that, for females, “[m]oving in the world is dangerous” (42).

These many researchers offer additional strategies for reading against the grain. Teachers can direct students’ creative and critical writing to an exploration of the appeal of the romance genre. Studying the publishing industry might uncover the sophisticated marketing strategies brought to bear in the publication of romances. Analyses of students’ own life and family histories might be undertaken as ways to access constructions of identity alternative to the romantic. Individual (silent) reading of these problematic texts merely perpetuates the hidden curriculum behind them; reading and writing about them in groups might better bring to light the powerful discourses that create them. Because critical theorists warn that “consciousness raising” may just be imposing one set of values over another, it is essential that students come to an understanding of how they are created by culture through analysis of their own experiences, if they are able to do so. It is precisely because of the contradictory nature of these texts, writes Christian-Smith in her introduction, “that these texts can be parts of feminist classroom practices aimed at rethinking women’s place in the world” (1993, 2).

What I find most personally intriguing comes from a study of Canadian girls’ reading conducted by John Willinsky and Mark Hunniford in 1986. Unlike adult readers
who read romances as fantasy, girls read them quite literally. Reading for their lives, girls come to these texts as “a means of finding themselves in the book rather than remaking who they are in the world” (Willinsky and Hunniford, 1993, 93). They read this way because they believe that this is how they will actually come to live. As I did.

A surprising and unfortunate absence, considering the breadth and depth of the studies in Christian-Smith’s collection is any exploration of the heteronormativity of the series romance. Deborah Britzman, writing four years later in de Castell and Bryson’s collection, outlines a more fluid construction of identity:

I want to argue for a more complex and historically grounded notion of identity; one interested in identity as fluid, partial, contradictory, nonunitary, and very social matters. To think about identity means examining how such matters are constitutive effects of both social relations and history and as able to rearticulate desire and pleasures. When it comes to questions of desire, of love, and of affectivity, identity is quite capable of surprising itself: of creating forms of sociality, politics, and identifications that unite the self from dominant discourses of biology, nature, and normality. This capacity and the labor of untying the self from normality in order to be something more than what the order of things predicts is an idea central to newer work in gay and lesbian studies and in what is presently termed “queer theory.” (1997, 185)

Remembering my own discomfort with the confining genre of romance as a heterosexually-determined girl, I shudder to imagine what a lesbian-identified girl might feel reading them. Britzman continues:

While seemingly everywhere, heterosexuality is constructed as synonymous to the dominant mythology of gender policing, the impossible cultural mythology of romance and happy endings, and the imperatives of patriarchy, the state apparatus, and the political economy of civil codes. And these representations are neither helpful nor pleasurable to significant numbers of heterosexuals. In fact, they may position heterosexuality as a site of suffering. (1997, 199)

Britzman asks: “If the educator is unwilling to engage with gay and lesbian cultural representations, how can it be possible for the educator to understand the conditions of self-fashioning and pleasures that youth make?” (1997, 198). Linda Eyre, (1997) another teacher-educator, speculates about how liberatory the pedagogy of teacher education may be when student teachers who are newly established in their own sexual identities feel the
pressure of needing to conform to the heterosexual norm in order to get and keep a job. Britzman would urge teachers to "risk the obvious in order to access the transformative" (1997, 204); she insists that students or teachers who are ignorant about homosexuality are likely to be equally ignorant about heterosexuality. A genuine ethic of social justice would include short stories like Charles Pouncy's (1991), which "traces the pleasures and dangers of young gay desire: of the need to find others and of the fear of being found, of the ways gay bodies are disciplined and of the unruly desires that dare to speak their name" (Britzman, 1997, 201).

At no point in my personal education in romance did I realize that lessons were being taught. No billboards flashed the message to me. No story insisted that I comply. Not one person ever told me in words to fall in love and get married. It was an assumption; it was the conclusion of every romance that I read; it was the very air that I breathed. There was no other choice. I was a girl.

In 1940 Denis de Rougemont, wrote in his classic *Love in the Western World*:

Love and death, a fatal love – in these phrases in summed up, if not the whole of poetry, at least whatever is popular, whatever is universally moving in European literature, alike as regards the oldest legends and the sweetest songs. Happy love has no history. Romance only comes into existence where love is fatal, frowned upon and doomed by life itself. What stirs lyrical poets to their finest flights is neither the delight of the senses nor the fruitful contentment of the settled couple; not the satisfaction of love, but its passion. And passion means suffering. There we have the fundamental fact. (1940, 15)

What has happened to the stories of passionate love through these six decades? Though Gornick proclaimed not the 'death in love,' as de Rougemont did, but the 'death of love' itself after the sexual revolution of the 60s and the women's movement of the 70s, she took pains in 1991, to explain its unexpected resurgence. "Even the so-called age of narcissism began to long for intimacy in a world that seemed increasingly bare of meaning. And some feminists too began to lament the death of love" (Gornick, 1997, 5). Women who had ignored the ticking of the biological clock now turned to reproductive technology, which resulted in a new romanticization of the child. But it was the looming
spectre of AIDS which, more than anything else, prompted a return to romantic love. “Once again we see that what gives romantic love its cultural configuration and its power—or lack of it—often has less to do with love itself than with demographics, economics, the use and abuse of gender assignments and the state of medical knowledge—or ignorance” (249).

What among all the kaleidoscopic images of a period sums up its attitudes toward love? Despite some recent attempts in literary criticism, structuralism, for example, to divorce literature from the society it grew out of, it used to be its literary works. Today the importance of words remains, through the genres are broader and include video, film, and newspapers (250). ... I began this book with a piece called “Whatever Happened to Romantic Love?” Now I think I know. Thanks to physical and economic necessity it came back, quieter perhaps than in past ages, more muted, but nonetheless alive and well, not only “crossing Delancey” as the film title has it, but everywhere, among married and would-be married heterosexuals and long-term homosexual couples alike. It remains to be seen how long this phase of the seemingly inexhaustible varieties of romantic love will last. (266)

Skimming the Books' section of this weekend's Globe and Mail my eye is caught by the heading of a column, “Praising the Personal,” that acknowledges a desire for the “small, personal essay, the sort of book that marries life and observation” (Levin, 1997, E9). The resonance is Virginia's. It is the emotional realm being sought in its fullest incarnations, a world that knows the many kinds of love and the journeys undertaken on their behalf, as the title of a newly-published book, What Kind of Love Did You Have in Mind? (1997) articulates it. Perhaps Gornick is right to claim that romantic love, as we have known it since the Middle Ages, can no longer persuade us that “in its pursuit the characters are going to get to something large,” that “we will all learn something important about how we got to be as we are, or how the time in which we live got to be as it is” (Gornick, 1997, 165). It is to the “seemingly inexhaustible varieties” of love, remembering the Greeks and their many words for it, that we will perhaps turn. “We need nothing less than a remything of love,” Gloria Steinem observed in 1992 (283).

If one dislikes the kinds of social norms the heroine seeks as her sexual preconditions, it is still interesting to see sex treated not primarily as a physical event at all but as a social drama, as a carefully modulated set of
psychological possibilities between people. This is a mirror image of much writing more commonly labelled pornography. In fact one cannot resist speculating that equality between the sexes as child rearers and workers might well bring personal feeling and abandoned physicality together in wonderful combinations undreamed of in either male or female pornography as we know it. (Snitow, 1983, 261)

For the question remains. Whether we like it or not, something that we have yet to adequately define demands that we create these stories and ingest them. Whether we like them or not, whether we believe in their power to transform, whether the attraction is biological or cultural or both, we are addicted to love. Site of desire, site of pleasure, site of hope. It is larger than what we can control, beyond reason, and more powerful. Plato knew it. And he knew that the ends of stories about it could be shaped for ill as well as for good.
CHAPTER FIVE:
THE ECONOMY OF LOVE:
MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, MONEY

In the garden there strayed
A beautiful maid
As fair as the flowers of the morn;
The first hour of her life
She was made a man's wife
And was buried before she was born.
(Anonymous, Sound and Sense.)

Of course MONEY can’t buy LOVE. That’s what your CREDIT CARD is for. Fifty-five Avenue Road, two blocks north of Bloor. The city’s heart. The truly unique you won’t find anywhere else. Love can be bought. If you know where to look. (advertisement, Toronto Life magazine.)

Our eagerness for both novels and films with the identical type of plot; the idealized eroticism that pervades our culture and upbringing and provides the pictures that fill the backgrounds of our lives; our desire for ‘escape,’ which a mechanical boredom exacerbates – everything within and about us glorifies passion. Hence the prospect of a passionate experience has come to seem the promise that we are about to live more fully and more intensely. We look upon passion as a transfiguring force, something beyond delight and pain, an ardent beatitude. (De Rougemont, Love in the Western World.)

There is not a woman born who desires to eat the bread of dependence, no matter whether it be from the hand of father, husband, or brother, for anyone who does so eat her bread places herself in the power of the person from whom she takes it. (Susan B. Anthony, in Steinem, 1994, 189-190)

If rebellion was my maternal legacy, it was not my father’s. His family had come to Winnipeg in 1882, in the first wave of Jewish immigration from the shtetls of Russia to the bustling towns of the Canadian Prairies. They quickly became upstanding, established, straight-laced, pillars of the fledgling Jewish community. Proprietors of a successful pawn shop, they upgraded to a jewellery store and sent their children, the third generation, to university. Books and learning were my paternal legacy. My father, the
youngest of his siblings, in his own act of rebellion, chose to go into the family business instead. A life-long passion for newspapers where he acquired most of what he hadn't learned at school transformed his subsequent regret at having made such an impulsive decision. He was a gentle wise man.

My uncle Nate, my father's older brother, was named for his grandfather, our founding paternal father, a ‘lost’ poet, a trickster, who was also a shrewd operator. In the dark days of the 1930s Nate travelled to New York to study journalism at Columbia University, returning to Winnipeg to write for the Tribune, a star reporter there until he died, unexpectedly, of an aneurysm, at the age of fifty-two.

On her twenty-first birthday in October of 1936, two years before they married, my father gave my mother a book for her birthday. I can imagine that Nate chose it and that my mother was not impressed. Because her own mother was such an intellectual, she thought she had constructed herself differently. I imagine that my mother, whose family was poor by any standards, was expecting something more from the son of a prosperous jeweller. Nonetheless her gift was White Banners (1936) by Lloyd C. Douglas, though she might have preferred Gone With the Wind, which was published the same year. In precise black fountain-penned script, my father inscribed it:

*To Francis:*

*May this book through the contents therein be a source of information in your trials, tribulations and also an asset to your future happiness.*

*Edward.*

Formal, aloof, reserved, ethical – as was his family legacy. What message did he expect this book to convey?

Their courtship was a long one because he was the youngest in his family. Custom had it that older siblings, especially sisters, were to marry first. So I imagine that my mother would have preferred an engagement ring to White Banners. She would have told my father exactly what she thought of his book. But, wanting to marry well, as the stringent deprivation of her mother’s life had taught her, and wanting, too, to leave her father’s house, I am sure she read it carefully.
The depression-era story in *White Banners* revolves around Hannah Parmalee, born into the working-class, unfortunately married to a wealthy man (against his family's wishes) and summarily divorced. Concerns about money plague all the characters in the novel. As the story begins, Hannah, destitute, arrives at the door of a middle-class home. Her timing is perfect and she plunges into dedicated domestic service for a family who become her life-long friends. Hannah, it seems, has given her newborn son to a woman she has met in hospital who has lost her own son in childbirth. As a working-class woman whose tentative marriage has dissolved without her moneyed husband's even knowing of her pregnancy, Hannah has realized that she will not serve her son well by bringing him up in poverty. The foster mother she has chosen for him will give Peter the best of all material things and will allow Hannah to observe his upbringing from a distance. The family in whose home she takes refuge is struggling to make it through the Depression on a professor's salary. They need her help with housework, child care and financial management. Making herself an indispensable part of their lives, Hannah is a model of pre-war womanhood: efficient, cheerful, charismatic, gifted in domesticity, infinitely selfless, believing "that if she didn't fight back, didn't enforce her rights, she would ultimately get what she wanted — and more — through the personal power generated by this passive attitude toward antagonisms" (Douglas, 1936, 371).

Her life a manual for passive aggression, Hannah is heroic as the very model of helpful selflessness that so troubles Walkerdine (1984). What did my mother make of the fact that my father had given her a book about money — about a woman who "married up" in order to give her child a better chance? What would she have made of the child on whom all Hannah's expectations of a better life (not for herself) were settled? What would my feisty mother have made of Hannah's compliant, selfless giving, of her gifted domesticity? What would she have made of the rhetoric of the happy family and the threat of adultery looming large but resisted?

My mother, who was fiery, passionate in her opinions, and highly emotional, would have been easily seduced by the doctrine of romantic love that flourished through
the late 30s and 40s. Blustery on the outside, prickly pear that she was, in her mind dashing men swept women off their feet, showered them with flowers, chocolates, gifts. There is no question that her notions about romantic love came to shape me, that her expectations provided a framework for me, became mine. My dad, tall, dark and handsome as he was, was not your typical romantic hero. Flat-footed and myopic, he was no soldier. He was way too nice.

I grew up thinking that all men were nice. I had wonderful uncles, a kind and gentle father, and when I got to university, a good-hearted boyfriend who was so nice, again. My mother said I would make mincemeat out of him. She was waiting for Heathcliff, though I didn't realize it at the time. And I am not sure if it was me she wanted him for or herself.\(^{25}\) As de Rougemont continues:

In ‘passion’ we are no longer aware of that which ‘suffers,’ only of what is ‘thrilling.’ And yet actually passionate love is a misfortune. In this respect manners have undergone no change for centuries, and the community still drives passionate love in nine cases out of ten to take the form of adultery. No doubt lovers can invoke numerous exceptions. But statistics are inexorable, and they confute our poetic self-deception. (De Rougemont, 1940, 16)

In *White Banners* an affair almost takes place between the husband, Paul Ward (an English professor!) and his lovely wife's beautiful and highly intelligent best friend. Hannah is proud to see that, though the attraction between them is compelling, they manage to resist temptation. It is interesting to look back on de Rougemont's analysis of the version of romantic love available in the early 40s. The gendered expectations of husband and wife were so strict as to drive passionate love outside marriage. Romantic love, as Freud and his followers have explained it, thrives on obstacles, takes its existence from the challenges they provide. “Remove all impediments as we did recently,” says Baruch, “and one removes romantic love. Many would say ‘good riddance.’ Feminists, in particular, view romantic love as a tool of patriarchal control. But cry as we will for

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\(^{25}\) In Woodman's terms, I was drawn into the negative *animus* of my mother which was constellated in its turn by her troubled relationship with her father.
liberation, other people are less equals to us than gadgets, mere appliances to turn us on” (Baruch, 1991, 28).

* * *

What really counts if one wants to be truly independent, is work, a job. That is my advice to all women who ask me. It is a necessary precondition. If you are married and want a divorce, it means you can leave, and support your children, and have a life of your own. Of course, work is not a miracle cure. Work today does have a liberating side, but it is also alienating. As a result, many women have to choose between two sorts of alienation: the alienation of the housewife and that of the working woman. Work is not a panacea, but all the same, it is the first condition for independence. (De Beauvoir, qtd. in Schwarzer, 1984, 42-43)

* * *

I grew up being aware of little passion between my mother and father, and few displays of overt affection. There was respect certainly and generally peaceful co-existence. I got all the love. My grandmother lived with us; she did all the cooking and housework; my mother was beautiful and absent; my father worked. We lived well, ate well, dressed well, went on holidays. I was showered with attention as my mother, grandmother, assorted aunts, uncles and cousins doted on me, spoiled me with affection. Sunday mornings my father took me on the streetcar, only one of the many treats that he provided. When I was sick I would call him at the jewellery store and ask him to bring something home for me. I hoped perhaps for a chocolate bar, but often what I got was a tiny locket or a heavy gold pocket-watch left over from the pawn shop days. I was the apple of his eye.

It was a shock to reach adolescence and have the bottom of my world fall out. My beloved grandmother now dead; her son, my uncle Jack, the doctor, dying of cancer in his fifties; my uncle Nate long gone. The family business floundering, money, never an acceptable subject for discussion before, became the only subject. (I wonder if money is ever a topic of conversation until you don't have enough of it.) When I was sixteen, my mother, impatient with my impulsive generosity to friends, put me on a strict allowance. She gave me two dollars a week, and I had to pay for my car fare to school out of it.
There was not much left for spending, literally only a few cents per week. But I did learn the value of a dollar. It was the beginning of a training in frugality, which came easily to her as a child of the Depression and which I resented terribly. Little did I realize how it would come to stand me in good stead.

My mother became a bargain hunter *par excellence*, and she passed that learning on to me. I hated it, how she fished for bargains. It embarrassed me to know that the few things I had were bought “on sale.” My adolescence was struggle enough without the extra pressures that financial worry put upon it. My mother, in the meantime, was suffering her own loss of status. Money, it seemed, was a defining factor in the 60s in Jewish Winnipeg. She had “married into money,” imagining, I suppose, that she would never have to worry about it again. As a girl she had worried. Every Saturday afternoon she had asked her father for a nickel to go to the movies and he had roared his refusal. My grandmother would say to her “Naarala (little fool), why do you bother asking him? You know I will give it to you.” But I suppose my mother was looking for more than a nickel from her father; she was looking for his approval, his pride in his growing daughter. She never got it.

Ironically, when my children reach adolescence, it is through my instigation that the troubled marriage into which they have been born comes to an end and they experience their own version of economic loss. The same children who went on four or five family holidays a year have taken one trip with me in the five years since their parents parted: to Winnipeg for their grandmother's funeral. Their father travels more extensively than ever; in forty months he went on forty trips. And we have become bargain hunters too, just like my mother. My children, without wanting to, have learned a lot about money.

* * *

Once upon a time there was a girl, let's call her Sleeping Beauty, who graduated as a teacher with two gold medals. The 70s were just breaking open and the world was her oyster. Propelled by her promise, she moved from a small Canadian city to a larger
one in order to teach the English literature that she loved. Getting away from home, she hoped to put a little distance between herself and the pressure to get married (it was the very air she breathed and all her friends were, after all. That was what they did right after graduation). But maybe she couldn't get far enough away from home. One prospective suitor followed another in dreary succession. Was she looking for love in all the wrong places? At long last her Prince did come. Whew! Riding a yellow Jaguar. It was as romantic a meeting as any she might have dreamt or imagined.

Star-crossed and blinded by 'love,' could she have known that the shadow side of 'powerful' was 'abusive'? Could she have understood that if he was so 'dominant' she would have to be so 'submissive'? Could she have imagined the price she would pay for 'love'?

In the beginning she gave up her name, her apartment, her friends, her furniture and curiously, her teaching job. She had been too dedicated a teacher. She needed now to be there for him, to offer all of herself up to Him, "feeding egos and tending wounds" (Bartky, 1990, 99). She would be his support, his helmpate, so "happy to keep his dinner warm as he went onward and upward" (Loesser, 1961, 17-18), as she had sung so many times. And he would honour her efforts by taking care of her, protecting her, as any knight in shining armour should.

But no matter how hard she tried to be a good wife and helper and later a perfect mother and homemaker, there was no part of herself that she could protect from him. Three children and twenty years of misbegotten dreams later, they separated, and everyone told her that the law was going to protect her. But it was expensive to get the law on her side, and she was running out of cash. He didn't really have to worry about the law now any more than he ever had.

She worried, though – about how she would manage with her children now that she didn't have much money to share with them and they had grown up used to much. She wondered where she would get a job when she was nearly fifty and hadn't worked full-time for the better part of twenty years. More than anything, she had to face the bald
realization that she was entirely, completely and utterly on her own to reinvent herself. She had, as Virginia Woolf pointed out in the last words of A Room of One's Own, "no arm to cling to" in the process of being reborn (1929/1977, 108).

Woolf had a lot to say to women about being on their own and most of it had to do with money and intellectual freedom:

My aunt, Mary Beton, I must tell you, died by a fall from her horse when she was riding out to take the air in Bombay. The news of my legacy reached me one night about the same time that the act was passed that gave votes to women. A solicitor's letter fell into the post-box and when I opened it I found that she had left me five hundred pounds a year for ever. Of the two – the vote and the money – the money, I own, seemed infinitely the more important. Before that I had made my living by cadging odd jobs from newspapers, by reporting a donkey show here or a wedding there; I had earned a few pounds by addressing envelopes, reading to old ladies, making artificial flowers, teaching the alphabet to small children in a kindergarten. Such were the chief occupations that were open to women before 1918. I need not, I am afraid, describe in any detail the hardness of the work, for you know perhaps women who have done it; nor the difficulty of living on the money when it was earned, for you may have tried. But what still remains with me as a worse infliction than either was the poison of fear and bitterness which those days bred in me. To begin with, always to be doing work that one did not wish to do, and to do it like a slave, flattering and fawning, not always necessarily perhaps, but it seemed necessary and the stakes were too great to run risks; and then the thought of that one gift which it was death to hide – a small one but dear to the possessor – perishing and with it my self, my soul – all this became like a rust eating away the bloom of the spring, destroying the tree at its heart. However, as I say, my aunt died; and whenever I change a ten-shilling note a little of that rust and corrosion is rubbed off; fear and bitterness go. Indeed, I thought, slipping the silver into my purse, it is remarkable, remembering the bitterness of those days, what a change of temper a fixed income will bring about. No force in the world can take from me my five hundred pounds. Food, house and clothing are mine forever. Therefore not merely do effort and labour cease, but also hatred and bitterness. I need not hate any man; he cannot hurt me. I need not flatter any man; he has nothing to give me. So imperceptibly I found myself adopting a new attitude towards the other half of the human race. It was absurd to blame any class or any sex, as a whole. Great bodies of people are never responsible for what they do. They are driven by instincts which are not within their control. They too, the patriarchs, the professors, had endless difficulties, terrible drawbacks to contend with. Their education had been in some ways as faulty as my own. It had bred in them defects as great. True, they had money and power, but only at the cost of harbouring in their breasts an eagle, a
vulture, forever tearing the liver out and plucking at the lungs – the instinct for possession, the rage for acquisition which drives them to desire other people's fields and goods perpetually; to make frontiers and flags; battleships and poison gas; to offer up their own lives and their children's lives. Walk through the Admiralty Arch (I had reached that monument), or any other avenue given up to trophies and cannon, and reflect upon the kind of glory celebrated there. Or watch in the spring sunshine the stockbroker and the great barrister going indoors to make money and more money and more money when it is a fact that five hundred pounds a year will keep one alive in the sunshine. These are unpleasant instincts to harbour, I reflected. They are bred of the conditions of life; of the lack of civilization, I thought, looking at the statue of the Duke of Cambridge, and in particular at the feathers in his cocked hat, with a fixity that they have scarcely ever received before. And, as I realized these drawbacks, by degrees fear and bitterness modified themselves into pity and toleration; and then in a year or two, pity and toleration went, and the greatest release of all came, which is freedom to think of things in themselves. That building, for example, do I like it or not? Is that picture beautiful or not? Is that in my opinion a good book or a bad? Indeed my aunt's legacy unveiled the sky to me, and substituted for the large and imposing figure of a gentleman, which Milton recommended for my perpetual adoration, a view of the open sky. (Woolf, 1929/1977, 37-39)

It is to read closely of the insidious, invidious changes that poverty wreaks on a woman's soul that I quote Woolf at such length. It is “the poison of fear and bitterness which those days bred in [her].” The progression from that to pity and toleration and then, finally, to freedom. In Woolf's rendering of how economic realities affect lives, I am bound by recollections of my adolescence as I am by those of my recent past to understand how freedoms, intellectual or otherwise, depend on material things. Just as my mother before me came to understand that when my father lost his money, he lost much more than that, so I have come to understand what it is to have status that is not really yours and lose it. As Hannah Parmalee did. It is an almost impossible understanding for those who have not stood in its shoes.

Woolf is careful in this passage not to blame men; she sees them as trapped in economic roles too. The instinct for possession tears at them like a vulture. What is to be blamed is the education they receive, their patriarchal education. Nine years later, in Three Guineas (1938/1986), Woolf considers education again. She traces the history of women's entry into the professions in the course of her inquiry into how the logical
outcome of an education in patriarchy is war. Could women's different sense of values enable them to build a new and better world? "How can we enter the professions and yet remain civilized human beings; human beings, that is, who wish to prevent war?" (Woolf, 1938/1986, 86). Four great teachers have guided the "unpaid-for" education of the "daughters of educated men": poverty, chastity, derision and freedom from unreal loyalties.

By poverty is meant enough money to live upon. That is, you must earn enough to be independent of any other human being and to buy that modicum of health, leisure, knowledge and so on that is needed for the full development of body and mind. But no more. Not a penny more. By chastity is meant that when you have made enough to live on by your profession you must refuse to sell your brain for the sake of money. (92)

By derision Woolf means the refusal of all badges, orders, honors and degrees. "Freedom from unreal loyalties" extends this theme to mean that all kinds of pride (in nation, in gender) must also be forsworn. Woolf consistently calls us back to our own sincere self-scrutiny. Women will never stop war, will never exercise any significant political power without the cold hard cash earned from their new professions. Education revisioned by women might open new possibilities, might offer as its end-product a human being with a very different value system, might not lead to war. Yet Woolf stands firm in wanting women to have a modicum of material ease; she has confidence in their ability to judge how much is enough.

However, in the embodied world in which Woolf lived, the only profession open to women was marriage. All their education was directed toward that end:

It was with a view to marriage that her mind was taught. It was with a view to marriage that she tinkled on the piano, but was not allowed to join an orchestra; sketched innocent domestic scenes, but was not allowed to study from the nude, read this book, but was not allowed to read that, charmed, and talked. It was with a view to marriage that her body was educated; a maid was provided for her; that the streets were shut to her; that the fields were shut to her; that solitude was denied her – all this was enforced upon her in order that she might preserve her body intact for her husband. In short, the thought of marriage influenced what she said, what she thought, what she did. How could it be otherwise? Marriage was the only profession open to her. (Woolf, 1938/1986, 44-45)
How many, how varied are the professions open to women today! Where are they taught how much is enough? 

* * * 

When we were young, Sartre had a tiny legacy from his grandmother, and I never had any scruples about his using it so that we could travel together. We never had any particularly strong rules. There were times when I was literally living on Sartre's money because I wanted to write - *The Second Sex*, I think it was. If I'd taken a job I wouldn't have been able to write. And he had quite a lot of money at the time. It didn't worry me. ... It was after the war and I had left teaching. I could have returned to it - I had been officially reinstated - but I had absolutely no desire to teach while I had books to write and while Sartre had a lot of money and was kind enough to lend me some. ... I regarded it as a favour from a friend and one which I would do for a friend - male or female - and which, incidentally, Sartre has also done for other people he has close ties with. (De Beauvoir, qtd. in Schwarzer, 1984, 57)

* * * 

Before I separated, I envisioned the days of my freedom in beatific terms. In my first mornings alone in the marital bed, I awoke to find my stomach not contorted into knots; I breathed newly, deeply, freely. Escaping from the prison my home had become, I would, for the first time in twenty years, be able to go to the movies on a weekday evening. But I found movies expensive. There was no provision in my monthly allowance for them. And not one penny for books. Books? "Nothing for books. She can use a library," declared Madam Justice. And nothing for tuition fees either. All the money we had saved during our marriage was directed into a trust fund for our children's education, not a penny of it for mine. Am I to believe that the Law did not want to punish me for reading, for thinking, for breaking a marriage, for surviving?

No money for charities either. She stared at me: "You don't expect him to give you money so you can give it away to charities, do you?" Gifts? Slash went her pen. Reduced. Reduced circumstances. A woman of reduced circumstances, I felt myself a small heap of steaming offal mounded on the floor. A question formed inchoate within me: "How can I feel like a human being without giving money to charity?" My lips were
sealed, stunned into silence. Clothes? “She doesn’t need any money for clothes,” said my former spouse. “She doesn’t work. She doesn’t go anywhere.”

Flowers? Wine? All of the amenities that had seemed so agreeable to Woolf in 1928, the amenities that she was the first to observe were men’s alone, are still theirs today. There is nothing in the realm of material pleasure that my ex-husband cannot enjoy. Understanding that men give their families precisely what they choose and no more, those were his exact words before the judge. “Not a penny more.” The Law is no more just than the human beings who practise it.

What position could she, Madam Justice, take, after all, when her embodied experience (all that she could really know) was within the context of a marriage that left enough room for her to become a lawyer, to practise law assiduously enough to be rewarded for her service by becoming a judge? Who was ‘happy to keep [her] dinner warm as [she] went onward and upward?’ Who cared for her children as she sat in her chambers deep into the wee hours of the night, pursuing settlement? If she had so little experience with keeping the home fires burning, how could she begin to understand other women with less sympathetic life experiences? What part of her patriarchal education would have taught her how to read another woman’s pain between the lines of a budget?

Divorce lawyers ask two things of the women who seek their counsel. They ask for budgets, wherein every conceivable expense, no matter how trivial, is expected to figure importantly, and they require an affidavit of the history of the marriage. The budgets are prepared repeatedly as the preparation for court drags on and on, in deference to the dynamic nature of the process. But settlements are reached with little actual consideration of those sections of women’s budgets devoted to luxuries: leisure, holiday, gifts, charitable donations. They do, however, matter significantly where the men are concerned. The story of the marriage is meant to furnish sordid, grisly, intimate details which the lawyer can utilize if settlement is not reached and the process must move out of the judge’s chambers to court, where every nuance of the union will be dissected at length. It took me two days to fill fifty pages with the story of my marriage. A story, my
version, as Bogdan paraphrases Plato: “an artifact made and made up out of words ... [imitating] at a third remove from reality” (1992, 7).

“That's quite a story,” commented my lawyer. I wondered at the obscene voyeurism of his project: that I was paying him by the hour to read my story, that his hourly rate was ten times what mine was as a teacher, that he knew there was very little likelihood of his ever using that story for more than “tone,” because proceeding legally all the way to court was so enormously costly that the only possible winners would be the lawyers. “It's good for you to write it, psychologically,” he advised. Good for me to wrench memory onto paper and then understand that none of it would count.

* * *

I think a woman should be on her guard against the trap of motherhood and marriage. Even if she would dearly like to have children, she ought to think seriously about the conditions under which she would have to bring them up, because being a mother these days is real slavery. Fathers and society leave sole responsibility for the children to the mother. Women give up their jobs to look after small children. Women stay at home when the child has measles. And women are blamed if the child doesn't succeed.

If a woman still wants a child in spite of everything, it would be better to have one without getting married, because marriage is really the biggest trap of all. (De Beavoir, qtd. in Schwarzer, 1984, 73)

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In the first months after my separation I refused to wear a ring on my wedding finger until I began to realize that the absence of that ring, on a woman of my age, denoted a diminution of power. So I went back to wearing rings because I understood that I could not afford to feel any more powerless than I was. Having survived a marriage that had everything in its power to destroy me, I thought that, on the other end of it, I would be safe. Finding out that I was wrong nearly destroyed me again. Popular wisdom would have it that strength of character is forged in the battles survived. The most sensitive of individuals, what I had to endure took an enormous toll on me, shortened my life undoubtedly, so that my urgency to capture the memories and ideas of this dissertation seems born of a fearful premonition that I will have no time to tell my story. I am never sure that there will be time for anything that is good.
And I am certainly, abidingly, one of the lucky ones. I got out. My children are more intact now than they have ever been. "What’s better, commented one friend upon hearing the news of our impending separation, “broken children or a broken marriage?” Yet, in the social milieu of the late 90s, where right-wing family values have the edge, there is scant rhetorical space for the understanding that to end a marriage may be the best way to save the children. The most recent research opens a window on this “startling” possibility.

Children living with two parents considered ineffective or hostile were five times more likely to have persistent behavioural problems than children living with a single but effective parent – a wider gap than one created by income.

“It’s a strikingly big phenomenon,” said Chief Statistician Ivan Fellegi. “Parenting style matters and it matters one heck of a lot.” (Philp, 1998, A7)

The results of this study suggest that governments may have to allocate funding for the development of parenting programs (instead of blaming divorce for children’s problems, as I think they have done).

Few people seem to understand how hard it was to end that bad marriage. Oblivious to the determination I mobilized in twenty years of trying to make it better, unable to fathom how driven I had been to try and try and try again, how deeply I feared the stigma of divorce, and how creatively I struggled with the demons around me, they could not view me as other than lacking in ‘commitment.’ Though I wonder what magic kingdom they thought I was headed for. At fifty, with no career, three kids, no fathers or brothers to fall back on.

It has been no magic kingdom. There was nothing beguiling in learning that, in the eyes of the Law, I had very little claim to having lost anything in the twenty years where I had full-time work outside the home for only two of them. It mattered not at all that, once upon a time, I had won two gold medals, had been such an outstanding teacher. My “promise” was paltry. Not a lawyer, doctor, or judge; I was a teacher. Who cared? My problems were my own fault. All I had endured in twenty years was elided,
minimized, denied, circumlocuted. A clean version of my life was constructed. The judge was impressed by my ex-husband’s ability to pay so little tax! The money I had saved in my two years of teaching went to pay for my divorce. If I hadn’t worked, hadn’t saved, my ex-husband would have had to pay.

“There is no room in the court for allegations about character,” my lawyer intoned repeatedly. “We have the feminists to thank for that.” As if I were to blame not only for the failure of my marriage but for what some people considered to be the failings of feminism too. In fact, “no-fault” divorce, as Janet Hough points out, “was the result of 20 years of lobbying, both by men’s and women’s groups, for divorce legislation devoid of sex-role stereotyping” (1994, 148). But it was expensive to change lawyers.

The first time my case came before the judge, I was not invited to attend, but I insisted (timorously) upon it all the same. Because I thought my lawyer would protect me, speak for me, represent me, it never occurred to me to ask him if I needed to be prepared in any way for my appearance. When Madam Justice directed a barrage of questions at me, questions concerning my husband’s business and my financial needs, I was flustered, unable to remember how much income tax I had paid the previous year, what it had cost me to run my house, how much I spent per month on groceries. I had prepared a budget some weeks earlier. Why was I so nervous in this unprecedented location, before the Law, that I could not remember what I had taken such pains to figure out, filing flimsy receipts for every single purchase, every coffee, every magazine, so that I could get an accurate idea of what it was costing us to live? Why did I come into that courtroom expecting someone else to protect me? Why did it take me so many years and so many humiliating experiences to internalize Woolf’s understanding that there was “no arm to cling to,” when I was an only child? I who had grown up alone, had come to

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26 Allegations of character had been used to claim that adulterous women were therefore unfit mothers and should not retain custody of their children. The change meant that allegations of abuse would no longer be admissible in the courtroom either. “With the passage of the Divorce Act, 1985 “fault” was all but eliminated from Canada’s divorce law. The traditional marital offences of adultery, cruelty, and desertion were no longer to be given consideration in the determination of support or, with corresponding changes to provincial property laws, in the division of matrimonial assets.” (Hough, 1994, 148)
Toronto alone, I who knew so clearly what it was to be alone. Why did I keep on wanting to cling?

When we left the court house that first afternoon, I asked my lawyer why he had not prepared me for court with my documentation organized and in hand. It was not his intention, he explained, to position me as an intelligent, highly educated woman who had given up a promising career. As a teacher. It would go better if I were just a victim. But I refused to inhabit the role he had designed for me. Before our next day in court I became obsessed with studying as much of the Law as a lay person could. I wrote a short essay to the judge though I doubt she ever read it. It centred around the following freedoms guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms:

Section 15: Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability.

Section 28: Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

Section 7: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice. (Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982, C11)

I prepared pages of detailed charts of financial material in order to demonstrate to the judge the economic disparity between my husband and myself. “But,” commented the lawyer’s assistant, “an adult male needs more money for clothes than a fourteen-year-old girl.” How so? The girl's growing feet need adult shoes, new ones every three months. The adult clothes she wears need replacing just as frequently. My daughters once returned from a visit to their father's new apartment to report that he had thirty-five pairs of shoes. His feet are hard to fit. He can only buy the most expensive brands. Equal protection. Equal benefit. Under the Charter.

Studies have documented that, upon divorce, the husband's lifestyle improves dramatically while that of the wife and children diminishes (Weitzman, 1980, 1985). In
1995 when my divorce became final, the judge, in her infinite wisdom, used as the basis for my husband's annual earnings the lowest income he had reported in the last ten years of our marriage. On the basis of that lowest figure, lower by two thirds than what he earned in his best year, he was to keep six-tenths of the money he earned; and each of us, the three children (now adolescent, wearing adult shoes and adult clothes) and myself, were each entitled to one-tenth. And the many expenses which he 'wrote off' because he was self-employed and the owner of a successful business – the meals, the car, the phones, the flowers, the wine, the parties, the vacations, the club memberships – all these did not enter into the discussion. In addition to six-tenths of a ridiculously low figure labelled his 'income,' he got all of the extras above and we got none.

"The lamp in the spine does not light on beef and prunes" said Virginia (1929/1977, 19). "What food do we feed our women artists upon?" she asked. (52) And the law, as my lawyer was quick to point out, was good to me. Equitable and fair. I was no welfare mother. Many people have pointed out the problematic nature of my privilege. I view these comments ironically because those making them, my lawyer for instance, have little embodied experience of financial reversal. It doesn't occur to them that learning to live on far less than half of what you used to live on represents an authentic challenge. It is difficult to judge where to begin to trim down your lifestyle. When I tell my story, people tell me not to expect any sympathy because I have not known the deep privations of a welfare mother. I explain what I have come fervently to believe, in looking at the larger picture, that, precisely as a woman of privilege, I feel bound to tell my story because there are so many women struggling just to survive who will never have the opportunity to tell theirs, because "intellectual freedom depends on material things" (Woolf, 1929/1977, 103). I see the comments of the well-meaning individuals who question my right to question as subtle efforts to silence me once again.

Gloria Steinem believes that because women of wealth are closer to power, even stronger forces are massed against their insurgence, and that "rich women [can] be ridiculed and condemned with far less fear of retribution than [comes] from opposing
men with real power" (179). The greater the imbalance of power between husbands and wives, Steinem explains, the "greater the abuse" (183); the myth that women in the upper classes are not physically and sexually abused is just that. Steinem clearly does not intend to diminish the enormous privilege that wealthy women enjoy. Her analysis of their situation is important because there is a "clear continuum from the feminization of poverty to the masculinization of wealth" (188), because assumptions about wealthy women having easy access to financial capital must be more closely examined, and because there are intimate links between women’s many freedoms and money.

Women are one-half of the world’s people; they do two-thirds of the world’s work; they earn one-tenth of the world’s income; they own one one-hundredth of the world’s property. (Classroom poster in Orenstein, 1994, 247)

The Law is ponderous, heavy and enigmatic about changes for women and children, lumbering like a giant sea turtle in no hurry to win any race, able at any moment to pull back into its shell. We do not find out about the Law and our relation to it reading romances. Where do we teach young women about their place in relation to the Law?

In 1873 a Canadian woman brought an alimony suit against her husband, claiming that her labour had helped him to accumulate the property that was deemed his. The judge laughed; such labour was merely what a wife owed to her husband (Chambers, 1997, 179). It was Judith Shakespeare’s story (Woolf, 1929, 47) all over again. Poodles dancing. One hundred years later, in 1973, Irene Murdoch’s case came before the Supreme Court of Canada. Her claim was identical. Her labour had contributed to the success of the family ranch and she should, therefore, be entitled to a share of that property. The judge laughed again. Her work was what was expected of a rancher’s wife.

The Married Women’s Property Act of 1884, which granted wives rights over their separate property that approached those of men and single women – formal legal equality – had done nothing to address the fundamental imbalance of economic power within most marriages or to deconstruct the social belief in marital unity, male authority, and wifely obedience, to achieve more substantive equality between spouses. Separate property – narrowly defined as wages and inherited land, money, and chattels – was inherently limited. In a society in which most women
were housewives, men continued to own the vast majority of family property. Without a legal recognition of the economic value of domestic labour, most wives were denied the benefits of property ownership. (Chambers, 1997, 179)

Meanwhile in Ontario Rosa Becker was fighting a battle much like Irene Murdoch’s in Alberta. Twelve years later here is the end of Becker’s story:

Rosa Becker has killed herself. After 19 years of working with her common-law husband to buy land and develop a business, after six years of battling him in court for a share of those assets, after six years of trying to enforce a favorable court ruling, she has left a suicide note calling her death a protest against the legal system.

She did not need to die to make that protest; the facts spoke for themselves. But her suicide has underscored the pain she must have felt as every note of optimism faded and every triumph evaporated. (Rosa Becker’s loss, 1986, A6)

I know how Rosa Becker felt seduced and traduced by the judicial system. I, too, came with reverence to the temple of Justice, believing the Law would protect me. I filled my head with notions of safety and protection reading the texts my culture provided for my education. Where do we teach girls about how the Law really works?

In 1975 the Law Reform Commission of Canada (established in response to feminist activism after the Murdoch decision) recognized that

no doctrine exists that the value of a contribution towards the family home, farm or business by way of management, physical labor, cooking, housekeeping, or child care is sufficient to give a spouse making such a contribution — and these are almost invariably wives — any share in the business, farm, home or property. (Law Reform Commission of Canada, qtd. in Chambers, 1997, 183)

It was another nine years of political action and lobbying until the passage of the Ontario Family Law Act of 1986 legally considered the longstanding economic invisibility of women's work in the home,

...to recognize that child care, household management and financial provision are the joint responsibilities of the spouses and that inherent in the marital relationship there is equal contribution, whether financial or otherwise, by the spouses to the assumption of these responsibilities. (Family Law Act [1986] part 1, subsection 5.7, qtd. in Chambers, 184)
As Lori Chambers points out, "[e]ven this act, however, does not guarantee wives material compensation for the career sacrifices often made for the benefit of the family as a whole, and does nothing to provide wives with access to cash in ongoing marriages, a problem that continues to limit women's options in abusive relationships" (Chambers, 1997, 184). Legal reform, Chambers concludes, will have limited impact until society's values are transformed, until greater economic opportunities are offered to women, until the state honours its obligation to provide support and shelter to women fleeing abuse at home. There are no Harlequin romances about abused women.

The Law seems as recalcitrant as the gentlemen who cling to it, who hide behind its dusty black robes and pretend that equality is too difficult to make real, that the economy would crumble if value was imputed to women's work in homes. Fully one hundred years ago, in 1898, Charlotte Perkins Gilman recognized the problem:

The ground is taken that the human female is not economically independent, that she is fed by the male of her species. In denial of this, it is first alleged that she is economically independent, — that she does support herself by her own industry in the house. It being shown that there is no relation between the economic status of woman and the labor she performs in the home, it is then alleged that not as house servant, but as mother, does woman earn her living. It being shown that the economic status of woman bears no relation to her motherhood, either in quantity or quality, it is then alleged that motherhood renders a woman unfit for economic production, and that, therefore, it is right that she be supported by her husband. Before going farther, let us seize upon this admission, — that she is supported by her husband. (1898/1966, 17-18)

Gilman maintained that in the dawning days of civilization when the women who planted and gathered first produced more food than their kinship group could use, men claimed that surplus to trade for other goods. It was the beginning of the colonization and expropriation of women's work that continues to this day. On March 2, 1998, a news story describes a new approach for determining the wage gap between the sexes which includes measuring women's unpaid work. It proclaims: "Women's income straggling at 52 percent of men's" (Matas, 1998, A6). Though Gilman was an avid reader of anthropology, the accuracy of her documentation is sometimes questioned. Her thinking was rooted in the 'civilization' discourse that prevailed at the time, a doctrine of infinitely
progressing (white) humanity that smacks, to modern sensibilities, of racism and that gave birth also to eugenics. It was the best she could do to understand that the law of supply and demand and the beginnings of patriarchy were bound in one historical moment.

Though the human mother was “worked far harder than a mare, laboring her life long in the service, not of her children only, but of men” (Gilman, 1898/1966, 20), what she actually possessed depended on the generosity of the man she married: “how much he has and how much he is willing to give her” (21). The “troubles of life” were “traceable to the heart or the purse” (25).

The question that engaged Gilman at the birth of the twentieth century was how women could achieve full equality in an industrial society. The history of the women's movement had been summed up in the eyes of the general public by the history of suffrage. But Gilman, as Woolf would later, understood the critical importance of the money. It was her embodied experience, her impoverished childhood as the daughter of a deserted mother and the desperate economic privation she watched her mother endure that formed the questions Gilman was passionate to examine as an adult. Like Woolf, Gilman had very little 'paid-for' education. And certainly there was nothing in an informal education in what she called “the iron torture chamber of romance” (1898/1966, 65) that prepared women to talk about money. Money never has been a topic of lengthy consideration in novels; it is simply taken for granted that men have it and women need it.

Gilman (1898/1966) made the same connections between the denial of equality of economic opportunity and social expression that Woolf would come to make some years later. Women are evolutionarily stunted by the narrow roles society allows them; the world is deprived of the contributions they might make. Females, socialized to see

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27 Cecilia Morgan points out that there were women of Gilman’s time involved in abolitionist and anti-imperialist struggles who struggled with an awareness of race, class, and gender but that Gilman did not choose to do so. See Vron Ware’s Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History (Verso, 1992), especially her chapter on the British anti-lynching activist Katherine Impey, “‘To make the facts known’: Racial terror and the construction of white femininity”; or Kumari Jayawardena’s The White Woman’s Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia During British Rule (Routledge, 1995).
marriage as their ultimate destination, think of little else; they become sex-specialized, failing to develop more than their powers of attracting the opposite sex. Gilman understands the young girl's position:

What she has to gain even as a child is largely gained by feminine tricks and charms. Her reading, both in history and fiction, treats of the same position for women; and romance and poetry give it absolute predominance. Pictorial art, music, the drama, society, everything, tells her that she is *she*, and that all depends on whom she marries. (86)

Femininity is the only acceptable specialization for girls. Because of the social construction of gender roles, woman "pours her whole life into her love, and, if injured here, she is injured irretrievably." Because a man may direct his energy toward the public world in what Gilman calls "racial activity," he will have a more balanced perspective on love. An unhappy love affair need not ruin his life. Because he has other possibilities for self-actualization,

[w]ith him it is frequently light and transient. With her it is a deep, all-absorbing force, under the action of which she will renounce all that life offers, take any risk, face any hardship, bear any pain. It is maintained in her in the face of a lifetime of neglect and abuse. (48)

The critical moment for Gilman came when "man began to feed and defend woman" and she "ceased proportionately to feed and defend herself" (1898/1966, 61). Giving up responsibility for her own food and protection, woman became essentially a prostitute, whether she was married or not. "The transient trade we think evil. The bargain for life we think good. But the biological effect remains the same. In both cases the female gets her food from the male by virtue of her sex-relationship to him" (64).

Observe the ingenious cruelty of the arrangement. It is just as humanly natural for a woman as for a man to want wealth. But, when her wealth is made to come through the same channels as her love, she is forbidden to ask for it by her own sex-nature and by business honor. Hence the millions of mismade marriages with "anybody, good Lord!" Hence the million broken hearts which must let all life pass, unable to make any attempt to stop it. Hence the many "maiden aunts," elderly sisters and daughters, unattached women everywhere, who are a burden on their male relatives and society at large. This is changing for the better, to be sure, but changing only through the advance of economic independence for women. A "bachelor maid" is very different from "an old maid." (89-90)
Gilman clearly believed that economic independence was crucial to women's well-being. Only the money to live decently releases women from the stronghold of romance, the "mismade marriages," the misery of being a burden on their families. To what extent have Gilman's high hopes for economic independence been realized?

In a recent article in *Toronto Life Fashion* magazine, Christina Basciano, a thirty-five-year-old single-by-choice woman, engages with the dilemma of the biological clock that suddenly seems insistent:

> Many sociologists and therapists agree that we're being slammed by a new wave of life crisis where early social conditioning meets Mid-30s Reality: the humbling recognition that the syrup-soaked family scenes of *The Waltons* and *Little House on the Prairie* were the TV-land concoctions of our time, creating a mass-induced lull with the pablum of familial idealism. In other words, they were a load of crock. (Basciano, 1998, 86)

What if Mr. Right does not, in fact, come along? How does a woman on her own face the possibility of remaining single? Turning to a number of therapists, Basciano finds that the reason women are single is that they enjoy living that way, without the demands and responsibilities of husbands and children. The vexing questions for single women around loneliness and poverty in old age can be addressed strategically by maximizing the opportunities for self-development, broadening the relational network to include a wide variety of relationships, and getting some good investment advice to develop a financial plan. Moreover, "I was tickled pink to hear that there is an emerging 70s-style renaissance of communal living among single women; many are electing to buy properties together in order to share financial and maintenance responsibilities" (Basciano, 1998, 130). Gilman would have approved of how successfully some women today manage to meet their relational and financial needs without men. Yet, for many other women, who are beyond Basciano's consideration here, living alone and growing older are often accompanied by abject poverty. Studies show that all women, even those
who do marry, will spend long periods of their lives alone. It is imperative that girls be given the relational and financial training they will need.28

Gilman did not seek to blame men for women's lot; she saw their roles equally as being “socially constructed”; they, too, were victims of the painfully slow evolution of society. Her *Women and Economics* (1898/1966) had a wide contemporary appeal because it addressed itself to a change already in full swing. Women were gradually moving into the larger world because of the changes of modern, industrial life. In 1906, Gilman wrote in a popular magazine: “What we have to do is to recognize the woman as a human being, with her human rights and duties and to learn how to reconcile happy work with a happy marriage” (Qtd. in Degler, 1966, xxvii).

In 1902 in *The Home* Gilman reiterated her belief that

[i]t is not that women are really smaller-minded, weaker-minded, more timid and vacillating; but that whosoever, man or woman, lives always in a small dark place, is always guarded, protected, directed and restrained, will become inevitably narrowed and weakened by it. The woman is narrowed by the home and the man is narrowed by the woman. (1902, 277)

Why could men have both meaningful work and happy family lives while women were forced to choose between them? Work had redeeming qualities of joy for all human beings. The autobiographical is worth noting again here, in relation to Gilman's own first marriage. Inasmuch as she loved Charles Stetson, the man who would become her first husband, she worried that the social expectations of marriage would do irreparable harm to her career and her self-esteem. She vacillated at length before deciding to accept Stetson's proposal in 1884. Once married, she descended deeper and deeper into

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28 Considering statistics about the considerable numbers of women who spend long periods of their lives alone, feminist philosopher of education Susan Laird writes: “I believe that curriculum theorists need to take seriously the gendered asymmetries, reversals and repetitions in this all too familiar story if girls and young women are ever to be educated to take responsibility toward themselves and if boys and young men are to be educated in ways that foster their understanding and appreciation of what that challenge can mean in a world that is often indifferent, condescending, unfair, hostile, and harmful, sometimes even murderous, to women. I am now thinking about this problem because my own experience of solitude following my marital separation has taught me to think of myself as a miseduced woman (despite the fine education I will be paying dearly for every month of my life until September 2009). No curriculum ever taught me anything about the challenges or joys of living alone; I have had to reeducate myself in order to survive the former and embrace the latter. And I am still only learning, but probably no more alone in this respect than I am in being single.” (Laird, 1993, 172)
depression, a profound despondency that deepened even more after the joyous birth of their daughter Katherine. A holiday away from home miraculously eased her pain, but when she returned home again, so did the melancholy. Gilman was prescient in placing the origin of her pain in a fear of the loss of her independence, which surely arose from her early experience as a daughter watching the suffering of her own mother. Knowing what she knew about herself, she still agreed to submit to the best available medical advice, that of the renowned Dr. Weir Mitchell, a specialist in women's nervous diseases. Conforming to the rest cure that he prescribed – of complete inactivity and no intellectual stimulation whatsoever (the same treatment that was visited on Woolf with the same deleterious effects) – nearly drove her insane.

It also motivated her to write *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1899/1973), a fictionalized account of her own descent into madness. She wrote with the conscious intent of helping others; all her writing emanated from a deeply ethical sense of social purpose. I felt just as its protagonist did when I lay on my bed in Winnipeg and wondered what, outside of marriage (which didn't seem right for me), I would do with my life. How many talented young women have gone mad engaging with the prospect of marriage? Did they read *The Yellow Wallpaper* in school? Why is madness rarely understood as socially constructed outside the academy?29 Why is the madwoman always positioned out there alone? Can we not admit our own mad moments and still cling to the safety net of sanity? Who opens topics like these with girls growing up? What do we not teach our daughters and why?

Ann Lane points out in her essay on Gilman's fiction that, while her mother had taken out her anger at her husband on her children, Gilman took her own anger at her helplessness before the social demands of marriage out on herself. Though she and

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Stetson divorced amicably and remained friends for life, she continued to suffer from depression at various periods in her life.

In her private correspondence it's sadly clear that she saw her emotional illness as a sign of personal weakness and responded with shame and guilt; but in her external product, "The Yellow Wallpaper," she examined and understood the social roots of mental illness and was able to show how the emotions ultimately are not a private affair after all.

In her fiction Gilman constructed a world in which her own sorrows would have been largely eliminated and her unique gifts cherished and encouraged. She drew upon the unbearable and destructive elements in her own inner and outer life, and managed them through her fiction. (Lane, 1980, xli)

Writing fiction managed her pain. Like so many women, Gilman wrote for her life.

Where do we teach our daughters about the social construction of their femininity? Where do we teach how writing helps?

What I am claiming here is a connection between two topics central to Gilman's thought: work/money and the control of one's life it brings with it and depression as a response to having no control over one's life. Gilman understood that women, as well as men, needed both work and love. Though she did not state it as explicitly as I am stating it here, she understood the connection between the emotional and the economic. I remember myself, a young bride, constellating all my hopeful illusions about marriage in a poem I wrote to read at the altar, determined to find the best in myself as a wife as I had in the other roles of my life. I came to marriage with the highest of hopes and was dashed like a ripe tomato against a rock, seeds spilling in every direction. What other than depression can express that hope gone sour?

There are further connections between money and sexuality beyond Gilman's understanding that marriage was prostitution. Ann Lane (1980) maintains that Gilman's father left her mother because another pregnancy for her would have been fatal. "Sex brings with it not only a frightening pregnancy but the likelihood of death; yet sex is so necessary in a marriage that without it, men desert their families" (xxxvii). It is probable that Charlotte grew up blaming herself for her father's abandonment and her mother's
suffering. "Gilman described in painful detail her mother's decision to deny all affection to her children, so that they would early in life be steeled to its absence and thus not suffer, as she did, when love was removed" (xxxvii). It is not surprising that Charlotte grew up ambivalent about her sexuality. And where, I wonder, did her mother turn for comfort when the embodied world was so dangerous for her?

This ambivalence of her upbringing leads Charlotte to leave home, as it will inspire all her fictional characters to leave 'home' in order to write their destinies in the larger world. The home, for all it had historically been maintained to be, was not always safe haven. The one consistent message in all her work is that one must leave the family in order to grow:

The women in Gilman's fictional world struggle to reach a new sense of themselves, but not through sexual awakening, not as Kate Chopin's heroine or Anna Karenina or Emma Bovary relates to her world, but defying conventions that define women's sexual place. Gilman's women, through struggle and hardship, ultimately achieve autonomy, usually through their work. With that autonomy, they are then complete enough to love and to be loved. (Lane, 1980, xxxix)

Readers tend to remember the two Emmas and Anna Karenina more easily than Gilman's heroines because they harness the power of the emotions in their development. Gilman's characters, compelling as they are to our rational selves, fail to greatly move. Given their creator's upbringing, it is unlikely that they could have been otherwise. It is understandable that Gilman felt herself ill-equipped to bring up her daughter, to provide her with an emotional education. It seems sadly logical that a woman who has been purposely unloved in her body in the primal relation between mother and child might grow up to develop a theory of women's self-development which hinges on economic independence and not on the bodily relation between the sexes. The companionate marriage which Gilman lived out with her second husband, Houghton Gilman, provides us with an important revisioning of the domestic wherein two people with different career paths form a union that respects the individuality of both. It is a model for marriage very different from the ones we see in conventional romance novels.
As Lane points out,

Gilman used fiction as a device to offer an answer to the question she always posed: “But what if ...?” What if she wants a family and a career, and her husband-to-be objects? What if her children are grown up and she is bored? What if her husband is abusive and she wants to leave him, but she does not know how? What if her vacuous life causes her to make impossible demands upon her caring husband? What if she does not have the patience to rear the child she loves? What if the work she desperately wants takes her away from the man she adores? What if her elderly mother is ill and she does not want to sacrifice years nursing her? Except in The Yellow Wallpaper, there is always a feasible, positive alternative, and there is always a happy, or at least a moderately happy, ending. The questions, in one form or another, came from Gilman's own experience, either because she had herself come to a satisfactory resolution or, more often, because she had not and suffered the consequences, which she wished to spare subsequent generations. If there were not many models after which young women could fashion a new way of life, then Gilman would create them in fiction. (Lane, 1980, xvii - xviii)

In The Yellow Wallpaper we see what life is like when we let others make our choices for us. In the rest of Gilman's fiction, women make choices for themselves, pushing back the limits of social convention. I laughed out loud when I reached the ending of a story (“The Cottagette”) where a man agrees to marry a woman only if she promises him that she will never cook, but will direct her energies only towards making art. The Yellow Wallpaper asks us to consider women's depression as it has been and still is so easily stigmatized as madness when being depressed is a part of being human and certainly a by-product of the social construction of femininity. The connections between female poverty and depression are explored by Rosemary Sullivan (1995) in her biography of poet Gwendolyn MacEwen. “Money does not create happiness, but its absence can destroy freedom” (Sullivan, 1995, 278); and being an artist, in Sullivan's terms, is not a financially safe profession. MacEwen's was a ravaged psyche; relationships were difficult because she considered herself fatally flawed and she drank too much. Nevertheless when she took her life she had a bank balance of $2.02. “It is surprising what a change of temper a fixed income will produce” (Woolf, 1929/1977, 38).

Forms of mental illness which are associated with men, where anger is directed not within but without, whose social effects are more destructive, are seldom
pathologized. Men like O. J. Simpson are seen as isolated individuals, not as members of
a large group of well-off, handsome men who regularly abuse their wives. Money can
buy everything in our society, even justice. A man possessing all the trappings of
economic success will pass for perfect if he looks the part, so little time do we take to
probe what is beyond the merely visual.

We do not “withdraw prestige and social status from these men,” writes John
Keyes, in an article which attempts to understand why boys become brutes (1996, 56).
There are, conservatively estimated, 165,000 hard-core serial batterers in Canada,
stalkers, men whose consistent, daily, deliberate verbal and physical abuse brings women
and children pain, agony and, sometimes, death (Keyes, 1996, 56). Fully one hundred
years after Gilman wrote The Yellow Wallpaper and made the connections she made
between power and depression, the stigma of mental illness still attaches itself to women
like a spider’s sticky web. Men are not stigmatized as crazy.

Answering the question of why boys becomes brutes, Keyes (1996) locates three
traumatizing factors in early childhood: “a shaming or disparaging father who regularly
humilies the boy, often in public; an insecure attachment to the mother figure, which
produces a ‘Madonna or whore’ perception of all women; and experiencing or witnessing
an abusive home environment” (57). From those who deal with spousal abuse on a daily
basis, Keyes offers this checklist for young women who must “fear that Dr. Jekyll could
someday turn into Mr. Hyde”:

- Does he make disparaging jokes about women? Does he think the
  expression ‘I’ll O.J. you,’ is funny?
- In his last relationship, who left whom and why? What does he say
  about that?
- Does he have mood swings that seem to have nothing to do with you –
  but end up with you being good or bad?
- How does he describe his upbringing? His parents? Does he happily
  see them?
- What’s his attitude towards money? Is he controlling of yours?
- Is he excessively jealous of attention paid to you by friends of either
  sex? By strangers?
If your answers to any of these questions make you uneasy, it's wise to insist on further discussion, or even break things off. Otherwise, the future may hold visits to a shelter, a hospital – or the morgue. (61)

* * *

I consider this project for battered women to be of great importance, because, like the problem of abortion, the problem of violence affects nearly all women – regardless of their social class. It is not restricted to any one class. Women are beaten by husbands who are judges or presiding magistrates as well as by husbands who are labourers. (De Beauvoir, qtd. in Schwarzer, 1984, 69)

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The quotation below is taken from an unpublished University of Toronto law thesis which maintains that wife abuse is child abuse and asks whether custody/access arrangements can afford to ignore “character” any longer:

One of the lawyers interviewed did describe a case where the abuse was not taken seriously by the court. The lawyer was representing an abused woman, and the parties were in the judge's chambers trying to settle the case. The judge told the abused woman to go out to lunch with her husband, and work out an arrangement for access because the case should not be before the court. When the woman told the judge that she had spent four years in counselling learning about how to protect herself both emotionally and physically, she [the judge] responded, “I didn't tell you to sleep with him, just to go out for lunch with him.” (Cohen, 1997, 76)

Over half the students in law schools may be women, but what really counts is the same question Woolf asked in 1938: “Are we not right then in thinking that if we enter the same professions we shall acquire the same qualities?” Competition, hierarchy, jealousy, possessiveness and greed were the lessons Woolf judged the logical conclusion of a gentleman’s education. “And do not such qualities lead to war?” she observed. “The professions [do] have an undeniable effect upon the professors” (Woolf, 1938/1986, 77), and if women come to exercise their knowledge and their power using values they have gleaned from their patriarchal education within an almost essentially unchanged patriarchal legal realm, how sensitive will they be to the women whose lives they judge?

The Law, like everywhere else I wandered in the public world, denied my experience in the private one, sanitized my pain, dismissed my learning. But even in the teaching profession there seems no way to put a value on what I learned at home. For a job opening at the university where I am a student, the list of teaching requirements is
uncannily close to my experience in the classroom. I call to ask if they would consider hiring someone past fifty and the answer is yes. “You will need to have published.” To teach pre-service teachers in a graduate institution you need to have published. I, of course, have not published. In all the places where I taught I created an abundance of curriculum which other teachers use today. I did not publish it.

I taught at the Faculty of Education the summer I graduated from it. I have taught grades nine, eleven and twelve, and kindergarten, grade one, grade two, grade three, grade four and grade five. A paper that I wrote for one of my graduate courses has been used as a model for incoming students at the Faculty of Education in Manitoba. Parents of students I taught tell me I was the best teacher their children ever had. (This is difficult to commit to print; it seems unseemly.)30 I do not possess the qualifications to teach teachers at the same institution where I had professors who did not even bother to hand me back my papers at the end of term, let alone make comments on them.

I have driven carpool, grocery-shopped, taken temperatures, done laundry, cooked meals, balanced chequebooks, tutored French, sewed costumes, volunteer-canvassed my street, been a single mother, started two businesses, assisted a dying parent, paid bills, managed budgets, raised three decent, motivated children, helped out in classrooms, fed meals to the homeless. But I have not published. Whose standards, whose values are being upheld here? The professions do have an overwhelming effect on the professors, it seems. Will I ever find the “rhetorical space” for what I know?

* * *

When I was sixteen years old and a good student, I tutored younger children who were having trouble at school, charging fifteen or twenty dollars an hour. I am fifty-two now. Two years ago I had a two-thirds position teaching French from kindergarten to grade five. Seven half-hour classes a day, six different lesson preps, interacting with 116 young students each day, using my voice almost constantly. My mother was dying; I was

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29 “It would be as difficult to present oneself as a good teacher as it would be to present oneself as a good mother.” (J. Miller, 1996, 111)
a single parent to two adolescent daughters and one son away at university. I had no extended family to help out in any way. Every day after school I went to my mother's apartment. My daughters met me there, and another day began. Two weeks after my mother died in October I collapsed with pneumonia. The doctor told me that the job was too hard. My mother had a small insurance policy. The money realized from that was not taxable. What my mother gave me, on one level, was the time away from work to write this dissertation. For the first time in four years I had time for myself. “Father's birthday,” wrote Virginia in 1928. “He would have been 96, 96, yes, today; and could have been 96, like other people one has known; but mercifully was not. His life would have entirely ended mine. What would have happened? No writing, no books; – inconceivable” (Woolf, 1953, 138). In how many ways has my mother's death freed me to write what I write though she never read a word of what I had written?

I fear not finding employment when I finish writing. My imagination may take me back to teaching full days at the elementary level, but my body will not. I cannot work in the academy because I have not published. I may go back to tutoring again. What I did when I was sixteen. It will pay me forty dollars an hour. After all my years of formal education, that's the best I can do. There are no equalization payments for that.

* * *

Because trauma cannot be simply remembered, it cannot simply be “confessed”: it must be testified to, in a struggle shared between a speaker and a listener to recover something the speaking subject is not – and cannot be – in possession of. Insofar as any feminine existence is in fact a traumatized existence, feminine autobiography cannot be a confession. It can only be a testimony: to survival. And like other testimonies to survival, its struggle is to testify at once to life and to the death – the dying – the survival has entailed.

And ...

But how do we write our own death (our own survival) and still keep the integrity, the wholesomeness, of the narrative itself? “To me,” says African American feminist bell hooks, “telling the story of my growing up years was intimately connected with the longing to kill the self I was without really having to die. I wanted to kill that self in writing. Once that self was gone – out of my life forever – I could more easily become the
me of me." Is not this violent and paradoxical predicament of "writing a woman's death" precisely part of any feminist undertaking of "writing a woman's life?" (Felman, 1993, 16)

The morning of my first wedding, a sunny December morning, I dressed in the little slope-ceilinged room at the top of the stairs in my about-to-be-sister-in-law's house and watched the guests arriving through the frosted windowpane. I remember that it was colder and snowier than most Toronto days. I remember that I felt a stranger to myself. What I remember is the feeling in the pit of my stomach. Sick. I knew I should not marry. I was twenty-six years old. All my childhood friends were married. He was tall. He was dark. He was handsome. He was successful. He was Jewish. Reader, I married him.31 How could I disappoint my mother?

It is a curious business, marriage. Nobody seems to pay enough attention to its immense significance. Nobody seemed to think that in approaching the altar, garbed in white, I was walking toward unknown disaster of unforeseeable proportions: and so I tried to emulate - I emulated successfully - the world's fine, confident unconcern. Such an emulation had paid off so well on so many other alarming occasions (anesthesia, for instance, or diving off the top diving board, both events which, I was assured, despite a natural reluctant fear, would not harm me) that I was prepared to take the world's calm view of marriage too, distrusting and ignoring the forebodings that even then possessed me: in such a mood, assured that it is a normal event or a commonplace sacrifice, one might well lay one's head upon the block or jump from a high window. (Drabble, 1969, 115)

He was a man whose past was filled with trauma. Whatever his pain had been, I thought I could rescue him from it. All the stories I had read taught me that I could do it. He would be my life purpose so long sought. Expo hostess, copywriter, spy, teacher, saviour. No job too big or too small. Maybe that was why he wanted to marry a teacher.

* * *

"Is the work of a mother, of a wife, of a daughter, worth nothing to the nation in solid cash?" Woolf asks in 1938. "[B]ut wives and mothers and daughters who work all day and every day, without whose work the State would collapse and fall to pieces,

31 I am, of course, borrowing Jane Eyre's words here (as I will again in Chapter Six); this is how she informs us, in the last pages of the novel, that she has married Mr. Rochester. (C. Brontë, 1847, 411)
without whose work your sons, sir, would cease to exist, are paid nothing whatever. Can it be possible?" (1938/1986, 63). Woolf sees that though women are entitled, in spirit, to half their husbands' incomes, in fact, few have access to such equality of purse. "It seems that the person to whom the salary is actually paid is the person who has the actual right to decide how that salary shall be spent" (67). She admits that for a woman to earn even 250 pounds a year (half of what they need to have a lifestyle equal to what a man might aspire) would be a remarkable achievement in 1938, even for a woman with the highest qualifications. Though the professions have been open to women for nearly twenty years they are still caught between the "devil and the deep sea":

Behind us lies the patriarchal system; the private house, with its nullity, its immorality, its hypocrisy, its servility. Before us lies the public world, the professional system, with its possessiveness, its jealousy, its pugnacity, its greed. The one shuts us up like slaves in a harem; the other forces us to circle, like caterpillars head to tail, round and round the mulberry tree, the sacred tree of property. It is a choice of evils. Each is bad. (86)

The "daughters of educated men" must continue to press for a wage for wives and mothers. Men, too, will benefit from such a wage:

For if your wife were paid for her work, the work of bearing and bringing up children, a real wage, a money wage, so that it became an attractive profession instead of being as it is now an unpaid profession, an unpensioned profession, and therefore a precarious and dishonoured profession, your own slavery would be lightened. No longer need you go to the office at nine-thirty and stay there till six. Work could be equally distributed. Patients could be sent to the patientless. Briefs to the briefless. Articles could be left unwritten. Culture would thus be stimulated. You could see the fruit trees flower in the spring. You could share the prime of life with your children. (128)

'What are men so afraid of then?' Woolf asks, though she understands why women are afraid, why they must entertain such subversive ideas as hers are with caution. "Fear is a powerful reason; those who are economically dependent have strong reasons for fear" (137). Women in 1998 still understand that without money they cannot leave abusive marriages. As busy as we are as a society making pronouncements about how we would improve children's lives, nothing will change for children until we reform the teaching of romance, until we change laws of public policy as well as of family law to
reflect a new valuing of women's work in the home and with their children. We will not improve the lives of children until we teach boys and girls how to create relationships where partners participate equally, ignoring the dangerous distortions of power that are encoded in our vast array of cultural productions. We will not have fewer divorces, less material and emotional suffering until we understand and practise respect in all our human relations. But in a technologically-driven, outcome-based education system, it will be a challenge to make room for equality and respect. How can we measure these?

* * *

I don't know if anyone's experience can counter the power of myth and make us rethink our assumptions that women are the same class as husbands or fathers, and that proximity to money is the same as its control. (Steinem, 1994, 174)

Inherited wealth and power enforce patriarchy pure, and envy of this ladylike trap makes the rest of us behave against our own best interests. That will continue until women have a feminist class analysis of their own. We need to honor the strength and knowledge of women at the bottom, as well as the experience and access to resources of women at the top – and combine them to achieve power for females as a caste. (Steinem, 1994, 175)

Always an astute observer of humanity, Woolf saw how the wealthy society women who were her friends, the women who inspired and nurtured her, enjoyed unprecedented freedom of speech and thought because they had money and the power it brings. I submit that the understanding that "intellectual freedom depends on material things" (Woolf, 1929/1977, 103) is perhaps the most important idea that Woolf bequeathed us, and that Gilman has given us a fitting companion to that idea in her understanding that depression results from lack of material power and the silencing of voice and will that accompany it. But as far as Gilman and Woolf were able to come in their analyses of power, what they could not yet understand was that it was one thing to confront the tyrant without and quite another to uncover the oppressor within. The daughters of educated men, as Woodman's insight into the "Father's Daughter" has shown, will have new challenges to face balancing their right to claim an education with
the push and pull of embodied existence. As teachers of adolescent girls who have not yet made their career and life choices, we need urgently to explore all of this.

There are no princes coming. When two thirds of divorced Canadian women and their children live below the poverty line (Finnie, 1994, 36), we ignore at our peril the connections between the love stories our culture teaches and the crushing female poverty to which those stories have so often led. As teachers, we are obliged to explore those connections with our students, to offer boys and girls alike the space to examine, question, and locate themselves in the powerful discourses of their cultural tradition where they can safely consider the kind of lifestyle they want and the compromises they may have to make in order to get it.

John Kenneth Galbraith maintained that Sleeping Beauty and her girlfriends were educated to spearhead the consumption of their affluent post-war era. “The decisive economic contribution of women in the developed industrial society is “overwhelmingly, to make possible a continuing and more or less unlimited increase in the sale and use of consumer goods” (qtd. in Steinem, 1994, 200). It is not surprising that young women are a major focus of consumer culture today and that Big Business is not inclined to care whether they starve themselves to death.

I believe that we cannot offer them what we have not claimed ourselves, that we may have to confront what we have been less than honest about in our own relation to money and the power that it trails in its wake. As Valerie Walkerdine reminded us in 1985, we must consider how it feels when women teaching in child-centred classrooms must suppress in themselves the very initiative and independence they are expected to nurture in their students. Kristen Golden, in Ms. magazine, reminds us that “[g]irls are watching [us],” and forming conclusions on the basis of the way we live our lives and not how we talk about them (1994, 61). Seeing through the enforced separation of our public and our private selves, girls’ eyes may see more clearly than our own.

Carol Gilligan (1990) tells us that adolescent girls are confident at eleven and confused at sixteen. Confidence in their own knowledge about the world, based on their
lived experience in it, is eroded as they are “processed” through the overt and insidious cultural learning of this period, a cultural conditioning to which they are profoundly sensitive. They lose confidence in their own ability to judge, to see, to feel, to know and in its place they layer on the lessons we teach them. The product who will emerge at the other end of an unquestioned, unproblematized North American female adolescence will be a split personality, a public persona and a private one – her most authentic and important learnings pummelled underground.

Add to Gilligan's model of burgeoning confusion data from the now considerable literature on high school girls' math anxiety. In *Moving Beyond Words* (1994), the last step in a personal journey which began with considerations of voice, moved through the mythology of romance and is finally concerned with money, Gloria Steinem comments that economic anxiety may be even more common than math anxiety, “for unlike math, which has its personal uses, economics is seen as a mysterious set of forces manipulated from above” (199).

I believe that math anxiety and economic anxiety share a common root. It is in adolescence that the seeds of economic disability are planted. The formal education that we offer girls through this period in their lives must address this process with strategies and alternatives. Do we have to wait until we are nearly sixty – as Steinem was when writing – to honestly examine our relationship with money? In Japan, she pointed out, where women have traditionally been in charge of household money management, men are seen to suffer from math anxiety and their grades in math must be adjusted in order to gain them university entrance.

Gender equity still eludes us, according to this morning's paper. Female managers earn only 68 percent of what their male counterparts earn. The glass ceiling holds unshattered (Ross, 1997, B15). As Steinem pointed out, “[w]hen any field includes too many women (usually when females become about a third of the whole), it is devalued, just as the neighborhood into which 'too many' families of the 'wrong' race have moved, and for the same reasons – exclusivity and bias” (Steinem, 1994, 209). Male prostitutes
are paid more than female prostitutes. Male professors are paid more than female professors. Lecturers on war earn more than those who speak about peace. Discrimination persists even in the field of birth technology; sperm donors are paid; egg donors rarely are. And lawyers are paid more than teachers.

"Tax inequities victimize women" proclaims the heading of the newspaper column. There is no intention to discriminate, the columnist explains, while elaborating seven major areas where men will be favoured by Revenue Canada: no recognition of unpaid work in the home, disproportionately high goods and services taxes for single mothers, taxability to custodial parents of support payments, end of family allowance ("there is no longer a recognition of the value of children and the work mothers do in raising them"), disallowability of pension income credit for government pensions (a major source of income for older women), and women's greater difficulty in deducting child care expenses (Roseman, 1993, B13). For example, the support payments I receive from my ex-spouse are taxable to me as income. However, I could not claim the child-care deduction when my daughter was younger because I had no income; support payments were not considered income for purposes of child-care. My ex-husband, whose daughter chose not to spend any time at her father's home, was allowed to claim the child-care credit because he earned income. Where is the justice in this?

Assuming women do manage to have an income, how confident are we in knowing how to manage our money? Where do we go for training in basic economic literacy since we didn't get it in school? Joanne Thomas Yaccato, psychologist-turned-financial consultant, recognized financial planning as a gender issue when she turned thirty and "[w]hat really flabbergasted me was my dawning realization that I was supposed to marry my financial plan" (Yaccato, 1995, 46).

The lure of the Cinderella story has kept women enthralled for centuries, and it has led to the disturbing belief that if you wait long enough and keep your fingernails clean (and your virginity intact) then the right man will come along and save you from having to fill out all your own federal income tax forms. (Barreca, 1993, 196)
Yaccato offers statistics that indicate that women in Canada comprise 31 percent of middle management and 48 percent of the graduating classes of Canada's business, medical and law schools. One Canadian woman now operates a business for every three men who do. In major cities, single female buyers outnumber single male home buyers, and women's RRSP contributions are growing faster than men's. The bad news about the recent recession was that more women lost jobs than men, but the good news was that those same women turned around and started businesses of their own.

Why is it then, as Yaccato asks, “that thousands of women from all walks of life tell me they fear becoming a bag lady in their old age?” Her answer: “From the time we're swaddled in pink and blue blankets, women and men are taught to have different expectations about money. Subconsciously, at least, we've come to believe a knight on a white horse will ride into our lives and make our financial problems vanish” (Yaccato, 1995, 46).

That knight again. Isn't it astonishing how persistent are the legends that have brought happiness to so few of us and trouble to so many? Even when men do come into women's lives, Yaccato points out, they are usually riding Fords and needing help with the payments. But is there a woman whose heart doesn't skip a beat at the sight of an Income Tax form? I know of no high school math class that teaches students to fill one out.

Not only is a rudimentary education in basic economics considered beyond women, but contemporary economic theory continues to place no value on what is recognized as “women's work.” What does it mean to really understand that women's work in homes or fields or in child-raising is valueless, not only on an individual micro-economic level but as expressed in the GNP of countries, as New Zealand's Marilyn Waring points out. She wants to understand ‘value’ in its economic and noneconomic contexts as a “very worthy word [that] has been taken away from us and led along a very narrow path” (Waring, 1988, 22).
Waring refers back to Adam Smith, the 18th century economist who was the first to distinguish "market" from "moral" values and to identify the market as the place where values were expressed, an insight that emanated out of his historical moment at the emergence of a new manufacturing class. Ironically, Waring asks: "If Adam Smith was fed daily by Mrs. Smith, he omitted to notice or to mention it. He did not, of course, pay her. What her interest was in feeding him we can only guess, for Adam Smith saw no 'value' in what she did" (23).

Waring concludes that economic rules make no sense because they are completely unrelated to the well-being of the community. How can an environmental disaster like the Exxon Valdez incident be seen as an economic gain because it provides work for so many – cleanup crews, lawyers, etc.? What value is placed on the landscape or the animals destroyed? Nature has no value at all in traditional economics.

In 1993 Statistics Canada estimated that the cost of replacing one year of homemakers' labour would be $200 billion dollars, almost 40 percent of our gross domestic product; double or triple time for homemakers who work sixteen-hour days was not taken into consideration (Steinem, 1994, 215). Two years earlier Carol Lees, a Saskatoon homemaker, drew world-wide attention to women's unpaid work by refusing to answer questions on a census that would have judged her labour in the home as other than "work." Thousands of other women joined Lees in her protest; they won their demand to have unpaid household work included in the 1996 census. Housekeeping is the main activity of 3.4 million Canadians, making it the largest occupation in the country. Reporting on a NACSW housekeeping conference held last October in Ottawa, Paula Brook notes: "[k]ids cost a fortune in terms of time spent, jobs compromised, seniority lost and benefits forgone, none of which is considered by the people, mostly men, who measure our GDP and set national policy" (Brook, 1997, D1). When Gilman considered the problem of women's work, she concluded that it was housework, not children, that made the greatest demands on women's time. Technology has swayed that balance slightly. Brook quotes Elizabeth Fox-Genovese (1996) who maintains that it is children
who are today’s version of what Betty Friedan (1963) called the “problem that has no name”; it is caring for children that keeps women isolated from the public world. In *Feminism is Not the Story of My Life* Fox-Genovese writes:

> Children, not men, restrict women’s independence. Children, not men, tend to make and keep women poor. Few but the most radical feminists have been willing to state openly that women’s freedom requires their freedom from children. Yet the covert determination to free women from children shapes much feminist thought and most feminist policies. (Qtd. in Brook, 1997, D1)

> “House is not home” proclaims the headline of this letter to the editor of the *Globe and Mail* after a front-page picture has appeared showing member of parliament Michelle Docker holding her seven-week-old baby in the House of Commons.

> What this picture tells us is that the House can be a child-care centre instead of the place where the business of the nation is managed. What happens when the baby cries? Are the matters of 30 million people now usurped by one person?

> Imagine a baby brought into a board room of a public company where serious matters are to be discussed. It would never happen. It’s wonderful to see more women taking senior positions in government and industry. It does not, however, extend to a licence to bring babies to work, and certainly not to the House of Commons. (D. S. Miller, 1998, A24).

What happens when the baby cries, indeed?

Instead of being trapped in their homes, as the housewives were, women of the 90s are “ghettoized in the lower ends of the workforce where it is still possible (if just barely) to work and raise children” (Brook, 1997, D1). Had I gone back to full-time teaching at the end of my marriage, I might have been able to support myself, but I could not have supported three children who had grown up privileged materially. But making the invisible visible and demanding its value in real economic terms is dangerous too. The same facts may be used against women, to keep them in their place: it could be argued that if you are so valuable as a homemaker and mother, then you’d better restrict your aspirations to that. De Beauvoir recognised the problem back in the 70s. She refused to support wages for housework though they might alleviate the problem in the short term.
But in the long term, it would encourage women to believe that being a housewife was a job and an acceptable way of life. But being banished to the ghetto of domesticity and the division of labour along male/female, private/public lines is precisely what women should be rejecting if they want to realise their full value as human beings. So I am arguing against wages for housework.” (Qtd. in Schwarzer, 1984, 75)

Double-cross, double vision, double whammy, yet again. As Carol Lees puts it:

There are dangers inherent in all demands for change. The danger in demanding the choice to work in paid labour was that one day women might be required to work in paid labour. And now we're at the other end of that stick – where women are exhausted because they have a double workload. What they didn't count on was that their unpaid work would continue unabated, and they would assume an extra burden of paid labour. There are always dangers. We never know what the negative consequences might be, but that can't stop us. (Lees, qtd. in Brook, 1997, D3)

Are we teaching young men in our schools that housework is a shared responsibility?

The thing to change is the conditions of housework. Otherwise its value will continue to be associated with the isolation of women, which is something I think should be rejected. Men must be made to share the housework, and it should be done publicly. It must be integrated into the community and the collectives where everybody works together. That's the way it's done in some primitive societies, incidentally, where the family is not synonymous with isolation. The family ghetto must be destroyed! (De Beauvoir, qtd. in Schwarzer, 1984, 75)

And the children? Now romanticized, as icons of upper-class parents' success, now demonized as condemning lower-class mothers to poverty. ‘Family values’ stronger than ever, the ideal of home as haven still persists. A spate of recent books aims to document the distress of working mothers (Brook, 1997; Hochschild, 1996, 1997a, 1997b; McKenna, 1997). How can we expect others to bring up our children? Who will be responsible for the transmission of values? How can women manage a day that never ends? The workplace is making extraordinary demands of time, writes Arlie Hochschild, so extraordinary that family life is brutally squeezed. Women have changed but the workplace has not. For many of the women in Hochschild’s survey work has become “home,” while home is “a place of unwashed dishes, uncleaned laundry, unmade meals and perplexing human relationships” (1997a, 40). Having identified the “second shift” of

"Canadians are deeply torn about whether women ought to be at home or at work, according to a ground-breaking survey published yesterday by Statistics Canada," is front-page news at the Globe and Mail (Mitchell, 1997, A1). We are a nation distraught by the work/family conflict. Covering the same survey the Financial Post reports that women are less likely to leave their jobs for the sake of their families. Those who do take a break return more quickly to the labour force than they used to. "Women find it easier to continue working now because of the influence of family friendly employment policies" (Toulin, 1997, 4). There is no mention at all of a nation distraught.

Just one day earlier, in an op-ed piece in the Globe and Mail, a middle-aged woman, twenty-five years a doctor, laments her dealings with a trust company: "It is simply a given that in any financial institution two X-chromosomes make you fiscally suspect" (Galbraith, 1997, A18). She could not get a mortgage on a home without her husband's co-signature.

I met with a succession of trust company officials, all male, and found myself defensively assuring them that I had a happy marriage, that my husband was willing to sign his name to their foul document, but that I didn't want him to. They looked at me uncomprehendingly. If my husband was willing to sign, what was my problem? ... I became obnoxious. I demanded to know how much money I needed to have in my own right before I could have a mortgage without my husband's signature on it. They said there was a formula, but refused to show it to me. I informed them that I was a person in my own right, not my husband's chattel. They agreed politely. I demanded to speak to one of their superiors. I was connected with a pleasant woman in the Ottawa office who said she understood "where I was coming from" and would look into it, whatever "it" was. (Galbraith, 1997, A18)

The mortgage did not go through without her husband's signature.

"Almost the same daughters ask almost the same brothers for almost the same privileges. Almost the same gentlemen intone the same refusals for almost the same reasons. It seems as if there were no progress in the human race, but only repetition," wrote Woolf in 1938, having surveyed the history of women's entry into the professions
(1938/1986, 76). Sixty years later, fully one hundred years after Gilman wrote, almost the same daughters are still asking almost the same fathers for almost the same privileges. Perhaps it was not penis envy, as Freud suggested, that was the problem. Gloria Steinem's (1994) fanciful musings on this concept have led me to believe that Freud's formulation was perhaps a projection of the womb envy that lurks at the heart of men's profound and steadfast refusal to allow women equity on the economic turf. The real power, the real reason for the 'dread of woman,' as Freud's disciple Karen Horney (1932) named it, was not simply fear of being swept away in her awesome power. It was envy of that power, women's power precisely, the power to create life. Fully one hundred years after Gilman wrote, we have been able to put human life on the moon, we have been able to clone a sheep; in fact, we have made enormous inroads in the field of birth technology into what has traditionally been women's power to create life. What has not moved very substantially is the money. "But that is all the more reason why we must make ourselves heard," warns sociobiologist Ruth Hubbard, "lest we slip into a brave new world in whose creation we have no part" (1990, 208). If women do not achieve economic parity before human life can be technologically reproduced, I worry that women will be worth even less than what we have been before in the history of the world.

*   *   *

Fully one hundred years after Gilman dealt with it, the issue of the value of homemaking is still an issue. I was a stellar homemaker32 for twenty years but I did not publish. I cared for the children. I kept his dinner warm while he went onwards and upwards. I darned his socks, ironed his shirts, chose his clothes, wrote his speeches, designed his office space, came in when his secretary was ill, chose the gifts he needed, planned his parties, managed his social relationships, got him onto the boards of temple and school, chose his tie every morning, prepared his meals, entertained his clients,

32 Several years before I came back to graduate school I went to see a professional career counsellor. He gave me a battery of tests. Among his many findings was the fact that I had the highest score in "homemaking" that he had ever seen.
advised him on every project and business decision he made in twenty years. But I did not publish.

Janet Hough, reviewing the history of spousal support in 1994, traced the difficulty of trying to create an economically equitable situation considering the underlying, basic, systemic inequalities. First, men were required to pay alimony to their wives; then there was a time when the legal presumption of equality prevailed. In feminist lawyer Mary Eberts' (1985) terms it was "equality with a vengeance" (qtd. in Hough, 155). "Spousal equality was thought to be guaranteed by gender neutrality, Hough explains" (1994, 149). But the result of this presumption was the unprecedented poverty for divorced women which led to the return of spousal support that is being practised now. "In a state of inequality, equal treatment does not achieve equal outcome but rather reinforces the status quo," Hough points out (150). "What is often misunderstood about the problem of gender inequality is not that women are treated differently than men, but that women are systematically disadvantaged relative to men" (155). Equality is more than mere "sameness of treatment" (156).

As much as Hough highlighted the importance of "equality of outcome," she wanted to ask how the system could change to make spousal support unnecessary. Relational feminism within the legal community has attempted to highlight women's values; it has insisted that they be valued.

Within the framework of relational feminism, the issue of maintenance becomes not a question of whether or not to do away with support, but one of how to do away with the need for support. We do not ask ourselves if and under what circumstances men and women should be treated the same or differently, but rather what priority childbearing and nurturing are to be given in our society. (Hough, 1994, 159)

Family law reform must occur in conjunction with changes in public law "as part of a coherent policy of income maintenance" which attempts to address women's economic dependence on men by rewarding them for their labours.

Suzanne Thibaudeau refused to pay income tax on her child support payments. She took her claim to the Supreme Court of Canada in 1994. Why, she argued, should
these payments be taxable to her and deductible to her spouse? Thibaudeau lost her battle, but she won the war for all divorced women in Canada. Changes to the Income Tax Act and new Federal Child Support guidelines were accompanied by changes in the Divorce Act. Many of the issues that I had to fight for in court are now enacted in divorce law; they need no longer be argued on an individual basis; they are rights. The income of the custodial parent is no longer a consideration in determining child support awards from non-custodial parents. The government has assured a reluctant public that it has conducted sufficient analysis as to be certain that whatever income the custodial parent has will necessarily be going to support the children. Higher awards for the support of teenagers have not been put in place, but there has been verbal acknowledgement of the fact that it costs more to support an adolescent than it does to support an infant. Medical and dental insurance are included in what the non-custodial parent must provide. Children are eligible for support beyond the age of majority if they are pursuing an education. Increases in the payer's income should be reflected in the size of the support payments paid. Anyone who has a child support order may request in writing the income tax returns of the payer in those orders. If new laws are created to reflect the concerns, interests and values of the society around them, the intent behind this new legislation is reassuring. Disparity in the lifestyles of divorced husbands and wives is finally being addressed.  

\[33\] These 1997 changes in response to women's activism were created as part of a compromise that also entailed the establishment of an inquiry into father's rights. As the findings of that parliamentary committee are expected in the second week of December, this development has recently commanded much press coverage. The fathers concerned alleged that their wives had turned their children against them and had chronically violated court orders which allowed fathers time with their children. In some instances, wives had physically attacked the fathers of their children without any legal consequences. The 1997 compromise was made not to examine whether or not the legal system was fair to men, but to assess the need for a more "child-centred" approach to family law practices and policies which would emphasize joint parental responsibilities. It is expected that the draft report will not accomplish enough to satisfy the desires of the men nor the concomitant concerns of the women around issues of abuse. There are expected to be no criminal sanctions for denying access or for parents who make false accusations of physical or emotional abuse and no automatic granting of joint custody if parents cannot agree to it. The terms "custody" and "access" are likely to be replaced by "shared parenting" and there will be recommendations for giving non-custodial parents more influence in their children's lives but no legislated mandate to do so. More weight will probably be given to independent experts with increased funding set aside for mediation and other non-adversarial forms of dispute resolution; more recommendations will be given to help disputing parents stay out of court and most interestingly, there may be mandatory education for parents who cannot agree on custody arrangements and a greater "voice" given to the children themselves through the office of a Child
Nonetheless, there is a clear continuum from the feminization of poverty to the masculinization of wealth. It’s no accident that women and their dependent children are 92 percent of those on welfare, and female-headed families make up most of the working poor, while the gender of those who control this country’s great concentrations of wealth is even more uniformly male. ... To get an idea of how disproportionate this distribution is, a minuscule top 0.5 percent of the country owns between 20 and 25 percent of the wealth – a figure derived from taxes on estates worth $60,000 or more, and one that has remained relatively unchanged throughout this century. (Steinem, 1994, 188)

Nearby twenty years ago in 1980 Lenore Weitzman wrote about the material effects of no-fault (equality of opportunity assumed) divorce in California: “women on average suffered a 42 percent decrease in standard of living in the first year following divorce, while their husbands experienced a 73 percent increase” (Weitzman, qtd, in Hough, 1994, 150). Things are not better yet; we see increasing evidence of the “feminization of poverty” that began to be associated with divorce in the 70s and 80s. In 1989 14.5 percent of Canadian children were living in poverty; in 1995 there were 20.5 percent.34 In response to the Ontario government cutbacks in legal aid which have most

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34 This information comes from a Letter to the Editor of the Toronto Globe and Mail submitted by five professors of Social Work at McGill University (Courtney, H. et al., 1997, A14). On December 1, 1998, the Globe and Mail reports that Toronto’s Homelessness Action Task Force has determined that about 5% (100,000) of the city’s population are homeless, that 31,000 of that number are children, that 10% of applicants for subsidized housing are single mothers who have no income at all, that 45% of all emergency hostel beds are occupied by families, and “that 91% of families led by single mothers under the age of 25 now live in poverty, up from 83% in 1985.” (Valpy, 1998, A18) On the flip side of the page the headline reads “Cutsbacks hurt women fleeing abuse.” Commenting on a new report on the combined impact of Tory government budget cuts of 21.5% in welfare funding and 5% in funding for shelters, Eileen Morrow (of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses) says, “The message is if you leave an abuser, you will be punished and that punishment will take the form of hunger and poverty and homelessness.” (Coutts, 1998, A17) A few pages further along is an article about how the war has changed the lives of women in Kosovo, Yugoslavia. Women in this “traditional patriarchal society” have had to take charge with the men away at war, but when the men return they are not happy about the changes. There has been a “surge of domestic violence.” Dr. Vjosa Dobruna, a pediatrician, founded the Centre for the Protection of Women and Children in Pristina, the capital city and has plans to open five other centres. “According to Dr. Dobruna, the first step in educating women is teaching them they are masters of their bodies.” (Ulbrich, 1998, A25)
severely affected those women seeking divorce who cannot afford to pay their own lawyers (many of whom are abused), the November 97 issue of Chatelaine magazine contains a feature article replete with cogent and necessary information on how to get a divorce without a lawyer (Chigbo, 1997). It is not simply a matter of becoming the man you wanted to marry, as Steinem first advised; one must become a lawyer too. Despite criticism from the family law bar, courts are responding to recent legal-aid cutbacks by simplifying the rules of procedure and phrasing them in terms that are accessible to the lay-person. An article in a recent issue of the Ontario lawyers' weekly newspaper concludes:

Whatever one's view of the recommendations, they raise at least this gnawing question: why is the process for determining the rights of our children increasingly resembling the rough and ready justice of our Small Claims Courts? ... Or, has the Tories' budget-cutting fixation made children indistinguishable from chattels? (Melnitzer, 1997b, 12)

Have children ever really been anything but chattels in the eyes of the law?

An editorial advises that Roddy Doyle's The Woman Who Walked into Doors (1996) be required reading for family lawyers who cannot understand the dynamics that keep women locked into abusive relationships. This passage is printed in its entirety:

For 17 years. There wasn't one minute when I wasn't afraid, when I wasn't waiting. Waiting for him to go, waiting for him to come. Waiting for the fist, waiting for the smile. I was brainwashed and braindead, a zombie for hours, afraid to think, afraid to stop, completely alone. I sat at home and waited. I mopped up my own blood. I lost all my friends, and most of my teeth. He gave me a choice, left or right; I chose left and he broke the little finger on my left hand. Because I scorched one of his shirts. Because his egg was too hard. Because the toilet seat was wet. Because because because. He demolished me. He destroyed me. And I never stopped loving him. I adored him when he stopped. I was grateful, so grateful, I'd have done anything for him. I loved him. And he loved me. (Qtd. in Melnitzer, 1997a, 6)

Addicted to waiting. Women stay as long as they can take it because they are hooked into the relational dynamic of Jekyll and Hyde, addicted to waiting for love. Waiting for the magical transformation that will turn a Heathcliff kindly. And one reason women stay is that they know the economic and social privation that awaits them at the other end.
Another article describes a recent family court ruling that will be taken to the Ontario Court of Appeal. In this precedent-setting divorce judgement, a female judge, recently appointed to the bench, allotted to the wife more than twice the sum her lawyers had come to seek at trial. It was her opinion “that the children of wealthy parents who are separating should, like children whose parents are together, enjoy the family's wealth all the time, not just while they are with one of the parents” (Benotto, qtd. in Melnitzer, 1997a, 14). The intent of this judgement, while it is framed around wealthy parents, moves toward equalization of the incomes of both parents. Courts are beginning to realize that the children are watching too. They cannot respect one parent who has every material comfort when they and their other parent often have so few of those things. The unlevel playing field does nothing to improve the quality of their parental relationships.

* * *

After eighteen years of capable, efficient, dedicated domestic service, I went back to work as a teacher. In my grade four classroom the intelligence, sensitivity, morality and humor of nine-year-old children revealed the sky to me. My self-esteem, long buried, stirred and crackled. I asked my husband to put on a pot of coffee in the mornings. I had to be at school, with my two daughters (who were students there) before eight o'clock. After eighteen years of receiving Better Homes and Gardens breakfasts daily from me, he refused. His psychoanalyst told him that to do anything in the kitchen made him womanly, not a good idea since he had a problem with his gender.

Though I bought my divorce with two years' labour as a teacher, I did not buy my freedom. Susan B. Anthony understood that “[t]here is not a woman born who desires to eat of the bread of dependence,” for any woman who eats it places herself in the power of the one who provides it. As long as I depend upon his money, his spousal support, any man's support, I am not free. No woman is. Where will I teach when I am past fifty, when I cannot muster the energy needed in an elementary classroom, when I have not published? I am a bourgeois wife and mother, or at least I am the leftovers of them. Because I am past child-bearing, I have, as Waring (1988) rightly points out, no “market”
value. There may, as yet, be no rhetorical space for my thinking. Working through the anger that brought me back to graduate school twelve years ago, I remain open to future possibilities.

*   *   *

In my utopian, but enabling fiction, I am a lecturer at the University of the Family. I give courses there on any number of areas: budget management, grocery shopping for bargains, caring for mothers pre- and post-partum, the art of hand-me-downs, building self-esteem in children, introducing your kids to books, encouraging creativity in your child, easy and inexpensive stain removal, Virginia Woolf’s philosophy of education, flower arranging, interior decorating, cake decorating, the history of women’s education, office-planning, women’s psychology and girls’ development, supporting and advocating on behalf of elderly parents, choosing the right school for your child, how to find and keep wonderful friends, creative teaching, writing a woman’s life, amazing ideas for children’s birthday parties, feminist pedagogy, gifts and cards your kids can make at home, the psychology of sibling rivalry, easy trips to take with your family, teaching children to love their bodies, French poetry, balanced diets for the new millenium, creating costumes in twenty minutes, feminist aesthetics, the lost art of letter writing, finding the love you need. Seemingly infinite is the variety of courses I might teach here, in the company of other ‘good livers,’ as Virginia would have said. One course is compulsory: Women, Economics and the Law.

*   *   *

Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, the first English woman doctor, was asked by one of the men who had refused her admission to medical school why she wanted to be a doctor, not a nurse. She answered: ‘I should naturally prefer £1000 to £20 a year.’ (Qtd. in R. Miles, 1985, 150)

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CHAPTER SIX:
TEACHING –
A NEW KIND OF LOVE

The novel's [I'm Not Complaining] narrator ends her tale with her rejection of a proposal of marriage and the prospect of a lifetime working as a teacher: not such an unusual ending to a woman's novel, as it happens, and one which recalls the moment when Charlotte Brontë [in Villette] has Paul Emanuel die at sea as Lucy Snowe settles into her sanctuary with the encouraging words, 'my school flourishes, my house is ready.' Madge explains her decision not to marry as at least partly due to her ambition to become a headmistress and also to her sense that by now she is too used to her independence, too 'fixed in my ways, trained from my childhood in the school house for this one job,' as she puts it. The last paragraph of the novel manages, in its melancholy way, to suggest the charms, the achievements, the securities of the job, while also conveying the sad strandedness of all women whose professional work is the care of children who will grow up and leave. The classroom is a refuge and protection against the ferocities of the outside world. Yet there is also a clear recognition of how entirely that outside world impinges on and penetrates the classroom, in a manner she welcomes as much as she regrets. (Jane Miller, School for Women.)

Feminist social theory directs us to reorganize our patterns of infant nurturance, permitting fathers to assume significant nurturant activities and an intimacy with their children that will preclude the harsh, deforming repression of the rich and powerful preoedipal experience. The felt presence of both mothers and fathers in the infant’s world may diminish the crippling dichotomy of internal and external, dream and reality, body and thought, poetry and science, ambiguity and certainty. These domestic arrangements clearly remain fantasy unless supported by the economic, religious, and legal systems in which we live. The task when viewed in the structural complexity of our social, political, economic situation appears herculean. Only when we suspend the despair that isolates us from our history and our future can our reproductive capacity reclaim the procreative promise of our species, not merely to conceive but to reconceive another generation.

We, the women who teach, must claim our reproductive labor as a process of civilization as well as procreation. We can continue to escort the children from home to the marketplace as did the paidagogos, the Greek slave whose title and function survive in pedagogy, or we can refuse the oppositions and limits that define each place and our love and work within them. The task is daunting. This book contains its contradictions. These words, for all their intensity, have been sifted through the sieves of academic discourse. The very institutions that I repudiate for their
perpetuation of patriarchal privilege are the ones within which I have found the voice that tries to sing the tune of two worlds. This writing has been interrupted and informed by driving the kids to the pool and to soccer practice, by the laundering of sweaty sports socks and mildewed beach towels, by the heat of the summer sun and the soft summons of the night air. (Madeleine Grumet, *Bitter Milk*.)

Excuse me, do we still have a national debt? (Larry Robinson, Letter to the Editor, *The Globe and Mail*.)

* * *

All through the long, lingering days of my reading adolescence, my fancies grew. I guarded them ferociously, shared them with no one, no giggling peer, no caring adult, no intrusive mother. It was not my dreams that Mother sought; she worried only about my falling back, about the dangerous new feelings born of my slow-to-burgeon body. I hated that she didn't trust me. I shared nothing of my flourishing inner life. Powerful but deadly, my desire for romance grew. As in a bell-jar. Silent as a hot-house rose.

I never wanted to be a teacher because it wasn't romantic like being a bride. No Lucy Snowe, no Madge, I became a teacher when all I could do to be a bride had come to naught. In poems I had stuffed beneath the white paper lining of my drawer, I had entertained ambition, dreamed of an inspired life where my thoughts and ideas counted. But I had buried that desire along with all the other desires not sanctioned by my culture. I wanted so badly to be a 'good' girl. No matter how I might admire 'nice' girls who rebelled, no matter how I dallied with protest, I didn't have the kind of courage to break out. I couldn't even steal a chocolate bar from the corner drugstore. So I settled for what my culture allowed me to want and trained my desire toward wanting to be a bride.

But as I went through teacher training and pictured myself a teacher, I was consoled by a persistent recurring vision of myself as a spinster (not a single woman) labouring quietly in a tiny Manitoba town. Even that I managed to romanticize, having worked during one of my practice-teaching sessions with a teacher who had taught with Margaret Laurence in Neepawa, Manitoba. Marginalized by what I thought would be only location what I actually did in my classes wouldn't matter much in terms of the big
world. I would live a small life, caring for the streams of children who would pass in and out of the door of my classroom. It wasn’t the kind of love the culture was selling, but it was a comforting kind of love, after all. It provided me with an honourable and plausible escape from the race for a man that terrified me and left me feeling hopeless. Because I had no power in it. I was a girl.

Teaching, the consolation prize, managed to locate me at the centre of attention more than being a bride ever would. But if I had left advertising because I didn’t want to sell the culture, I was shocked to find myself doing exactly that once again. A teacher was implicit in the transmission of the social order; a teacher sold her culture. Duplicit, complicit, implicit. Like selling the $9.98 dresses, I was selling a shoddy product to an even more unsuspecting consumer. That product was the romantic worldview. The consumer was the adolescent girl, sitting innocently in class, hanging on my every word. I must know, she implied, in her attentive obedience. The setting was the literature classroom. I had to be able to tell her something useful there about how to live.

We may learn a good deal in the process about the values of a society which is prepared to hand over the education of most people’s children to a group of adults whose powers of mind and character and whose qualifications for the job are so consistently distrusted and traduced. (J. Miller, 1996, xii)

As a teacher I was divided against myself on two counts. How could I sell a culture that so devalued teachers, that didn’t believe I knew enough, as a teacher, to sell anything? How could I sell a culture that I, flower-child of the 60s, am not sure I believed in at all? Thirty years ago, as a beginning highschool English teacher, these were the moral issues I struggled with. Could I have understood presciently that the cultural mythology was wearing thin? No wonder the thirty years that followed have necessitated such a mobilization of economic factors to fortify the notion of romantic love. No wonder that the January 1998 issue of Bride magazine is the largest in the magazine’s history, weighing in at over one thousand pages. No wonder it was easier for me, when I came back to teaching so many years later, to teach younger students where I could teach at some remove from the cultural commodification of romance.
It took me fifty years to understand what I knew as a six-year-old girl, to excavate and uncover the deeply buried silenced voice of the young girl who thought she knew something. Today, when I am fifty-two, I scan the book list for the privileged sixteen-year-old girls I taught when I was twenty-three. I am ashamed that, at the moment when their desire to be somebody was most intense, I innocently presented these texts, silencing the nagging doubts inside me. At some level I knew better but I resisted what I knew. I liked my job; I was afraid to bring a revolutionary message. I did not teach them where the women really were. I did not teach them what had happened to the women. I let the texts teach them. I did not teach the “daughters of educated men” that the distance is perilously short between a text in which a woman does nothing with her life except fall in love and a text where she is dead. How could I have known then? I skirted close to rebellion, moving the desks from their neat rows, intentionally blurring the boundaries of power, teaching the lyrics of Neil Young and Paul Simon as poetry. I told them that having a life apart from their husband’s might be a good idea. I never suggested that they might not marry. Then, one snowy December, I got married and quit teaching, all in one breath. What a role model I was! Out of the deep burden of the long-carried shame I bear for what I taught/did not teach those girls came the motivation to write this dissertation. As a teacher.

If we are to bridge the gap that divides the public from the private in our culture and in our consciousness, then we need to think of schooling as a time and place where those oppositions can be mediated and reconceived. (Grumet, 1988, 33)

In the gap that separates Jane Miller’s (1992, 1996) thinking in Britain from Madeleine Grumet’s (1988) in the United States is the negative space I would like to explore in this chapter. Difference here is more than time and place, yet the implied question that holds both these educators is the same question: Why have women been silent about their experiences in the classroom for so long? In 1988 when Grumet, mother of three, teacher, considered the absence of the stories of women teaching, she opened up unknown territory. It was an absence whose presence I had felt in 1970 as a
beginning teacher, to which I referred in that fateful newspaper article (see my p.5). It
was and is intimately connected with what men could afford to know and not know about
abandoning the teaching realm to women. The controversy that swirls around education
today, the concerns about accountability and budgets, are linked to what both Grumet
(1988) and Miller (1992; 1996), another teaching mother of three, call the **feminization
of teaching**. No wonder we, the middle-class women who teach, have been complicit in
hiding the traces of reproduction that we bring with us to the classroom, as if we were
tainted. Of course we are tainted. The middle-class women who teach bring to the
classroom the subconscious, cross-cultural, multi-racial legacy of the sacrifice of the
daughters. We, too, are afraid to explain ourselves in terms of what our bodies know. All
our education as Other has been an assault on our bodies, just as mine was.

Grade five. We are having another class in to visit ours so Mr. Peters can teach us
all an important lesson. He has threatened us before their arrival to be on our best
behaviour, warned us not to utter a word. We are always on display; he is more
demanding than any mother. I do not remember the topic of the lesson. I remember my
discomfort at sharing my bench and desk with a strange student from another class. I am
cramped, hot, shifting and fidgeting, arranging and rearranging my Oxford-clad feet on
the wooden floor and my notebook on the slippery desktop. The room is dry, overly
heated against the cold winter. My woolen sweater irritates the back of my neck. I cannot
establish a space for myself. We are heads bent low taking notes, fountain nibs
rhythmically scratching trails of Peacock blue ink from Schaeffer cartridge pens across
the faint lines of Hilroy notebooks. Mr. Peters drones on at the front of the classroom, full
of himself. He is tall, thin, looming, with a protruding Adam’s apple, Brylcreamed-hair,
my own version of Ichabod Crane, a giant pacing back and forth. My best friend Rachel,
across the aisle, leans over, gestures toward her pen and whispers, “I need a cartridge.”
All communication is forbidden. I answer with my eyes. Fumbling in my pencil case, I
open the small yellow box, carefully remove a cartridge and hand it across the aisle to
her. I do not say one word.
“Lesley,” Mr. Peters bellows, his voice echoing huge in the still, high-ceilinged classroom. “Get into the cloakroom and stay there until I come to get you.” Humiliated, I see only the black leather of my Oxfords on the wooden floor as I slink to the back of the room and hide among the damp and wooly winter coats. Time becomes unbound in the minutes that remain of the lesson until I hear the shuffling of shoes that tells me the visiting class is departing. You can hear a pin drop in that classroom. His heavy footsteps thunder down the aisle. His face is red, apoplectic with anger. He shouts: “If you weren’t a girl, I’d smack you on the behind!”

Mr. Peters is a mean, short-tempered, tall, slim, dark man. He is my Demon Lover, my mother’s negative animus, my father’s positive anima.35 I leave grade five. I leave grade six. He never leaves me. He is the supreme Patriarch; I can never please him no matter what I do. His voice booms and echoes in the hollow classroom of my mind. My stomach twists in knots. His footsteps shake the wooden floorboards. He threatens my girl’s body. He is a tyrant with a temper. What do I do? Reader, I marry him.

Then I write a dissertation for him. I do not learn the end of Mr. Peters’ story until many years later when my mother decides the time is right for me to know. It happens that, at the end of grade six, at report card time, Mr. Peters calls my mother to tell her that he has decided I should not remain in the enriched program in grade seven. I am too slow and careful with my work, still spend too much time daydreaming, will have difficulty adjusting to forty-minute periods and class rotations. My mother is angry. She asks him to remember that it was he who convinced her to put me into his “major work” class against her strenuous objections; she explains how I will be without friends in the regular stream. She insists that I be given a chance to try to manage the new time constraints. In one of my abiding fantasies I look up Mr. Peters’ address in the Winnipeg telephone book

35 The notion that there was anything positive about Mr. Peters is perhaps baffling here. However, interpreted through the lens of Jungian theory, my father’s submerged desire to be a teacher (because he had abandoned school early when he was clearly such an intellectual) would have been a desire inspired by his positive anima, the feminine component of his psyche; similarly, my mother’s desire for agency (corrupted here through the kind of power Mr. Peters exercised) would have been inspired by her negative animus.
and send him a little note to tell him that not only did I manage to pass grade seven, but I became a teacher and earned a doctorate in the field of education.

* * *

"The kind of classroom situation one creates is the acid test of what it is one really stands for .... What we do in the classroom is our politics," Christine Overall quotes Jane Tompkins as she addresses the inherent contradictions of her role as a feminist academic. "What we do in the classroom is also our ethics," she continues (Overall, 1997, 1). Like Elizabeth Ellsworth, Overall chafes under the legacy of women's uneasy relationship with power. Where Ellsworth sought to expose the hidden power dynamics in any academic situation, Overall turns to Sara Ruddick, whose important work on "maternal thinking" lays bare the central contradiction of women teaching which hovers between the goals of growth and acceptability. Teachers, like mothers, must encourage the kind of growth that replicates the system, just as my mother did. Teachers and mothers together teach girls to testify against themselves in the service of a patriarchal definition of what it means to be 'good.' "Like maternal thinking, pedagogical thinking is, in part, governed not only by the interest of the (intellectual and social) growth of the student, but also by the interest of shaping an acceptable student" (Overall, 1997, 7). If "children must submit to and internalize the Law of the Father, as it is enforced by mothers" (Ruddick, qtd. in Overall, 8), students are expected to submit to and internalize that same Law as taught by women teaching who are also conflicted with their roles as enforcers of a law not of their own making. The notion of complicity weaves through Overall’s paper.

So the most painful source of my feelings of fraudulence is the institutionally-defined requirement to shape my students towards standards that are not only not of my choosing, but often, in violation of the feminist principles to which I am morally and politically committed. (10)

The best a teacher can do is be conscious of her choices. "What one can do in the classroom is defined by the basic conditions that make teaching and learning possible," (11) “for we teach not only what we know but what we are" (Svinicki, qtd. in Overall,
11). Honesty, equity and respect are the framework on which the classroom must rest, and method must be recognized as content.

Teaching can be and often is a subversive activity. Behind the closed door of her classroom the teacher may transgress.

We teachers hide the work we care about in our own classrooms just as artists stack it in their attics. “Behind the classroom door” used to be the phrase that stood for the domain where the teacher ran the show. The closing of the door, the drawing of the line: Now it begins. This is what matters. Now we are together. This is our space. (Grumet, 1988, 91)

Though recent calls for accountability have tried to pry open that classroom door, Madeleine Grumet suggests that teachers look to the example set by artist Judy Chicago (1977) and her colleagues who refused to replicate the patterns of dominance and hierarchy so essential to rising through the ranks of any profession, by forming an association of their own. Chicago’s book Through the Flower describes how deeply she was influenced by Woolf’s insight that the professions had a certain undeniable effect on the professors, that the price paid for success was often the death of the senses and a sense of proportion; Woolf’s analogy was that of a “cripple in a cave.” It is often the teacher who “would keep her senses alive” who is forced to leave the system or to find some safe space for herself in the demanding school day, Grumet maintains. The controversy in Toronto around teachers’ preparation time ominously backgrounds her words (Galt, 1998, A10).

What is likely to be concealed behind the closed door of the classroom, what Grumet warns must not be lost, is the emotional agenda which speech and silence in the presence of the aesthetic evoke. Once again, we are in the realm of the emotional, that uneasy place where women who teach dwell and yet are so unwilling to talk about, for fear of being viewed as unprofessional.

Although many women teach to provide income for our families and/or ourselves, it is also possible that the expected allegiance to home and family that has framed women’s work in the world has exaggerated a subsistence motive in order to camouflage the illegitimate pleasure that the woman who teaches finds in the work itself. (Grumet, 1988, 86)
In spite of the "distrust that divides the women who care for children" that "grows in the dark like mold" (94), the challenge is for teachers to reveal this "intimacy of nurture" (xvi):

Just as I would send the teacher to a room of her own where she can shed the preconceptions that blind her to the responses of her students, I would ask her to bring the forms that express her understanding of the child and the world to the children, to her sisters who are her colleagues, and to her sisters who are the mothers of the children. (Grumet, 1988, 94)

To create a community where emotional experience can be shared and discussed is to transform the experience of silence and powerlessness that teaching has perpetuated.

Grumet quotes Merleau-Ponty:

When one goes from the order of events to the order of expression, one does not change the world; the same circumstances which were previously submitted to now become a signifying system. Hollowed out, worked from within, and finally freed from that weight upon us that makes them painful and wounding, they become transparent or even luminous, and capable of clarifying not only aspects of the world that resemble them, but others too. (Qtd. in Grumet, 1988, 94)

Grumet and Merleau-Ponty do not teach me this; they bring what I already know in my body/memory to my attention. I learned it when I was in grade eight, from my highly emotional teacher Miss Colpitts. We teach as we have been taught, influenced as strongly by the negative experiences (as I was by mine with Mr. Peters) as we are by the positive. Every day that I taught I remembered Miss Colpitts. Six years ago a professor gave me permission to write a reflective paper about values education.36 I wrote about my experience in her classroom, about how I strove to teach according to the example she had set behind her closed door. Several months later I followed up the writing of that paper with a telephone call that reconnected me to her after nearly forty years of silence. She read my paper and passed it on to another former student of hers who taught at the Faculty of Education where that paper is now used as a model for incoming students. They are asked to use memories of their experiences as students to understand why they...

36 I am indebted to Dr. Clive Beck for giving me the opportunity to write reflectively about how the theory I studied in his class had been embodied in my life.
want to be teachers. Teaching with the heart is like a chain; it is somehow subversive. A woman who was my student thirty years ago writes in a letter: “I am reminded of you as I read Wlodkowski’s book, Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn (1985), especially about how the learner can identify with an instructor who competently meets the needs of the learner. The learner then begins to take on some of the attitudes and behaviours of the instructor, to literally act in some ways like the instructor” (28). The letter goes on to explain that my efforts to help her understand herself through writing did, in fact, encourage her through a period of adolescent self-doubt and help her revision her educational journey.

What Miss Colpitts taught, beyond any of the subject areas she was hired to teach, was her ‘self’; she embodied her values in the songs that she taught us, her music. To have taught those values overtly in late-1950s’ Winnipeg would have been unquestionably dangerous. Behind the closed door of her classroom we sang:

You’ve got to be taught to hate and fear,
You’ve got to be taught from year to year,
It’s got to be drummed in your dear little ear,
    You’ve got to be carefully taught.
You’ve got to be taught to be afraid
Of people whose eyes are oddly made,
And people whose skin is a different shade,
    You’ve got to be carefully taught.
You’ve got to be taught before it’s too late,
    Before you are six or seven or eight,
To hate all the people your relatives hate,
    You’ve got to be carefully taught.

At thirteen I learned about the coercive yet subversive power of education. And I learned that I could direct the desire that was growing hot within me, that profoundly mysterious new energy in my blood, to the songs I sang in the company of the girls whom I loved.³⁸

³⁵ I ran into my former student one day on the elevator of the building where I study and where she also takes courses. She was in the first grade eleven English class I taught in 1970-1971. “You see, you were largely responsible for our ‘coincidental’ meeting in the elevator last fall. I suspect that almost no heroes/heroines know that they have played such a role in the lives of others. I wonder how often they are then thanked. Well, I hereby sincerely thank you!”

³⁶ I understand why we were segregated for phys ed., but it is hard to imagine why they had to segregate us for music. For further discussion see Charlene Morton’s (1996) dissertation on the feminization of school music.
With all my heart I sang: “When you walk through a storm, hold your head up high and don’t be afraid of the dark, at the end of the storm is a golden sky and the sweet silver song of the lark. Walk, on walk on with hope in your heart and you’ll never walk alone.” I learned the power of hope.

So moved by her example that, all these years later, when I am blocked and burned by the work of this dissertation and days away from a visit back to Winnipeg, I pick up the telephone and call her. She has celebrated her eightieth birthday, but it does not take more than a split second for her to recognize my voice. “Ah, Lesley,” she sighs, “I’ve been thinking so much about you, wondering what you’re doing about the music in your soul.” When we meet again the following week, she is just as she always was. Her eyes sparkle as devilishly as ever; her conversation brims with story. And, remembering Jessica Benjamin’s (1983) definition of love, I realize that she knows me for myself. Love was the energy that propelled her inspired teaching. Teaching with heart and soul is about having high hopes for your students.

Grumet would return the word “reproduction” to its origins, remembering that the most important activity humans engage in is the act of reproducing themselves. To remain silent about the experience of nurture is to be complicit with the system. The fundamental argument of her text is “that knowledge evolves in human relationships” (1988, xix) and that what women know in their bodies is also knowledge about the world. Curriculum, her own area of research, is “a way to contradict biology and ideology” (1988, 8); both parents and teachers are trying to make it better for the next generation against the backdrop of their own embodied memories.

Epistemology is distinct from gnosis, Grumet insists. It is an intersubjective knowledge rather than an immediate perception of spiritual truth; it is developed through social relations and negotiations. She turns to the work of Chodorow (1978) and Dinnerstein (1977) to affirm their self-in-relation model of human development and their validation of the preoedipal period that has been so denigrated and marginalized. Education must honour what the knower knows in the context of relationship.
Psychoanalytic theory, Grumet maintains, has given too much power to the father and too little to the son. The harsh repression of the son’s preoedipal experience might be mitigated by portraying the mother as involved in the public as well as the private world. “The mother who is in the kitchen and in the world may nurture both sons and daughters for whom male and female, private and public, knowing and feeling are not so harshly dichotomous and oppositional” (1988, 17).

Like Woodman and Kristeva, Grumet honours the buried matriarchal history that would “reveal our latent possibilities and the perspectives to reassure us that all is not lost”; we have within us the power to imagine and reclaim it through recognizing what has been negated in our existence. The revolutionary female consciousness that Kristeva judged buried in history is alive and well “in the work that women do daily teaching children” (Grumet, 1988, 19). Measurement, evaluation, outcomes and the back-to-basics rhetoric around them assign blame to the women who teach. Why, Grumet asks, are the men who design these policies not held accountable? Grumet reiterates Kristeva’s fear and Woodman’s, that women, entering the domain of the symbolic, will be blinded by the power of the Word to the rhythms of the body. Kristeva’s instructions echo Woolf’s: to stand apart, continually questioning, to listen scrupulously to unspoken speech, to attend meticulously to “whatever remains unsatisfied, repressed, new, eccentric, incomprehensible, disturbing to the status quo” (Kristeva, qtd. in Grumet, 30).

Grumet’s work is steeped in Merleau-Ponty’s desire to rescue thought from abstraction and relocate it in the body, thereby rescuing the body. The term “body-subject” was how he described human consciousness. Yet, as much as she would rehabilitate the body, Grumet recognizes that there are limits, that while reading between child and parent occurs in the context of voice and touch, it cannot be quite that in the classroom. “We touch the text instead of each other and make our marks on it rather than on each other” (1988, 144). Writing is important as Grumet honours the indeterminacy of meaning making which she “would wrest from the grip of knowledge and return to art” (147).
Near the end of her text in a chapter entitled "Redeeming Daughters" Grumet revisits the theme of the child-as-redeemer in order to listen to the "unsung sisters" (1988, 157) of those cherubic boys. To hear their voices, Grumet maintains, one must give up the notion of the "innocent" child. "Neither innocence nor deceit is a property of the child but is rather a property of the relation within which the child is nurtured. If innocence is the exclusion from the world demanded by the fathers, lying is the exclusion from the world demanded by the mothers" (161). Considering the work of Zora Neale Hurston, Agnes Smedley and Mary McCarthy, Grumet contemplates what cannot be said between mothers and daughters, the lie that is resistance to the mother's world, and how the knowledge that informs it becomes transformed into story.

Nevertheless it is the argument of this text that it is not the son's innocence but the daughter's lies that offer us redeeming knowledge. In showing us the world as they would have it, they reveal the world that we fled because we were not brave enough to pitch our tents and raise our flags there. Their lies can become our knowledge.

And ...

It is the teacher who stands guarding the territory where these secret gardens can grow, who can grasp these visions and grant them the legitimacy of knowledge. ... That is how it was for Smedley and Hurston and for McCarthy. They each remember teachers who lifted the maternal injunction and let them speak. Well, you say, they were writers. Yes, liars whose tales and stories were not buried in nostalgia or paranoia but encoded as literature and science. Writers are liars who get published. But it is not easy for the women who teach children to encourage mendacity. (162)

It is not easy because of what they have yet to come to terms with in their own stories.

Grumet's seductive vision of the reincorporation of nurture leads me to consider all my academic travels and travails as routes to lead me back to what I experienced as a student and then again as a teacher in classrooms where the ground rules were to respect that the learner is also a knower and that learning takes place in relationship. Grumet makes a passionate plea for breaking down the boundaries between the public and private world through admitting our need for intimacy and nurture rather than repressing it as politics, ethics, and education have done. The defining loss at the centre of human
existence that Grumet would uncover and confront is the same loss that the romance novel is designed to address, the loss of being human, animal, mortal. Of woman born.

Hindsight might judge Grumet overly optimistic about legitimating the reproductive in the educational order. In the ten years that have passed since her *Bitter Milk* was written, little has actually changed for the better on this front; schools and schooling are highly resistant to change, as Jane Miller puts it, "or perhaps they are simply ineradicably marked by the ways in which gender is organised in the wider society" (1996, 58). Several years ago I interviewed a caring, committed teacher who embodied Grumet's theory in her classroom behaviour though she had never read *Bitter Milk*. When I described Grumet's argument to her, she responded: "I do plenty for these kids. Don't ask me to be their mother. I've got my hands full with that at home." Though she sounded angry, I suspect she was just being honest. Grumet seems somewhat naïve in her idealism, a real romantic, just as I have been.

If Grumet is led to question the absent presence of women in teaching by contemplating her life lived crossing and recrossing the boundaries between the public and private worlds, Jane Miller is brought to it initially through considering the life and work of her great-aunt, Clara Collett, a teacher and writer on education and women's work, a woman "serious and heavy with knowledge, unmarried and not very popular" (1990, 72). I am interested in how both these women came to ask their academic questions by way of their lived experiences. The most impressive educational achievement of the last 150 years has been the education of women, Miller points out, yet this has often been articulated as a question of girls having gained what boys have lost.39

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37 Interview with Judith Tinning, Northern Secondary School, Toronto, 22 Apr. 1993. Tinning's comments foreground those of Christine Overall later in this chapter (footnote 48, p. 272). Overall likens the burgeoning demands placed on the middle-class woman teaching to the endless expectations made of the middle-class mother.

40 Front-page news in the Sunday New York Times is this story: "U.S. Colleges Begin to Ask, Where Have the Men Gone?" (Lewin, 1998, 1) In a number of American colleges (primarily liberal arts institutions) there are now more women than men enrolled. Explanations for this vary. Both black and white girls today tend to have better attitudes toward school than boys do. Some universities admit to having relaxed their standards for the admission of men (while also admitting that this doesn't always work because the women leave when they realize that there are no men of their calibre). Universities stress small classes and personal attention in their marketing strategies for women while selling internships and intercollegiate sports to men.

Catharine R. Stimpson, feminist scholar and dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Science at N.Y.U.,
Who, she asks, has congratulated the girls for doing well? The presence of girls and women in education is vexed and vexing:

Parents who pay for their sons' education may be paying for an absence of women, amongst other things. To an extent which is quite inadequately recognised, state education is provided by women; as is virtually all schooling, whether public or private, for young children. The periodic spasms of suspicion and criticism levelled at state education in this country are hard to understand without some sense of how gender distinctions have always - covertly as well as openly - articulated with discussion of education. So that it is not far-fetched, in my view, to see the current frenzy of revision and legislation as a response (peculiar perhaps to an era in which sexual inequalities are often thought to have been both confronted and eliminated) to what can seem like the feminisation of education and, by extension, its infantilisation as well. A strange nostalgia for school-days when boys were boys and teachers were men regularly erupts. (J. Miller, 1992, 1)

How have children fared when women have both taught them and mothered them? How have women's lives been changed by the prospects teaching has offered? How have women teaching changed the face of education itself? These are the questions that engage Miller in 1996, as she wants to know "[w]hy does teaching and why do teachers get such a bad press?" (1996, xii). "Teaching is probably the best example of the ambiguities inherent in all paid work performed by women" (1996, 2), writes Miller as she refers to sensationalized media accounts of women teaching who seduce their male pupils and nervous estimates of the growing pool of unemployed young men. Miller's more historical, political and economic focus rounds out the picture Grumet painted, as it moves the scene of inquiry from America to Britain.

Women are made responsible for the transmission and mediation of the central themes and values of the culture: for what is regarded as necessary knowledge, for morality, for language and accepted forms of social behaviour and for beliefs about family, religion, nation. Yet the fact that this process is submitted to constant surveillance and continuous legislation - and with minimal consultation with classroom teachers - is an indication of how little women are trusted to take responsibility for the system within which they work. (1996, 9)

comments: "At some places, I've seen trustees worry about the skew," she said. "Male trustees get worried if the gender balance goes to 48 to 52, and the female trustees say, 'Are you crazy, were you worried when it was 48 to 52 the other way?' I think it's about money and prestige and an old atavistic fear of tipping. Some people still believe that if you're a women's institution, you're a lesser institution." (Lewin, 1998, 2)
The world, admits Miller, approves of a good teacher while it is not the least bit interested in what she is doing. Even reluctant teachers learn to keep the door shut and the children quiet. Those historical periods when women teachers attract the most paranoia are, curiously, those when women are at the helm of the state: the 1880s and 1890s when Victoria ruled and the 1980s when Thatcher did. Public contempt for teachers is irrational and hard to explain, but it is experienced by women who teach in contradictory ways. Teachers are either too sexual or asexual, too intelligent or stupid, too motherly or stern, equally the butt of criticism from the Left as they are from the Right and not surprisingly, self-deprecating.

Miller's text gave me the permission that Grumet's had not given to type onto the computer screen the sentence "I never wanted to be a teacher." It was heresy for me, the quintessential good girl, to admit that, but such a relief. What I never wanted was to be the object of scorn and disrespect that a teacher is; something in me always refused that public definition of what it meant to be a teacher. When I returned to teaching at the elementary level, even though I had been trained for highschool, people stunned me with the ignorance of their remarks. As if it were no work at all and certainly not intellectual work to teach twenty nine-year-olds all day. I asked them to remember what it had been like to host a birthday party for their own children. "Imagine if it had lasted six hours, every day." It is impossible, all the same, to convey the drain of teaching young children, where you scarcely find time to go to the bathroom or snatch more than ten minutes for lunch. It is impossible also to convey the majesty of it, the miracle of participating in their growth.41

In my experience, there is no moment more crucial to the long-range outcome of a child’s education than the moment of first transition from home to school. It is unspeakably ironic that the women (few men teach at this level) who perform this critical

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41 Judith Robertson's, *Cinema and the politics of desire in teacher education* (1994) analyzes the powerful effects of "teacher movies" such as "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" on the aspirational zeal and vocational predispositions of 12 preservice elementary women teachers who dream of "doing good" at the "primary" level of education and yet who are continually betrayed by their social conditioning into induction into the least privileged and socially appreciated domain of education.
task are the most poorly paid and least respected of all teachers. Many years ago in Mexico I marvelled at a children's playground in a neighbourhood park. It was a garden of delight unlike any I had ever seen before. Behind our American and Canadian rhetoric about being 'child-centred' societies lies a huge vacuum; the 'developed' nations have 'developed' a wonderful way with words.

Miller draws attention to the "covert regulation of women teachers and their potentially wayward sexuality" (J. Miller, 1996, 16) describing an incident where she and her fellow teachers asked if they might wear trousers to work. After considerable debate permission was granted with "a list of caveats evincing a positively unseemly interest in anatomy and current fashion" (16). "Bums" were not to be seen; only trouser suits were eligible, and only those made of fabrics that did not cling to the body. She chooses to include this incident in her discussion by way of exposing the contradictions around female sexuality and the problem this constitutes for women moving into the public realm. Though I taught at an all-girls' school, eyebrows were raised when my skirts were too short. It was not just sexuality that was narrowly circumscribed. In my first week there I was discreetly whisked aside one morning after breakfast and told, "You break bread, you don't cut it." I had been seen cutting my toast with a knife.

Miller is sensitive to the nuances of race, class and gender, to the differences that pupils bring with them to the texts they encounter. As the Jamaican woman who taught English literature to my younger daughter explained to my daughter's class, what could Wordsworth's poem have meant to her, as a girl growing up in Jamaica, when she had never seen a daffodil? Miller sees through the prison of the canon to affirm that, although new texts may be a part of making it better, even the flawed texts, in the hands of capable teachers, may be vehicles for exploration and transformation. Nonetheless there is something paradoxical in the teacher's relation to power when she teaches the literature of the culture that judges her own culture's capacities inferior: I would say that women teaching are always in that ambiguous position in relation to a literary history that is so little theirs. Using literature to explode the prism of difference is valid in any classroom.
"The notion of women’s potentially greater consciousness of the class contradictions lived by teachers and, differently, by their pupils, particularly the girls, is an important insight" (J. Miller, 1990, 127).

Examining the novels about teachers that were popular when she was growing up, Miller finds that many of the women in them do not marry; they teach and are happy doing it. Teaching is economically rewarding for single women, too, though they will not earn what men do. For those who marry it will supplement the family income, but teaching most often provides a bridge between being a daughter and being a wife. It has offered many working-class women the opportunity of moving into the middle class with all the inherent contradictions that entails: teaching working-class children middle-class values that are not really your own, being accepted as a valid member of neither class.

Citing the work of American sociologist Michael Apple, Miller sees teachers as both paid and unpaid workers and finds that very contradiction central to the nature of their work. She is distinctly not happy with Grumet’s desire to make the intimacy of nurture more visible in the process of education precisely because of the severity of its repression.

Both the image of the woman teacher and the conditions under which women work in schools have suffered from the peculiarly diffuse manipulations of the idea that women who work with children do so out of ‘natural’ inclinations and needs, of a kind men are unlikely to share. These ‘natural’ inclinations will include the biological, but also the inculcated capacity to serve others. The uncertainty as to what sort of work teaching is, and whether it should be regarded as a profession, derives, I think, from women’s overwhelming presence within it and from the confusions inherent in the way most women are expected to perform paid and unpaid work simultaneously, usually for ‘greedy institutions,’ as the sociologist, Sandra Acker, has put it, which if they are not families are inclined to behave as if they were. (1996, 99)

This concern mirrors de Beauvoir’s worries about wages for housework (discussed here in Chapter Five). Miller, like de Beauvoir, is anxious about binding women any closer to the reproductive realm when that association has been so problematic for them for so long; she repeats de Beauvoir’s admonition not to become the ‘nurturers of the knowers’ (J. Miller, 1996, 103) while admitting that the impulse to do so is very seductive. Miller’s analysis, very different from Grumet’s, must be set against the specific political climate
of Britain, where a politicized class-based awareness is the very air one breathes. Seeing women who teach as workers, she would aim for the recognition and respect that is granted other workers who make an important contribution to the state. It is not surprising that her analysis leads her to link the increasingly entrenched contemporary hue and cry against education to the fact that too many women have made too many changes which have been too good for too many girls.

Men ‘join’ professions, and belong to them, while women perform the work professions have been designed to protect. And the word ‘career’ assumes its more sinister meanings (with echoes of ‘careerism’ and even of the wild careening of the joy-rider), in relation to the notion of a ‘career woman,’ who is no longer simply a worker, but someone who is married to her job and has replaced the ‘natural’ patterns and expectations of a woman’s life with hectic ambition, in ways that men may do, but women do at their peril. ... In fact, as Sandra Acker has shown, the concept of a career in teaching has little in common with most uses of the word. (1990, 107-108)

What are the economic implications of this for women who come to teach divided against themselves on the dilemma of nurture – on the one hand ‘naturally’ inclined to do the job well, on the other, tainted by the associations ‘nature’ trails? Caught between organized demands for increasing professionalism and their own guilty conflicts about being paid for work which is somehow ‘natural’ for them, the progression towards greater economic security has been two steps forward and one step back. Even if the main reason for encouraging women into education has always been economic, on the part of the state because women were more available and could be paid less, on the part of the women because it was an obvious and accessible route to earning an income, the whole story has never been adequately told. The actual job of teaching has become increasingly complex and demanding and, paradoxically, public discussion of teaching has focused on all the new aspects of the job that are not really teaching.

For if teachers are not to be thought of as intellectual workers, they are also not to be given help with those aspects of the job which deflect from a concentration on the subject-matter of what they teach. And that denial rings with the kinds of contempt meted out to the job of running families.
As if the flexibility, the knowledge and the judgement required to plan and carry out that job were the outcome of instinctive, innate capacities in women, rather than the result of thorough planning, experience, discussion with others and – very importantly – a collection of competencies which must be capable of developing productively over time. (J. Miller, 1996, 106)

I believe that the woman who teaches embodies these contradictions for the girls in her classes for whom she serves as a primary example of a ‘career’ woman. These contradictions hinge on the value of her work and, by extension, on what she is worth as a person in a world where everything material seems to have economic value. The equation of woman to mother to teacher remains contradictory at best.

Like Grumet, Miller sees that many of the finest teachers leave teaching because of the “poor prospects, public condescension towards them, and – these days – by the ceaseless flow of ill-considered and often swiftly countermanded claims on their time, energies and expertise, which are imposed from outside” (1992, 25). Her story of teaching, full of hope and disappointment, is out there now, with all the other stories of women teaching that Miller encodes in her own, a proliferation of new narratives about women who teach. “The presence of women and girls at every level of education has crucially influenced curriculum, teaching, the organisation of schools and the value put on a whole range of educational outcomes” (Miller, 1992, 26) and “[e]ducation has always revealed new possibilities.”

It is education’s capacity to confront the unknown and to accommodate it that so terrifies a government obsessed with its budgets, and prepared to attack education and denigrate teachers in order to meet them. (1996, 275)

The presence of women in education, now so visible and even theorized, has, not surprisingly, both revealed enormous possibilities and aroused enormous fear. Precisely what is so frightening?

When I first came back to graduate school in the fall of 1986, neither Grumet’s nor Miller’s analysis was available to me. It is perhaps not surprising, given their subsequent impact on my thinking, that the first course I signed up for was called “Mothers as Teachers and Students.” I had grown accustomed to listening to its instructor
on the radio as I drove from home to school to grocery store to pediatrician and back again. Paula Caplan’s (1981, 1985, 1995) voice drew me into another world, a world where someone would articulate for me the contradictions and disappointments of the romance story in which I had been formed. I sat mute in that course and listened. It was all I could do to contain myself.

* * *

Marianna De Marco Torgovnick, professor of English at Duke University, in another theory-infused memoir, writes about what she calls ‘slasher stories’: “stories where danger lurks in unexpected places, where routine actions or things (the jump rope, the neighbor’s dog, a mother’s embrace) turn deadly, actions that kill or maim the family, actions that are random, arbitrary, unpredictable” (1994, 36). The stories that disturb her are related to the home; she might read them in a doctor’s reception room or waiting for a haircut. But as arbitrary as Torgovnick maintains they are in her definition above, her deeper probing reveals that they are not quite so.

The slasher story primarily appeals to our deepest sense of what it means to be female both inside and out of the home. Slasher stories appeal to the sense that women are vulnerable, physically and emotionally, that women are victims. They do more than appeal – they create and nurture that sense. … For the dynamics of the slasher story, as I have been describing them, are deeply embedded in what it means in our culture to be a woman. (1994, 38)

Torgovnick admits that she has grown accustomed to depending on men to confirm her authority to be herself, both privately and publicly. But ‘slasher stories’ have taught her that even men cannot protect her. The cultural fascination for them leads her to speculate that perhaps Freud was right to suggest that “there’s an innate desire for violence in human nature” (55).

Two of Torgovnick’s recent publications have investigated the “primitive.” Most recently, in Primitive Passions: Men, Women and the Quest for Ecstasy (1997) she maintains that the “primitive is the sign and symbol of desires the West has sought to repress, [the primitive] was coded metaphorically as feminine, collective and ecstatic, and
civilization was coded as masculine, individualistic and devoted to the quotidian business of the family, city or state" (qtd. in Kendrick, 1997, 19). The ‘civilized’ come to seek the ‘primitive’ motivated by a yearning for what French philosopher Romain Rolland called the “oceanic” feeling, “the experience of dissolved boundaries and the interpenetration of the self with the cosmos.”

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Europeans roamed far and wide seeking this ecstacy. But, Torgovnick notes, men and women travellers responded differently to its presence (in a way that suggests to me, among other things, the difference in their ego boundaries). Men recoil “out of a perceived need for self-preservation” while women have been less concerned about “preserving the integrity of individual identity” (Torgovnick, qtd. in Kendrick, 1997, 19).

Unlike the male travelers who approached, felt magnetized, and ran to the safety of imperialist discourse, women like Mary Kingsley, Isak Dinesen, Beryl Markham and Vivienne de Waterville have embraced the opportunity to merge. (I think of Woolf and her continual frustration with the demanding ego, the “infernal I, I, I.”) “Instead of feminizing the primitive landscape, these women saw it as “beyond sex and gender” – as, a blessed release from such constraints” (Kendrick, 1997, 19). The desire to be released from the prisonhouse of sex and gender is surely an insistent subtext running through my work here. Women, as Torgovnick explains, are able to get “beyond sex and gender” not simply because, well, women are like that, but because for centuries the West has civilized and colonized the “the primitive, the oceanic and the feminine” for the sake of protecting “the primacy of civilization, masculinity and the autonomous self” (qtd. in Kendrick, 1997, 19). However, despite the best efforts of organized religion and “the idea of ownership,” the oceanic has survived. In contemporary culture, however, access to the oceanic is sold at the mall, mainly through New Age literature. “The logic of our culture perceptibly demands that the impetus for change take shape within commercial

\[42\] In Civilization and its Discontents Freud relates how, through the mediation of a friend, he has come to understand that the ‘oceanic’ feeling of boundlessness is the “source of the religious energy which is seized upon by the various Churches and religious systems, directed by them into particular channels, and doubtless also exhausted by them.” (1930, 1) Somewhat grudgingly Freud acknowledges that, though “it is not easy to deal scientifically with feelings,” the ‘oceanic’ is “a feeling of an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole.” (1930, 2)
enterprises and financial networks” which provide a continual “wind-up” for change but leave the certainty of real change questionable (Torgovnick, qtd. in Kendrick, 1997, 19).

In search of the “primitive, coded metaphorically as feminine,” I believe one might be side-tracked by the demon lover. The conjoining of love and violence is the heart of darkness at the core of the collective psyche. So the many media manifestations of that joining that encode love with violence are perhaps neither random nor surprising. But it is the feminine, coded metaphorically, that is really being sought, the feminine as Woodman, Kristeva and Grumet have brought it forth from the deep recesses of history, the animating life principle, the well-spring of love, which is the collective manifestation of the mother love that the romance theorists (Benjamin, Miles, Baruch et al.) and the social scientists (Chodorow, Dinnerstein) have honoured. To be human is to seek love. To teach about being human is to teach with love about love in the broadest sense. Why has it taken so long for women who teach to admit this?

*   *   *

Attempting to locate and identify the “unknown feminine figure” who appears in the dreams of so many of their analysands today, Jungian analysts Marion Woodman and Elinor Dickson (1996) chart the historical pathway of the rise and repression of the Goddess who, they maintain, is now insistently pushing through from the collective unconscious. They trace her roots through the Hindu goddess Kali, nourisher of life and destroyer, to a time when human existence was rooted in the Earth and its cycle of birth, death and regeneration. As consciousness evolved and humans began to see beyond the material world of nature, they recognized the existence of an underlying essence. This was the realm of the archetypal, where the Goddess was worshipped as “the unifying

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41 See my footnote 50, p. 274.
44 As in my footnote 10 (p. 34), I refer here to the Jungian conception of ‘feminine’ psychic energy and not to a gendered attribute. Jung insisted that both men and women needed to balance the complementary “masculine” and “feminine” energies in the individual psyche in order to achieve wholeness and authenticity. That balance of complementary energies in the individual realm needed to be enacted in the realm of the collective unconscious as well. My experiences with Madam Justice in Chapter Five illuminate how inadequate an appeal to embodied gender would be in Jung’s terms.
light in nature,” “the mediator of transformation” (18). Archetypes, as Woodman (1982) has defined them, are

[i]represenitable in themselves, but their effects appear in consciousness as the archetypal images and ideas. These are universal patterns of motifs which come from the collective unconscious and are the basic content of religions, mythologies, legends, and fairytales. They emerge in individuals through dreams or visions. (195)

This definition does not address the enormous power that archetypes encode, but I will need to acknowledge this power in order to understand the negative space to which I referred at the beginning of this chapter.

The Goddess disappeared during the Iron Age as the solar consciousness of the Sun superseded the lunar consciousness of the Mother and the concomitant subjugation of Nature began. The voice of the Goddess was silenced in history; the unifying light of creation was repressed; the container for self-transformation lost. This dangerous dissociation heralded a split in the psyche of the individual and the collective unconscious, as the balance and complementarity of masculine and feminine energies were lost.

Crusaders returning from the Middle East in the eleventh century brought with them statues of the Black Goddess, Isis, which were immediately embraced and enshrined as the Black Virgin. This worship of the Black Goddess functioned as a compensating idealization for the chaste Virgin Mary whose popularity flourished in the reflected light of the Courtly Love tradition with its idealized, unreachable woman. However, the arrival of the Black Death in the fourteenth century implicated the Black Goddess through the associations of carnality that had been projected on her.

The plague was a catalyst for a major shift in human perception in many areas – in cosmology, in science and medicine, in attitudes toward women, and in philosophy and religion itself. Unexplained and irrational, death was an insult – an aberration thrown in the face of man’s newly acquired image as the “controller.” Man turned increasingly to his own rational power, and began to look upon death, nature, woman, his own body and sexuality as being irrational, and therefore something to be subdued and brought under more rigorous control. (Woodman and Dickson, 1996, 30)
“Death, nature, woman, his own body” – all these were to be brought under man’s control. Distancing himself from his body, man sought also to distance himself from death. Cartesian dualism, though articulated most fully in the seventeenth century, originated in the wake of the Black Death. By the nineteenth century medical science had provided the understanding of disease necessary to give man the control over his body that he had sought. “These advances in science were accompanied by a profound alteration in man’s perception of woman and death. As Philippe Aries has observed, it was during this period that death began to take on an erotic meaning in art and literature” (Woodman and Dickson, 1996, 32).

As Woodman and Dickson point out, associations of woman with sexuality and death intensified man’s anxiety and led him to project his own guilt about his sexual feelings onto woman. The universal condemnation of Eve is a measure of this projection, and I submit that the theory that has formed the basis of this dissertation is largely grounded in this important historical moment. Much of our present anxiety about sexuality is constellated around a young white middle-class woman, she who is newly sexual, she who is dressed in ways that arouse and tantalize, she who finds herself at the centre of a very material world with little understanding of the history that brought her there and the extent of the fear that history causes. And much of our present anxiety around teaching is constellated around a white middle-class teacher who speaks out of her own experience and has changed the world. Some women come to teaching impaled on all the contradictions that Grumet and Miller explicate of the profession that is and is not one. Some women bring to teaching their own histories filled with the dead bodies of daughters. Some women teach with no idea of how they might construct a large enough curricular space for the archetypal and spiritual worlds.

Woodman and Dickson continue to explain that when carnality became projected onto woman, a compensating idealisation of virginity gained strength, within and without the Church. As Rosemary Ruether points out, the split between carnality and spirituality in women mirrored the mind/body split. The most extreme incarnation of this doubled
split came with the witch hunts of the late Middle Ages, the same period when Mariology enjoyed its greatest heights. More than one million women were killed in a three-hundred year period. "Not only did woman carry the burden of man's guilt and response to death, but she also became the scapegoat for the economic instability that came in the wake of the plague" (33). Carnal lust and witchcraft were indelibly bound in the figure of woman.

Quite naturally, devotion to the chaste Virgin Mary, as the Universal Mother whose security was desperately needed, became an important part of the Church's redemptive theology and the Black Madonna, she who embodied both sexuality and spirituality, was repressed into history and into the shadows of the unconscious. Thus the virgin/whore split that mirrors the mind/body dichotomy and along with it, the driving underground of the feminine soul. As Woodman and Dickson are careful to point out, it was not just woman who suffered at the hands of this interpretation but man as well, who was tortured by these ruptures, torn between the need to idealize woman and his equally strong need to dominate and control her, lest she destroy him. "Given this split and the repression of the feminine, it is not difficult to see why Freud mistakenly placed sexuality at the root of the underlying anxiety in the psyche. Only very recently has it become clear that patriarchal pathology is rooted in the dread of death" (34, my emphasis).

Although the patriarchal ego prides itself on being reasonable, the twentieth century has been anything but the Age of Reason. In our collective neurosis, we have raped the earth, disrupted the delicate balance of nature, and created phallic missiles of mass destruction. Ironically, in our desperate attempt to keep death at bay (or prevent dissolution, from the point of view of the ego) we have brought ourselves to the brink of extinction. So long as we deny the Great Mother and refuse to integrate her as Goddess in our psychic development, we will continue to act out neurotic fantasies and endanger our very survival as a species. (23)

The Second World War, as these authors rightly point out, placed man in a new relation to death with its massive and demonic destruction of human life. Death was and is no longer out there, a product of chaotic and irrational forces in the universe; it was man, newly technological man, who was his own worst enemy.
Woodman and Dickson explain how at various times throughout the long history of patriarchy the spirit of the Great Goddess has emerged in the collective unconscious. In the Romantic poetry of the early nineteenth century, in today’s reworking of the wisdom of Tibetan Buddhism via the scientific revisionism of Chaos Theory, a ‘new’ understanding emerges that despite man’s efforts to control it, Nature is random, chaotic, beyond order. That understanding comes from the Goddess.

Science has very nearly grasped the paradox at the heart of reality – the paradox that mythology calls “Goddess” – creating a momentum that has never existed at any other time in history. As we begin to look at the quantum reality of nature and of our own bodies, we are called to a new level of consciousness. (38-39)

For the Great Goddess buried in history is alive, “dancing in every apple blossom, in the song of every purple finch, as well as in the flames of passion we call life” (28).

She guides and advises and acts with absolute clarity, often with a startling sense of humour that delights in play. These moments in dreams or active imagination are filled with her compassion for our human situation. She is blunt, neither indulgent nor sentimental. She demands embodiment. Living in the creative intercourse between chaos and order, she calls us to enter into the dance of creation, “her love in her living body.”45 She speaks to men as clearly as to women.

This is so because …

[b]oth genders need a well-differentiated masculine and a well-differentiated feminine. The power structures of patriarchy have profoundly wounded both, making mature relationships almost impossible without hard psychic work. As a culture, we are presently stuck in the parental complexes. Many women have worked for years trying to find their own identity, freed from the mother and father complexes. Men, too, are working to find their own feeling values, values that are not dependent on pleasing or hating Mother and Father and all they represent. The archetype of the Black Madonna, or Lilith, or Mary Magdalene may be a way to freedom for both. (Woodman and Dixon, 1996, 2)

But as much as they may liberate themselves from the prison of gender, contemporary men and women, as the children of patriarchy, must maintain an awareness that they

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inherit the legacy of a "killer power shadow that would massacre the feminine and the masculine in whatever form they manifest" (4).

Considering the history that Woodman and Dickson excavate here, it is no coincidence that our mythology is filled with the stories of daughters who have been sacrificed. It is no accident that social workers dealing with the trauma of living in the post-modern nuclear family report that daughters are the pivotal point of familial stress: daughters who are abused by fathers, brothers or step-relatives, daughters who see through the carefully-modulated facades of their parents' less-than-perfect lives, daughters who are brought in inappropriately as confidantes and arbitrators.

Recall Torgovnick, for whom the greatest 'slasher stories' of them all are the classical stories about the sacrifices of daughters. The last human sacrifice in the Old Testament was Jephtha's nameless daughter. In the Book of Judges, Jephtha, leader of men in battle, goes off to war desiring victory. Prepared to offer anything in exchange for military success, he promises his G-d that he will sacrifice to him the first living creature that he sees upon his triumphant return. As Jephtha returns in glory, his devoted daughter runs out of the house to greet him. Picture it - she is out-of-breath, long curls flying behind her, the snap of youthful enthusiasm in her footsteps. She pleads for two months to wander in the wilderness and "bemoan her virginity." When she returns from her retreat, Jephtha honours his promise and sacrifices her to the Almighty. This is not Genesis. There is no divine intervention to prevent the sacrifice of daughters.

In mythology we meet Iphigenia (the oldest and most beloved daughter of King Agamemnon), also sacrificed, sentenced to death by her father, who loves her with all his heart. "The roots of the father-daughter wound are deep," maintains Jungian analyst Linda Leonard (1982, 27). Euripides' drama Iphigenia in Aulis demonstrates how a father comes to sacrifice his daughter and the wound he sustains through the process as it "reveals the limited view of the feminine in a patriarchally ruled society" (27). Here the oracle advises him that if he wishes the favourable wind his ships need to set sail to avenge the theft of his sister-in-law Helen of Troy, he must agree to sacrifice his beloved
daughter to the goddess Artemis. Once again it is military victory that is needed; Agamemnon must retain his power as commander of the army. He will realize the madness of what he has done, but it will be too late. Iphigenia and Clytemnestra, her mother, both plead with the King to spare her life. How can her aunt's life be more important to him than hers? But he has made his own bargain with the devil – his own lust for power and skewed sense of duty to his country – and he cannot refuse. Iphigenia decides to die nobly for her country, in the service of the gods. “One man is of more value than a host of women” (Euripides, qtd. in Leonard, 1982, 27). What have generations of girls reading made of this story? How have generations of women teaching explained it?

What view of the feminine is implied in this drama? Woman is regarded as man's possession! The three prominent female characters are regarded as objects owned by man. Because Menelaus regards Helen as his possession, the loss of the beautiful Helen initiates the Greek to war on the Trojans to retrieve her. Clytemnestra, the obedient wife, is regarded by Agamemnon as his to rule. And Iphigenia is a daughter who can be sacrificed by her father. Hence the feminine is not allowed to reveal itself from its own centre, but is reduced to those forms compatible with the prevailing masculine view.

At the same time the prevailing masculine goal is power; man's first duty is to Greece, no matter what the cost. Helen's seduction by Paris is really an opportunity for the Greeks to make war on the Trojans. As Agamemnon later realizes when it is too late, “A strange lust rages with demonic power throughout the Hellene army.” And it is this power lust which ultimately demands Iphigenia's sacrifice. (Leonard, 1982, 27-28)

The drama also demonstrates, for Leonard, a dangerous split in the feminine as it is embodied in the three female personalities. A woman can be beautiful or she can be obedient, but either way she exists to serve man. And the masculine is wounded too, split between Menelaus' love for beauty and his brother's lust for power. For Agamemnon, powerful leader of men that he is, cannot weep. The king, as Leonard points out, “as the visible manifestation of the divine principle, endorses values that are consciously recognized by the culture” (29). Helen, object of beauty, is seduced. Clytemnestra, wife, obeys. Iphigenia, too, is implicated in her willingness to be obedient to the sacrifice of the
feminine. The illness of the family mirrors the illness of the culture. Clytemnestra finishes by murdering her husband and is murdered, in her turn, by her son Orestes, avenging his father’s death.

The father-daughter sacrifice has its roots in the dominance of masculine power over the feminine. When the masculine is cut off from feminine values, when it does not allow the feminine principle to manifest itself in its own way out of its own center, when it does not allow the feminine its manifold number of forms but reduces it only to those which serve masculine ends, it loses its relation to the values of the feminine realm. It is then that the masculine becomes brute-like and sacrifices not only the outer woman but also its inner feminine side. (Leonard, 1982, 30)

The myth has relevance today while many woman struggle to construct identities for themselves that are free of the influence of the masculine in its negative, not its positive, form. Men suffer, too, addicted to power, “under the illusion that they must always be right and self-justified in order to maintain their control and authority;” (33) they cannot access the spiritual, they cannot weep. They have sacrificed their “inner daughters” for the sake of power as they have culturally sacrificed their outer daughters for its sake too.

Woolf articulated her own version of the daughters’ sacrifice in her essay “Professions for Women” (1931). Here she described how her right to self-expression was continually at war with the “Angel in the House,” that embodiment of Victorian virtue of which her mother, Julia Stephen, was the ideal. The “Angel” was sympathetic, charming, unselfish, self-sacrificing: “she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others” (Rose, 1978, 156). The “Angel” would have been deadly to the writer in Woolf, encouraging her to flatter and deceive, so Woolf “did her best” to kill her. “Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing” (Woolf, 1931, 157-158).

This long history of sacrificing daughters is remembered today as adolescent girls are sacrificed to the media, to romance, to big business, to every profiteer who can use them as a lure to sell something. An inchoate, unconscious, cultural memory, it hovers and seethes beneath the smooth surface of our social relations. What buried, dangerous
knowledges are the daughters holding? What do we not want to know? **What has been enacted in the sacrifice of the daughters is the sacrifice of the body.** The level of crisis in contemporary society is defined by the twin problems of teen pregnancy and single motherhood, discourses which are material attacks on the young female body. Mothers and teachers are to blame yet again, with cut-backs the answer to both problems – to abortions, day-care, welfare, health and education.

Because women and girls are no longer silently hiding behind closed doors, because they have become a vocal vibrant presence in classrooms and educational theory, I believe, as Jane Miller does, that the anxiety around education has reached such a fevered pitch. Only an appeal to the archetypal, to the implicate order of things, as Jung saw it, can begin to address the alarm aroused by young women and the older women who teach them. Woodman and Dickson’s excavation of the repression of the Goddess and the concomitant projection of sexuality and death onto women are at the deep heart of the mysteries that have plagued me throughout this inquiry. And all this rings in my ears as the newspaper announces that the Ontario government has made a decision to close all the alternative secondary schools in the city of Toronto (Lewington, 1998, A1). Because I understand the adolescents served by those schools and the level of inquiry that prevails there, Woolf’s words, “intellectual freedom depends on material things,” are lit up and flashing across the screen of my mind. If there is no longer any room in the educational spectrum for alternative schools, what “alternatives” will be targeted next and how narrow will the definition of ‘mainstream’ education become?

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The “curriculum of the maternal”\(^4\) (that Grumet validates, Miller problematizes, and Woodman and Dickson contextualize) has been a continued concern of feminist educational philosophers Jane Roland Martin and Susan Laird. Almost twenty years ago Martin (1981) drew attention to the logo/androcentrism of knowledge, to women’s absence from the fields of historical, literary, scientific and political accomplishment, and

\(^4\) This phrase belongs to Susan Laird (1995).
to the dubious privilege of women's becoming educated and inducted into a man's world. It is logical that Martin should have turned next to ask what the women were doing while the men were creating culture. Asking that question, she reflected deeply about the specific activities women were performing in homes (caring for people and things and/or raising children), and how those activities have been and should be valued. Martin's conception of the "hidden curriculum" (1981, 1985, 1992, 1994b) recognizes those activities, those processes without which society could not function or continue to reproduce itself, biologically or culturally. Attitudes toward these reproductive/domestic activities reveal a "hidden" curriculum of misogyny which, given the larger picture that Woodman and Dickson paint, is perhaps not surprising. "If we do not 'work through' the highly varied and exceedingly subtle resistances of home and domesticity that are manifested not just in America's educational thought but in the culture at large, we are bound to repeat them" (1992, 123), Martin warns.

In *The Schoolhome* (1992), Martin maintains that it is urgent that home and school share the responsibility for raising the nation's children because more than 65% of American mothers now work both outside and inside the home. Martin begins her text by looking back to 1938 to stand with Woolf on the metaphorical bridge between the private and the public world, to ask on what terms women should join the procession of educated men, where it is that men's education will lead them, and whether women want to proceed to that same end? For the professions, as Woolf well knew, had an undeniable effect on those who practised them, and the end of all men's professions was competition, hierarchy, and ultimately, war. Women, Woolf (and Martin) suppose, should do it differently, aiming toward a peaceful end, but women can only do it differently, as Woolf, Martin and I understand, if they have a different sort of education. Like Woolf, who was revisioning an education for peace at almost the same time, Italian educator Maria Montessori believed that the kind of love that would flourish with a different education was "a higher form of love," which was a "prerequisite for the 'human
"harmony" and the 'genuine community of mankind' that had to obtain if positive peace was to be achieved” (20).

To consider what that different education might look like Martin turned to Montessori, one of her few female predecessors in the field of educational philosophy. “How could it be that I,” wrote Martin, “who taught university courses in philosophy of education, had not read Montessori?” (1992, 121). And why, Martin wondered, had the word “casa” in Montessori’s “Casa dei Bambini,” the school that Montessori described in such rich detail, always been translated as “house” when it seemed to Martin that what Montessori was, in fact, describing was a place like home? Martin’s research proved her insight correct, so she concluded that the protracted insistence on this misleading translation was, in fact, another enactment of the “hidden” curriculum of anti-domesticity. Why, when so many of the great philosophers (including Dewey) had written about the family’s influence on education, were those parts of their work never cited, studied or explored? “The silences about domesticity constitute a hidden curriculum in anti-domesticity” (Martin, 1992, 75), Martin concluded.

Montessori’s new curriculum had been created in response to a social change not dissimilar to the one facing contemporary America when children could not be cared for adequately in their homes. “Read ‘casa’ as ‘home,’ advised Martin, “and you perceive a moral and social dimension that transforms your understanding of Montessori’s idea of school” (1992, 10). As in the open classsrooms and integrated days of the British infant schools of the late 60s and early 70s, the emphasis in Montessori’s school was on “children learning as opposed to teachers teaching, on the manipulation of concrete materials, on freedom and the absence of compulsion” (11); the value of obedience was replaced with that of “individual self-determination” (22). In both these locations the distinction between work and play was deliberately blurred. But, unlike the British infant schools which were to designed to function as miniature versions of the larger world, Montessori aimed to make her schools like homes, the kinds of homes which many of her poor and seriously neglected students could not, in their wildest dreams, have imagined.
"It may be said to embrace its inmates with the tender, consoling arms of a woman. It is the giver of moral life, of blessings; it cares for, it educates and feeds the little ones" (Montessori, qtd. in Martin, 1992, 12). The problem of peace began with educating the very young in a very different way.

Montessori has been canonized for her individualization of instruction, but it was the revolutionary idea of affectionate attachment to the human and the natural world that was her real gift to the educational realm, on Martin’s view and on mine. For Montessori, this home-like attachment was “both the beginning and the end point of moral development” (Martin, 1992, 19). It was the beginning of an education that would not lead to war. But, as Martin regretted, making school more like home was a problematic educational move.

Like the housewife’s labors that are not considered real work, home’s contributions to a child’s development are not called “education.” … Denying through our choice of words both the seriousness of the teaching and the societal significance of the learning, we underestimate the educative powers of the domestic context and the importance of the curriculum of home for the lives of children and the continuation of society. (27-28)

Martin understood that Montessori’s system had limitations in terms of the present situation in American schools, that following it, one could be imposing “middle-class morality” on students, that this might not be the right approach for all schools or all teachers. Nonetheless, she argued, as I would, that the affectionate nature of the relationship between student and teacher is a productive one, that the task of bringing the young into culture as contributors is well-addressed by this approach which seeks to broaden and democratize a curriculum newly construed as one of “attitudes, skills, and values, not bits or bodies of knowledge” (Martin, 1992, 84).

The Schoolhome (1992) is the most personally interesting of all Martin’s writing to me; it has attracted the least public comment and attention perhaps because it so completely destabilizes the location and values of the educational enterprise. Martin was not afraid to talk about the educative function of love in enhancing the development of
children who care about the world, the people and things in it. Differently from Plato, Martin believed that gender did make a difference. The educational ideal that she embraces throughout her work is a gender-sensitive one that considers gender where it matters and does not consider it where it does not.

Two years later Martin asked us to imagine a curriculum conceived as embracing a wide and varied range of human activities and conduct, as encompassing forms of living or activity and not just forms of knowledge. Such a curriculum would have to give ample space to the arts, to the professions, to various sorts of work, and to all sorts of other practical activities; it would also have to leave room for a variety of social activities and roles – not just the role of inquirer and the one-time favorite role of citizen – and it would not be able to ignore things in what for want of a better designation I will call the personal realm, things such as character development. A curriculum so conceived might well have space neither for distinct disciplines nor families of such disciplines as separate school subjects but might only have space for the theoretical disciplines as a single school subject. (Martin, 1994b, 148)

Just as Martin had thought back through her mothers – Montessori, Woolf, Dorothy Canfield Fisher47, Louisa May Alcott – to name but a few of the thinking women whose ideas inspired her thought, Susan Laird continues Martin’s tradition, thinking back through these writers and taking Martin’s work as a springboard for further investigation. In “Curriculum and the Maternal” (1995) Laird continues the conversation about the radically new curriculum Martin has proposed above. The subject matter of the new curriculum might include

the philosophizing of children and of those who have reared them to maturity, especially their ethical inquiry about friendship, love, sexuality, gender, society, schooling, fairness, and justice; philosophical conceptions of the child, woman, and family in discussions of human nature, the good life, and the just society; theological disputes about the genderized conception of the Son as the Holy Child of the Holy Mother, particularly as these have informed contemporary parochial schooling and religious education, liberation pedagogies, and lingering 19th century notions of true womanhood and woman’s true profession. The anthropology of childhood, youth, and child rearing within different cultural contexts might be part of this subject matter, too, along with children’s poems and stories; literature

47 Dorothy Canfield Fisher, one of many pilgrims who went to Italy in the early 1900s to visit Montessori’s Casa dei Bambini, was one of the first to insist that “casa” be translated as “home” not “house.” (Martin, 1992, 10)
for children and about child rearing, especially as read through the multicultural lenses of feminist theory and criticism; the history of child-rearing practices, children, childhood, and adolescence, especially as this history is being reconstructed in relation to women’s history; children’s music, theater, and other children’s arts; semiotic analyses of young people’s fashions and dances and of body language in the child-rearing relation; the architectural design of children’s environments, with special theoretical attention to their genderized divisions of public and private, work and leisure spaces. This subject matter might most obviously also include the politics of children’s and young people’s rights and issues vis-à-vis families and schools; legal advocacy for children, youth, and those who care for them; the sociology of child care’s feminization, domestication, and bureaucratization; the international and domestic economics of fertility control, child rearing, child care, and youth welfare, particularly in relation to the finance of education and health care and to the feminization of both child-affiliated work and poverty; the mass media’s gender-coded representation and commercial use of children, mothers, teachers, and youth as objects and consumers; theoretical critiques of the technicism of child-care expertise and of the psychological and medical domination of child studies within the contemporary university. (Laird, 1995, 69-70)

Laird has drawn considerable inspiration for her new curriculum from Louisa May Alcott’s (1868/1980, 1869/1982, 1871/1962, 1886/1983) fictional mother Marmee and her daughter Jo (Little Women); their teaching “pose[s] critical questions that feminists and educators should consider today. Few children “have been so artfully mothered” [and by extension, taught] as the March sisters” (Laird, 1999a, 36). Alcott’s series of novels about the March family (Little Men, Good Wives and Jo’s Boys), often “dismissed by scholars as mere bestseller[s] or girls’ book[s]” (36), have not received the close attention from educators concerned with girls’ education and ‘miseducation’ that they merit. Marmee is seen either as an “unattainable ideal of private motherhood” or “an unexamined popular presumption” (36). Laird asks,

Could the analytic philosophers’ loveless standard sense of teaching have claimed so much credibility among educational reformers in the absence of that unexamined popular presumption? Recent empirical research on girls’ miseducation as negative achievement amply shows that presumption to be unwarranted – and harmful besides. Having debunked its destructive consequences, such research poses a challenge for educators and feminists: to rethink, with new sensitivity to girls’ miseducation, the concept of teaching that analytic philosophers have called “standard.” (36-7)
There is much in Marmee's curriculum which prefigures the work of Nel Noddings; Marmee's is "a curriculum organized around 'centres of care' for self, intimate and distant others, plants and animals, objects and instruments, and the physical environment," omitting only Noddings' centre for ideas (Laird, 1995b, 93). The March family evenings of intimate conversation offer the opportunity for sharing experiences and attentive listening that Gilligan recommended. "Marmee's curriculum reflects her particular perception of life as unpredictable and often troubled, and love as a basic necessity for surviving its difficulties with dignity and joy" (1995b, 94). But the standard analytic philosophers are, not surprisingly, I would think, wary of love. Love carries with it the long history of feminine association with sexuality, carnality and death that has been described above by Woodman and Dickson. "We cannot allow the education of men to abandon the seriousness and the rigors of reason for the gentler disciplines of love," writes Thomas F. Green (qtd. in Laird, 1995b, 86). To these philosophers, acts of nurturance, motivation, encouragement, and discipline do not count as "teaching" because they are not 'rational' in origin. Considering the recommendation of the AAUW reports "that interactive teaching should nurture the expression and valuing of feelings and aim to develop students' mature capacities for health and well-being, not just their rationality" (87), Laird insists that they do count. The debate over what aspects of the maternal curriculum may be legitimated as teaching has been going on for quite some time.

This is what mothers teach - love, survival - that is, self-definition and letting go. For each of these, the ability to feel strongly and to recognize these feelings is central: how to feel love, how to neither discount fear nor be overwhelmed by it, how to enjoy feeling deeply." (Lorde, qtd. in Laird, 1989, 38)

Ten years ago, in 1988, Susan Laird was asked to present her paper, "The Concept of Teaching: Betsey Brown Vs. Philosophy of Education" at the first general session of the annual meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society. All papers are submitted to a blind review process. The paper given at the first general session is judged by the program committee to be the best of all the papers submitted. Betsey Brown is the
title of a 1985 novel, written by Ntozake Shange, about the experiences of a bright, middle-class, black, adolescent girl in the uneasy dawn of school desegregation. Laird argued in meticulous scholarly fashion, weaving the insights of the novel with philosophical theory. She was convinced that there was no rhetorical space within analytic philosophy for discussions of the body, that the Socratic metaphor “simply [could] not bear sexuality” (1989, 35). Jane Roland Martin’s (1981) questioning of Plato’s premise that “sex is a difference that makes no difference” (qtd. in Laird, 1989, 34) at an earlier meeting of the same society, which Laird brought into her discussion, underscored the validity of Laird’s position that not much space had yet been made for discussions of the adolescent urges that remain so compelling for the children who are the intended recipients of the theory these philosophers would create. Yet Laird argued that to assume that “sex is a difference which makes no difference” would be a perilously inadequate way to teach adolescent students. Laird imagined Betsey’s teacher, Mrs. Martin, as knowing well that “[e]very seventh grader in her classroom thinks constantly about sex, as does probably every other reasonably curious seventh grader anywhere in the late twentieth century United States” (34). Laird argued eloquently and persuasively that sex did indeed make a difference for “teaching,” as did race and class. She imagined the kind of redefinition of the philosophical realm that Betsey Brown herself might make.

In his reply to her paper, Jonas Soltis (1989) analyzed Laird’s work as if she were his student. Soltis was, at the time, a senior professor at Teachers’ College, Columbia University, so it is perhaps not surprising that he positioned himself in this way, as Laird’s superior, despite the fact that Laird had already earned considerable respect within the academic community. Curiously, Soltis seemed almost insulted that, in referring to the texts of other analytic philosophers of education, Laird neglected to cite his own text. He summarily dismembered Laird’s paper, claiming only to be looking for its main point. There were too many main points, it seemed, for him to handle. And there was far too much love. Where was the ‘logic’ of it? (Remember our discipline, he seemed to be saying nervously – where would we be if let go of logic?) And literature, after all,
was not philosophy. “It takes both love and logic to do philosophy of education,” he insisted, and Laird had apparently neglected to include a “series of arguments from moral principles which require us to include in our conception of teaching the caring and nurturing function” (Soltis, 1989, 49). Therefore Laird’s was not an “adequate argument” (49).

I find Soltis’ reply interesting in terms of its relation to the time-honoured debate between poetry and philosophy, in its implications for academic Father/Daughter relationships, and in the enormous anxiety aroused by Laird’s deliberate inclusion of adolescent female sexuality in the philosophical discussion. Positioned as it was in the first general session of the annual meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society, Laird’s paper was delivered in what surely ought to have been considered a ‘safe space.’ Soltis gave neither a ‘safe’ nor a ‘loving’ reply. I would suggest that, assuming his was a logical reply, it was more ‘logical’ in terms of the buried history of the feminine excavated in this chapter than it was ‘logical’ in the classical analytic tradition. To my mind, it was another version of Torgovnick’s slasher story.

How will the “curriculum of the maternal” (with all its radical implications for discussion of those aspects of life which are not rational) fare in a slash-and-burn economy of budget cuts and back-to-basics rhetoric? Consider the words of the head of the English department at a large Toronto highschool:

What makes our inner-city school such a success is the nurturing care and concern of our staff for students whose plights are often heartbreaking. Problems such as rape, pregnancy, malnutrition, physical and sexual abuse and neurotic behaviour surface daily at my place of work. Instead of a mentor being assigned to every junior student, each student will be on his or her own. Some will most likely act out in class for attention and be sent to the vice-principal for discipline. Perhaps they will just withdraw into depression. Possibly they will consider suicide. (Hebscher, 1998, A23)

Laird maintains that philosophers of education should consider novels like Betsey Brown as worthy texts for analysis. Acceptable public discourse about adolescent female sexuality is limited to the ‘problem’ of teen pregnancy (as we have seen in Chapter Two).
Deborah Tolman maintains that the ‘teen’ in teen pregnancy is always a girl, that she is assumed (where possible) to be a girl of colour, she must be poor, she is in danger of becoming a single mother. Betsey Brown understands this and more. At risk and at fault, the pregnant teen “pushes the panic button,” not for the espoused concerns of economic burden and negative social consequences her activities imply but because she “makes teenage sexuality real” (Tolman, 1996, 255). “We live in a society in which displays of sexuality are not well tolerated and in which displays of female sexuality are especially anxiety-provoking” (Vance, qtd. in Tolman, 1996, 255). Considering female sexuality, Fine, Tolman, Thompson and Vance have created theory where few dare to tread. “Research on adolescent girls’ sexuality arouses such anxiety and controversy that woeful neglect of this topic has been tolerated,” writes Tolman (1996, 257). Sexual behaviour in girls is viewed through the lens of deviance, not development. Audre Lorde and bell hooks background Tolman’s assertion that there is no research to explore “the potential negative outcomes for all girls of failing to understand, acknowledge, or integrate sexuality into a positive sense of themselves and their relationships” (Tolman, 1996, 258). The girls Tolman interview for her study come from a variety of backgrounds;

[These girls said that no adult woman had ever talked directly or in such depth to them before about their sexual desire and pleasure; more than half had never spoken with anyone about it. For the urban girls, research unrelated to pregnancy was a novelty; for the suburban girls, acknowledgement of their sexuality in any form was new. (Tolman, 1996, 259)

All the girls in Tolman’s study honour the power of the erotic. Lorde writes that women in this society are kept from understanding the power of their own erotic impulses because once in touch with their sexuality, they are dangerous to the status quo. But if women can reclaim this affirmative force within, they will be more able to access pleasure in other areas of their lives. However, “in a social context in which danger and violence are palpable, visible, and unavoidable, most of these girls make conscious choices to sacrifice pleasure to protect themselves from danger” (Tolman, 1996, 260). It
is that social context that must change in order to ensure that girls have safe access to their sexual selves and the agency in their own lives which accompanies it.

For all the hyped-up sexuality pervasive in our culture, we seem unable to pass on to the developing generation an appreciation of what is about to happen to them – the blooming beauty of their bodies, the bitter-sweet ache of the flesh, and the vertiginous somersaulting of emotions – probably because we do not, in our heart of hearts, believe in it. What we do seem to believe is that the female body is the site of sexual assault (this holds as true for its romantic as for its pornographic depictions), and that one nevertheless has the obligation, as a citizen of free-wheeling, raunchy capitalism, to consume as much sex as possible without undue wear and tear to the soul. These are our teachings, and we get the students we deserve. (Kostash, 1987, 193)

We can no longer assume that by not teaching about sexuality we can discourage or prevent adolescent sexual behaviour. “A genuine discourse of desire,” writes Michelle Fine, would invite adolescents to explore what feels good and bad, desirable and undesirable, grounded in experiences, needs, and limits. Such a discourse would release females from a position of receptivity, enable an analysis of the dialectics of victimization and pleasure, and would pose female adolescents as subjects of sexuality, initiators as well as negotiators. (Fine, 1988, 33)

Returning the body to the girl who owns it is the subject of Alice Walker’s recently-published novel, By the Light of my Father’s Smile. In this story of one father’s role in circumscribing his daughter’s sexual pleasure, Walker confirms that “loss of sexuality leads to loss of self” (Thomas, 1998, D12). Reviewing this novel Joan Thomas recalls an earlier story written by Walker with a similar theme commenting that “behind the political and racial elements in the story is a private rage – the father sees that sex will take his daughter away from him” (1998, D12). The public discourses around adolescent female sexuality, as we have seen them, mask the private rage.

Ownership of the girl’s sexuality has somehow historically been conferred upon the father. Recall the newspaper article about Danielle House (p.125). This is not to say that mothers have not regulated their daughter’s sexuality, as they most certainly have. But it might be fair to suggest that within the priorities of patriarchy mothers have been entrusted to protect the property of fathers and that daughters have somehow been
included in this property. Thomas would see contemporary mothers as liberated to make their own decisions regarding their daughters’ sexuality. She finds Walker’s affirmation of the role that fathers play in affirming their daughters’ sexuality important in the light of feminist writing that “expects so little of fathers but that they refrain from raping or seducing their daughters” (D12).

In a recent interview in Ms., Walker discusses what prompted this “overtly sexual theme”:

Women must begin to write more truthfully about the profound mystery of sex. I think that race is also a mystery. Which is to say that neither can be fully comprehended except as deeply mysterious expressions through which we can learn profound lessons about life. It is almost impossible not to learn something about yourself in the sexual act. So it’s important for women to be alert to the spiritual growth and self-discovery they can attain by paying close attention to their sexuality. (White, 1998, 45)

Asked how she decided on her narrative approach, Walker answered,

Again, it’s my belief, based on my own self, that what women want most is to be blessed in our sexuality by our parents. As women, I believe we’d especially like to be blessed by our fathers. In that blessing, we’d like the father to know everything about us, just like when we were born, and to love us still. (White, 1998, 46)

As Thomas explains it, Walker, in the writing of this novel, is asking her readers to consider adolescent female sexuality as Michelle Fine did.

Consider the sexuality of young women for what it is, rather than focusing only on the hazards of sex. It’s not the vulnerability of teen-aged girls that’s the real issue, but our attitude to things we can’t control, to a development in our daughters’ lives that undeniably asserts their autonomy. Under the guise of protecting our daughters, we thwart their development as whole people. (Thomas, 1998, D12).

It will not be the fathers alone who will have difficulty hearing this message. Francine Prose writes a scathingly critical review of Walker’s novel, calling Walker a “cheerleader for Eros” (1998, 18) and accusing her of abandoning her responsibility as a writer by valuing the groin over the mind. Prose’s reaction will be shared by many in a world that has yet to make peace with female sexuality and with women’s (continually contested) ownership of their bodies.
Yet there are urgent connections between sexuality, voice, and agency that need to be explored with girls. Bodily insult, as Snitow (1983) maintained, is the surest way to reduce self-esteem and silence voice. Stephanie Golden's (1998) interpretation of the seemingly innocuous fairy tale of the little mermaid confirms the price that is paid for speaking about desire. For the mermaid it is mortality and the pain of walking on human limbs. Consider the furor around the recent publication of Joyce Maynard’s memoir of the affair she had, at eighteen, with J. D. Salinger. Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye* (1951), the primer for discussions of masculine adolescent sexuality, once hotly contested for its irreverence, has become a schoolroom classic. Sexuality in young women is not well tolerated where it cannot be colonized by culture and the economy. And who will teach these girls that the body is “the sacred dwelling place of the soul”? (Woodman, 1985, 170). What I write here is informed by my memory of seven fourteen-year-old bright girls burying a purloined copy of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* in the dusty sports field behind the school, the final transgressive act of grade nine.

In *Of Woman Born* Adrienne Rich begins her chapter on “The Domestication of Motherhood” with a quote from Frieda Fromm-Reichmann’s “On the Denial of Woman’s Sexual Pleasure”:

...there is a Persian myth of the creation of the World which precedes the biblical one. In that myth a woman creates the world, and she creates it by the act of natural creativity which is hers and which cannot be duplicated by men. She gives birth to a great number of sons. The sons, greatly puzzled by this act which they cannot duplicate, become frightened. They think, “Who can tell us, that if she can give life, she cannot also take life.” And so, because of their fear of this mysterious ability of woman, and of its reversible possibility, they kill her. (Qtd. in Rich, 1976, 110)

So much energy is constellated today around what young women can safely know. The call for the dismantling of education as we have known it is another version of Torgovnick’s slasher story. As safe as women have come to feel in their roles as teachers, and as much at home as girls have grown in the classroom, slashes to funding and slashes to programs can change all that very quickly as the right-wing, family values, back-to-basics rhetoric grows. Morale is disastrously low in Toronto public highschools for both
students and teachers as I complete the writing of this dissertation. It is a gendered story, but it is a class-based story as well, as Miller has ably pointed out. It is not the upper classes whose education will be severely compromised. What really motivates all these changes is the unspoken realization that the middle and working classes have come too far, have become too 'uppity,' and women are like that, too. To what extent is all our recent and continuing concern with deficit born of a fear that women have come too far? Too many women principals, too many female medical students, too much female sexual agency. Basic economics explains that the deficit will always be a trump card to stop change in its tracks when social mores are changing too quickly for the powers-that-be to assimilate them. Like the women who were sent back to their kitchens after the two World Wars, women teaching and girls learning today may find themselves sent back. The areas of the curriculum most severely besieged are not the 'masculine' fields of mathematics, science and technology; they are the 'soft' underbellies of curriculum: the arts, music, language, history, the humanities – the study of what makes us human.

The contradictions persist. If girls do not achieve success in science and math, they will live lives distressingly like their mothers'. If they do not possess a sense of mastery of these subjects they will begin to think of themselves as lesser, as somehow indefinably stupider, less capable. Not to understand here carries more than its face value. Science, math, economics, control of money and access to it are linked inextricably but accurately in the minds of young women. Fully one hundred years have passed since Gilman wrote Women and Economics and "The Yellow Wallpaper," and women still need to understand the importance of these two works to their real lives. More than sixty years have passed since Woolf wrote A Room of One's Own, and women still struggle for access to economic subsistence, let alone the little luxuries of life that "light the lamp in the spine." In Canada, in 1929, women were still not 'persons.' But how equal are we today?

What kind of education would not lead to war? Woolf asked in 1938. It would be an education that would refuse to sacrifice the daughters. For the connections between
war and female sacrifice played out in mythology have been enacted in reality in myriad ways. Where do we begin to rework our cultural history of sacrificing the daughters if not in our schools? What do girls need to know, what are we prepared to tell them, and what are we ready to learn from them?

* * *

What would happen if one woman told the truth
About her life?
The world could split open.
(Rukeyser, qtd. in Greene, 1994, 25)

It is the social construction of gender, of the roles women are required to play and the problematizing of them that concerns feminist philosopher of education Maxine Greene. How can women both acknowledge the scripts they have so brilliantly internalized at the cost of their own identities and side-step them at the same time? How can they begin to think and feel from the groundedness of their own realities? How can they become fully “present” to themselves in order to release “individual capacities now suppressed?” (Greene, 1994, 17). She believes that “it is necessary to look into the darkness, into the terrible blankness that creeps over so many women’s lives, into the wells of victimization and powerlessness” (20). In this darkness Greene finds the literary record of women’s lives replete with so much death and suicide, understandable responses to the circumscription of women’s lives in a male universe. She remembers the story of Judith Shakespeare. She pauses to consider the effect of discouragement on the mind of the artist, as Woolf did, and wonders how women can break the vicious circle of their disenfranchisement.

“I am arguing for an intensified awareness of women’s own realities,” Greene writes, articulating her concern for the perceptions of “the body that carries subjectivity into the world” (22). “Once women come in touch not only with the lived world but with their primordial landscapes and with their corporeal involvements, they cannot avoid coming in touch with their sexuality as well” (22). Like Janet Hough, who decried the lack of public policy changes to accompany changes to family law legislation, Greene
argues that calls for equity may be so much wasted air in a world where the roots of systemic inequality run so deep.

"How can we go about changing the constructed world?" she asks. She offers imaginative literature as a good place to begin.

One of the strengths of imaginative literature is that it can enable women to assume new standpoints on what they take for granted, to animate certain constructs with their indignation, so that they can see them as sources of the injustice that plagues them, see them not as givens, but as constituted by human beings and changeable by human beings. The imaginative leap can lead to the leap that is praxis, the effort to remake and transcend. (Greene, 1994, 24)

Greene, I think, is right in beginning with imaginative literature. A woman’s philosophy is realized to a very great extent through embodied literary experience (Plato’s caveats notwithstanding). Thinking back through Gilligan’s work, cited in my earlier chapters, through the work of Martin and Laird above, and reaching back historically to Woolf’s fiction, essays and criticism, I would draw attention to the importance of the literary example to all these women who think and theorize. My own lived experience (documented in my analysis of my own and other girls and women reading) would confirm that women do go to imaginative literature, to books, to learn how to live and by extension, to think deeply. “Standard” analytic philosophy, of course, while eschewing any association with “poetry,” takes its roots in books as well; Socrates’ student Meno was a literary creation, albeit one that blurred the boundaries between literature and life. It is not surprising, given our history of gendered socialization, that women and men should turn differently to different books, written by authors of different genders to ‘do’ philosophy.

The feminist pedagogy that Greene and her colleagues have created out of their embodied minds addresses what the hidden curriculum that sacrifices our daughters can no longer afford to ignore. Here the competing aims of educare and educere as they relate to the education of young women are revealed. How can we bring girls into our culture and teach them what they need to know without sacrificing their authentic selves
at the same time? The essential features of female adolescence that embody absence, silence and loss (of voice, confidence, self-knowledge) are a microcosmic reflection of the fate of women in history and literature that Woolf and the women who followed her have elaborated in detail. How can young women “claim” an education whose ultimate goal is to reproduce patriarchal society and, while claiming it, remain whole?

Feminist pedagogy offers a standpoint from which we can begin to consider educating girls in ways that restore to them the strengths born of owning their own bodies. Grumet (1988) maintains that the project of curriculum is to return the child to herself. Jane Roland Martin (1981, 1994b) advises that teachers must reveal patriarchal education’s hidden curriculum to students. Understanding what has gone before raises consciousness of what is and what might be. Classrooms where power is distributed more liberally (Gore, 1993) may make it easier for girls to speak honestly. “How one teaches,” writes Gore, “becomes inseparable from what is being taught, and crucially, how one learns” (1993, 2-3). If adolescent girls need to remain in close connection with their parents through the process of individuation, they need also to maintain close connection with their teachers. As Alice Balint wrote, “The amicable loosening of the bond between mother and daughter is one of the most difficult tasks of education” (qtd. in Chodorow, 1978, 130).

There is respect here for the relational nature of knowledge production. Women may know themselves in relation to men, but not in relation to each other. The web of connection that symbolized Women’s Way of Knowing (1986) and honoured the relationship between individual knowers and their knowledges is brought to bear in feminist pedagogy’s commitment to learning within community. Lugones and Spelman (1983) focus on friendship as a motivation for learning, for attempting to reach across the chasm into another’s subjectivity. In The Claim of Philia (1990) Joanne Pagano proposes that to come to know is to celebrate difference and the desire to “merge with the Other, to assimilate the Other” (1990, xvii). To come to know is to celebrate difference and attachment. Learning is collaborative, within community.
The strategies of feminist literary theory have great potential in literature classrooms with adolescent girls. They are acts of psychic survival here too. Girls can learn to re-read and re-vision texts in the tradition of Annette Kolodny (1980) and Adrienne Rich (1971). Seeing literature as "a dream for awakened minds" (Frye, 1957, 111), with the power to harm as well as to heal, honouring students' "feeling, power, and location" problems (Bogdan, 1992), our challenge is to provide the skills to take texts apart without robbing them of their pleasure.

Re-empowered by the understanding that all language is political and that they read, write and speak in a language forged by men, girls need to become "resistant readers" (Fetterley, 1981). From this vantage point, within their culture but outside it at the same time, girls might come to an understanding of how their understandings have been constructed. Together they could attempt to answer Showalter's (and the AAUW's) questions: "What are the effects of this long apprenticeship in negative capability on the self-image and the self-confidence of women students?" and "Can we wonder that women students are so often timid, cautious, and insecure when we exhort them to 'think for themselves'?" (Showalter, qtd. in Fetterley, 1981, xxi). How will girls ask for the first time what it means to read and write, not as male impersonators, but from the strength and power of what it is to be a woman?

"We learn to tell our stories in conversation with the stories we are told," writes Pagano (1990, 2). Re-reading the literary canon we would augment it with the work of women, with coming-of-age novels of girls across a broad spectrum of ethnicities, cultures and sexual orientations. Reading others' stories, girls learn to tell their own, in writing journals and autobiographical/family narrative, in dramatic role playing, in collaborative projects. Reading and writing honour a commitment to self-reflection, self-knowledge and self-creation. We revision classrooms based on the affiliative principles of nurturance, support, and care, where teachers move beyond the paradox of the
“bearded mother,” understanding that “self-respect comes only when exacting standards have been met” (Rich, qtd. in Gore, 1993, 69). These are classrooms where authority is authority ‘with’ and not ‘over,’ classrooms that admit how, in the domination of discourse, the Speaking Subject necessarily silences Others. There will be much conversation here, and the sincere attempt to speak the long-buried truths of the body in an atmosphere of committed listening and respect. The questions will matter more than the answers.

To question everything. To remember what it has been forbidden even to mention. To come together telling our stories .... (Rich, 1979, 13)

The essentialism/anti-essentialism debate (discussed in my introduction) is mirrored in feminist educators’ struggles around how to include a pedagogy of care within a pedagogy of critique, specifically in the challenge of the “bearded mother” to engage with the pluralism of contemporary education. Ann Diller writes,

We must also follow the ethics of care in its insistence on changing our ethical focus from a preoccupation with justification to a concern for better caring relationships.... To create, maintain, and enhance caring relationships among ourselves constitutes the central moral focus. (Diller, 1996a, 161)

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48 This term originates with the poet Anne Halley. Culley, Diamond, Edwards, Lennox and Portugues (1985) explain it this way: “To recapitulate Dinnerstein’s thesis in its simplest form: it is the woman in her female body who is, to the infant, all joy, all power as well as the first source of disappointment and the first object of rage.” (Culley et al., 14) As teachers, we are “inescapably, also their mothers – necessary for comfort but reinforcing a feared and fearful dependency if such comfort is too easily accepted. But we are also, in part, their fathers – word-givers, truth-sayers – to the extent we incorporate what Dinnerstein calls the father’s ‘clean’ authority in our female bodies. The poet Anne Halley would call us ‘bearded mothers’ as we betray our body’s traditional significance – for good or ill – with every word we utter. As our maternal power is feared, our paternal authority is mistrusted.” (Culley et al., 1985, 14) Philosopher Kathryn Morgan revisits Culley’s analysis in “The perils and paradoxes of the bearded mothers” (1996b). Christine Overall articulates it this way: My first role muddle, then, arises in response to what appears to be the expectation that as a feminist academic I will always be available and accessible to other individuals and organizations; that I will give without stinting to every current political project; that I will donate my time and energy for feminist conferences, committees, demonstrations, publications, workshops and lecture series that want my labour; and that I will always be delighted to offer a willing ear and sympathetic shoulder for distressed persons of both sexes. A central criterion for evaluating me as a good colleague and teacher is whether I successfully sustain an ‘open door policy.’ Significantly, no other profession – doctor, physiotherapist, psychiatrist, social worker, lawyer – that I can think of demands this unconstrained access. Significantly, the nearest similarity is to the role of mother and to other gender-stereotyped work such as waitressing and secretarial services.” (Overall, 1998, D9)

49 This refers back to my earlier discussion of essentialism and the unified subject, pp. 15-22.
Diller's pedagogy is based on coexistence (tolerance) and cooperation, on the practice of "receptive attention," a concept she draws out of her reading of Nel Noddings (1984), Sara Ruddick (1989), Marilyn Frye (1983), Lisa Delpit (1988), Sara Hoagland (1988), Carol Gilligan (1982), and Iris Murdoch (1970). "A new understanding alters the landscape," Diller maintains, "it lessens the power of differences to build barriers and to maintain fences of disregard." This "dialectic" presumes an understanding of the difficulty that arises "when we try to follow another person into their own culture and life experiences" (1996a, 164). As Lisa Delpit explains, "To put our beliefs on hold is to cease to exist as ourselves for a moment — and that is not easy. It is not easy to see yourself "in the unflattering light of another's angry gaze" (Delpit, qtd. in Diller, 1996a, 164). Diller highlights the motivation of friendship and emphasizes the pleasure inherent here. "Can anyone really know us," she asks, "who knows nothing of our personal joys?" (1996a, 166).

But Diller is acutely aware of the tensions of the "bearded mothers" of feminist academe. She urges a rapprochement between the two seemingly opposite pedagogical imperatives of nurture and criticism, towards a kind of academic "tough love" that understands the importance of a relational ontology. Both criticism and nurturance are lived out in the relationships that obtain between and among students and teacher. Diller looks to the development of a community of joint support and inquiry where all members assume responsibility (which is not necessarily equal) for mutual well-being. She cites Lugones and Spelman's "need for a reciprocity of understanding," for classrooms where teachers are not the sole source of nurture or criticism. "This means that each person makes a methodological commitment not only to listen to others but to endeavour to understand them on their own terms, and each expects, in turn, to have an equivalent effort directed toward understanding their experiences" (Diller, 1996c, 141). This is a pedagogy that tolerates ambivalence and resists closure. It presupposes teachers and students "with the ability to say, 'I stand here, but am willing to move there'" (Bogdan,
1992, 257) as they engage with the power of story (historical, literary, political, spiritual or scientific) across the realm of difference.

* * *

Romantic love is the single greatest energy system in the Western psyche. In our culture it has supplanted religion as the arena in which men and women seek meaning, transcendence, wholeness, and ecstasy. (R. Johnson, 1983, xi)

It is unlikely that the profound individual and collective attraction to the encodings of romantic love will disappear because no matter how much work can be done on the intellectual level to “deconstruct” them, the deep mythical, cultural and archetypal structures to which they are connected are unchanging. The subtext of Torgovnick’s ‘slasher story’ is the lure of the primitive. She is drawn to the ‘heart of darkness,’ to what Peggy Phelan calls the economy of “deep violence” and “profound romance” for reasons which are deeply embedded in the psyche (Phelan, 1993, 4). The conscious course is to lay bare in as complete a way as possible the powerful dynamics at work in the material world and in the archetypal and spiritual realms. When I taught grade four, I was amazed by my students’ ability to entertain and understand sophisticated ideas and texts. I experimented with poetry working my way from “The Highwayman” to the mystery of Hopkins. Children understand much more than it has yet been believed.

A different education for girls would consider Martin’s and Laird’s radical suggestions. It would ask girls to broaden their conception of love to include agape (altruism) and philia (affiliation) as well as eros (sexual love) and to examine the dynamics of healthy relationship.

Human love is so obscured by the inflations and commotions of romance that we almost never look for love in its own right, and we hardly know what to look for when we do search. But as we learn love’s characteristics and attitudes, we can begin to see love within us—revealed in our feelings, in the spontaneous flow of warmth and surges toward another person, in the small, unnoticed acts of relatedness that make up the secret fabric of our daily lives.

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50 I am aware of the racist implications of this term but it recalls, for me, the Black Goddess who unites body and spirit. This is my intention, as well, when I use it on p. 246.
Love is the power within us that affirms and values another human being as he or she is. Human love affirms that person who is actually there, rather than the ideal we would like him or her to be or the projections that flows from our minds. Love is the inner god who opens our blind eyes to the beauty, value, and quality of the other person. (R. Johnson, 1983, 190-1)

Love is an inherently human capacity that flourishes outside the narrow parameters of romantic love with its attendant disillusions and disappointments. Johnson writes about “stirring the oatmeal love” (195) as love that honours a willingness to share in the ordinariness of existence. This is love without high drama for “[f]antasy,” as Woodman writes, “is one of the most dangerous addictions in our society” (1996, 65). And there is much satisfaction for women in the love of friendship and community that has yet to be much discussed.

If the education we give our daughters speaks only to their capacity to entertain fantasy, then we do no more to teach them about the strength and mystery of their bodies than our mothers did. Teaching what we can about the body and learning ourselves by listening to what they tell us might be a better place to begin. The route to mature self-knowledge is not a magic carpet ride with a prince.

Gloria Steinem highlights the difference between romance and love:

Romance: a tale in verse, embodying the adventures of some hero of chivalry ... A fictitious narrative in prose of which the scene and incidents are very remote from those of ordinary life.

Love. That disposition or state of feeling with regard to a person which manifests itself in solicitude for the welfare of the object, and delight in his [sic] presence. (The Oxford English Dictionary, qtd. in Steinem, 1992, 249)

Steinem asks: “[w]ill increased self-esteem cause “the withering away of romance?” and answers: “[y]es - but only in its current form” (1992, 261). Romance is, as we have known it, an impulse to intense curiosity, a search for illusions of magic rescue, which we might not require if we were not so needy.

[R]omance could be a deep, intimate, sensual, empathetic way of learning: of seeing through someone else's eyes, feeling with their nerve endings, absorbing another culture or way of life from the inside, stretching our boundaries, and bringing into ourselves a wider view of the world. If there
were equality of power and high self-esteem among women and men, or between two lovers of the same gender, both could have the pleasure of learning and of teaching in this all-five-senses way – without feeling incomplete, angry, or abandoned when romance has run its course. (261)

Steinem is clear on the role the economy plays here: “I’m sure that, as long as shopping and romance are two of women’s few paths to a sense of power and well-being in this culture, both will continue to be addictive – for the same reason” (263).

* * *

Peggy Phelan, who comes to the academy by way of a career as a dancer, admits a life-long fascination with the disappearance of the manifest object and what is left behind. Loss is what claims her and she maintains that both theatre and performance art answer a need to rehearse loss, particularly that most permanent of all losses, death. “What psychoanalysis makes clear is that the experience of loss is one of the central repetitions of subjectivity” (Phelan, 1997, 5). So integral to our humanity is this experience that Phelan suggests that “the syntax of loss is hard-wired into the psyche” (5). But if performance is a resistance to loss and a rehearsal of death at the same time, writing is also performative; her text is a “writing toward and against bodies who die” (4). And importantly, “[w]e are more and more only what we make, what we do. And those who are unable to make or do will have a harder time dramatizing their value” (3). As Woodman has phrased it “[i]n our creating, we are created” (1996, 173).

Writing acts as recovery for the originating loss that has been projected so variously, notably in the fantasies of romantic love. In its creativity, self-writing honours the wisdom of the Goddess to speak from the embodied soul and the eye of the paradox that is living in reality. Loss is the subtext of my text here. Radway, Chodorow, Phelan, Woodman and Grumet are all concerned with what has been lost. I began this writing with the death of my personal mother, but it is the larger loss of the Mother/Goddess that is reflected in my search, as it is the loss of the primordial, preoedipal landscape and our infant sense of oneness with it. I believe that women yearn to experience and recover the experience of loss in the company of women, in stories like Anne’s and the adult versions
of them. It is no mere accident that *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* (1996) is number one on the New York Times Best Seller list and its author’s (Rebecca Wells’s) earlier novel, *Little Altars Everywhere* (1992), about the same group of girls/women, is in sixth place. How urgent is our need to read about how women’s friendships are lived out in abiding love! For many women, young and old, it is a more compelling motivation for reading than are the tales of romance. Woolf recognized it in 1928 when she wondered what would happen if Chloe liked Olivia.

In the dusty cardboard box labelled "Memories," I have all the notebooks that held the notes I took at university: the photos, letters, birthday cards, household accounts, instruction pamphlets and lesson plans accumulated in a tumultuous journey through life. What I do not have are the poems I wrote as a girl, no record of the words I forged to help me survive that awkward, awful, tortured, lonely passage into womanhood. Those words that were such an embarrassment to me, those innocent, pathetic turns of phrase. Those tangled feelings caught in symbols on a naked page are gone. They are all gone. To what extent has all my thinking and studying, these twelve years of it, been an attempt to recover the wisdom of those words? That, too, is loss. I lost the right to call myself a writer. All this is written to preserve the poet as a young woman who dwelt within me, who stuffed her poems under the white paper lining of her drawer. I honour her project and give it life. She was no Anne. She never wanted to be a teacher. She was Emily. She wanted to write.

In my grade four classroom the intelligence and sensitivity of nine-year-olds exploded all my preconceived notions of what children knew. I had witnessed the miracle of the child’s mind watching the development of my own children, but those children were mine. I couldn’t presume to think that I was anything but prejudiced about the wisdom of their insight. What did I need from the children I taught? What had I always needed from them from the moment I entered the teaching profession? I needed their love, at least as much as they needed mine. I am stunned when I realize the enormity of that never-acknowledged need. “What exactly did you think you were getting from
them?" a psychiatrist asked me some years ago, when I came to her for help with my troubled marriage. That I was getting anything at all from them came as a complete shock to me.

In my grade four classroom we are reading *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* (Coerr, 1977). The story takes place in Japan where a young girl who has survived the bombing of Hiroshima unexpectedly contracts leukemia. Everyone who knows her is making origami paper cranes to cheer her through her battle. Sadako is not going to win. We are sitting in a circle, on the floor of our classroom; I am reading with tears streaming down my cheeks. "Here," says Noelle, who sits beside me, as she gently takes the book out of my hands, "I can read. Then we can take turns reading." It is not the first time they have seen me cry. Sometimes when I get to school in the morning, I sit at my desk and tears are the only way I can deal with what I have just left behind at home and prepare for the day that lies unblemished before me. The odd rebel who gives a convincing excuse to the teacher on yard duty will manage to gain access to the classroom before "Time" is called, before I have composed myself. We never talk about the tears that glisten behind my glasses, but there is always something to talk about. These things distract me, take me away from my private life, save me. "It's a good thing you have this job," comments my principal, who has also found me like this in the early mornings, "otherwise you'd go crazy." And she is right. Teaching, in many ways, and through all the contradictions I have considered here, has saved my life. The love those children gave me has saved my life.

No matter how many times I circle around and through all the theory, I am returned to the love story that teaching is, the exchange of love, especially in elementary school, the intimacy of the project. To spend all day, every day with the same children is to come to know them very well, is for them to come to know you very well. It is more 'quality' time than a mother ever spends with her own children. A classroom whose ground rules are established around mutual respect will evolve into a breeding ground for
love. And a teacher who teaches with her emotions fully present to her can set the example for her students to live in the same way.

*   *   *

In the thinking that has informed this dissertation, Woolf has been my guide and inspiration. An early postmodernist, she refused to define or be defined narrowly. The palette of her world held neither black nor white but an infinity of shades of grey. She had no trouble holding the tensions of competing discourses, affirming knowledge in its endlessly shifting splendour, honouring the fertile interconnections of many voices, assuaging the pain of binary opposition by melting false dichotomies into the inherent unities of which they are composed, anticipating in her thinking the teachings of quantum physics. She steadfastly refused to define other people's oppression for them, understanding that she could not speak for anyone but herself. I, too, would claim that there is much in the notion of the accident of birth.

To produce a dissertation like this one is necessarily to open oneself up to charges of essentialism. I embrace those challenges. I am essentialist in my claims that female experience in Western culture has been predominantly lived out in terms of the primacy of relationship and the activities and knowledges that surround the relational realm. I am not essentialist in biological terms: I do not claim that the traits women have developed and honed in their everyday lives are specifically and only theirs. My essentialism, if that is in fact what it is, is one that embraces the thinking of Marion Woodman, who seeks to legitimate feminine energy alongside masculine in the psyche, as it does that of Jane Roland (1981, 1985, 1992), who is anxious to afford space in the curriculum to the care, concern, connection of women's long apprenticeship in relationship and to explore that analysis with men.

As the graduate school classroom experience that I related at the end of Chapter Three has taught me only too well, claiming to speak out of the authority of my own embodied experience sets me up for further charges of essentialism. I reiterate and hold fast to the notion that I cannot speak honestly with any authority (if either honesty or
authority are ever possible) about any other experience than my own. This is not to diminish the lived experiences of other lives nor is it to privilege my position though it is obvious that my position as the Speaking and/or Writing Subject here does in fact privilege me completely. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to indulge myself in the world of the mind long enough to think my life through. No matter how well I taught my students Atticus’ (Lee, 1962) lesson in To Kill a Mockingbird – of putting yourself in the next person’s shoes – because I believed that he was right and I still do, I understand that there are limitations in doing that.

It has been urgent for me to locate my thinking along a historical continuum. The work of earlier feminist thinkers, while seen as flawed viewed through the lens of the ever-retreating present, was not flawed when it first appeared. Thinking has a certain shelf-life. It does not always ripen like wine. In the early stages of feminist theory, it was crucial to insert women into discourse, to crack open the narrow definitions of history as we had known it and to reclaim the lives lived by women throughout the ages. Logically the next step was to generalize about what women had been doing and, in making those generalizations, to claim for women skill, expertise, dedication, the rewards of having done what they had done well and with dignity. That, of course, became a trap. If we had done something so well, then why were we not content to continue doing it? What we meant to claim was that our experience had value too, that there were areas which had been consigned to us that were worthy human experiences and that the expertise we had developed in our limited roles would stand us in good stead in the larger world. Moving from the private to the public world, my desire is to melt the boundaries. A world where boundaries are more fluid has been articulated for me most effectively in fiction by feminist utopian writers Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1915) and Marge Piercy (1976) and in theory by Morgan (1996a), de Castell (1997), Bryson (1997) and Britzman (1997). It is the spirit that animates the work of these writers that I would bring to the enterprise of education.
Teaching and learning are performative acts, specific moments asserted against death, as performance art describes itself. They matter. Each moment in our life is an assertion against death, against loss. Understanding that differently, probing the implications of mortality in classrooms, teaching as if death mattered, would open the way to a reconceptualization of romantic love. The elaborate ways society has devised to deal with death have completely failed to enable us to see life as a journey, a sacred pilgrimage. They have civilized us without making us civil. They have failed to allow us to make peace with the naturalness of life, the life of the body, the sensual experience that I believe we will not have in the next life. Instead we do such violence to all bodies, beginning with our own and to the body of earth.

Teachers are urgently needed to help make the transition into a world where gender as we now know it will not so rigidly define us. Teachers are needed urgently to open up discussions of what is so noxious in our culture. Teachers are needed more urgently than they have ever been, to teach with empathy, to model in the worlds they create in their classrooms the better world that their students may one day construct.

In a workshop she led recently for teachers at a girls’ school in Toronto, Carol Gilligan (1998a) spoke about the importance of collaborative work, for its espoused benefits of working in community, for its attempts to dismantle the hierarchical order and dislocate competition. She asked the teachers whether they were prepared to let girls take responsibility for their own learning and achievement. She insisted that in a patriarchal culture, listening to girls will take us right to the heart of where the culture is. She underscored again the risks a girl takes in speaking honestly, the dangers of being labelled a feminist, the fear of what rich prizes might be lost. Speaking about the graduate students whose work she has supervised, women who are more than familiar with her own research, Gilligan commented that she finds it worth noting that those aspects of their dissertations which are most brilliant in their discussions with her are not present in the finished product; these are precisely the ideas that they are afraid to include. Somehow they have become like the women who tell her “when we were nine we were
stupid, no – honest.” If teachers make what girls say sound stupid before they say it, then they stop saying it. The upper-class girls who are receiving the “privileged” educations, the girls to whom is promised “honour, riches, marriage and blessing” were those girls to whom she found herself most unable to speak through the patriarchal legacy. She suggested that if women want to be just like men and do everything that men do, we must expect violence. “What is the lesson you want to teach the girl about her relationship to the order?” was her question for teachers. She suggested that girls study resistance movements – in anti-slavery, the Holocaust and liberation theology – so they could see that there was an intelligence to the process of making change.

To introduce girls to the politics of resistance is an extraordinary place to be in the midst of this transformation. This must be done in groups because it is too painful to do alone. In Gilligan’s newest research on boys, she finds that the struggles of boys in early childhood parallel those of girls in adolescence. It must be made visible that this system does not serve men’s interests either. Who is it really serving? Gilligan notes that she began her work after the Roe vs. Wade decision,51 that is, when women got control of their bodies. She regrets that we teach our students so little about the human world. Education should aim to give people a language for their feelings, but to do so brings up the tension with what people do with their lives. People who care about the human condition write about education (Gilligan, 1998a).

In the question period that followed the public lecture (1998b) Gilligan gave that evening, a professor who had produced an abundance of feminist curricula that addresses women’s long absence and silence asked her to explain why this wealth of curriculum that she helped to create is, in fact, so little used in schools. Gilligan’s answer was to point to the depth and breadth of misogyny and logo/androcentrism. Feminism is, as Juliet Mitchell sub-titled her book in 1966, “the longest revolution.”

If reading is the fragile, limitless act that Linda Christian-Smith (1993) claims it is, so labile, so open to interpretation, so various, then how will reading serve as an

51 This was the decision made by the United States Supreme Court in 1973 which legalized abortion.
affirmation against death? This writing of my life and what I have set out to learn about it are the most assertive gestures of my life. In words I make myself material, permanent in a way performance art cannot be. Writing is an extravagant, self-indulgent, loving gesture against death. As teaching is.

The paradigm shifts that have rocked the scientific world need to be enacted in the cultural realm. De Beauvoir’s notion of rootedness, echoed in Woolf’s memoirs, powerfully felt in early adolescence as women are about to come into their sexuality, is when the ability to make important connections is the strongest. It is that point where the cultural forces are mobilized so stalwartly against that process and toward a consumer-based romantic idyll. Gilligan, Walkerdine, Benjamin, Laird, Greene, and Pagano enlarge and deepen the notion that the voices that are lost in adolescence hold precious keys. Laird’s debt to the March family and my own to Anne illuminate what ‘good’ books can do for girls, what they can teach them. Pagano’s notion of finding the wilderness honours Woodman’s notion of an authentic female self who speaks the language of the grounded feminine (no longer the Father’s Daughter). We cannot yet be sure how that voice will sound. Revisiting Peggy McIntosh’s ‘Feeling like a Fraud’ (1985), we have been fraudulent not in terms of the voice of the Father but to the voice of the Mother. Hers is the voice that would urge us to seek pleasure in and through our bodies.

It is no accident that one year ago we were galvanized by the death of The Princess and now we are held by the fall of The Prince. In the corridors of power, Bill Clinton’s aides, well acquainted with his propensity for escapades, have nicknamed him ‘the Boy’ (Purdum, 1998, A12). Woodman would call him the puer aeternus52 in Jungian terms, the boy who never grew up. Stuck back there with Peter Pan, he was not expected to grow up. Because there are so many men like him, men replete with power, success and charm but lacking in emotional maturity, it is easy to wag a finger at Bill. He is the universal alter-ego, the man of every man and woman’s dreams: a bad boy perhaps but

52 Marie-Louise Von Franz (1981) developed this theoretical profile based on her work as an analyst and described it in her book by the same name.
just the boy we have been trained to fall in love with or to become. Here we have a little princess and her little prince whose story, past all the broken commandments, is a “romance,” the kind of romance we deserve. Such is the ignominious end of romance at the end of the second millennium of patriarchy. If Diana’s life and death provide a lesson in the death of the mythology of romance, Bill’s story illumines a larger death. It exposes the death of the values we were supposed to have held; the values to which a dry lip-service is still haltingly paid throughout the Western world. The real operating value is a rampant individualism – ‘I want it and I’ll do anything I can to get it.’ By enacting the dictum that what is repressed returns, Clinton’s adventures have moved the public sexual discourse away from teenage girls and single mothers and broadened the discussion.

As for sex, Michel Foucault wrote three volumes on the history of sexuality to try and understand “the moral problematization of sex”: How did a natural function much like hunger or sleep come to be widely seen in the West as evil. He got as far as imperial Rome, then he died. If his research had made it to the United States today, he might have had to deal not just with the moral but with political problematization of sex. It would be striking if Bill Clinton’s sole original contribution to American politics was to induce a rethinking on the connections between morality, politics and sex. (Salutin, 1998, C1)

* * *

I end with a memory. We are seven friends from grade seven gathered so many years later in a moment snatched out of time. We have lived a good part of our lives through Eliot’s stages of birth, copulation and death with our share of marriages and divorces. It has been a journey.

*We meet again in the restaurant in Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver. It is February 18th, 1998, but here the air is spring. Flowers form in the beds, open in masses on the bushes. Spring trees blossom. We are high above the city in a fertile green forest. We are old friends – seven from grade seven. We are Marcia, Ely, Zoey, Ruth, Lesley, Bette Jane, Joanne. We are nearly forty years from our first meeting, and we are no distance from it. Time is not linear. We are not the girls we were once and we are completely those girls. And more. Life has taught us.*
Bette: “For fifty years I had only one emotion – happy.” Richard has been dead for three months now and happy is beginning to crack – fine lines everywhere like ice on a newly frozen river. Bette is full of beauty, filled with life. Memory buoys her. Life is beautiful and cruel at once. She is at the first step, the first milestone of a journey of great pain. My heart breaks for her. I know the road too well.

Ely: “We didn’t do it the way they do it today. We weren’t taught to do it like that. We were taught to do it quietly, nicely. We got what we wanted all the same – but we didn’t offend anyone.”

Lesley: “We weren’t ‘in your face’ with it, do you mean?”

Ely: “Yes. We weren’t ‘in your face’ with it. But we knew what we wanted, we had aspirations. We got there. Things were expected of us.”

Zoey can’t decide what to order. We are sharing two appetizers. She is flustered, blushes, giggles as she did so many years ago. She has raised five adult children. She is sweet, through and through. One daughter is doing a Master’s at McMaster in biology – AIDS research. A son, named Ben, is my Ben’s age in Computer Science at UVic. She looks exactly the same – bangs, ponytail- ever the cheerleader. She wears a jogging suit.

Joanne. Was any girl more beautiful than Joanne? Always her eyes – tears beneath a veil – as if, if you looked hard enough at her, she would begin to cry. She is still filled with longing. The most beautiful among us, she has married a doctor, as Ely has. Ely was not the most beautiful among us, but she has managed being nice so well. Bright – maybe the brightest.

Ruth keeps the level of conversation cheerful. Ruth who comes so close to deep, is so capable of depth, but guards herself vigilantly against the danger. A fast chatty prattle protects her. She cares, she means so well. She covers her pain – life’s disappointments.

Lesley: “Your sister brought Lady Chatterley’s Lover back from the States.”

Ruth looks at Bette: “It must have been your sister. Couldn’t have been my sister. Do you know what my sister did? We’re sitting at the kitchen table having tea, my mother, my sister and I. My sister says to my mother: ‘Do you know what your daughter is
"reading?" and proceeds to tell her. My mother says, "I have confidence that Ruth knows what she ought to be reading, that she can decide what she should read."

Lesley: "Do you realize how important that was – what your mother was really saying to you?"

But the Lady Chatterley incident doesn’t go much further. We did it, all remember doing it – we read it. But, Ruth says, we never talked about it. We buried it, quite literally, in our final shared transgression before highschool. Though some of us have trouble remembering. Forty years later we still can’t talk about it. The setting is too public. We turn our memories instead to Miss Colpitts, how she taught us to sing with our souls in our voices, how she wanted us to win. We remember wishing she were our mother; as daughters we could have talked to her.

We remember the assaults on our bodies – because we were girls. There were boys’ stairways at our high school and girls’ stairways – we guess, in retrospect, that this was because the boys would have looked up our skirts as we climbed the stairs. For the same reason we drank at different water fountains.

Miss Pybus, our junior-high art teacher, stood in the hallways at change of classes and grabbed at our thighs. If we were wearing too many crinolines she sent us to the office and we were temporarily suspended. Rosa Lee Pierce went home sobbing. Ely was disgraced for wearing culottes – lavender, very pretty, assuredly very feminine. Ely, who was perfect, an Eaton’s Rep. It was the highest honour, everyone’s dream. (You couldn’t be one if you were Jewish; Eaton’s took no Jews then.) The girls worked longer hours than the boys and got paid much less. They had different privileges too.

Who would have been able to articulate that our bodies were everywhere scrutinized and regulated because we were girls? Some of us were so happy. I was impaled on contradiction. I fought where I was headed, was in no hurry, had a sense of impending doom. Yet hovered on the edge, understanding the deep peril of outright rebellion, most profoundly the loss of mother’s love. I couldn’t risk that. Would my life would have been different had I not been an only child?
What I am left with after the meeting with old friends and the parting, the viewing of photographs, the display of memory, the weaving of present into past, the beautiful children produced, the sacred special time with my adult son – is a sense of my new beginning – larger than what I know. A sense of promise – and the fear that attends to that. The fear that accompanies me like a second skin because I live in a woman's body. And a remembrance that is a recognition of the endless possibilities of joy.
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