A Question of Change:
conceptions of knowledge, practices and disability studies.

by

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Sociology and Equity Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
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Academic fields of study are inscribed with taken-for-granted meanings, practices, and ways of articulating them. Critical disability studies is no different. How is it possible, then, to be creative and effect change when scholars are restricted by the same limitations and practices that typically do little more than reproduce more of the same? Working within sociology and equity studies, I proceed with two assumptions: meanings are intersubjectively created; and ideologies are embedded within practices. Emphasizing embodiment, reflexivity and personal narrative, I use an interpretive approach and a disability studies lens to explore the relation of conceptions of knowledge and change through the everyday practices of knowledge production. The thesis focuses on scholarly practices as sedimented ways of thinking and doing that can be shifted by reorienting in various manners in order to move from taken-for-granted conventions (that entail a standpoint) to a change in consciousness and new knowledge.
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[...] we cannot imagine how a mind could paint. It is by lending his body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings. To understand these transubstantiations we must go back to the working, actual body [...] 

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Eye and Mind, 162)

Glassblowing is a highly sensual practice. It has everything to do with the senses, the body, material, process and performance, and it demands a heightened consciousness of one's senses, body and immediate environment. The nature of hot glass doesn't allow for me to stop and ponder while I'm working with it, yet it is a performance that demands full attention to my body in space and to the material in hand or the glass can drip or smash to the floor. Even worse, I may seriously burn myself or others.

I never wanted to be a glassblower for a living, thus I've gained enough knowledge of technique and material to create, but I feel no imperative to produce an end product. Rather, my interest is in playful experimenting and enjoying the process: testing how far I can push the limits and possibilities of the materials and my body; playing with relationships of color, shape and texture; and spontaneously altering, combining or creating different tools, processes and ways of moving. I set aside my imagination, proceed with curiosity, try to disorient myself from what I think I know, and experiment by doing differently. Most importantly, I do this without a plan or a goal but with a little hope for encountering the new. Thus I engage in serious play with difference.

Experimenting with hot glass entails uncertainty and risk – my efforts may not culminate in a finished piece. Yet it is in the risk and uncertainty of experimenting that the possibilities for creating something exciting or new in glass resides. I suspend belief and disbelief in order to be open to new possibilities, and I situate myself in a process between knowing and not knowing. As I'm working, I make what I see in the same moment and action. That is, as I create what I literally see, touch and know, I know what I create.
While hot glass is never (purposely) touched directly, I touch it as it touches me through the tools that extend my body. I feel the glass through a blowpipe, through wood, metal or graphite tools or through wet newspaper. The searing heat of its flesh travels through my tools or radiates through space from its skin to mine, as the relative coolness of my extended body and the air chills its skin. However, rather than working on glass, hot glass requires that I work with it and through it. It tells me – through changing color, how it feels on the pipe, the sound and feel of my tools on its flesh – when it needs reheating or cooling, what I am allowed to do next, and which tools I can use to nudge it into shape. I 'listen' through my eyes, my ears, my skin, and my body. Molten glass is largely formed through spinning and gravity. It demands that I attend to it at all times by keeping it on center and in constant motion. I perform a dance with it, letting it take the lead, adjusting to its rhythm while constantly rotating the pipe. Hot glass is tricky; it has its own body-mind-spirit that must be respected, and as I try to teach it, it is my teacher. If I don't heat it evenly or to the right temperature, or if I turn too quickly or slowly, it will resist and twist or fall off. I learned this dance by touch – by feeling the movement of the glass through my body.

Glassblowing is often done with a team, thus it entails negotiations of relationships of different bodies, aesthetics, rhythms, powers, egos, skills and manners of working. But regardless of the diversity of who we are as individuals, if we bring a generosity of spirit to the teamwork it creates a sense of belonging and synchronicity, and when everyone is performing in sync there is no better feeling of creative flow. While working with the main piece of glass, others may bring me bits of glass to add to it; but the temperature of the added glass in relation to the main piece is crucial. It requires team members to coordinate themselves to reheat or cool their glass, often using just one gloryhole (reheating furnace) between them and sometimes trading pipes and sharing tools. While maintaining a focus on their own pipes, team members move around the studio space and each other using peripheral vision and an embodied sense of where others and their pipes are moving in relation to themselves. This embodied awareness of each other is crucial for glassblowing; without it there is no experience of creative flow, the glasswork is compromised and accidents happen.

The roar of the furnace limits verbal communication, thus we communicate through eye contact, gesture, or body language, and over time team members learn each others' grammar and rhythm quite well. As a novice glassblower I had great difficulty understanding verbal
instructions over the roar of the furnace. Out of frustration the studio technician started signing to me, and while I do not know American Sign Language I came to understand him quite clearly within that context. However, one cannot learn to blow glass by watching or through instruction; it is an embodied knowledge that can be learned only through practice.

When I’m glassblowing, nothing else exists to me but what I’m doing in the moment. The assault on my senses, the raging heat, the roar of the furnace, working in sync with a team, and attending closely to the glass and my body, all contribute to my experience of glassblowing as a meditative, mindful practice. In many ways, the experience of glassblowing was the first time that I felt I had a voice and a way to use it. The end result of my communication, if I have one, is not a written text, but it does have its own grammar that articulates a world for those who choose to learn the language.

</prosthesis>
The first medium I worked with as an artist was textiles, but after a number of years I sought out a medium that had a completely different flavor from anything I had ever experienced before. Glass was appealing to me for a few reasons: it is dangerous and exciting to work with; it straddles science, craft and art; not many people were working with glass; and because the studio glass movement had only been around since the 1960s, the 'field' was wide open to experimentation and doing things that had never been done before. My interest was in process and experimenting, and the potential for 'newness' with glass suited my tastes very well. I was drawn toward disability studies for some of the same reasons: it is interdisciplinary; it is a field of study that is not yet saturated; it hasn't been around for very long; and there is a lot of potential to experiment and thereby produce something unique with/in it. In short, the ability to experiment and the potential for 'newness' is of great importance to me and is part of the driving force behind what I choose to do in my life. One might say that I have a taste for the new.

what is becoming of me?
Graduate school proclaims itself to be a place where students are expected to break new ground, add something new to a discipline and be critical and original thinkers. However, that
isn't the whole story of my experience of un/becoming a graduate student. Lately I've noticed that I've been expending a lot of energy struggling between what I want to do with my scholarly work – experiment, be creative – and performing what I think is expected of me as a social sciences graduate student. While I love my classes, the people I study with and my department, everything isn't always comfortable nor necessarily creative.

Graduate school is competitive and it isn't uncommon for students to be ridiculed or even socially isolated for a performance deemed unbecoming: for saying the wrong thing; not understanding; proposing new ideas that haven't been completely thought through; not being quick enough; or for not already knowing. The looks of disdain, the meaningful glances and rolling eyes that circulate among the class when some people speak, and the quickness to cut them off while others can speak freely and at length; the retreat into separate corners of silence rather than continued dialogue and sociability after contentious issues erupt; these are enactments of intolerance for difference. Rather than staying open to difference in the meanings of what and how people say, those who are sure they are in the know too easily invert an opposing or untypical idea to make it mean that the 'sayer' is substandard or defective and then discard both as garbage. The risk of being created an unbecoming 'sayer' can factor into decisions about whether or not people will share ideas, ask questions, voice anything 'different' or invest themselves in an academic community or activist group. Moreover, it does not create an ideal milieu for 'thinking the new'.

As an MA student I've chosen to write in styles that I think may be more acceptable because I feel a need to prove to others that I can deliver more traditional academic writing. I would like to work more experimentally but I worry about producing work that is so different in format or style that it could be misunderstood or questioned as valid by those who sit on PhD selection juries. I find myself anxious about producing work of the right kind, at the right time. Because I'm wary of being perceived as producing work that is distasteful or unbecoming of a potential PhD student, I try to conform, to mold myself into the image of the capable graduate student. There's no doubt that I have insecurities, but I suspect that it's not an uncommon experience for graduate students to feel they must bend to the disciplining power of their chosen disciplines.

Academic disciplines consist of 'disciples' or students who are devoted to, or at least willing to follow, already instituted doctrines or teachings. While disciplines typically strive for new
advances and innovations, they also typically restrict scholars to using only the legitimized 'tools' of that discipline within an already prescribed purview. With the parameters for scholarly practices thus limited, so it seems is the potential for innovation. This disciplinary “regulating power” is described by Elizabeth Grosz (drawing on Foucault) as a power “which functions, if not to dampen and suppress the impetus to invention and newness, then at least to link it as firmly and smoothly as possible to that which is already contained” (1999, p. 16). For me, pressure to produce, perform, progress and conform, whether self imposed or demanded externally, is not conducive to experimenting, to thinking the new. For students, researchers and faculty who want academic appointments, promotions, tenure, grants or raises, there is a palpable imperative to mold oneself to whatever has already been determined to be acceptable – the norms of one's field of study. How, then, is it possible to create change?

Economic, social and cultural hierarchies are reflected in the structures of and boundaries that are circumscribed around both academia in general and fields of study such as disability studies. While disability studies scholars in Canada today (2012) are widely in agreement that disability is socially constructed through culturally enforced normative orders, disability studies is itself intent on delineating its own norms, which are reflected in the many declarations of what disability studies is/not and does/not. Even so, disability studies scholars are conscious of and try to be vigilant about not re-inscribing oppressive norms and inequitable practices in their work. This entails, for example, not using ableist language and not maintaining a hierarchy of disabilities in their research, writing and pedagogical practices. Yet that which is produced by disability studies scholars does at times contain the hierarchies and language which we seek to not reproduce. While hierarchies and marginalization are often on the tongues of many disability studies scholars, this is discussed not only in direct relation to the social positioning of disabled people, but also in relation to the 'marginalization' of disability studies and the desire for it to be legitimized as a full-fledged academic discipline. The irony of this 'marginalization' discussion lies in the (normative) conformation that already exists for disability studies as an already validated field of study, and the question of the degree of further conformation required for it to be deemed a discipline by academia. In Homo Academicus, Pierre Bourdieu described the university in this way:

...the university field is ... the locus of a struggle to determine the conditions and the criteria of legitimate membership and legitimate hierarchy, that is, to determine which properties are pertinent, effective and liable to function as capital so as to generate the specific profits guaranteed by the field. The different sets of individuals (more or less constituted into groups) who are
defining by these different criteria have a vested interest in them. In proffering these criteria, in trying to have them acknowledged, in staking their own claim to constitute them as legitimate properties... (1988, p. 11).

While Bourdieu’s sociology of universities was written in 1988, this characterization is still applicable today. Given the competitiveness of academia and that academia is itself structured hierarchically and in turn maintains a hierarchy of disciplines, it is difficult to imagine the possibility that within disability studies a hierarchy of authorities would not arise – authorities who control who has the knowledge, what kind of knowledge is valid, how knowledge can be attained, and who may disseminate that knowledge.

Our fields of study are already mapped out for us before our arrival. They are given to us already inscribed with taken-for-granted meanings and practices, and taken-for-granted ways of articulating them. Whether disability studies is validated as a field of study or a discipline, it is already incorporated into academia, and both disability studies and its scholars are already perpetuating academic, social and cultural norms in our everyday scholarly practices. How is it possible, then, to be creative and effect change when scholars continue to be restricted by the same limitations and the same practices that, in effect, typically do little more than reproduce more of the same? How is it possible to reveal or confront the subject that academia and disability studies require us to be? How do I as a disability studies scholar also repeat the same old things and how can I change? As Foucault established in *Discipline and Punish*, we are disciplined by institutions through ubiquitous, silent and invisible technologies or systems that repress us. Are we to be forever determined by these repressive forces, or is it possible to escape at least some of the disciplining of academia without leaving it? (de Certeau, 1984, p. xiii). These are the questions that animate this thesis.

Using an interpretive, integrative, embodied approach, I will address this knot of questions by exploring conceptions of knowledge and their relation to change. From a disability studies perspective, my intention is to model and interpret different conceptions of knowledge as they are mediated by various practices of knowledge production; thus my analytic interests are our everyday taken-for-granted practices, with a focus on the embodied and mediated elements of scholarly and language practices. There are two primary assumptions that ground this thesis. The first is that meanings are intersubjectively created, and the second is that embedded within a practice is a way of thinking that is grounded in the ideologies of the culture in which the practice is performed. This focus on practices is to call attention to how we do disability studies
– how we research, teach, learn, read and write – in order to emphasize our practices as both a form of consciousness and as action on the world that we can attend to as a way to better understand what we are doing and how we are doing it when we do disability studies.

the method is the message

At this point in a thesis a student would typically be expected to elaborate on their theoretical framework, methodology, methods, and all that other jargony 'stuff'. A student is typically required to submit a thesis proposal or outline that maps out that 'stuff' before being granted approval to begin the research. This mapping is itself a method, a way of working that is widely assumed to be the right and only way of proceeding with a thesis. It is so right for all students that it is written into the formal administrative procedures and forms that structure degree granting programs at many universities. This method of mapping everything out before proceeding is but one way that students are authored and their knowledge shaped by the academy before that knowledge is even produced. This method is not how I research and write, nor is it how I proceeded with this thesis.

The aforementioned terms, and the explanation of them in regard to a particular thesis, are a key characteristic of the thesis genre, and some would argue that it is not a thesis if those elements are either missing or not overtly discussed within the thesis. Genre is but another way that a student and their work are incorporated into the appropriate academic image. An essay, thesis, poem or any form of writing, is a fragment of the author that reflects their ideology and that of the culture they are writing within. This is embedded in the text but not just in what is stated, it is also embedded in how it is written, the style, type of language, genre and format. It's not uncommon to read academic writing that is filled with great ideas while the very language or form of the writing contradicts those ideas. Yet knowing that a text is of a particular genre creates expectations that, if they are not met, may cause the reader to be “pulled up short” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 270), with the consequence of misunderstanding or even outright dismissal of the text. Nevertheless, while it may be a risk, being “pulled up short” (ibid.) is something I desire for the reader and an important element of this text.

It may be antithetical to the notion of 'thesis' to declare that it should not be a requirement to discuss that 'stuff' in a thesis, yet that is my position. All of that 'stuff' should be apparent through reading the thesis itself and, if there are crucial elements of the thesis missing, surely it would not be published. It is condescending and redundant to spell it out for the reader.
Moreover, it's boring to read academic narratives that spoon-feed the reader, that 'guides' the reader how to read and interpret the text. Do academics need this 'guidance' or is this really a euphemism for prescription? In academic writing even redundancy is redundant. Throughout the text the author repeats many times over what has just happened and what will happen next. Is this redundancy due to an author's uncertainty about their ability to write or the ability of the reader to read, or is it simply a matter of following convention. Only in academia can you read a text where the plot, the mystery and whodunnit are all spelled out in the first few paragraphs – then again at the end of the text, and with aspects of it also reiterated at the beginning and ending of each section or chapter. It spoils the experience of reading. What's even worse is if I must do the same in my writing, which results in spoiling the enjoyment of writing a narrative that will unfold for the reader. Where is the creativity? This method of mapping out everything for the reader is a way to shape what the reader will think about the thesis, to predispose the reader to understanding the text in a predetermined way before they even read it. Therefore, for reasons that will become understood as this text progresses, it is antithetical to my thesis to map everything out prescriptively for the reader in advance.

Yet here I am, struggling in this moment with the requirements of writing a thesis and my own requirement to make what and how I practice congruent with what I believe and say. This is one of the themes woven throughout the text. I attempt to perform rather than just say what I understand. For example, I believe that reflexivity in scholarly practice is important for disability studies in order to create change. Thus I try to model that by reflexively questioning my practices or words, as a way to create the possibility for change in myself and the world by revealing my unwitting contradictions. Paulo Freire calls this praxis: a “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (2005, p. 51). He writes that the struggle for liberation from oppression “cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection” (p. 65). Thus this thesis can be read as a modest move toward liberation, as serious reflection, as action, and as theorizing. However, this matter can also be summed up differently and more simply by thinking about ethics as a practice; that is, ethics as a practice of acting on what one believes. This is another thread that runs through the thesis – an unspoken question of the ethics embedded in our scholarly practices. So, in a sense, I have a small ethical dilemma that I hope to allay by moving between what is traditionally required and what I think I should do.

Overall, this thesis is a dialogue and negotiation between perceived expectation and desiring,
scholarly convention and experimenting, theorizing and storytelling, representation and practicing. As such, it would be contradictory to adopt all of the characteristics of a single writing genre. Rather, this text moves between the personal narrative and thesis genres with a little experimenting and creativity added for spice. Thus this thesis is informed by and informs through personal narrative. That the form of this thesis is situated between, is as much about creating the thesis as a performative – an embodiment of the ideas that I state – as it is about my method. A thesis typically stands as a representation of what a student knows, as it is sliced off from their relationship to what and how they know. However, with the assumption that meanings are intersubjectively constructed, throughout the thesis I try to exemplify various relations to scholarly practices as I read, write and interpret. Thus I portray not the good graduate student who is confident in their knowledge, but a learner who is showing how meaning is made as it is being made, and then reflecting back on it in order to give a sense of the progression of thought and the process of knowledge creation as the thesis unfolds. There is a movement in the text – back and forth between story, analysis, interpretation, time and location – that echoes the movement of meaning making. Sometimes this is a smoothly narrated transition, but at other times a jarring sharp cut. These are an occasion for the reader to actively engage in the meaning making that these cuts are intended to imply, rather than dismiss them as a sign of lack. If the reader is jarred, good! It pleases me that a reader may encounter the unexpected or find it necessary to orient to reading (a thesis) differently. On the topic of reading, Francis Bacon wrote:

Read not to contradict and confute, not to believe and take for granted, not to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read, but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention (2002, p. 439).

My hope is that the reader will ‘chew and digest’ and in the end be satiated.

Throughout the thesis I use personal narrative as it relates to various aspects of a wider culture. Yet my method cannot be so simply characterized since it varies in order to get at different conceptions of knowledge. This can be considered a dialectic approach that may be better explained through the artist techniques of juxtaposition, assemblage, collage and montage, or perhaps even, as Michel de Certeau might suggest, “poaching” (1984, p. xii). This way of working can be better understood by reading the section in chapter two entitled <prologue> (p. 42 of this thesis). While the <prologue> is a detailed phenomenological description of my writing process, the description is also to be understood as fundamental to
my research method. However, what I understand as my method more than any other is the various forms of attention with which I engage the practices and objects of my analytic interests. I attend to them in relation to the body, senses, emotions or experience, a way of engaging that is not typical in academia, especially in terms of scholarly practice. Other forms of attention include reflexivity, mindfulness, close readings, textual analysis, and description.

The chapters in this thesis can be read alone; they do not depend on each other to make sense. Every chapter includes personal stories to ground the narrative and theorizing in experience, and each chapter also includes discussion of our practices as sites of sedimentation, discipline and resistance, to better understand how we as scholars can effect change. Throughout discussion of particular practices, I use a configuration of three theoretical concepts to reorient to change. The first of these is 'standpoint'. I don't use standpoint theory in this thesis, nor do I use any of the distinct flavors of the concept in the strict sense that others do. Drawing from Dorothy Smith (1990) and Donna Haraway (1988), I define standpoint as it is related to the idea that knowledge arises from a specific social context, a context that includes (often invisible) disciplinary cultural practices or environments. A standpoint is achieved through one's total experience of life including upbringing, education, religion, cultural influences, socio-economic status and other political positionings in society such as disability, gender or sexuality. Those experiences structure and shape a particular consciousness of the world that predisposes one to particular knowledge and understandings. This socially organized consciousness is the starting point from which a subject knows the world, thus I call it *standpoint from*.

The second concept is 'orientation' as it has been theorized by Sara Ahmed (2006) in *Queer Phenomenology*. Ahmed defines orientations as the ways in which we turn in the world to arrive at different conceptions of the world (p. 1). In addition, Ahmed explores how the things we repeatedly turn toward or use also act as "orientation devices" (p. 3). She writes: “Orientations shape not only how we inhabit space, but how we apprehend this world of shared inhabitation, as well as "who" or "what" we direct our energy and attention toward” (ibid.). Ahmed uses a phenomenological approach to theorizing orientation because phenomenology “emphasizes the importance of lived experience, the intentionality of consciousness, the significance of nearness or what is ready-to-hand, and the role of repeated and habitual actions in shaping bodies and worlds” (p. 2). Thus orientation emphasizes these same things and this makes it an ideal concept to think about practices and concepts of knowledge. Though Ahmed stresses that orientation may be changed, the form of the word as a noun implies that orientation could be
construed to be very much like standpoint in the sense that it is an already achieved state, and consciousness is already directed in a particular way. Thus I alter the concept a little to stress action in the moment by calling it reorienting to in order to emphasize that one was already oriented and now in the process of turning toward a different direction, although we may not always know what we are turning toward. Reorienting to suggests possibilities for choice and change that the concept of standpoint alone does not offer. As Ahmed's quote suggested about phenomenology, consciousness has intentionality in that it is always extended toward something. That is, consciousness and the object of consciousness do not exist alone but make each other in the same movement and moment. Therefore, consciousness is always consciousness of\(^1\), which comprises the third theoretical concept from which I draw.

*Standpoint from* emphasizes everyday experience and practices; *reorienting to* emphasizes habitual actions, how 'devices' orient, and possibility for change; and *consciousness of* emphasizes what we are conscious of in relation to what we can know. What I am working with is a specific configuration of these concepts that will move us through the exploration of particular practices and their relationship to conceptions of knowledge and change. Simply stated, there is a changeable trajectory that begins in one's *standpoint from*, that is shifted by *reorienting to*, which effects a difference in *consciousness of*. This configuration is reflected in the discussion of practices in each chapter, but I do not overtly discuss this configuration of concepts in each chapter. I simply include it here to give an accounting of my method.

Chapter One presents the body as the primary site of knowing in an introduction to practices through the ordinary practice of walking. This chapter has an existential orientation in that the focus is on consciousness as awareness of the world through the lived experience of the body. Thus different bodies and different experiences of the body can effect a different awareness. Through story, different experiences of walking are explored as they reflect a welter of contradictory cultural meanings of which bodies, walking and technologies are made. This chapter takes up Michel de Certeau's questioning of our habitual practices and Marshall McLuhan's ideas about pervasive environments that mediate how and what we know.

Chapter Two presents practices as ways of knowing. As mentioned, cultural values and ways of thinking are embedded within a practice. This chapter also stresses embodiment but moves to

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1 See the Preface and Introduction to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception.*
analysis of reading and writing as practices of scholarly production. By focusing on my relationship to reading and writing the discussion turns to unwitting contradictions, the limitations of conventions, and tactics of disciplinary resistance that can give rise to possibilities of new knowledge even within constraints. With each practice I attempt to show and explain how it is possible to make small shifts of orientation that may allow one to become differently conscious in order to effect the possibility for change. That which exists between a person and a practice is a phenomenon – an experience – and this is what I am trying to get at in the section entitled <prologue>. This is a phenomenological description of my writing process that also stands as explanation – a configuration of knowledge as description and writing as a way of knowing. The interpretation of reading and writing in this chapter is a demonstration of a key point which is that the only way we can experience the world is through our bodies, thus parts of this chapter are written in a manner to highlight this.

Chapter Three presents the practice of narrating as a way of knowing. I draw on Donna Haraway's (1988) article Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective (henceforth Situated Knowledges) which outlines the ongoing debate between objective knowledge and knowledge as relative. This in itself contributes to the discussion of conceptions of knowledge, but the aim of this chapter is to suggest that language is a situated knowledge with sedimented taken-for-granted meanings that we often unwittingly perpetuate in our language practices. My goal, as is Haraway's, is to show how changing a language practice such as a conventional metaphor can change a conception of the world. Thus my interest is in a close reading of Haraway's use of particular vision/knowledge metaphors in order to discuss knowledge as an intersubjective meaning making endeavor.

In chapter Four, I more directly address the notion of change and practices as they relate to disability studies. Drawing on Elizabeth Grosz and Tanya Titchkosky, I methodically explore the existential notion of becoming as it relates to disability and disability studies. This discussion moves from interpretation of the the word becoming, to disability studies as a reflexive practice of unbecoming, to the problematic of change, and reorienting to the new.
Chapter One

no body is neutral
on being, becoming and using a walker

We do not need theories so much as the experience that is the source of the theory.

R. D. Laing (Politics of Experience, 15)

An active line on a walk, moving freely, without goal. A walk for a walk's sake.

Paul Klee on drawing (Pedagogical Sketchbook, 16)

...since man took his first step, no one has asked himself why he walks, how he walks, if he has ever walked, if he could walk better, what he achieves in walking... questions that are tied to all the philosophical, psychological, and political systems which preoccupy the world.

Honoré de Balzac (Théorie de la Démarche, 7)

The body is our first orientation. Thus I begin this thesis with the body since it is the first context in which every one of our experiences of the world arises. The body is also the site of all of our practices and the site of all our meaning making. As the context for all experience, our experiences of our bodies must also form an integral aspect of how we understand, and what we understand and produce as knowledge. That is, our experience of our bodies forms a part of our standpoint or position from which we know the world. Thus this chapter is focused on consciousness as awareness of the world through the lived experience of the body, and is further focused by limiting discussion to that of the practice of walking. Through story, different experiences of walking are explored as they reflect the many different cultural meanings of which bodies, walking and technologies can be made. This chapter takes up Michel de Certeau's questioning of our habitual practices and draws on Marshall McLuhan's ideas about technologies and pervasive environments to flesh out the experience of walking as a mediated and mediating phenomenon. I begin with a description of an ordinary everyday experience of walking home from school.

walking home in the city
It was a beautiful, sunny and brutally cold winter day in Toronto. Caught up in thoughts about my studies, I got off the bus and proceeded to walk the rest of the way home.
Class was so good today... Edward Said, contrapuntal analysis...
   careful, slippery, cars coming, wait

...I love it when everyone is so into the discussion...
   green light, cross now

...contrapuntal analysis... new concept... interdependence, complementarity,
enmeshment...
   sunglasses on

...connections, overlapping, hybridity...
   heavy bag

...I wonder if the students heard that idea before...
   windy, pull hat down, scrunch neck into collar

...‘worlding’...

...chiasm... chiasmus?... chiasmic relationships... chiasmatic relationships?...
   fingers freezing, tuck hands into sleeves

...it’s funny... classmates consciously know there is no one right answer to the question
of disability...
   scoot around lady with stroller

...and they know our weekly readings are grounded in many different disciplines,
theories and approaches that offer different ways to think about disability...
   icy

...regardless, they often say things that indicate a desire to find that one right theory to
use to think about disability or that one right ‘solution’ to the ‘problem’ of the
'oppression' of people with disabilities...
   someone behind me?

...I have to remember that just because one way is right, that doesn't mean another way
is wrong... no sense in creating more binaries...
   a familiar shape, sparkling aluminum

What's that?... discarded crutches... cool!... nicer than the wooden ones I found a few
weeks ago... maybe this is a sign that I should proceed with the sculpture I'd been
thinking about...
   grab them

...I wonder what it's like trying to get around with crutches in the snow?...
   feeling of trepidation in my legs as I imagine slipping

...it must be so hard... and scary!
   so cold, hurry

My legs are freezing but my feet are toasty... love my new boots.
   slippery steps, key, open door

So glad to be home... I’m starving!
I propped the new crutches beside the others, shrugged off my coat and boots, ran up the stairs and made dinner. After eating I changed into pajamas and settled on the sofa, preparing to do some research and writing. I wrote a description of everything I could remember from my walk, however that only accounted for a few minutes and the actual walk was about fifteen minutes, so what did I do or think for the rest of the time? It’s impossible to know.

Often, perhaps even typically, when I walk in familiar areas or for mundane purposes I’m on autopilot. I am not conscious of walking, my body or surroundings. I might be thinking about my research, a conversation I had yesterday, making plans for whatever, deciding what to buy, and a myriad of other things. Even if while walking I was asked what I was thinking in the previous ten minutes, I’m unlikely to be able to relay exactly what those thoughts were. Yes, I’m attentive enough that I don’t bump into telephone poles or get hit by a car, but that is partially due to unconscious proprioceptive reflexes, one of the ways the body reads the world. Any thoughts I have about avoiding telephone poles are fleeting and in the background, if they are there at all. I walk in a state of what I call up in my head. Others might call it walking in a fog or ‘mindlessness’.

A couple of weeks later, again after class, I was anticipating the upcoming weeks that I would spend house-sitting for my parents. I had just finished the last of a round of research and was looking forward to starting new projects and slowing down my pace. I rushed around, paid some bills online, washed the dishes, grabbed my computer and tossed some clothes into a bag. I hurried out the door hoping to catch the next train. It was a warm evening and a light sprinkling of snow made everything look fresh and clean. Walking to the streetcar I was again up in my head, so I don’t know what I was thinking, but I do remember feeling my body full of tension and being determined to ignore the pain of carrying too much. The light turned green and as I crossed the street I noticed my foot start to slide in the snow. Bam! There was no thought, only pain. It filled my consciousness. I was pain.

Lying on the sofa several weeks later, my body faded into the background of my awareness and I was completely focused on the TV. Suddenly, a new pain of a quality I hadn’t yet experienced shot through me like an electric shock, bringing my foot into focus and shoving the sights and sounds of the TV into the background. The only thing I had managed to accomplish that week was the download of Big Brother UK 2006 and now I was being distracted from watching that! One would think that since I couldn’t go out I would be able to do a lot of research, or at least
put together my presentation of de Certeau’s (1984) *Walking in the City* for class. But I couldn’t concentrate; too much of my attention was drawn to my healing body. I needed to get some work done, so to improve my focus I attempted to practice mindfulness meditation\(^3\), the practice of intentionally attending to your body and mind, of “letting your experiences unfold from moment to moment and accepting them as they are” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 23). It is the paradoxical practice of 'non-doing' that “involves adopting a particular orientation toward one’s experiences in the present moment, an orientation that is characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance” (Bishop et al., p. 232). I tried to relax my muscles and still myself by focusing on my breath – but that lasted about ten minutes. My mind kept jumping from the pain to thoughts about paying attention while walking, to reminding myself to pay attention in this moment, to pain again, to trying to hurry myself toward mindfulness, and worrying about getting some work done... Remembering that occasion now makes me laugh, since the point of mindfulness is to stop trying to be productive and just be. At that time, letting myself just be was far from what I was doing. While I accepted the fact that healing would be slow and difficult, I berated myself for getting injured: “Why didn’t I pay more attention? Perhaps I wouldn’t have fallen if I hadn’t been so lost in thought. I should have been more present, more mindful, not ‘in my head’”.

As time passed, my body became less distracting and I was able to read *Walking in the City*. De Certeau begins with a 'vision as knowledge' metaphor, describing how a perspective of a scene looking down from above biases us to a "totalizing perspective", creating us as "voyeur-god" (p. 92). He writes:

> His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was "possessed" into a text that lies before one’s eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more (ibid.).


\(^3\) Mindfulness refers to a state of consciousness achieved through mindfulness meditation which is the practice of intentionally attending to your body and mind, of "letting your experiences unfold from moment to moment and accepting them as they are" (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 23). That is, mindfulness requires a suspension of judgment. “The basic idea [of a sitting mindfulness meditation] is to create an island of being in the sea of constant doing in which our lives are usually immersed, a time in which we allow all the 'doing' to stop” (p. 20). Mindfulness meditation is the paradoxical practice of 'non-doing' that “involves adopting a particular orientation toward one’s experiences in the present moment, an orientation that is characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance” (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 232).
One thing that de Certeau is suggesting is that whichever sense we are dominantly oriented to, it will allow us to understand only in a particular way and necessarily biases us in what we can know. So, while Western culture depends on the visual as our dominant way of knowing, the visual is tied to particular knowledge, hence this also paradoxically inhibits what we can know. That is, when any sense predominates over others, we are predisposed to being conscious of some things and not others.

De Certeau’s idea about sensual orientation reminds me of Marshall McLuhan’s notion of shifting sense ratios (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967, p. 41). McLuhan argues that when we repeatedly use a tool or medium it becomes an extension of ourselves. A medium emphasizes some bodily organs or functions (McLuhan, 1969) over others; it alters our sense ratios, shifts our perspective and essentially changes our whole world (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967, pp. 8, 41). He writes:

> Media, by altering the environment, evoke in us unique ratios of sense perceptions. The extension of any one sense alters the way we think and act – the way we perceive the world. When these ratios change, men change (p. 41).

McLuhan theorizes that when a particular bodily sense or organ is repeatedly stressed by a medium, this creates a pervasive environment and a “self-protective numbing of the affected area, insulating and anesthetizing it from conscious awareness”. He refers to this numbing as “Narcissus narcissis”; a “form of self-hypnosis”; “a syndrome whereby man remains unaware of the psychic and social effects” of a medium (McLuhan, 1969, para.18). He suggests that only by “standing aside from any structure or medium, that its principles and lines of force can be discerned. For any medium has the power of imposing its own assumption on the unwary. Prediction and control consist in avoiding this subliminal state of Narcissus trance” (1964, p. 15). McLuhan traces the cause of Western ocularcentrism to the creation of the medium of written language and the widespread distribution of texts made possible by invention of the printing-press (1962). Whatever the cause of this bias, many theorists including de Certeau have been critical of Western ocularcentrism.

In *Walking in the City*, de Certeau emphasizes vision from above, criticizing that vantage point as one that alienates the viewer from the messy everyday practices of the ordinary people on

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4 For a full explanation of the concept, see The Gadget Lover, pp. 41-47 of *Understanding Media*. McLuhan 1964.

5 A worldview that privileges vision over all other senses and ways of knowing.
the ground (1984, p. 93). Rejecting the “totalizing eye” as a fiction that gives us the illusion of the world as a transparent text, de Certeau contrasts the everyday practices on the ground to “visual, panoptic or theoretical constructions” (ibid.). Setting aside our dominant visual orientation, he moves analysis from subjects to practices, making a case for walking as an alternative orientation. Speaking both metaphorically and literally, de Certeau suggests that an everyday embodied experience of walking can be resistant to the dominant scopic regimes of knowing/being; thus through walking we can attain different knowledge. Yet it is difficult to imagine that the mundane practice of walking could make any kind of difference at all. In the description of my walk home from school, walking is a habitual activity in which I typically don't think about the positioning of my feet, notice the feel of contracting muscles, or pay attention to how the ground feels with each step. What this brings to mind is Marcel Mauss' work on 'body techniques'.

Mauss (1979) determined that the ways we learn to move – walk, swim, eat, dance, etc., – are shaped by the societies we live in (p. 98). Introduced by Mauss and expanded by Pierre Bourdieu, body techniques, hexis and habitus refer to “the ways in which from society to society men know how to use their bodies” (p. 97). Mauss considered body techniques to be a result of individual or collective unconscious thought, rather than merely due to repetition (p. 101), and surmised that there may be no “natural way” to move the body (p. 102). These embodied practices of culture include pervasive, normative, unconscious habits, thoughts, traditions, skills, practices, styles and disciplines of the body that are entrenched in a particular group.

Mauss considers the body to be “man's first and most natural instrument. Or more accurately, not to speak of instruments, man's first and most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means, is his body” (p. 104). Using McLuhan's theories as a tool to think this through, we can extend Mauss' reasoning by extending our understanding of tool, technology or medium by defining them in a loose and broad sense. McLuhan's point was about mediation, so whatever mediates between oneself and the world could be considered a technology. Thus the body, an institutional environment, language, or a particular practice such as walking, can be understood as a 'technology' that mediates how we understand and know the world. If, as Mauss suggests, walking is an unconscious habitual use of the body, and if, as McLuhan suggests, this habitual use creates a state of 'Narcissus narcissosis' (1969, para. 18) or an unawareness of the implications of our habitual practices, how then can reorienting to walking be any better than our habitual use of vision?
What de Certeau is advocating for is a reorienting to the spatial through movement that would require *directing attention to* kinaesthetic, proprioceptive, tactile and haptic senses. While we are walking we are in a space of between-ness, neither here nor there. We are not at a starting point or an end destination but in a process that implies a directed moving around, away from and especially toward, while in the midst of things. Walking is a trajectory of movement in space that unfolds over time (1984, p. 35). Thus this is not a matter of simply walking in a habitual, taken-for-granted manner as I did when walking home from school, but of being mindful of walking and all that it entails. In effect, this sensual reorienting away from the visual could create a reorganization of sense ratios that would effect a change in one's consciousness of the world such that one awakens from what McLuhan characterizes as “Narcissus narcosis” (1969, para. 18), enabling the production of different knowledge.

From a vantage point above, de Certeau reasons, roads and paths are representations that “only refer, like words, to the absence of what has passed by” (1984, p. 97). This is a translation of action into representation that “causes a way of being in the world to be forgotten” (ibid.). Rather than a representation created by and for vision, walking is a practice, a way of moving in the world that speaks or writes ourselves and our spaces. De Certeau is critical of the use of vision from above as a metaphor for knowledge, implying that it is a myth, only a representation that is disconnected from a way of being. Using the metaphor of 'walking as speech act' (ibid.), de Certeau defines walking as “a space of enunciation” (p. 98). Describing walking in a city, he writes:

Their story begins on ground level, with footsteps. They are myriad, but do not compose a series. They cannot be counted because each unit has a qualitative character: a style of tactile apprehension and kinesthetic appropriation. Their swarming mass is an innumerable collection of singularities. Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together. In that respect, pedestrian movements form one of these 'real systems whose existence in fact makes up the city'. They are not localized; it is rather they that spatialize (p. 97).

De Certeau seems to be in agreement with Mauss, that practices are the result of entrenched collective unconscious thought, when he writes that our practices are the “acting-out” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 98) of disciplinary systems; they are “a way of thinking invested in a way of acting” (p. xv). Yet in the above description de Certeau does not lump all walkers together in a homogeneous mass but, rather, walkers are a “collection of singularities”. Elaborating on this, de Certeau writes:

Walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc., the trajectories
it "speaks." All the modalities sing a part in this chorus, changing from step to step, stepping through proportions, sequences, and intensities which vary according to the time, the path taken and the walker. These enunciatory operations are of an unlimited diversity (p. 99).

The idea of ways of walking as ways of speaking oneself in the world is refreshing and exciting. On the other hand, there is the reality of being too different in a world that respects only the same. Speaking and behaving differently is not something that is always beneficial in the academic world. Yet I am all for trying new things and for reorienting to become differently conscious, and I support the theory behind what de Certeau espouses. Thus the discussion now turns to consider a small collection of singularities of walking. When I first read Walking in the City I never considered the implications for me with my new mobility impairment. This is the path that this story will now walk.

walking with the city

'Walking' down the flight of stairs to my front door by sliding down on my butt, like I did as a child, puts a big smile on my face. I love it! That's a good thing, because it's the only way I can get down now. Those who've seen me do this smile too, but the weird thing is that this is considered an acceptable practice only because I have a mobility impairment. If it is acceptable and even fun for people who are impaired, shouldn't it also be acceptable for people who are not? A contributing factor to this acceptance is that I do it in the privacy of my home. I imagine if I chose to slide down the stairs on my butt instead of using the elevator in the OISE building, at best people would just continue to treat me like I'm inappropriate or different, and at worst I would be forbidden from doing so because it was 'dangerous' or 'inappropriate', considering an elevator was available. Either way, it would be considered unbecoming behavior. Several times I've seen people crawl up the stairs of the streetcar, dragging or shoving their wheelchairs, walkers or crutches up with them. Others offered to help and no one objected to this manner of boarding the streetcar as inappropriate behavior, yet there was an air of discomfort, and I had the sense that passengers were being 'tolerant' toward disability. But I digress. Once I'm down the stairs, I hop on one foot as I wrestle the folded walker (a mobility device) out the front door.

I live in Toronto, near a park, on a pretty, quiet residential street. It was a beautiful, sunny spring afternoon and I was alone on the sidewalk, ready to start my first walk with a walker to 'somewhere'. I reached for it, dragging it toward me with one hand. I leaned toward it extending my other arm, then grabbed and squeezed both the handles and brakes. Orienting
the walker around my body, and orienting my body within the center of the walker, I shifted my weight onto my shoulders, arms, hands and the walker, as I regained my balance. The walker surrounded three quarters of my body, creating a visual and spatial delineation between myself and all else. I felt the metal touching my hips, determining the boundaries within which I must stay. Releasing the brakes, I pushed the walker forward, braked and transferred most of my weight onto my wrists, arms and shoulders as I stepped forward with my injured right foot. Then I took a quick step with my left foot, shifting all my weight onto that leg.

In the following description the small script is intended to be read as thoughts or feelings that occurred simultaneously with the regular text directly below it. For example, every time I stepped with my right foot, my experience was punctuated by pain (ouch!, oww!).

--- brakes off/push forward/brakes on/shift weight onto shoulders/right step/

    oh dear    oh no!

    ahhh

    quick left step/shift weight onto left leg/

--- brakes off/push forward/brakes on/shift weight onto shoulders/right step/

    have mercy!    ow!

    ahhh

    quick left step/shift weight onto left leg/

--- brakes off/push forward/brakes on/shift weight onto shoulders/right step/

    geez!    yoww!

    ......!    trees budding! bulbs coming up, it's spring!

    quick left step/shift weight onto left leg/rest/

--- brakes off/push forward/brakes on/shift weight onto shoulders/right step/

    ......!    oof!

    bleh, cat pee!    ......!

    quick left step/shift weight onto left leg/

--- brakes off/push forward/brakes on/shift weight onto shoulders/right step/

    The air is sweet, it smells like spring!    Wrist cracking!    ......!

--- brakes off/push forward/brakes on/shift weight onto shoulders/right step/

    Tired already!    Fifty birds on those vines! So loud!

    quick left step/shift weight onto left leg/rest/
While continuing to walk, some of my thoughts were as follows:

- my hands are bruised
- the air is clear; it’s so easy to breathe
- pain is always changing
- what a cool plant; the leaves are so unique
- are those birds mating or fighting?
- shoulders ache so bad
- those boulders have big shell fossils
- sweating
- ice-pick stabbing pains
- there’s a hawk circling over the park!
- a big blister on my palm

I’d been forced to slow down and was walking at a snail’s pace. If I didn’t focus on walking I would fall, so I was being very deliberate in my movements. I could feel walking acutely in my bones and muscles; especially my hands, arms and shoulders. Because I was moving so slowly and stopping for breaks, I became much more aware of my environment. Any thoughts I had were in response to sensory stimuli from either my body or immediate environment. I was intently focused on the mechanics of walking and the feeling of my body when I suddenly
realized how unburdened I felt. My head was clear and I had a sense of lightness in my body. How did that happen? Colors seemed brighter, smells seemed stronger and the air pressed on my skin harder. Well, okay, it wasn’t the colors, smells or air that suddenly changed but my reorienting to them that altered my consciousness of them. And as my consciousness of the world changed, so did my relation to pain. I still had as much pain but it was somehow different and, paradoxically, it added to or punctuated my experience. I had no thoughts about research, school, the past or the future. There was no theorizing, ruminating, problem solving, planning or worries. I was completely present in the moment. I was simply being. I was practicing a mindfulness walking meditation and I wasn’t even trying! Jon Kabat-Zinn writes that, “When we practice walking meditation, we are not trying to get anywhere. It is sufficient to just be with each step, realizing that you are just where you are. The trick is to be there completely” (1990, p. 115). That was exactly what I was doing and I felt great. This change in my state of consciousness was provoked by the change in my body. This experience seems to give credence to de Certeau’s call for an embodied experience of walking that supports a different way of knowing/being; a way that flies in the face of a totalizing scopic regime.

Thus far I have given two accounts of walking that are very different from each other. In my first description of walking home from school, while I may have been in the city I was unaware of it. While I was busy in my head, my mind’s eye did not imagine or see the city from above or below – I didn’t imagine or see it at all. I was unconscious of the city; it was an unconnected entity. This first example could be called ‘mindless walking’ and can be characterized as being lost in reverie, walking around in a fog, distracted, lacking awareness of what’s going on around me. In my second description of walking, I was very attuned to my surroundings, I heard, felt and saw a lot more and the experience was more pleasant. There was no conceptualizing or imagining of the city, rather there was an experiencing of it in a very connected manner. The second example, while it is written large with pain, is ‘mindful walking’ and is characterized by an openness to the world and an orientation to the present moment with an acceptance of things just as they are. One’s choice in manner of walking could be the choice between walking ‘in’ the city or walking ‘with’ the city, a differentiation in how we orient to walking and the city. I

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Mindfulness meditation has become a mainstream therapeutic device advocated and prescribed by western health care practitioners. The basic training of mindfulness is offered by all sorts of therapists and through many hospital programs, primarily as a means to manage pain, for depression relapse prevention, and more recently for treatment of addictions. While this western version of mindfulness has been proven to be very effective, it is paradoxical in that in traditional Eastern practices of mindfulness one is not supposed to try to achieve anything whereas in the western version it is used for therapeutic reasons such as pain management.
will return to a discussion of these two examples of walking again later. For now, let us relegate those experiences of walking to the background in order to reorient to my interactions with people during this same occasion of walking. While de Certeau suggested walking as a mode of reorienting away from the dominant visual orientation, my experiences of walking were also punctuated by the visual, although as the stories show, there is a difference in how I was oriented to the visual.

**watching with the city**

I was sitting on a low rock wall, taking a break in front of a neighbor's house when a young father came out of the house and loaded his child into a 'stroller'. As they were leaving their front gate he said to me, “Slow recovery?” I smiled and nodded. He responded, “Yah, I saw you trying to walk down the street yesterday”, he smiled and strolled away. I didn't see him see me yesterday. What did he mean by *trying* to walk? I was walking.

A number of times I noticed in my peripheral vision that someone was watching me walk through the park. I watched them watch me for a while, curious about their curiosity, but when I turned toward them they quickly turned away as if they weren’t watching. They denied me a reciprocal exchange of acknowledgment that instead made me a thing to watch. A school bus slowly rolled up to a stop sign and stopped. I sensed a lot of eyes turned my way, watching me traverse the path through the park. I looked over at the teenagers, they continued to watch, and I continued to walk. Their watching was collective; they were ‘comrades-in-eyes’\(^8\). I looked over again and they were still watching me, the spectacle. There didn’t seem to be any judgment, just curious watching. I looked over a third time and a couple of girls gave me a friendly wave, so I waved back. This was funny. I had become someone who was waveable. I didn’t understand the wave. Who do you wave at? Some people, mostly children, wave at clowns in the circus and Santa Claus. People wave at celebrities, friends, taxis, the man in the caboose, the pope, babies and mounted police. I wasn’t any of those things, so what made me waveable? Someone suggested that because I was an adult who was moving extremely slowly that the teens perceived me as having time to wave back, making me approachable. If I was at a complete standstill, enjoying the sun but without a visible disability, would they have perceived me as ‘approachable’ and waved? I doubt it. Perhaps my appearance of vulnerability, as signified by my snail's pace gait and the walker, caught their attention, but I wonder if their

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\(^8\) A term suggested by Tanya Titchkosky.
friendly wave was more an acknowledgment of my disability or even, perhaps, attributable to pity. I really don’t know. One thing the wave did do was to act as a sign that they were aware that they were watching me and an acknowledgment that they were watching me, thus there was a reciprocity that the covert stares did not allow.

If my life were less solitary my new experience of being seen may have been different, but suddenly people, nice people, kind people, were talking to me and I quite enjoyed that. There was little indication that I was noticed before and at times I felt quite invisible. Walking with a walker somehow made me visible. I now appeared as a neighbor to some of my neighbors. I know that I’ve become highly visible because people were watching me all the time, yet sometimes invisibility and visibility paradoxically existed together when I turned to meet a person’s gaze and they looked away. It was an unusual experience to be recognized through my act of walking with a walker.

the importance of progress
As I walked, a woman dressed in exercise clothing and her limping dog (who looked at my walker wistfully) marched into the street to pass around me. A while later, I saw them again, and as they passed by she said to me, “Good job! (The dog looked at her, tail wagging.) Just be sure to take lots of breaks”’. Surprised, I turned to watch them march away, noticing that the dog was struggling to keep up but the lady seemed oblivious. Why did she say that? I didn’t know her and had never seen her before. People who don’t know each other don’t typically speak to each other in passing. What allowed her to speak to me? Perhaps the walker identified me as someone who was vulnerable, not a threat, and therefore approachable, but there is more to it than that. Instead, my interpretation is that she read my manner of walking with a walker as a sign that I was exercising for the purpose of rehabilitation. Both this lady and the notion of rehabilitation assume that there is a better state for me to strive for (Michalko, 1998, p. 66). This creates a default status for someone doing rehab (me) to “less than” (1998, p. 67). For this lady, my walking with a walker manifested me as someone who needed encouragement and advice. That she acted on that by giving me her encouragement and advice manifests her as an authority who must help me, thereby cementing our positions in the hierarchy between us. What fascinates me is that it didn’t occur to this woman that maybe this was the way I’ve always walked or that I always will walk. I was interpellated as someone who was doing rehab and therefore “less than” (ibid.) regardless of whether I was doing rehab or not. Part of the 'mechanics’ of her making the assumption that I was trying to return to a former (better) state
is that in mainstream Canadian culture it is understood that one must try not to be disabled, and that disability is not a valid space of existence. Rehabilitation is all about making ‘progress’ so that one can be a productive member of society, and remaining ‘broken’ or ‘defective’ is not a viable option. One must progress toward ‘the good life’ and disability is not that (ibid.).

Moving on from that particular occasion of walking to walking elsewhere, the importance of ‘progress’ remained but my experience of walking was different depending on the technology I used to assist me. I’ve had limited experience wheeling about in public with a wheelchair. However, I have learned that in a wheelchair I am either highly visible or completely invisible. People either go out of their way to be helpful or friendly or they are completely oblivious and block my path. There doesn’t seem to be any middle ground. Because of my limited experience with a wheelchair, this discussion will proceed with the devices I’m more familiar with.

Compared to a walker, crutches can be held quite close and in vertical alignment with the body. In public spaces, the amount of space maintained between my body with crutches and other folks remains the same as when I never needed crutches. However, while my experience of using crutches is that they act as an extension of my body, others do not perceive them that way. People often get too close to them and I’ve been tripped several times. While crutches can be quite compact a walker, on the other hand, extends further away from the body in a horizontal direction, and on typical narrow residential sidewalks this makes passing by awkward because it requires others to move quite close to me. Consequently, I find myself quite conscious of trying to make others feel more comfortable by moving to the side and, strangely, trying to take up as-little-room-as-possible in order to maintain social norms of personal space. Not surprisingly, there is definitely not enough room for two people with walkers or most other mobility devices to walk beside each other or to pass by. While I feel the walker becomes an extension of my body, others seem to perceive it that way too and, though I am much less likely to be tripped with a walker as opposed to crutches, people keep their distance. It is not unusual for those approaching me while I use a walker to step off the sidewalk and into the street to walk around me (and parked cars). While the walker is somewhat adjustable to different bodies and can be raised or lowered according to the height of the user, it cannot be adjusted for stairs or different sidewalk widths. While the walker and the user may be oriented toward each other, they cannot be oriented to a space if it fails to orient to them (Ahmed, 2006,

\[\text{While the area I live in was built during an age when people with walkers and wheelchairs were not expected to go out for walks, I wonder if newly developed neighborhoods are being built with wider sidewalks.}\]
The sidewalk is of a width that, rather than getting close, many people who want to pass by feel that walking in the street is a better option than getting close. This failure of the space to orient toward me has subsequently created a social milieu whereby others are prone to become not oriented toward me, but rather around me.

At this point my foot was not weight bearing and I had difficulty with pain in my rotator cuffs and my 'good' foot, thus I varied my mode of mobility between using crutches, using a walker, and sometimes using a rolling office chair. One lesson I quickly learned was that because I had a mobility impairment my ability to carry things was also impaired. Because my arms and hands suddenly became an extension of my legs when I used a mobility device to walk, I could not use my hands in the way I was accustomed. I learned this in the first five minutes after arriving home from the hospital when I wanted a glass of water while using crutches. What a comedy that was! Carrying things was a real problem and not something I ever would have considered in relation to a mobility impairment before this experience. Thus my favorite mode of moving around was my rolling office chair. I could push myself around with one leg, although facing backwards; it was relatively compact; I could move quickly; it was much safer than using a walker or crutches (I kept falling while using them); it didn't give me blisters on my palms or hurt my shoulders; I didn't have to hop on my painful 'good' foot; and best of all, I still had the use of my hands. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau (1984) explores people's agential tactics of appropriating, adapting, re-using or subverting dominant cultural practices to suit their own agenda (p. xiii). The use of my chair in this manner and bumping down my steps on my butt are what de Certeau would call 'tactics'. Disabled people are ingenious tacticians. These tactics, says de Certeau, make it possible to work and live within unworkable and uninhabitable spaces "by reintroducing into them the plural mobility of goals and desires – an art of manipulating and enjoying" (p. xxii). I loved my office chair as a way to get around, but I only ever used it at home. Propriety dictated that I use 'proper' technologies for 'walking' when I was in public.

I wasn't able to return to school for several weeks, but I was, ironically and luckily, taking a disability studies class with Tanya Titchkosky. Tanya and my classmates were committed to accessibility and they collectively brainstormed possibilities for me to continue participating as part of the class. Tanya was soon shocked to learn from her inquiries to the 'proper' departments that, as big as the University of Toronto is, there was no system already in place for such an inevitability – to make the remote participation of a student in a class remotely
possible. I am unsure of all that creating such a system entailed, but through some wrangling Tanya managed to re-locate the class. I didn't have to walk but my classmates did – to a very comfortable, specially designed, video-conferencing room with an enormous video screen, plush lounge chairs, microphones all over the room, and a technician who was ready and willing to broadcast the class to me. This room was not intended for classes but it was appropriated by our class, a tactic that made the class habitable for us all. This tactic created us all as cyborgs, transformed me into a giant talking head and the voice of God, and it enabled me to finish my studies – I am so lucky and feel very grateful for all who were willing to act on their convictions.

I was away from school for several weeks and on my first day back my choice of walking technique consisted of hopping with a walker. The second week my choice of technique was crutches, and upon entering the class I was greeted by someone who commented, “It’s so nice to see that you’re no longer using the walker”. My classmate then proceeded to tell me that a mutual acquaintance who had been injured a month before me had “not been making any progress at all” and was still hopping around with a walker, “It’s so nice to see you making progress”. The following week on entering the classroom I was walking with a walker again but no longer hopping. This time my classmate was initially puzzled, but then made a friendly attempt to encourage me by stating, “Somani! Are you bearing some weight on your foot now? That’s great, you are really progressing along”.

Depending on which mobility device I use, people react to and treat me differently. Crutches, office chairs, wheelchairs, canes and walkers require me to reorient to the world and the world reorients to me when I use different devices too. Different mobility devices have different meanings for people. One of the first things that was said to me on my return to school was, “You're using that old person's thing”, in reference to my walker. It was said in a teasing friendly way and was not meant to be hurtful, but I constantly felt like I needed to justify why I used certain devices, though I rarely did. Once when I was walking down the street carrying my crutches instead of using them, some acquaintances passed by snickering. I wanted to explain that while I didn't need the crutches this moment in a few hours I would – other times I used crutches so that I wouldn't have as much pain later. Another time I sensed that classmates thought I wanted pity because I seemed to walk well enough without the cane I often had with me. It was true, much of the time I didn't need the cane to walk unless I had a lot of pain, but it assisted me immensely in the subway train as a sign that I needed a seat since I didn't have the balance or the stamina to remain standing while the train was moving. These are examples
of how different mobility devices mean different things to people, and how those meanings had
an effect on me.

My classmate’s remarks are also revealing of those different meanings. There was a tacit
understanding that the meaning of progress was a move toward walking ‘normally’. Further, it
was taken-for-granted that I was not ‘normal’ now, that I would want to make progress toward
‘normal’, and that I can make progress. That is, it was assumed that the status of my disability
can and would change to at least become closer to ‘normal’. My classmate marked me as
someone who needed to make progress and that progress toward normal was understood to be
a very good thing. The implication is that in the order of progress crutches are a step up from a
walker in that they are used when one is closer to the status of ‘normal’. Therefore, crutches
are more ‘normal’ than a walker and thus a walker must be more ‘deviant’ than crutches. In
people’s minds there is a hierarchy of mobility devices based on how close to normal those
devices are perceived to be. In effect, a walker is imbued with more disability than crutches are.
My classmate was invested in the idea of me being normal, was surveilling my progress,
measuring me against norms, and my manner of walking was a marker of my relationship to
normal.

not-walking with the city
My friend Kate came by my place for a visit and now that my cast was off she wanted to take
pictures of my scars. So, I slathered on lots of moisturizer to make them look ‘nice’ and she
took a few shots for possible future use in an art project. The following week another friend
picked up Kate and myself to go out for dinner. Kate suggested we park ‘here’ because the
restaurant was close by. When we asked her the exact location she indicated it was “just down
the street”. After reminding her that I was walking with the walker that was folded up beside
her, we found a parking spot closer to the restaurant and I then proceeded to slowly make my
way toward it with the walker. Before long I was sitting on the walker’s seat with my friends
pushing and pulling me to our destination. This was not how a walker was intended to be used,
but this tactic was certainly more effective. When we arrived, Kate walked ahead and cleared
some chairs out of the way to enable me to get through with the walker.

Part way through the meal Kate asked me, “When are you going to get that thing off your leg”?
I reminded her that I already had the cast removed and that she had taken pictures of my
scars. “Oh yah”, she replied, and we continued with other conversation. Later she asked, “When
are you going to start walking?" "I am walking", I said in surprise. "Well, when are you going to start walking normally?" "I don't know", was my ambiguous, honest response. How did it happen that even though Kate had seen me walking she could ask me when I was going to start walking? I am very aware of walking, I am walking like I have never walked before, aware of it like never before, walking deliberately and fully embodied like never before, and I am feeling it in every part of my being. How could I be walking, yet not walking? How ironic.

It was puzzling at first, but I made the realization that somehow Kate did not consider what I was doing now to be walking. Just like the lady with the limping dog, Kate associated the walker with the process of rehabilitation. When Kate couldn’t argue that I was not walking, she then qualified her question by asking when I was going to start walking ‘normally’. Since rehabilitation’s goal is to achieve ‘full range of motion’ and ‘normal’ walking, my way of walking is only ever perceived in relation to how I walked before the accident or, if you didn’t know me before, it was compared to what is understood to be ‘normal’ walking. Thus my current mode of walking is always perceived as abnormal or ‘less than’ and not legitimate walking or real(ly) walking at all. Even though I am learning what is for me a ‘new’ way to walk, because rehabilitation assumes that there was an originary walk that came before my new way of walking and which must be restored, how I walk now cannot be regarded as original. My new way of walking is ‘invalid’ because it is not the normal-originary way of walking.

One would expect that a walker (the assistive device) would signify walking, but for strangers and close friends alike, a walker signifies to them that I am someone who does not walk because walking is not counted as walking unless it is ‘normal’ walking. I am what I call a ‘not-walker’. Let me explain this term. To say “I am not a ____” refers to what I am not. It implies a negative, lack, or absence. But what if I said, “I am a not-____”? This speaks to what I am. It implies a positive, a something, or a presence. Using this ‘logic’, if I say that I am a ‘not-walker’, I don’t mean to say that I don’t walk. I do walk and, as described, there is a fullness to my experience of walking – yet my walking is being negated by others who don’t perceive me as walking at all. They perceive a lack that does not exist and try to fill it with a lack, a negative or a diss. But it cannot be filled because it is already overflowing with ‘something’. What is there is actually a fullness not a lack, and in this example it is brimming over with walking. Therefore, they can only map something onto the surface of the lack-that-is-full, making it into a sign of, for example, abnormality. The walker, my mobility device, gets mapped onto the surface of my being as a sign of ‘not walking’ and my understanding of that process is that I am a ‘not-
walker’. For Kate it was never a question of if I would be able to walk ‘normally’ again, but a question of when I would. In her mind there was no space for even the possibility of me remaining ‘not normal’ – disabled.

mindlessness and mindfulness

Before concluding, let us revisit the two descriptions of walking presented earlier in this chapter. De Certeau (1984) suggests that lived experience from the ground such as that of walking in the city can give us far different knowledge than a view from above that creates a conception or representation of the city. But what kind of lived experience? The kind where I am oblivious to what’s going on around me because my consciousness is of thoughts about school, my work and conceptualizing and I am so unaware of the sights, sounds, smells and other sensual stimuli of my environment that I fall? Or the kind where I’m mindful of surroundings and sensory experience in the moment, as exemplified by my second description of walking?

In my characterization of my first walk home from school I used the terms ‘unaware’ and ‘unconscious’, the meaning of each word referring to a lack or a negative – a lack of awareness or a lack of consciousness. I equated those words with mindlessness, walking around in a fog, being half aware or tuned out and operating like a machine (autopilot). None of these words are a positive way of describing that walk. Implicit in my words are judgments that that manner of walking or being is ‘bad’; thinking about work all the time is ‘bad’, attending to something that’s not happening this moment is ‘bad’; not paying enough attention to our bodies is ‘bad’; letting the mind dominate over the body is ‘bad’; and one could suggest that there was an unspoken assumption that my manner of walking constituted a mind/body disconnect that is ‘bad’. To sum it up, I made the assumption that being mindful of is ‘good’ and not being completely aware of one’s surroundings and/or body by being ‘mindless’ is ‘bad’. I also characterized these ways of walking as two very separate ways of being, but is that really true?

To answer that is to attend to the interaction between one’s mind, body and attention as we go about our daily living. For example, in the first description of walking, my consciousness was fluid, moving from thoughts about class to thoughts about how cold I was, the crutches on the ground, traffic, my warm feet, the person standing behind me, etc. While it seemed that most of my consciousness was directed to internalized thoughts, there is no doubt there was awareness of my body and surroundings such that I could walk, notice how I felt and notice what was going on around me, at least to some degree. In the second description of walking
my consciousness was also fluid, moving from pain, to the mechanics of walking, to the sounds, sights and smells of my environment, to the realization and conceptualization of my experience as being mindful, etc. While most of my consciousness was of the present moment, there was definitely a dialogue going on in my head about my experience.

It’s a good thing that when we are thinking about the grocery list and start to slip we instantly switch our focus back to our bodies in order to try to prevent a fall. On the other hand, going on ‘autopilot’ frees me up to work out solutions, make plans, and analyze concepts while I am doing mundane activities such as vacuuming or walking home from school, and that’s a good thing too. Letting awareness of my body and/or my environment fade into the background allows me to focus on reading, research, a TV show or talking on the telephone. I can touch type without thinking about what my fingers are doing, keeping my focus on the thoughts I am trying to capture. It may be unpleasant, but it’s useful to have pain that tells us to take care of ourselves. The body cannot completely dominate the mind – try meditating and attending to your wandering thoughts if you doubt this. Likewise, the mind can’t completely dominate the body either, as illustrated when the body interjects with its needs all the time – hunger, pain, need for warmer clothing. Thus it appears that my assumptions were wrong and that not being completely conscious of one’s surroundings and/or body can be a good thing. So-called ‘mindless’ walking is in actuality as legitimate a mode of walking and being as mindful walking and mindfulness. One might even say that mindlessness has as much fullness of being and knowing as mindfulness, just as disability has as much fullness of being and knowing as not-disability.

It is common to hear people reify things such as mindfulness, embodied learning, arts informed research or whatever else may be new to them or currently popular in their discipline; I do so myself. It is also common to hear of other things that are trashed in comparison to those that are reified. But these characterizations are a trap that create dichotomies that lull us into believing myths. Whether we visualize or conceptualize from above or below, walk mindlessly or mindfully, the effect is that of different orientations that predispose us to how and what we can perceive and know. They are but examples of a myriad of possible orientations that can affect our consciousness of the world. In the first description of my walk home from school, one of my thoughts was, “I have to remember that just because one way is right, that doesn’t mean another way is wrong... no sense in creating more binaries...”. Mindlessness and mindfulness, two manners of walking/being, do not need to be held in opposition to each other. Holding
together what seems to belong apart, resisting accepting only one as right and rejecting the other as wrong, allows them to be analyzed *with* each other and with de Certeau’s and McLuhan's ideas.

While I can't say that my experience of the world of mobility impairment has all been wonderful, it has been a rich, productive, full experience. Disability is always considered to be a problem, a lack, a deficit, or a negative, and there is always an assumption that it is an encumbrance or burden. My experience has forced me to focus on my body, my environment and walking, and this has led me to feeling more present and less burdened. It’s enabled me to quiet my mind, allowing for a more embodied experience of walking and being. Disability has enriched my perception, and awakened me to things that I didn’t know were there, and pain – at least when I am in a mindful state – has in some ways made me more open to the world.

The conception of knowledge stressed throughout this chapter is that the body is a primary site of knowing and knowledge; we have knowledge through the lived experience of our bodies and we can know through such mundane practices as walking and looking. Even within one person there are a myriad of possibilities for walking and attending to walking. Walking itself as a technology or technique had a powerful effect on me that altered my consciousness to give me different understandings of the world, depending on how I was oriented to walking. There is a very close connection between one’s experience of the body and one’s consciousness of the world and even without an intention to reorient oneself to walking, a change in the body or a practice can mean a shift in consciousness. That is, different bodies and different experiences of the body can effect a different awareness, thus *what* we know is mediated by our bodies and the technologies we use to extend our bodies. As Marshall McLuhan suggests, different technologies have different effects on the persons using them, and my stories about using various assistive technologies illustrate exactly that. What is intriguing though is how my use of a technology seemed to affect other people. I don't know if others are indirectly mediated by the technologies I use or if they are somehow using those technologies on me. Perhaps it is both. Regardless, meaning is made of the use of those assistive devices and those meanings have material consequences: some practices are valued over others; practicing differently is not easily accepted; some practices and technologies are stigmatizing; and the validity of a practice can be negated if it is not deemed 'normal'.

10 I don't assume it will always stay that way or is that way for others.
While repeated use of a dominant configuration of the sensorium or body can, as the work of McLuhan and de Certeau suggests, create a pervasive environment in which only certain types of knowledge are available, this chapter shows how, by shifting our sense ratios or reorienting differently, we can gain new knowledge and awaken from our 'trance', or what sociologists refer to as the taken-for-granted. The different experiences of walking explored through the stories in this chapter reflect a tangle of cultural meanings of which bodies, walking, and technologies are made. While the discussion drifted away from de Certeau's focus on the spatial and haptic qualities of walking, there are many ways to reorient to walking and vision, and as the stories of walking and watching showed, even within a scopic regime there are possibilities for reorienting to the visual in order to learn something different, a discussion that will be explored further in Chapter Four. This chapter also revealed consciousness of as fluid, always in flux, directed and with the possibility to be intentionally altered. Perhaps like sense ratios, consciousness of is a matter of ratio too. If this is true, and if knowledge is mediated by different technologies, bodies and practices, then changing technologies, bodies and practices can be used to our advantage in order to create more possibilities for different knowledge. This is the discussion of the next chapter which also stresses embodiment and which will further pursue the questioning of habitual practices through the analysis of reading and writing, the primary practices of scholarly knowledge production. This will allow me to address limitations of academic conventions, unwitting contradictions within scholarly practices, and the question of possibility for change even within constraint.
Chapter Two
practices of reading and writing embodiment

Academic institutions are so mired in reading and writing, with essays, research reports, books, or dissertations as the end goal of research, that it is easy for scholars to ignore or be unaware of the implications of these habitual practices. This chapter is a reflection on the scholarly practices of reading and writing and their relation to forces of discipline, agential maneuvering, limits and possibilities within the context of my experience of graduate studies. While the focus of my course of study is disability studies, my program falls within the discipline of sociology. In addition to being a graduate student, I am a sculptor, and it is from these standpoints that I explore how the body factors into the forms with which scholars, including myself, choose to communicate and practice. Before proceeding with particular academic practices, I begin with a general discussion of practices.

practices and standpoint
Practices are the conventional, habitual, repetitive actions, processes or ways of doing or speaking that we enact in our everyday lives. Through repetition, our practices become part of an automatic unconscious system that allows us to bypass conscious interpretation of them. As Foucault (1975) established in *Discipline and Punish*, we are disciplined by institutions through ubiquitous, silent and invisible technologies or systems that repress us. These technologies include, among other things, academic institutional practices such as scholarly reading and writing. As discussed in the previous chapter in relation to ocularcentrism and walking, the repetitive nature of our taken-for-granted practices can create a pervasive environment wherein some knowledges are accessible while others are inhibited, and in which we may become numb to the effects of that which we are repeating. Our practices are both created by and re-create the values and ideology of the culture in which they are performed. Thus they are an acting-out of disciplinary systems and, as Michel de Certeau (1984) puts it, they are “a way of thinking invested in a way of acting” (p. xv). If we understand practices as forms of consciousness – ways of knowing and doing that are shaped by the limits and possibilities of normative orders – then a practice can be considered a position that we assume, a sort of standpoint from which we know the world.
In sharp contrast to my experience of glassblowing described in the *prosthesis* (see p. v), academic reading is commonly understood to be a solitary, sedentary activity. Whether reading silently to oneself or listening to a screen reader, it does not usually entail a lot of physical exertion on the part of the reader. Physical activity is considered to be minimal and limited to holding a book, turning pages, navigating with a computer mouse, highlighting passages, adding notes in the margin, or moving one's eyes across a page. Reading is reliant on the body for it to occur, but reading is typically characterized as a cerebral, disembodied undertaking, since the majority of effortful action in reading – conceptualizing, responsive dialoguing, understanding, reasoning, analyzing, judging and decoding – is perceived to be internalized and of the mind. Consequently, cerebral activities hold a privileged status over those that are construed to be of the exterior, carnal body, particularly within academia.

While reading is characterized as a disembodied activity, the academic texts we read have also been critiqued for ignoring the body – in the ways they are written, the forms they are written in, and in the content taken up in the writing. Much scholarly writing has been characterized as privileging the mind while relegating the body to the margins. Judith Butler (1993) ascribes the estrangement of philosophers from “corporeal matters” to their vocational training and, even when they do attempt to take up the body in their work, they do so in a way that is “disembodied” and they either miss their mark or even “write against” the body (p. ix). Csordas (1994) writes that when scholars refer to the body, they often do so while still taking the body for granted, without much sense of "bodiliness" in their analyses, as if body were little more than a synonym for self or person. This tendency carries the dual dangers of dissipating the force of using the body as a methodological starting point, and of objectifying bodies as things devoid of intentionality and intersubjectivity. It thus misses the opportunity to add sentience and sensibility to our notions of self and person, and to insert an added dimension of materiality to our notions of culture and history (p. 4).

Elizabeth Grosz is also critical, stating that the body has been largely “conceptualized in narrow and problematic, dichotomized terms” (1994, p. 4). Grosz suggests that philosophy “has established itself as a form of knowing, a form of rationality, only through the disavowal of the body, specifically the male body, and the corresponding elevation of mind as a disembodied term” (ibid.).

Within academia, disavowal of the body is practiced in many ways. For example, by the time we
reach graduate studies, many of us have been enculturated through secondary school and undergraduate studies to automatically erase all traces of ourselves from our writing in order to construct academic papers that are impersonal explanations of findings. Papers are typically fashioned to be detached, dispassionate and with no trace of the author through such demands as disallowing a first person point of view. Writing in the third person, the language can become cumbersome and inaccessible, the author becomes virtually invisible, and the text can take on a paradoxically disembodied voice.

In a researcher's writing, the inclusion of emotions and personal experience – that which has come to be learned through the senses or 'embodied knowledge' – can add valuable context, insight and even data to a scholarly text. Yet, as Dorothy Smith (1974) writes,

> As graduate students learning to become sociologists, we learn to think sociology as it is thought and to practice it as it is practiced. We learn that some topics are relevant and some are not. We learn to discard our experienced world as a source of reliable information or suggestions about the character of the world; to confine and focus our insights within the conceptual frameworks and relevances which are given in the discipline. Should we think other kinds of thoughts or experience the world in a different way or with edges and horizons that pass beyond the conceptual we must practice a discipline which discards them or find some procedure which makes it possible to sneak them in (p. 8).

Smith was writing in 1974 and sociology has diversified since then, but her description still has a general relevance to academia, unless you happen to be in a program that approves of such things as autoethnography and arts-informed research. Because experience and emotions tend to be associated with the body they are marginalized in favor of activities associated with the thinking mind – hence they are undervalued and typically excluded. In the words of Husserl (1973) "the word 'experience' points much more to a practically active and evaluative mode of behavior than specifically to one that is cognitive and judicative" (p. 52). Thus the personal experience and emotions of the researcher/writer are not considered pertinent and, therefore, not only are they largely ignored in academia, but mention of them in written work is an indication of an unacceptable bias or even solipsism within many academic circles. As a result, it isn't common to encounter personal experience and emotion in, for example, a peer-reviewed sociology journal.

Thus far I have outlined some of the disciplinary constraints, conventions and norms of academic reading and writing. However, what possibilities exist to work outside those conventions? Scholarly practices are already instilled with pre-interpreted meanings and
procedures before we ever begin our studies. If we repeat these practices in the same ways they have always been performed, we will produce more of the same – the same type of scholars and knowledge. Given that “the grid of 'discipline' is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive” (de Certeau, 1984, p. xiv), how can I as a disability studies scholar avoid repeating the same old thing; how can I change or do otherwise? Michel de Certeau's (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life* is an exploration “of the ways in which users – commonly assumed to be passive and guided by established rules – operate” (p. xi). De Certeau’s goal is not to elaborate on the creation of “disciplinary technologies” but to show the creative tactics performed to resist them by those who are “already caught in the nets of 'discipline'” (p. xiv). I touched on tactics in the previous chapter in relation to using my office chair for a purpose it was not originally intended – a mobility device to aid walking. To elaborate more on tactics, they take root in the 'cracks' (de Certeau, 1984, p. 37) that people pry open in disciplinary systems in order to bend those powers to suit their own agendas. Tactics are the unsanctioned ways that we can “poach”, re-appropriate, subvert, alter or “manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them” (p. xiv). Thus between the constraints and limits of our practices are also entwined the possibilities for change; to be, think, know, feel and do differently. In doing differently, we are not passive but active agents in how we choose to practice, even within an institutional setting. I suspect that the way I use the concept of tactics may not be what de Certeau had in mind. He was more oriented toward how consumers don't just consume but become producers by using things for different purposes than originally intended. Whatever his intention, I don't imagine he would object to my 'poaching' his idea for my own purposes.

the body as scholarly tactic
What happens if a scholar orients to reading and writing differently, if what a scholar reads breaks with convention and the text is overtly written from the body, about the body or speaks to one's body, or if the text references emotions or personal experience? Do scholars read, treat or value the text any differently than they do other academic writing? What would happen if a scholar was asked to read academic texts while attending to their emotions? In one of my classes students were required to experiment with exactly that. We were instructed to keep a journal that, in addition to a summary of the readings, included personal reflections on, and emotional reactions to, the readings.

I interpreted the instructions to mean a critical response to the readings and, being
opinionated, it was something familiar and easy to do. However, a few weeks later I realized that what I was doing was critical thinking and not attending to feelings, so I returned to the readings looking for things that I emotionally responded to. I found nothing! It was a disorienting frustrating process since each time I thought I felt/found something, I realized it was just more critical thinking. It seemed I had a complete lack of feeling about these readings. However, if I 'listened' to the physical sensations in my body as I was reading, this reorientation alerted me to a vague emotional response. The next step was to identify the emotion and, perhaps ironically, through a sort of Socratic questioning I was able to reflect on why I felt that way. Attending to my body created a space for me to realize that I had more feelings about the material than I first thought. This is one way that the body speaks or, alternatively, one way to read the body.

What I learned was that when a reading triggered an emotion, most of the time it was impatience or irritation. Reflecting on why I felt that way revealed anxiety caused by the anticipation of the writing of my M.A. thesis, and because of that I was very quick to dismiss readings as not relevant or 'academically rigorous'. I wanted everything that I read and wrote to relate to my thesis and if it didn't I got irritated, impatient and dismissed it as superfluous and not worth expending energy on. What this experience illustrates is not that there is a natural disjuncture of feeling and thinking, such that they constitute discrete activities, but rather my initial difficulty in identifying my feelings is a result of many years of a habitual disconnection of consciousness of my emotions while doing scholarly work. While it was a challenge to become conscious of my emotions, once I did they revealed quite clearly that emotions can play a role in what we will choose to read or accept as valid. What follows is a description of a couple of the readings and my responses to them.

In *The Body's Poetics of Illness*, metaphor, spirituality, psychoanalysis, art and mythology are the raw materials that Thomas Moore (1992) manipulates to sculpt the message that we must pay attention to and honor symptoms of illness as poetic expressions of the soul. Throughout my reading and summarizing of Moore's book chapter, I was irritated and impatient to be finished with it. I found Moore's writing style difficult and I characterized his approach, a 'poetics of illness', as 'flaky'. When I reflected on my feelings, I reminded myself that I've always had difficulty with poetry, which I find frustrating and inaccessible. As for Moore's writing being 'flaky', while I consciously espouse poetics as a valid mode of conceptualizing, my feelings revealed that I unconsciously question taking the arts seriously in scholarly work. This is ironic,
considering that I am an artist who has a strong belief that more of the arts need to be injected into the humanities and social sciences. Yet I still have a hard time swallowing scholarly work that does incorporate it.

Another of the course readings was James Overboe's book chapter (2001), *Creating a Space for Embodied Wisdom Through Teaching*. Overboe, a teacher and student who has cerebral palsy, relays personal experience and theoretical grounds which support his argument that rationality dominates in education to the extent that embodied wisdom is not valued, and that this impoverishes education. A strong feeling of irritation arose early in this reading when I became skeptical of Overboe's memories of his early education. For example, he writes, "As I watched other non-disabled children complete their lessons I noted that they employed a linear rational method that matched their controlled corporeality" (p. 173). It is hard to imagine that a young child could "note" such things. The effect of that statement was that I became skeptical and dismissive of all of the chapter, and while reading Overboe's account of his university student experience the intensity of my negative feelings increased. Overboe's writing is filled with descriptions of how his body and thinking work and he uses personal memories and anecdotes to build his argument. However, "the relationship between our so-called public and private lives was not and is not a subject for intellectual inquiry" (Ng, 2000, p. 177). I believe this is what I reacted to more than anything. Overboe's personal accounts constitute what many in academia would characterize as weak evidence and inappropriate for scholarly writing. Despite consciously believing that we need to include our personal experiences in scholarly work (as I do now) my emotions reveal the unwitting contradiction that I am resistant to reading exactly that.

Reorienting to my emotions while reading has given me the insight that there is a disjuncture between what I proclaim to believe and my underlying assumptions, which are played out in what I do. In the first example, I sloughed off a poetic way of doing and thinking as invalid. The Cartesian mind/body divide in academia has disciplined me, an artist, to unconsciously discount the arts – typically associated with the body – within scholarly work – typically associated with the mind – and, in the second example, I perpetuated the Cartesian mind/body divide, privileging the mind by dismissing the author’s personal experiences. While motivation and biases are well recognized as potentially shaping research, I had never before considered my emotions as a potential point of analysis while reading. While we cannot change what we are unaware of, my experiment showed me that being mindful of emotions while reading an
academic text is an effective self-reflexive tactic to better understand my resistances and contradictions. By becoming conscious of a disjuncture between my ideology and how my beliefs are embodied in practice, an opportunity is created to better align what I do with what I believe. Emotions can potentially lead to valuable information for scholars who strive to avoid perpetuating entrenched oppressive ways of thinking about, representing or doing research on people.

While my experiment involved emotions, it also involved a process of rationalization. This seems to imply that feeling and thinking are discrete activities. However, I wish to suggest that they exist through reciprocity or intra-action\(^{11}\). While it was my body that alerted me to feelings I had about the readings, it was Socratic questioning of those feelings that revealed the crux of why I felt the way I did. Without identifying the feelings, I would not have been able to access certain information and without the Socratic questioning, I would not have been able to interpret my feelings. Emotions involve complex intra-actions of the unconscious, the conscious, body, mind, percep, concept, other and self.

**reading and glassblowing**

Walking and talking are examples of movements that some of us have learned and, through practice, we have disciplined our bodies to the extent that those movements are so automatic that many of us no longer have to think about how to perform them. Paradoxically, though, in order for any movement to become habitual – such that we don't need to focus on them – we must initially focus a great deal of attention on learning the techniques. Thus we must first focus on the body in order to be able to ignore the body.

Many scholars have habitual ways of doing their scholarly work that help them maintain focus on their researching, reading and writing; my way of working is just one variation. Before I begin I eat something to avoid the distraction of hunger. Dressed in my most comfortable clothing, I stretch out on the sofa with my feet up, in a quiet room with a regulated, even temperature, and no distracting sounds from, for example, a television or radio. I read and write with a laptop, on my lap, which was purchased to avoid the pains of using a desktop

\(^{11}\) “Intra-action” is a word used by Karen Barad to avoid the dichotomies reproduced by words such as interaction which imply separate things that work together. I use it here to suggest that mind and body or feeling and thinking are not discrete but are mutually materially and discursively produced. See: Barad, Karen. (1999). Agential Realism, in *The Science Studies Reader* ed. Mario Biagioli. New York: Routledge. pp 1-11.
computer and the discomfort of writing with pen. I have everything I need including a big glass of water, tissues, highlighters, books, pens and other office supplies. Everything I need is assembled within an arm's length so that I won't be tempted away from my task to retrieve anything. This disciplining of my body by limiting my necessity for physical activity is an attempt to discipline my mind against any distraction. I do everything I can to ensure that my attention is directed only to my reading/writing.

There are similarities to how I go about glassblowing. I am also careful in my choice of clothes to ensure that they are comfortable, loose fitting, made of natural fibers that won't melt, a dark color to hide graphite smudges, and they provide some protection from the heat. I set my pipes at just the right distance from the heat to warm them and adjust the temperature of the glass furnace and gloryhole to allow me to work at a temperature that is comfortable and easy for glassforming. I keep a bucket of ice cold water near to hand, turn on the water fountain, and ensure that I have all my tools gathered and arranged in a certain order and within convenient reach – but this is where the similarities seem to end.

For a variety of reasons – the searing heat on my skin, the blazing light and roaring of the furnace, the physical discomfort of sweating and intense thirst for water, and the active movements required of a glassblower – even if I wanted to ignore my body I couldn't and it would be dangerous to try to do so. As the glassblowing description illustrated, consciousness of my body, team members' bodies, and how we move, are integral to the process of glassblowing. However, my orientation to my body is very different while doing scholarly work. It consists of a preparation ritual where I attend to my physical needs in order to push my body into my unconscious while I am working. I set myself up to focus only on reading, thinking and writing and to throw all else into the background by ignoring much that is sensual and physical: my senses, emotions, body, clothing and environment.

When learning to blow glass, the novice must be constantly reminded to keep turning the pipe to keep the glass centered, but over time and with much attention to and discipline of one's body and movements, many of the glassblowing movements become automatic so that attention can be turned to more highly skilled techniques or creative matters. However, the awareness of whether the glass is on center or not is always there, and I am conscious of it through my body, by how the pipe feels as I'm turning it. Without looking or thinking, I notice immediately if there is a shift and I adjust my body and the glassblowing pipe accordingly.
Regardless of how much expertise a glassblower has, an embodied awareness and an awareness of the body always remain. This, however, does not seem to be the case with reading and writing. For example, as I read from my laptop, I know that the laptop is there and I would feel it on my lap and under my hands if I paid attention to that, but I do not. Nor do I notice my eyes moving from left to right as I follow the words across a page. I write by touch-typing on a computer keyboard but, through years of repetitive practice, my typing is automatic. While I am at times conscious of typing errors as I make them and move to correct them, I’m not aware of the movement of my fingers as I type. When I do I take notice of my body is when pain interjects, or when I get hungry, thirsty, or have to pee. Even when I attend to those things, I may do so while thinking about my work. I have trained myself not to attend to the physical activity of reading and writing, but to attend only to the discourse I am reading and my discourse with it. Though reading is a meaning-making endeavor that happens between bodies, the reading that is produced between the textual body and myself will be as attentive to the body as the text and I collude to produce. That is, unless I consciously determine to orient my attention differently, my default position during academic reading is to ignore the invisible or unacknowledged body in/of the text and to ignore my body too. Whatever comes of my writing, it is considered a product of the mind and not the labor of the body. Thus it is common for reading and writing to be characterized as disembodied activities. In this story of a comparison of the experience of the embodied-ness of glassblowing and the disembodied-ness of the scholarly practices of reading and writing, thus far I have painted a picture of sharp contrast.

**mindful writing**

During my undergraduate studies I developed a project in which I mindfully followed my writing process while attempting to write a project proposal. The intention was to better understand my process in order to create an artwork that could visually represent it to those who might help me with writing in the future. This project required me to maintain a very focused mindful attention to writing, as I was writing, and at the same time to write notes about what I thought and did. The recursive nature of the project made it a tedious and confusing task, and consequently I documented only part of the process. At that time I did complete an artwork that used visual icons to represent the notes I took, but what follows now is a narrative that is a synthesis of what I thought and did while writing that proposal years ago and further mindful observations of my emotions and process while writing this chapter. As you will understand better after reading the narrative, there were multiple layers of what were for me complex translations between feelings, text and image.
I have no words.

Writing is hard...

I can't write just anything. I must be able to connect my topic in some manner to my own experience, to write about something that I have strong feelings about, or I literally cannot write at all. Thus my emotions and my writing are heavily invested in each other. I begin with an indistinct taste for what I'd like to chew on, but I have no corresponding words. I have a sense of something; an embodied sense that has nothing to do with rationality. I feel the meaning in my body – particularly in my gut, my throat and tongue. Yet it's not in just one part of me but an overall total-body feeling, and the sense of anxiety that grows while I try to write increases the intensity of my felt experience of meaning. My ideas are like impressions that I experience as three-dimensional feelings and which are near impossible to textually articulate. I can feel the story, it has a vague shape and color, but it is in a form that needs translation. The effort it takes for translation into words sickens me. My ears are ringing, my head hurts, I feel nauseous and my whole body aches and buzzes with anxiety. I feel the clock racing in my heartbeat – tick tick tick tick talk, tick tick tick tick TALK.

A couple of times when I was a kid my voice clenched up in pain and I could not speak. It felt like someone grabbed me by the throat and was squeezing the voice out of me. The harder I
struggled to speak, the tighter the invisible grip on my throat and the more intense the pain – until I couldn't squeak out a single sound. This feeling of trying to speak but being prevented from doing so is how I feel when I write. I have a sensation of stricture in my throat and it's hard to write even a few words. I stammer and try to force myself to spit out a couple of ideas but I choke, and the bits and bytes I do manage to cough up are not whole thoughts. Fragments. I write them down but it's really more like writing with alphabet soup puke. It's as if I need letters on a page before I can find a word. Then I need a pile of words to rearrange so I can write a phrase, and a pile of phrases before I can find the right ones that will form a 'proper' sentence – all to discover the thought I didn't know I had because it was a feeling. After suturing together some of the words and ideas, the larger morsels now function like stronger tastes that evoke forgotten memories. They act as mnemonics that help me decode my embodied impressions. So I keep foraging for more food for thought.

Along with these morsels of writing I binge on readings, class notes, imagery, and other materials. A lot of it, as fast as I can, tick talk... I lose my sense of time... For days weeks I immerse myself in this process, following my emotions. Writing consumes me as I consume what tastes right. It's a tedious and tiring process, but taking a break entails the risk of having to start over again, since I may not understand what I was writing and doing upon my return. I still don't know what my topic is so I collect a lot of seemingly disparate tidbits, some of it junk-food. Ingesting all of this 'stuff' as fast as I can results in spluttering more bits of writing when ideas start to bubble up in my throat and I scramble to spit them out before I swallow them back down. I continue in a hurry until I feel over-satiated by what I've ingested, and satisfied with the quantity of my output. I now have a mass of confusing textual crumbs that somehow made sense in my feelings, but on the page they make non-sense. I slice up the texts and slide them about, trying to rearrange all the bits into groups of different flavors but they all seem connected and equally important. It's like trying to separate the mixed vegetables from the meat and potatoes in a stew. I struggle for hours days to make discrete groupings, and when I succeed I finally have a taste of the ingredients for my paper.

While I now have ingredients, I have no overarching menu. So I expend a lot of time, tick tick tick, and energy laboring to create one. But this is a paradox I cannot solve. How can I write the menu or a recipe before I create the dish? How can I possibly know what I will write before I write it? How can I name this thing before it exists? I tell myself that the menu will keep me focused, that it is evidence that I'm a good student, that this is how papers are supposed to be
written. I should be able to spit out an outline. I’ve been taught and I’ve taught others how to write them, but yet again I search for new resources that will help me write my outline, *tick tick tick*. I taste, swallow and produce nothing new nor old. I conclude that this is not a matter of knowing but doing. So I swallow harder as I try to choke down the razor-sharp straight lines of academic conventions. Once again I spit and cough and splutter but what I spew does not produce lines, only morsels. Even so, I keep trying to squish my self into the straight groove inscribed on the page by the scholars who wrote before me. The frustration of fitting! I can't. This is not my choice, still, it is a resistance to the medium – or perhaps the medium is resistant to me. Either way, I'm obliged to orient to writing differently. So I return to desire, intuition, taste, emotions and what I can do.

I am not an ordered, linear narrative. There are no straight lines when I write, only morsels that can be piled together to create larger mouthfuls. I build even larger portions of writing by grazing from one ingredient to another as my taste directs me and as I am able. When no more words bubble up I move on, pushing myself to work faster. I become disoriented, get lost, lose writing and forget what I've already written, *tick tick tick*. I get stuck on something but leave it and eventually discover a solution. Later I discover the same solution for the same problem, experiencing it again as if for the first time, *tick tick tick*. I often write the same ideas over multiple times in a variety of ways, but not because I try to, that's just how writing works. I realize this when I find some lost writing, *tick tick tick*. I fiddle with word and sentence order and read my writing aloud, not to edit but to listen for the words to speak sense. I do this over and over and over, *tick tick tick*.

I'm scared. My heart is pounding and a nauseous dread washes over me like ice-water. I tell myself to stop worrying about the deadline, be calm, don't panic. I try to reassure myself that writing this paper isn't going to be as hard as I fear and I will end up with something to show for my efforts. But I also know I will repeat this same process and experience many times over before I'm done.

When I began this essay I could only refer to feelings, aesthetics, resonance and intuitive knowing. I didn't rationally know why I created or chose the ingredients that I started with, but as my writing evolves so does my understanding. I write more than necessary because I'm uncertain what I need. It is this excess that renders me a bricoleur, that allows me to build, collage and juxtapose chunks of meaning. I am relieved when I read them together and find reciprocity between the fragments and the seemingly disparate flavors and textures speak to,
with and through each other. It is from the cuts between the fragments that the meaning of the essay emerges. I struggle again to create the linear narrative of the traditional academic essay. Using different colors of paper, I print everything out, cut sections apart, tape bits together and rearrange the fragments on my wall. I never begin at the beginning of the essay because I don't know where the beginning is. I start somewhere in the middle that feels strong, though the middle usually ends up closer to the end. This is how I find the structure of the essay. I think and write between some fragments until one thought, feeling or image flows into another, but sometimes the connections are obvious and little more is necessary. Other times I prefer sharp cuts that imply meaning, to intrigue or engage the reader in the meaning making. I worry about the criticism. These cuts are sometimes interpreted as nothing more than lack and uncertainty. But taste and translation are always at play, and for me the cuts are aesthetically and functionally important. They are worth the risk. Reading between the fragments is how I make sense.

My deadline is long past and my extension deadline is very soon so I'm very stressed, but I now know that these chunks of words will work together to create an essay. It's only near the end that the seeming non-sense makes sense, that I'm able to name the thing that now exists, to learn the question I didn't know I was asking. I don't have time for editing, I never do. My essay is done, I found the words, but writing them has chewed me up and spat me out – my body-mind-spirit is completely purged and I feel utterly depleted. Writing makes me sick.

I want to literally shake the tension from my body and take a break to re-energize but I can't, I have more papers to write. If I take a day off – sometimes it happens overnight while sleeping – writing becomes near impossible again and I will need to start over to get back into my writing mind. I must keep myself in a state of great tension in order to keep writing. I try to offset that by staying mindful.

</prologue>
A subjective orientation to writing that includes personal experience can reveal the specificities of individual lives/bodies that can articulate unrecognized or marginalized ways of being or perspectives of the world. The *prologue* narrative suggests that writing, at least for me, requires a particular orientation or state of consciousness. When I did my BFA I discovered that I couldn’t write and do studio work at the same time or my work suffered in both areas. They seem to require different ways of being, and while I had the impression that most students were able to switch back and forth quite quickly, for me the process of switching into a *writing mind* was difficult and long. Writing requires me to bring what I know into a different form of consciousness, a form that I have trouble accessing.

The *prologue* makes explicit that writing is indeed embodied and the body can play as much a role in writing as the mind. It is important to note that it is an orientation to description, not explanation. What I have presented may seem to be a conundrum. On the one hand I have the story about my efforts to throw my body into the background while reading and writing. On the other hand I have the story of writing that is very much about how my body, emotions and sensations play a role in my experience of writing. Both are true stories but they are partial stories as told from different standpoints or perspectives. I begin every writing session by setting myself up to ignore my body and most everything else in the world in order to focus only on writing. I need to do that in order to get into my *writing mind*. Yet some kind of awareness of the body must exist while writing or I could not type. There must be a part of me somewhere that is telling me where to put my fingers and that 'something' must include some kind of awareness of my body. This implies that we always have some awareness of our bodies but that the levels or type of awareness of the body is always in flux. Ignoring the body doesn’t suddenly make it not exist, ignoring only means to put it out of mind, and I succeed in doing that while reading/writing only to a point sometime after discomfort turns to pain or stress and my consciousness shifts. The story of my writing process was written not while trying to ignore my body but while attending to my body, emotions, and sensations as well as my process. My shift in consciousness to being mindful of writing produced a completely different experience of writing, and thus a different story. Had I chosen to reorient to something different while writing, I would have come up with yet a different description. For example, I could have told a story about:

- thoughts I have about topics I’m dealing with
- the page as the space of writing or writing as the space between myself, a finished
paper and another

- writing as a becoming of self as text, and text as self, of text incarnate, and writing as incarnation.
- the process of writing where thought and expression, self and other, subject and object, text and body, public and private, come together, coalesce, crystallize as a creation, a paper.

The point is, consciousness is fluid and can be directed by reorienting oneself to gain different knowledge. Ignoring and being mindful are very different types of consciousness, and yet even they can be mixed because the way we attend to one thing and/or another can change from moment to moment.

Since, as I explained in the <prologue>, I cannot take a discretely rational and unemotional approach to writing, it is emotion and personal experience – embodied knowledge – that give structure to the <prologue> and this thesis. In contrast to the ease with which I rationalized my emotions in the emotion/reading experiment earlier in this chapter, both the emotional aspect of my writing experience, and the writing of emotion into the <prologue>, are complex experiences that I will not try to completely rationalize. Rather, I want to suggest that the <prologue> gives a sense of writing not simply in relation to emotions, personal experience and thought but a sense of writing as it may pertain to the intra-action of body, spirit, emotion, thought, sensation, action, intuition, percept, past experience, present situation, desire, concept, memories, knowledge, education, etc. That is, these things cannot be discretely delineated or extracted from each other and are, rather, co-constituted in the process of writing and in the text itself.

hidden labors – hidden bodies

Students don't typically do a lot of reading and writing in the classroom but complete the majority of their work behind the doors of a private space. Thus any sense of the labor of our reading and writing is largely hidden from each other, and hidden even to those who are doing it if they work to push it into unconsciousness as I do when reading. However, as I attempted to convey in the <prologue>, the labor of writing can require a lot of mental, emotional and physical effort, and can have a significant material and emotional impact on a writer. There is, however, further reason for including the <prologue>, which is to give context to why and how I am writing this thesis and to suggest that in addition to our writing being shaped by
genre, academic discipline, academic norms and language conventions, writing as knowledge production also involves a singular specificity of situated-ness. That is, my writing affects and is affected by my body as my body effects and is effected by my writing. If the only way we can experience the world is through our bodies where reason and feeling meet in, for example, taste, then our first orientation to anything, including reading and writing, is through our bodies – though they are also given to us already filled with culturally inflected meanings – and it is through our different bodies that we are affected by and effect the world differently. “The body is our general medium for having a world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 169). Thus our different bodies as our first orientation, are the first ‘situations’ that influence the knowledge we produce. This thesis, then, is a form of knowledge production that is shaped by my orientation to the world through my specific body.

In light of this comment and the description in the <prologue>, what then are the implications of stating that scholarly reading and writing are disembodied practices? What are the assumptions made earlier in this chapter? To say, as I did, that reading and writing are not activities that entail much “embodied awareness or awareness of the body”, is to assume that, using some normative measurement, all bodies are the same; it is to assume that we all have the same orientation to reading and writing and that we all read and write in exactly the same way and with the same amount of effort. For me to imply that the “physical activity” of reading is not “effortful” or that “holding a book, turning pages, navigating with a computer mouse, highlighting passages, adding notes in the margin, or moving one's eyes across a page”, are activities that do not require a lot of “physical exertion”, is to make normative assumptions about the bodies of who I imagine scholars and readers to be, and assumptions about how much effort is required for others to do those activities. One can read the bodies in my statements as able-bodied and my statements as ableist. Not all of us have learned the same body techniques or habits. I am skilled in the technique for balancing a laptop on my lap such that I don't have to think about how I'm holding it. If the computer shifts in a manner that indicates it might slide off, just as when I feel the glass fall off center of my pipe, without any thought I automatically shift my body to prevent it from falling. Thus there is obviously some type of consciousness of the body even while I ignore my body. While I can automatically shift to prevent the computer from falling, many others cannot. I don't have to remind myself to keep turning the glassblowing pipe or keep holding a pen or a mouse, but perhaps others do.

12 A reference to Donna Haraway's Situated Knowledges (1988), which is taken up extensively in the following chapter.
The amount of effort required by different people to do the same things varies and to not take that into consideration invalidates the experience of a lot of people. To use the word disembodied in this context is to do the work of dissing (disrespecting, putting down or denying) the embodiment that is really there and it is to disavow some bodies.

If it is true that writing is a form of knowledge production that is shaped by the writer's orientation to the world through the writer's specific body, then even when the author uses the third person point of view a body is always in the text, but whose body? Bodies can be read in the text through the way the body or text was written, in the language that is used, in the fact that the text was created, etc. A text requires a body to write it, make it into a book or article, print it, distribute it, etc. For that to occur, bodies/people had to manufacture pens, paper, computers, printing presses, the internet, trucks and stores for distribution, etc., all through physical labor. Language had to exist prior to the composition of the text and language requires a whole culture of bodies for it to evolve in the first place. Thus a particular type of world had to be created by bodies before a particular type of text could exist, and a world of bodies exists in relation to a particular text. Thus a whole world is embodied by text and reflected in any one text.

The text has a body – it has my body – and without the actions of my body and other bodies, there could be no text. For a text to appear I must orient myself toward it. For it to exist to me, I first must have an idea where to find it or that it could exist in the first place, and act on that by locating and reading it. This requires me to use my body – hands, mind, eyes, other senses – in order for it to exist in my world. The academic text requires me to read it for its existence and I, at this point in my education, read it for my existence in order to pass as a graduate student. So, if all of this is true, yet scholars still insist that the body is not there or has been disavowed, isn't the insistence that the body has been disavowed a disavowal of the body? At the very least, this is a particular orientation to the not-body or that which does not count as bodily awareness.

While it 'seems' obvious that glassblowing is an embodied practice, this is not to suggest that there is any such thing as a disembodied practice. Scholarly practices are indeed embodied. Yet we regularly create distinctions as if the body is absent. The difference is that some of us, at different times and for different reasons – perhaps due to different orientations or bodies that produce different ways of being, doing and knowing – are more consciously embodied or
differently conscious of the body.

<epilogue> - truth and lies
Writing allows me to pass and thus far it has been the only way to pass courses for my degree. Writing lets me pass in another sense too. As already mentioned, I cannot take an unemotional approach to writing, yet many of my papers have pretended to be exactly that; they pass. Though I tried to maintain my presence in this body of writing by referring to the senses, myself, emotions and experience, the writing also betrays me. While I attempt to 'give voice' to my 'other' by including personal accounts of my writing and glassblowing processes, the authority of the voice of the other is still subsumed by the academic thesis genre and language in which it is embedded, and by the authority of my academic voice if it succeeds in passing as 'not-other'.

Writing is sometimes a better way for me to communicate than speaking. When writing I can review and rewrite, rearrange the sentences so there is a logical order, ensure that I'm saying what I mean and that I don't say something 'stupid'. I can avoid the blurring out of words that sound harsh when I don't mean them to be, and avoid the unintelligible blather I produce when trying to speak an idea that I haven't quite translated into words yet. It helps me pass as someone who doesn't not know, to appear as the 'good graduate student', at least in some respects.

This thesis is an embodiment of passing – since the labor of my writing is unreadable. Even in the <prologue> what I have produced is an orderly written narrative that follows a proper format, formal rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Letters appear in a proper order; words do not overlap but are discretely separated by space, implying that they can be understood separately from each other; and yet the words associate with each other in a tacitly agreed upon manner. This is what passes as a representation of my writing process yet it fails to show the intense labor of my writing or the process in the form of the writing. There is a chaos that I struggle to untangle while I'm writing. Ideas flow into each other, overlap, collide, subsume and morph into each other. It is a chaos that I cannot express in a written form. The <prologue> is a linear, 'proper', grammatically correct text that does not appear anything like the choking, chaotic, fragmented process of writing that I describe.

The text subsumes my physical body and my writing works to ensure my 'salvation' as a
'normal' body, thus deceiving the reader into reading my body as 'normal' writer. If I tried to represent my writing process in a text that didn't deceive the reader, what would that look like? I could project the stereotypical 'abnormal' writer by writing with spelling and grammatical errors, transpose letters or write in incomplete sentences. But to do that would hide the fact that those things aren't an issue for me. My disability is not a matter of appearance but of time and process. Most teachers look at my writing and marks and laugh at me when I request accommodations, insisting that I don't need them. Yes, the end result of my writing is fine, but what can't be seen is the intensive labor and cost for getting that result. They expect the written work of disabled people to be 'substandard' or at least have a 'different' quality, a quality that can be seen and read on the surface of a page, and that has nothing to do with the experience of writing. If a student's writing passes as 'normal' then they may be penalized by being denied accommodations until they stop passing. My writing passes.

To be honest, while the <prologue> is a true story, it's also a lie. On the one hand, it is intended to elucidate my experience of writing and I did that as openly and truthfully as I could. On the other hand, the very medium of the representation – text – obfuscates that experience. Perhaps if I were a poet, the intensity of emotions that I feel while writing would not elude my ability to represent them through written language. Other than to simply label an emotion, which fails to express a sense of an emotion, how does one translate an interiority and convey feelings through text? This was my challenge – to describe the indescribable – and so I tried to paint a picture through coded and metaphorical language that draws on taste, food, the body and bodily processes. I may not have captured all that I wanted to in the text, perhaps that's not even possible, but I hope that some readers will get a taste of my experience.

So, while I may pass as a writer, I have failed to represent the experience and process of writing in the form of the representation. A possible redeeming aspect of this failure is that it may contribute to my intention to create meaning without prescribing it, and to emphasize the act of translation while maintaining an openness for reader interpretation. This discussion of the limits and possibilities of a text leads into the topic of the next chapter.

We are all under the influence of disciplinary mechanisms and it is easy for scholars to ignore or be unaware of the implications of their everyday practices, but altering our orientation to them is a way to create change and new knowledge. Even within the limitations imposed by institutional systems there are possibilities for change through tactics of disciplinary resistance.
My goal in this chapter was to try to bring a different consciousness of the body to scholarly practice by reorienting to reading and writing through the body, but without recreating a mind/body split. Shifting one's orientation to emotions, sensation, experience and the body can create a different understanding of the body, reading, writing, and student experience within academia. The concluding discussion of the limits and possibilities of text leads into the topic of the next chapter which will explore the significance of language practices as social accomplishments with both sedimented meanings and generative possibilities. The language practice of metaphor will be explored as a way to reveal the social significance of metaphors as an intersubjective act of meaning making. I draw extensively from Donna Haraway's (1988) theorizing of situated knowledge to outline her discussion of various theories of knowledge as she articulates them through metaphors. I begin with a basic description of what situated knowledge entails, then move to metaphors, drawing on Lakoff & Johnson (1980) for an understanding of what metaphors are and how they work to structure what we know. I then turn to close readings of a few of the many metaphors that Haraway uses in order to draw out an understanding of knowing as narrating. Using a disability studies lens, the focus of this chapter is on the 'vision as knowledge' metaphor, a metaphor so pervasive that we are largely unconscious of it as a metaphor and unaware of how often we use it and the implications of such repetitive use. I also explore Haraway's method of narrating her article through attention to mediation and a critique of the recycled vision/knowledge metaphor she uses for situated knowledge. Briefly turning back to de Certeau (1984) for inspiration, I discuss translation, interpretation and the possibilities for narrating knowledge differently than by using the dominant vision/knowledge metaphor. I finish the chapter with a final brief discussion of Haraway's metaphors in relation to pointing, which is also a topic for discussion in the final chapter of this thesis.
I have tried to write this thing calmly even as its lines burn to a close. I have come to know something simple. Each sentence realised or dreamed jumps like a pulse with history and takes a side. What I say in any language is told in faultless knowledge of skin, in drunkenness and weeping, told as a woman without matches and tinder, not in words and in words and in words learned by heart, told in secret and not in secret...

Dionne Brand (No Language is Neutral, 34)

...truth is always relative to a conceptual system that is defined in large part by metaphor.

Lakoff & Johnson (Metaphors We Live By, 159)

In the article *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective* (henceforth *Situated Knowledges*), Donna Haraway (1988) draws on the different flavors of standpoint theory that have emerged through its history to critique the prevailing late 1980s western radical feminist commentary on the traditional disembodied objectivism of scientific doctrines of truth, and the epistemological relativism of some feminist versions of standpoint theory.

Haraway suggests that there were two dominant competing feminist perspectives about objectivity at that time, both of which grew from feminist desires (p. 578) for a shift in the status of women, and support for subjugated (women's) knowledges. The first pronounced science to be a “contestable text and a power field” (p. 577). It evolved from the postmodern

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13 While I do not overtly discuss disability studies in relation to feminism, and this article was written in 1988, surprisingly it can be read as parallel to ongoing discussions in disability studies, though the entanglements are a bit different. In disability studies we have critiques of various models of disability, beginning with the medical model that individualizes disability, to the social model and a variation of it that claims disability and impairment are separate and different, to a critique of the social model as splitting the subject, to a critique of discounting personal experience of disability and a call for more personal narratives, to a critique of narratives of experience as doing damage by evoking pity rather than political change... and the discussion continues. These moves of theorizing within disability studies can be read alongside similar moves within feminism that are discussed by Haraway in *Situated Knowledges*.

14 All page numbers in this chapter refer to Haraway’s *Situated Knowledges* unless indicated otherwise.
social constructionist assertion that all claims of knowledge are contingent and contestable, therefore scientific declarations of objective truths are in actuality practices of rhetorical persuasion (pp. 576-577). The second perspective grew from a desire for a “feminist version of objectivity” (p. 578). Marxist, psychoanalytic and standpoint theories were drawn on to formulate feminist-standpoint theories that take women’s experience as a preferred starting point for scientific inquiry (p. 578).

Haraway draws on two metaphors15 (discussed later) to represent these perspectives, describing them as two poles “that feminists have both selectively and flexibly used and been trapped by” (p. 576). While all claims of knowledge could be deconstructed as contestable and relative, there was simultaneously a desire to support those very knowledges which were devalued as relative and contestable (p. 579). Yet, to choose one perspective would seem to negate the other, thus choosing both seemed to be contradictory. Haraway expresses dissatisfaction with this dichotomy but rather than choosing between and thereby negating one perspective/narrative or the other, Haraway holds together what seems to belong apart. She proposes “situated knowledges” (p. 581) as a metaphorical “bridge” between totalizing value-free objectivity and relativism, both of which are framed by metaphors of ‘vision as knowledge’.

Briefly, Haraway describes situated knowledges as a “doctrine of embodied objectivity” (p. 581) based on “partial, locatable, critical knowledges” (p. 584). It is a model of knowledge that affirms that all knowledge is mediated by the subjective position, perspective, standpoint or location of the knower. My interpretation of this is that an individual’s particular experiences of life and position in society form a predisposition that orients them in a trajectory toward a particular consciousness of the world. A standpoint affects and effects what is understood and produced as knowledge, thus situated knowledge can be said to be closely related to one’s consciousness of the world. However, Haraway's point is not only about knowing from a particular location. In addition to what one understands, how one understands must be accounted for (p. 583). To illustrate this she turns toward a creative use of language and metaphors to 'bridge' the what and the how of understanding. However, to understand why Haraway turns toward metaphor requires an understanding of what a metaphor is and how a metaphor works.

15 I use the term 'metaphor' as a general category. I do not intend to delineate between figures of speech such as allegory, analogy, archetype and metaphor.
metaphor as standpoint

Language is a form and a forming of consciousness. Individual words carry a genealogy of changing, overlapping meanings that stretch from their origins to their current usage. Language is open-ended in the sense that we can never know for sure what someone means by a certain word. This ambiguity can be a problem for communication but it is also a generative, creative aspect of language that is an opening to a world of possibilities. Simply speaking, a metaphor depends on the open-endedness of language to create new meanings. New metaphors are new stories that stimulate our imaginations through unexpected juxtapositions, novel combinations of ideas, inferences, vivid imagery and other sensory impressions. A simplistic theory of metaphor is that metaphors (in Anglophone languages) are rhetorical figures of speech where a word or phrase is applied to an unrelated concept in a nonliteral poetic manner in order to imply a similarity between them (Lakoff, 1993, p. 202). For example, in Jay Dolmage's (2005) essay *Between the Valley and the Field* he writes:

In positing one thing in terms of another, metaphors might be seen as bridges on the verbal map. Indeed, the Greek root of the word, _metapherein_, means “to carry across”. In studying the use of metaphor, one thing becomes abundantly clear: the metaphor can be a useful tool for bridging between binaries that have traditionally been divisive (p. 109).

Dolmage uses the word 'bridge' as a metaphor for a metaphor. We can make sense of this metaphor because there is an implied similarity between a literal bridge as a means to cross over a gap, and a metaphor as something that makes connections between a gap in different meanings. Yet this similarity is not inherent to these ideas but a similarity that is constructed in meaning making as the concepts evoked by the metaphors correlate to the meaning maker's life experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 155). Dolmage (2005) also uses 'bridge' as a metaphor for his essay in which valley/field are metaphors for prose/poetry, forms of writing that are typically held apart and which he wishes to connect via the metaphorical bridge, metaphor.

However, Dolmage's (2005) article takes up a more contemporary and complex theory of metaphor which proposes that the distinction between poetry and prose, literal and figurative language, is false, and therefore metaphors are not defined simply as poetic figures of speech but are central to our everyday language practices (Dolmage, pp. 110-111; Lakoff, pp. 203-204). The contemporary theory of metaphor insists that the key to how metaphors work is not in language but in the way that one field of ideas is 'mapped' in terms of another field of ideas.
in our thinking process (Dolmage, p. 110; Lakoff, p. 203). Lakoff & Johnson\textsuperscript{16} (1980) propose that the very manner in which we think is metaphorical (p. 3) in that the everyday “concepts we live by are partially understood in terms of other concepts” (p. 56). Thus, metaphors ground our experience and are key to how we do culture, since they permeate every aspect of our lives, structuring how and what we can perceive, think, do and know (p. 4). By extrapolating from Haraway's (1988) \textit{Situated Knowledges}, our habitual everyday metaphors entail a standpoint from which we are oriented toward a particular understanding of the world or “situated knowledge”.

We have an enormous store of already-metaphorized everyday concepts that are grounded in bodily experience that we unwittingly repeat in our everyday language. These are the foundation of what novel metaphors can draw on (Lakoff, 1993, p. 203) such that they can be sensible to others. Metaphors are the embodiment of experience in language. Dolmage writes: There is an intimate connection between metaphor and experience. Shared experience both allows for the understanding of metaphor, and is facilitated by metaphorical language. A simple way to summarize this point would be to say that we understand metaphors because we share experiences, and we come to experience the world a certain way as a result of how we metaphorize it (2005, p. 111).

New metaphors are created by combining disparate but already understood concepts to suggest a novel idea. But metaphors are a situating language practice, both an orienting and orientation of the reader, listener, speaker or writer, such that some meanings are emphasized or foregrounded while others are swept unnoticed into the background (Dolmage, p. 110; Lakoff & Johnson, p. 10); some things are made to matter while others are not. In other words, already established concepts are creatively re-combined but only partially; they are 'cross-situated' in the thinking process; and this scrambling or reorienting of concepts allows different (partial) knowledge to emerge than either of the original concepts alone can produce.

Dolmage describes metaphor as a tool to understand what others think and, since all writing is based on metaphor, writing is also an “enabling” and “potentially revolutionary” tool (2005, p. 108) for change. Metaphor is a tool for shaping a consciousness of a particular world by reinforcing dominant ideologies that maintain what already is, through the repetitive unconscious metaphorical concepts we live by. Paradoxically, metaphor is also a tool for shaping

\textsuperscript{16} It's surprising that Haraway does not mention Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) book Metaphors We Live By, since she relies so heavily on metaphor and the structure of her paper is uncannily similar to their discussion of objectivism, subjectivism and experientialism in chapters twenty-four to twenty-nine.
different consciousnesses by articulating new ideas which can in turn effect change through new metaphors that evoke novel ideas. However, metaphors are not only tools but mediums through which we perceive the world. Haraway's article is an enactment of how metaphors can both maintain established doctrines and construct new ways of thinking. Like Dolmage, she expresses a desire to bridge binaries such as “paradoxical and critical feminist science projects” (Haraway, 1988, p. 581), relativism and objectivism (p. 579), “radical constructivism and feminist critical empiricism” (p. 580) and the “god-tricks” of infinite vision and singular vision (p. 584). She uses metaphors throughout her article to do so. While her article is replete with multiple layered metaphors, I will focus on only a few to show how she uses metaphors to bridge binaries and to think through her notion of situated knowledges.

unwitting contradictions
Haraway begins *Situated Knowledges* with a metaphor that introduces the claim that some feminists make of 'us' being harmed by 'them'. She writes:

> Academic and activist feminist inquiry has repeatedly tried to come to terms with the question of what we might mean by the curious and inescapable term "objectivity." We have used a lot of toxic ink and trees processed into paper decrying what they have meant and how it hurts us (1988, p. 575).

On first reading of these two sentences I quickly interpreted them to mean that Haraway was pointing to a presumably unwitting ironic contradiction of feminist inquiry that was claiming harm as it was also perpetrating harm. However, the full meaning was not transparent to me. I was confused by the allusion to wasting natural resources and wondered what this had to do with objectivity, knowledge, feminism and situated knowledges. Reading further, it became clear that Haraway was emphasizing the us/them dichotomy created in this declaration of harm. She identified the imagined 'us/we' of this claim as women whose bodies are deemed by society to be a “disqualifying and polluting bias in any discussion of consequence” (ibid.). She also identified the imagined 'they/them' as pointing to the privileged male conspirator scientists and philosophers who dominate their fields. Thus the commentary Haraway was referring to was that of the subjugation of women's claims to knowledge to a 'masculinist' science that seeks to maintain its gender bias by upholding the status quo through claims of objective truth and the policing of what counts as knowledge (p. 575). It is notable that she characterized this narrative as “paranoid fantasies and academic resentments” in which she acknowledged her own complicity (ibid.).
I was still uncertain if Haraway was really stating that feminist inquiry had caused material harm to the ecological environment. However, her turn of words could be read as an analogy that draws a parallel between the feminist and environmentalist movements. Read in this way, Haraway metaphorically positioned both feminists and environmentalists as unwitting 'polluters' of that which they profess to protect – at least that was the interpretation that came quite automatically to me. How I arrived at that interpretation was more puzzling, but we know from discussion of how metaphors work that the meaning a reader must make from Haraway's analogy is woven from the interaction of visual and textual threads automatically associated with each 'movement'. After a little reflection I determined some of the elements I unconsciously selected in order to arrive at my interpretation and have charted them below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminist Movement</th>
<th>Environmentalist Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declares: Women are being harmed/created as polluted bodies/subjugated by men and science.</td>
<td>Declares: Earth is being harmed/polluted/subjugated by humankind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We feminists are protecting the knowledge environment and women as a source of knowledge from those dominators.</td>
<td>We environmentalists are protecting the earth and trees as a natural resource from those dominators/polluters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yet some feminists are unwittingly causing harm to the knowledge environment and its resources (women) by pointing, which creates dichotomies of Us/them man/woman privileged masculinist scientists/subjugated women through a choice of language (communication).</td>
<td>Yet some environmentalists are unwittingly causing harm to the natural environment and its resources (trees) by pointing, which creates dichotomies of Us/them man/nature environmentalists/polluters through a choice of (paper-based) communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is an instrumental and ironic abuse of the very 'resources' (women) and knowledge environment the feminists profess to protect.</td>
<td>This is an instrumental and ironic abuse of the very 'resources' (trees) and environment the environmentalists profess to protect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above breakdown of the elements of this analogy/metaphor is simplistic because the workings of even very simple metaphors can be complex; this is not a simple metaphor and I am not a linguist. However, even from a simple breakdown one can get a sense of how concepts are cross-situated and ideas such as 'knowledge environment' and 'feminist polluters' can emerge. I quickly discounted the interpretation of environmentalist polluters as perhaps only instrumental to Haraway’s method, since I was oriented to Situated Knowledges as a feminist reading. However, that element of the metaphor effectively evoked the question of
what an us/them dichotomy means in relation to the notion of the interdependence of all things. Thus the interpretation of the metaphor that I took into the rest of the reading was this: Feminists are claiming that women are being harmed, created as 'polluted' bodies and subjugated, and they are pointing to men and the sciences as the perpetrators of harm. Feminists are trying to protect the knowledge environment and women as a source of knowledge. However, Haraway suggests that the pointing is creating dichotomies of us/them, man/woman, and privileged masculinist scientists/subjugated women. She believes this is harmful and that it is an instrumental and ironic abuse of the very 'resources' (women) and knowledge environment that feminists want to protect. Thus feminists are claiming harm while creating harm because they are not accounting for the interdependence of all things. Haraway returns to this metaphor at the end of her essay and I will return to it also after discussion of the vision metaphors that are central to her thesis of situated knowledges.

two competing flavors of vision

The dominance of vision over other senses in western culture has been discussed by many, including Marshall McLuhan who writes:

> In general we feel more secure when things are visible, when we can "see for ourselves." We admonish children, for instance, to "believe only half of what they see, and nothing of what they hear." All kinds of "shorthand" systems of notation have been developed to help us see what we hear.

> We insist on employing visual metaphors even when we refer to purely psychological states, such as tendency and duration. For instance, we say thereafter when we really mean thenafter, always when we mean at all times.
> We are so visually biased that we call our wisest men visionaries, or seers!
> (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967, p. 117)

We repeat some metaphors so often that they've become conventions that structure how we think while they remain hidden from consciousness as metaphors. An example of this, as McLuhan suggests, is the pervasive use of vision in our everyday language as a metaphor for knowledge. This metaphor structures how we understand knowledge as something which can be seen, and it is typically expressed as having 'insight', 'see' what I mean, or 'seeing' is believing.

In Chapter One, I discussed Michel de Certeau's criticism of the metaphor of 'vision as knowledge from above' that biases us to a "totalizing perspective", creating us as "voyeur-god" (1984, p. 92). Donna Haraway (1988) is also interested in vision/knowledge metaphors and she
seeks to reveal how specific entrenched metaphors have worked us over to understand vision and knowledge in particular, partial ways – partial as in not complete and partial as in biased. She begins with the same metaphor as de Certeau because it was so pervasive, especially in its repeated use as a criticism of traditional scientific doctrines of objectivity – so pervasive that she calls it an 'ideology' of vision (p. 582). According to Haraway, this metaphor proclaims that objective vision from above is a "god trick" that "fucks the world" (p. 581) and that this perspective is

[...] a conquering gaze from nowhere. This is the gaze that mythically inscribes all the marked bodies, that makes the unmarked category claim the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation. This gaze signifies the unmarked positions of Man and White, one of the many nasty tones of the word "objectivity" to feminist ears in scientific and technological, late-industrial, militarized, racist, and male-dominant societies, that is, here, in the belly of the monster, in the United States in the late 1980s (p. 581)

In this story (pp. 581-582), vision signifies disembodied, dominant powers that subjugate from a distance through a devouring, narrowing, value-free, totalizing perspective from above. These powers have a seemingly limitless vision made more powerful through technologies such as cameras, microscopes, sonography, satellites, etc.

For Haraway, this metaphorically articulated claim evokes another metaphor of agonistic images of a "reality-war", "of automated academic battlefields, where blips of light called players disintegrate (what a metaphor!) each other in order to stay in the knowledge and power game" (p. 577). She responds that it creates dichotomies (such as us/them discussed earlier) and that this metaphor is itself a "myth", "an illusion, a god trick" (p. 582), but only because we believe it to be true. This suggests that the metaphor is not the whole story, but a sedimented interpretation that, along with the imagery of academic warring, Haraway desires to change.

The next vision metaphor Haraway discusses (pp. 583-584) contrasts to the first story of objective vision. It is derived from feminist theorizing of subjugated standpoints. This story is of vision from the peripheries and from below the privileged vantage points described in the first metaphor. However, Haraway warns that this 'vision from below' metaphor for knowledge is also problematic because it can be romanticized as innocent and/or appropriated by those who are more powerful. It could also be subjected to the same deconstruction as the perspective from above of the first vision metaphor and may easily be dismissible as relativism.

These two stories of vision are the two perspectives – totalizing value-free objectivity and
relativism – discussed earlier in this paper. Haraway concludes that “relativism and totalization are both "god tricks" promising vision from everywhere and nowhere equally and fully, common myths in rhetorics surrounding Science” (p. 584). Though Haraway is critical of these metaphors of 'vision as knowledge', and she admits that vision is not the obvious choice of metaphor for a feminist agenda because it evokes the dominant objectivist metaphor with all of its inflammatory baggage (p. 588), rather than create a new metaphor she chooses to recycle these together to effect a change in what 'vision as knowledge' can mean. Her reasoning is to avoid creating another binary and because she wishes to “reclaim” for feminist writing the visual system that has been so “maligned” (p. 581). To 'bridge' the two metaphors she proposes “situated knowledges” which combines elements of both.

another flavor of 'vision as knowledge'

In Haraway's new vision metaphor all vision is reformulated as never passive or neutral, but as “active perceptual systems, building on translations and specific ways of seeing, that is, ways of life” (p. 583). Situated knowledges is objective knowledge that is based on “passionate detachment” (p. 585) and partial, locatable, embodied vision that is understood to be specific and always mediated. While Haraway's metaphor is still based on 'vision as knowledge', situated knowledge is not only about what we see from a particular location – perspective. She echos Marshall McLuhan's “the medium is the message” (1964, p. 7) in suggesting that for real change to be possible, rather than attending to what is seen, we need to become conscious of and accountable for how the technologies we construct to view the world in turn construct us and the knowledge we produce (Haraway, 1988, p. 589). The tools we use affect and effect our practices of knowing. Whether from a vantage point above or below, while locations may not be equal, each location requires equal skill to gain intimate specific understandings of how what we see is mediated through our bodies, technologies of vision, and technologies of language (p. 584).

Illustrating how metaphors/language mediate our interpretations, Haraway shifted the first interpretation of feminist standpoint theory which was an allegory (extended metaphor) that entailed “infinite mobility and changeability” (relativism) to a re-interpretation of feminist standpoint theory as an allegory that entails understanding how visual systems work in order to see from another's point of view (p. 583). Situated knowledge arises from a context that includes the specificities of diverse perspectives from various imbricating and moving locations and accounts for how our embodiment of technologies mediate us/our perspectives, and make
a difference to knowing and knowledge. This new metaphor is of “elaborate specificity and
difference and the loving care people might take to learn how to see faithfully from another’s
point of view” (p. 583). Situated-ness is not just a perspective from a fixed location of a
particular identity politics or “in a reified body” (p. 588) but is relational. Since all
vision/knowledge is partial and the grounds of perception are socially achieved, connections,
conversations and collaborations that can generate allies and solidarity (p. 584) are an essential
element for knowledge. This is quite a different scenario from the agonistic academic war
games of the first metaphor.

unwitting contradictions – part two
To expand even further on situated knowledges and its corresponding metaphor, Haraway
explains (pp. 591-592) that critics of scientific objectivity have claimed that it entails an
instrumental use of the 'objects' of the scientific gaze – the world and everything in it – that
does not benefit the objects but produces them as “resources” to appropriate, that will only
further the interests of dominant capitalist forces. However, Haraway believes that this narrative
of resources creates the “object of knowledge” as "passive and inert" (p. 591), denying 'it' the
status of agent and knower.

At this suggestion my thoughts return to the first metaphor in Situated Knowledges which
started with:

Academic and activist feminist inquiry has repeatedly tried to come to terms with
the question of what we might mean by the curious and inescapable term
"objectivity." We have used a lot of toxic ink and trees processed into paper
decrying what they have meant and how it hurts us (p. 575).

I interpreted this to mean that feminists and environmentalists were unwitting 'polluters' of that
which they profess to protect as they simultaneously point to others as the perpetrators. I
based my interpretation on the notion of trees as resources, since that is what they are, right?
Yet Haraway's discussion of resources made me realize that 'trees as resources' is another
conventional metaphor; one that I had internalized and used to conceptualize the first analogy.
As metaphor, 'resource' has a world of meanings associated with it, including that of passive
object to be instrumentally consumed, appropriated and used. Haraway goes on to explain that
situated knowledges, on the other hand, assumes that the object of knowledge is an active
agent in the knowledge produced, hence “accounts of a 'real' world do not, then, depend on a
logic of 'discovery' but on a power-charged social relation of 'conversation' (p. 593) at every
level of biology. To begin to illustrate this point Haraway reflexively returns to the original
metaphor, suggesting that we need a new metaphor of the earth as active agent. The metaphor she proposes is that of the "Coyote or Trickster". She writes:

We need not lapse into appeals to a primal mother resisting her translation into resource. The Coyote or Trickster, as embodied in Southwest native American accounts, suggests the situation we are in when we give up mastery but keep searching for fidelity, knowing all the while that we will be hoodwinked (p. 593).

I now understand that the original metaphor was not about feminists and environmentalists but ecofeminists and the 'earth-mother'/mother-earth' metaphor. 'Mother-earth' was an unconscious conventional metaphor that worked to produce my interpretation of the first allegory. I came to this understanding only after a new metaphor (coyote/world) was introduced that was inconsistent with the first one, which illustrates how new metaphors can show us the workings that conventional metaphors keep hidden (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 221). It is part of the normative order that I naturalize my automatic unconscious interpretation and this makes my interpretive moves a challenge to sift apart. 'Mother-earth' and 'resource' acted as a shortcut to decode Haraway's allegory, but there are fields of meaning that emerge from them that moved me from one metaphor to another and another. The shortcuts elided consciousness of a common narrative that entailed many moves, including the ones in the previous breakdown of the first metaphor and, in addition to but not limited to, the following:

The earth gives us everything we need to survive.
The earth is a mother,
    a passive, nurturing woman.
She is a woman of limited resources
    but she is the source of everything her children need.
Without the mother the children cannot survive
    but her children are greedy.
They abuse and pollute her
    and the mother is a victim of her dominating children.
They abuse her by sucking her dry of all her resources
    and they pollute her with their waste.
Their waste is a product of their gluttony (a sin),
    thus the naughty children are immoral.
Their waste is depleting the pitiable mother,
    but if the mother/resource is depleted the children will not survive.
For the children's sake, they must stop being so greedy
    by reducing consumption of her resources and production of waste.
The children can save themselves
    by protecting and saving the mother.

This is a story of the world as passive female victim and the naughty children who deplete her resources. It evokes dichotomies of adult/child, humankind/nature and victim/perpetrator. It sketches out a relatively superficial domestic problem of women, nurturance, home and proper
child-rearing, not a systemic problem that includes capitalism gone wild, corporate polluters and lack of serious governmental action; thus it maintains a division between the personal and the political. The solution is a simple – reduce, reuse and recycle – hierarchy of waste management.

The implication is that the mother-earth/resources metaphor for the world essentializes women, diminishes ecofeminism and does not depict the earth or women in a way that serves either of them. Instead, by shifting our orientation to the world from mother to coyote-trickster, the animal/human, victim/perpetrator, and nature/culture dualisms can be avoided, and we can become conscious of the world as having an “independent sense of humor” and agency in the production of knowledge (Haraway, 1988, p. 593). Some might call foul for Haraway's appropriation of the 'world as coyote-trickster' from First Nations cultures and assume that the metaphor draws on a familiar trope of First Nations people as stewards of 'mother-earth'. If this was the case then 'world as coyote-trickster' would not shift one's consciousness of the world to anything different. However, this interpretation further proves how conventional metaphors can stick like glue. Haraway points out that the coyote-trickster is a mythological character from not only aboriginal cultures but many cultures around the world (p. 594). By employing the coyote-trickster, she gestures to a world of stories that constitute variations on a theme through a wide variety of ideologies, languages, values and interpretations. For example, the coyote in various mythologies can be: playful, creative, disruptive, elusive, a joker, break rules, or possess a dual nature. The 'world as trickster' is a world that is unpredictable, that can't be nailed down, that can't be neatly categorized, that plays by its own changing rules. This is a world with a mind of its own. In the last sentence of Haraway's article she states: “Perhaps our hopes for accountability, for politics, for ecofeminism, turn on revisioning the world as coding trickster with whom we must learn to converse” (p. 596). Instead of a narrative of mother-earth as resource and pollution, this metaphor suggests that the world is a tricky animal that we can speak to and which speaks to us, but in a coded language that we “must learn” if we hope to understand and be understood.

Metaphors are coded and language is a tricky animal. The juxtaposition of concepts in Haraway’s initial metaphor – feminists, ecofeminists, resources, polluting, protecting, mother-earth, etc. – and in all metaphors, obliges the reader to read across cuts, making the reader the tenuous thread that interweaves the different elements. It is in the addition of the reader's internal thought process where the meaning emerges, but which cannot emerge alone. It is in the reading together of these elements within the space created by differences that the
meaning is contextualized and narrated. While this is often an unconscious or transparent process particularly with habitual use of conventional metaphors, this is not a straightforward, effortless or passive process, particularly for new metaphors. Each reader is charged with actively defining the message for themselves. Metaphors require the reader to engage both emotionally and intellectually in order to span the caesuras of ambiguity between the elements, their disparate connotations, evocations and imagery. Haraway's intentions hover in the spaces and may either uphold or present a challenge to the reader's biases or assumptions, yet the spaces allow room for the thoughts of the reader, effectively suturing her/him into the discourse. While disparate elements are evocative and create parameters of meaning, they alone do not create the story, nor does the reader alone impose their own story. The meaning is created in the relationship of reader and word/concept and thus the reader as active agent is also implicated as ethically responsible for the meaning that emerges. While this explains how we make meaning with metaphors, Haraway's point is that metaphor is a metaphor for all meaning making. As the world, words are alive. Both words and the world are an animal that has agency, thus neither words nor the world interpret themselves or wait for an interpreter. Whether we name it interpretation or knowledge, it emerges from a conversation between us (p. 593). Like metaphors, all knowledge is partial and relational and it is because of this that the new can emerge from the spaces between difference. “The interval is where the action is” (McLuhan and Powers, 1989, p. 13).

vision as knowledge – the same old story

Disability studies scholars have been critical of the myriad metaphors that emphasize disability as a lack, perpetuate false understandings of disabilities, and represent disability as a thing no one would or should ever desire. There is much existing scholarship that is critical of language that is deemed to be both dis-ableist and ableist, objectifying, pathologizing, denigrating and exclusive of disabled people and their experiences. I will not go into the details since others have done so much work on it already.17 There is much validity in these arguments. However, as

much as ableist language can feel oppressive, language policing can do the same. So while I will also be critical of language, I will try to focus on creating change by proposing something new as well.

Certainly, vision as a metaphor for knowledge is based on the presumed ability to see, thus this metaphor relies on a normative conception of the body and is considered by some to be ableist language because it excludes blind people as knowers. It misrepresents how the senses of anyone, disabled or not, work together, yet Haraway’s use of the metaphor seems to keep vision quite discrete. To say that the vision/knowledge metaphor is a reduction is an understatement, and Haraway makes this clear as she details the full pictures that emerge from both of the vision/knowledge metaphors that she takes exception with. Her laying bare of these metaphors is understandable, but why would she continue to draw on the same dominant metaphor for knowledge if her intention is to define knowledge differently? On the topic of reductionism she states, “Science has been about a search for translation, convertibility, mobility of meanings, and universality which I call reductionism only when one language (guess whose?) must be enforced as the standard for all the translations and conversions” (p. 580).

This statement could be interpreted to mean that the sciences are concerned with finding metaphors to bridge ideas. This is a positive notion of the sciences as potentiating multiple diverse meanings just as metaphors do. Yet she cautions that privileging one language for translation forecloses possibilities for interpretation and amounts to “reductionism”. This notion can be turned toward metaphors in that metaphors can generate multiple possible meanings which are limited by enforcing a standard interpretation. Hence interpretation of vision as a metaphor for knowledge through only one translation of vision can likewise be limiting and so Haraway develops a different interpretation of 'vision as knowledge' by extending vision to mean not solely a disembodied gaze from above, nor a perspective from below, but as partial, embodied, mediated and from different locations. Since all vision/knowledge is partial, it could be argued that the metaphor is inclusive of many blind people who have partial vision; but what about those who have no vision at all? Does this mean they cannot know?

Haraway does motion toward other sensory systems and bodies throughout her essay, and seemingly wants the reader to understand that her focus is on embodiment, not just vision; but this is overshadowed by the vision/knowledge metaphors. At one point she asks, “What other sensory powers do we wish to cultivate besides vision?” (p. 587), and in the same paragraph,
which is all about vision, she asks “Who gets blinded? Who wears blinders?” Not only does she use the vision/knowledge metaphor, but she takes up the blindness/ignorant metaphor. After rejecting the voyeuristic male gaze metaphor as evoking an image of violent academic war games (p. 587), she turns to the view from the ground metaphor subjugated knowledge. She writes that “The subjugated have a decent chance to be on to the god trick and all its dazzling – and, therefore, blinding – illuminations” (p. 584). What is accomplished by Haraway's use of a different vision metaphor? She moves away from an image of war and antagonism toward an image of blind as ignorance, effecting a different violence on a different group of people, one that is somehow more palatable, since it is not recognized by her as violence. Haraway may be suggesting that the subjugated are more likely to understand that the belief that one can see from everywhere is an overpowering force that can make you ignorant to 'reality'. However, there are a number of other meanings suggested by this metaphor. Here are a few implications:

- People who don't know the 'real' world/truth are blind and thus the blind can't know the 'real' world/truth.
- The subjugated are not as likely to be dazzled by the myth of vision from everywhere therefore the subjugated are not as likely to be blind
- Perhaps some folk have been tricked into believing the myth and thus they became blind, and of course none of us want to be 'that' – duped, unknowing or blind.
- Blind folk are more likely to have been fooled into believing that one can see from everywhere

This is but a taste of how this analysis could progress at length. While wanting to “reclaim” the vision/knowledge metaphor because vision has been “maligned” (p. 581), Haraway (presumably) unwittingly maligns blind people in her use of the blind/unknowing metaphor. It would be easy to say 'it's only a metaphor' but, like many disability studies scholars, Haraway's own argument insists that metaphors are not just figurative but construct the world as we know it both materially and semiotically (p. 595). That sight is so closely associated with knowledge is not simply a play with words. Metaphors are actions/practices that often reinforce normative ideology and thus have material consequences for people with disabilities by designating them as lacking, inferior, abnormal.

Haraway's feminist agenda is grounded in an emancipatory rewriting of 'woman' and her theorizing leads us there through her re-metaphorizing of 'vision', but what are the effects of this? Titchkosky (2010) writes about the historical trashing of disability through rhetorical
devices such as metaphors in the freedom talk that has helped to build emancipatory projects such as the feminist and anti-racist movements. Titchkosky’s research reveals that the disability tropes and the realities of, for example, disability, blindness and insanity, were not considered by those seeking freedom as anything but undesirable and discardable. Disability was perceived to be a natural disqualifier and thus disavowed by the freedom seekers as definitely something that they were not (p. 15). Haraway (1988) makes the statement that “we need the power of modern critical theories of how meanings and bodies get made, not in order to deny meanings and bodies, but in order to build meanings and bodies that have a chance for life” (p. 580).

However, the way disability is used in her essay somewhat contradicts this statement. Not only does she use the blind/lack metaphor, but she makes instrumental use of “epistemological electroshock therapy”, “self-induced multiple personality disorder”, trying to “stay sane”, and “epistemological feminist mental hygiene” (p. 578). I am not suggesting that Haraway completely trashes disability, but some of her language certainly doesn't contribute to a positive image of disability and her persistent use of the vision/knowledge metaphor does not help the matter.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) theorize that metaphors are understood through correlations we make to schemas already constructed through previous experience (pp. 154-155). This seems sensible, but their ideas are based on normative experience of normative bodies, and this raises doubts about the validity of this theory. How could metaphors that draw on normative bodies and experiences for understanding make sense to people who have not had that experience? Yet they do. People who cannot run or have no legs still understand what it means to run their fingers along the wall to find a light switch, run a hot bath, or run machinery. Similarly, blind people understand what it means to ‘see what I mean’, to ‘get insight’ into something, to ‘watch out’ for others. This would seem to negate Lakoff & Johnson's theory. Yet, if we consider that all experience is not direct experience, then the theory that we make sense of metaphors based on experience can still hold true.

Haraway (1988) defines all knowledge as situated and partial. It can be achieved by trying to get 'insight' into another's particular 'view' by orienting to their position and by trying to understand what has mediated their 'perspective'. In other words, since all knowledge is mediated, the task is to get an indirect sense of what something means to someone else as it is filtered through both their and our life experiences, particular bodies and the 'tools' or 'mediums' through which we understand. In addition, we must account for how we know,
whether that is through vision from above or below, through a microscope or through touch, hearing or text, to name just a few ways knowledge is mediated. With situated knowledges there is no splitting of subject and object (p. 583) but rather a splitting of subject (p. 586). So, not only do we come to know the world through our bodies, but we must come to (partially) know the world through the bodies, experiences and ‘technologies’ of others too. We can't ever fully know the mind or experience of another anymore than we can ever truly achieve equity. But through our doings that move us toward understanding, equity and disability, we may sometimes touch and be touched by a fleeting glimmer, scent, whisper, taste, or breeze of the lived experience of another. Though ableist metaphors may be offensive, this theory does account at least partially for how it is possible for anyone to learn new metaphors that do not relate to their direct experience.

It is still curious that Haraway chose to recycle the dominant metaphor for knowledge rather than create a new orientation to knowledge. Perhaps she considers her new metaphor an act of resistance by 'returning the gaze', or perhaps her positionality circumscribed other options as beyond her reach. This last hypothesis may have some validity. What Haraway has described are three metaphors for the same concept, that are all consistent with each other in that they are all based on 'vision as knowledge'. Haraway's 'new' vision metaphor calls on the conventional metaphor of 'vision-as-knowledge'. In doing this it gives validity to the new story, suggesting that we can maintain some continuity in our current understanding of vision and knowledge and that there must be coherence in the new story. According to Lakoff & Johnson, “consistent sets of metaphors“ are typically found in the sciences because they enable a more objective understanding of a situation through consistently structured relationships from which non-conflicting inferences can be made (pp. 219-222). Aside from science, “different metaphors for the same concept are not in general consistent with each other” (p. 219). This is because no single metaphor can fully describe a concept since, as already mentioned, metaphors function by highlighting some things and hiding others (p. 221). Consequently, as Haraway showed by changing the 'earth as mother' to 'world as tricky coyote' metaphor, we require a variety of inconsistent metaphors for a fuller understanding of our everyday lives (ibid.).

We all have our biases, needs and desires. Haraway is invested in both science and feminism and seems to need to effect a shift in both while maintaining an equitable relation between them. This is neither bad nor good but may account for her maintaining consistency with the vision/knowledge metaphor. The use of vision/knowledge and blind/ignorance metaphors strikes
me as very much an instrumental use of those ‘technologies’, a use which keeps people in their places, maintaining the status quo of who knowers can be and thus who holds the power, and this is antithetical to Haraway's proposition of situated knowledges. There is no doubt that her thesis of situated knowledges has been a great contribution to theory, yet had she switched to a metaphor for knowledge that was inconsistent with vision, her argument could have been enacted in a manner that was more consistent with what she was trying to convey about knowledge. In other words, how she is saying is causing harm to what she is saying. This may indeed be her point... Haraway is very tricky.

Throughout *Situated Knowledges*, Haraway references tools, media and environments, all of which have been taken up by her and other theorists as mediators. If “the medium is the message”, using McLuhan's and her own message that we must understand the things that mediate us in order to account for our knowledge, we could say that Haraway's medium is her article, thus the academic text was her message, but language/metaphor was another medium and her environment (academia, academic disciplines) functioned as yet another. As Marshall McLuhan did in his later work with spatial metaphors, Haraway conflates method and metaphor, but instead with vision metaphors, reworking “the medium is the message” to medium-as-metaphor-as-method-as-message. Haraway wants to convey that the mediums, metaphors and methods we use mediate us, and that we make meaning by using those too, but instead of just telling us she shows us. By using metaphor she requires the reader to work interpretation as she shows interpretation's workings, also demonstrating that words or people alone do not make meaning but are interdependent; meaning is made in the relationship, the conversation between us. She shows us that reorienting to a ‘technology’ such as vision, or a semiotic technology such as metaphor, reshapes us and creates new paradigms, new stories.

Haraway's method suggests a reflexive turn of our attention to how we are mediated by our own situated-ness, technologies and practices, to better understand how we are implicated in the stories we repeat and how we create a particular world (and ourselves) when we tell our particular stories. In other words, how we narrate the world creates the world, or, as Jay Dolmage writes, "the words we choose make the world we choose" (2005, 115). A particular consciousness of the world is embedded in each story we tell, so by telling a new story we can effect a different consciousness that creates the world anew. Like Haraway, Jay Dolmage

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18 The medium/method/metaphor is also the message of this thesis.
suggests that we can choose change (2005, 117) – we can create new metaphors that can story a new world. Haraway’s point is that metaphors are translations that can be interpreted in many ways to create the world anew. She also makes the point that neither embodiment nor situated knowledge emerges from a fixed place in a reified (disabled or not disabled) body such as from the eyes/vision/blindness, but from “inflections in orientations, and responsibility for difference” (1988, p. 588) – through consideration of how different bodies/minds experience the world, practice knowing and produce knowledge. Regardless of having made those points, she recycled an already existing translation of ‘knowledge as vision’ by reinterpreting what vision can mean. To sum it up, Haraway formulates situated knowledge using a vision/knowledge metaphor based on vision that is partial, embodied, active, specific, and mediated.

According to the contemporary theory of metaphor, each conceptual element – ‘vision’ and ‘vision as knowledge’ and all that they entail – will be changed by the ‘cross-situating’ of ideas in a new metaphor, thus we can assume that not only our ideas about ‘vision as knowledge’ will change but our ideas about ‘vision’ should also shift. What would make the most difference is the idea of all vision as mediated, which is different than the everyday conception of vision, but other than that there is little change. I concede that this reorientation to vision conceivably effects a different consciousness of ‘vision as knowledge’ (situated knowledge) but the master metaphor is still operative and our conception of knowing is still cast as seeing. It would require invoking a different paradigm to disrupt the dominant conception of knowledge by creating a new metaphor that is inconsistent with the conventional master metaphor. Haraway did not do this, the status quo is maintained, and it seems that neither the story nor the world has changed. While Haraway makes “an argument against various forms of unlocatable, and so irresponsible, knowledge claims” (p. 583), standpoints that incorporate only the visual sense of knowledge are also irresponsible. “It is, therefore, time to switch metaphors”, as she put it (p. 580). To further this turn to a discussion of the possibility for change in our conception of knowledge, it is worthwhile to return to Michel de Certeau’s criticism of the metaphor of ‘vision as knowledge from above’.

In Chapter One I explored Michel de Certeau’s (1984) *Walking in the City* in relation to habitual practices and the sensual orientation of walking, as well as the experience of being understood as a not-walker. De Certeau proposes reorienting to the everyday experience of walking as an alternative to the dominant western visual orientation. His interest is in the sensual – the
embodied experience of movement through space that unfolds over time. In retrospect I realize that the research I’d been doing on the senses prior to reading *Walking in the City* had oriented me to focus on some of his ideas and not others. To say that I found de Certeau's writing 'eluded legibility' is an understatement. For example, what does this paragraph mean?

The ordinary practitioners of the city live "down below," below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, *Wandersmanner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other’s arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poem in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility. It is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness. The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other (p. 93).

The words, “below the thresholds at which visibility begins”, “spaces that cannot be seen”, “The paths... elude legibility” and “characterized by their blindness”, all indicate that De Certeau is writing about walking and not seeing. He seems (to some people) to be using the word blind as a metaphor for unawareness, distractedness or unconsciousness.

In trying to make sense of the text, I was surprised to find a different published translation of the chapter *Walking in the City*, and compared them. The second translation seemed to support an interpretation of blind as a metaphor for unawareness. However, my curiosity was piqued by the different translations and I compared both to the original French, looking for clues to interpret the text. Rather than interpret, first I had to translate, and I did so line by line, creating a chart of the paragraph in the original French, my translation, the first Rendall English translation quoted in this chapter, and the second translation by Miller and Schneider. I looked for the truth between translations, concluding that the Rendall translation was most faithful to the original French. Surprisingly, the second translation seemed to be more than translation and included interpretation. With this conclusion, I returned to pouring over the Rendall translation again. The significance of all this talk about translation and interpretation is

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that while Haraway could have translated knowledge differently, she chose to reinterpret vision while stressing that translations must not always be in the same language (1988, p. 580). As Gadamer (2004) states it, “Translation is an indissoluble unity of implicit acts of anticipating, of grasping meaning as a whole beforehand, and explicitly laying down what was thus grasped in advance” (p. 552). This makes it important to be skeptical of translation before interpretation. So, while Walking in the City may seem to imply that blindness was unawareness or unknowing, maybe I shouldn't rely on the same old translation or interpretation. Within the dominant Western scopic regime, blind is used as a metaphor for unknowing or unawareness, and since de Certeau (1984) is quite clear that he is not in favor of a totalizing scopic view, this is either an unwitting contradiction or he is doing something different with the meaning of blindness.

My thoughts turned to a different kind of walking I'd been experiencing, thinking and writing about (see Chapter One). Mindfulness walking meditation entails an expanded state of consciousness that is achieved through intentionally attending to your body/mind, feelings, thoughts, surroundings, sensations, and most importantly the experience of each step as it unfolds moment to moment. This was a very different experience of walking from my everyday 'mindless' experience, yet as my exploration of walking in Chapter One concluded, each manner has its benefits. There is no one right way, the only 'problem' is when we persist in always using the same way such that it becomes dominant and 'rules' our consciousness. This was both de Certeau's and Haraway's point about the dominance of vision. But as de Certeau (1984) suggests, we also need standpoints that are not visual at all but incorporate diverse bodily locations from which to understand differently, and it seems he was proposing blind walking. What is it like to walk through the world blind? Just because someone is blind it doesn't mean they are unaware of their surroundings or where they are walking. I have a sense of something; an embodied sense of... de Certeau is onto something.

While I searched for a way to interpret blindness as I sensed it was being used by de Certeau – not as lack but as a different orientation that entails a fullness of being and knowing – I came up with a new word. Just because something can't be seen does not mean that it doesn't exist and that we can't know it. So I call “blindfulness” into our consciousness. If something is not nameable it is hard for many people to have a sense of it, discuss it, understand it or even know that it exists. Making up new words or metaphors is a creative act that can articulate a

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22 The word 'blindfulness' came to me when I was reading and writing about de Certeau’s Walking in the City for an unpublished paper I wrote entitled Walking With the City in 2010.
presence in the world of something not yet widely thought, sensed, or understood. Jay Dolmage (2005) writes that new metaphors can “create new knowledge that demystifies the experience of being human and expands understanding by broadening perspectives. When a different body conceptualizes the world, the world opens up and the fences come down” (p. 116). Perhaps this new word could do that.

**the becoming of blindfulness**

Haraway writes in *Situated Knowledges* that “We need to learn in our bodies, endowed with primate color and stereoscopic vision, how to attach the objective to our theoretical and political scanners in order to name where we are and are not, in dimensions of mental and physical space we hardly know how to name” (1988, p. 582). Blindfulness is perhaps one of those mental and physical locations that we hardly know how to name, and now hardly know how to define. While I have been attending to contradictions throughout this thesis, I wish to minimize creating more, so while I’ve put forward the notion that different senses and ways of being can produce different understandings and knowledge, my experience and understanding of blindfulness and what it might entail is limited. Rather than attempt to prematurely foreclose the possibilities for what 'blindfulness' can mean, I will only lightly sketch out a sense of what the word conjures for me and to leave its possible meaning open to percolate; perhaps others will help to write it into consciousness as a worthy concept, or not. Blindfulness acts as a bridge between blindness and mindfulness. While blindness refers to a physical ability to not see, mindfulness refers to a particular state of being, awareness, or consciousness that is achieved through a particular orientation of one's attention. Thus blindfulness is a way of knowing, being and moving through the world that we currently have no word for. Our different bodies contribute to the constitution of ourselves as subjects but bodies are not wholly deterministic any more than discursive power is. Blindfulness is a form of consciousness that is achieved through an orientation to blindness and not a given state for everyone who is blind, nor is it something that is unachievable by the sighted. I don't have the ability to be blind, to know the world as a blind person, but sometimes I can gain a little blindfulness as I attempt to orient myself to blindness. Blindfulness could be the queering of knowledge metaphors or maybe the tricky coyote. It has nothing to do with deficit or lack but reflects a fullness of experience.

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23 Annotation: 'Blindfulness' needs to be put into conversation with those writers who may have already tried to conceptualize blindness as a way of being, but at this point I simply present a new possible word as something that I have not explored other than what is written here. Thus it would be premature to comment on whether or how others may have represented this (or not) because I simply don't know. That would be an obvious and interesting first round of research to begin with.
It is a risk for a scholar to throw a new word or concept out into the wild before thinking through all its possible positive or negative entailments, and without testing and interrogating it thoroughly. However, I think it would be more of a risk for me alone to try to prescribe a tight definition. While I have not fully defined what blindfulness is, my hope is that through the word we might come to a broader understanding of what knowledge and consciousness is and can be, and to reorient to possibilities for disabled people through the notion of disability, not as lack or problem, but as something with generative possibilities that are yet to be widely understood. Blindfulness is an example of wordplay that has potential to change how we think about blindness, disability, knowledge and consciousness. Though it needs testing, reflecting, meditating, considering and experimenting, blindfulness may be a new metaphor that narrates a new story.

It's yours. Do with it what you will. Tell it to friends. Turn it into a television movie. Forget it. But don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now. (King, 2003, p. 29).

We know the world through the stories we tell and the stories are a conversation between us. A change in metaphor effects a change in orientation, such that we are forced to attend to the world differently, effecting a different consciousness. Yet in order to get close to a new idea, sometimes we need to distance ourselves from what we already know. Metaphors are made powerful and evolve into unquestioned truths through repetition. Yet it is also the incessant repetition of metaphors of blind/ignorance and vision/knowledge that has laid the groundwork for something new to emerge, since the new can only emerge from repetition. Haraway proposes that we seek knowledge “ruled by partial sight and limited voice – not partiality for its own sake but, rather, for the sake of the connections and unexpected openings situated knowledges make possible” (1988, p. 590). This speaks to me of partial knowledge as a dynamic opening to possibilities, a process of becoming rather than a fixed entity or truth. This leads to the topic for the next chapter where I will directly address the notion of change and practices as they relate to disability studies. I do this through exploration of the existential notion of becoming while drawing on the work of Elizabeth Grosz and Tanya Titchkosky. The discussion begins with a methodical analysis and interpretation of the word becoming, moves to an understanding of disability studies as a set of reflexive practices and then settles on the problematic of change and reorienting to the new. I finish by touching on the ideas of risk, uncertainty, experimenting and play within higher education.
Before moving on to the next chapter, I want to return to Haraway's (1988) first and last metaphor again as the discussion is relevant to the next chapter. The first two sentences of *Situated Knowledges* read:

> Academic and activist feminist inquiry has repeatedly tried to come to terms with the question of what *we* might mean by the curious and inescapable term "objectivity." We have used a lot of toxic ink and trees processed into paper decrying what *they* have meant and how it hurts *us* (p. 575).

First, a quick recap of interpretation of the first metaphor. Feminists and environmentalists were unwitting 'polluters' of that which they profess to protect, as they simultaneously point to others as the perpetrators. This evoked a picture of a knowledge environment being polluted by feminists. Understanding of the metaphor later changed to the mother-earth/earth-mother metaphors which Haraway criticized for creating women and world as passive victims, a story of women/world as exploited resources and polluted/polluters. I originally dismissed the environmentalist polluters evoked by the first metaphor as only instrumental to Haraway's purpose, but it turns out that it is yet another allegory for the metaphorical pointing that both feminists and ecofeminists have done in their narrating of the world. The initial claim of harm entailed an action of metaphorical pointing that created an us/them dichotomy. Pointing indicates a separation or disconnection from that which is being pointed to, that which is not me. It is a pointing toward something other and pointing away from self at the same time. It is a way to call something 'other' into consciousness. Interestingly, this metaphorical pointing relies on the vision/knowledge metaphor. It implies that first there is an object that can be pointed at, it is seen by the pointer, there is a visible spatial separation and social distance between the pointer and object, it is pointed to for others to look at, and others are assumed to be able to see it and thus know it too. Pointing splits subject and object and creates a story of polarizing dichotomies that denies the interdependence of all things. This is what Haraway metaphorizes as the garbage that pollutes our environments, the world. This is the environmental crisis she wishes to address by proposing the 'world as trickster' metaphor. The last sentence reads:

> Perhaps our hopes for accountability, for politics, for ecofeminism, turn on revisioning the world as coding trickster with whom we must learn to converse (p. 596).

In the first metaphor Haraway implied the question of what an us/them dichotomy means in relation to the notion of the interdependence of all things. By shifting from mother to 'world as coyote-trickster', the animal/human, victim/perpetrator, and nature/culture, matter/mutter (p.
596) dichotomies are avoided, and the world is storied as having an “independent sense of humor” and agency in the production of knowledge (p. 593). Thus bodies are not solely biology or inscription but “material-semiotic actors” (p. 595). But while the world is fashioned as having its own agency, neither the world nor the word interpret themselves. This narrative stresses the relational, the interdependence of all things – animal, man, woman, world, word, etc. – and the intersubjective nature of all knowledge. There is no us/them, only we. Rather than pointing the finger at men and science as the perpetrators and implicitly pointing to women as victims, Haraway makes a reflexive turn, reorienting to the theories and practices in which feminism and herself are implicated, a splitting of subject.
Let's think the unthinkable, let's do the undoable. Let us prepare to grapple with the ineffable itself, and see if we may not eff it after all.

Douglas Adams (Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency, 188)

If we continue to speak the same language to each other, we will reproduce the same story. Begin the same stories all over again. Don't you feel it? Listen: men and women around us all sound the same. Same arguments, same quarrels, same scenes. Same attractions and separations. Same difficulties, the impossibility of reaching each other. Same... same... Always the same.

Luce Irigaray (When our Lips Speak Together, 69)

what is becoming of disability studies?

On the first morning of the Disability Studies Summer Institute (DSSI) at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto), Dr. Tanya Titchkosky introduced her opening address to the participants as The Becoming Crisis of Disability Studies (2011). Within the first few minutes, Titchkosky posed the existential question, “what is becoming of disability and disability studies” (2011). Continuing on with her address, she described the story that is narrated by statistics and reports of governments, the United Nations, the World Bank and the World Health Organization, of disability as “simply a natural calamity that has befallen a large number of unfortunate few” who exist on the margins of all that is good (ibid.). This picture has been painted “from a distance, as if from the top of a tall building”, and it is characterized by the United Nations as a “silent crisis” which, according to Titchkosky, persists despite worldwide governmental interventions (ibid.).

'Crisis' is a term commonly used in medical fields to describe an acute or significant change,
usually for the worse, in the state of a person’s mental, emotional or physical health. It is especially used in relation to psychological states, and while it may be correct terminology and accurately reflect the experience of people, I wonder how the use of the word 'crisis' inflects the way we think about madness and disabled people. In the news 'crisis' is used in relation to finances, environmentalism, suffering, starvation, or natural disasters, to denote urgent, dire, or catastrophic problems of society. Margaret Price (2011), in her book *Mad at School*, analyzes various words, metaphors and utterances that are often used in relation to disability, words that reflect negative and violent conceptions of disabled people. Price's analysis is focused on accounts of violence in U.S. workplaces (p. 111) and academic institutions. According to her research, the coverage of these events – media reports, articles, blogs and online bulletin boards – represent academia as in “crisis” (p. 22) through the use of such language as “under siege”, “campus terrorism”, “time bomb” and “preparedness”, in metaphors of epidemics, war, and terrorism (p. 145). While Price's analysis does not specifically focus on the word 'crisis', the implication is that metaphorical use of 'crisis' in this context is problematic. According to Price, not only does such language perpetuate a misconception of disabled people as violent, but it's use is an enactment of 'structural violence' (p. 142) – an assault on disabled people. She breaks down for the reader how the media accounts she studied reinforce dichotomies of us/normal/rational and them/crazies/irrational (p. 145). These binary oppositions create a “logic of domination” (Haraway, 1988, p. 592) and, according to Price (2011), “the 'us-them' binary, often invoked in DS [disability studies] literature, is a ready example” of how “power dynamics around disability are maintained” (p. 177). 'Crisis' is something that has been slapped onto the surface of disability by normative culture, and it's sticking like glue.

For both Price and Titchkosky this notion of crisis in relation to disability is problematic, and both question the reason for and effects of its use. While de Certeau (1984) is writing in a different context – the city as a concept – his statement is very apropos to this discussion of crisis. De Certeau casts doubt on the “ministers of knowledge” who make such characterizations as ‘disability as a “silent crisis”’. He writes:

> The ministers of knowledge have always assumed that the whole universe was threatened by the very changes that affected their ideologies and their positions. They transmute the misfortune of their theories into theories of misfortune. When they transform their bewilderment into "catastrophes," when they seek to enclose the people in the "panic" of their discourses, are they once more necessarily right? (p. 95).

Like de Certeau and Haraway, Titchkosky (2011) too is skeptical of the totalizing view from
above, suggesting that disability can be noticed “up close as a cultural phenomenon produced by us, always locatable not over there, but instead down here between us, between all our embodied interpretations” (Titchkosky, 2011). Noticing up close is where she believes disability studies enters the picture. However, Titchkosky does not simply propose that disability studies can save the day, nor that it is the solution to any problem. She questions why disability is required to be the crisis and, while agreeing that there is a crisis and that it persists, she reasons that ‘crisis' needs to be rethought and addressed in new ways. She asks, “If disability is us, and if we collectively continue to deny disability as cultural production, who then are we making ourselves to be?” (ibid.). Thus Titchkosky articulates a desire for an existential crisis, not for disabled people but for society in general. She defines this reflexive turn as a “‘becoming crisis' that some disability studies approaches offer” (ibid.). It is “the necessity to regard what we have already said and done to/about/with disability as exactly what needs to be put to question” (ibid.).

Titchkosky cites a definition of crisis as an event that creates an “unstable and dangerous situation” or “negative change” (Titchkosky, 2011). The implication is that society, which includes disability studies, may perpetuate a negative representation of disability through its pointing to disability as obviously “bad, inadequate, unjust, unfair, exclusionary”, a problem or a crisis (ibid.). This metaphorical pointing to that-which-I-am-not, discussed at the end of the last chapter, is what Titchkosky wants to call into crisis. To quote from my previous chapter:

Pointing splits subject and object and creates a story of polarizing dichotomies that denies the interdependence of all things. This is what Haraway metaphorizes as the garbage that pollutes our environments, the world. This is the environmental crisis she wishes to address by proposing the ‘world as trickster' metaphor (see Chapter Three, p. 76).

Pointing is an act that materializes self/other and us/them rather than 'we'. By calling into crisis this pointing to 'disability as crisis', Titchkosky also questions and calls into crisis “what is becoming of disability and disability studies” (2011). While Titchkosky's focus in her DSSI address was directed toward society generally, in what follows my focus is to take seriously her question, “What is becoming of disability and disability studies” with a focus on disability studies, and to consider her phrase, “The Becoming Crisis of Disability Studies” (ibid.) in order to tease out possibilities for their meaning.

becoming

‘Becoming' has hooked me; what does Titchkosky mean when she uses the word? While I
understand her point, I wonder why she would call it a 'becoming crisis'. In trying to grasp the meaning of 'becoming' I find myself confused, which could be attributable to the very nature of the word, which can occupy a number of different grammatical designations. To begin with, Titchkosky used 'becoming' as both an adjective and a verb and defined it as "the process of coming to be something or of passing into a state" (Titchkosky, 2011), but becoming can mean many things. It can be an adjective, as in 'becoming dress', to mean flattering or appropriate. I doubt that Titchkosky's "becoming crisis" means a flattering crisis, though it may be an appropriate crisis to provoke. However, if 'becoming crisis' is intended to mean 'the crisis that is becoming' then 'is becoming' acts as a compound verb – the present progressive tense of 'to become' – indicating that at this moment the crisis is coming into existence. 'Becoming crisis', then, would carry essentially the same meaning even though it functions as a verbal adjective. Similarly, the verb 'is becoming' in the question 'what is becoming of disability studies', suggests wonder about what disability studies is coming to be, and 'becoming crisis' could then be construed as a crisis about what disability studies is coming to be. Thus far, 'becoming crisis' could mean:

- an appropriate crisis for disability studies;
- a crisis that is coming into existence for disability studies;
- a crisis about what disability studies is coming to be or is turning into.

These meanings could lead to an interpretation of Titchkosky's 'becoming crisis' in this way: It is appropriate and even attractive for disability studies to transition into a period of uncertainty by analyzing its own production of disability-as-crisis and to destabilize an understanding of disability as an "unstable and dangerous situation". Calling into question what we already do, know and say is a break from passivity, a disruption of a repetitive action that perpetuates disabled people as a problem which could, for some, precipitate a crisis in our understandings of who we are, thereby throwing ourselves into an "unstable and dangerous situation" (Titchkosky, 2011), a crisis.

To sum up the crises in two sentences: Titchkosky's crisis in understanding disability as a 'silent crisis' provoked her to call for a disruption, a crisis in our understanding of our pointing to 'disability as crisis'. This new crisis could precipitate a newer crisis in our understanding of who we are, that could precipitate an even newer crisis, that of a need to transform from what one is and does to what one wants to be and do. Conceivably, if one diagnoses a crisis or a problem one will want to fix it and immediately leap to desiring the good-as-new. And if the space between crisis and good-as-new – the transformation – is experienced as an uncomfortable
space, one could easily push it into the unconscious, to discount it as unimportant and secondary with an orientation only to that which will come to be, the good-as-new. This jump from crisis to new brings me back to wondering about the word becoming again.

Becoming signifies a change, a transition from one point to another; from an already established, known, stable 'here' that is disrupted, to move through a state of instability, growth and progress – a state of not yet formed, not yet matured, not yet there – in a trajectory toward an imagined 'there' in the future. In a state of not-yet and with the future perhaps being unknown, transition could be fraught with uncertainty, upheaval, or anxiety about what will be. As Grosz (1999) states, the "idea of chance, of indeterminacy, of unforeseeability – that lurks within the very concept of change or newness, seems to unsettle ... ideals of stability and control" (p. 16). Thus the inclination would be to ease a sense of loss of control by concentrating on the question, 'becoming what?', by making the unknown known, by foreseeing the future, by manifesting a goal. The transition becomes an occasion for the organizing, outlining, mapping out and formulation of a plan that is based on experience, on previous plans that have worked well, and on results of previous research. One's sense of anxiety is alleviated by implementing the plan – using the appropriate tools to carry out the predesignated steps within the allotted time-frames and parameters. Thus the execution of a controlled, predictable transition with a set trajectory will ensure one's arrival at the anticipated destination or desired outcome... and a sense of safety.

In light of this understanding of becoming as transition, I go back to Titchkosky's question again, what is becoming of disability studies? While 'is becoming' is the present progressive verb tense of 'to become', indicating that 'becoming' is happening right now, it provokes a question about the future of disability studies since it implies change – becoming what? Disability studies could transform through a period of uncertainty from whatever disability studies is/was, to something it will be, and in that transition it is not-yet formed, not yet matured, not yet 'what'? As already suggested, this could create a crisis for some disability studies 'authorities' who may feel destabilized and fearful. They may then decide to institute a plan of action for the purpose of creating their desired conception of what disability studies will/should be. Once the plan is completed, disability studies will have transformed into something 'new', but what kind of new? The new that is predicted by an academic discipline that controls, contains and imagines it before its arrival? The new that is bound up in the plans created to deal with a crisis; plans that rely on the past and imaginings in the present?
Drawing on Bergson and Deleuze, Elizabeth Grosz suggests that the new is a product of time because the new is manifested through the divergence of 'what was' from what is actualized now or could be actualized in the future (Grosz, 2003, p. 16). She states:

Time, the very matter and substance of history, entails the continual elaboration of the new, the openness of things (including life, texts, or matter) to what befalls them. This is what time is if it is anything at all, the indeterminate – the unfolding and emergence of the new (ibid.).

The new is not the culmination of what has passed, thus, since that which can be imagined is based on known possibilities of the present, the manifestation of the already imagined is not the emergence of the truly new but only a new that resembles the past (Grosz, 2000, p. 1018). A plan is the bringing forward of the past – previous experience, research, what is already known to work – into the present to create a future; a future that is conditioned by possibilities that are contained within the present, a future that will resemble the present (ibid.), rather than become the absolutely new. Therefore, a plan cannot create the new because the potential for the new is about a future which cannot be constrained by or imagined from within the present. (Grosz, 2003, p. 18). The unfolding, the elaborating, or the differentiating force of time that creates the new is what Grosz defines as 'becoming' (ibid.). Once again I return to wondering about the meaning of becoming.

becoming in itself
As already noted, 'becoming' can be used as an adjective or verb, but it is also a noun, a special noun called a gerund; a verbal noun, a 'thing' which also carries the qualities of a verb. If we dismiss becoming as merely transition or the means to an all important end, we deny the existence and value of becoming as a 'thing' in itself. Becoming is not a nowhere of not here or there, it is a perpetual between-ness that is the space of emergence and the act of emergence itself, a space of creation and the act of creation itself. Becoming has no beginning point or end point. It implies a perpetual question of what will come to be, but without ever demanding an answer. It is dynamic, fluid, always in flux and never complete, and thus there can be no goal of a final state. Rather, becoming is an ongoing differentiation, the incessant emergence of that which differs from itself – the other. As a space where the other emerges, becoming is an important space in which disability studies can dwell.

If becoming is differentiation, then “the becoming crisis of disability studies” (Titchkosky, 2011) could mean a crisis that is completely different than how it has ever before been understood
and used by disability studies. Another way to analyze it is that both becoming and crisis can be defined as a rupture or break in 'what is'. Thus, 'crisis of disability studies' indicates a rupture of disability studies. Alternatively, 'crisis' might refer to the word that disability studies deploys in its pointing to disability. That is, as a way to distinguish it from, for example, how the concept of crisis might be deployed by a trauma unit or the crisis of psychiatry or other fields. If this is so, and if becoming is also understood as a rupture or break in 'what is', then “the becoming crisis of disability studies” (Titchkosky, 2011) could be construed as a rupture in the deployment by disability studies of 'disability as crisis' that could potentiate something new for disability and disability studies. Any way I parse it, a "becoming crisis of disability and disability studies“ implies change, opening to the future, differentiation from what is, becoming otherwise, potentiating what might come to be and doing something new.

If disability studies scholars desire something new for disability, and if at least some parts of academia really want the new to emerge, then we can’t allow the past and present to grip us in exactly the same manner each day. Through Titchkosky’s (2011) reading of the past and present for what was hidden, assumed or unconscious, she has found and made visible to us a line or path that has been repeatedly followed and which she identifies as the repeated 'pointing to disability as problem/crisis'. Sara Ahmed (2006) writes that:

> Lines are both created by being followed and are followed by being created. The lines that direct us, as lines of thought as well as lines of motion, are in this way performative: they depend on the repetition of norms and conventions, of routes and paths taken, but they are also created as an effect of this repetition. To say that lines are performative is to say that we find our way and we know which direction we face only as an effect of work, which is often hidden from view. (p. 17).

Paradoxically, it is only through repetition that the new can emerge. For the new to emerge there must be an old from which it can emerge", and the repeated pointing to 'disability as crisis' or lack is the ground from which that can happen. Because the path has been called into consciousness by Titchkosky, we can then choose to follow that well trodden path again or not. However, the 'becoming' trajectory of a disability studies that plans to continue to follow that path is no longer full of possibility for the future of disability or disability studies, since what will come to be is that which is already anticipated by following that path. Preserving what already exists – pointing to 'disability as problem' – is to foreclose new possible futures for disability and

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25 I began this thesis with the question that 'given the demands to return to the same how can change and the new arise?' See thesis statement on page 4.
a becoming/unbecoming disability studies
I have sometimes noticed a curious division of people at conferences and that some disability studies factions withhold their support from some disability-related events. Having been a part of discussions about why this occurs, I've gotten a sense of the disapproval by some that is directed toward those others who embody a different politics of disability; are focused on a different mode of activism; or practice a different flavor of, approach to, or methodology for disability studies. This appears to be a disciplining politics of exclusion based on a righteous notion of what disability studies should be. This process of either defining something by comparing it to an other or subsuming the other is, ironically, the same process whereby disabled people continue to be defined negatively by, or are made to disappear within, the predominant culture. It could be argued that this sort of discriminating has been a function of all social justice movements and that it is typical for fields of study that are critical. But does that mean it must be this way? Can the disability movement and disability studies do something different than what has always been done?

What is too often forgotten is that disability studies is a student, and its teacher, Disability, is not a homogenous category. It consists of diverse bodies, minds, ways of being in the world and understandings of the world. Disability is slippery, cannot be nailed down, it resists definition. Like the word 'becoming', there is nothing about disability that suggests a necessity to repeat what already is. Disability is endless variation on a theme, the theme of difference. Disability is a becoming that points to the openess of the world, to differentiation, to complexity, to the potential to be otherwise. Disability the teacher, therefore, demands a disability studies that is as diverse and dynamic as disability; that is not a homogenous group; that is composed of people who think differently from each other. Disability demands of disability studies that it diverge from prevailing norms and practices, and that it value 'becoming-otherwise' as an opening to potential futures. Disability requires a disability studies that resists a singular normative definition and that challenges the very notion of a discipline within academia.

Could we practice disability studies not as a repetition of what already is or was – disability as lack, problem or crisis, or disability studies as this or that definition – but as an ever-changing response to what is? What if disability studies was to take on an orientation to the new, to
creating the new, to dwell in becoming? This would entail a dynamic notion of disability studies as a doing that is always in flux. Disability studies might then be conceived of as a becoming practice rather than a discipline. Such a practice would require a suspension of belief and disbelief; a transition from understanding disability – or anything for that matter – to understanding differently, without ever arriving at a goal of complete understanding.

That there are different flavors of disability studies is a refraction of differing carnal needs and desires, and is exemplary of the potentialities existent in disability and disabled people. The strength of disability studies is that it is, to some degree, already interdisciplinary, and can thus create a myriad of new pathways and intersections between disability, disabled people, disability studies and all else. A becoming disability studies with loose boundaries that can create hybridity, imbricate, complexify and multiply is a disability studies that moves toward an excess that allows for the flexibility and creativity that can potentiate innovation.

Just as it would be counterproductive to define disability studies in such a way as to impair its potential for becoming the new, it is similarly disabling to point to 'disability as a crisis/problem'. Through society, disabled people are created as problems, as lack, as invalids. This construction of disability is an invalidation, an erasure, an unbecoming of people. As Titchkosky stated in her DSSI address, society continues to produce disabled people as “wasted lives” while disability is silenced as “a promise, a sign, a desire, a life, a necessity” (Titchkosky, 2011). Disability is typically considered aesthetically unbecoming, and disability is almost always represented in distasteful and unbecoming ways. While any break/rupture potentiates the new, a new becoming is also an unbecoming of what is, was or might have been, and the converse is also true; an unbecoming is a break that potentiates a new becoming. So, when we refer to one term we implicitly invoke the other too. Hence, the concept of unbecoming is not necessarily only the negative erasure of or violence against people, but can be a generative becoming also. That disability has been created as unbecoming in turn nudges disability studies to theorize and practice unbecoming.

Disability studies claims unbecoming by working to uncover and unbecome norms, dominant narratives, ableist barriers, structures, etc. that unbecome disabled people. It is the unbecoming of unbecoming, the negation of negation that can be garnered to critique, reshuffle and deconstruct normative orders. Unbecoming can be, for example, cultural studies, social sciences, art criticism, feminism, philosophy, gender studies, or critical race theory that work
with disability to overturn assumptions, poke holes in boundaries, and dis-assemble biased methodologies. Unbecoming is the crumbling of closed systems, the re-working of disciplinary boundaries, the re-vision of laws, a reorienting to everyday practices and conceptions of knowledge, the stirring up of the sedimentation of knowledge; it is the un-doing, un-working or un-tying of the rules and entrenched ways of being that bind us. A generative unbecoming dis-orders hierarchies of disability and the senses, dis-integrates assimilations that erase, dis-figures configurations of normalcy, dis-eases the complacent comfortable, and dis-credits ableist language. Disability studies can act as disability's diss; it can be the unbecoming that devitrifies the slick glassy surface of prevailing norms.

To unbecome is to provoke a dis-equilibrium that sends one into a whirling vertigo that destabilizes one's orientation to the world such that one's sense of self and the world and everything that one holds to be true become disoriented or unmoored, thus creating a condition that prevents settling on a single grounding standpoint. Unbecoming is an unworlding of the world that can potentiate the new. However, a generative unbecoming is not to destabilize just for the sake of creating anything new. Again, it requires us to raise the ethical question, what kind of new? Unbecoming, like becoming, is an engagement with the past or present in a way that creates the possibility for a different present or future. To try to negate the negation, to try to unbecome the unbecoming of disabled people by pointing to 'disability as problem' does not potentiate anything new for disability or disability studies, and in fact it is disabling because it is the materialization of 'disability as problem'. Titchkosky writes that “we face the necessity of regarding any representation of oppression as itself a participant in that which it gives an account” (2010, p. 28). Anyone representing disability as lack or crisis is complicit with that representation, but we can become more accountable. For an ethical becoming/unbecoming, one would require the ability to be self-reflexive and to interrupt habituation, possibly through one's dis-education or de-institutionalization, or at least by questioning one's assumptions as I've tried to do throughout this thesis. By being self-reflexive we can have a broader understanding of how the knowledge that we produce is mediated by the assumptions of our and our “objects” experience, positionality, and the technologies that are employed in the production of knowledge between us.

re/defining

It would be a simple move to choose to set aside 'crisis' as a bad word and instead take up discussion of progress in relation to disability. Yet this is also part of the discourse that
Titchkosky (2011) points to in the statistics and reports of governments, the United Nations, the World Bank and the World Health Organization. In such documents disability is always filtered through bureaucracy and often, if not always, connected to the economics of a country – to getting disabled people 'well' in order to become productive (working) citizens – all in the name of progress. While de Certeau (1984) is writing about the city, his statements can be read as if he were discussing the administration of a country. He writes:

Administration is combined with a process of elimination in this place organized by "speculative" and classificatory operations. On the one hand, there is a differentiation and redistribution of the parts and functions of the city [country], as a result of inversions, displacements, accumulations, etc.; on the other there is a rejection of everything that is not capable of being dealt with in this way and so constitutes the "waste products" of a functionalist administration (abnormality, deviance, illness, death, etc.). To be sure, progress allows an increasing number of these waste products to be reintroduced into administrative circuits and transforms even deficiencies (in health, security, etc.) into ways of making the networks of order denser. But in reality, it repeatedly produces effects contrary to those at which it aims: the profit system generates a loss which, in the multiple forms of wretchedness and poverty outside the system and of waste inside it, constantly turns production into "expenditure." (p. 94).

This definition of progress is a polarizing positioning of people as either resource or waste that evokes the pollution, resource, recycling metaphors of the previous chapter. Rather than continue to engage in the progress/crisis binary, de Certeau suggests that "one can try another path" by turning instead to analysis of the small creative tactics of everyday practices that resist hegemony by "insinuating" themselves into "the frantic mechanisms and discourses of the observational organization" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 96). The collective of these multiple and diverse maneuvers define what de Certeau calls an "antidiscipline" (p. xv). I have tried to exemplify de Certeau's suggested path throughout my discussions of particular practices – reading, walking, writing and even approaching disability studies differently – and I agree with de Certeau and Haraway that binaries are polarizing. However, as the Chapter Three discussion of Haraway's (1988) metaphors in Situated Knowledges illustrates, we actively make meaning in the words we choose and the definitions we put forward in our word use. This led me to explore 'crisis' and 'becoming' as conceptually closely related and productive of each other, rather than mere poles. These concepts can stand in for each other if one chooses to understand them dialectically. Thus an alternative path may be to turn to re/definition.

Defining is, of course, something we all do all the time, simply by making a choice and having a taste for one thing over another. We can't help but define disability studies through the type of research or work that we produce while claiming disability studies as our field of study. We
Define it by choosing who is invited to write for, organize, present to and participate in disability studies events, journals and research groups, and if and why we choose to present, attend or participate also works to define disability studies. Redefining by making choices that are not habitual or easy is something we don't tend to gravitate to. It's not surprising that we are drawn to like-minded people; sameness is easy and sameness is habitual. But it's not so easy or comfortable for us to deliberately draw into disability studies those whose thinking diverges from the status quo (disability studies' status quo) and to embrace differences as a potentially productive and even necessary engagement that can renew or redefine disability studies. However, this is exactly what a disability studies that is a becoming/unbecoming practice would do. Rather than retreat hurt, frustrated or angry into silent separate corners when differences erupt, we can engage in conversations with people and ideas that clash, and then engage in them some more. On language and understanding, Gadamer (2004) writes that:

... reaching an understanding on the subject matter of a conversation necessarily means that a common language must first be worked out in the conversation. This is not an external matter of simply adjusting our tools; nor is it even right to say that the partners adapt themselves to one another but, rather, in a successful conversation they both come under the influence of the truth of the object and are thus bound to one another in a new community. To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were (p. 371).

As Gadamer and Haraway suggest, it is in the generative liminal spaces between one's partial situated knowledge and that of others that new interpretations, stories and understandings are created, but this can occur only if we engage in dialogical and dialectical relationships with difference, what Haraway refers to as conversing in a different code. It is in these relationships, in communion, that we unbecome who we were and become someone different – we are redefined. It is, after all, consensus that creates homogeneity, while dissensus produces difference and the new. By welcoming antagonism (difference) into our midst we can creatively redefine disability studies anew.

We already tell and are told what disability and disability studies are, and our definitions can put a frame on how we perceive the world. However, our definitions can also bind us. I am not suggesting that we shouldn't define disability studies but that it is necessary to consciously

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26 I am not suggesting that we need to fight (or not), but that it is problematic if we only ever disengage when differences arise. There are ways to engage amicably. For more in-depth discussion of this topic see Margaret Price's *Mad at School*. 
redefine and repeatedly redefine again, and that redefinition of disability, disability studies and ourselves through calling into question what we do and how we do it is a function of a becoming/unbecoming practice of a disability studies that is oriented to creation of the new. A redefinition of disability and disability studies could be provoked by “taking the obviousness of the ‘problem of disability’ and putting IT to question” (Titchkosky, 2011). As Titchkosky suggests, we need to “regard what we have already said and done to/about/with disability as EXACTLY what needs to be put to question and forge a crisis in our current understandings of disability-as-crisis” (ibid.). This is how she defined “the becoming crisis of disability studies” (ibid.) and I interpret this as a crisis that could mean an unbecoming or unworlding for disability studies scholars from which the new can emerge.

A crisis/unbecoming/unworlding could also force a redefinition of values and beliefs about what disability can mean or be, what disabled people can do, what crisis means, or even what it means to be human. It can redefine how to do disability studies and the relationship between universities and disabled people and, in turn, a redefinition could make a world of difference. What, for example, could it mean for disability and disability studies to redefine 'progress' in such a way that the new can emerge? The concept of progress, in the traditional hierarchical sense of the word, is a linear, unidirectional movement forward in space and time to a higher level of productivity or advancement. This definition of 'progress' has been used to oppress disabled people whose bodies and minds resist being disciplined to the 'correct' movement, to linearity, to the imperatives of norms of productivity and advancement. As already discussed, becoming can be understood as transition or transformation, hence a becoming disability studies can imply progress to a higher level of advancement in the area of disability studies. However, since disability studies functions to represent disability through its various utterances, and if disability studies does not want to perpetuate the oppression of the people it represents, progress could then be reconceptualized to defy the norms of movement, space and time. The movement of progress for a becoming disability studies could be redefined as unpredictable multidirectional, asymmetrical movements which are discontinuous, disruptive, unmeasured and without a predetermined goal.

Such a redefinition could, for example, significantly change what it means for a student to progress through university. It could reshape what an academic discipline or field of study could be and change the ethos in which we work together. What would it be like to be a graduate student if the current expectations of progress, productivity and performativity were redefined
such that an ethos existed in which uttering the quirky, the original or the out of the ordinary were valued as possibly progressive, rather than quickly relegated to the irritating-disruption trash heap? While it's true that a few disabled people have made it through the doors of graduate school, many of those who are here have arrived only because we are able to 'pass' for not-disabled or because our disabilities are assumed to disappear through accommodations or at least remain behind closed doors. What if inclusion wasn't just rhetoric but alternative ways of teaching, learning and knowing were a standard part of all university and disability studies pedagogy, and a final thesis or dissertation was not the primary or only way of attaining a degree? Is writing a 250 page dissertation really the only valid way to prove one's worthiness to be granted a PhD in sociology? Would sociology still be sociology if scholars produced knowledge in ways other than traditional academic texts? Catharine Stimpson, a dean at New York University, also wonders what forms a dissertation might take other than a “proto-book”.

Her questioning could also be applied to theses and academic essays in general. She writes:

Is there any other form that the dissertation might take? Inside Higher Ed I once had a conversation with a leading Renaissance scholar shortly after I became a graduate dean. “What is the most important reform in graduate education?” I asked. “Change the dissertation,” she said. Surely what matters about the dissertation is less the exact format than a form that displays what this capstone activity must display: respect for past work coupled with originality, independence of thought, and the capacity for sustained inquiry. Rhetorical flair would be nice, too (Stimpson, 2007, para. 7).

Who might become scholars if a traditional academic essay or dissertation was but one choice among many for testing the ability to learn, think and understand – for measuring the progress of a student? What new ideas and types of scholars might emerge if experimenting and thinking the new were a valued and integral part of knowledge production, and much less constrained by the imperative to progress by conforming to academic social, behavioral, and disciplinary norms? What new theories about disability might emerge if disability studies was “not directed to the attainment of certain goals, the coming to fruition of ideals or plans, but rather required a certain abandonment of goals?” (Grosz, 1999, p. 11).

risking change

It takes a leap of faith to abandon goals, much like it takes a leap of faith to allow oneself to experiment. It's taking this leap of faith that I'm having trouble with in graduate school. I don't

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27 I am generalizing, of course. Disability studies and academia in general have made some changes to be more inclusive, particularly by those who take up Universal Design in their pedagogical practices. However, I feel the overall picture of inclusive teaching/learning practices within higher education is more about awareness, rather than actual practice, and this is not enough.
write quickly and so time constraints weigh heavily on me. I know what kind of writing is acceptable and so, rather than risk experimenting and possibly not having much to show for it in terms of a final product, I do what I know will work and is expected. However this way of working can be unsatisfying and it does not make it likely for something new to emerge. I am not suggesting, as Donna Haraway might, that we engage in empirical scientific experimentation. While some may consider that an option, for me that sounds scary, given the history of exploitation of disabled people in the scientific enterprise. Rather, I am suggesting that the playful, full of curiosity, caught up in process kind of experimenting that artists practice can also be a responsible, ethical experimenting practiced by disability studies scholars who are self-reflexive and oriented to disabled people and disability as generative and full of possibility.

It is curious that experimenting and play are not taken seriously and thus not common in university except in arts programs. Many artists understand that if real innovation is to emerge it will do so through trying something different – by experimenting and playing. On the topic of play, Gadamer writes that “Play has a special relation to what is serious... play itself contains its own, even sacred, seriousness. Yet, in playing, all those purposive relations that determine active and caring existence have not simply disappeared, but are curiously suspended” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 102). Experimenting is to proceed with curiosity and to be confident in one’s uncertainty of knowledge. It is a suspension of judgment, belief, disbelief and expectations, a reorienting away from what we think we know in order to be open to new possibilities. Experimenting is to embrace uncertainty as a way to create new knowledge.

There is an unselfconsciousness at play in playful experimenting. It involves immersing oneself in a performance of doing differently, and trusting that process even while it entails the uncertainty and risk that one can be burned without any assurance of a deliverable. Gadamer writes that “play – indeed, play proper – also exists when the thematic horizon is not limited by any being-for-itself of subjectivity, and where there are no subjects who are behaving 'playfully’” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 103). Playing can happen, “only if the player loses himself in play” (ibid.). Yet it is in the risk and uncertainty of playful experimenting that the possibilities for creating something exciting or new resides. Gadamer suggests that experimenting and play always entail risk and taking limitations and possibilities seriously. He writes, “If, for the sake of enjoying his own freedom of decision, someone avoids making pressing decisions or plays with possibilities that he is not seriously envisaging and which, therefore, offer no risk that he will choose them and thereby limit himself...” (p. 106), this is not serious play. Playful experimenting is a process
of learning about limits and pushing them into the shape of possibilities, playing with different relationships, and spontaneously altering, combining or creating different tools, processes and methods.

Playful experimenting entails reorienting toward knowledge with uncertainty, in a trajectory toward creating new knowledge. It is a mindful reorienting to that with which we are experimenting which may allow for a different consciousness of it – new knowledge. Paradoxically, though, it does not entail an imperative for arriving at new knowledge. The space of innovation where experimenting is possible stresses doing/making, not the products of making. It is a space where unique processes, practices, ways of working and ways of thinking, are valued over an end product that may be infinitely reproducible. The space where the new emerges, where innovations happen, is a place of encounter with the 'other', and as such it is a relational social space of negotiation with difference. What would it be like to be a student whose measure of progress or value to classmates and teachers alike was grounded in a concept of knowledge that stresses what one does and how one knows over what one says or thinks they know. The ethos of academia entails an imperative to know, to know 'normally' and to be certain of one's knowing. However, the certainty of knowing can entail easily trashing whoever or whatever doesn't fit into the schema of what is familiar. To take up playful experimenting and serious play is to revel in uncertainty. It is to transform the practices that indoctrinate students into disciplines, to practices that support and nurture different ways of thinking and doing. Is there a place for serious play in sociology, equity studies, or disability studies aside from play as a topic of study? What kind of ethos would emerge if we instead embraced the uncertainty and partiality of all knowledge, a knowledge which is not monologic but arises through relationships with difference. Ironically, academia is ripe for the new to emerge and has been for a long time, not because it's so innovative and progressive, but because of its conformity and repetition. Convention is the raw material of innovators who push, massage, tear and pry apart the cracks in boundaries, conformity and traditions that can let the new emerge, even within academia.

If disability studies and academia want the new to emerge, then boundaries will need to be pushed much further and more changes made. If the education of disability studies scholars continues to be done in the same way that education has always been done in universities, it will continue to produce more of the same. Traditional university education can limit the potential for what disability and disability studies can become, what disability scholars can learn, think, know, and do, and who can become a disability studies scholar. By not making room for
chance, for the unexpected and for the unimagined – which are requirements for experimenting and which may emerge through experimenting – university education can easily squelch the possibilities for doing otherwise, for new becomings. And yet, we can become mindful of the myriad of spoken and unspoken rules and norms that grip us, the unquestioned willingness with which we comply with them, and the resulting foreclosure of our ability to create the new. And with that mindfulness, perhaps then we can enact real change.

I’ve attempted to paint a portrait of a dynamic disability studies that is oriented to creating the new, that is self-reflexive, ethical and always in the process of redefining itself, disability and the world anew, not with the expectation that others will adopt this way of practicing disability studies, but because this is what I need it to become for me. I need a disability studies that is open to experimentation, that does not impinge on my ability to seek the new, and that will never definitively answer the question, “what is becoming of disability studies” (Titchkosky, 2011), since to do so would be to foreclose a myriad of possible futures for what disability studies scholars, disability and disability studies might become. What do you need disability studies to be and why?
I often feel that the art I produce is good, occasionally I think it's amazing, but rarely do I ever produce a work of art that I must keep for a period of time because I have an attachment to it. I typically don't care about the final piece after it's made. For me, being an artist has less to do with a finished artwork than with the experience of creating. It is about what I do, how I do it, who I do it with and the conversations and relationships that arise at the confluence of all of those. Of equal importance is getting a taste of the new through the potentialities that exist between materials, equipment/tools, practices, people and myself. Those are the things that contribute to how I feel when I perform that identity called 'artist', 'glassblower' or 'scholar'.

When I'm glassblowing, nothing else exists to me but what I'm doing in the moment. The assault on my senses, the raging heat, the roar of the furnace, working in sync with a team, and attending closely to the glass and my body, all contribute to my experience of glassblowing as a meditative, mindful practice. In many ways, the experience of glassblowing was the first time that I felt I had a voice and a way to use it. The end result of my communication, if I have one, is not a written text, but it does have its own grammar that articulates a world for those who choose to learn the language. (see <prosthesis>, pp. v-vi)
References


