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LEARNING THE BODY VOICE: BODY MEMORYWORK WITH WOMEN

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
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Abstract

In this research, I explore the body life history of six women, interweaving my own, focusing in particular on the "crossroads" between preadolescence and adolescence. 'My' participants and I do a form of memorywork, looking for an understanding of the meaning of body in the construction of girls' and women's subjectivity. Using photographs, the writing of a third person narrative and in-depth interviews, 'my' participants and I generate a biography of the body. I focus on two emerging themes, body commentary and movement or physical activity, and their impact on the lives of adolescent girls. I emphasize the importance of continuing to explore the current discourse on girls, while simultaneously questioning it.

Résumé

Ma recherche explore l'évolution corporelle de six femmes, y compris la mienne, et je me penche particulièrement sur le passage de la préadolescence à l'adolescence. Mes sujets et moi avons effectué une plongée dans la mémoire pour examiner la place du corps dans la constitution de la subjectivité des filles et des femmes. À partir de photographies, de la rédaction à la troisième personne et d'entrevues en profondeur, nous avons produit une biographie du corps. Je fais ressortir deux thèmes: le commentaire sur le corps, et le mouvement ou l'activité physique, et leurs répercussions sur la vie des adolescentes. J'insiste sur l'importance de poursuivre l'exploration du discours actuel sur les filles tout en le remettant en question.

Chapter I
"My questions are my body"

"My questions are my body. And among this glowing, this sure,
this fact, this mooncolored breast, I make memorial."
(Muriel Rukeyser, 1978, p. 279)

Coming to the questions

I remember sitting in my neighbour's living room a few years ago, watching the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings on television on a sunny Saturday afternoon. My neighbour, a retired school teacher, was at that time about 75 years old. Watching Strom Thurmond asking his probing prurient questions, my neighbour turned to me and said in a surprisingly bitter tone, "dirty old man, he's slavering." She was not a woman prone to such comments. She then told me of a male friend of her parents who used to sit her on his knee and fondle her when he came to visit, when she was about eight or nine years old. Her parents never knew. In fact, until that moment, that sunny Saturday afternoon, more than 65 years after it happened, she had never told anyone. But how deep it had gone.

I remember walking in the woods with my 'boyfriend' Richard when I was eleven. Two teenage boys, about sixteen, approached us; they had hunting knives. They forced us deeper into the woods and tied us both to a large tree, one on either side. They pushed aside my clothes and touched my barely developed breasts and vulva. They said to each other "too small." They let us go. I never knew what they did to Richard, if anything. I asked him what they had wanted; he said money. But I knew it wasn't money; I really did not know myself what it was. I have never told anyone this story (or indeed, the other stories) until this moment. Such a small story. But how deep it had gone.

As I read Deborah Tolman's (1992) narrative of how she came to interrupt for herself the normative story about girls' sexuality, and to understand what her own story was that brought her to that interruption, I thought about what story brought me to do this research. Why had I come to care so deeply about an issue which I have still to define after all these years, an idea of not being your own subject, body and mind -- of not having a "body voice,"

as I call it. When I first started interviewing, I sat with the tape recorder, so that I could do what my advisor had suggested, to ask myself the same questions that I was asking 'my' participants.[1] And the story which started to emerge, painfully, was the story of what I dramatically call the cage of men's desire. It had been flung over me at an early age. But I had always thought that experience (and other "isolated" incidents) was such a small story compared to others' experiences. And now, at this age, I feel that cage so large. When I was on the bus with my daughter, watching men's eyes start to prowl over her when she was 12, the cage being thrown over her, as I saw it, that is when the body voice story emerged.

That was when I began to understand how deeply I had been wounded from such seemingly small stories. I wanted to know if these 'small' woundings had affected other girls as they had me. I wanted to know whether being identified -- singled out, as it felt -- as body, as I had been, as many, many girls are, had had the effect I thought it had: that of silencing my voice, my mind, my visibility.

Because there is yet another story, I believe, one that must be linked to this. It is the story of how I meet my self while I am trying to write this thesis. I meet the girl who is afraid to claim her status as a knower, who time and again, in school, at home, in nursing training, at university, met the idea that she could not be a knower. I could fool around with ideas, I could (barely) think, I could even try and write, but somebody else, some man, would always know better. Of course, when I was growing up, authority was not shared, it was not dispersed. No, authority was lodged in the modernist 'head,' the subject, the doctor, the priest, the professor. That these were all male was just a coincidence.

I had wanted to be a doctor, inspired by (male) role models like Thomas Dooley and Albert Schweitzer and their stories of (colonial) bravery in the 'exotic' countries featured in National Geographic. I was discouraged from this; a doctor's life was too hard for a woman. Instead I was encouraged to become a nurse, to have something to fall back on. What did that mean exactly? I didn't have to ask; I knew what it meant in my bones. But I couldn't have said it; I didn't have the words then. Today I understand that it meant if my husband (because of course I would marry) might prove to be a ne'er-do-well, an alcoholic, a deserter, then I could "fall back" on nursing.

I have had such a struggle 'interrupting' the story of the impossibility of my having a voice. I know most deeply what Helene Cixous means when she says:

> Every woman has known the torture of beginning to speak aloud, heart beating as if to break, occasionally falling into loss of language, ground and language slipping out from under her, because for woman speaking -- even just opening her mouth -- in public is something rash, a transgression. (cited in Mairs, 1997, p. 304)

I can remember sitting in a class reading Sandra Harding's (1987) Feminist Methodology. She asked the question, "who can be a knower?" (p. 3). I felt hot all over; I went cold a minute later. I knew that was my question.

And when I read Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan's Meeting at the Crossroads, I felt a phenomenological nod (Buytendijk, cited in Van Manen, 1990, p. 27) that gave me a crick in my neck. The 'schizophrenia,' the split the girls in Brown and Gilligan's study were feeling in adolescence, why, this was me.

Finding a context for the questions: The split

Brown and Gilligan's (1992) work took place over a span of four years with almost 100 girls between the ages of seven and eighteen at a school in Cleveland, Ohio. They wanted to look at the psychological growth of girls from Grade 2 to Grade 9, with particular emphasis on the ages of transition from girlhood to adolescence (from 9 to 14). They believed, based on their own past studies, that there was educational and therapeutic value in their interviewing process; they wanted to examine this more closely.

They began to find, however, what they called the "underground," that the girls were preparing for their interviews, checking with each other, in order to say the right thing. It was a form of silencing, of self-censorship. Not wanting to be a part of this silencing, Brown and Gilligan evolved a new way both of approaching the interviews and of analyzing them. As they tracked the growing girls, looking at what they said and how they said it, they saw a move from the straight vision of childhood to the double vision of female adolescence (what one girl called feeling schizophrenic, and another "being bilingual" (p. 207)). The girls seemed to learn to watch and assess, to decide when it was appropriate to be true and when

it was appropriate to be false. The girls themselves decided that this was how it must be, and they often viewed this as a powerful choice. They seemed to be quite clear about the decisions that had to be made that resulted in them putting themselves aside, silencing their own voices.

Brown and Gilligan identify this as the quandary of leaving relationship in order to maintain relationship, leaving true relationship to maintain idealized or false relationship. When asked about an incident of conflict in their own lives, girls saw injustice and spoke out more clearly at a younger age than they did as they grew older. Mediation, being 'nice,' not speaking up when it would hurt anyone's feelings, assessing whether it was worth it at all to speak up, became the modes of "relation." The girls were aware of their true feelings, but very often decided not to express them. Brown and Gilligan suggest that not only are feelings and thoughts not expressed, but they come, over time, not even to be known. [2] They regarded these girls' behaviours, not as normative, but as a reaction to moving into a non-female-validating world. They suggest that girls' thoughts and feelings become disembodied as they learn to see themselves not as "I," but with an "Over-Eye." [3] In other words, girls have double vision, not only in looking at the world but in looking at themselves.

Brown and Gilligan suggest that many of the themes found at this crossroads, this borderland betwen girlhood and adolescence, mirror those found in women's psychological issues. They also suggest that journeying into women's childhood is essential in remembering our true girls' voices. They agree to a certain extent with Emily Hancock's (1989) contention that "women's full development depends on circling back to the girl within and carrying her into womanhood" (p. 242), but warn that because of the silencing that has occurred there, this may not be an easy or pain-free task.

Despite my phenomenological nod, I felt something was missing from their analysis. What about body? Where were these girls' bodies? Where was the understanding of the 'cage of men's desire,' of compulsory heterosexuality, of consumer culture where girls and women are the goods that they themselves consume? Where was my own understanding of the split? The "care and connection" analysis of Brown and Gilligan seemed to leave out the body, or at least they did not consider it in depth. Paulo Freire (1970) said "we cannot enter

the struggle as objects in order to later become human beings" (p. 51). What happens to us when we can't enter the 'struggle' as mind/body subjects?

Brown and Gilligan (1992) discuss how encouraging and allowing girls' own voices to stay strong will assist them in staying in touch with themselves and with their culture. They suggest that physicality of voice, as well as its emotional and intellectual components, are of great importance in preventing the silencing of young girls and women. "Voice, because it is embodied, connects rather than separates psyche and body; because voice is in language, it also joins psyche and culture" (p. 20). This appeared to bring the issue to body, the voice of the body. But Brown and Gilligan seemed to stay at the level of voice as speaking, speaking truth, speaking authenticity, the act of speaking out. I searched for some way to express what I felt was missing.

Being a girl/woman in a body has overwhelming meaning to our development -- our sexual, intellectual, emotional, and achieving development. At adolescence, suddenly girls move from a seeming androgyny to being sexualized. This identification locates their body culturally. They move into a gendered, sexualized space, overdetermined from the outside, though psychic survival seems to depend on internalizing that overdetermination of our girls' and women's bodies. In my view, we lose something very profound as we move into our place in the cultural script. I call this our body voice -- an integrated subjectivity, based in, but not limited by or to, our bodies.

The body and the gaze of culture

Much has been written of girls' poor body self image, their involvement with the full range of eating disorders from dieting to anorexia to bulimia, the normative obsession with slimness (Bordo, 1993; Chernin, 1981, 1985; Kaplan, 1980; Orbach, 1978, 1986; Rodin et al., 1985; Seid, 1989; Steiner-Adair, 1991; Szekely, 1988; Wolf, 1991). Nor is this confined to girls; it is considered normative behaviour for women. Despite the fact that the first public demonstration of "second wave feminism" was a protest of a Miss America pageant, and all that is implied in that, despite a new paradigm on weight and body image issues, girls still seem to move from being "in" their bodies, and "in" their voice, to a crossing-over, at

adolescence, to a state of "double" voice, "double" vision and, I would add, disembodiment.

Girls start to dissect their bodies, piece by piece, with a fury and judgemental stance that is very powerful. They look at themselves and others with the "Over-Eye" of cultural norms and values, of engendered culture, and start to make a split. As they move out of their bodies, to become viewers of themselves, they move out of voice, or rather, take on a false voice.

Girls and women thus experience a marginalized invisibility/ visibility. Often it seems that we are visible when we don't want to be (identified as sexualized body), and invisible when we want to be seen (as voice, as person). We are glossed over when we want to be seen, street harassed when all we want is ordinary street privacy, and then taken to task as not being important/educated/ experienced enough to be seen, or as "asking for it" when we are seen. One of 'my' participants calls it "always being on display" -- "sometimes you enjoyed the attention you got and sometimes you hated it; it all depended ... the way it was addressed to you" (Annette, 2-6).[4]

Being seen is an important theme for girls and women -- more than important, vital. What is important is the element of <u>being</u> seen by (an)other. The now traditional, though disputed, feminist take on this is the idea of 'the male gaze': "Men do not simply look; their gaze carries with it the power of action and of possession that is lacking in the female gaze" (Kaplan, 1983, p. 311). Kaplan also says "the gaze is not necessarily male (literally), but to own and activate the gaze, given our language and the structure of the unconscious, is to be in the masculine position" (p. 319). It is the male gaze, and/or our own taking up of that position, which structures part of our feminine identity, our daily reality; it is the male gaze which, in the traditional economic and aesthetic hierarchy, places us and (de)values us, and from which we take our cues and our self values. John Berger's (1972) now virtually clichéd saying, "Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at" (p. 47), remains for the most part true. Though it is also true that popular culture now plays at portraying women as having appropriated a gaze for themselves, a gaze which mimics the 'male gaze' (i.e., a sexual gaze).

This 'view' and the other expressions of it in daily life continue to have a "'direct grip'

(as opposed to representational influence)" (Bordo, 1994, p. 16) on our bodies:

> Through routine, habitual activity, our bodies learn what is "inner" and what is "outer," which gestures are forbidden and which required, how violable or inviolable are the boundaries of our bodies, how much space around the body may be claimed. (Bordo, 1994, p. 16)

I wanted to know: what effect does this learning of, this internalization of, the "Over-Eye" have on girls? When does this internalization start to occur -- at that crossing-over time that Brown and Gilligan speak of, or earlier? What is foreshadowed? Is it mainly the need for girls to nurture relationship that contributes to the silencing Brown and Gilligan observed, or more? What part does body, and the growing awareness of what body means to a woman, play in that silencing and that awareness of relationship? How does one measure the role of the body in self-censorship? What do women remember of that time?

The body and the voice: The nature/culture divide

This construction of our (feminine) identities, based in body, is intricate. The relationships between the identification of woman as body and the "speaking" woman are multiple. When we speak of identity, 'voice' has come to represent the ability to express one's identity and have it be valued for itself. Women, along with other marginalized (though majority) groups, have been finding and speaking their voice(s) for some time now. When I think of voice, I think of actual speech as well as the symbolic element of expressing one's identity.

Historically, for the most part, women have not spoken, or if they did, their words were not attended to, nor saved, nor passed on institutionally. When I think of body voice, I think: if women can't speak and women are body, therefore body cannot speak. If body cannot speak and women are body, then women cannot speak. Speaking means claiming to know, claiming to be at home, sufficiently at home, to have a home from which one can speak. Do we have a home in our bodies?

Speaking (thinking) and the construction of knowledge(s) have historically been removed from body (Grosz, 1993; Spelman, 1982). Knowledges have been desexualized and decontextualized. Empirical, 'objective' science, most valued in Western society, has

been conceived of as separate from its thinkers, its actors, even its subjects. Science has assumed the measurements as separate from the measurer. Even in the humanities and social sciences, "there is the underlying presumption.. that reason and knowledges based on it are methodologically appropriate to their object of investigation, the human subject" (Grosz, 1993, p. 189). The traces of the production of knowledge have been traditionally erased: the gender of the producer, the society she finds herself in, the historical time and place, etc.

While the contradictions in this viewpoint have begun to be acknowledged, this view of knowledge construction still continues. Because girls and women have been seen as body, not mind, and have historically been considered incapable of the production of 'reasoned','empirical' knowledge, their knowledge making has been disempowered.

Elizabeth Grosz (1993) suggests:

> Given the prevailing binarized or dichotomized categories governing Western reason and the privilege accorded to one term over the other in binary pairs (mind overy body, culture over nature, self over other, reason over passions, and so on), it is necessary to examine the subordinated, negative, or excluded term, body as the unacknowledged condition of the dominant term, reason. (p. 195)

Elizabeth Spelman (1982) looks at the question of this binary element in Western culture; she asks: is the body disempowered because it is associated with women, or are women disempowered because they are associated with the body? She states that "what philosophers have had to say about women typically has been nasty, brutish and short" (p. 109). She notes that, traditionally, Western philosophers have sought and extolled the transcendence of the body. She asks that we examine the relationship of culture and transcendence and its correlation with the denial of women's reason. She suggests we can then understand the origin of the women/body/nature duel/duality with man/mind/culture. She extends her analysis to take in racism, since the modernist view of the 'other' usually identifies the other as being without culture.

Sherry Ortner (1974) too has explored the relationship between nature(body) and culture(mind) constructions in terms of the disempowering of women. Ortner states that nature is the one thing "that every culture devalues, ... defines as being of a lower order of

existence than itself" (p. 72).

The three ways in which culture aligns woman with nature, Ortner suggests, are through her body and its procreative functions, her social role as a mediator between nature and culture (raising children), and her psychic structure, which arises from her physical and social roles. But women are also members of society, members of culture, and as such participate in the views of culture. "In other words, women's consciousness -- her membership, as it were, in culture -- is evidenced in part by the very fact that she accepts her own devaluation and takes culture's point of view" (p. 76). This is a fascinating understanding of the manner in which self devaluation becomes a reality for women. Ortner suggests that it is only when both men and women are "equally involved in projects of creativity and transcendence" can women "be seen as aligned with culture, in culture's ongoing dialectic with nature" (p. 87). (The duality of this conception -- of nature involved in a dialectic with culture in which nature must always succumb -- is perhaps what needs to be transcended.)

That culture is our distance from nature, and that women lack that "optimal" distance, is a complex concept. Marie Ashe (1988) says:

> While there can be no total identification with nature (except perhaps before birth and in death), we define ourselves as persons by the postures we adopt relative to nature, by the degree to which we differentiate from nature, by the equilibrium we strike in a balance of nature and culture, of body and mind. (p. 544)

A deeper understanding of the social construction of both masculine and feminine identities has been emerging in a postmodern view of the subject. Ruth Hubbard (1989) states that "we construct our interpretations and we construct the very nature that we choose to interpret." This view of nature as constructed remains, however, a minority view, and the either/or of gender identities structured in ideas of nature has tended to remain tenaciously fixed. [5]

Susan Griffin (1982) suggests that it is "the way of all ideology" to constitute duality, for protection. She contends that it is the fear of the body that has led to the duality of culture/nature, intellect/emotion, spirit/matter, which defines male/female relations. Fear of

difference is then the result of this construction of duality.

The body as a resource

Adrienne Rich (1977) posits what could be interpreted as an essentialist view of women, body and thinking:

> In arguing that we have by no means yet explored or understood our biological grounding, the miracle and paradox of the female body and its spiritual and political meanings, I am really asking whether women cannot begin, at last to 'think through the body', to connect what has been so cruelly disorganized -- our great mental capacities, hardly used; our highly developed tactile sense; our genius for close observation; our complicated, pain-enduring, multipleasured physicality. (p. 290)

I would suggest that we not view this exhortation as essentialist but, rather, that we take this idea of 'thinking through the body' as two fold. We must work on and through our relationship with our bodies. One way to start that process is through using our body as a resource for knowledge construction. Rich understands why we who have been deemed (devalued) "body" for so many centuries have decided that we must become (valued) "mind," but she suggests we use our bodies "as a resource, rather than a destiny" (p. 39). Certainly, feminists have shied away from taking on the 'woman as body' construction in fear of being defined only biologically or biosocially (with the emphasis on the bio).

I am not saying that we should be constructing a universalizing discourse about women's bodies; the pluralism of feminism rightfully mitigates against this. What I mean is that a starting point for our endeavours should be an acknowledgement that we are women in bodies. Understanding what that means, in the pedagogy of everyday life, in our differences, is vital. An analysis of the every day lessons, which we internalize daily, does not necessarily come spontaneously to us. It takes digging to bring the 'anonymous' up into our consciousness.

Sandra Bartky (1988) suggests, "The absence of a formal institutional structure and of authorities invested with the power to carry out institutional directives creates the impression that the production of femininity is either entirely voluntary or natural" (p. 75). In a patriarchal society, women's "production" of themselves has been survival. It is survival

in an economic and interpersonal sense; it is also survival in the sense that if women have internalized this self-regulation as "femininity," then it is their very cultural (actual) identity which is at stake. A woman might see the destructuring of this production as "desexualization, if not outright annihilation" (Bartky, 1988, p.78) We do not want to be annihilated. Can we explore this, can we make it different?

I feel we need to turn Rich's exhortation of thinking through the body into a rich exploration of our physical selves, based in our physical selves. But we need to broaden the definition of physical, and understand that culture is written on us all, through our bodies, the vehicle for our experiences in the world. This is what I tried to get at in this research, looking at body memory without isolating the body from lived history.

Thinking (speaking) about our bodies in new ways can be a vehicle for positing a more integrated and conscious being-in-the world. Zillah Eisenstein (1989) states, "If a person's biological sex will always be expressed through cultural intervention, then we must consider what kind of relationship we want to establish between biology and culture" (p. 199). This relationship, its role in our self-identification, and its consequences, is not straightforward. Although women may be viewed by society as body, it is men who appear to be 'allowed' to stay 'in' their bodies, to be the subject of their own mind/body experience, and it is women who appear to 'leave' their bodies, and to experience objectification, a mind/body split (double-vision), with negative consequences. Bordo (1991) suggests that while men are embodied subjects, women are "mere bodies." Girls and women lose their own relation <u>with</u> their bodies to stay in relation, with others and their culture, <u>through</u> their bodies.

This transition of loss was partially mapped in Brown and Gilligan's study (1992), a transition from strength and "ordinary courage" at ages eight, nine and ten, to a diminishing, even a silencing, of voice as the girls moved into adolescence and into the socialized and socializing process of becoming women. Girls appeared to lose genuine relationship when they followed the rules of female socialization. These rules were modelled for them, and the rules suggest that, to stay in relationship, girls must take on a voice of false relation, with others and with their own selves. The loss of the corporeality and strength of their voice results in, and from, the body double-vision that girls seemingly must partake of in their

transition to "womanhood."

The questions

Can we stay in our bodies through the voicing of our body experience? Could embodiment be a way to keep voice? How do girls move from body centeredness to the position of feeling outside their bodies? If, through existing practices, girls and women are reproducing ourselves as "feminine" subjects in a context lacking space or language for a different construction, how can we understand our own voyage? Will girls and women, through resistance to these constructions, face "desexualization, if not annihilation" (Bartky, 1988, p. 78)? Walkerdine (1990) suggests that:

> It is no good resorting to a rationalist account which consists simply in changing images and attitudes. If new content, in whatever form, does not map on to the crucial issues around desire, then we should not be surprised if it fails as an intervention. (p. 104)

This component of desire is key to breaking through the normalized voice of society to attempt to find our own. Understanding how our feminine desires have been constructed, and thus how they can be de/re/constructed, is one step to owning our own body voice. The links between women's preoccupation with weight and shape issues, our society's cultural imperatives, and the resulting loss of voice for women have been explored from different perspectives. In many ways, however, they are still trivialized. These connections and the subsequent psychic silencing of women have still not been made sufficiently explicit to bring about a transformation in the paradigm. The links between the constructions of desire and of identity must be expressed, felt and lived if change is to occur.

Learning for ourselves how our identities are continually being constructed means that we can interpret our daily lived experience with fuller understanding. We can then bring to our life roles, as teachers, mothers and women who influence the lives of girls and other women, a depth of resources that would not otherwise be available, either to us or to them. Like any archaeological process and product, what we learn through our 'self-digging' and reflection teaches us first and changes our perspective. What we don't understand but live, we pass on to others as unexamined perspectives. If we understand more of what we live,

then we can pass on our transformed and transformative self "education."

Chapter II
Ways of speaking, ways of listening

No one ever told us we had to study our lives,
make of our lives a study, as if learning natural history
or music, that we should begin
with the simple exercises first
and slowly go on trying
the hard ones, practising till strength
and accuracy became one with the daring
to leap into transcendence, take the chance
of breaking down in the wild arpeggio
or faulting the full sentence of the fugue
--And in fact we can't live like that: we take on
everything at once before we're forced to begin
in the midst of the hardest movement,
the one already sounding as we are born.

(Adrienne Rich, 1993, p. 88)

The how

In this text, I claim for myself an amateur status, the status of non-expert. [1] I do this as an attempt to make obvious, or somehow come to terms with, my own gaze. Denzin (1997) says that "current cultural critics of ethnography, and cultural studies.. have yet to seriously interrogate and question their own license to gaze, let alone to write about what they gaze upon" (p. xix). I understand what he is suggesting -- the mirror has endless faces and you have to look at all of them, including your own -- but that is not always done. Nor, perhaps, is it possible to address all the mirrors; nonetheless, our awareness of these issues and our questions about them are very much our responsibility. Researchers, particularly but not only feminist researchers (Froude Jones, 1995; Oakley, 1986; Stacey, 1991), do question their positions. But in a broader sense, however, many researchers continue to maintain their right to ask the questions.

So I have gazed and listened; I have looked at photographs which I asked 'my' participants to bring to our interview; I have asked them to write stories in the third person about their lives; I have asked them questions about their deep beings. Beyond presenting the university with a required "Statement of Ethics of Proposed Research" (immediately

accepted), my "license to gaze" has not been questioned. 'My' participants did not question it. I, however, do question it. I felt the strength of my gaze from the first moment of the first interview; a stranger sat in front of me, signed a release form, allowed her voice to be recorded, told me a summative narrative that perhaps no one else had ever been told. I know there are gaps, many stories I didn't hear, silences and secrets not shared, but nonetheless, I understood my privilege. I feared my privilege.

So I can only say that as an amateur in this field of body voice, of women's voices about their bodies in the world, I speak to my own experience and have recorded some of theirs. My desire to not overwrite their experience is profound; my desire to not overwrite my own is equally strong. As an amateur, then, I can claim not to be an expert. But neither can I place my "gaze" on the same level as that of 'my' participants. I am working through and in an institution which places value on identities like "researcher," "writer," "graduate student." These identities also have a hold on the culture we inhabit.

Thus I cannot underestimate the impact of the image of "expert," either on 'my' participants, or on myself. But I do not claim to write their stories. This is my story about their stories. (This phrase 'in the field' as in field work, field notes, fascinates me. The mind is a field, the self is a field, perhaps the only one to which we have any hope of direct access. It is an illusion, of course, to assume that we have direct access to our own minds, our own selves, they are no more or less constructed than the world external to us. Or are they? There is the world of sensory feeling perhaps, but how exactly to express that? It is the element of play that I like about these images; there is the further image of the body field, even more profound.)

These were my feelings; this was my starting point; this was what I tried to do all along the way. The theory, however, in which supposedly I must locate myself, is broader than my feelings. As an amateur, I found it difficult to find my place in the theory. I was presumably involved in the construction of knowledge. But what claims could I make for what I was doing? As a feminist researcher (whatever did that mean exactly?), there are many standpoints to decide upon. I liked Liz Stanley's (1996) idea of 'intellectual autobiography'; she says that this approach "positions an experiencing and comprehending subject at the heart

of intellectual and research life, a subject whose ontologically based reasoning processes provide the grounds for knowledge-claims and thus for all epistemological endeavour" (p. 45). Such an approach is not "narrative" but rather concerned with "analytic processes and engagements" (p. 45), making explicit ("displaying") the process of engaging with both your own experience and that of 'your' participants. Stanley (1996) suggests that experience is not only first person experience, but rather includes indirect experience and "knowledge gained second - and third - ... hand" (p. 44).

The voice I wanted to be able to find was one that included both my own personal experience and that of 'my' participants -- our experiences in the world -- and one that acknowledged the theory that I had come to understand as the social construction of our experiences. I wanted to enter into a dialogue; I wanted a two way street; I wanted, indeed, for 'my' participants to do their own interpretation -- a realization I came to as I sometimes felt disappointed by our interactions. My advisor suggested that my subjects are me, a conflation/ recognition of experience. I prefer to use the term resonance. They resonated in me but they are not me. I hope I resonated in them and that this writing will resonate in them. But I am not them. I prefer to think of it as "comprehension of the self by detour of the comprehension of the other" (Ricouer, cited in Prell, 1989, p. 254).

The dialogue I wanted was sometimes there, and sometimes not. The level of confidence, the level of intimacy, the level of sharing varied, as one would expect. Different women, different everything. I am talking only to women, I assume that shared base, but there are difficulties with these assumptions (Anderson & Jack, 1991; Borland, 1991; Christman, 1988; Cole, 1992; Finch, 1993, Froude Jones, 1995; Hurd & McIntyre, 1996; Minister, 1991; Munro, 1995; Oakley, 1986; Rampage, 1991; Smith, 1993). I assumed also a shared interest in body. All of that was there, I have no doubt. I wonder how many assumptions are embedded in both what I say and what they say. There are questions not asked, shoulders shrugged to indicate the "you know." But that is both the pleasure and the danger of a woman interviewing women -- even as I question it -- pleased assumptions of a shared culture, dangers of overlooking differences, what Tracey Hurd and Alice McIntyre (1996) call "the stillness of sameness" (p. 78). They suggest that emphasis on acknowledging

difference(s) in feminist research has resulted in an under-exploration of the experiences of sameness. The result can be a study which takes things at face value (an interesting phrase), and presents "the danger of aligning myself with the participants' lived, but critically unexamined, life experiences" (p. 79).

Thus I site myself.

The researcher and the 'researched':

Six women participated in my study. Three of them were younger than I, in their early twenties, and three of them were around my age, late 40s/early 50s. The three younger women, Emily, Stephanie and Freida[2], approached me about participating, either as a result of a flyer I had distributed in several university classes (Appendix A), or because an acquaintance had told them of the study. I directly approached the three older women, Annette, Phébée and Caroline, and asked them to participate. I thought they would represent quite different stories, each from the other. Caroline was a fellow student in a graduate class. Annette and Phébée have been friends of mine for some years; they participated in the pilot project, which was the genesis of this further study.

I consider myself also a participant in the study, firstly because my subject, the 'body voice,' is something with which I have struggled and thought and read about, long before I ever came to this formal point of research and writing. I also consider that I am doing feminist qualitative research, which means that I do not absent either my background, my perceptions, or my feelings from this process. I am present, as are 'my' participants.

Susann

I am in my early 50s, a single mother, a large woman. I say that because I feel my size probably had an impact on the research study in several ways. One effect was 'my' participants felt that I knew whereof I spoke, when I talked or asked questions about body image, body language, etc. Another effect of my body size may have been a slant in the body biographies. Although I was seeking an understanding of what a woman's whole body history might be, the issues of weight and body shaping did emerge in particular. I assume that this was a result of both the "normative discontent" (Rodin et al., 1985) that girls and women feel about their body size, and a reflection of my size. I do not identify 'my' participants in any physical way, except through their own self-identification; I let their

words and pictures portray their own physicality.

I work and study and have spent most of my life in the province in which I now live. I come from a family of four children; I am the second girl; I have two younger brothers. Unlike all 'my' participants, I spent my entire youth and adolescence attending the same school. I have felt fat since my early adolescence and, as a result, have been fat through dieting and metabolism changes for most of my life.

Caroline

Caroline was born in the West of Canada. There were four children in her family. Her older sister (by 16 months) was "slim, outgoing, popular." Caroline compared herself negatively with her sister; she was extremely shy, into her 20s. She was very much a loner and she attributed most of it to her body. Her family moved constantly, for her father's business; thus she changed schools often.

As a child, she always felt fat. This, along with the constant changes of home and school, contributed to her shyness and exacerbated it. She doesn't feel that her parents directly gave her the feeling of being fat, though they never did anything to contradict that perception. She was teased by kids at every new school. One place she felt safe was at the summer cottage they always rented. There it would be only the family, and they would swim and mess about in the water, building rafts, working on gardens they planted, being physical, but isolated from the outside world.

In grade 10 she started dieting and continued doing so until she had her first child in her early 20s. She gained weight then and again after her second child. She started dancing and found new energy, to go to graduate school and start a new profession. Along with a growing acceptance of her body, came the end to a drinking habit, for which she says she "substituted" bulimia. Now in her late 40s/early 50s, she is ending that pattern as well.

Emily

Emily too comes from the West of Canada. She is her parents' only child, though she has a much older half brother. Her parents are divorced. She grew up in a small town, though she changed schools a couple of times, during the changes to her family life. She remembers this as being a very hard time. She felt shy and disconnected from the students in her new school. She switched back to her former school and felt better integrated.

However, in Grade 10, because of a combination of family issues and events, she decided she wanted to go to a private school away from home. This experience was painful; class and money differences impacted strongly on her. Emily felt insecure both physically and psychologically. Her tall body, which had been accepted as being Emily and not discussed much with her old friends, became a much-remarked-upon part of her life.

There were some saving graces: new friends, and rowing at which she excelled, her height and strength being very useful at this sport. After graduating from high school Emily went to university in the West, then transferred to a Montreal university, following her boyfriend who was studying here.

Freida

Freida was born in the East of Canada. She grew up in a family as "nuclear as you can get, two parents, an older brother and a guinea pig." Her mother has what Freida calls "very severe body image problems" and she feels that they were passed on to her.

At age 11 or 12, she got involved with a youth church community, which became very important to her. She started to see that there were other worlds, other ways of seeing people, whereby they weren't judged by shape and size. She started to "make a commitment to her body," to do what she needed to do to have a different attitude towards her self/body.

She rejected ideas of dieting and weight control and at 14 became a vegetarian. At 15, she stopped shaving which was "a huge taboo, both within my culture and within my family." She wanted to do things for her body that were "non-destructive," so as to counter self-abusive impulses and foster self-connection. She came out as a lesbian when she was 16; still living at home, she dared to do so; it was not well received by her parents. She says coming out was very much based on a "gut feeling," rather than on the basis of any particular relationship. Throughout her adolescence (and continuing into her early 20s), Freida has struggled with feeling suicidal.

She identifies two things as having been interactively supportive in these change and identity issues. One was the youth community and how "body positive and very inclusive and very supportive" it was. The other is her own consciousness. She identifies herself as a person living against the grain of much of society. She came to Montreal to go to university. As a result of feeling more comfortable in this new environment, away from her family, Freida started to experience "severe body memories," and has faced the knowledge that she is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse.

Stephanie

Stephanie is from this city; she is the older of two girls in her family of origin and has two younger stepsisters. Her parents divorced when she was seven. She says they went from being a middle class family to being "dirt poor." She describes the years before that as normal, except that she was very tall, and isolated because of it. Soon after her parents split up, she and her mother and sister moved to Europe for a short time. They returned and she continued her schooling here.

At the end of elementary school, Stephanie felt that she was finally "sort of" accepted by everybody. But then in high school, she felt isolated again. She says that her height was a huge issue for most of her life, and it is a big thing for her parents as well. In TAG (an advanced program) in high school, teased and separated out, Stephanie says it didn't bother her because it was so familiar.

She started university and, for personal reasons, mainly because she was in the process of recovering from an abusive relationship, was failing and dropped out. Now in her early 20s, she is involved in physical training to qualify for a national police program, a long held dream of hers.

Annette

Annette was the middle child in a family of five, and the only girl. Her father worked in media, though this never seems to have meant that they had very much money. She was born in the East of Canada, but has lived on the Prairies as well as here, so she has been through many school changes.

One of the strongest influences on her sense of self as a child was being surrounded by her brothers. She has the feeling that she thought she was a boy. She used to think she was going to grow up to be an "army man." A major transition point for her was when segregation at school and also in her neighbourhood separated her from her brothers and brought home to her the realization that she was a girl.

Taught by nuns in high school, Annette doesn't remember being encouraged to achieve. University was suggested, but it would have to be Catholic. When she went to university (Catholic), she was one of the few women in her class; it was only the second year of a previously all male university accepting women.

She married and became pregnant when she was in university, but was able to graduate because her mother looked after her baby. Only she and one of her brothers have completed university. She had a second child and after some years of marriage, became a single mother and raised her now grown children alone. In her late 40s, she has also become the only member of her family to complete a graduate degree.

Phébée

Phébée was born in the East of Canada and grew up in a wealthy family. Her father was in publishing; her mother didn't work outside the home, though she had been an actress prior to her marriage. Phébée has a younger brother.

Phébée speaks of her mother as being very obsessed with her body image. Her mother was bulimic; she would eat and then throw up after every meal. Phébée feels that this very troubled relationship with food and body image was passed on to her. At home, they ate quite differently from other people. Phébée always felt that she was "not just hungry, but famished."

At eleven, Phébée had her tonsils out and she was put on a diet, her first. She lost weight, but this diet, with its physiological and psychological components, brought about a strong cycle of compulsion and guilt.

Like all 'my' participants, Phébée changed schools several times. When she was 14, she went to Mexico to school for two years. There, as a 'round' white stranger, she had lots of boyfriends. The contrast when she returned to Canada hit her very hard.

Her obsession with her weight grew; her late teens and early 20s became a roller coaster ride of dieting, regaining weight, dieting again. She started meditating, became a vegetarian and began a new way of looking at food and body image. Now in her early 50s, she is a therapist who works with women with disordered body image and eating habits, and feels she has personally come to a place of body self-acceptance which is hard-won.

The interviews and their genesis

When I sat with a tape recorder and 'my' participants, I asked for their body life history, most particularly, but not exclusively, at the time of transition between pre-adolescence and adolescence. I wanted to know if and how girls move from a feeling of body centredness to a feeling of being outside their bodies. What did that mean to them in adolescence, and what might it mean now? I assumed the 'if': that girls do experience a separation between mind and body. What I wanted to know more about was how. What are the practices with which girls and women are reproducing themselves as "feminine" subjects? Can there be a context (a space or language) for a different construction? How can we understand our own voyage? Are these practices understood as such by girls and women? Is there resistance to these practices?

I wanted to find out if my understanding of how I found myself without a body voice (as I tenuously defined it) was shared by other women. Could they look back at their preadolescent and adolescent lives and trace a trajectory of daily and/or dramatic events that they saw as having influenced them, as women in bodies? I wanted to elicit reflection on these questions. I wanted to see if there were lessons for me in their stories, or lessons for them, and then broader still, if their stories had lessons for other women.

After reading Brown and Gilligan's (1992) work, I considered different ways of approaching this subject of transition and body in adolescence. Should I talk to girls or women? Because I felt more comfortable interviewing women, and because I felt also that I personally would learn more for my own growth through interviewing adult women, I decided to use a retrospective method of inquiry with women. I also decided to use photographs, something I had been doing in my own life,[3] to spark the memory/reflections I wanted to elicit. This way of approaching the subject was explored in a preliminary study with two participants, Annette and Phébée.

Eliciting memory

> The child's history is presented as a history of unasked questions. The writing of her story is the asking of these questions, and the story is also the answer. (Chandler, 1990, p. 131)

Carolyn Steedman (1992) suggests that children cannot analyse what is happening to them, or around them, "so the landscape and the pictures it presents have to remain a background, taking on meaning later, from different circumstances" (p. 22). I wanted to invite 'my' participants to look for that meaning in an environment that allowed memories to come safely forward.

Asking a woman about her body memories is not necessarily a safe thing. Girls (and women) experience violence directed at their bodies; their memories cannot be sanitized or poured into moulds of childhood joy. Emily Hancock (1989) speaks of how a young girl "naturally synthesizes the dualities of female and male in her androgyny, fuses play and work in her purposeful activity, reconciles love and hate in her lack of contradiction... separate yet connected, she is autonomous and attached" (p. 259). This rather nostalgic view of childhood for girls can be contradicted by many statistics, as well as personal memories. Even among 'my' six participants, surely a very small slice of women's lives, this view is belied. Nonetheless, I believe Hancock posits this in contrast to the later, still larger pressures on adolescent girls and women. Hancock's view is that the "key to women's identity" (p. 25) lies in recovering "the girl within." Brown and Gilligan (1992) acknowledge Hancock's perspective and track what they see as the loss of the authentic voice of girls, documenting the weakening of girls' voices in their intensity and authenticity as girls move from preadolescence to adolescence. They also suggest that the process of recovering the "girl within" is not just a case of unearthing an unproblematic embodied joy -- the silencing, violent or not, that girls have experienced will also be uncovered. This can be a painful, mournful process; as well it can suggest avenues for growth. [4]

Girls tend to be more reflective than boys according to Phame M. Camarena, Pamela A. Sarigiani and Anne C. Petersen's (1997) longitudinal study of mental health among boys and girls as they move through adolescence. Their study suggests that although girls "are more likely to experience greater subjective distress and related internalizing disorders" (p. 183), they also showed an openness to learning from experience.[5] A feeling of mastery can emerge from understanding the process through which one has passed; "learning and growing from experiences across adolescence appeared to be the specific catalyst for self

development" (p. 193). This aspect of learning, of course, is not always culturally valued.

In deciding upon my methodology, I considered these perspectives on the value of the girl's memory of herself. In the preliminary interviews conducted for a graduate research studies course, I interviewed Annette and Phébée, then in their late 40s, about their body memories in childhood and early adolescence, asking them to bring photographs of their childhood and early adolescence to the interview as a memory aid, to see how this worked in the interview. Since this use of photographs appeared to be useful in eliciting memory, I continued it with all of 'my' participants. I conducted two interviews, each between one and two hours, with one exception.[6]

The first interview involved the photographs in particular, and focused mainly on listening to the body life story of 'my' participant with few additional questions from me. Prior to the second interview, I gave 'my' participants the typed transcript of the first interview. I also asked each of them at the end of the first interview to write a third person body memory narrative about a time of transition in their preadolescent/adolescent lives. This third person narrative was given to me prior to the second interview and we then discussed it. This interview was also used to clarify the first interview and to ask additional specific questions about a favourite body memory and what it means "to be a girl."

Photographs

As in the pilot project interviews, photographs were used to "jog" memory and to explore some issues of the conflict between memory and the "reality" represented by the photographs. In both of the preliminary interviews with Annette and Phébée, their subjective memory of certain elements in their childhood seemed to be contradicted by the photos they had brought. This created discussion in the interviews about the whys and wherefores of these contradictions, and of memory itself.

Coward (1985) speaks of the importance of photographs for women. She states "photography is permissible looking when the photograph is removed from the context where staring would be unacceptable" (p. 52). Girls and women are more often the object of the gaze than the subject. When they are free to gaze at themselves in photographs, Coward

suggests that they can "look and look, not just at men but at everyone. We can feed off appearance, and reclaim the visible world [my emphasis]" (p. 52). "[Photographs] appear to admit us to the criterion by which the visual impression we create is judged" (p. 53).

Coward suggests, however, that this view of the "mirror with a memory", (an early description of a photograph), is false. Photographs trick us. There is not presence or "objective record" (p.53), but absence in them. The photographs speak of times past, of fleeting time, of the inability to capture time, of the dissonance between the seen and the felt. As a result, of course, they are a powerful tool in memory work. Mira Dana (1987) suggests that if one of the ways we learn who we are is through reflection and being mirrored, then the mirrors we have are very important.

Photographs are one mirror; people in our world are yet another, far more important one (of this, more later). They are a part of the construction of our own gaze. Women often avoid mirrors, these supposedly objective reflection of ourselves; nonetheless, the overdetermined mirrors of popular culture surround us at every move.

> The image for women, being the sex which is defined and made the subject of aesthetic judgment, is decisively enmeshed in the power-relations of looking. From the earliest age, women are alerted to the fact that the mirror might look back, that in our image may lie the decisions as to whether we will be loved. (Coward, 1985, p. 52)

Thus, and inevitably then, gazing at the mirror of this "permissible looking" as Coward terms it, this possible participation in our own gazedness, turned out to be a fascinating and profound experience, both for myself and for 'my' participants. Moving through a self-chosen grouping of photographs of themselves from early childhood, through adolescence, and in some cases to the present, 'my' participants used the pictures to tell their own story. They expressed both the feeling and factual history of life passages. Although other family members were in some of the photographs, the focus both for myself and for 'my' participants, was on themselves, as girl, as girl growing up, as a girl in a body, at first a seemingly genderless body, the unisex body of a child, and later a much more gendered body.

Using the photographs could have structured the narratives in a 'snapshot' fashion, in the sense of leaving out events or issues not represented in the photos. But that was not my

impression of what actually happened. Some participants had only a few photos and, in Caroline's case, none on hand (though it was evident they existed in her mind's eye). With these participants, the discussion became a reflection on the photo and issues around the photo. For instance both Phébée and Stephanie felt they were fat when they were young. As we looked at their few photographs together, it became obvious that this existed only in their mind's eye. The camera does not capture that feeling of being fat, but rather the actual shape of the person in front of it. It is with a kind of wonder that one looks at the flat image and remembers the feelings associated with that particular moment or day or time of life. Annette remembers never being in a skirt -- for her this was one of her own family stories, of not feeling like a girl -- and yet in all the pictures of her younger self she showed me, she is in a skirt.

Uniformly, regardless of age, 'my' participants expressed deep emotion in this process of reviewing their photographs of the past. Even Caroline, who did not have pictures to show me, cried when describing her reaction in looking at photographs of her younger self. Why, in this context, were such strong emotions evoked? 'My' participants spoke most often of regret for feelings they had had about themselves, often of an "inferiorized" body (Bartky's phrase), that in retrospect were based not on outer reality, but a strong controlling inner reality. They regretted the time and energy "lost" on that inner negative identification.

I noticed different responses related to the age of 'my' participants. For 'my' younger participants, some of these photos of adolescence were quite recent. For Annette, Phébée and myself, the distance from the experiences represented by the photos was much further. The emotional impact seemed to be mitigated somewhat by that distance. Our present bodies seem overlaid by so many further experiences. And yet, and yet, for me, sensory experiences returned, the smell of my classroom, the flying feeling on the long high swings in the school yard, forgotten feelings that helped me remember the thoughts and emotions of that time.

Memory work can be very simple, though evocative. If you don't try too hard to tell the story of the photograph, it can tell you a story. The combination of memory, made up of sight, smell, touch, and the stories you have told and that have been told about/to you, meet a photographic image that, like memory, you have learned to trust as real. This is the story.

In the photo, our own personal meaning combines with the public "conventions" of family photography.

Family albums hold great interest for us. They are full of the remembered and the imagined, the inner and outer experiences of our childhood. Patricia Holland (1991) notes that "we invest our own album with the weight of childhood experience, searching it for information, pouring into it our unfulfillable desires" (p. 2).

> We see a child, an adolescent, a young adult, unfamiliar, held in place by someone else's lens. We tell ourselves, often with incredulity, that this is where we once were. This pictured body was once the centre from which we experienced the world. And we ask ourselves how our subjective memory can be aligned with the exterior image. (p. 2)

As Holland notes, family photographs contain a subtle and often deceptive story. The photos seem, at the time of taking them and even later reviewing them, a simple, often chronological, story of memory or event. But in the consciousness of each person standing, most often posed, most often smiling, are all the swirling emotive "overlapping family" histories, as she calls them (p. 1). "Interpreting family pictures poses a series of challenges to different pasts, as memory interweaves with private fantasy and public history" (p. 1). (This description does not differ greatly from the process of interpreting our own full narrative histories, our personal historicity.)

Holland says "our understandings must shift from an 'inside' to an 'outside' perspective and back. Neither position has much to say to the other, but neither is enough by itself" (p. 5). Annette Kuhn (1995) suggests a different way of approaching the reading of a family photograph -- she feels that "such memory work bridges the divide between inner and outer worlds," what she calls "radicalized remembering" (p. 8), a way of combining the personal and the political. Claudia Mitchell and Sandra Weber (in press) suggest that photographs (in their study, school photographs) are not only a tool of remembering, but that they actually construct memory, and suggest that photographs can be used to deconstruct the situations we have previously experienced. They cite Haug et al. (1987) who say that memory work that is used for deconstruction "should be taken to mean a refusal to accept ourselves as 'pieces of nature', given and unquestioned, and a determination to see ourselves

as subjects who have **become** what they are, and who are therefore subject to change" (p.157).

Third person narrative

Memory-work can be a very powerful tool of understanding and resistance (Crawford et al., 1992; Hancock, 1989; Haug et al., 1987). Frigga Haug et al. have done pioneer group memory work on female sexuality. June Crawford et al. (1992), building on Haug, have done similar work on emotion and memory. One particular and vital tool of both Haug's and Crawford's group work on memory is the third person story. The purpose of writing in the third person is to distance the writer from the event, and emphasizes that the "author is both the object and the subject of research" (Schratz, 1995, p. 63). A story is generated from each member of the memory work group on a particular subject, written in the third person. These written memories are analysed by the group, explored and then rewritten. Haug et al. state that "writing is a transgression of boundaries, an exploration of new territory" (p. 36). Writing in the third person crosses the boundary from the journal style of writing, the "I" of the every day, traditionally associated with the private, with women, and with unpublished documents, to the public sphere of "a space in which we can take ourselves seriously" (p. 36), a space more like that of creative writing or of literature.

'My' participants were given the following written "instructions" at the end of the first interview. They emerge directly from Haug et al. (1987) and Crawford et al.'s (1992) work.

- Write a body memory
- of a particular episode, action or event
- in the third person
- in as much detail as is possible, including even 'inconsequential' or trivial detail (it may be helpful to think of a key image, sound, taste, smell, touch)
- but without importing interpretation, explanation or biography.
- Write about a memory from the time of transition from preadolescence to adolescence.

(modelled on Crawford et al., 1992, p.45)

Since I was not involved in a group situation, the intention of the writing was not to rework the story or explore it deeply; it was an additional tool to help elicit memory, more

to be used as an aide-memoire, in a similar way to the use of the photographs. I also thought of it as an empowering element of this research for 'my' participants, part of the personal reflection that I regard as being fundamental to change and growth as women. Writing it after the first interview and the viewing of the photographs would, I hoped, give the construction of the narrative more depth and meaning for 'my' participants. (I too participated in this exercise by writing my own third person story as Amantha.)

Haug et al. (1987) would not consider the work that 'my' participants and I did as memory work. It lacks the radical element of the group, relooking, rewriting, seeking the gaps that construct the stories. Haug et al. say "memory-work is only possible if the subject and the object are one and the same" (p. 35). In other words, the separation between myself and 'my' participants mitigates against using memory work in the way she suggests. I quite agree. Further, having now been through the experience of this research, I believe that this kind of work is ideally done as a group. Haug et al. speak of a distinction between the "person" and the "personality," that is "those aspects of the self that are socially constructed" (Schratz, 1995, p. 42). This distinguishing between psychologizing and 'culturalizing' is fundamental to the Haug approach to memory work.

Memory work, however, can and has been done in different ways. There are many examples in feminist work of using personal memory to explore broader issues. Annette Kuhn (1995) for instance considers feminine and class constructions by working with photographs of herself as a child. M. Ann Hall (1996) speaks of the individual memory work by Ulla Kosonen about the construction of a physical activity body self. Valerie Walkerdine (1987) uses her own childhood memories to explore gender and class issues.

The limits of graduate work, which is supposed to be constructed individualistically, to "prove" something about your ability to interpret and analyse, made it difficult to apply all of Haug's principles to my work. Since I am not a psychologist, I cannot summon up such a description of 'my' participants' experiences, nor do I want to. As a "cultural analyst," I am supposed to make commentary on lives which are rich with all kinds of meaning(s). I found this aspect, supposedly fundamental, very difficult. Without a group, the distinction between the "person" and the "personality" is more blurry.

Moreover, in the dyadic interviews with 'my' participants, psychologizing seemed to be the direction that they took personally. Making psychology of one's person(ality) has become a cultural phenomenon in North America. I thus found it difficult to escape this context, despite my intentions. As well, this type of 'dyadic' interview can elicit feelings of being in therapy. Again the trust in the 'expert' researcher can enhance this aspect.

Nevertheless, and with Haug's protocol in mind, I aimed to encourage the direction of telling the story of the personality as much as possible. However, I felt the difference between myself and 'my' participants in these interviews was less one of 'expert' and 'informant' (horrible word), but rather one of self conscious participant observer, and of participant. It is this element of self consciousness and the awareness of the need for interpretation on the part of the interviewer, that does create difference. In Haug's groupwork, the intention is that all members of the group are equally and intentionally self-conscious. Certainly 'my' participants were self conscious in the most creative use of that word as they used narrative to construct their own story for me, but our intentions were quite different.

Despite the contradictions that I saw as inherent in what we were doing, the experience of writing these third person stories appeared to be quite profound for 'my' participants. They did not find it easy; it was a challenge. Nonetheless, as Phébée said, it gave her back the "goût d'écrire," and helped her "touch the pleasure of writing" (personal communication, February 1997). Haug et al. speak of the empowering elements of writing this way and 'my' participants expressed their awareness of this aspect after writing their story.

Annette Kuhn (1995), who has done what one could call individual memory work, often with photographs, says that:

> Memory work has a great deal in common with forms of inquiry which - like detective work and archaeology, say - involve working backwards - searching for clues, deciphering signs and traces, making deductions, patching together reconstructions out of fragments of evidence. (p. 4)

She suggests that memory work using such simple strategies as asking questions of one's strong response to a family photograph can lead to "critical consciousness that embraces the

heart as well as the intellect" (p. 8) and can move beyond the personal to the political and the cultural. She says it can refuse "a nostalgia that embalms the past in a perfect, irretrievable, moment" (p. 8), be more than just an "empathic introspection with one's past self" (Gardiner, 1982, p. 189), and demonstrate that "political action need not be undertaken at the cost of the inner life" (Kuhn, 1995, p. 8).

The third person story did involve searching for clues. Stephanie went back to her diaries to find the source for her story -- the choosing of the dress for her elementary school graduation became the symbol for her growing up, her transition to womanhood. Phébée thought hard about what 'hook' she could use to express this transition time. When she thought of the river in front of her family home, and how it had remained a stable element in her rather changeable youth (different schools, family travels, etc.), she realized she had found a way to show how she changed in relation to that same river that kept on flowing.

Working with the interviews -- digging for clues in the mind field

In this most crucial of elements, that of interpretation of the 'data,' I found myself deeply challenged. I am not alone in this, of course. Denzin (1994) says "in the social sciences, there is only interpretation. Nothing speaks for itself" (p. 500). He further adds that "interpretation involves the construction of a reading of an event, both by the writer and the reader" (p. 502). This is a highly self-conscious process. He also suggests that the "rules" for the presentation of the expert self are no longer clear.

The struggle of the new ethnography is that of expressing your own impact on the research, while simultaneously constructing a useful and authentic "mirror" to your participants' lives. As I encountered these issues, trying to find transparent ways of moving into my field (mind field, body field), I appreciated a response from my advisor when I complained that I could not find a practical yet non-formulaic guide to this process of interpretation. "It's because it's an art," she says, "one you learn by doing" (C. Mitchell, personal communication, October 1997). A craft, an art, and a science are all ways of viewing this process.

The process of interpretation

I turned to some of the studies I admire for clues. Carol Gilligan and consoeurs [7] use a Reader's Guide to approach the interview/narrative text which emerges from their research. This Guide requires four close readings of the text: the first identifies the narrative or story; the second finds the "self" of the narrator, in her own words; the third and fourth involve reading for the moral voices of "care" and "justice." They suggest that this method of "taking soundings" (Gilligan, Brown & Rogers, 1990, p.87) makes research a relational act, which emerges out of an integration of both reader-response and feminist theory. They insist on acknowledging the context of interpretation, both for the narrator and the researcher (or reader), and further, acknowledging both connection to the narrator and "the experience of membership within an interpretive community" (Brown, Debold, Tappan & Gilligan, 1991, p. 42). Their questions are both "who is speaking" and "who is listening." The latter question emerged from their understanding that the self of the interpreter, (or the selves of the "interpretive community" (Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan, 1995, p. 14)), is of vital importance in understanding the "results" of their studies. Feminist research into the value of personal narratives, biography and autobiography has long been dealing with this dilemma of interpretation, of who speaks, and of whose voice is heard, in a similar manner (Borland, 1991; Froude Jones, 1995; Munro, 1995; Minister, 1991; Smith, 1993).

Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jack (1991) suggest additional ways of listening to personal narrative. Jack approaches the interview/text by looking for three areas: moral language, meta-statements, and the logic of the narrative (or "logic-in-use" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 2)). In her work with women and depression, Jack found that reading against the grain [8] by seeking out discrepancies between what the women felt 'should' be, and what was actually experienced by them, was a useful way to identify the effects of socialization. In listening to the "moral tone," she felt she could identify the values that the participant was trying to live up to, and thus honour the individuality of each woman by addressing discrepancy and socialization in the conflicts which arose.

For instance, in a society which values "independence," women who feel dependent, or who identify their behaviour as dependent, might feel devalued. But their own use of

language could show that values such as nurturing, caring, interconnectedness -- deeply important to them -- were not valued in their personal environment, and were thus identified, by themselves and others, as problems, rather than values. Taking their logic-in-use, rather than society's logic-in-use, colours their behaviours differently. Dana Jack (1991) calls this being "bilingual" (with a different and more positive meaning attached to this word than when used by the girls in Brown and Gilligan's (1992) study). She suggests that "we need to be aware of how women employ negatively valued words ... as they attempt to represent aspects of a subjective reality that, as yet, have no other names" (p. 27).

Keeping these approaches in mind, I tentatively approached the aural and written transcripts of 'my' participants' interviews. Reading and listening, I felt myself plunge once more into the actual experience of the interview. I remembered my deep shock and tender amazement at the experience of having strangers tell me their life story. I pondered the role of the 'expert'-- the ethical feminist dilemmas I had read about over and over in personal narrative and oral history research, the discussions over the contexts of power in the researcher/researched experience. Here I was in the centre of this 'expert' situation, and I was going to have to live it through.

This question of voice that I was "researching" -- the body voice -- seemed problematic even to me. How had I dealt with it in these interviews? Had I explained it well (even as I struggled to define it for myself)? How had 'my' participants read what I had 'explained' to them? Had I given room for 'it'? Had I silenced 'it'?

Brown and Gilligan (1992) and Anderson and Jack (1991) have addressed these issues. Anderson, in particular, discussed the results of adhering to the "text" of her questions and of paying attention mostly to her own agenda as a researcher. Then she noticed the road not taken, the avenues not opened, the sentences left unexplored. I had noticed this in my own readings of my interviews; I had put it down to inexperience, to lack of understanding of how to listen to another's story. I got better at it, sometimes I followed the paths of 'my' participants' stories and lost my own agenda. In struggling to write up this interpretation, I regretted some of that.

Anderson says she came to understand that her awareness of the interpreter's need

to make sense of what was being told to her, at that very moment, was a problem. "The scholar's search for generalizations may have interfered with the interviewer's need to listen to an individual experience" (Anderson, Armitage, Jack, & Wittner, 1990, p. 99). I certainly began to understand this element of conflict, as I found myself thinking, what does this have to do with what I want, as I listened to a story. What I had learned in qualitative research theory, to ask the question, 'what is happening here?', sometimes fled in light of my sense of time passing, and my feeling that my own agenda was buried in the concerns of 'my' participants.

Using memory

Because of the nature of the 'unfinished business' of experience (Crawford et al., 1992), the selectivity and bias of memory is inevitable. But it is this very element which is fundamental in memory work; the fact that it is remembered means that it is important. It is not the "truth" of the memory, but the memory itself.[9]

> One's self engages with one's memories, has a conversation with them, responds to them, as another responds to oneself. Memories are essential to the duality of self. The 'I' reflects back on the 'me' and together they constitute the self. Memories contain the traces of the continuing process of appropriation of the social and the becoming, the constructing, of self. (Crawford, 1992, p. 39)

Mark Freeman (1991) asks whether it is a delusion (or projection) to think that we can learn anything from individual narratives, that narratives can tell us nothing beyond the known story or the cultural plots that people slot themselves into. He questions not that memory might be deficient, but that the composed story itself will express only the conventional story, and we cannot learn from it. He is asking this question, because it must be asked. But he feels that the usefulness of narratives is to assist us in rethinking the conditions that might have blocked the development of a different story. He says:

> If development has anything to do with new meanings being given to experience, and if these meanings are inseparable from language, and if, finally, language is part and parcel of the sociocultural world, then development ultimately has to do with negotiating both language and context

> and becoming cognizant of how they mediate one's experience. It is, in short, to claim authority for one's beliefs and actions, which is the most fundamental precondition for fashioning new forms of language and envisioning new contexts with which the developmental process can be continued. (1991, p. 91/92)

Haug et al. (1987), too, suggest that to find some authentic ways of changing, to envision new contexts, we have to focus in on contradictions. They suggest that in constructing our own stories, the ones we tell ourselves and other people, we work to smooth over contradictions, to aim for a story/life which is without contradictions. Such a life is virtually impossible, they say, and add "while to a degree, it is the use of such constructions that enables us to get by in the world, they ultimately prevent us from gaining a proper grip on reality" (p. 40). Their interest is in looking at the "avoided conflicts, refuted connections" in order to explore the means to find more potential in life. It is the silencings of the contradictions, the cracks in between the smooth sides of our lives, that they feel hold some keys to understanding and growth.

Karin Martin (1996), in her study on girls' and boys' teenage sexuality, suggests that for girls, narrative work is a way to gain "agency and sexual subjectivity" and says:

> Narrative work is the telling of a story that attempts to reconcile their [girls'] contradictory feelings and contradictory cultural scripts about "deciding" to have sex. It is a method of balancing what happened, how things are "supposed" to happen, according to cultural and interpersonal scripts, and how one wants them to happen. Girls use narrative work to make sense of their first experiences of sex and to construct some feelings of agency or sexual subjectivity when they are feeling very unagentic. (p. 18)

What Martin and Deborah Tolman (1992) both seem to have noticed in their studies on girls and sexuality is this sense of the smoothing over of the contradictions, at the same time subtly acknowledging them, in order to gain a sense of agency. Certainly Brown and Gilligan (1992) were also learning about this in their study with girls --this smoothing over of the cracks.

We need to understand the possibilities of agency inside our cultural scripts. Convention or smoothed over contradictions can be as informative as a story full of cracks;

the systems in the story can expose the skeleton that stories are hung on. The Personal Narratives Group (1989) suggests that:

> [personal narratives of] nondominant social groups... are often particularly effective sources of counterhegemonic insight because they expose the viewpoint embedded in dominant ideology as particularist rather than universal, and because they reveal the reality of a life that defies or contradicts the rules. Women's personal narratives can thus often reveal the rules of male domination even as they record rebellion against them. (p. 7)

Women's stories often echo a lack of fit with the cultural story we live inside. Our struggle with that "larger" story and the dissonance we perceive and live can lie both implicitly and explicitly in our narratives. Women's fit in the cultural "conversation" (Burke, 1973, p. 110) is not seamless; there is a difference between our own lived story and the scripted social plot, and we often seem to know that and articulate it. Brown and Gilligan's (1992) girls are a good example of that articulation.

Michael Lambek and Paul Antze (1996) suggest that memory, despite debates about "false memory syndrome," is not understood as social construction and that the discourse about memory is to be questioned as much as the content of memory. They note that the "invocation of memory is part of an identity discourse" (xxi) and cannot be separated from concepts of the self or subject. Laurel Richardson (1990) says that "(autobiographically) narrative organizes that experience of (past) time into personal historicity" (p. 23). As Freeman (1991) suggests, the "trajectory of developmental transformation can only be told in retrospect" (p. 88). That "personal historicity," our life story gathered to this moment, both shares our sense of our (past) identity and helps create its future, through the feedback of others. Imagine a story told to no one. What would memory mean then? Something quite different.

Antze and Lambek note that memory is less important when the past is less of an issue and identity is taken for granted (speaking collectively). Perhaps that explains how vital memory and history have been, and continue to be, to the feminist project, and why telling one's own story can mean so much to "marginalized" groups. They say that the "invocation of memory signals association as opposed to disassociation, continuity over discontinuity"

(xxv). In its forgetting and in its remembering, a memory narrative is a construction by the narrator of their "real."

Since, as Crawford et al. (1992) suggest, memories hold that "continuing process of ... the constructing of self" (p. 39), the unfinished business of living means that the story can shift and change in its retelling at this moment, or at a future moment. That continuous process that Crawford et al. refer to is our negotiation of the terrain of our lives. The stories that we tell ourselves and that we tell others impact deeply, on both conscious and unconscious levels, and change our perceptions and our lives. Thus the body histories that I heard at these particular times will likely shift and change as 'my' participants shift and change. This was particularly clear to me in the differences between the stories of 'my' twenty-something participants and those of 'my' 40-50 year old participants. Aging can move us further out of the feminine script and give us perspectives we cannot imagine or maintain when we are younger. Aging does not guarantee this, however; neither does being young mean we are necessarily overwhelmed by the script.

In listening to 'my' participants I found that some memories around body and feminine construction seemed not to have faded. They seemed idiosyncratic or trivial at times, and strange in their forcefulness. What I interpreted this to mean was that somehow these 'personal' memories had hooked onto a larger societal script and either contradicted or borne out the messages carried therein, in a very strong way. Other memories felt more familiar to me, they resonated with the words of other participants. Once again there was that phenomenological nodding, the yes of deep personal understanding of the experience.

This phenomenological nod, when applied to femininity, can assist greatly in understanding its constructedness. We can become aware that these phenomena, which seem so individual and personal, echo with us, not because we are women, but because we inhabit a space that constructs our individuality as "woman." Understanding our constructedness is not the only step, but it is one step to living different scripts.

Chapter III
Her own body story: From the outside

The map is not the territory: What does body image mean?

We have many bodies, though we seem to be one body. We have children's bodies, adolescent bodies, women's bodies, private bodies, public bodies, school(ed) bodies, sporting bodies, reproductive bodies, birthing bodies, mothering bodies, sexual bodies. We are not just body image, and to stay with only body image is to have "our perception... channelled into colonized forms" (Haug et al., 1987, p. 54).

This study was originally subtitled Body Image in Girls and Women. Marcia Germaine Hutchinson (1994) suggests that although body image "describes an internal and subjective sense a person has of their own body, the term easily jumps from the subjective to the objective" (p. 153). This 'objective' that she speaks of is something I think is commonly understood as body image - a self concept around one's body. Is it positive, is it negative, is it 'real', i.e., grounded in objective measurable 'fact', what is the influence of the 'subjective' on it?

This idea of 'body image' is studied over and over again. A review of titles of articles in journals such as the International Journal of Obesity or the International Journal of Eating Disorders reveals an astonishing creativity on the part of researchers (often male) in finding yet another angle, yet another minute difference with which to approach the same subject -- girls and women and their disordered body image (and disordered eating). [1] I think I can say that most girls and women in North America, whatever race, culture or class, have been exposed to an understanding of what that 'dysfunction' means. [2] We have come to learn that girls and women have a negative body image, an unrealistically negative body image, which often focuses, again unrealistically, on body weight and disordered patterns of eating.

However, I have come to think of body image as a woefully inadequate term to describe the idea of the impact of body on women's lives. Not only does body image move "from the subjective to the objective" in others' terms, it comes to do so for the woman herself. It also suggests that we can separate our bodies from our selves; it suggests

something outside the self, as if 'image' were just a laying on, a mask, a cover -- something that is superficial, which can be removed or transformed.

Many women's self-help books on body shaping and weight convey this idea. So much of popular culture seems to indicate that this mask can be shifted. Women's 'self-help' books on body and weight, even those going beyond the personal to acknowledge cultural influences, suggest, again and again, that transformation is just a step away: a visit to the gym, a fat-free diet, a hair and make up makeover, or more psychologically, transforming body image. [3]

Body image is manufactured as self image for women. But the effect of being a woman in a body has much deeper meanings in mainstream North American society.[4] These meanings, the inscription on our bodies/our selves through advertising, televisual and cinematic images, are multiple. They are not only images of makeovers of beauty and transformation; they are images of submission, of victims of violence, of pursuit, of passivity, of sexual availability, of objectification. Mixed in with these more traditional images, which are now globally transmitted through media and thus even more available to all ages and strata of society, are the "new" images of women, the CEO, the working mother with the 'helpful' husband, the sexually demanding woman, the autonomous woman -- images of contrast and demand, relation and autonomy.

Girls and women walk the streets surrounded by girls and women and boys and men who walk the streets with all these images in their heads, their hearts and their lines of vision. Their gazes, both outwardly and inwardly, are deeply affected. Sandra Bartky (1988) says that women are very aware of the fact "that she [any woman] is under surveillance in ways that he is not, that whatever else she may become, she is importantly a body designed to please or to excite" (p. 80). There has been induced in many women, then, in Foucault's words, "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault cited in Bartky, 1988, p. 63).

We still seem to lack a language for ideas beyond body image, ideas such as body consciousness, body integration, body awareness. How do we convey that at one and the same time, we are both body, heart, mind and soul, but that having a body as a woman is

different from having a body as a man. We lack a language for Channel B, what Susan Wooley (1994) calls the woman's channel. She says "since Channel B has no accepted laws, to think about its programs I had to think for myself. ... for most of us, knowing what we know has been a slow process. Sometimes listening to other women taught us to listen to ourselves" (p. 323). I have found myself looking for the language of Channel B in my own life. For me, the idea of body voice suggests the wholeness and integration I have been seeking, both in experience and in language. The body is the hinge between what happens inside of us and what happens outside of us. As that hinge, it is both written on and, itself, writes on our environment. It is our whole environment, inside and outside.

Body story, life story

Thus, when I started to address the texts of the interviews, with their interweaving of life story and body memory, I was forced to consider anew the breadth of the project. Asking for a body life story meant hearing a life story. For a girl, a woman, the intertwining of 'body' events and 'life' events seemed inescapable. Was this only because of my starting point, my stated goals in doing the research? If I had said -- tell me your life story, or tell me what you feel has had the most impact on your life story -- what would 'my' participants have highlighted as being most important? Phébée herself brought up this issue by saying, "There are other angles, probably to look at my youth, it probably would look less painful, less uncomfortable, but it is the way, this is how I had to look at it" (1-44). Body is always here, of course, for all of us. Without the essential element of our physical bodies, we do not exist. I don't think, however, that one leaps to a body story when asked for one's life story; biography or autobiography is rarely body focused. [5]

So I was confronted with the question of how to focus in on certain themes or elements of what seemed rather grand or all encompassing in its formative influence on a woman's life. I had, in other words, the usual but not simple task of finding 'themes,' of identifying in 'my' participants' narratives what they considered important in this body history.

The surveillance that Bartky (1988) speaks of appears in several forms in 'my' participants' stories; I decided that was one place to start. One form of that surveillance is

what I call body commentary.

Body commentary, one expression of the gaze

My interest in body commentary was first sparked by the two pilot project interviews I had with Annette and Phébée. Memories emerged of a number of comments on their bodies, both from within and outside the family, at a young age and in adolescence. I searched my own memory and could not remember overt family commentary though I do remember teasing from other children.

Every day we take in oblique body messages and translate them into an understanding of femininity. Haug et al. (1987), in their memory work on female sexualization, discuss, for example, how girls and women come to understand that to sit like a woman is to sit with your legs together. They ask, what is the importance of this leg posture? No mother says "you should sit with your legs closed because otherwise your pubis is exposed to view, and men will think you are making yourself sexually available." Girls receive the information that there is something mysterious, powerful, sexual, to be concealed between their legs; it gathers meaning beyond its mere existence. "'Sexualization' is acquired without sexuality itself ever being mentioned," (p. 77) what Haug et al. would call "de-naming" (p. 79). They give as an example of "de-naming" a male acquaintance's suggestion that "'women's physical constitution simply makes it easier for them to sit with their legs close together rather than spread apart; it's their anatomy'" (p.78). They suggest that "arguments like this condemn the activities of women to a perpetual and sustained de-naming" (p. 78). They ask further then, "how do 'innocent' parts of the body become 'guilty'" (p. 79)? This has particular meaning in looking at body shaping lessons which girls and women receive, and which contribute to what Bartky (1988) calls the "routine obligation" (p. 80) of feminized and feminizing practices around body.

The internalization of disciplinary practices means that there is no one person or group of persons to look to as being responsible for the routine obligation of monitoring our own bodies, as we are shaped into what Foucault calls "docile bodies" (cited in Bartky, 1988, p. 62). Using this by now familiar idea, Bartky states that within our institutionalized patriarchy, "The disciplinary power that is increasingly charged with the production of a

properly embodied femininity is dispersed and anonymous; there are no individuals formally empowered to wield it; it is.. invested in everyone and in no one in particular" (1988, p. 79). She cites as one overt example the way that women who are fat are often told on the street by perfect strangers that they should lose weight, or that they have "such a pretty face" (Millman, 1980) and are asked why they are fat. 'My' participants too tell stories of body commentary by people not close to them. Body commentary that is institutionalized, of course, does not necessarily have to be verbalized by individuals. Since it is covertly and overtly contained in the texts of the media which cross our paths every day, it ends up becoming common place, and eventually is understood and accepted as "common sense."

The pervasiveness of the cultural messages about how women should act, or rather more subtly, do act, means that femininity is naturalized, and then received as natural, by girls and women. The additional power of individual body commentary must be acknowledged, not only because girls don't have much resistance against the perceptions of the powerful adults in their world, but because this body commentary is reinforced by the larger framework of television, magazines, books, music. The commentary of significant others on a girl's body, particularly the commentary of her mother, weaves in with the cultural texts of our society to become very powerful. (In this sense, I understand the anonymity that Bartky speaks of as the tightly interwoven discourses of family and culture.)

Femininity is a complex construction, which is understood to <u>not</u> be a construction. In this naturalized form, it becomes a wholly desirable state in which girls and women appear to readily participate. Haug et al. (1987), looking at the stories their group worked on, noted a "connection between pleasure and subjugation; ... we saw ourselves taking pleasure in the very process of being trained into particular dominant structures rather than feeling tyrannized by them" (p. 81). This is a profound comment on the mixed pleasures of adornment, body shaping, etc., that Bartky (1990) calls an "infatuation with an inferiorized body" (p. 40), a complex narcissism of feminine production. Freida aptly describes the dynamics of this infatuation by saying "I was taught or pulled into the ideal of women spending, or girls spending, just enough time on their body to make it an object or to make it presentable and yet not enough that they could really connect with it" (32-2).

It is interesting here to consider Valerie Walkerdine's (1990) analysis of the overt and covert messages in child-centered pedagogy. While on the one hand the overt message is one of "activity, exploration, openness," the covert message is "good behaviour, neatness and rule-following" (p. 140). (This sounds like the cultural dissonance mothers and daughters face.) The latter "rules" cannot be conveyed overtly because they are the exact opposite of what is supposed to be happening in the child-centered environment. This is very guilt producing, she says, for those who understand the covert message and follow it, and then are penalized for the very practices which are producing the 'undesirable' behaviour. These practices are also pathologized within the context of what is being produced.

For girls and women, the overt message of equality, 'you can be anything you want,' jars against the covert message, which is 'reproduce yet again your "femininity"' -- translated as being a good housewife/mother, "feminine" lover and superwoman worker. Girls and women read the covert message. Then, following what they 'read,' they exhibit the pathologized behaviours (for example, the continuum of dieting to anorexia) and are stigmatized as "diseased" or dysfunctional. One very important "text" that girls read is their mother, their most immediate and accessible feminine representative.

Mother speaks: The daughter hears

> Do qualitative research on teenage girls and you will find you cannot get away from their mothers. Literally, because before you can get to the daughter's room for your chat, you first have to spend the obligatory half-hour making small talk with mum over a cup of tea. And figuratively, because the mother is one of the most important people in teenage girls' world of experience. (de Waal, 1993, p. 35)

I was not interviewing teenage girls. Nonetheless, I was asking about 'my' participants' memories of their transition from preadolescence to adolescence. And mother, both literally and figuratively so to speak, loomed (a word used with intention) large in the lives of both 'my' younger and older participants.[6]

The relationship between girls' body lessons from their mothers and the influences of what Mieke de Waal (1993) calls the mother's "pedagogic moral" (p. 42) have been explored

by Elizabeth Debold, Mary Wilson and Idelisse Malave (1993), as well as Haug et al. (1987).

Debold et al. list some of the "shaping" commentary of mothers:

> Pull in your stomach.
> Fix your hair.
> Get your hair out of your face.
> Are you going out looking like that?
> Put a little lipstick on.
> Take your hands away from your face.
> Stop picking at your face.
> Stop biting your nails.
> Stand up straight
> Don't slouch
> Sit straight
> Smile. (Debold, Wilson, & Malave, 1993, p. 206)

and add "underlying each admonition is a cultural idea of what is and is not attractive in a woman. Both the standard and the ways it is communicated undermine women and girls" (p. 207). They suggest it is more than the immediate "lesson" which is conveyed about the ideal which is important. Who is sending the message also matters profoundly. 'My' participants voiced their mother's overt (and covert) commentary as an important theme. They were particularly alert to, and influenced by, these body lessons they received from their mothers.[7]

I would add that simultaneously conveyed in these body lessons is an implanting of the concept of self-transformation as well as the overlaying of identity with the body. Debold, Wilson and Malave (1993) seem to suggest, and Bartky (1988) makes more explicit, that the resulting contradiction of this falsely enhanced, imbued sense of responsibility for self-transformation, and the impossibility of achieving it, can bring about a great sense of shame.

This inability to achieve the unachievable (never so named), of gaining full mastery over transformation, and its concomitant shame, echoes with Anne-Louise Brookes' (1992) statement regarding the sexual abuse she suffered and its effect on her, "I always assumed that the authority of the other was more powerful than was my own authority. My body told me so" (p. 34).

If the practices we are supposed to master cannot ever be mastered, in other words,

if our "feminine" transformation can never be complete or completed, then the shame and the striving to transform can become conflated and all encompassing. Our sensory experiences of our bodies become so overladen by multiple cultural messages, abuse and harassment, we lose a sense of owning them, or being them. Our bodies end up "telling us so," that we do not have authority over ourselves, over our own identity. Understanding this lack of ownership, what I often think of as homelessness, can help us see such "pathologies" as eating disorders or self-mutilation as strategies of survival (Chernin, 1981, 1985; Cross, 1993).

Indeed in the body lessons which are passed on to girls, identity is always implicit in the practices. Carol Smart (1996), in a discussion about the constitution of the subject, suggests that practices can exist before having a discursive identity. She says "we can see that doing (practice) needs to be distinguished from being (identity)" (p. 226). It is indeed the rare mother who actually states "You should sit with your legs crossed because otherwise everyone can see your pubis." Rather, the practice is associated with the gender identity, "girls don't sit with their legs open." The reason is never stated, but as Haug et al. (1987) suggest, the identity begins to become constituted by the sexualizing concealment. "In accepting certain 'standards', we acquiesce also in a particular relationship to others, to the identity offered us by those relationships.... the body becomes the medium through which we are inserted into the prevailing social order" (p. 88).

Sandra Bartky (1988) too lists the "disciplinary practices that produce a body which in gesture and appearance is recognizably feminine" (p. 64). They range from the more obvious -- dieting, physical exercise for body shaping, make-up, hair and skin attention, cosmetic surgery -- to the less obvious -- ways of sitting, moving, taking up space, looking and receiving looks. These practices suggest to girls and women that they (their bodies) are not acceptable. Indeed, the message seems to be that a constant effort at transformation must be maintained. In the (heterosexual) commodity economy of our feminine selves, we appear to be involved in a never-ending project. Bartky states that this regulation is "perpetual and exhaustive - a regulation of the body's size and contours, its appetite, posture, gestures and general comportment in space, and the appearance of each of its visible parts" (p. 79). She emphasizes that this project is now the "routine obligation of every woman, be

she a grandmother or a barely pubescent girl" (p. 80).

Phébée says of her mother (who is now 89) that she continued her obsessive relationship with food and body into her 80s, "She wanted to fit again into one of her dresses for Christmas day and she went on a drastic diet and ended up in the hospital. Since she understood that her body couldn't take that anymore, she has stopped" (2-10). My own mother (age 83, weight around 95 lbs) recently asked for a girdle to keep her stomach in. Joan's mother, aged 81, (C. Mitchell, Personal communication, March 1998) constantly thrusts the flatness of her stomach, proudly maintained even after bearing five children 50 years ago, into any conversation.

Mothers are viewed as being (one of) the most important (and often pathological)[8] influences on their children's developmental lives. What is less explored, Anne Woollett and Ann Phoenix (1996) suggest, is "the implications of prescriptions in developmental psychology texts for women, for mothers, for children and for feminist accounts of motherhood" (p. 81). While they were looking at print texts, we can take texts in the larger sense, as in the texts of popular culture, the texts of femininity, and thus the reading for prescription can be enlarged.

The analysis of cultural prescription must be both personal, for ourselves, and in an outward direction, teaching others. Susie Orbach (1994) discusses how mothers, as the carriers of culture, cannot help but influence their daughters in their relationship to their bodies. "The gender prescriptions that have such a profound effect on mothering are no less important in the development of a girl's corporeal sense of self" (p. 170). She suggests that a mother's own sense of her body will inevitably be taken in by her daughter:

> The daughter's corporeality embodies the mother's feelings about her body, her experiences of the physical interventions between them, as well as the instructions and modelling about appropriate physical femininity. (p. 172)

Brown and Gilligan (1992), as well as Debold, Wilson and Malave (1993), are suggesting that adult women in positions of influence with young girls, whether mothers, teachers, or others (such as coaches), need to become self-consciously aware of their own conflicted issues, emotions and dilemmas, both past and present, with their roles as women, as mothers

of girls (and boys), as female teachers (or coaches) of girls (and boys).

This need for self awareness on the part of adult women is deeply highlighted by the voices of 'my' participants. We can speak abstractly or generally of the overriding influence of the (white) patriarchy on our self images, the male "gaze", the "consuming passions" which are nurtured in us by our consumer culture. However, what I heard in the body memory narratives of 'my' participants were of influences very close to home, the voices of family and school.

I do not wish to discuss here the origins of psychopathology, nor to embark on any psychoanalytic analysis of the mother-daughter relationship (for which I am eminently unsuited and untrained). Rather I want to stress how the importance of mother and how mother's prescriptive words (or silent modelling or both) meet and mesh with cultural inscription to have a strong effect on girls at their entry point (of moving in)to womanhood. Phébée describes being a girl as "an apprenticeship," "just a passage, just learning how to get there" (2-31). Mothers end up being the mistress craftswomen that girls apprentice to. Acknowledgement of this aspect of the mother-daughter relationship appears to be of paramount importance. Equally important, however, is understanding how the apprenticeship to mother as role model for femininity meshes with that anonymous, non-differentiated power that Sandra Bartky (1988) identifies as constructing femininity. Debold, Wilson and Malave (1993) state:

> Raising a daughter is an extremely political act in this culture. Mothers have been placed in a no-win situation with their daughters: if they teach their daughters simply how to get along in a world that has been shaped by men and male desires, then they betray their daughters' potential. But, if they do not, they leave their daughters adrift in a hostile world without survival strategies. (p. xv)

The voices of feminists analysing mother/daughter issues have been for the most part the voices of daughters (Chernin, 1983; 1985; Friday, 1977). The generation of <u>our</u> mothers has been more voiceless (Caplan, 1989; Mirkin, 1992; Rabinor, 1994; Surrey, 1993). This voicelessness has been part of the dilemma. Now that we are mothers, we have to understand these dilemmas of preparation, of assimilation, of connection, of identity more clearly, so that

we too do not become voiceless and irrelevant.

From 'my' participants, I heard the voices of daughters, for the most part. Of 'my' six participants, only two were mothers. (I too am a mother). This of course had a deep impact on what was said and what I heard. The effects on our body histories of our socialization as daughters and mothers do need to be explored outside of the usual pathological etiologies. Catherine Steiner-Adair (1990) looks at the socialization of girls and the value of relationship in their development. She posits a fundamental male-oriented bias in our North American culture that defines autonomy as the goal of development. She then suggests that "since females develop a sense of identity in the context of relationship, girls are naturally more dependent on and vulnerable to external references impacting on their sense of identity" (p. 165). If girls are socialized to value relationships, though, she asks a significant question: "Are girls also socialized to value the values they are given for relationships?" (p. 166).

This question goes to the heart of what Gilligan and consoeurs too are exploring when they seek to help girls stay grounded in their own subjectivity. If autonomy is the prime value of our culture, and if girls value relation, how do they negotiate the dissonance between values? How can their socialized mothers and the other women in their lives help them negotiate these values?

Steiner-Adair (1990) thinks it is this dissonance that is a prominent etiological factor in the development of eating disorders. She says that rather than seeing eating disorders as a "failure to attain autonomy" (p. 169), as it is seen by many eating disorder researchers, it is more likely that "eating disorders have erupted in this culture because of an unhealthy and unrealistic overemphasis on autonomy in women" (p. 169) and the resultant conflict for girls. She suggests that self-destructive dieting behaviours are "culturally supported" (p. 167), and that to understand their predominance in adolescent girls' lives (in particular) "requires an analysis of the bridge between normalcy and pathology" by viewing "normal" development in a cultural context (p. 163). [9]

This conflict for girls can show itself most explicitly in issues around body and sexuality. Girls now can expect equality around gender issues in education and the world of work. Body and sexuality, however, remain complicated and controversial terrain. The

issues emerge very strongly at adolescence, for both mothers and daughters.

Freida, Phébée and Emily speak of their mothers' explicit problems with food and with body image. These two things are not the same, though they are often conflated. Phébée says her mother's kitchen was a "laboratoire" where she constantly experimented with "healthy" food; simultaneously her mother was bulimic. What is common to both food and body image issues is obsession (Chernin, 1981). For women, there are conflictual images of mother as nurturer, feeding her family (though often not herself), while simultaneously having to be a slim (sex) goddess (Kaplan, 1980).

In Freida's family, food was never just food (4-1). It had good or bad labels, and there was a generally negative relationship with it. "It had responsibilities attached to it" (4-1) and it was weighted down with meanings that were never made clear. There were many rules, she says, but they were unspoken "so you had to figure them out as you went" (4-1). What was clear to Freida was that her mother had "very severe body image problems" (3-1) which she did not acknowledge, but which Freida views as having been "transferred" (3-1) to her. These "formed themselves into comments about my weight, comments about my hair, ... about anything.. anything bodily" (4-1).

Freida describes this as the "you're such a beautiful child but..." (3-1) syndrome. In an early work on women and weight, Marcia Millman (1980) named it "such a pretty face" (the but is in silent parentheses), a 'compliment' that large women receive constantly. It is in essence the request for transformation to fulfill your cultural assignment. I remember well sitting in a male gynaecologist's office in my twenties, listening to him say "you have such a pretty face, why don't you lose weight?" (What this had to do with my Pap smear was of course never explained.)

Phébée too speaks of the "transference" of her mother's body image dilemmas. She says "For her, body image and eating was a very obsessive process and I caught it, very early on, this obsession" (1-7). It was not, as she puts it, "passed on" to her brother. Her mother told her constantly:

> Pull in your stomach, straighten your shoulders, pull in your stomach, straighten your shoulders. She would always do that, or, you know, pat my shoulders or my back, meaning pull in your stomach and straighten your

> shoulders. So I was conscious of my stomach all the time. This was omnipresent. I would walk on the street, I would look at something, I didn't see the sky, I was thinking about my stomach. (1-24)

The conflicted voice of Emily's mother comes through in a letter she wrote when Emily was 8 years old and staying at her grandmother's. "I was just learning to read. I can tell by the way she wrote it and she says at the bottom, 'please don't eat too much while you're there. Practice saying no thank you.' So I thought that was kind of funny" (4-1).

Emily describes her mother as being very "neutral" in her commentary on her. She says "she doesn't impose. If she has those values, she doesn't impose them on me" (6-2). Nonetheless, Emily does describe her mother as being very very concerned about her own weight; "she even says this - she would rather die than get fat" (15-1). Her mother often commented on Emily's weight. Emily says "she would always make sure that I didn't eat certain things.. she would always ask my grandmother not to feed me so much" (4-1) and she adds "even now, every time my mom sees me after not having seen me for a long time, she says 'oh, you've lost weight' and I haven't, so... I told her that that upsets me" (4-1). "I don't see why that has to be one of the first things she says" (5-1). Emily wonders about the effect of that on her because she has been concerned about her weight since she was 9 or 10.

Gerald Adams, Mandy Hicken and Mahsid Salehi (1988) studied the relationship between parental expectations regarding physical attractiveness attributes, parents' verbal behaviours and children's socialization regarding attractiveness. While they were measuring children's views of other children, their findings are interesting if we relate their study to how we learn to view ourselves. Why is it, for instance, that most children at a very early age identify the fat child as the least desirable playmate?

Adams, Hicken and Salehi's (1988) studies suggest that:

> As parents internalize a physical attractiveness stereotype and they express these expectations through subtle descriptions about people, children may experience a parental socialization process that could encourage the child's internalization of the physical attractiveness stereotype. In turn, children may begin to manifest attractiveness-related stereotypic behaviour in their peer relations at a relatively young age due to this subtle parental socialization process. (p. 147)

Stephanie makes very explicit the influence she feels the adults in her life had on her. She didn't question the labels that were put on her; she says, "The adults in my world were the people that told me what and who I was. My mother told me every day what I was; I started thinking for myself, really much later... if the adult turned around and said to me, you're green, I would have believed it" (35-2). She received contradictory messages from her mother. While she says that in her family, the overt rule was that smart was better than beautiful (and she was smart), Stephanie also seems to have understood that for her younger sister, Alison, who was 'beautiful', smart wasn't necessary. "Alison unfortunately was told that she was good looking, that was all she had to be, and it is only now she is beginning to say, I'm smart too" (14-1) . Stephanie was told, in her teen years, as she began to take an interest in boys who didn't seem to be interested in her, that she was "too tall and too smart" (16-1).

Strategies that mothers use to assist their daughters in dealing with differences in siblings, differences in development, can sometimes have a different impact than intended:

> My mom had a push/pull effect; she will tell you one minute you're this and the next minute, you are the exact opposite. She said there was nothing wrong with the way I looked, that I wasn't fat whatever, but I was not as pretty as Alison or whatever other image, or the way she was when she was younger. (Stephanie, 19-2)

Stephanie has struggled and continues to struggle with these labellings to come to her own assessments of herself, her abilities, her potentiality.

Neither Annette nor Caroline remember their mothers' words as being a positive or negative influence on their body self concepts. Annette says her mother was not much of a talker when she and her brothers were young. She didn't talk to them much about her own life because "she didn't want to influence us; that is the way she says it" (2-8). What Annette understands from this is that her mother had a dark view of life, that she was depressed and she didn't want to convey that attitude to her children.

Nonetheless, Annette says, "we were influenced by how she acted.. by the nonverbal body language, but not in terms of what she actually said" (2-10). Her mother made many of Annette's clothes, and those of her brothers, but she didn't make them for herself. She said

she didn't have the time, but Annette adds that "she didn't like her body, she thought she was fat, so she didn't bother" (2-9). Now in her 70s, her mother still "takes somebody else's word for what she should be weighing" (2-20); she went on a diet because her doctor told her to, with little visible evidence of its necessity. Freida, too, speaks of her mother's vulnerability (and her own) to their doctor's 'diseasing' of their body weight.

Caroline remembers nothing of family commentary on her body. She speaks of her parents as not having had 'body' issues. She says her mother was very beautiful; she started to gain weight in her 40s and 50s, but she didn't appear to have any issues with her weight, and was confident in her looks. Her father, who followed her mother home from a soccer game "because she had great legs," still thinks her mother is beautiful.

Nevertheless, from a very young age, Caroline felt she was fat, unlovable. She says her family was very undemonstrative; she made the connection that it was because she was fat that she wasn't hugged, loved. "In my mind... I was in some way repulsive to them, and so they would not be able to reach out and take this little kid and hug them and think they were terrific, and it was because I was fat" (1-1). She doesn't feel that her parents directly gave her the feeling of being fat; "I think it came from me" (3-1), but she adds that they never did anything to "contradict" this perception. In Grade 10 she started what she calls "disciplined eating" (16-1) and although she lost weight, she remembers no reaction to it, at home or at school. She adds, "It is possible there was feedback, there must have been. But I don't remember hearing it. I certainly didn't take it in and feel good about myself. Maybe I wasn't letting it sink in, because I wasn't willing to let go of this feeling that I had of myself" (16-1).

Caroline's story identifies how deep such internalized feelings are, not easily altered by surface change like weight loss. It also highlights what Sandra Susan Friedman (1997) calls the "code", the "language of fat" (p. 45). She says that, as Brown and Gilligan (1992) have found, girls "learn to live their lives in translation in order to accommodate themselves to Adam's rules" (p.34). One of the major translations girls seem to make is that of turning situations in which they cannot express their authentic selves into an identification of themselves as being insufficient, inferior, and then, fat. Although this seems like a major leap

in self-naming -- from inferior to fat -- we can understand it in light of the identification of woman with body, and of body with a lesser order of existence. In addition, at adolescence, Friedman (1997) says:

> Many girls associate the societal restrictions that are imposed upon them with the inevitable weight gain and increase in body fat that occurs during puberty. They try to deal with the new restrictions in their lives by focusing on these changes in their bodies. They focus on their reflected external image instead of on their real internal selves. Girls deflect their feelings back onto their bodies and encode them in the language of fat. (p. 36)

Girls at puberty, living in radically changing bodies, which are simultaneously being culturally sexualized, are particularly susceptible to this jump to an "inferiorized" body. Of course, this translation or encoding is not embedded in our DNA. It arises from a multitude of signs, in our family, school, and popular cultures. But it ends up inscribing the individual girl with that material "grip" that Bordo (1993) identifies.

Cultural preparedness

I have noticed how free adults feel to address children about how they look, in a way that they would rarely address adults: "How big you are, I can remember when you were just this high, what a pretty dress you have, what a pretty girl you are, what beautiful hair you have, what a beautiful smile" and so on. I have done it myself. It is as if children were just a surface that was written on, and you wanted to be able to compliment their parents about how good the writing looks.

Another thing I have noticed is that boys are not usually complimented on their clothes, or their hair, or the colour of their eyes. They are told how grown up they look, how big and strong they are, if indeed their looks are commented on at all. Girls, on the other hand, receive a continual barrage of compliments on their looks and clothes. It seems a small and trivial thing, but it's part of the set up. It starts so young. It is part of what Hilary Lips (1994) calls "cultural preparedness" (p. 89). In speaking of parental behaviour and its relationship to mastery for children, she suggests that from the time:

> When parents describe newborn infant daughters as 'softer' and 'finer' than their newborn infant sons who are comparable in size and strength, to the

> times when young boys are given toys that require skill and perseverance to assemble and use while girls are given dolls, the message sent by parents to their children is that boys can make things happen and can take care of themselves, while girls cannot. (p. 91)

Lips suggests this kind of behaviour sets up "cultural preparedness for powerlessness" (p. 90). The result of this continual and consistent 'priming' is that "girls and women become increasingly ready to learn the lesson of powerlessness in any new situation" (p. 90). I would suggest that the voices of others, including but not only those of parents, prime girls, long before popular culture or their peers have an influence on them, to "be seen" in the Berger (1972) meaning of the word -- socialized to the mirror.

The power of body commentary

Body image researchers (Rieves & Cash, 1996; Thompson & Heinberg, 1992) have found a correlation between childhood teasing about physical appearance, what Thompson & Heinberg (1992) call "negative verbal commentary" (p. 60), and negative body image in adult women. The women in their studies remembered substantial teasing about their physical appearance when they were young, from family members, relatives, friends, teachers and peers. In particular, brothers were remembered as being the worst, followed by peers. Phébée says her brother always called her "la grosse," rarely using her own name. Her parents never seemed to have stopped him from doing so. She says "I think it was to give him some power that he would put me down... and it did, it had that impact on me" (1-8).

The power of this commentary is very strong, particularly when it is addressed to preadolescent or early adolescent girls as they struggle to define themselves inside their changing bodies. I know that I have never forgotten a casual comment by the mother of my then current best friend telling me, at age 12, that I had the kind of look that meant I would come into my 'prime' and be beautiful at age 35. It doomed me in a sense to have a certain vision of myself. I had no measure against which to weigh her comment; I took it in wholeheartedly.

Other stories by 'my' participants show a similar singular lack of understanding by adults of the power differential between adults and children, and the resultant power in their

commentary, positive or negative. Phébée tells a story that obviously has never left her consciousness. When she was ll, she went into hospital to have her tonsils out, and while she was there, she was put on a diet. She lost ll pounds. When she came back to school, her teacher commented in front of the class on how wonderful she looked, having lost so much weight. As Phébée says, "so that does it, eh? What was I before, and what would I be next?" (1-17) This message to a child is not a compliment, but says how unacceptable she was before (as do most 'compliments' about weight loss). Her teacher felt free to comment on her in this way.

Stephanie, a tall girl and woman, has had many experiences of what she calls the 'don't forget us little people' reaction. At school, clumsy was a word that became attached to her "tall" designation, and it had negative connotations. When she was clumsy, as any child might be, it became inappropriately attached to her tallness, and was something she was teased about. She says "I didn't feel clumsy until it was pointed out by different people at different ages" (1-19). Awkward was another word. "My teacher would put it very nicely, 'well, you're rather awkward, darling'" (1-19). Stephanie feels that her height is an essential part of who she is and when she is rejected because of it, she feels her whole being is being rejected.

Annette, like me, has memories of commentary on her body by relative strangers, comments that have stayed with her. When she was about l3 or l4, on a visit to New Brunswick, she overheard an older man say "it's too bad to have a child's mind in a woman's body', like that. And it sounded like a put down" (1-10). She says "this comment "stayed in me, stayed with me" (l-10). She adds:

> What was happening is a lot of people were starting to give me messages about my body that I hadn't even realized. Like I remember one of our neighbours was saying that I had really strong legs, like a runner, or a ballet dancer. And I had never noticed, like, my legs. Another guy who was into weight lifting mentioned, he asked me if I was a ballet dancer, because he seemed to feel that my legs were stronger, out of proportion to the rest of my body. And it was all, like other people noticing my body, you know, which started making me maybe a little self conscious about my legs being big. Up until then, I hadn't noticed. Up until then, they were just for running. They were for jumping, being good at skipping, and for being very useful.

> And then after that, you start looking at them, and think well, they are not slim like other people's. So you started comparing yourself to other people. But up until there, it seemed like I wasn't really that aware of myself, what's happening here is they are talking about me as a sexual object, before I was ready, before I was even ready to hear it... for some reason, even though those aren't important statements they stay with you. It makes you become aware of that division, you know, that suddenly your body is something that is not you, it is what other people see, it is what they project on to it. (1-11)

Emily too, who sees herself as overweight and struggles with this image of herself, deals with such comments from a boyfriend who is concerned about weight in women, seemingly both aesthetically and for health reasons. "And he said to me once, he said that's the worst thing, when women get overweight" (14-2).

Caroline speaks of the endless teasing she received from the children at all the different schools she went to. She talks about one "terrifying" occasion in Grade ll when she was supposed to receive an award for her grade point average. Her parents made her go to the prize giving, but she spent the entire evening hiding in the bathroom, standing on a toilet, so that no one could find her. She couldn't bear the idea of being seen,"everybody was going to look at my body walk across the stage" (20-1). Emily too says in class "I would try and sit in a position which I think will somehow make me look thinner... for instance, I would always sit on the edge of my chair so that my legs wouldn't be pressed down" (16-2).

The discipline and energy required to forestall the awaited commentary is enormous. It takes a great deal of work, as Walkerdine (1990) suggests, "to cover over not an essential femininity but a different set of desires and organization of pleasures" (p. 145) than those of our cultural assignment. Both the actual and the imagined commentary is terrifying, when one considers its cumulative effect. Becky Thompson (1994) cites Harriette Pipes McAdoo's phrase "the mundane extreme environment" (p. 369) of racism resulting "from an accumulation of injuries," the daily priming. This idea of the "mundane extreme environment" can be applied to a girl's geography too. For girls, the daily priming through commentary, whether seen as harassing or not, prepares them to assume their place in the cultural script.

Chapter IV
Her own body story: From the inside

> There is no theory that is not a fragment, carefully preserved, of some autobiography. (Paul Valery, cited in Miller, 1991, p.1).

Her own body story

If girls are highly influenced by outside voices, if girls are primed for powerlessness, then is there resistance? What does their own voice (what does that mean exactly?), their authentic voice (to use Gilligan's terminology - but is authenticity without ideology?), sound like?

Can we tell stories about ourselves through memory and narrative that are outside of the cultural performance, that are not co-opted or coded into already framed narrative lines? I think this is very difficult. Personal experience narrative does not sit outside construction. Nonetheless, it is not an "exhausted genre" (Kauffman, 1993, 142). But how does one speak of the body of the woman and the woman in the body in a way that neither essentializes her/herbody, nor abstracts her from herbody?

I felt that one way was to speak of body outside of body image, to ask questions that did not contain the words 'body image,' 'weight,' 'shaping.' So much of body image is assumed to be about these issues. For women, the idea of body, beyond reproductive issues, seems to have crystallized around size and weight issues.

So beyond asking for 'my' participants' body biography, I asked what I considered to be two important questions: "what is your favorite body memory," and "what does it mean to be a girl." I also asked for a third person story that looked at body memory at a transition time. I think this moved the language to a different sort of place or places. These places turned out to be ones of movement, of action, and of safety and sensuality. 'My' participants' favorite body memories also did not necessarily correspond with, or reflect, what they felt it meant to be a girl.

Listening to the words of 'my' participants and reading the stories they had written, thinking of my own rich memories, I could feel sometimes the sun on my/their skin, the movement of my/their body. It was very moving. The physicality of our bodies in the world

gets flattened on the page; our physical literacy cannot be nailed down. Whatever words I write here are only about the body. Our bodies are coded, certainly, and when we speak of them, we speak in code most often. Even when we move in them, we move in code most often. But there are moments that seem unique and uncoded. I can feel those moments underneath this writing, even if I can't convey them. They are a form of resistance, of seizing one's body for one's own purpose.

In the following section, I briefly discuss 'my' participants' favorite body memories and what they feel it means to be a girl. In addition, their own third person story is reproduced[1], with any discussion that emerged from its writing. As well, the photographs that were given to me to put in the study illustrate each participant's section.

No enemies in sight

Stephanie, for instance, tells of her favorite body memory.

> That would be pretty easy actually. The first time I ever sunbathed in the nude. Especially someone such as myself who is as reserved as hell. The first time I ever did that, that was amazing. I was just so free! Nobody was around; we were camping. The family was away. I was stretched out on a towel, happy as a pig in poop, lying there getting all this sun and not a stitch of clothing on. It was great! It felt very free. Free. No restrictions, no material excess foolishness. Even at 13, I thought I was..quite the thing, reading quite a bit of philosophy at the time. And of course really reading up on the movement for the suffragettes and..being thirteen. Anyway just that element of being free the.. never appealed to me, but just not having a stitch of things on. No fear. Absolutely no fear. Complete complete sense of freedom, on the physical as well as the sort of psychological... no one was around. Not a soul. No enemies in sight. (44-2)

Stephanie's response to what she used to consider being a girl is interesting when juxtaposed with the freedom of this nude sunbathing with "no enemies in sight." A girl's essence was "wearing a dress and having your hair so, your hands so, smelling a certain way... excessively flirtatious, being essentially a sexually attractive thing" (38-2).

Stephanie's story recounts an experience which reflects some of these feelings at age 12 or 13. In her story, too, is the element of the princess, what she defines as "something

valued, something treasured, something pampered, you were given things, you were acknowledged, you were the focus of attention" (8-2). She says that as a young girl, getting caught up in the emphasis on physical appearance meant, "playing a role, the female -- the woman itself, that whole package, that character, seems to somehow end up being lost in that physical development or identity. You become the image, rather than becoming a person" (9-2).

Stephanie's story by Stephanie

Summer was definitely here, the sky was a bright blue. Stephanie had woken up early that Saturday morning in June, excited because today she was going shopping with her mother, Maria and her sister, Alison, to buy a dress, a graduation dress.

Stephanie's mother heard her eldest child moving about; groaning, she reluctantly left the comfort of her soft bed. Having only had a few hours of sleep, she could think of nothing she would like better than remaining in bed. Working the graveyard shift, while raising two young school aged children was beginning to take its toll. However, her job provided her family with the basic necessities and allowed them to live in some modest comfort. She had been worrying all week about going to buy Stephanie's dress; money was tight this month. She was hoping she could get a nice enough dress for her little girl, because she had sensed just how much this graduation ceremony was beginning to mean to Stephanie. So, up she got, headed for the children's room to wake Alison up, knowing full well that the little one would still be abed sleeping.

Stephanie in the meantime had set the table for breakfast. After breakfast they headed out to the Greenfield Park shopping mall. It was to be the first stop of the day; luckily enough it was also the last.

They walked into a little boutique called "a la mode". The owner of the boutique, Maryse, was also a neighbor of theirs. It was the first time they had ever set foot in this store. Maryse approached them, asking if there was anything in particular that they were looking for; to which Maria replied telling her that they were here to buy a graduation dress for Stephanie. Maryse pointed to a rack of summer dresses. Stephanie's mother walked over to the rack sifting through the assortment of dresses. She pulled out three that she favored. One dress was black and white polka dots, straight cut and to Stephanie's way of thinking, one of the most boring dresses she had ever seen. She still had to try it on as it was the one that her mother liked best. Thankfully it did not fit right; it made the chubby kid look that much chubbier. The second dress also had polka dots, but these were pink and white, and it had a large white collar. Stephanie hated that one too. The last dress was all cream coloured lace. It looked like something out of one of her mother's regency romance novels. Something you would pull out of a chest that belonged to a long since dead relative. Stephanie had just finished reading a book called "Samantha's Secret Cave" in which chests of antiques were found, so she found this dress to be very romantic. She tried it on; it fit beautifully. She started to swirl around, delighted that this time, with a dress like this, the other kids at school would not tease her about looking like a boy or being as tall and as tough as the boys. They would finally treat her like a girl. The funniest part about the way the kids were was that Stephanie was anything but a tomboy. She just stood so much taller than the other kids. She was even taller than her grade school teacher, Katie. She really wanted this dress and hoped her mother would buy it. Maria looked at the price tag and cringed inwardly; it was a little on the steep side. She carefully asked the child, not wanting to see the look of disappointment on her daughter's face as she asked her if she liked one of the other dresses. Stephanie's face fell, but she was a good girl and knew that they did not have a lot of money, so she picked the pink one. As she was putting on her clothes her mother decided to splurge and get the cream coloured dress Stephanie so much admired. Her daughter was ecstatic! They headed home satisfied with their purchase.

A week later it was the afternoon of the graduation, Stephanie wondered what her classmates were going to think. Maybe Thornton Christopher, the cutest boy in class, would think she looked special, but that was kind of gross. Boys were still just too weird; it still would be nice, however, if for a little while they treated her the same way they did the other girls. She got dressed and put on the matching pair of pantyhose. They itched; it was the first time in her life she had ever worn

pantyhose. She put on her new shoes which matched the dress, her mum fixed her hair, and she was allowed to put on make-up. Stephanie felt so grown up. As she looked at the transformed image in the mirror staring back at her, she wondered if this was what she would look like when she grew up, and voiced as much to her mother. Maria smiled warmly, thinking how very grown up her daughter was becoming. She told Stephanie that it was a possibility and that they would have to wait and see.

She arrived at the school with all the other children from her class. Mum and Alison watched as Stephanie looked around anxiously waiting for someone to be the first to notice her. Someone did, and that someone was Stewart. Stewart, like Stephanie, was considered one of the nerds. When he saw Stephanie, he told her that she looked just like a princess. Stephanie told him that he looked nice too and ran off to tell her mother what Stewart had said. After that Stephanie did not care what anybody else thought or said out loud. Somebody thought she looked like a princess, and on that day, she felt like one. It was so nice and this is what she thought it must be like to be treated like a girl, like a woman for that matter, to be thought of and treated as a beautiful princess. It was, however, the only time in her life that she has ever been thought of that way. Fairy tales, like children, grow old and are looked at differently with time.

In Stephanie's story, we hear the longing for connection and empowerment expressed through the practices of being a girl: the meaning of the dress, of her mother agreeing to buy it for her, the dance itself, the compliment that moves her to self-acceptance, the uniqueness of the experience, how it lodged in memory. Even now with her adult understanding of the role of "girl" by which she was overcome, she says "it was the only time in her life that she has ever been thought of that way." We hear what Haug et al. (1987) mean when they see women "taking pleasure in the very process of being trained into .... structures rather than feeling tyrannized by them" (p. 81). They suggest that "memories of the points at which we adopt those standards and make them our own reveal the extent to which we are already subject to their influence" (p. 117).

This story is full of these routinized practices that Bartky (1988) speaks of -- the thrill of shopping, putting on a new dress, the charm of

transformation, what it can/could/will mean to our relation in the world, adorning our bodies. It's not just putting on a dress, it's putting on our feminine identity. Through it, we understand quite profoundly what Bartky means when she suggests that the destructuring of our "feminine" production might be seen as "desexualization, if not outright annihilation" (p. 78).

"I must be liking this"

The prospect of annihilation is something that over/underlays Freida's story. In it, we sense the other side of Stephanie's story, a story of premature sexualization, of a girl who wants to live the story, who has believed in the story, but for whom it now feels impossible. Freida says "In my schooling, in my socialization, I wasn't taught anything about interactions and about being able to set boundaries on my own body" (5-2).

Freida's story by Freida

She is digging her nails into her knee, hoping he won't notice her tensity. If she closes her eyes he disappears for an instant -but alas she is reminded of his presence by the tongue that stretches to her oesophagus. She chokes, somewhat in need of air, somewhat in need of space to breathe; and then he is back inside her.
This must be what it's like.
I must be liking this.
I must like him.
He smells. He smells of that 'I took a shower but put on my week's favourite shirt again'. Her nose is thrust into his chest and she thinks it might break if he pushes any harder. He's suffocating her. He is so large that he engulfs her little body.

Her little body... so 'out of proportion' still-little body...

big hips, big butt, big tummy, nothing else -
nothing else: she seems hollow inside.

So hollow she's not sure where she has gone. She's gotta stay - he likes her. She's never been 'liked' before, never been 'licked' before - at least never in a shopping mall. She feels sick to her stomach and digs her nails in further, her nails aren't that long : bitten to the core from previous fears. If only she could last until nine o'clock. She watches the digital numbers on the spinning advertisement - wishing it would count seconds - just to see the numbers move : move out of her body.

They sit on a one-entrance ledge. dark. evening. hustling business execs entering the subway - she watches them intently wishing they would take her away : she watches the passer-bys wondering if they've ever felt this way - away - or if they even notice the two lovers. No, one lover and one child-make-believe- lover.

His legs are now completely around her, and his fingers are fondling at her sides - like hunters to the breast. He hasn't figured out that she doesn't have any yet. Her red shirt seems to scream at her

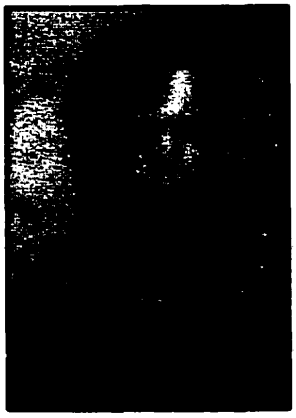
- red alert, red alert - but she's intent that he likes her - and she's never been 'liked' before; never been 'licked' before - and she's glad of that.

He is slimy and she feels covered, from tongue to toe, in 'him'. That eel in her mouth, in her body. She screams silently when his eyes are closed. Her toes are curling in her running shoes - if she can't run, maybe she can curl herself up so small that he can't find her; follow herself into that hollow body.

She's never tasted love, and she wants to spit it out.

She isn't sure if that's his dinner or just his self but it isn't the 'sweet fruit of desire'. His tongue is stronger than her fist and it seems to be frenzied or intent on finding buried treasure - treasure she doesn't even know she has.

She squirms to climb away into that body, a body even she still doesn't know. Maybe if they sit side-by-side then she'll have one side safe, one safe side to



stock her body in - away from him. But alas he is insistent on filling her field of view. Enforcing that there is nothing in the world but him. She wants to think that's sincere and that she would be happy about it - knowing full well that neither are true. "Why don't you look at me", "Look into my eyes." And if she does, she'll cry or scream or faint.

All she can hear is his breathing and her heartbeat in her throat. It feels like he's licking it, dancing with it, pulsing with it -

she has disowned them both.

She didn't bargain for this. She's thinking that it might not be so bad if she put all of her body in those toes. Her body agrees.

The sounds beyond their glassed-in ledge are just faint mumblings from the market places of another country, like musac in a store - but much less soothing.

Freida wrote this story because it was one of the strongest memory feelings of body that she has from that time of early adolescence; it also had a strong impact on how she reacted to people for the next four or five years. She says "it was the first serious experience of body outside of my family, and outside of just sort of a hug with a friend" (3-2). It coloured her experience negatively; she feels from her conversations with other women that having such an overwhelming first experience is fairly common. She feels there is "so much culture tied up into the 'good' experience of a first date, which doesn't happen for so many people.... it is bursting that fantasy" (3-2). She also feels that for her, the "paralyzing" element of this experience was amplified by her "extra baggage [of abuse] that I was unconsciously dealing with" (4-2).

Freida thinks the pressures that exist around such an experience involve age differences (this boy was older than she) and learning how to communicate well in a new manner, outside of the familiar family or peer communication that has been developed. She says "when you are in an experience with someone you may not entirely know, when you are trying to communicate on a level that you expect them to understand and they don't, and then you feel bad because it's your fault they are not understanding. You must be doing something wrong" (5-2).

She questions the 'just saying no' paradigm as being difficult when you are dealing with power imbalances such as age, experience and communication differences. Coming

from what she calls an intimate family, "there was a sort of expectation that adults would set the boundaries and that it wasn't something that was in your hands" (5-2). She had the expectation in this situation with an older boy that he was going to set boundaries, and that he would "recognize what I might be feeling and take that into consideration. And he didn't" (6-2).

Freida thinks that the discourse of the fantastic first date and the fantasy of "you're going to enjoy this" with the interesting caveat of "eventually" and "you'll get over it" is still very strong. There are the additional pressures of peers and parents in terms of timing; she says "everything is seen in terms of development processes, if you are not out there doing step 1 and 2, you feel like you are getting left behind" (7-2).

Freida's concept of being a girl also involves communication. She says it is a lot about interacting with other people, "you were supposed to be very good at communication with people and very understanding and nurturing and have a sort of enough self assurance that you could focus on other people, but not enough that you stood out in a crowd." She relates that same element of 'enough but not too much' to the production of her femininity:

> I was taught or pulled into the ideal of women spending, or girls spending, just enough time on their body to make it an object or to make it presentable and yet not enough that they could really connect with it. So this body was just sort of an extension of your house. It. The material world, rather than being an extension of who you were inside. (32-2)

Freida's favorite memory of feeling at home in her body is of spending time with a friend of hers who is "someone that I feel very connected to in a mind sense, but also in a body sense, and in a spiritual sense" (35-2). She feels that:

> times I have been with her.. often we will spend the night together.. not in any sexual sense, but it often happens that we are naked, and for me that experience of being with her and feeling completely safe.. in the sense that she knows my mind, and she knows how I think and how that comes across, but she also knows my body, and knows my body in a way that I appreciate and that feels centered to me. (35-2)

When we move from the intimate to the public, however, girls and women often feel homeless in their bodies, having to defend their physical/psychic selves in the public space.

"Loin des regards"

Phébée's story is a series of vignettes of the senses, remembering a time of transition. It involves a move from sensuality as home to self-consciousness, away from the senses of her body to the homelessness of an internalized external gaze. She describes her awareness of the changes happening in her at puberty as "very heavy." "I lived in a closed kind of world. It was my world, my senses, my family, the little place where I lived" (2-3). That closed world did have a lot of changes in it, changes represented by the different schools she went to, the travels her parents took, the different people who cared for her. One constant was the river in front of her house. Searching for an idea for her third person story, she realized that she could measure her internal changes by those that related to the river and her experiences with it.

Phébée's story by Phébée/ L'histoire de Phébée par Phébée

Elle avait à peine un an lorsque ses parents ont acheté "leur maison", un chalet d'été sur le bord de la rivière Des Mille Iles, á Bois des Filion. A l'époque c'était un endroit de villégiature ou l'on venait principalement pour ses multiples plages. Le 479 rue Perron était situé sur le bord de l'eau à proximité de "la plage de la 42e avenue", le paradis des enfants. Alors que la population estivale était assez importante, l'hiver il ne restait que mille habitants, tout au plus. Ce fut un lieu de découvertes multiples, son enfance fut inondée de:

SONS

Le vent dans les feuilles, le chant des oiseaux, les crapauds qui l'empêchaient presque de dormir la nuit, les cigales qui annonçaient les chaleurs des canicules, la pluie qui avait un effet de berceuse, le grondement du tonnerre, les cris stridents d'enfants qui se baignaient, le cillement du vent d'hiver, les vagues qui frappent les rochers, le son creux des roches qu'elle lançait dans l'eau, les roues de sa bicyclette sur les routes de terre, le craquement de la neige sous ses pas, le froissement des feuilles sèches...

GOÛTS

Les flocons de neige, les gouttes de pluie, les brindilles d'herbe sechée qu'elle allumait pour fumer..., l'eau de la rivière qui entrait dans ses narines; les centaines de bonbons à la cenne, gâteaux, chips, cornets, liqueurs tous achetés au même endroit: chez Boimenu (petit dépanneur qui n'ouvrait que l'été) et qui goûtaient tous la "liberté". Les pique-niques sur la plage, les fruits frais achetés des vendeurs itinérants, la neige, les glaçons qui pendaient du toit, les repas du dimanche chez grand-maman qui l'été habitait tout près, les cigarettes en chocolats que son père lui rapportait de la ville, le thé des bois, les noisettes cueillies au bord de l'eau l'automne...

VUES

Les couches de soleil, les gros nuages qui prenaient toutes sortes de formes surprenantes, l'herbe, la rangée de peupliers chez le voisin, l'orme dans sa cour, les magnifiques arbres qui longeaient le bord de l'eau et les milliers dans l'île devant chez elle, les millions de diamants sur l'eau lorsque le soleil brillait, toutes les gammes de couleurs et de mouvements de l'eau selon les saisons et le température, les énormes bancs de neige transformés en glissoires ou en forts, les floçons de neige, les pas du père Noël sur le toit près de la cheminée, le changement des couleurs à l'automne, la glace sur la rivière, les inondations au printemps, la débâcle...

ODEURS

Les feux de feuilles, les feux de foyer, le dégel au printemps, le bord de l'eau, son maillot de bain mouillé, la pluie l'été, le sable, le gazon, l'humidité, le parfum de sa mère, le linge propre, la nourriture sur le poêle, la cire sur le plancher de bois...

TOUCHES

L'eau sur son corps, la légèreté de son corps dans l'eau, les jeux et mouvements dans l'eau, la froideur de l'eau le matin très tôt, l'irritation de son nez lorsque de l'eau y entrait, le plaisir d'uriner dans la rivière, le vent froid d'hiver, la neige sur sa langue, les pieds gelés dans ses patins, la chaire de poule, les mains gelées dans ses mitaines toutes mouillées, sauter dans des marées d'eau, la fatigue et l'exaltation d'avoir nager jusqu'á la roche, glisser dans la côte de la 42e avenue, la peur des animaux, sa peau toute ratatinée lorsqu'elle passait des heures dans la rivière...

IMAGE CORPORELLE

Puis doucement, sans trop s'en rendre compte, ces sensations diverses se sont tués. A l'age de 12 ans sa relation avec la rivière était complètement modifiée. Ce sont la forme, la couleur et la texture de son maillot qui étaient devenues prioritaires. Posséder le casque de bain qui correspondait parfaitement au style qu'elle voulait transmettre. La gêne d'arriver sur la plage la hantait. Elle avait souvent l'impression que tous les yeux étaient tournés vers elle et qu'on le jugeait. Elle enviait la beauté de toutes les autres filles. Tous ses gestes devenaient calculés: elle ne lançait plus sa serviette sur le sol mais la plaçait soigneusement; elle ne courrait plus pour entrer dans l'eau mais marchait et se trempait par étapes. Ses mouvements de nage devenait harmonieux, gracieux et calculés pour plaire et impressionner. Elle ne restait plus des heures dans l'eau mais seulement une quinzaine de minutes á la fois.

Ce n'est que lorsqu'elle plongeait sous l'eau, loin des regards, qu'elle retrouvait "la paix et la liberté".

P.S. A l'age de 14 ans elle arrêta de se baigner dans la rivière Des Milles Iles car cette dernière était devenue trop polluée.

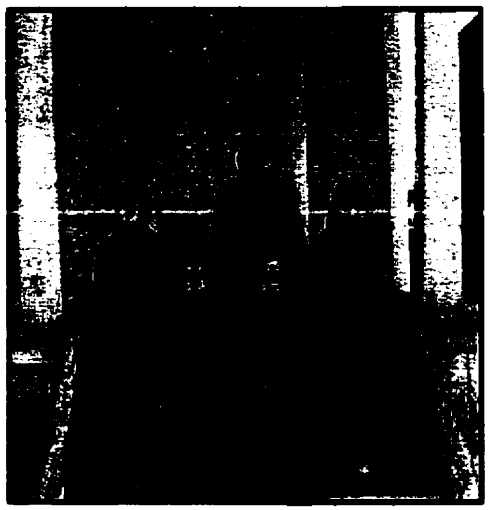
When you are a child, Phébée says, you are allowed to have lots of sensations, and you have the adult world "that puts words on that. You're tasting, you're cold, you're warm.. It's soft, it's sweet, it's bitter, it's all these different things happening to you and there's words and it's encouraged and it's nice.. And then arrives all these hormone changes and nobody talks to you about it, nothing happens" (2-4). Though she asked for

explanations, the promises of 'one day' never came. The only "knowledge" that was transmitted was of the 'facts', sanitary napkins and reproductive biology. Phébée protests, "but that's not a girl's sexuality." She felt that something taboo had happened. "There's more openness to a young child, there's more freedom in the way we touch them, look at them, .. And I guess I was not receiving that any more. Something had happened. I thought it was all me" (2-5). Sidonie Smith (1993) describes it thus:

> Suited up in the gendered body with adolescence, the skin no longer functions as a continually breached border of expanding consciousness. The borders of experience close down. ... Now the skin has become the skin of sexual difference, a potentially contaminating border not to be breached by contact with an alien world. (p. 135)

Being a girl, Phébée feels, is merely an apprenticeship to being a woman. What one learns, from one's mother, are the rules; at the time she was growing up, those rules were those of a wife and mother. Her parents were older, and though different views of a woman's possibilities were just starting to emerge through the second wave of feminism, these did not have much impact on her adolescence.

Phébée's favorite body memory is orgasm. [2]



Not one of the boys

Annette's story charts a moment of a change of consciousness for her in her family, when she came to understand that she was not one of the boys, that another future awaited her.

Annette's story by Annette

Annette had always enjoyed being a member of a large family. She was the only girl in the family; the middle child with four brothers. She felt closest to the oldest and the youngest ones because of their calm temperaments. It just happened that the two brothers closest to her in age had very bad tempers. They seemed especially quick-tempered compared to the other family members.

Even though Annette was the only girl in the family, she had never felt "different" or "special". She played the same games as her brothers - cowboys and Indians or cops and robbers. She was physically active and enjoyed climbing trees, running and playing baseball. She remembers having received toy trucks to play with as a child but sometimes was given dolls which she tended to ignore. Oh yes, she did play with other girls once in a while, especially outside because then she could play skipping. Indoor games with girls were much less interesting. She had a Huckleberry Finn attitude toward girls - they were "sissies" who worried too much about their appearance.

Annette didn't realize it but her body had slowly been changing. Very gradually, almost imperceptibly, she was starting to "fill out". Her breasts were starting to develop and her hips were becoming more pronounced which accented her small waist. She was starting to look much less like "one of the boys" and actually more like a woman even though she was only twelve years old. It was around this time that she noticed that people began treating her differently than they had before. Neighbours discussed her body as separate parts - almost as if she herself were no longer present. She heard comments about her strong runner's legs and was asked if she were a ballet dancer. People felt free to comment on her tiny waist and her developing bust. They seemed to ignore the fact that Annette could overhear them and was beginning to feel as if her body didn't even belong to her. Was she something separate from her body? It made her feel very self-conscious. Strangers were judging her on her physical appearance alone. They didn't seem interested in who she was as a human being.

What she especially disliked was being gaped at on the street. At twelve years old, she felt very vulnerable to the stares and cat whistles from truck drivers and construction workers. She was no longer invisible - now she felt as if she was always on display.

Even though she was having difficulty dealing with outsiders, she thought she would be safe in the confines of her family. However, she soon realized that even her family was starting to react to her changing body. Her mother especially seemed to change in the way she treated Annette. Now she seemed suddenly more concerned about the way Annette dressed to go out. Annette was no longer allowed to stay out as late as her brothers. Her brothers began to tease her about the changes that they noticed such as the day Annette's brother Gary informed the whole neighbourhood that she was wearing her first bra. Annette was too mortified to

step out the door that day.

A few days later Annette and her brother John had an argument. John, quick-tempered as always, lashed out and punched her in the stomach. It certainly wasn't the first time he had hit her - they had often battled in the past and she was quite adept at defending herself. But this time, before she had a chance to react, her older brother Robert grabbed John and threw him down the front stairs, saying, "You are never supposed to hit a girl, especially not in the stomach!" Annette was just as stunned as John by Robert's quick and angry response. This was the first time that someone defended her just because she was a girl. She wasn't sure how she felt about this. She had always prided herself on her strength and her ability to defend herself. And yet, in a way, it seemed quite chivalrous of her older brother to take care of her like that. Perhaps this was the beginning of a lifetime of alternating between wanting to take care of herself and wanting someone else to take care of her.

The event in this story occurred at the same time as Annette was experiencing changes in her home and school environment. At home, she was given her own room; at school, boys and girls were separated into different classes. At play in the neighbourhood, she started to be isolated from her brothers. The story she recounts symbolizes a time of transition from innocently assuming, without ever asking, that she could grow up to be an "army man", to a realization that she was meant to hang out with the girls. She was a girl and that meant something different. For her, "it just seemed that the boys were doing the interesting things and the girls were hanging around, talking about clothes, hair, broken nails, things that I found very boring" (2-4). The image of Huckleberry Finn, for Annette, is an image of someone who did "very boy things, very free, adventurous" (2-4).

For Annette the idea of being a girl has changed from her own childhood view. Then, she thought boys were brave, "moving ahead.. forging ahead" (2-19) and girls were silly. She adds "if I had been reading stories of heroines, it would have been good for me. But I didn't get any of those.." (2-19). As a mother of two daughters, she says she saw a kind of gentleness in her daughters when they were young; this contrasts with her "tomboy's" view of girls as being boring, worried about broken nails.

Annette's favorite body memory is skipping, "double Dutch", "you know, like being able to jump that and keep on that rhythm, like going past thousands, just keeping on skipping" (43-2). When she was skipping, she had the same feeling that she experiences as an adult dancing. She feels in the flow, hypnotized by the repetition and the physicality of the experience. Sometimes in softball, she says, when everything is going right, she has the same experience.

Underneath it all

The story that Emily chose to tell is of a body memory at a time of transition for her that happened in later adolescence. She moved from her home town to a private boarding school in Grade 10. In the ten hours it took to drive from her home town to her new school, her life changed forever. She feels she went from having a voice to losing it, from confidence to loss of confidence, and she wants to understand why. This story exemplifies the lived experience; Emily can still remember what it feels like to sit in that car for all that time with all those thoughts, the big car, the perfect summer day, the cats in the cage, her mother silent...Emily coming to understand what had been undertaken.

Emily's story by Emily

Emily sat in the passenger seat of her mom's big white American car. Her mom, aware that this was not the time for conversation, was concentrating on the road which wound through the mountains of Roger's Pass. The trunk was filled with Emily's belongings, including everything on the list sent to her by the private boarding school. Her clothes were meticulously folded and, protected between them, were her carefully selected mementoes. These included a photo album depicting her childhood up until then, a vase given to her by her mom, the sand she had collected from the beach in Martinique, and her two gold necklaces (one of these was a birthday gift from her dad. On it he had engraved "Love Dad" and her incorrect birthdate, "09/15/73".).

On the back seat beside her disassembled bike, her cats sat together in their travelling cage, probably confused by their unusual situation. They were two black half brothers and Emily had loved them for years. Many think that black cats are bad luck but Emily, having been born on the thirteenth, could not afford to be superstitious. She did not like the fact that her cats were in a "cage" but, since it was designed to hold a dog as big as a Rottweiler, she told herself they would be alright.

It was a perfect summer day. That is, it was perfect as far as the weather was concerned. However, Emily did not take the time to appreciate the weather nor the magnificent scenery. Instead she was focused on transferring her feelings, the events of the last few days, and her anticipation of the future on to the sheets of lined paper in her lap. Many would wonder how she could write like this, without feeling motion sickness. She paid no attention to that.

She thought of her friends back home--both her good and bad ones. She remembered saying goodbye to her first love. She wrote down all the details of their last visit together, wanting to record every word. He had promised to write and she already imagined his letter. She thought of the fact that she had not said goodbye to anyone else. She had not even told them she was leaving. Of course, they would know by now, since news always

moved quickly through the little lakeside town.

Then she began to write about her first day of school and how she hoped her new life would be--better than anything she had experienced so far. She imagined how she and her roommate would quickly become good friends, and they would have many other friends. She imagined that her teachers would be superior to most of her old ones. She saw herself trying and excelling at new sports. She pictured school dances, swimming at the beach, weekend trips to the city and, most importantly, popularity. Then she grew nervous, as though the motion sickness were setting in after all, but it wasn't that. She felt afraid that maybe things would not be better and maybe she had made a big mistake in deciding to leave. The negative side of her imagination took over, and she worried that she would be shy like she had been so many years prior, and that she wouldn't make new friends. She felt, for some reason, that everyone in the new school would be better than her and that she didn't belong in private school. She worried that they would quickly see through her.

This move was the biggest thing that had happened to her so far (or was she happening to it?) and, during that ten hour drive from her familiar life into the next stage, she lost most of her confidence. Still, underneath it all, she knew that she would not trade places with anyone else. This was what always made her feel a little better. No matter how bad she felt, she always had enough faith in herself and her future that she would never trade places with anyone else if given the chance. Unfortunately, this feeling would stay "underneath it all" for a long time.

The tremulousness of this story contrasts strongly with Emily's favorite body memory. A few years after this transition that she writes about, while she was in university, she went on a three week Outward Bound mountain hiking trip. This is an activity that is seen as being empowering for women (Arnold, 1994; Powch, 1994).

Emily had really prepared for it, "not [just] to look good" and was "really in shape" (27-2). She had broken her arm about three months before the trip, so she had to work hard to build up her strength in her arms for the experience. She and her group backpacked for a gruelling three weeks in mountains, in cold and hot weather, no showers, and:

> It was the physically most demanding thing I have ever done, but I felt very capable and strong, and everybody was very supportive of each other and I felt really really comfortable, and not self conscious... The whole trip gave me a lot of confidence, because..we all recognized the good qualities in each other and we were very open

and we talked about them, our instructor encouraged us to talk about them in group discussions. (27-2)

Emily's ideas about "being a girl" contrast with these images of strength and self-confidence. She says she always thought that "being beautiful was one of the most important things a woman [could be]. I always knew that it was important to be good and to be smart, but I always thought that how we looked was incredibly important" (18-2). She also thought that being female "meant that I would grow up and I would be a mother and take care of my kids and my husband and do a lot of cooking" (18-2).

Emily has begun to rethink that image. In university she has come to see that other possibilities exist; she also contrasts her own goals with those of her boyfriend. He was "always doing things that were bettering himself whereas I was cleaning the bathtub" (19-2). She is struggling with these new images, but says some of the influences on the struggle are professors that she has, "who have been good role models and I can see that there is much more than just keeping your apartment clean" (21-2).

Something special

I always knew I would write this story as my third person narrative. I held it in my mind for a long time during this research before I wrote it down. It is difficult to write a story without analysis, without commentary; indeed, the lines at the end appeared out of nowhere.

But I understood them to be true. I don't remember whether this story marked a firm demarcation in my moving into the femininity of puberty, but I remember so strongly the actual moments and feelings of this experience. The sun is still on my skin, the wind still moving my skirt. That moment of alertness to the outside view, the "gaze," remains with me as well.

Amantha's story by Amantha

Amantha had never been to the Oratory before. She was amazed at how immense it was, what a sense of grandeur one felt, standing on the street, looking through the gates at the long expanse in front of the stairs, so many stairs, which led up, up to the great stone building topped with a green copper crown.

It was Easter and her whole family had come in from the small city where they lived to Montreal, staying in a hotel and visiting her mother's relatives. It was the first time she remembered being in the big city, though surely she had been there before.

She and her sister and her mother had gone shopping; new things for Easter Sunday. She had white gloves, of course, but most exciting was her light turquoise skirt with the small white polka dots and a crinoline, her first. She had tried on her older sister's before, but this was her very own.

It was a brilliantly sunny day, warm but with a fresh breeze. She was glad it was so warm so she didn't have to wear what she thought was an ugly coat over her beautiful new skirt. She and her sister tried to go up the stairs on their knees, as it seemed that was the thing to do. All around her were pilgrims, as her mother called them, going from stair to stair on their knees, stopping to pray silently on their rosaries at each step. But she was too impatient, and the stone was rough on her skin. In the end, she and her sister tore up the stairs and reaching the top, breathless, looked out over the view.

Later, somewhere over on the side of the large terrain of the Oratory, they went through the outside Way of the Cross; it was like a garden with the Stations situated along stone and gravel paths, and little stairways connecting them. She was standing on one of these stairways, looking out over the garden, standing in the bright sunshine, feeling very special and not quite herself. Suddenly a little wind came up and lifted her skirt and her crinoline. As she pushed them down, she felt as if she was in a movie, as if she was no longer a girl, as if someone might want her, and she looked around to see if anyone had seen this precious moment.

She still loves wind and always feels something special, something to be loved, when the wind catches her hair and blows it about her face.

I have always loved and continue to love swimming. And like Caroline and Phébée, I find its charm is in the ease of movement and being far from view (loin des regards) and judgement. But my favorite body memory is of tobogganing. My family favored simple (and inexpensive) sports; in the winter, we skated in the city parks, and we went sliding. As a mother with a young child, I continued sliding. I have slid on small local hills and I have also sped down a steep Swiss mountain. For some reason, the speed, the lack of control, and the complete body integrity of the moment has always captured me. Like playing basketball, one cannot be self-conscious while sliding pell-mell down a steep icy slope.

Chapter V
The geography of the body

> I believe in such cartography -- to be marked by nature, not just to label ourselves on a map like the names of rich men and women on buildings. We are communal histories, communal books. We are not owned or monogamous in our taste or experience. All I desired was to walk upon such an earth that had no maps. (Ondaatje, 1992, p. 261)

Disruption of the story

In the last chapter, I talked about a disruption of the usual story about body, the one that centres around weight and body image issues for girls and women. In their third person stories and in their favourite body memories, 'my' participants seemed to be articulating less of a coded narrative. It seemed to me that I heard some inklings of a different language about what it means to be a woman or a girl in a body.

By coded narrative, I mean the usual ways that women speak of their bodies and of the practices they use to shape, adorn and transform their appearance. I do not mean to suggest that we can be totally free of the coding; what I am suggesting is that to speak of the body (and to learn to do more than speak of the body: to speak <u>in</u> the body) more in terms of one's own subjectivity is to reduce the distancing, the objectification of ourselves.

The girls in Brown and Gilligan's study (1992) spoke of "schizophrenia" and "being bilingual" when they spoke of themselves in the world. What ways can there be to give voice to our lived bodies, our whole selves? What are the micro-practices of 'freedom'? Is there a space that is not colonized? Is there a discourse that is not already coded? Charlotte Bloch (1987) suggests that there might be. She calls it the "not-yet-known" and says, "this sensual inkling, the invisible current of a non-reducted imagining, does ... sometimes emerge through various chinks in our everyday life" (p. 434).

This idea of everyday life, what we understand that to be, and its relationship to the construction of femininity is explored by both Charlotte Bloch (1987) and Dorothy Smith (1988) in contrasting yet parallel ways.

Bloch looks at everyday life, using some of Foucault's ideas of a decentralized yet all encompassing anonymous power. She explains how the repetition of the practices of

everyday life, as we learn them and also construct them, reassure us while they simultaneously form our subjective identity. The repetition of our practices is based on the experience of "recognition" coming from bodily memories -- "a bodily recognition structured in time and space" (p. 434). This subtle understanding of how our bodies' memories are constructed both as knowledge and practice resonates with Bourdieu's idea of the body as memory. Bloch suggests that this construction of what she calls the "staging of the body" for women represses the "inklings that contest the self-evidence of everyday life" (p. 434).

In my interviews, I was not seeking these inklings. Indeed I realized as I moved along through the process of the research that I had been looking for the coded expressions of patriarchal woundings. However, what I began to hear in and amongst those coded expressions, as I started to pay attention, were these "inklings", a small yet definite articulation of the "not-yet-known." When Stephanie speaks of the pleasure of nude sunbathing at age 13, when Phébée goes through the catalogue of the sights, the sounds, the smells that structured her physical body memories prior to puberty, we are hearing of a girl's body experience outside the code.

I realized I too have these seemingly uncoded memories, memories that seem to have been obliterated through the passage into the practices of femininity. How large those practices start to loom, how eagerly and longingly we enter into that discourse.

Dorothy Smith (1988) discusses the staging of the body by looking at the discourse of femininity and its interactivity with its own texts. [1] She says that femininity is a "distinctively textual phenomenon" (p. 38) and argues that the texts must not be separated or "isolated from the practices in which they are embedded and which they organize" (39). In order to remain lively in the field of inquiry, we must look at what we do (our practices) and how we learn to do them (our texts) and the relationship between the two. Practices must be located and understood in relation to the texts which are located in time and space and place.

This is how we can denaturalize our femininity. Smith is suggesting that we are not only "docile bodies." She argues that femininity is not (or not only) a discourse of passivity or victimization; it is also a discourse of the interaction of the creator and the consumer of

knowledge of femininity, the woman herself. She says women are knowers in this arena -- they understand the production which is involved in their self production. "Knowledge is grounded in a complex of actual practices and relations (among them that knowledge itself)" (my emphasis) (p. 37). She suggests that women know, and know they know, what they are doing when they work at femininity.

Haug et al. (1987) look at this production in a slightly different way. They describe the familiarity women have with the "requisite standards, with proportions, with strategies of concealment and emphasis" as "'expressive competence'... a competence in non-competence" (p. 129). Acknowledging that this competence is one way to be agentic in our lives, they also suggest that:

> It works to consolidate our social incompetence, insofar as it leads us to acquire expertise in operating within existing standards, and thus both to assimilate and accept those standards, rather than questioning what lies behind them. (p. 130)

We are directly involved in the labour of the construction of our femininity, the labour of transformation. Smith (1988) says that we must recognize that "when we speak of 'femininity' we are talking about how women's skills and work enter actively into textually-mediated relations which they do not organize or produce" (p. 39). We see in this description both the active and passive elements of the body constructions, memories and practices that we live and make over every day. She suggests that women interact and make choices with, and within, the coded texts. This kind of reading gives women agency, limited though it might seem. Haug et al. (1987) argue that without the consciousness and understanding of our own labour and its interaction with the "textually-mediated relations" which we do not produce, agency is severely limited.

Haug et al. are suggesting that we make and find new spaces; I think they are suggesting that these spaces can be found or created, though the means are not yet clear. They suggest that it is insufficient to merely oppose standards or to live in spite of them, and that we have not yet found the means "to discover paths away from the road socialization now marks across our bodies" (p. 130). I look to my own experience, and see how the codes took me over. I look at my own fight to decode, and how many decades I have been living

that struggle. I listen to 'my' participants and look for the story under the story.

Movement as disruption

One of the stories that lay underneath my story of constriction in adolescence was that of physical activity, of playing basketball. When I interviewed 'my' first two participants as part of the pilot study, I brought that memory to my questions. I was a "knower" in the sport of basketball, physically active on the court, top scorer, captain of my team, coach of the junior team. Meanwhile, in my daily life, at school, at home, on the street, I felt fat, undesirable, disconnected. Like Phébée, I looked at the sky and thought of my stomach.

When I started interviewing 'my' participants, I wanted to know if there were times and places and spaces where they felt free of the "staging" of their adolescent female bodies, and what that might have meant for them, then and even now. From my own experience, I identified physical activity as being one of those "free" spaces and so I asked questions about that. 'My' participants spoke in various ways about these physical activity spaces; some did identify movement as a way to stay 'in' their bodies; others did not. Phébée and Freida, in particular, have used consciousness work rather than body work to negotiate a new body relationship for themselves.

The lived body is inexorably linked to the idea of entrance into womanhood, into concepts of the feminine, into movement into sexuality. The lived body takes up real, not just psychic, space in the world. As I have said before, we walk these streets, malls, school corridors, accompanied by both real and imagined bodies. We have both the body inside our heads, and the body that occupies the space around us. How do we use the public spaces/voices we walk in, what is their message to us? Are there places/spaces/activities in which our lived bodies have been more comfortable?

The girdle of society: A girl's geography

The idea of our bodies' physical and psychic geography is a rather complex one. But if we consider how we construct an image of ourselves, we come to understand that our bodies are both a way of experiencing the world, and an experience in themselves. This is not

always self-evident. However, when we experience an event which impacts on our physical selves in some way that changes both our body and our perception of it, we then have a new experience of our body.

Virginia Olesen (1992) has looked at the influence of both "extraordinary events" and "mundane ailments" on the lived experience of the body. She examined the narratives of people who had been through the 1989 San Francisco earthquake (including herself). This was her "extraordinary" event. She also looked at the strong emotions evoked in people who were experiencing "mundane" ailments, what health care might call "trivia" (p. 211) (e.g., back pain, skin rashes, etc.). She suggests that when we understand the physical self to be an ever changing construct which responds to the environment and is an environment in and of itself, we begin to understand how our feelings about our bodies (and thus ourselves) are part of a dialectic between self and environment.

In the narratives of those who experienced the earthquake there emerged a blending of the individual experience of physical fear and the previously taken-for-granted environment to produce what Olesen calls a "vulnerable self" in which "body and self were mutually implicated in that biography of vulnerability" (p. 210). What she finds interesting is that it was not only in response to the extreme earthquake that this vulnerability emerged; it also came out in response to the mundane ailments. What she suggests is that the shifting of the self perception linked to the physical self can bring about this vulnerability, in other words, our "body image," our physical self, is not static. "It is a complex self involving multiple meanings, such as body for self, body for other, and other parts of one's own self" (p. 211).

What does this mean for girls and women and their relationship with their bodies? Girls and women are subjected to a wide range of public behaviours on a continuum of sexual harassment and assault, from wolf whistles to rape, which occur on a daily basis, through most of our lives. Privately, in our homes and in our relationships, some version of this harassment and assault can also occur.

What is the cumulative effect of this on girls and women? Some of these incidents might seem mundane, indeed are mundane, but they are not trivial when one considers the frequency of their occurrence. Harriette Pipes McAdoo (cited in Thompson, 1994, p. 369)

identifies the "mundane extreme environment" of racism, in which the cumulative effect of daily, seemingly small events contributes to an extreme environment of racism. "To grasp racism requires us to identify not only single, extraordinary interactions, but also the daily realities of life in a racist society" (Thompson, 1994, p. 369).

In the same way as 'small' racist acts contribute to an extreme environment, so the everyday, seemingly isolated incidents which happen to girls and women in a sexist society combine to create an extreme environment in which their body story becomes the story of a "vulnerable self."

Iris Marion Young (1990) suggests what the end result of that can be:

> Women in sexist society are physically handicapped. Insofar as we learn to live out our existence in accordance with the definition that patriarchal culture assigns to us, we are physically inhibited, confined, positioned, and objectified. As lived bodies we are not open and unambiguous transcendencies that move out to master a world that belongs to us, a world constituted by our own intentions and projections. (p. 153)

She posits that the way girls and women protect themselves from the ever present threat of violence against their personal selves is to carve a space around themselves in the public (and possibly private) environments they inhabit, a world of inhibited and confined movement and spatiality. This daily practice of maintaining a "docile" "feminine" inhibited body in public space carries a message for our own identity. She considers that girls and women practice "inhibited intentionality" (p. 147) in the way they use their bodies in space and time.

She suggests that in general, in our urban, developed society, notwithstanding individual women's or men's differences from her model, women are constructed to have a dual relationship with their body, as both subject and object in the world. The results of this are a hesitancy, a dual manner of approaching the physical activity necessary to be a subject in one's environment. For Young, the physical contradictions which women express are rooted in the fact that "for feminine existence the body frequently is both subject and object for itself at the same time and in reference to the same act" (p. 150). This shows in our limited and limiting use of public space, our appropriation of an external gaze to judge ourselves, and our tentative way of approaching and doing physical activity.

Young's analysis of the phenomenon of "throwing like a girl," which she extends to

running, climbing, swinging, hitting "like a girl," is one that informs research into girls' and women's physical activity. Feminist authors working in the area of sports sociology and psychology describe a complex multiple construction of attitudes towards physical activity/sports and girls' and women's bodies that block our full physical experience of our bodies (Graydon, 1997; Hall, 1996; Lirgg, 1992; Lirgg & Feltz, 1989; McCaughey, 1997; Wright & Dewar, 1997). Catherine MacKinnon (1987) argues that the "socially contradictory" element of being female and being athletic, is a constructed subordination of women. "Femininity has contradicted, masculinity has been consistent with, being athletic" (p. 120).

The curriculum of the body: Physical activity spaces

Where and how do we learn this constricted construction? There is no one place or space; they are multiple: home, school, the street, the texts of our daily lives.

Judith Okely (1996) says the training of the child's body, a training of bodily containment, was central to her own boarding school experience. It was a "curriculum of the unconscious" (p. 137). She cites Pierre Bourdieu in suggesting that:

> A system of beliefs or principles can be implanted by bodily training because.. the body is treated as a 'memory', which is not easily obliterated by conscious thought. Bodily lessons may be taught without the pupils' intellectual collaboration. (p.137)

In her experience, bodily posture, appearance and health were constantly reviewed and always under surveillance, thereby creating a continual alertness and busyness to the students' daily lives. There were restrictions on girls' physical space, dormitories, classrooms, the grounds of the school that they were allowed to walk in, the ways in which they could walk or 'play.' There was a kind of girls' human and physical geography that was conveyed both implicitly and explicitly.

In sports, there were restrictions on which games girls could play. Though Okely is speaking of the 50s, it is only recently that equity in sports has been articulated and begun to be played out. Some of the restrictions have come to be seen as such, and have been 'lifted.' In the past, the games girls were allowed to play were games that involved mostly arm

movements, rather than 'excessive' leg movements. Characteristics of boys' sports, such as body contact, tackling and kicking, were absent from girls' games:

> Females must never kick balls, lest perhaps they kick the other kind. Females who raise and kick the leg are seen, in the dominant male ideology, to be metaphorically exposing their genitals. This movement, without a target, is institutionalized in the titillating can-can. (Okely, 1996, p. 144)

This institutionalization of (sexualized) constriction is echoed by Nancy Lesko (1988) when she speaks of the "curriculum of the body, the total set of intended and unintended school experiences involving knowledge of the body and sensuality" (p.123). She suggests that these experiences become central to the formation of the identity of young girls and women (and concomitantly, of course, to the identities of young boys and men), and are of great importance because schools are "pre-eminent places where adolescents come together during their initial period of sexual identity development" (p. 123).

She suggests that girls understand and negotiate this terrain (the bilingualism noted in Brown and Gilligan's (1992) work). The evidence is in the way they either follow the norms of "restraint, moderation, busyness, and niceness" (p. 139) or break away from them, to create a different meaning for themselves. "For girls, the curriculum of the body appears to be an implicit, accepted, and powerful basis for differentiation and stratification" (p. 139). Lesko says that the way the school mandates activities and dress codes can end up putting "an organizational legitimacy on certain constructions of femininity" (p. 140).

My own experience in school echoes the restriction Okley speaks of. I went to a convent. We had gym once a week, during which we had basically unstructured play (or one memorable year, an attempt at ballet). We played pingpong in the wide halls of our old building; there were swings in the yard on which we became ecstatic. Other than that, there were no physical or team games, beyond Ballon prisonnier (which we played with the nuns, their skirts hiked up), a memory that Phébée shares with me. Ballon prisonnier doesn't take up a lot of space; it is not a team game, but a game that can be played with several girls. The purpose of the game is to throw a ball (the size of a soft soccerball) at a girl on the other side as hard as you can, so that she can't catch it. If she doesn't catch it, she is out. If she catches it, she immediately throws it back as hard as she can, to try and knock you out. There is no

physical contact or skill involved, beyond the teeth clenching force with which one hurls the ball.

The only team sport our school participated in was girls' basketball, a game I loved and played well. There in the gym, pounding down the court, scoring goals, I forgot the body I didn't like, the body I endlessly suffered in. It is difficult to play basketball well and be self conscious. Was this a form of resistance, unconscious though it might have been? What effect did it have on me? Did 'my' participants also have these kinds of experiences?

There are a wide range of possibilities when we speak of physical activities: activities which are school-based or school-organized, such as gym or team sports; activities which take place spontaneously in our neighbourhoods, such as baseball, street hockey, skipping (gender dictates who does these for the most part); family organized activities revolving around weekends or summer holidays; and individual activities involving lessons and usually organized by the family, such as ballet, gymnastics, etc.

I asked 'my' participants about their range of physical activity. For the most part, we did participate in all of the above, more or less. (See Appendix B.) The exploration of this more or less and what it meant to us was fascinating. We seemed quite active, for the most part. But it is the way we speak of our activity that interests me. Pleasure was not always a part of the description. Gym was universally decried as being a forgettable or painful experience. Comparing of bodies, and what we had to wear for gym, seemed to lie at the bottom of this, not necessarily the gym activity itself. For all 'my' participants (and for myself) who mentioned gym, there was no joy or pleasure in it.

Janice Butcher (1983) says that the most important "determinant of the activities in which a person becomes involved is perceived competence in that activity" (p. 44). For girls, then, "satisfaction and confidence in moving are prime prerequisites for girls' participation in physical activities" (p. 44). Wearing bloomers, doing restricted movements, never being taught properly because gym is only gym and there are supposed to be other avenues for learning correctly, all these contribute, no doubt, to the distaste with which gym can be viewed. In addition, in a coed school, with coed gym classes, girls can end up on the side, admirers and cheerleaders to the boys. In a single sex school, the peer gaze can mitigate

against pleasure in physical activity.

When Phébée talks about "bloomers," those heavy dark blue bulky pieces of underwear we used to have to wear under our gym skirts, and how she felt she looked in them, the direct male gaze was not present. Nonetheless, they made gym an agony of self-recrimination for her. Her internalized inhibition of bodily movement seemed to be working independent of will or reality. To Phébée, the bloomers [2] made her body feel unbearably large, "bulgy"; under them she wore what she calls "her secret thing," a girdle. She says "you're talking about an eleven year old girl wearing a girdle, every day, even under the bloomers" (1-23).

None of 'my' participants, girdle or not, speaks of gym with pleasure. Freida says she "finished with" gym, she just didn't do it. She also did not do any competitive school sports, partly because of respiratory difficulties, but also because she has a distaste for organized competitive sport. She says "teams can be encouraging to people, and can be comforting, but they can also be really nasty, setting up very rigid norms, and competition within teams" (14-2). This competitive aspect of games has been found to be an inhibiting factor in girls' participation in sports (Lirgg, 1992).

Jan Wright and Alison Dewar (1997) interviewed women about their present and past movement activities. It became evident that their participants, like those in this study, did not have positive memories of school-based physical education activities. One woman said that the school "had missed the point in terms of trying to connect people with their bodies and their bodies with their lives" (p. 87). For some, the negative association of feeling incompetent or unskilled according to the values of the physical educator continued into their adult lives, and was hard to overcome in finding new activities which pleasured them.

The coded norms of competition and dominance that exist around sport are well established in North America, and traditionally have excluded women, or have been used to exclude them. M. Ann Hall (1996) says that:

> Sport contributed to the fabrication of the gender order by "naturalizing" male dominance; preserving an arena of popular culture for men; dividing women along lines of class, race, and athletic interest; contributing to changes in gender ideologies in the dominant culture; and structuring physical and emotional experiences, and modelling the human body and human feeling

around masculine and feminine axes. (p. 39)

This traditional sport gender order, which deemed women as unable to be "sporting" because of their "wounded" bodies (continually bleeding in menstruation) (Hall, 1996, p.37), has only recently started to be deconstructed. Sports remain part of the "staging of the body" that Bloch (1987) refers to. She says "here [in sports] the body is controlled in time and space according to certain norms, which in turn are realized as abstract goal-units, ie., to socially visible (in the sense of socially comparable) behaviour" (p. 441). It is these abstract goal-units that Freida seems to object to so strongly, what Bloch calls the "aggressive insistence upon public presence in the form of making and breaking records" (441).

It is important to understanding the wide ranging influence of these lived norms on the construction of our feminine and masculine bodies. R.W. Connell (1983) suggests that sports, with its competitive and dominating physical nature, has a powerful role to play in the construction of a masculine body identity, and the way in which boys and men experience, move in, and use, the world. He says:

> In linking the construction of masculinity with the social power structure of patriarchy, I think we have to take much more seriously the combination that comes up repeatedly in schoolboy sport, in physical labour, in the cult fantasies of bodily perfection: the combination of strength and skill. It is important here that these are attributes of the body as a whole; they are not focused, even symbolically, on a particular part of it. What it means to be masculine, is quite literally, to embody force, to embody competence. (p. 27)

This description of the masculine body, as a whole, contrasts very strongly with Young's "inhibited intentionality"; it is, in fact, its exact opposite. This has profound meaning for girls' and women's social presence.

Feminist authors writing about physical activity believe there is a potential for transformation in "changing subjectivities and women's social reality" (Wright & Dewar, 1997, p. 80) through movement activities (Gilroy, 1997; Lenskyj, 1995; Vertinsky, 1992). These movement activities range from what could be considered leisure activities, such as walking, biking, hiking, through to more intense and competitive activities, such as body-building, team sports, and self-defence. Strength-building, in no matter what form, could be seen as one major way to break down some of the restrictive elements of girls' and women's

physical geography that Young (1990) identifies.

In the 1990s, girls and women participate more than they ever have in all levels of sport and physical activity. Has this new participation changed our ownership of public spaces, and our ownership of our own bodies? Research seems to indicate that girls who are physically active in adolescence feel more comfortable in their bodies, and have higher self-esteem, even if their physical activity level drops off in the later teenage years (Covey & Feltz, 1991; Lirgg, 1992).

Certainly among 'my' participants, physical activity which was owned by oneself was seen as empowering. Empowerment can be considered as many things: strength, endurance, control of space, a feeling one can defend oneself, achieving of personal goals (Wright & Dewar, 1997). Wright and Dewar suggest that, for women, power has more to do with personal identity:

> Being in control; identification with body and pride in its/their achievements; having a responsive body which can respond to challenges; is capable and able. This includes physical strength - not expressed so much in terms of prowess or demonstrated as muscularity, but strength as a source of confidence, personal security, the opposite to the vulnerability of patriarchal femininity. (p. 91)

Emily and Stephanie both express how doing their particular sport enhanced their feelings about their bodies. Both tall, strong girls, rowing for Emily and volleyball for Stephanie gave them pleasure in their bodies' strength and abilities. However, in their stories, we can see the unfolding of some of the issues around physical activity for girls and women. Role models, family encouragement and expectations, and coaches can have a great impact on girls and women's feelings about themselves and their physical abilities and competencies.

Emily had always done sports such as figure skating, and she played basketball and volleyball in the school in her home town. She started rowing when she transferred to a private school in Grade 10. Rowing was part of the curriculum and well supported at the school. In this new school, in which she felt very uncomfortable in many ways, she found rowing to be a great comfort. Physically it suited her: "Rowing is something where my height was a big advantage. I was good at it, so it made me feel good" (17-1). In addition, she made friends with girls that she would not normally have known at the school. She says

"rowing made me feel great about my body. I felt the best there than anywhere else, because I was in the best shape I have ever been in. The people in rowing really valued that and my coaches were the best role models for me" (19-1). She still corresponds with her coach from Grade 11. This coach, in Emily's view, was a great role model, very strong and fit, though other girls at the school called her the Amazon woman and implied that she was too masculine. [3] Her friends would also warn Emily "you had better be careful about becoming too butchy or too big and masculine-looking" (11-2).

Emily says rowing was regarded as being a kind of masculine activity. Her father would always say how masculine rowers looked on T.V. and in Emily's view, he didn't support her at all in her rowing accomplishments. She continued rowing into her second year university, but finally stopped when her academic work needed more attention. She still seems to miss it, and currently does no formal physical activity, though she tries to work out at the gym from time to time.

Stephanie, for whom gym was a negative experience partly because of asthma, discovered volleyball in Grade 9. Suddenly her height worked for her, and she received a great deal of positive reinforcement for her work on the team. She says it was the result "of being able to utilize my height and just the agility that I had at the time", and adds "it was the beginning of confidence for the first time in a long time" (21-1). When she was playing well on the team, she felt more accepted, and started to open up, and she says "you could see the response. It is like anything else, when you have a negative perception of yourself, you have a tendency to behave in a certain manner, you close off a little bit more" (24-1).

Unfortunately at a tournament, as the star player, she froze because of all the attention, and she was benched. When she told her mother about this, her mother said "well, give it up." Stephanie says, "And that was it. That was the last time I... bothered" (22-1). Although in Grade 10 she was encouraged by a coach to attend basketball camp so she could play basketball, her father would not pay for the camp, and she never got on the team.

As an adult, she has wanted to become a national police officer. She failed the first time she tried the physical entrance exam and is currently training in order to pass it. She has moved from a very average level of physical activity to being very physically active. She finds

her current high level of physical competence very empowering. When she first started training, her goal was to pass the physical exam. Now she says there is inherent pleasure in the whole process, and she feels more and more empowered. Recently she was able to run for fifteen minutes "without dying," as she says, and "for me that was such a big thing. And here I am, I got off the treadmill, I started doing this Rocky thing... it is a huge psychological thing" (27-1).

One of the advantages that she sees is, "I can protect me. That is a very big thing" (33-2). Stephanie was physically abused by a boyfriend, an incident that remains shocking and fearful to her. She says she had not ever thought, because of her height, that she could be physically intimidated. She found it took a long time to regain her confidence in both her physical and emotional self after this incident.

But recently at work, she confronted a superior who had been sexually harassing her, in a very physically assertive way. It made her feel very good to know that if necessary she could physically defend herself. At the same time, she acknowledges an ambiguous feeling about the aggression that might come along with that assertiveness. Nonetheless, she feels that one of the most important things she could do for her children, if she has any, would be to make sure that they "develop a very healthy attitude towards their physical person, through physical activity" (31-2).

Physical activity, though, has many faces. It is not always an aerobically challenging workout; it can also be a way of feeling, touching, a way of being in one's body that works to mitigate against the dual experience of subject/object that Young (1990) discusses. This can be equally empowering.

Caroline talks of dance as being something that freed her from a bodybound negativity with which she had struggled her whole life. In her late 20s, she started doing dance exercise. These were not what she calls "robotic" aerobic exercise classes; the dance was more fluid, "graceful and meditative." Caroline felt she was able to express some of the emotion that was suppressed in her family of origin. She started off hiding in "many layers of clothes," but gradually "I could just feel myself pulling up and standing up straighter" (6-1). She credits the dancing with giving her the strength to do many new positive things in her

life, including starting a new career.

Paradoxically the dancing, though body-based, led her to a new understanding of her self as a whole. She says, "It helped me understand, for the first time in my life, that I was not my body, just my body, there was more to me" (9-1). Caroline says that, despite being so body conscious all her life, she "probably spent 35 years not looking at my body. 'You know how you can never look at your body?'" she asks rhetorically. At these classes, full of mirrors, she had to look at herself; she looked at her body for the first time. "I guess I got more connected to my body as well as getting a little more separated in a way too, in that I didn't feel so ashamed. I didn't feel that my body was one way and that would have to tell me how I would have to be as a person" (10-1). [4]

Caroline's physical activity experiences as an adolescent contained little pleasure or self-affirmation. Though she did play volleyball, she said it made her nervous to have people depending on her as a member of the team. Her only physical childhood pleasures came during family summer vacations when she would do a lot of swimming. She says "when you swim, you aren't compared to anyone else so much, it is something where you can let yourself go" (19-1). She compares this feeling of not being judged in swimming, to how she felt in her dance classes.

Phébée too expresses this feeling about swimming. She lived across from a river and her childhood was spent swimming, as her third person story indicates. That was so natural to her, it didn't feel like a defined "physical activity." Sports were not present in any of the schools she attended, though she does remember playing baseball in Grade 5, being on a good team and playing well. "Maybe because I was heavier, or something, I had more power, I could hit far, it was really exciting" (1-22). In the convent school, with the nuns, she remembers the same lack (or even fear) of activity that I do. "The nuns kept us quiet... the idea of being more physical was not welcome at all" (1-21). But she danced. From the ages of eleven to sixteen she would go to a local community hall, and at a time when "everything that had anything to do with my body was so strenuous" (1-42), she would be "transported by the music or the beat" (1-42) and dance away. "I was a good dancer, I really liked it. I felt a lot of power and pleasure in that and that was probably a very positive thing for me

because I didn't have any confidence in my body, in my ability. It was something I wanted to forget about mostly" (1-35, 1-36). At the same time, she says "dancing involves being outside of the body and watching ourselves dance, it isn't as innocent" (1-43) as the swimming, "loin des regards," was for her.

As an adult, Annette, like Caroline, found dance. It was something she didn't do in her adolescence. She sees it as having the same elements as her favorite body memory, skipping -- the idea of flow. "Being in tune with the music and being in sync with the other person and just the whole physicality of it.. it is non-thinking, it is being in flow" (2-44).

Annette didn't mention any organized school sports, but rather talked of the games that she played with her brothers. Softball in particular was her favourite, and she speaks very proudly of the fact that she didn't "throw like a girl." Her brother had taught her how to throw "sidearm," and as a result she was an infielder, not an outfielder. She didn't play hockey with her brothers, but did figure skating. She was proud of her physical ability and activities with her brothers, and found it very difficult when she moved to Montreal around age 10 and found herself gender segregated both at school and in the neighbourhood. Though she still did play softball with her brothers, a division had been set in motion.

She cites this time in her young life as being very hard for her, a time when she started being a loner. Alienated from the masculine games she loved and excelled at, she didn't want to play with girls. She regarded them as sissies, afraid of breaking a nail. She didn't feel a lack in herself when she was young for not being "girlish", but rather a lack in girls for not being more like guys. She describes herself as a tomboy[5]; she wanted to do boy things. "Boys were doing the interesting things and the girls were hanging around, talking about clothes, hair, broken nails, things like that I found very boring" (2-4). She feels that if she was growing up today, in a world which seems to encourage girls to be more physically active and adventurous, she would have been more comfortable. She has always appreciated her body for its functionality and usefulness in sports and movement. She says "there are times when you look at yourself, and you think, gee, it would be nice if I had smaller legs, but then you also think that your legs get you where you want to go, and they are fulfilling a function, so you have both those ways of looking at it" (1-12).

The literature of feminist sports theorists raises some of the issues brought up by 'my' participants, issues of self-confidence, lesbophobia and masculinity, the influence of significant others on motivation and activity, messages of what a girl is and what she does to, for, and with her body. Encouraging physical activity is not a simple matter, overlaid as it is by girls' and women's already overprescribed body. What should be encouraged? What is useful? What are the goals? Should we aim for androgyny in sports, as Patricia Vertinsky (1992) suggests; should some sports be encouraged as single sex games, as Aniko Varpalotai (1995) discusses? How do we work with the element of weight and body shaping issues in encouraging physical activity for girls and women? How do we make sure that stressing physical activity doesn't further marginalize disabled women (Olenik, Matthews, & Steadward, 1995)? What about women without financial or other access to equipment, facilities, or enabling attitudes and role models? How do we enhance the visibility of role models (Snow, 1995)? These are questions that are being explored by feminist researchers and which need to be openly articulated. We need to understand that self-esteem doesn't only rest with the individual; social structures and practices (Vertinsky, 1992) must be moved and changed.

A fundamental need is to make physical activity an integral, naturalized part of the discourse of a girl's and a woman's life, one that can push those constricted physical boundaries, constructed and maintained by ourselves and others, out, out, out, so we can take up more space, so we can occupy our own space, and have boundaries which are not penetrable but which are also not constricting. A new geography.

Chapter VI
Discourse: A return to the questions

> But for whom do I speak in this "we"? For women. But how can I speak for women? This question expresses a dilemma. Patriarchal domination requires the subversion of its authority by the speaking of a specifically female desire beyond its power to know. But there cannot be a woman's desire; the very project of feminist subversion leads us to the dissolution of such universals. When I speak, then, for whom do I speak? For myself, of course. But this is politics, not autobiography, and I speak from my own experience, which I claim resonates with that of other women. .. I believe that some of the experience I express resonates with that of other women, but that is for them to say. The differences among women do not circumscribe us within exclusive categories, but the only way we can know our similarities and differences is by each of us expressing our particular experience. (Young, 1990, p. 182)

Resistance and discourse

In this study, I was trying to find room for expression of some other ways of speaking about body (bodyself-expression), what I have called "body voice" in one way or another. I was seeking other than the usual discourses (Chesters, 1994; Rodin et al., 1985) that women have about body, the internalized body commentary voice with which girls and women are so familiar - the dissecting, negative Over-Eye or the Fury (as Debold, Wilson and Malisse (1993) call it). My concept of the body voice was very tenuous, intuitive, and in some ways, it remains so. I have come to a more articulated understanding of body voice, as the potential "inherent"[1] in girls' and women's bodily constructed subjectivity. But do we have the language to speak this?

A great deal of feminist work has gone into unearthing the unobvious, trying to hear what isn't being said. This is because cultural discourse overlays our experience to such an extent we have to strain to speak the words that aren't yet there, to try and use the language that already exists to describe our experience, which is also overlaid. It is a twisting and a turning, a wriggling out of the fit of the text, the cultural assignment, that sometimes seems impossible.

But there are ways to re/visit our experiences even in the language which we now understand to be so overladen. Words can be put together to acknowledge our deepened understanding of what we are living. Sexual harassment is a good example of that; until it

was 'defined' in the late 70s by Catherine MacKinnon and others, we didn't have the language (though certainly sexual and harassment were words that already existed) to express our experience as girls and women. Now sexual harassment is almost a cliché, with legal and other problems attached to it. I hope we continue to remember how far we have come in twenty years on this issue.

We have potentially come very far in understanding that bodies matter. What still needs all our attention is how the mattering is constructed. Susan Bordo (1993) says that we can acknowledge that our gendered bodies are socially constructed, that they are overwritten from the moment of our birth, and we must equally acknowledge and examine the material "grip" this has on our bodies. "Culture's grip on the body is a constant, intimate fact of everyday life" (p. 17). It is in recognizing and working with this material grip that we can attempt to forge new experiences that change what language means.

For instance, for adolescent girls, one expression of bodies, sexuality, has tended to remain fixed in the discourses of victimization, disease, teenage pregnancy and asexuality (Fine, 1992; Tolman, 1992). How can girls' own desires be identified and lived and spoken? Or what can change the discourse of girls and weight? How can our body identification be made visible and articulated? Bordo (1993) suggests "we need to reserve practical spaces both for generalist critique (suitable when gross points need to be made) and for attention to complexity and nuance" (p. 243).

I felt I was participating in one of these practical spaces during my study, through both my own broad reading and thinking about the theory which surrounds issues of women and body, and in our (myself and 'my' participants) close reading of our own particular body memories and histories.

In this chapter, I am supposed to sum up; here, as in the other spaces that I have inhabited during the long process of this study, I find difficulty. What I have in my mind and my heart are the intimate stories of six women -- not the full story, not even all of the partial story -- but still rich, deep, heartfelt emotions, feelings, attitudes have been brought to the surface for our mutual attention. Again, I find the self-consciousness of the non-expert intruding on my voice.

I can say that when I started this process, I had an idea. I used the words "body voice" to try to express what I felt a woman's subjectivity could be, fullness of body/mind. I felt that I had been constricted by my body in the working out of my life as a woman. I wanted to hear other stories to ratify and understand my own experience. In some ways that has happened, in other ways not. That of course is the pleasure and challenge of research: it doesn't always turn out as you thought it would.

I have found myself nodding in understanding as I listened to Phébée's preoccupation with her body shape, her struggles with dieting and self-acceptance. I found myself astounded at the depths of Freida's adolescent perceptions and self-awareness of how important it was to take hold of the influences on her body self. I listened with appreciation to Stephanie's story of the contradictory aspects of being smart or being beautiful, and how she has to struggle with the ideas of both being able to co-exist in her singular self. As the mother of a girl, I understood Annette's complex feelings about inserting her daughters into a society not well structured to receive their precious individuality. I listened to Emily's strong voice and body expressing how tentative she felt about her presence in the world. I connected with Caroline's feeling of being able to start breathing at last after struggling with issues of body negativity and body space her whole life.

There were also surprises and silences (of which more below). The main surprise (though I wonder at its origin) was the depth of self interpretation of 'my' participants. Dorothy Smith (1988) was right; women know and know that they know. I ask myself what conclusions can I draw that don't speak for themselves? What consciousness do I have that has not been exhibited with fierce strength, feeling and insight by 'my' participants? But for two things, I would be silenced. One is that the voices of 'my' participants were entrusted to me, they were being expressed and heard for a reason -- this research. The other is that I was there, I heard the words, saw the body language, sensed the feelings that words cannot always express. The reader of this text, on the other hand, was not there. So it is my responsibility to have conveyed the richness of these lived experiences, these lived bodies.

I have tried to stay true to both the quality and intent of what 'my' participants were saying. I could have explored these six stories with many different lenses; they felt like a

motherlode of women's body memory, richly veined, leading deep into a field of mind and body, with great reserves of knowledge and articulation. I chose two areas to look at: body commentary and physical activity. I chose to highlight 'my' participants' own third person story because the stories seemed to carry more than I could express, more even than they could express. And there are still other issues that remain undiscussed.

Silences: Sexuality and safety

There were silences. One major one was about sexuality. With the exception of Freida's story, and Phébée's favorite body memory, 'my' participants negotiated around sexuality in their life stories. There were hints and phrases but it is of interest that a body life story did not contain more about sexuality.

There are perhaps several reasons for this. One was certainly my own focus and interest in following up on questions and avenues that emerged from the stories; that perhaps explains the non-elaboration in the second interview. However, since the first less-structured interview did not elicit this discourse either, it is possible, as I have discussed in Chapter II, that a fat woman interviewing women about body voice might seem to be asking an unarticulated question that 'my' participants read as being about body shaping and weight issues.

Another, more complicated reason is that girls' and women's "sexual subjectivity" (Martin, 1996) [2] is not an open subject of discourse. Tolman and Debold (1994) chart how girls speak of their bodies as 'no body' in the sense of sexual pleasure and desire. It is almost a misnomer to speak of girls' authentic language around sex. Tolman (1992) suggests that there is a "silence on girls' sexual desire in the adolescent development literature [that] is textured and layered by different strategies of silencing" (p. 17) She says that it is not only missing, it is resisted, a resistance "that is exerted subtly through the deployment discourses of repression, deeroticization, denigration and diversion" (p. 17).

This silence in the research discourse has been echoed by the perceived widespread lack of an active sexual language among girls themselves. The language most often understood to be used is a relational one, the language of love, caring, and cuddling. Girls

are assumed to care more about the emotional aspect of a relationship than the sexual one. Sexual elements become coopted into pathologies (Fine, 1992; Tolman, 1992; Wolf, 1997), such as teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and the AIDS/sex/death discourse. These are all controlling and coercing discourses which turn sexual agency away from expressions of desire and towards the technical aspects of the body project, such as condom use.[3] Tolman's (1992) questions to the girls in her research were very direct and specific and even then, some of her participants could not bring to the surface articulation of their own desires. As Naomi Wolf (1997) points out, while as a result of the "sexual revolution" (so-called), "we had access to the technologies of pleasure, we still did not inherit a culture that valued and respected female desire" (p. xviii).

Another closely related silence was equally fascinating to me, that of safety issues. I started off this process with an understanding of how a not-isolated incident of sexual assault had deeply influenced my body perceptions and feelings. But these issues of body safety and invasion, violence against girls and women, did not emerge as I had thought they might in the body life stories of 'my' participants.

Only Emily talked at length about what she felt was her mother's obsessive concern for her safety. Emily understands that a girl has different issues about this than a boy. Referring to a question in a university class of how she felt her life would be different if she had been born the other gender, she said, "I would be much freer. Everything would be so much easier for me... We are so much more vulnerable... the obvious difference [between men and women] is that if someone goes after him, they are probably after his wallet, whereas we don't know what they are after when they come after us" (22-1).

Although she felt at the time when she said this that it only affected little things in her life, (like planning the logistics of a late night walk home), she later wrote to me to say that she had come to understand that she had made different decisions about her future because of how she viewed her own safety. She adds that most parents don't usually call out after their children, male or female, as they leave for the day's activities, "take lots of risks today, honey, and go after your dreams," but she feels that girls in particular are encouraged to not take risks, because of safety issues. This is one reflection of the ambiguity that mothers feel

about their daughter preparation role. Emily feels it's important "to be aware of it and to think about its effect on my decisions" (letter, p. 2). She says, as a teacher-in-training, she found herself about to counsel a female student to be careful and not take a career risk. She was able to stop herself from doing so, because of her own self awareness.

Freida's perspective on this is still in a process of evolution and understanding. Having come to understand relatively recently that her "love/hate" relation with, and disconnection from, her body, and her feeling that her body is just a "carrying case," are related to childhood sexual abuse, she is still learning about what this means to her. She acknowledges that her difficulty in connecting physically with "herbodyself" impacts deeply on relationships, indeed, all connection with the world.

Freida's third person story, which carries the baggage of this abuse, makes explicit the possible impact of male sexuality on a girl's sexual feelings.[4] She says, "I probably would have been a fairly different kind of person if that hadn't happened" (3-2). Both Tolman (1992) and Martin (1996) discuss how the language, texture, and experience of girls' sexuality tends to be highly influenced by male concepts of sexual desire. Martin cites Laumann et al. that "only about three percent of women said that physical pleasure was their main reason for having first intercourse, compared to four times as many men who said this" (1994, p. 329).

Martha McCaughey (1997) says "femininity includes the internalized bodily ethos of rape culture" (p. 163). Freida's disturbing 'first date' experience was overlaid by the sexual abuse that she knows she has suffered in her childhood. She carries that "baggage" with her into relationships, work, study, the street.

The influence of this "baggage" is far too seldom understood in its wide-ranging impact on girls' and women's achievement. Anne-Louise Brookes (1992) has addressed this issue. She broke new ground in her doctoral thesis in both form and content. She wrote, in insistent autobiographical form, of how her personal body experience, in her case childhood sexual abuse, affected her "knowledge" attainment and experience. She suggests that girls and women, sitting in classrooms (or elsewhere) trying to learn, are sitting on those hard wooden seats with an even harder knowledge inside of them. She says:

> Not able to speak my abuse, I couldn't really know myself as a creator of my own knowledge. Thus I could not recognize knowledge as socially constructed except in

> a very limited way. My body worked to deny the information which my mind accepted. This was because I always assumed that the authority of the other (oppressor) was more powerful than was my own authority. My body informed me so. (p. 34)

This profound statement, "my body informed me so," seems to crystallize my still inarticulate definition of influences on girls' and women's body voice, my story of the patriarchal wounding. Not all girls and women are actively sexually abused. But many (most) of us have experienced the continuum of body identification/sexual innuendo/sexual harassment/sexual assault, that "mundane extreme environment" that Thompson (1994) speaks of. If we define abuse as having our identity rest mainly on our bodies and then having our bodies controlled, threatened or assaulted from childhood to old age, then yes, we are all abused.

The issue that Brookes raises has been too long pushed aside. Violence against women, actual or mythologized, is a form of control with which we struggle daily. We grow up with the ideology of threat against our physical sexual selves. When Gilligan et consoeurs look at how girls change, when they start to hide their real selves, as they move into puberty, the complex issues of identity in adolescence need to take into account this pervasive body identification and invasion for girls. It is not enough to have math and science enrichment courses; it is not enough.

Perhaps that is what Taylor, Gilligan and Sullivan (1995) mean to suggest when they review some of the reasons why girls tend to lose voice in adolescence:

> Girls in general are at risk for losing touch with what they know through experience, in part because the changes of puberty and adolescence may render girls' childhood experience seemingly irrelevant, in part because women's and girls' experiences tend to be idealized or devalued or simply not represented within patriarchal societies and culture, and in part because girls often discover in adolescence that their relational strengths and resilience (their ability to make and maintain connection with others and to name relational violations) paradoxically begin to jeopardize their relationships and undermine their sense of themselves. (p. 4-5)

This identification of a time when girls cross over from preadolescence and adolescence (Brown & Gilligan, 1992), a crossroads, is interestingly fleshed out here by the idea that the transition is so huge that previous experience becomes irrelevant. What is it that makes it so?

Why is it that what we learn as girls loses relevance in adolescence? Do we lose autonomy in relationality? Might it be that our homelessness is encouraged by the link of powerlessness with our bodies? Does our experience as adolescents "de-name" us, "de-skill" us?

Entrance into womanhood, into concepts of the feminine, into movement into sexuality, lie in and with the body. If, as Catherine MacKinnon (1982) suggests, a woman's body is seen as penetrable, as not having secure boundaries, then the continued constriction of ourselves seems inevitable. Thus, the issue of violence against girls and women seems very large to me.

The fact that it did not emerge strongly in 'my' participants' body life stories reflects both my own fear of arousing this subject and something that I think is more subtle. That is, when women speak truly of themselves from the inside, they are speaking of a sensual, multiple, rich experience that is daunting in its possibilities.

'My' participants' stories reflect this profound multiplicity of experience. And I know we only touched the tip of the iceberg. I could feel the sensual inklings that Bloch (1987) insists are sitting waiting to be expressed. These inklings co-exist, comfortably or uncomfortably, with the cultural script we are living. Raising both to personal consciousness can alter the posing of the questions, the societal perspective, our action in the world and the world's effect on us.

When we discussed the memorywork we had done, 'my' participants seemed to be aware of the value of what one might call raising consciousness. Emily said "talking about things, well, it doesn't make them clearer, at first it makes them more confusing, but then after awhile it starts to become clearer" (29-2). Stephanie's reason for participating in the research was to "take a look at myself and help me grow" and the interviews were "another experience which has allowed me to do that a little bit more" (45-2). Phébée, who had spent much time over the years in personal and group therapy dealing with body issues, did not feel that the experience of the interviews was new, but she did feel it was interesting to tell the "whole" body story at one time. What she found most liberating was the writing of the third person narrative. Annette appreciated the opportunity:

> ... to start seeing your own history. I just went through the motions of going through my youth and it was almost like I wasn't completely there at any point. When you are

> looking now, you are in the present moment and you are really trying to look back and see what happened and why that happened...You look back at some of the pictures and you say, why did I have this image of myself as not being very attractive. You look and you say, gee I was a cute little kid,.. if I saw a little blonde girl like that, I would have thought she was really cute. Probably would have stopped and talked to her....it was that lack of self esteem that I had at the time that I am realizing how deep it was. So much so that you are practically walking through your own life, as if .. like a sleepwalker. (2-45)

Bringing our memories to conscious awareness in the present day can help us understand some of the effects of what Annette calls "sleepwalking", the practices that we may have been involved in without question, but which we can now look at, and learn from. Writing/speaking our stories is one way to position ourselves against the possible amnesia of our transformations, to bring to the surface the colonization of our feminine experience.

Supports: Relationship and connection

What can support girls (and women) in continuing to feel and express the inklings of their authentic selves, outside of the boundaries of their cultural script? Brown and Gilligan (1992), Debold, Wilson and Malave (1993), and Taylor, Gilligan and Sullivan (1995) speak of the importance of the significant women in girls' lives, their mothers, their teachers, their coaches. 'My' participants also identified women as being important as signposts, supports, and aids in growing to consciousness.

Freida's introduction to the supportive youth church community group started with a bonding with her Grade 6 and 7 Sunday school teacher, a woman who "was one of the first people who would listen to me and who didn't cast me off as some strange being" (10-2). Through her interaction with this group, she then came to understand that her discomfort with her body "isn't what I am supposed to be feeling. I do have a right to feel good about myself"(13-1). Through her understanding of the importance of such support, she fostered and participated in a weekly student-run women's issues group in Grades 10 and 11, and continues her activism currently in university, supporting women's issues. She says such activities "strengthen me by the way I support and am supported by other women who do similar work" (35-2).

Stephanie too identifies women as the only true support in becoming her full self. She says "I don't find too many external sources [such as the media]. I don't find that support in men, I definitely don't. I find it in other women who are just... who are just fed up with trying to be something that they are not" (39-2).

Stephanie recounts a story from her university days which indicates again the manner in which women are supportive in ways that men (and the structures in which we live/work/study) are not. She had been failing her courses, trying to recover from the abusive relationship she had been in. Though her grades had improved somewhat, she was still in a precarious academic position and had to apply to the Associate Dean of her faculty for permission to continue. He said to her "'I am of the opinion that you are going to be a very average student.' This being told to a kid who had had a 90s overall average and this person sitting across from me saying, you're going to be average!" (32-1) Her female advisor, on the other hand, although unaware of the details of Stephanie's personal situation, seemed to understand that something was going on, was very supportive and urged her to see a counsellor. In the end she dropped out of university. This kind of undermining experience is what Anne-Louise Brookes (1992) is suggesting must be recognized. Violence gets in the way of the possibility of learning, and there is little understanding of such situations.

Annette too speaks of her adult appreciation of women and the lack of support she received when she was younger. She went to an all girls' high school; her teachers were nuns. She says she has read in recent years that it is supposed to be a supportive thing for girls to go to an all girls' school, so that they don't feel that they have to "look stupid" and can achieve. However, she didn't find her teachers were concerned about her academic ability, "except that we had to be good in religion." (31-2) She also remembers a Grade 10 geometry teacher, a nun, who was supposed to be a brilliant mathematician. But what she retains of this nun's classes were lectures about "going out with the boys and looking at the way you dress" and admonitions about not wearing makeup. There were also cautionary tales about "making room for the Holy Ghost" when dancing with a boy. (32-2) (How this echoes with my own high school experience.)

Annette says "we all grew up not wanting to be like our mother... but there is nothing

helping you do something else..." (2-34). Both as a mother and a daughter, I relate to that feeling of Annette's and also feel great sadness that it was not different for me and for all of 'my' participants. The stories I have heard have contained a very ambivalent feeling toward mothers. This ambivalence has been analyzed by feminists who understand the many dilemmas of being a woman, a daughter, a mother, in a world in which women have traditionally been undervalued (Caplan, 1989; Mirkin, 1992; Rich, 1977).

Mirkin (1992) suggests that:

> When one personalizes these situations, mothers are pathologized and anger is turned to them rather than the society which is discriminatory. Instead of feeling good about themselves as girls who could grow up like their mother, female adolescents often devalue their mothers and are frightened of being like them. (p. 55)

She says that in order to assist girls to want to move into womanhood, we have to develop a new story about it, in which "daughters can take pride in their mothers' skills as survivors, explorers, tradition-breakers, and tradition-keepers" (p. 56).

Debold, Wilson and Malave (1993) urge mothers to make a revolution. They suggest that the "common way" that mothers have of guiding daughters, "the paths of least resistance" (p. 247), ask a great psychological sacrifice of girls and is a betrayal of them and of the mothers themselves. They ask that this betrayal, which does not originate in any individual woman, be changed, be revolutionized into a process whereby girls are encouraged to grow into authenticity and power. They suggest that this revolution begins with naming:

> With voice lessons that encourage resistance; a mother daughter revolution begins with public speaking that resists cultural systems of separation and dominance. Naming for ourselves and speaking to each other about what we are not supposed to know... (p. 249)

Brown and Gilligan (1992) state that not only mothers, but teachers, need to start this process of naming. The memory work that 'my' participants and I have done together in this study is one way to start naming. And that naming process is different from psychotherapy. It is different because, while psychotherapy is a form of memory work and a very common one in North America, it also tends to have an individualistic approach, valuable in its own context, but limited in its political effect.

Memory work and naming, such as Haug and others have done in a group or as

individuals, can be a way to move the process outward, beyond autobiography and into politics. Emily Martin (1987) understands this need to move from the personal to the political (a venerable and still not outmoded concept) and says:

> We must not make the mistake of hearing the particularistic, concrete stories of these and other women and assume that they are less likely than more universalistic, abstract discourse to contain an analysis of society. It is up to anyone who listens to a woman's tale to hear the implicit message, interpret the powerful rage, and watch for ways in which the narrative form gives 'a weighted quality to incident,' extending the meaning of an incident beyond itself. (p. 201)

What are some of the ways that we can extend "the meaning of an incident beyond itself"? As we name our own experience we make the transition from the personal to the political. Unless we contextualize our own experience, it remains only autobiography. When we make the links between what seems like only our own story to the larger story happening around us, we move awareness and "skilling" to another level. We can imagine many ways to do this and indeed, most feminist work is engaged with this process. Bonnie Zimmerman (1993) argues that while:

> My experience, my selfhood, is constituted by others... when I think of experience as relational and socially constructed, not as personal and individual, I can still use experience as a meaningful category on which to base my politics. (p. 118)

It is on this basis of experience and "naming" that both Brown and Gilligan (1992), addressing teachers, and Debold, Wilson and Malave (1993), addressing mothers, suggest a circle -- a mother-circle, a teacher-circle -- whereby the naming process takes place inside the circle at the adult level and then moves out in waves into each person's environment. Mothers and daughters can talk and listen; teachers can do the same in their own classrooms and in the school environment. Taylor, Sullivan and Gilligan (1995) have also worked with mother-daughter and teacher-student groups to break down the passing on of the "common way" and the barriers of protection that exist between women and girls. They believe that women must break the false image of perfection and of idealization that now sits on girls. It is perhaps one of the most valuable things we can do for ourselves and for the girls growing up around us. Girls should not have to stand vigil against this psychological foot-binding. They must feel

free to come across the borderland of female adolescence into true relation as women.

Raising consciousnessness can seem to be a motherhood issue. Who would not applaud it? But its value sometimes appears to have lost its focus. As we come to understand our own experience and give the anonymous cultural inscriptions a name, we participate in more than just personal consciousness raising. We become role models and actors in cultural change through our own learning, living and dissemination of that learning. We become teachers in the broadest and most ideal meaning of that word.

Supports: Movement

Another support in claiming our bodies and breaking down cultural inscriptions can be movement (broadly defined), that helps us take back not just the night but the day's environments we move through. Feminists have been rightfully wary of promoting physical activity. Movement and physical activity have the possibility of being coopted into the transformation work that women are supposed to do, yet another expression of body shaping and weight issues. As McCaughey (1997) suggests, when speaking of the idea of self-defense for women, we do not want to replicate "the all-too-familiar relationship women have had with their bodies (aside from that of sex object): that of craft object" (p. 163).

But as feminist sport sociologists and psychologists are finding, a woman expressing strength through her body is a woman who moves with more self-confidence in her environment, and it can have far-reaching results for her identity. The body does have a memory, though it may be unconscious. Strength-building through movement of the body can construct us differently. Stephanie speaks to that when she compares her original goal in starting her training and the gradual realization that she was doing it for the pleasure of feeling strong. We can build a different relationship with our body and the way it occupies the space it moves through. McCaughey (1997) says that "gender is constructed through corporeal acts" (p.131). Wright and Dewar (1997) suggest that "changing the way we move, the way the body is deployed in purposive movement, can change our relation with the world" (p. 82). "Try roller-blading while thinking about how you look. You won't get very far" (V. Leblanc, Personal communication, July 1998). Nancy Theberge (1991) notes that, "The

experience of sport as empowering is tied fundamentally to its physicality... Through the bodily experience of sports women have come to reclaim and reexperience their selves which have been taken away" (p. 129). It is not inevitable that we throw like a girl; we don't have to throw like a boy either. But we have to throw with strength; we have to aim.

Voice lessons: Coming back to the questions.

There is a new discourse emerging about girls. It has many faces: the Spice Girls (girl power), girlzines in print and on the Internet (New Moon, Reluctant Hero), books for parents about bringing up strong girls (Rutter, 1996), school curricula aimed at enhancing girls' performance in traditionally weak areas such as math and science. Alongside these sometimes idealized visions of "girl power" are other texts documenting girls' problems and issues (Friedman, 1997; Orenstein, 1994; Pipher, 1994; Wolf, 1997). In an English Montreal newspaper over the past year, the Womannews section had a monthly article about girls and some of their issues. Why are girls "in" right now?

I find the current popularity of girls fascinating. It is interesting to try to understand the reasons for the emergence of different discourses at different times. Is this popularity because more feminists have become mothers? Have the issues of adult women, which preoccupied us earlier, now evolved to an understanding that the construction of femininity starts very early and has to be addressed long before adulthood? Do we understand that our daughters are not necessarily free of all the practices and constructions which had such an impact on us?

I certainly found my own daughter's birth a spur to concern about many issues. Her beginning adolescence indeed was the spark that sent me back to my own memories which were very uncomfortable. The echoes of her very current issues went streaming down right to my own childhood. I remain somehow that embattled girl, and this study has been one of my attempts to throw off the cage, to be integrated, to express my body voice. Body voice is not one thing, or rather, it is many things in one, the one being me, or Annette, or Emily. It is girl as subject of her own experience, it is girl who can express her own experience, it is girl who can live her own experience, the contradictions of her own experience and not lose

her voice. I still see girls losing their voices. How can that be, I thought, this isn't the 50s, it's the 90s. How can so much and yet so little have changed?

When I question the new discourse of girls and all the ideology that is entailed, I am not saying that nothing has changed. That would not do justice to the individual and societal empowerment of girls and women that has been fought for and gained. But we need to understand why so many of the hegemonic, patriarchal structures seem to remain, sometimes even appearing to be untouched or well able to withstand what should be terminal blows. The system seems to manage to regroup, to come together again. To understand the ability of ideology to absorb change is to better understand what is referred to as backlash, postfeminism, etc.

Discourses can be controlling, as well as liberating. And I find myself concerned by the charting and naming (the diseasing?) of girls' adolescence. We research girls and tell them in the popular media and in academic language that they are more prone to eating disorders, depression, a poor body image, low self esteem, sexual harassment, rape, violence against girls and women. Simultaneously, they should "just say no," they have "girl power," they are equal. [5] So what are we telling them? And what might be the result? Might they then not "assent, even if unwittingly, to the [new] cultural prescription"? (Freeman, 1991, p. 90) Models don't only represent, they constitute. What cautionary tale is emerging now? How is this information being transmitted, with what purpose, to whose advantage? These are questions which need to be constantly addressed.

"Respecting the unrepresentable"

> Try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. ... Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer. (Rilke, 1934/1962, p. 35)

I have always loved the questions. I feel more comfortable with questions than answers. My study was a question, and it remains a question, or rather many questions. How are girls constructed? How is body implicated in that construction? What does it mean to have an "inferiorized" body? Are there places/spaces/feelings/thoughts that can be

experienced outside of the cultural script?

I "believe" in the social construction of identity (as I hope is evidenced in this writing). I also "know" we have "real" bodies, skin and bones and blood. I live my own. Monica Rudberg (1997) says "when it comes not to the body, but to our body, we remain incurably naive realists" (p. 200). We find it difficult to bring to the surface and integrate concepts of the constructed body and our own experience of the lived body. Rudberg adds, "Bodies do in fact 'talk back' at us all the time, reminding us of our mortality and cooling us down in the midst of all our self-constructing projects" (p. 200). It somehow seems easier to seek knowledge 'out there' (from here, our bodies) than it is to understand the intimate and involved relationship we live as knowing bodies.

But it is that very interaction of the skin of our "real" bodies and the skin of the world that fascinates me and troubles me. Are we wholly overwritten? Do women, because of their relationship with their bodies, constructed though they may be through cultural discourse, have greater access to those "sensual inklings" that Bloch (1987) speaks of? Emily Martin (1987) suggests that we do. Stressing that she is in no way saying "back to nature" (p. 200), she states:

> Because their bodily processes go with them everywhere, forcing them to juxtapose biology and culture, women glimpse every day a conception of another sort of social order. At the very least, since they do not fit into the ideal division of things (private, bodily processes belong at home), they are likely to see that the dominant ideology is partial: it does not capture their experience. It is also likely that they will see the inextricable way our cultural categories are related and so see the falseness of the dichotomies. (p. 200)

In Martin's opinion, everyday life for women is a struggle and thus can contain a "critical standpoint" (p. 200), one of the ways that autobiography can move us to politics, if we so choose. And we must choose. We can and must keep naming, articulating, and practicing our voice lessons. Elizabeth Grosz (1994) suggests using the body to look at our subjectivity. She says, "all the effects of depth and interiority can be explained in terms of the inscriptions and transformations of the subject's corporeal surface. Bodies have all the explanatory power of minds" (p. vii). Rudberg (1997) agrees with her and says, "the body is the obvious point of departure for any process of knowing" (p. 182).

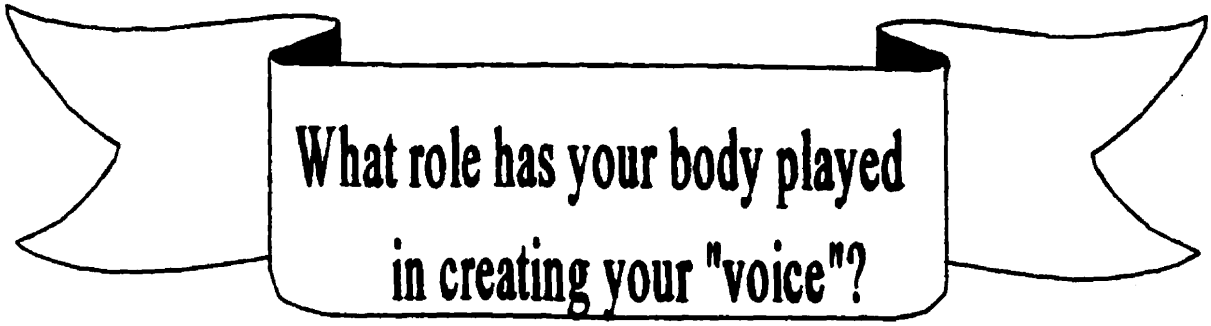
Bodies can, of course, have their sense of experience as obscured by ideology as minds can. So we have to be sure that naming, using the body, does not become yet another way to overwrite our experience. Diane Elam (1995) suggests that the body can not necessarily be reduced to "a new set of terms" (p. 236) and says that while "new labels and terms are sometimes empowering, they are not necessarily the answer to respecting the unrepresentable" (p.237).

Catherine MacKinnon (1987), who is no sentimentalist, says the following:

> Women have a contribution of perspective to make here [in sports] that is a lot more powerful than either playing with the boys or allowing the boys to play with us. ....both men and women have climbed Mount Everest. When asked why, the man said, because it was there. The woman said, because it was beautiful. (p.124)

My voyage in this research, through listening, reading, reflecting and writing, has been one that sought to uncover my own body voice, "comprehension of the self by detour of the comprehension of the other" (Ricouer, cited in Press, 1989, p. 254). When I began, I felt that my own cultural identification as girl/woman as body, and the subsequent woundings, had blocked my access route to knowledge, to owning knowledge. Knowledge was voice for me, and it was something outside of me; it had to be attained, climbed, conquered -- the mountain.

But I have come to understand that double vision can be a gift as well as a liability. Girls and women <u>can</u> address the issues of body and knowledge with this double vision, and enrich each with the other. I now have a different relationship with my body and my concept of knowledge, my embodied, thinking self, and the strength that comes from learning to integrate them. Body voice is surely both the beauty (the 'isness') and the 'thereness' of the mountain.



I am a Master's student in the Department of Educational Studies doing a study on "The Body Voice in Girls and Women."

Drawing on both theoretical and personal aspects of the body, I want to deepen our understanding of the particular cultural, political, social and personal times in which we grew our selves: the influences, the resistances and the residues of our formative experiences.

I would like to interview you about your life story with regards to your own body awareness, body consciousness, body image, body experiences, as you moved from childhood through to adulthood. I would like to explore some of what it means to be a woman in a body and how your movement through childhood and adolescence has contributed to the particular woman in the body which you are today. Exploring memory through interviews and photographs, I would like to document/represent women's body voices.

Your investment in this study would be two or three audiotaped interviews of about an hour and a half each, at your convenience, and rummaging through old photo albums for pictures of your younger self to use for exploring memory.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please call me at: [redacted] (day, office) or [redacted] (evening, home). I will explain anything more you might like to know about the study and we can arrange a convenient time and place to meet.

Susann Allnutt

Appendix B

List of our physical activities:

Susann:	
Girl:	School: gym, basketball, swinging
	Home: swimming, biking, badminton, baseball
	Friends: biking, skating
	Lessons: none
Adult:	Biking, swimming (not much of either)

Stephanie:	
Girl:	School: gym, volleyball
	Home: none mentioned
	Friends: none mentioned
	Lessons: none
Adult:	Weightlifting, running, strength training

Phébée:	
Girl:	School(s): gym, baseball, swinging, ballon chasseur
	Home: swimming, biking
	Friends: swimming, biking, dancing
	Lessons: ballet
Adult:	Biking, swimming (not much of either)

Caroline:	
Girl:	School: gym, badminton, volleyball
	Home: swimming, gardening
	Friends: none mentioned
	Lessons: none mentioned
Adult:	Dancing (not much anymore)

Annette:	
Girl:	School: none mentioned
	Home: softball
	Friends: skating, figure skating, skipping
	Lessons: none mentioned
Adult:	Dancing, softball, rollerblading

Emily:	
Girl:	School: rowing, tennis, basketball
	Home: swimming
	Friends: none mentioned
	Lessons: figureskating
Adult:	Rowing (now stopped), exercising

Freida:	
Girl:	School: badminton
	Home: baseball, biking, walking with the family
	Friends: biking, skiing, soccer, capture the flag
	Lessons: ballet
Adult:	Biking, canoeing, hiking

Endnotes

Notes to Chapter I.

1. I say 'my' and question it -- but what else do I say, 'the' participants? I think also of the word subjects, and in light of my subject, the investigation of subject/object, I think that maybe that is a good word. But it holds ramifications of experiments, of these women being subjects because they cannot be "objective" -- that most glorified word. Or worse, that they are really objects. So in the end, they are 'my' participants; they are not 'the' participants. I have to acknowledge my power in this situation. I came across this way of expressing what I see as a power tension in research in Mieke de Waal's (1993) study. She calls her participants "'my' girls" (p. 37). I decided to adopt this "conceit" for my study.

In the feedback I received from 'my' participants, Phébée suggested that perhaps this "conceit" had had the opposite effect from that intended. Did this unrelenting emphasis on 'my' not say that she and the other women participating in the study were indeed mine? She also asked whether bracketing both words, as in 'my participants,' might not give a more correct slant to the irony or context intended.

These were excellent questions, but after considering her perspective and that of other readers who found the continual quotes irritating or a disruption to reading, I decided to keep the original idea. It seemed important to me to have the use of the quotes throughout the writing, and to emphasize the irony of the 'my,' rather than that of the participation. There is a difference between discussing 'the' art or 'my' art, or 'the' body or 'my' body. I felt that same difference needed to be emphasized here. Yes, the participants in this study are both not mine, and yet mine. And therein lies the irony, and the need for emphasis.

2. Alice Miller (1981) suggests this in her work, that when children put feelings away, it is not just away; they are no longer accessible; even when it is safe later to have them, they are gone.

3. This expression of the "Over-Eye" of culture comes from Dana Jack (1991). Girls have double vision not only in looking at the world, but in looking at themselves, because they internalize the Over-Eye.

4. The numerals following quotes by 'my' participants indicate the first or second interview (1 or 2) and the page of each.

5. Feminist are indeed exploring gender identity and the constructedness of "nature," by looking at "transgressions" and what they mean for our production of feminine (and masculine) subjectivities (e.g., Butler, 1990, 1993). "Nature" as lived body continues to be problematic. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen to stay with the embodied practices of 'my' participants.

Notes to Chapter II.

1. Amateur is a conflation of the term of non-expert with love of the field, of the story, thanks to Ann Beer for this idea.

2. All 'my' participants are identified by pseudonyms, most self-chosen and indicated in their third person story. Caroline's name was chosen by me, though she approved it.

3. I had already been through my own photographic learning experience, after having read Emily Hancock's The Girl Within (1989). In that was mention of a woman looking at photographs of herself as a young girl. I had raided my mother's cache of photographs and been through some of the same feelings of regret and astonishment that 'my' participants felt. There were not many photographs of myself as a teenager, however; I seemed to have disappeared during that time. Then an astonishing coincidence: I met a high school friend on the bus, while I was in the middle of interviewing 'my' participants. She said she had some photos of me from high school. She brought them to me and there I was, Grades 9 through 12 in about 8 very precious photographs. In addition, I had the chance to go through my father's diary which had been with my brother. There I found a few more photographs of myself at younger ages that I had never seen before.

4. Alice Miller (1981) suggests that what a child loses through repression is not always recoverable. Hancock (1989) states that Miller's 'remedy', the mourning of the lost self, might not be sufficient for women to find that silenced child. She says that from the women she studied, she feels that rage must break the "hold of the false self to revive the girl she's buried in childhood" (p. 243).

5. Boys on the other hand seemed to find balance through seeking stability, or reestablishing stability, a "perspective of control and avoidance" (Camarena, Saragiani & Petersen, 1997, p. 197), the authors call it, and add that it is not that their male participants were "unwilling to self-disclose negative feelings to us; rather, we believe that they were unwilling to admit negative emotional experiences to themselves" (p. 201).

6. Caroline did the first interview at a very busy and changing time in her life. She was not able to find the time to write the third person story, or participate in a second interview.

7. Carol Gilligan has worked with a number of collaborators, some of whom are first author and others who are second (e.g., Brown & Gilligan, 1991; Brown, Debold, Tappan & Gilligan, 1991; Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller & Argyris, 1989; Gilligan, Brown & Rogers, 1990). Since I regard her as a pioneer, I name her as first author. I use the word consoeurs, borrowed directly from Claudia Mitchell (personal communication, October 1997), even though the occasional collaborator is male.

8. Reading against the grain can leave the grain still in place.

9. The issue of recovered memory echoes loudly for me when I suggest that "truth" doesn't matter. Whatever truth is exactly, it certainly matters. But I contextualize my statement by acknowledging the difference between a court of law or a therapist's office and my dyadic life story interviews. Nonetheless, I could have unearthed a new story of abuse in these interviews and I would have been faced with far different ethical issues than those I did face, issues of ensuring anonymity and honouring 'my' participants' stories.

Notes to Chapter III.

1. Susan C. Wooley (1994) suggests that some of the real reasons for eating disorders are being purposefully ignored:

> We are in the second day of this conference, billed as a gathering of all the eminent North American scientists in eating disorders. Slides (hundreds by now, maybe thousands) have posted the counts of virtually everything that can be named and measured --with the usual exceptions of sexual abuse, role constraints, powerlessness, enforced silence. (p. 336)

2. Witness how my thesis committee and I, needing a clear sub-title for my rather more nebulous idea of "body voice," immediately leaped to "body image" as a shorthand way of conveying what I was interested in, a code easily understood.

3. Make up, make over, freshening up, putting on your face - what transparent descriptions. And yet they seem to thoughtlessly pervade our women's discourses.

4. When I say North American society, I mean mainly an urban, middle class, developed culture such as the one that I inhabit. It is also predominantly white. The six women and myself who participated in this study appear to partake of those particular elements. I say North American, because although I have done some reading about other societies and indeed other cultures inside our North American one, I don't feel qualified to comment on other than the society I find myself inside with its marketed mainstream images: these I define as overwhelmingly white and middle class. When I speak of the patriarchy, I have also come to realize, I am speaking of what Debold, Wilson and Malisse call the "white patriarchy."

5. Sidonie Smith's (1993) Subjectivity, Identity and the Body is a rare look at women's autobiography bringing body into focus.

6. Fathers might appear to be absent in this chronology, for I do not mention them. 'My' participants did mention them in terms of their life story, but very rarely in terms of their body stories. Absence of course is as important as presence, but it is more difficult to comment on.

The only exception to this was Phébée. Her father appeared to have his own body image issues; he was short and did stretching exercises to get taller, wore heels on his shoes and put inserts in them. He was also very interested in his own clothes. In addition, he commented regularly on both Phébée and her mother's looks. He did at times use money as

an incentive for each of them to lose weight.

7. One major difference appeared to be that this ambivalent relationship between mother and daughter was still very much in negotiation for the younger women, whereas 'my' older participants gave voice to a feeling that a negotiated peace had already taken place.

8. Janet Surrey (1993) cites a survey study by Paula Caplan and Ian Hall-McCorquedale in which in over 125 reviewed articles, "when any dynamic etiology [of psychopathology] was formulated, it was seen almost universally residing in mothers" (p. 115).

9. Judith Rodin, Lisa Silberstein and Ruth Striegel-Moore (1985) call women's weight concerns a "normative discontent." They suggest that the differences in how females and males view their bodies are analogous to their different orientations to the world in general, and that weight has come to be a metaphor for women. Even as women cast off other sex-role traditions, their concerns about weight seem not to diminish.

Notes to Chapter IV.

1. The stories are reproduced as they were written; the only changes made were minor punctuation ones, for clarity.

2. Phébée did not elaborate on this statement, nor did I ask her to. I assumed from her body language that she felt it was self-explanatory, and I did not explore it further. I think this is a good example of the "stillness of sameness" (Hurd & McIntyre, 1996, p. 78) that can occur when a woman interviews a woman. In Chapter VI, I discuss the issue of silences about sexuality in this study.

Notes to Chapter V.

1. By texts, Smith (1988) means the "more or less permanent and above all replicable forms of meaning, of writing, painting, television, film, etc. The production, distribution and uses of texts are a pervasive and highly significant dimension of contemporary social organisation" (p. 38). Although Smith is analyzing these "more or less permanent" forms of meaning, as I have mentioned before, I feel texts can be defined in broader terms. Our memories end up being part of the permanent texts, written on ourselves, that formulate our practices, and these memories may be made up of very fleeting events or circumstances, like the body commentary 'my' participants discuss.

2. I had my own resistance to bloomer-thought in gym, and in basketball games. My mother for some reason had a variety of silk and polyester fitted bloomers, of unique design, given to her by an eccentric aunt. I would saunter out on the basketball court with these bloomers hidden under my skirt, and only as I started playing, would they become obvious. I would last at least until the first quarter end, before I was banished to the locker room to come out in my navy blue bloomers. It became a game I never fully won, but one I took great pride in.

3. This highlights a major theme in physical activity rhetoric that works against participation by girls and women. Sports traditionally seen as masculine carry covert and overt messages about non-participation. Research has shown that girls have less self-confidence about participating in sports which they see as "masculine." Less self-confidence translates into less skill and less motivation to acquire skill (Lirgg, 1992; Lirgg & Feltz, 1989; Vertinsky, 1992). Underlying much of this is a controlling narrative of lesbophobia (Fusco, 1995; Kidd, 1983).

Catherine MacKinnon (1987) asks, "What does it say about the relation between sexuality and physicality, what does it tell us in particular about the content of heterosexuality, that when a woman comes to own her own body, that makes her heterosexuality problematic?" (p. 122).

4. Marcia Hutchinson (1985) suggests such an exercise for women to become more comfortable with their bodies. She says, using a full length mirror, look at yourself, own yourself, all your parts. This is akin to the permissible looking that Coward (1985) suggests looking at photographs gives women.

5. M. Ann Hall (1996) says that the "the term "tomboy" illustrates perfectly our belief in a sex-dichotomized world" (p. 15). In 16th century usage, the word referred to a rude or boisterous boy -- "who acted too much like a tom, or a man" (p. 16). Then the term moved to describe bold women (i.e., prostitutes are still called toms or tommys in England). Eventually it meant "a spirited young girl who 'behaves like a boisterous boy'" (p. 16). Hall asks why we don't have a similar word for a boy who acts like a girl, such as "Marygirl." She suggests that we don't need one because "girl" conveys the derogatory meaning all by itself.

Notes to Chapter VI.

1. I have put many words in quotes in this research writing, for I understand too well the difficulties in using words such as "inherent," "naturally" and even "of course."

2. Karin Martin (1996) uses this phrase "sexual subjectivity" to express the level of agency that girls and boys might feel about their sexual selves. She looks to this sexual subjectivity as a means of overleaping the silence and putting away of oneself that Gilligan and consoeurs map in teenage girls.

3. Body issues, such as menstruation or birth control, become technical issues. The mother passes on the best way of not leaking or staining, the best tampon; she hands her daughter a condom, and feels that she is dealing with sexuality. Joan Brumberg (1997) states,

> Mothers and daughters do not speak about emotions, or the sensations accompanying the daughter's development; about desires or fantasies, about shame or pride concerning the body, about inner sensations during menstruation, or about the desire to explore the changing body or sexual preferences. (p. 9)

4. Discussion of sexuality and teenage girls often centers around heterosexual relationships. Indeed all discussion in this study appears to take this for granted. I do not take it for granted. However, even Freida, who came out as a lesbian in her mid-teens, speaks of sexual relationships in terms of boys as well.

Karin Martin (1996) discusses how lesbians' first sexual relationship in their teens is often with a boy, because of the strength of the heterosexual discourse for adolescent girls. Boys, because of the discourse about the overwhelming urgency of their "implacable" sexual desire, and despite widespread homophobia among teenage boys, do not necessarily have a sexual relationship with a girl, prior to having one with a boy.

5. The 1997 Nike ads for girls are a fascinating example of the push and pull of this discussion. The television ads have flashes of a girl playing basketball, playing with a doll, doing ballet, running competitively. The voiceover says, "If you let me play sports.. I will have more self-confidence..., I will be more likely to leave a man who beats me... I wil be less likely to get pregnant before I want to..." One can 'read' this as, if you "let me play," then I will be all things (ballet and basketball); another way to 'read' it is that without sports, I will just be a victim.

In this situation of having to ask, instead of claiming, ("if you let me play"), the "you" is undetermined. Who is "you"? Your mother, your father, the school, a coach, a sporting federation, society in general? It is perhaps that anonymous cultural inhibitor, unnamed.

The print ad shows a girl with her face turned wistfully to the viewer, her hand on a chain, suggesting she is sitting on a swing. My daughter's Grade 10 English teacher had his class analyze the ad. He told me the first thing all the students noticed was the chain, and to them, it represented an imprisoning element for the girl. My daughter also played a lot with emphasis on the different words in the phrase, if you let me play, if you let me play, if you let me play, if you let me play, if you let me play. (It is a great teaching tool.)

One can laud this ad campaign and simultaneously mourn and marvel at its necessity and its open window on cultural attitudes. I try to imagine a similar ad to encourage boys to participate in sports. My imagination fails.

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