

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION
Conference 1994, November 27 - December 1
"Educational Research: Innovation and Practice"

MEMORY AND NARRATIVE - THE POWER OF EXPERIENCE

Sharn Rocco

Assoc. Lecturer, Early Childhood Education
School of Teacher Education
Charles Sturt University - Mitchell

That pedagogical practices are constituted in patriarchal institutions of power, knowledge production and schooling, is the underlying assumption of this paper. This paper focuses upon the narratives of school experience produced by final year early childhood teacher education students who participated in a 'Collective Memory Work' project titled 'one day my prince will come'. The process of collective memory work, in this instance, required participants to engage in reading and reflection, tutorial discussions, journal writing, writing in the narrative form, and sharing and rewriting of at least one autobiographical narrative. This project was undertaken as the data collection phase for writing of my M.Ed. Hons thesis.

The dominant theoretical discourse guiding my thesis and the analysis of stories of schooling addressed in this paper, is feminist poststructuralist theory. My intentions in pursuing this research is to better understand my own subject positionings, to explore alternative ways of being and knowing, and to contribute to feminist conversations about the process of feminine subjectification and how the romantic storyline, as it is invested in life history, contributes to that process and becomes taken for granted. The critical premise of my work is that gender difference as a discursively produced social structure invested in personal and institutionalised practices, brings with it an emotional commitment to a gendered identity and a moral system that keeps it in place. (Davies, 1990; Haug et.al. 1987)

As will be shown in the analysis of memory stories addressed in this paper, schooling emerges as a critical site for this process of subjectification. From my analysis and reflection on the research process questions will be posed for future patterns of teaching and meaning making for those with a genuine interest in redressing the inequities gender.

The nature of masculinity and femininity is one of the key sites of discursive struggle for the individual and we need only look at a few examples of the forms of subjectivity widely on offer to realise the importance of this battle. It is a struggle which begins at birth and which is central to upbringing and education. At the centre of the struggle is the common sense assumption that there is a natural way for girls, boys, women and men to be. (Weedon, 1987:98)

My own experiences of being girl child, sister, daughter, woman, mother, teacher and student negotiating the social milieu of life, struggling to achieve a sense of belonging and to signify myself as good, and therefore acceptable, normal and natural, establishes my subjectivity and the source from which this paper springs. The child, who becomes the person, struggles for attention and approval. Central to this life of struggle and signification are the contradictions of theoretical and epistemological frameworks and the binary oppositions inherent in language as a site for meaning making. Gender is specific in its signification and therefore necessarily conflictual. The person is positioned and confined by gender as it is discursively produced. The discourse of gender difference is hegemonic and phalocentric. The

presence or absence of the penis is the basis of the social construct of power hierarchically arranged and competitively constituted.

Schooling as a site of subjectification is a patriarchal institution; its structures and practices reflecting discursively produced gender difference as taken-for-granted. Not surprisingly, early in the data collection phase of my MEd Hons thesis schooling and family emerged as key sites of subjectification. The following extract from a participant's journal recorded in the second week of the project reflects upon the taken-for-grantedness of gender difference and its relationship to the romantic story line as it is institutionalised in schooling.

Although I feel or felt the pressure of "one day I will meet my prince" and my life will be complete from my family I remember as a girl, school, clubs and society also practiced this theme, whether subconscious or not.

At school I remember things such as:
boys always moved furniture while girls cleaned
boys were always the captains of team sports
the boys always believed they were best at sports and outdoor things
and as young girls I remember we usually left it to them, we never really stuck up for ourselves.

I distinctly remember a soccer game when I was in grade one. It was a friendly interschool game. Funny how all the boys were on the team and all the girls cut up the oranges for half time and cheered them on. We never really thought much of these roles I guess but why do girls grow up thinking that men will make their life if we were usually subservient in social roles? (Natalie, 2/8/93)

Natalie's recollections reflect that what is taken-for-granted in the organisation of schooling is that boys are active, strong, participating leaders while girls as opposite to boys are passive,

supportive, silent, followers. Natalie's question answers itself; it is precisely because girls are cast in subservient social roles that they believe 'men will make their life'. Feminine subjectivity is defined in opposition to the masculine, it seems there cannot be one without the other being positioned as opposite. This is how masculinity and femininity are characterised and played out in the lived and imaginary narrative of the romantic storyline. Dominant discourses shaped into narrative and understood as storylines combined with the structure and protocols of social institutions, become hegemonic in a/effect.

Subjectification is a process of discursive interpellation which leads the subject to shape herself within the confines of the dominant culture. Haug describes it thus:

The process of subjectification can be understood as the process by which individuals work themselves into social structures they themselves do not consciously determine, but to which they subordinate themselves. The concept allows for the active participation of individuals in heteronomy. It is the fact of our participation that gives social structures their solidity; they are more solid than prison walls. (Haug et al, 1987:59)

The common sense assumption of natural difference is acclaimed by scientific theories, enshrined in religious discourse and illustrated by usual practice. Women and girls have learned that they are capable of operating on both sides of the gender divide yet a discursively

produced moral commitment to feminine signification holds in place the inequities of gender. Feminine and masculine are conceptualised as opposite and biologically determined so that the subject must not be mistaken for the other. As the person, (understanding herself to be individual), acts in the world, she understands and recognises the readability of her presence as she reads the presence of others. The inscription of category membership upon our bodies is the nesting of discourse, self conscience and signification, speaking and silence, patterning the narrative life history as gendered. Many of the stories told for the collective memory work project of 'one day my prince will come' are characterised by this moral commitment to gender difference and individual and personal responsibility for its signification. The following story bears witness to this.

It was just one of those school days, the usual lessons, the usual routines - almost a perfectly normal day for a year eight student. Almost but not quite. Not for Amy.

The bell had rung signalling for all students to make their way to class. Amy made it to class, in fact most did. Except for three girls. Three year eleven girls. Classes for them were optional - you went if

you felt like it - but who's going to make you go - certainly NOT (sic) the teachers.

The names of the three girls are not important, though you would certainly know them if you saw them. Take this for example, typical winter uniform: long sleeved shirt, long sleeved jumper, stockings are a good idea but then comes the SKIRT (sic) - just below the hips and way above the knees. hmmm Anyway! All three wore make-up and lots of it. Two had long hair and one short. They sat outside the garden shed smoking away and waiting.

Meanwhile Amy sat in her art class taking notes with the other students. Amy is a quiet girl, not too worried with trends and fads that perhaps other girls her age are concerned with. In comparison, Amy's winter uniform consisted of long sleeved shirt, long sleeved sloppy joe and long trousers. A few of the girls wore trousers but they were more like tailored pants with pleats. Amy chose to wear 'Levis' just like the guys at school but why not? They are cheap durable and much warmer than slacks or skirts - which she didn't like wearing. The teacher, Mrs Crouch asked Amy to take a message to the principal's office. So off Amy went, down the stairs between blocks one and two.

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

'Hey you!'

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

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

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

'Are you a boy or a girl?'

Ouch! Amy felt her heart beat hard and fast. How dare they but

they did! Amy's eyes itched, she dropped her head slightly and lifted it once more, she smiled as best she could and said quietly, 'a girl'.

The three girls turned to each other and giggled to themselves, but Amy didn't find it quite so funny. She walked as quickly as she could. Tears rolling down her cheeks, she stopped at the bottom of the stairs. Her mind a flutter, 'how could they?' Yet it wasn't the first time she'd been mistaken for a boy! (Participant journal entry - second writing of the incident.)

In her first writing of the incident Amy went on to say:

The next thing I remember is being at home and crying. I explained what had happened to mum. She was very comforting. But as a result I decided to buy a long skirt, (I never wore trousers to school again), I still prefer not to wear skirts or dresses thou (sic). The other thing I remember deciding then, was to grow my hair long - I actually told this to mum that afternoon! (And my hair is long today still!) (Extract from participant journal entry - first writing of the incident)

In Amy's story, above, we see her struggling to achieve herself as good. A sensible, reliable, girl. Not taken with fads, she dresses for practicality, wouldn't do, is chosen by the teacher to run errands. She recognises herself as a 'good' girl. In so doing, she constructs herself as opposite to the bad girls - she will buy a long skirt. (My emphasis). Amy recognises herself as demure, deferential, compliant. Bad girls are equally as recognisable, they draw attention to their sexuality, don't do what they're told, ask questions, demand to know things.

There is in Amy's story, a sense that in her discursive struggle for belonging, achieving membership of the category 'good' had been ascendant to that of the category 'girl' which she had taken for granted as biologically determined. Her story captures an historical shift on the discursive battle field of subjectification that is everyday life. Amy had felt there was an obviousness about her femaleness guaranteed by its naturalness as biologically determined. Confronted by her discursive opposite, 'bad' as opposed to 'good', in the body of her biological peers, same st/age, (all are discursively positioned as child:student) same sex, Amy is forced to acknowledge that her essential difference cannot be taken for granted. In the past it had been adults who had mistaken her gender and she had consoled herself with the belief that they couldn't remember what it was like to be young while her mother had consoled her with the words, 'Some people just don't look do they?' From this moment on she decides to demonstrate her moral commitment by taking responsibility to signify her category membership, firstly by wearing a skirt and then it is to be inscribed upon her body so that there can be no more confusion, she will wear her hair long like a biological badge of membership and allegiance to her gender category.

The young child, in her efforts to achieve belonging, comes to understand the importance of achieving and correctly signifying membership of particular constitutive categories. These categories are hierarchical both within and against. Membership is qualified by the

self in interaction with others contextualised by an historically specific subjectivity and the dominant discourses of normality understood as gendered. The importance of and responsibility for the correct signification and reading of gender was made visible in many stories. In the stories of mistaken identity, (such as Amy's story above and Mia's story which follows), the experience resulted in a conscious change of appearance, frequently to be inscribed on the body - particularly wearing the hair long or removing body hair. In Mia's story we see that she places responsibility for correctly signifying/recognising gender with the reader and the subject.

Standing in the canteen line in year four a young black girl with a short afro stood dressed like most of the other girls in navy slacks and long sleeved white school shirt. She chatted to Jane, dressed just the same, standing in front of her with her long blonde hair pulled up in a high pony tail tied with a navy blue ribbon. She patiently waited to move to the front of the line where she could purchase her lunch. They stopped talking as Jane was served, no problems. The canteen lady, someone's mother, smiled and I smiled back. Then she said, 'And what can I do for you little boy?' The smile was quickly wiped off my face and replaced with a scowl and my eyes started to water. I thought, 'For a start, I'm not little and I'm certainly not a boy. How rude! I bet she never called Jane a boy.' Instead of saying anything, through gritted teeth I asked for a sausage roll, hoping the lady would return before I cried. On her return I snatched the sausage roll, payed and walked away without a word of thanks - she didn't deserve it. I didn't mention it to anyone, I was too embarrassed but the next day I wore a tunic to school telling my mother, 'I look like a boy in slacks. It'd be okay if I had a ponytail.' (Participant journal entry- concluding narrative.)

Language weaves with speech and silence, a discursive tapestry of meaning; the junctures of its threads being the dualisms of meaning and friction, defining the other as opposite. Warp and weft are male and female, speaking and silence, presence and absence. Discursively defining the self as opposite to the other, it seems impossible to be one and the other. Thus, meaning is made visibly signified and textually tethered. Embedded in language the structure of gender invests expressive categories with oppositional meaning often understood as masculine or feminine, good or bad. It is arguable whether the first dualism of discursive positioning and subjectification is boy/girl or good/bad, each being constituted in the

first words 'dad'/'mum', 'yes'/'no'. Each is a category of meaning represented by personal and institutionalised practices which signify membership as gendered and hierarchical. Dualistic meaning making is the assessable hallmark of schooling. The tick and the cross. Good and bad. These twosomes good/bad, male/female, tick/cross are the framework of meaning in the discursive production of identity.

Taking ourselves up as gendered subject/s is not achieved without struggle and contradiction. We do not passively adopt the practices and roles ascribed to our gender category but rather from early infancy engage in and try out practices and subject positions on both sides of the gender boundary as we perceive they are available to us. We do so with varying consequences or outcomes. These consequences, their internalisation and manifestation in, or affect in shaping subsequent thoughts, actions and feelings is dependent upon prevailing discourse/s, power relations and subjectivity. For instance, those who have achieved a gendered identity within the discourse/s of individualism and democracy will experience their subjectivity within lived and imaginary narratives in terms of freedom and choice. The

consequences of the discursive shift captured in the historical moment of Amy's and Mia's stories read from within the discourse of the individual would be understood as an act of choice freely made - the power invested in the structure of gender is thus rendered invisible. The romantic storyline constituted in the discourse/s of the individual, gender difference, biological determination and stages of life gives coherence and readability to the oppositions of gendered subjectivity. Power is assumed and ascribed to its subjects according to their positioning and accommodation (fit/misfit) within the hierarchy of the prevailing discourse/s.

Within the prevailing discourse/s of sex and gender 'what you are born, when it comes to sex, is what you remain. This creation of an absolute out of something which is far from an absolute biologically (Connell, 1987; Davies, 1989a; Kessler and McKenna, 1978) is in large an achievement of lived and told narratives. That is, being male or female is not only observably the way people are, but is also the way people can imaginably be in any world we can think of.' (Davies, 1990: 133). In narratives which offer acceptable subject positions to females, (ie. positions which allow them to take themselves up as 'good girl' or 'respectable woman'), fail to make imaginable for these subjects a world in which an adult life without marriage is conceivable or acceptable, much less enjoyable.

Furthermore, our identity and sexuality as constituted in the categories male and female is produced in relation to and interaction with, others - we learn to see ourselves through others eyes. What we expect of ourselves is often shaped by what we believe others expect of us. This is evidenced in the stories from Haug, et al's 'Female

Sexualization', and many incidents in people's lives referred to in their journal writing for 'one day my prince will come'.

Schooling is a ubiquitous site of subjectification and the production and reproduction of dominant discourses. The insertion of science into education has meant that the dominant psychological discourses and their scientific claims to universal understanding of the individual have infiltrated everyday life and been inscribed on minds and bodies. Science is a masculinist framework that holds in place hierarchies of knowledge and power by glorifying and sanctifying the individual while silencing the subject. Science with its claims to rationality and objectivity is understood as the path to Truth and certainty and thus has entered the collective consciousness as the basis of action, understanding and justification of the self; all is measurable, quantifiable, traceable; without contradiction or quandary. Science is invested in dualistic structures of meaning making from which memory, experience and subjectivity are absented.

Claims for a science of the rational were from the first intimately bound up with the possibility of a scientifically validated and rational pedagogy. (Walkerdine in Henriques, 1984: 165)

Schooling is grounded in a belief in the truth of science and faith in its processes, accepting that rationality and objectivity exist and can be achieved and enacted exclusive from emotion and subjectivity which are conceptualised as opposite and inferior. Within schooling, the oppositional dualisms of power that regulate thinking speaking and acting are male/female, adult/child, rational/emotional, right/wrong, good/bad; power being ascribed to those who position themselves or are positioned on the left of the divide and powerlessness to those on the right. The oppositional power ascribed subjectively to good and bad, right and wrong can shift its positional meaning depending on whether category membership is being signalled by male/female and/or

adult/child. The following story illustrates this dynamic as we see the subject interpret the same behaviour of a boy and a girl quite differently according to gender.

I'm sitting at two desks. The one directly opposite, but in front of me is triangle in shape, a boy sitting there being very dominant and powerful. I am sitting at the oblong desk with a girl sitting next to me. I am constantly being kicked by the boy and pinched by the girl, all under the table of course, so as not to attract the attention of the teacher. I feel threatened and powerless. I can do nothing to stop this. These two are like a team, they are brother and sister and seem to enjoy inflicting pain on to others. I feel shy and lonely. I have only been at the school for a few days. Too shy and scared to tell the teacher or even my mum. I can't believe the girl is doing this, she must be bad, not really a girl, more like a boy in disguise. Why you

may ask? Well girls don't do nasty things, only boys so in my mind she is just like a boy. I wonder why boys feel they have to be so mean. I am hurting all over my legs and arms. I am crying on the inside but not on the outside.

After completing this narrative the participant subject went on to say:

I spent six months at this school somewhere in Sydney, and I hated it. Just recalling it makes me cry inside. This memory recall happened without fail everyday. Its hard to believe, looking back now, that two children my own age could have complete control of me, and I was powerless. (I was only six years old in Grade 1).

For many years I wondered why my mother sent me back to the school day in and day out. Well I was sure I had told her what happened to me each day, hadn't I? It turns out I never did tell my mother until many years down the track. So I must have silenced myself and tried to cope with the problem on my own. (Susie, narrative - Participant journal entry, 10/'94)

Suzie is silenced by the apparent necessity to maintain her allegiance to the category 'pupil' by consorting with her attackers to ensure they go unnoticed by the teacher to whom they are bound in the discursive process of subjectification as opposite and separate, the 'other' category in the process of meaning making and its signification. Within the classroom, and the prevailing discourse of 'teaching as usual', the dualism of adult/child is reinforced by that of teacher/pupil. Power is discursively adhered to the adult as teacher which in the process of meaning making, silences children:pupils and sends their political activities underground.

Suzie is also silenced within the loving relationship of mother/daughter, which as a relationship of power is aligned with adult/child as an oppositional dualism of meaning making. In this analysis the dualisms of teacher/pupil and mother/daughter can be understood as sub-categories of the hierarchy of power invested in the dualism adult/child within which power is assumed by the adult and taken for granted. Positioning within the varying, possible combinations of these categories is dependant upon gender, age and is historically specific. Relations of age are central to power within the hierarchical structure and discourses of schooling. Being positioned, and signifying oneself as belonging to the categories child:pupil as opposed to adult:teacher makes access to power exclusive to and hierrarchical within the category/s of membership. Power is assumed and ascribed to its subjects according to their positioning and accommodation (fit/misfit) within the hierarchy of the prevailing discourse.

The silences within the discourses of power and powerlessness are critical points on which to focus in any attempt to understand the seemingly immutable construction of gender. In Suzie's story, above, the legacy of the old truism, 'children should be seen but not heard', seems to be clearly understood, (though I would expect these days very rarely heard), by these children. And certainly Suzie already believes 'boys will be boys'. So much so, that she questions the sex:gender of her female attacker while taking for granted the behaviour of the boy. Consequently, in her mind, the girl belongs to the category 'bad' while the boy simply remains just that, a 'boy'. Suzie, who has clearly positioned herself as a 'good girl', (the two categories seem synonymous to her mind), is rendered powerless.

Deference has been taken up as a characteristic of femininity and is expected of those who signify themselves as female. Femininity as deference is constituted in common-sense knowledge which makes reference to usual practice as evidence of its validity. The power of common-sense knowledge in the process relies upon its obviousness often articulated in common-sense sayings and advice. (Weedon, 1987: 75-77). For instance, with regard to Suzie's positioning in the story told above, the following sayings come to mind: 'grin and bear it', 'lay back and think of England', 'turn the other cheek', 'smile and the world smiles with you weep and you weep alone'. In light of this analysis, Suzie's positioning and her silence are not so 'hard to believe'.

In extracting stories of schooling from the vast body of data produced within the collective memory work project 'one day my prince will come', (twenty of which were the subject of multiple contemplations in formulating this paper, though there were many more), what became glaringly visible was the absence of the teacher. The following story, is one of only a few narratives in which the teacher is present; I have chosen it for reference here for the following reasons: Within this narrative the power invested in the teacher/pupil dualism seems omnipresent in its signification; the child in resisting being positioned by particular signifying practices of the teacher, accesses the discourse of 'mother as protector'; the particular classroom practice being resisted by the subject of this story is one which fits comfortably within the discourse of 'teaching as usual'.

I'm looking out the window, the streets whizz by to (sic) quickly. I feel sick in my tummy at the thought of today.

'I'm not going to go.'

'Go where Tess?' Mum's voice says from the front seat.

'I don't want to go. I don't like her.'

'Yeah, Miss Marcich the bitch. Tess call her Miss Marcich the bitch,' my brother calls to me from the front passenger seat.'

'That's enough Simon.'

The cars seem to whizz by faster and faster like one of those movies on fast forward. I dreaded to feel those two bumps. Those two bumps signified the beginning of ...

There were the bumps, there goes the bush. My stomach is beginning to churn, vomit suddenly rises to my throat. I swallow it. My hands begin to shake. Mum stops the car and Simon and her step ot. Tears well up in my eyes, I can't hold them back any longer.

I lean over to the front seats and lock the doors before anyone has a chance to know what's going on.

'TESS!'

'No, I don't want to do it!'

'Do what?' Mum asks.

'Its my turn already, I won't do it. I can't write it up neatly enough and she gets mad and makes us stand up there until its neat, then we get yelled at!'

Mum says, 'What do you have to do Tess? Open this door.'

'I have to write the date and day on the board, straight, neat, no mistakes. I can't I don't know how to spell it!'

In my mind I reply yesterday's events when my friend Zac got in trouble for spelling the day wrong. I saw how he got yelled at, and I saw how he cried, I saw how her yukky white gloves roughly yanked him from the chair.

'I'm not going in it's my day to do it. I'm only in Kindergarten, I can't spell yet!'

'TESS, I'll tell Mrs Marcich that you can't do it today. OK?'

A few sobs escaped my lips as I unlocked the front door and mum gently lifted me out. I trusted mum and knew she wouldn't let the teacher make me get into trouble.

Side by side we walked into the classroom.. I clutching mum's hand so tight I can see my fingers going white.

'Excuse me,' mum says.

I drop her hand quickly as Miss Marcich spins round to face mum.

'Um, we had a bit of a problem this morning ...' I quickly turn and walk to the book corner, shy, I don't hear what they say.

A few minutes pass and Mum comes over to say goodbye. She puts her arms around me and whispers, 'It's alright Tash.' I follow her out and wait in the tree house for the bell.

'Mum's right,' I think as Miss Marcich calls out David's name to do the 'first job.' I breathe a sigh of relief as I see John struggling to do his best writing, 'At least its not me.'

(Tess, narrative - Participant journal entry, 11/93)

What seems to be significant in searching these stories, written within the collective memory work project 'one day my prince will come, for their pedagogical implications is that there is not one instance recorded of a child seeking out or initiating interaction with a teacher for understanding, assistance or protection. Of the stories in which the teacher is referred to or characterised her position can be read as one of failure. For example, failure to recognise that the subject desperately wanted to be the princess in the play, failure to have a soft ball uniform big enough for the girl, failure to understand that the girls would rather lock themselves in the toilets than be caught by the boys in a game of 'catch and kiss', failure to ensure pupils did the 'right thing', (as in Amy's story above).

I take pedagogy to mean that which addresses "the transformation of consciousness that takes place in the intersection of three agencies - the teacher, the learner and the knowledge they together produce" (Lusted,1986:3) ... (this)concept of pedagogy focuses attention on the

conditions and means through which knowledge is produced. (Lather, 1991:101)

In the context of this paper the definition of pedagogy quoted above becomes subject to critical interpretation and re-valuation. It must be asked who is the teacher and the learner and what is the knowledge they together produce? Within schooling as a site of subjectification much of the knowledge produced/meanings made occurs despite or in the absence of the teacher. However, within schools it is adult teachers who are ascribed legitimate power. There is no power without responsibility. I argue that teachers committed to issues of social justice have the power and the responsibility to make visible what is taken for granted in the process of schooling; that children can be empowered, (given a legitimate voice), to articulate their experiences of knowledge production and subjectification and to participate in its analysis. Teachers are well placed to disrupt and change the structures and practices of schooling and teaching as usual. This disruption requires a detailed knowledge of what is usual and taken for granted, and a recognition that structures and meanings are embedded and engendered in language. Teachers might begin by asking what is believed to be 'normal' and 'natural' - normal child, normal family, normal classroom, what discursive practices hold these in place, and how are they gendered. Who and what is given voice and who and what is

not heard.

There is a collectivity of experience engendered in language and its dominant discourses, yet what became apparent during the course of the project 'one day my prince will come' is that insertion into the discourse of the individual, through liberal humanist philosophies of family, childhood and schooling, silences the subject by engendering the belief that her experience is unique. Memory and how it is given voice and in what forms and contexts it is validated is central to the activation or suppression of the power of the individual and collective consciousness. The isolation felt as a consequence of a belief in the individual as a fixed and unitary subject and therefore in our own individuality assists in maintaining the power of traditional images and structures. What is spoken and not spoken is governed by paradigms of thinking which have been discursively produced over time.

The significant junctures of meaning making that have been identified for analysis in the stories cited throughout this paper, can be applied to each. Within any site of subjectification there are numerous discourses at play or in 'battle' activating and positioning the subjects to take sides, often on several teams at once. Which and to how many 'teams' you believe you categorically, must, or to which you have a right to belong, is discursively determined by biology - the presence/absence of the penis. Some 'memberships' are taken up as an act of choice but when this is so it is more likely to signify itself as an act of resistance and as such becomes visible. More often, the discursive interpellation of the subject into existing structures and moral codes is rendered invisible by its taken for grantedness. Positioning oneself within the dominant discourses and their adherence to the body as it appears and acts in the world, is likely to engender feelings of approval and authority, (even if only in regard to the correctness of particular category memberships). As is evidenced in the stories cited in the course of this paper, however, both adherence and resistance have power in particular historical moments.

Through memory work the participants revisited the experiences of childhood, situating themselves historically within the associated categories to which they had membership. If we take the stories told to be collective, in the sense that they are recognisable to others,

then individual experience can become generalisable and subject to analysis. (Haug, 1987). Much of what has been said in the course of this paper, to be fully explicated warrants considerable elaboration. Much of what can be made visible in the stories addressed here has not been spoken about. However, I hope that the reader will take up the threads and begin to darn the gaps and embroider the edges where they find connections with their own lived and imaginary experience.

In concluding this paper I wish to return to my own subjectivity. I am

a talker because I am a thinker. I believe these to be universally generalisable facts as evidenced in the stories told here- people think speak and act. Not in any fixed or hierarchical order but dependant upon the physical and social context of the historical moment in which they are experienced, the moment itself being historically constituted. The discursive interpellation of the individual in the physical world, the structures of which are themselves discursively produced, does not occur in a linear, non-contradictory way. This is my experience.

Bibliography

- Belenky, M., Clinchy, B.M., Goldberger, N.R., Tarule, J.M.1986, Women's Ways of Knowing, The Development of Self, Voice and Mind. Basic Books Inc. New York
- Connell, R.W., 1987, Gender and Power, Polity Press, Oxford.
- Davies, B.,1988, Gender Equity and Early Childhood, Curriculum Development Centre, Schools Commission, Canberra
- _____1989, Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales. Preschool Children and Gender, Allen and Unwin Sydney.
- _____1990a, Lived and imaginary narratives and their place in taking oneself up as a gendered being', Australian Psychologist, Vol. 25: 76-90.
- _____1990b, 'The problem of desire', Social Problems, vol. 37: 801-16
- _____1993, Shards of Glass. Children reading and writing beyond gendered identities, Allen and Unwin Sydney
- _____1994, Poststructuralist theory and classroom practice, Deakin University Press Geelong
- Davies, B. & Banks, C., 1991. 'Becoming male: the aquisition of masculinities: a childhood perspective', Conference on Masculinity, MacQuarie University, Sydney
- Eagleton, M., 1986, Feminist Literary Theory A Reader, Basil Blackwell, London
- Grosz, E., 1989, Sexual Subversions, Allen & Unwin, Sydney
- Haug, F., ed.,1987, Female Sexualisation, Verso, London
- Lather, P. 1991. Feminist Research in Education: Within/Against Deakin University Press. Geelong
- _____1991, Post-critical pedagogies: a feminist reading, in Education and Society, Vol. 9 No. 2
- McLaren, P. 1991, Postmodernism, Post-colonialism and Pedagogy. in Education and Society, Vol. 9, No.1
- Rowland, R., 1988, Woman Herself. A Transdisciplinary Perspective in Women's Identity, Oxford University Press Melbourne
- Stanley, L. & Wise,S., 1983, Breaking Out: Feminist consciousness and feminist research, Routledge & Kegan Paul London
- _____1990, 'Method, Methodology and epistemology in feminist research process, Stanley, L. ed. Feminist Praxis, Routledge N.Y. London.
- Walkerdine, V., 1981, 'Sex Power and Pedagogy', Screen Education, Vol.35,14-24
- _____1984, 'Developmental psychology and th child-centred pedagogy:

the insertion of Piaget into early education, Henriques, J., Venn, C. & Walkerdine, V., *Changing the Subject: Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity*, Methuen London

_____1985. On the regulation of speaking and silence: class and gender in contemporary schooling Steedman, C., Urwin, C. & Walkerdine, V., Eds. *Language Gender and Childhood*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London: 203-241

Warnock, M., 1987, *Memory*, Faber and Faber London.

Weedon, C., 1987, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Basil Blackwell London