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Articulating Otherness: A Methodological Adventure in Gothic Intertextuality

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Brief biography:

Mary Madden is a Research Fellow in the Department of Health Sciences at the University of York, UK. She has an inter-disciplinary background in English literature, critical theory, sociology and social and community work. Her work combines practical field experience with complex epistemological and methodological challenges to forms of enquiry in the health and social sciences.

Abstract

This article is inspired both by the radical feminist work of Mary Daly and the post/modern possibilities of deconstruction. The author adopts a monstrous textual form to show and warn fellow voyagers in the academic mode of production that challenging exclusion and assimilation involves thinking beyond existing forms and going beyond “methodolatory” (Daly 1986 p11). Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein provides the basis for a Feminist Gothic approach that emphasises research as a written, passionate and embodied process with consequences for the researcher and the researched. The article asserts the narrative inevitability of intertextuality, examines the gendering of knowledge and presents a discursive challenge to the subject/object binary.

Introduction

The starting point of Paul Ricoeur’s (1992) work on the link between narrative and identity is Aristotle’s Poetics. This text from 4BCE is also the key source for contemporary Hollywood screenwriters (e.g. Vogler 1998). Aristotle states that the purpose of a plot is to organise a diversity of incidents into the harmony of a story, a story that is told. This story is, “an unstable compromise between the dispersion of events and the unity of a plot” (Ricoeur, 1992: 39). The plot provides a means of organization for sense-making. Ricoeur’s work considers the possibility that characters in a story are told and plotted in much the same way as

the actions. From this he develops the idea that identity is formed in narrative and, “relies on the capacity to tell a story about oneself, or maybe several stories... our story is also a part in the story of others” (Ricoeur, 1992: 39). Ricoeur therefore regards literature as, “a huge laboratory of thought experiments” and personal identity as, “the result…of the internalisation of narrative models which I find in my culture” (Ricoeur, 1992: 39).

During doctoral work exploring the dilemmas facing a social researcher working in the United Kingdom poverty industry under Thatcherism (Madden, 2001), Mary Shelley’s (1963 [1831]) Frankenstein became the sense-making text that guided me in encounters with the restrictive discipline(s) of social science. As a researcher and advocate I was concerned that I was contributing to the representational denigration of the young homeless people with whom I worked (Madden 2002/3, Madden 2003). Against a Conservative idealisation of the Victorian home and the re-birth of the urban underclass, I made an attempt to contextualize and historicize processes of knowing by experimenting with form in order to highlight relationships between form and content (Madden 2010). Like many women before me, when faced with misery and absurdity I ventured into the arts of 'sensation' (Pykett, 1992). As I inhabited high contrast political landscapes of good and evil, my writing took on a gothic flavour and I narrated myself and the people with whom I worked as '"figure[s]' against the 'ground' of culturally given [gothic and social scientific] images of 'the self' (Parker, 2005:71).

In Frankenstein, the teenage runaway Mary Shelley debates Enlightenment ideas about knowledge, sentiment and reason; in particular the ideas of Rousseau that paved the way for Romanticism. Victor Frankenstein (a researcher) and his creature (a research subject/object composed from the bodies of the poor and assorted animals) are two disillusioned, debating creatures of the Enlightenment. The possible existence of a third figure, the discarded-before-created 'female' creature, hints at possibilities outside of the dichotomies of masculine romance and rationality; things that “have hitherto remained unknown, terrifying, monstrous: … mad, unconscious, improper, unclean, non-sensical, oriental, profane” (Jardine, 1985 p73). Frankenstein feared that, “she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made [between ‘men’] before her creation” (p167). Intrigued by the potential of this feminised 'Other' voice to disturb binary thinking, I sought out its/her power to haunt and disrupt the disturbingly violent and restricting late twentieth century neo-gothic rationalities that were perpetuating inequalities.

A journey into metaphor

Frankenstein regards his creature, the product of his research, as horrifying and monstrous at the moment he realises it will acquire its own subjectivity. While piecing his anatomical mechanism together, he sees the parts of his project as objects of beauty. The horror comes when epistemology shifts to ontology and it is clear that the creature will have its own embodied subjectivity. Its dull yellow

eye opens and the creature gains the power to look back at its creator: “Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created” (Shelley, 1963 p61), Frankenstein abandons his creation.

Shelley writes ambivalence into Frankenstein’s desire to pass on the terrible knowledge acquired in his transgressive studies:

> I see by your eagerness, and the wonder and hope which your eyes express, my friend, that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted...Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge… (Shelley, 1963 p56).

Frankenstein’s ambivalence is understandable. His quest for knowledge led to the creation of things he could not control; just as it is impossible to control how any narrative is consumed by readers and policy makers. No author is immune to the anxiety this causes. It is with this in mind that I explain how I became Frankenstein, his monster and more. This extraordinary form is the result of what some might consider an unhealthy appetite for knowledge. Philosophy is the genius that regulated my fate and re-formed me; “I desire, therefore, in this narration, to state those facts which led to my predilection for that science” (Shelly 1963, p42). This is an assembly that provides a metaphoric warning for fellow travellers dabbling in the dirt of the academic mode of production. Listen

and learn that neither desire nor detachment will protect you from the risk of being changed by what you do – perhaps, utterly. For in the process of observing ourselves it is important to attend to Roger Smith's (1997) question, "do we not make ourselves into something different?" (p15)

I was a community/social welfare worker in pursuit of further knowledge about the factors that created poverty and so I re-entered the academy. I had long been an ill though paradoxically devoted disciple of a number of disciplines, interested in theories both 'musty' and 'trendy' and with an ardent devotion to application. Publicly eschewing what I feared might be perceived as a frivolous desire for art and literature, I began to conduct my researches in the persona of a 'social scientist'; a persona I soon found confining. Developing a passion for knowledge in the social sciences had the incongruous effect of putting passion and knowledge in conflict with each other. Academia set logos, head, knowledge, reason and authority to war with pathos, body, emotion, dependence and obedience. I was torn in my attractions between the academic Master's detached cerebral self-control and the domestic Mistresses' ability to indulge full physical feeling. I shared with Frankenstein a view that, "the ambition of the inquirer [in this discipline] seemed to limit itself to the annihilation of those visions on which my interest in science [and art] was chiefly founded. I was required to exchange chimeras of boundless grandeur for realities of little worth" (Shelley, 1963 p50). Like Ann Game (1991) I found, "contemporary sociology as a form of writing particularly closed, and at its worst, authoritarian in form of address" (p18).

Nevertheless, I shared Frankenstein's, "almost supernatural enthusiasm" for intense study and while attending to my new lessons, I continued to seek out those writers that would encourage a growing interest and disdain for parts of what I'm sure Frankenstein would consider another, "would-be science, which could never even step within the threshold of real knowledge" (Sheley, 1963 p45).

The distance between words and things

I was working in a discipline riddled with the anxiety that unless a rigid boundary between knowledge and fiction was maintained, social science texts would lose their truth content and philosophy would lapse into poetry (Barrett, 1999). It seemed that the very vividness of writing jeopardised the dull ideal of abstracted, uncontaminating researcher neutrality that was a requisite part of good social scientific practice. An insecure empiricist fetishization of the 'real' combined with a crude scientism[1] to produce a defence against all passion in the social sciences that led to, "a genre of stories and texts that have at least one thing in common-they are usually monstrously boring" (Rudberg, 1997 p94).

I learned that the content of research reports was not to be obscured by an obvious writing style that would 'get in the way'. So I practiced the textual art of separating knower from known, made futile attempts to abolish the distance between words and things and refined the techniques of report writing that perpetuated the fiction, "that research is reported, not written" (Barthes, 1986

p70). This attention to dullness manifested itself in my writing, which made such deadly reading as I too aspired to objective, unambiguous, precise, non-contextual and non-metaphorical language. Yet, as Laurel Richardson (1990) said and everyone knew, “even the 'plainest' scientific writing used literary devices to constitute value and convey meaning” (pp119-24). The idea that metaphor might be avoided in the social sciences was ludicrous. The whole idea of a social 'system', or 'structure' was itself metaphorical (see Derrida, 1978 p278).

There were of course those in the social sciences who were critical of the self-defeating desire to banish life from language. Some had long advocated a freer “sociological imagination” (Mills, 1959) while others were wilfully ‘turning to language’ (Burman and Parker, 1993; Wetherell, Taylor and Yates, 2001) and calling attention to the forms through which they produced and inhabited knowledge:

> The essays collected here … see culture as composed of seriously contested codes and representations; they assume that the poetic and the political are inseparable, that science is in, not above, historical and linguistic processes. They assume that academic and literary genres interpenetrate and that the writing of cultural descriptions is properly experimental and ethical (Clifford 1986).

I sought out this kind of sentiment but soon began to recognise what Debbie Oates (2001) later described, “that whilst such ideas have been widely accepted and (re)explored, most of the exploration is on the level of theory, an application of such ideas is less common.” This journal is an exception to the rule. To apply such ideas was to take risks with credibility.

The gendering of knowledge

I became increasingly perplexed by the art of the social scientist, a creature that seemed to me to be burdened with the task of separating the inseparable; arts from sciences, observation from action, mind from body. This in order to match the ambition of those philosophers who have been credited with the performance of miracles. M. Waldman, one of Frankenstein’s tutors, celebrated the achievements of such men, those who displaced the alchemists:

> They penetrate into the recesses of nature, and show how she works in her hiding places. They ascend into the heavens: they have discovered how the blood circulates, and the nature of the air we breathe. They have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world with its own shadows (Shelley, 1963 p51).

Such philosophers gained a great vantage-point when they rose out of their bodies and above the earth.[2] But what a strange fantasy that is, the possibility of

ascension into a heaven of pure mind! As Adriana Cavarero (1995) states, “[i]n effect the philosopher abandons the world of his own birth in order to establish his abode in pure thought…” (p38). What kind of life could there be in such deathly disembodiment?

The promise of power in the penetration of secrets filled me with an excitement made up of unequal parts repulsion and attraction. Adriana Cavarero (1995) cautioned me to remember that although Athena was Greek goddess of wisdom, the symbolic order of western philosophy of which Athena is part, constructs women as absent, ignorant/naïve or as driven female mentor or vessel whose purpose is to bring truth to ‘man’. So while women and their bodies may signify and contain knowledge, women are not credited with the capacity to know: “Thus we find a subtle and ambiguous symbolic game. It almost seems as though women (excluded from the realm of thought both in reality and because of the ‘unthinkability’ of their gender) become the sacrificial food for the journey towards the realm of philosophy that will exclude them” (p39). My desire to understand the feminized workings of nature’s body was tempered by a fear that my gaze into her living inside implied death, not only for her, but also for me. I aspired little towards the command of thunders or the mimicry of earthquakes. I remain to this day, however, filled with a great enthusiasm to celebrate the open secrets of life and a desire to mock the deathly, disembodied, invisible world with its living fleshy shadows.[3]

Seeking threads of connectedness

Mine is an uneasy and ferocious devotion to knowledge. My engagement comes laced with the desire to explode and re-build; a devotion to the pleasure and danger of resurrecting bodies of knowledge incarcerated by the "grave keepers of tradition" (Daly 1978 ppxiii-iv). I relished the possibility of, "opening the coffers/coffins in which 'knowledge' has been stored, re-stored, re-covered…seeking the threads of connectedness within artificially separated/segmented reality [and] starting to put the severed parts together" (Daly, 1978 ppxiii-iv). This was not in a naive assumption that it was possible to reveal or work a 'truer' alternative or more complete pattern of reality but with a desire to acknowledge and take pleasure in constructive processes that sought to cultivate knowledges and possibilities of difference. With Virginia Woolf (1976) I felt I might be able to:

> ...make it real by putting it into words. It is only by putting into words that I make it whole; this wholeness means that it has lost its power to hurt me; it gives me, perhaps because by doing so I take away the pain, a great delight to put the severed parts together (p72).

Written from a point of exclusion from masculinist constructions of the subject, I recognised Woolf's desire for 'wholeness' not as naïve holism but as an expression of the desire to articulate flourishing 'other' ways of being. I dreamed of constructing my own literary journey away from paralysing fragmentation and

deathly abstraction. I celebrated Hélène Cixous's (1981) bold assertion that "writing is precisely working (in) the in-between, inspecting the process of the same and of the other without which nothing can live, undoing the work of death " (p254). I did not want to be confined to the artificial limitations of dichotomous thinking. Why be confined to 'either/or' when one could have the promise of 'both, and…'? From Woolf, Cixous and Morrison (1993) and from my own initial studies (Madden 1995), I began to see writing as a potentially generative process: "word-work is sublime, she thinks, because it is generative; it makes meaning that secures our difference..." (Morrison, 1993 p24).

Re-visioning

One day, "partly from curiosity, and partly from idleness" (Shelley, 1963 p50), Frankenstein found his way into M. Waldman's lessons while I found myself in Prof. Stanley's Women's Studies. There, under the very noses of great grave keepers, I witnessed others emerging from encryption in the libraries that had trapped them in basket weaving and folklore boxes.[4] Once out, they engaged in vigorous eating and mental training in order to face the contortions ahead, preparing to leap "over the walls that separate the halls in which academics have incarcerated the 'bodies of knowledge'" (Daly, 1978 p xii-iv). Here at last I found an interdisciplinary place where I was encouraged to "open the coffers/coffins in which 'knowledge' had been stored, re-stored and re-covered," to seek out the "threads of connectedness within artificially separated/segmented reality", and to

strive “to put the severed parts together” (Daly, 1978 p xii-iv). Professor Stanley termed this the de/construction of research knowledge.

It was here that I re-learned what I already knew but always “disremembered” (Morrison, 1987 p274), that she must not only know the works of the Masters; she must go much further. She must heed the warnings of Audre Lorde, Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Smith that the apparatuses of knowing are also apparatuses of ruling (Smith 1990). Together with Audre Lorde (1984) we asked, “[w]hat does it mean when the tools of racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy? It means that only the most narrow perimeters of change are possible and allowable” (pp110-113). We recognised that the “master’s tools” could not be used unchanged to remake “the house”, the academic institution. Instead, they had to be themselves dismantled. We asked Virginia Woolf’s (1998b p198) question of ourselves as Outsiders, “Shall I ask them to rebuild the college on the old lines? Or shall I ask them to rebuild it, but differently? Or shall I ask them to buy rags and petrol and Bryant and May’s matches and burn the college to the ground?” With Mary Daly and Virginia Woolf, we took a common ‘vow of derision’ and pledged ourselves to see through the gravekeepers and make them transparent to other Voyagers as well (Daly, 1978 xiv).

I learned much as I listened to Stanley (1990, 1992, 1993): “Such were the professor’s words.... As [s]he went on, I felt as if my soul were grappling with a palpable enemy; one by one the various keys were touched which formed the

mechanism of my being" (p51). As time progressed I re-visioned and re-remembered my path as one inevitably involving meeting and merging with Mary Shelley's "hideous progeny:" (Shelley, 1963 p18)

> [C]hord after chord was sounded, and soon my mind was filled with one thought, one conception, one purpose. So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein - more, far more, will I achieve: treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation..." (Shelley, 1963 p51).

I learned from Adrienne Rich (1975) that re-visioning involved:

> [T]he act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction – [it] is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves. And this drive to self-knowledge, for women, is more than a search for identity: it is part of her refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society.

I determined that in this intertextualising process of re-visioning I would not re-construct a simple narrative of progress. A Bildungsroman wasn't the type of example I wanted to make of myself. Although it could chart the life of a woman

or a man, I found it an ill-fitting form that presumed a masculine protagonist. As Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975 pp12-13) states:

> The rise of the word Bildung calls …on the ancient mystical tradition, according to which man carries in his soul the image of God after whom he is fashioned and must cultivate it in himself…It is the universal nature of human Bildung to constitute itself as a universal intellectual being…Hence Bildung, as being raised to the universal, is a task for man. It requires the sacrifice of particularity for the sake of the universal.

I was uneasy about sacrificing particularity for the sake of a universal and had no intention of reflecting god sized images of intellectual 'man' back to him. [5] I decided I would actively resist reproducing the mechanisms for his inflation in my story and not be confined to the "acceptable/unexceptional circular reasonings of academics that are mere caricatures of motion" (Daly 1978 p23). I determined that mine was to be a metaphorical Otherworld Journey; a journey of becoming that would take me a long way away from fixed forms and static 'ologies.' [6] The journey I embarked on would lead me to examine the power dichotomy 'knower' and 'known', re-acknowledge the significance of 'high' and 'low' cultural regimes of representation and confirm that social science discourses are productive rather than merely reflective of identities (Madden 2001).

First I had to ready myself. By day I busied myself gathering and re-assembling. I chose a beautifully crafted portable workbasket and filled it with all that had inspired me to date, regardless of its disciplinary acceptability. This basket of sources and resources served as a matrix for my re-assembly. It contained food, water, ink, mirrors, music, memories, curves, colours, yarn and other tools and ingredients of domestic literary alchemy. In amongst these I placed selected works begun by physicians, lexicographers and madmen including Dr. Peter Mark Roget, Dr. James Murray and Dr. W. C. Minor (see Winchester 1999). I had been warned that the grave keepers of tradition would continue to bar my way unless I was equipped with the correct passwords. It was imperative that I gather words, keep adding to my studies and begin to write myself; for the transgressive parts of me "easily perceived that, although I eagerly longed to discover myself to the[m]…, I ought not to make the attempt until I had first become master of their language" (Shelley, 1963 p116).

I called on Theuth, the Egyptian god of writing and Maat, the Egyptian goddess of truth to guide my journey and bless my basket of tricks and then set about re-learning the science of letters and the art of language as if I were a stranger to it, "and this opened before me a wide field for wonder and delight" (Shelley, 1963 p121). Theuth fancied himself god/doctor/pharmacist/magician:

> [T]his messenger-god is truly a god of the absolute passage between opposites…he is precisely the god of nonidentity… The god of writing…He

> cannot be assigned a fixed spot in the play of differences. Sly, slippery and masked, an intriguer and a card…a floating signifier, a wild card, one who puts play into play…Every act of his is marked by this unstable ambivalence. This god of calculation, arithmetic and rational science also presides over the occult sciences, astrology and alchemy. He is the god of magic formulas that calm the sea, of secret accounts, of hidden texts (Derrida 1981 p93).

Maat and I wondered how fixed and assigned this god's 'he' identity could be.

Despite or perhaps because of our slipperiness, Theuth and Maat helped me to adopt strange forms and experience the power of experimental articulation. I discovered the joy and impertinence of what Michael Shapiro (2001) terms "insurrectional textuality." I began to pursue a writing practice different from the familiar explicitly argumentative form. One that I hoped might prove, "resistant to familiar modes of representation, one that is self- reflective enough to show how meaning and writing practices are radically entangled in general or one that tends to denaturalise familiar realities by employing impertinent grammars and figurations" (p320).

My insurrection meant I was no longer willing to participate in and perpetuate a fiction of selective knowledge production. This would have limited me to the ludicrous idea that my 'knowing' was only informed by the appropriate canon and

not by film, TV, gossip, action, friends, an inner-city Catholic upbringing, a brother who is a fan of science fiction and horror, and so on. As Shapiro (2001) says, "[i]nsofar as 'social reality' emerges in various writing genres, investigations of how the world is apprehended require inquiries into various pre-texts of apprehension, for the meaning and value imposed on the world is structured not by one's immediate consciousness but by the various reality making scripts one inherits or acquires from one's surrounding cultural/linguistic condition" (Shapiro, 2001 p318).

I began to focus on the "pre-texts of apprehension" that produced assumptions about contemporary homelessness and poverty. Re-conceiving myself in this way brought its pleasures and many sleepless nights as I wrestled with the return of the repressed:

> My internal being was in a state of insurrection and turmoil; I felt that order would thence arise, but I had no power to produce it. By degrees after the morning's dawn, sleep came. I awoke, and my yesternight's thoughts were as a dream. There only remained a resolution to return to my ancient studies, and to devote myself to a science for which I believed myself to possess a natural talent (Shelley, 1963 pp51-2).

I had to do much in order to pay heed to previously suppressed or discredited knowledges and to make sense of the re-emerging and re-membered science[7] of

the ‘female’ monster. A concern for the dissected and re-assembled led me to biology. I found much of interest in its stories of the quick and the dead; “as a way of knowing the world it is kin to Romantic literature with its discourse about Organic form and function” (Haraway, 1992a p5). As M. Waldman told Frankenstein

> If your wish is to become really a man of science, and not merely a petty experimentalist, I should advise you to apply to every branch of natural philosophy, including mathematics (Shelley, 1963 pp52-3).

Good advice. Nor should the artful woman of science neglect alchemy, despite the grave keepers’ presentation of it as a rather dated and unsuccessful wizards’ game. I learned much about magical compositional processes and the potential benefits of putting the unlikely into combination from metaphorical adventures in alchemy. Waldman acknowledged the gifts left to the modern masters of knowledge by the alchemical fathers: “[They] had left to us, as an easier task, to give new names, and arrange in connected classifications the facts which they in a great degree had been the instruments of bringing to light.” However, he also told Frankenstein that, “the labours of men of genius, however erroneously directed, scarcely ever fail in ultimately turning to the solid advantage of mankind” (Shelley, 1963 p52). But this is not true. The twentieth century made it plain, if it wasn’t before, that there is no such thing as innocent knowledge. As Frankenstein found out, the quest for knowledge, even on the basis of good

intentions, is in itself absolutely no guarantor against horror. Walter Benjamin knew that, "[t]here is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (in Shohat and Stam, 1994 p88).

The quest for gold

Although Waldman's "modern masters" of science claimed to "promise very little, they know that metals cannot be transmuted, and that the elixir of life is a chimera" (Shelley, 1963 p51), they nevertheless seemed to share Victor Frankenstein's huge ambitions. For all their disavowal of the alchemical quest for gold, at the root of much of their work lay the desire to turn base material into products of permanence, purity and value. This was evident in their wish to transcend their own bodies and transform the bodies of others into tradable knowledge: "Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange" (Lyotard, 1992 p4). A capitalist economy in pursuit of earthly wealth and deathly immortality commodifies bodily matter while rendering it worthless.

Virginia Woolf helped me to face up to what I might become in a barbarous economy where greed and knowledge overlap:

> …[T]hey had money and power, but only at the cost of harbouring in their breasts an eagle, a vulture, forever tearing the liver out and plucking at the lungs - the instinct for possession, the rage for acquisition which drives

them to desire other people's fields and goods perpetually… (Woolf, 1998a p49-50).

Woolf warned me that it was not possible to compete with the Promethean Masters on their own terms. They would tempt me. They could bully me. They might deprive me of my senses. They might assimilate me. They could destroy me. She reminded me that it "is unpleasant…to be locked out [but] …it is worse perhaps to be locked in" (Woolf, 1998a p31).

Mary Daly (1978) has long let it be known that the grave keepers are "the demonic forces of [racist capitalist] patriarchy which assume ghostly forms (that is, are difficult to perceive) and function as noxious gases" (p29). She promises us that with the power to name ourselves we are able to confront the demons blocking our way at each passage on the journey. When they challenge us for passwords we expose them by shouting their names; "they – in effect - drop dead. To put it another way, the gases drop down (condense) into a merely messy puddle" (pp29-30). What promise! And if only! Even now after the embarrassing revelations of the 'credit crunch' the demons have the magic to resurrect themselves.

Feminist fabulation

We who have been transformed into monstrous others through discourses of class, patriarchy, racialisation, disablement, 'perverse' sexuality and so on also

find ourselves with a monstrous power to disrupt such categories. Difference originates in process, not mere fact and transgressors reveal the fact that, "'fact' is subject to constant reconstruction and chance" (Cohen, 1996 p14). Take it from the now Victor/ious, Monstrous I that bodies and being are always at stake in the pursuit of knowledge. We have learned much about the pleasures and dangers of transforming the word and the image into flesh (and vice versa). Mary Daly (1987) helped me detect the pattern behind the deceptive patterns of Phallocracy. Instead of lamenting my complicity in its reproduction I came to realise that I had powers to haunt and inhabit its structures (see Derrida 1976 p24).

There remains so much still to learn about the technologies of performative transformation required for adventures in "feminist fabulation" (Barr 1992):[8] "[I]n order to re-member our dis-spelling powers, Hags must move deeper into the Background of language/grammar" (Daly, 1978 p328). The Academy, like Alchemy became much more interesting and promising in the hands of word witches. I did not want to, "give new names, and arrange in connected classifications" the fact of the fore-fathers. That is merely shuffling sameness and I wanted difference. It takes great vigilance to avoid becoming more of the same, those who, "rearranged lies and called it truth, seeing in the new pattern of an old idea the Revelation and the Word" (Morrison, 1990 p163).

Mary Daly advocated Gyn/Ecology as a means of weaving past the dead past and the dry places. The 'female' monster and Other Voyagers tempted me with

the promise of moving beyond the restricting binaries of Western metaphysics. All Voyagers were wise to the fact that trying to free up the language and open up spaces of difference would make us subject to ridicule: “[t]o give a new language to these other spaces is a project filled with both promise and fear... If philosophy is truly to question those spaces, it must move away from all that has defined them, held them in place: Man, the Subject, History, Meaning” (Jardine 1985 p73).

The point of such monstrosity is to be read; it has etymological roots in ‘monstrum’ – ‘that which reveals’ and ‘that which warns’ (Foucault 1967 pp68-70). Transgressive forms do not fit easily into the classificatory ‘order of things’ (Foucault 1970). Our intertextual ‘promise’ lies in our refusal of easy categorisation (Haraway 1992b). A monstrous existence is a state of ontological liminality, policing the borders of the possible (Haraway 1992b; Halberstam 1995; Braidotti 1996; Shildrick 1997). Such late modern monsters do not threaten in fairy tale manner, we are not confined to forests and haunted houses; instead our existence is an unsettling every day promise of deconstructiveness (Cohen 1996).

Be warned, there is no ease in a monstrous existence and no reward for difference. There is however, pleasure if not profit to be gained from putting unlikely things into combination, pointing out “thetic and phallic fallacies” (Hodge 1997), journeying “beyond methadolatory” (Daly 1986 pp11-12) and beginning to

“make a dirty difference” (Haraway 1997). This is an assertion of power that flies in the face of the unfashionableness of feminism. Voyagers need allies. I am grateful to Shelley and Stanley for offering me their help:

> Then [s]he took me into his laboratory, and explained to me the uses of his various machines; instructing me as to what I ought to procure, and promising me the use of his own when I should have advanced far enough in the science (not) to derange their mechanism. [S]He also gave me the list of books which I had requested; and I took my leave.
> Thus ended a day memorable to me: it decided my future destiny (Shelley, 1963 p53).

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[1] Susan Bordo (1986), Zygmunt Bauman (1988), Jurgen Habermas (1972; 1984) have all produced valuable critiques of what they term scientism in the social sciences. Zygmunt Bauman (1988) suggests that sociology's claim to scientific status on a par with natural science has been an attempt to claim scientific status as a provider of facts which "help rulers rule," (pp217-235). Celia Kitzinger (1987) argues that a "credibility problem" in the social sciences "leads to the incorporation into psychological and sociological accounts of comparatively more overt and conscientious efforts to depict themselves as 'truly scientific,'"(p5). She goes on to describe five ways in which social science researchers in the field of homosexuality have attempted to attach the image of science and therefore 'valid knowledge' to their own research:

1. The 'up the mountain' saga that laments the poor quality of previous research and which, in the name of progress, requires the need for this and future research intervention
2. The mythologizing of expertise which "credits scientists with access to knowledge denied to ordinary mortals"

3. Faith in the superior efficacy of the scientific method which involves the castigation of other research on the grounds that it fails to live up to the norms of ideal scientific practice
4. The use and denial of textual persuasion and literary effects including, the use of obscure prose to emphasise expertise and passive sentences to contribute to the aura of objectivity
5. Visual metaphor to produce the effect of "making visible the invisible, exposing the hidden and concealed, shedding light on those dark corners that have been shrouded in ignorance, and exposing reality for all to see" (pp1-31).

[2] As Judith Butler (1987) argues, "[b]y defining woman as 'Other', men are able through the shortcut of definition to dispose of their bodies, to make themselves other than their bodies - a symbol potentially of human decay and transience, of limitation generally...From this belief that the body is Other, it is not a far leap to the conclusion that others are their bodies, while the masculine 'I' is the [pure] noncorporeal soul" (p133).

[3] In Adriana Cavarero's reading of Parmenides' pursuit of Truth, Paremenides writes himself an encounter with a "driven female mentor." A goddess informs him that the world, inhabited by appearances, should be discarded as false and unreliable. The world of appearance and existence is "even described as the deceptive shadow of nothingness" (p37). Cavarero sees this as "the most radical formulation of the schism between abstract thought and the direct experiences of the world that has been inherited by philosophical tradition…thought decides that it can stand on its own, carving out an expanse of mobile eternity that is then presented as the standard of higher truth" (p37). If the realm of Truth and philosophy is disembodied 'nothingness', I am perhaps one of its earthbound embodied "shadows"?

[4] Mary Daly (1978) notes "continuing efforts … to reduce women's studies to 'basket weaving' through the usual devices of tokenism, legal intimidation…and in sanctioning psychic harassment of women who are 'too extreme'" (p425 note 8). The Dewey decimal system has space for women's knowledge as 'old wives' tales' under 'folklore.'

[5] "Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice his natural size" (Virginia Woolf 1998a p45).

[6] My use of Mary Daly's "Otherworld journey" is a metaphorical journey into the embodied world of 'otherness' that I always already inhabit and not I hope as Beverly Wildung Harrison (1985) fears, part of a "growing but morally dubious fascination with forms of world–denying spirituality in our culture" (p6).

[7] The word science can be traced to its Latin root in the words, scire - to know, and scientia – knowledge, The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles. The definition of science is not only as a branch of knowledge distinct from the arts, but it extends to the state or fact of knowing.

[8] Feminist fabulation is a term used by Marleen S. Barr (1992). Barr considers such fabulation "one example of what Haraway calls the 'promising monsters who help redefine the pleasures and politics of embodiment and feminist writing' (Haraway,1985 p98)" (ppxvii and 46).