

**THE SIGNIFICANCES OF BODILY DISSOCIATION IN THE CONTEXT OF
CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH**

by

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The Significances of Bodily Dissociation in the Context
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ABSTRACT

This thesis critically examines the culturally informed ways in which childhood sexual abuse impacted the lives of three women. I made contact with these women through informal calls for research participation; their oral life history accounts were obtained by me through a series of extended interviews. Women's testimonies form the nucleus for this project, and their own feedback to the research process and to my explication serves as the conclusion to this thesis.

This paper is concerned to develop a critical anthropological analysis which is attentive to historical and cultural significances which impinge on felt distress, and which is critically attuned to the phenomenological character of sexual exploitation.

The interviewed women variously testify to a series of effects of sexual abuse. These include a lack of sense of identity, social anxiety and a sense of mystification concerning the negotiation of social relationships, lack of identification with culturally normative gender habits and practices, dissonance between emotion and cognition, a sense of boundlessness, and in general, a felt lack of conditions of intelligibility and referentiality in their lives.

Women also attest to a pervasive experience of bodily dissociation, to a lack of felt connections to their own body, which is relatively enduring over time. Explication of this sense of bodily dissociation is the focus of this thesis. I argue for the crucial importance of the *lived body*, for the significances of a connected mind/body complex through which we can continuously engage with, and come to apprehend, our life-worlds. I argue that sexual abuse initiated a pervasive disruption of women's embodiment, such that their integrative capacities for organizing lived experience were pervasively thwarted. This speaks to a profound abuse of power, in that sexual abuse may come to disrupt a meaningful sense of connection to self and commune-ity.

I also discuss healing processes, in the context of one woman's coming to embodiment, and in relation to the therapeutic metaphor of boundaries. I suggest that healing may be less an issue

of cognitive understanding than an issue of *use*, of acquiring a fully mindful-bodily experience of renewed practical and social efficacy.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my children Leander, Ryan, and Laura, in hopes that their ongoing lived experience will always be touched by gestures of love and reciprocity.

QUOTATION

The senses do indeed confuse, ambiguate and disseminate cognitively unified meaning; but they also serve to preserve, and to recollect, ancient meanings otherwise lost: meanings which can be *protected* only in a body not subject to reflection, and *retrieved* only in a precognitive way, 'prior to cognition properly so-called' - retrieved, in their amplitude of sense, only in, and only as, a bodily felt gesture, or a bodily felt posture, or a bodily felt movement. There are deep meanings hermeneutically concealed within the liturgical texts: meanings which I need to *hear with my ears*, in order to understand, and meanings which I need to *behold with my eyes*, if I would comprehend their truth. The Cartesian *Cogito* needs a *tongue* to taste the sweetness of truthful speech, as it needs *hands* to hand down the teachings of tradition, and needs *hands* to give alms to the poor and the hungry...And as we listen to the words we sing, as we consecrate our ears and our mouth to the enchanting spirit whose sounds we echo; as even the frame of our entire body yields itself up to the rhythmic measures and the rising and falling intonations, we gradually recreate within ourselves an intimate, unshakable, non-objectifiable *understanding* of the body as knowledge: the sacred language is woven, is insinuated, into the very fibers and bones of the body. (italics in original)

David Michael Levin

The Body's Recollection of Being
(pages 214, 215)

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THREE WOMEN'S TESTIMONIES

I acknowledge that it's been a major dominant factor that impacted me through my entire life. And I find it frustrating to be 38 years old and still struggling with some really basic, like, living skills. You know, that I can reference back to not having learned at that time. Because of being in what I would call survivor mode. It's just that it's very hard to sort it out, because for- I'm 38, and for 15, 16 years of my life, sexual abuse was like a major, major component of it. So that's half my lifetime- like whether I'm in it or out of it, that it still has dominated most things. It's like I've described it as being *full of ghosts* or something, you know, that it's not something that you can grab onto or whatever. Like to me, that's the incredible ripoff of sexual abuse, is that, you know, it seems to take up so much space in people's lives.

“Vanja”

An ethical response to another's suffering begins when we enter their world in order to experience their pain.

Bakhtin¹

Introduction

This thesis critically examines the culturally informed ways in which adult-child sexualized behaviours shaped and impacted the lives of three women who identify themselves as survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Following a brief introduction, this first chapter offers selections of these three women's oral life history accounts which were obtained through extended interviews with myself.² As Smith (1990) argues, feminist research practice requires attention to women's active constructions and interpretations of their social processes and relations. In other words, speaking *from experience* here refers not to some overarching or foundational knowledge, but refers to an ongoing activity through which we try to critically engage the past, present and future as living knowledges. In a sense, speaking from experience is a “trafficking in possibilities”, to be understood less as rhetorical strategies than as activity which stems out of a deeply felt *mattering* of one's life-world.³

Due to the inherent *mattering* of life stories, I am suggesting that instead of merely viewing these selections as *autobiographical* stories, they may instead be seen as *testifying* activities, as the

notion of testifying connotes both the notion of story and the concept of critical consciousness (see Henderson, 1988). Testifying, thus understood, is not concerned primarily, or only, with documenting individual truths, but can be seen as critical commentary on ideologies and practices. Put differently, testifying activities are better understood not with the goal to 'pin down the truth' of individual subjects, but to render visible implicit cultural imperatives and contradictions. Relatedly, the "I-witnessing" which is undertaken by both myself as researcher and perhaps differently by the readers of this thesis, is arguably a valuable undertaking, as "seeing, listening, touching, recording can be... acts of fraternity and sisterhood, acts of solidarity. Above all, they are the work of *recognition*. Not to look, not to touch, not to record, can be the hostile act, the act of indifference and of turning away" (italics added) (Scheper-Hughes, 1992, 28). Creating a "politics of remembrance", however, involves more than mapping ideological inscriptions onto individual subjectivities, but requires analysts to examine how ideologies are actually *felt*, and how they register meaning in intersubjective contexts (Giroux, 1992).⁴

Similarly, in his book *Body and Emotion: the Aesthetics of Illness and Healing in the Nepal Himalayas*, Desjarlais (1992) declares that it is mistaken to argue that personal *experience* should not be considered because it cannot be known for sure to be 'true'. Instead, he argues that ethnographers need to attend to the aesthetics of experience, to the "surface imagery, felt qualities, and embodied values intrinsic to moments of illness and healing" (Desjarlais, 1992, 71). The following selections locate the women in their phenomenological childhood worlds as they were lived in the context of sexually exploitative relations.

Kamsler (1990, 10), offers the following definition of childhood sexual exploitation.

Child sexual assault is a sexual act imposed on a young person or child by another person... The ability to engage a child in a sexual relationship is based on the all-powerful and dominant position of the adult (or older adolescent) offender, which is in sharp contrast to the child's age, dependency, and powerlessness. Authority and power enable the perpetrator to coerce the child into sexual compliance.

Kamsler further defines incest as “any sexual act imposed on a young person or child by another person taking advantage of his [or her] position of power and trust within the family. ‘Family’ can mean natural parents, step-parents, grandfathers, uncles, brothers and so on” (Kamsler, 1990, 10, 11). According to Burstow (1992) sexual abuse refers to *any* sexual activity between adults and children, whether actively involving sexual contact or not, arguing that this behaviour is abusive because children’s dependency on adults precludes the real possibility of any sexualized behaviour being fully consensual. As MacLeod and Saraga (1988) outline, three elements important to definitions of child sexual abuse are betrayal of trust and responsibility, abuse of power, and the inability of children to freely offer consent. They posit that questions concerning age, blood relationship or taboos are red herrings which obscure the exploitation of children’s ignorance, trust and/or obedience through abuse of power.

The experience of adult-child sexualized activity as exploitative is culturally overdetermined in a variety of complex and irreducible ways. Desjarlais (1992, 250) states that “without considering, if only conjecturally, the effects of touch or image on human sentience”, we would be at a loss to understand distress and healing. When touch and sexual behaviour is imposed and experienced as inexplicable, unwanted and unavoidable, meaning and interpretation may be rendered inchoate and/or fixed, invoking distress that may be variably enduring over time (Herman, 1992). Because victimization may be continuous and coincidental with other conditions of oppression, its effects may similarly be felt as chronic and enduring. I would also emphasize that experiences of distress must be viewed as a dynamic interaction between the victimized individuals and the surrounding cultural environment, and “not only as a relatively static, circumscribable entity to be located and addressed within the individual psychology of those affected” (Summerfield, 1995, 22).

To understand the following accounts, therefore, it is important to note that the imposition of sexualized activity between adult and child is always already a culturally mediated behaviour, and is

thus governed by values, meanings and understandings which are sedimented in the wider web of cultural practices and ideologies. As Kleber, Gersons and Figley (1995, 1) argue, trauma and distress go beyond the individual, whose interpretation is always already shaped by the cultural environ, and whose distress is enacted “through specific situations in specific societies” In the “western” and North American context, the experience of sexual exploitation is likely to be implicitly informed by dominant ideologies related to the nuclear family, and to normative beliefs connected to heterosexuality, both of which are interpenetrated in complex ways (Fineman, 1995). Hegemonic cultural notions of *familialism*, for example, have historically entailed a series of entrenched norms and values related to socially appropriate sexual desires, the development of autonomy, the demarcation of personal and public worlds, and to gendered identities (Luxton, 1987). Within this context, moreover, it is culturally believed that gender, sex roles and sexual identity develop along heterosexual lines, or that there is a confluence between sexual identity, sexual orientation, and gender identity (Burch, 1993, 26). The *meaning* of sexual exploitation for individual women, therefore, is not *only* a personal one, but an *intersubjective* one, as sexuality, gender and identity are relational concepts which are culturally instantiated and invigorated *between* individuals (Marshall, 1994).

In this view, gender (or the culturally elaborated practices, behaviours and attributes which are believed to accord with ‘biological’ or bodily sex distinctions) is not merely a set of behaviours and attributes, but a cultural “marker of power, a maker of subjects, an axis of subordination” in the context of wider social *relations* (Brown, 1995, 40). Gender relations and identities, moreover, are actively constructed in *specific* social, historical and personal circumstances, becoming deeply constitutive of one’s self-concept and sense of self in relation to others (Goffman, 1987). Gender relations thus provide the mode of interpretation through which individuals develop a subjective and social identity (Marshall, 1994), and are constituted through engagement in structured social practices

around sex and identity (Connell, 1987). This (historically contingent) cultural matrix of socializing norms and practices is embedded in a wider web of structured relations of *power and inequality*.

Sexuality and sexual differences have thus historically served to legitimate the organization of many different forms of social inequalities, and in such ways so that sexual difference and gender is implicated in the concept and construction of power itself (Moore, 1994). There are overdetermined reasons, therefore, to believe that sexual conduct between adults and dependent children will result in distress. Moreover, according to Kaschak (1992, 117), a child's sense of their 'maleness' and 'femaleness' is acquired in the context of *specific* relationships, particularly those of significant adults. She adds that

children learn how to be females or males in a particular society with its particular attributes, expectations, and meanings about the myriad of human characteristics that become [hierarchically] organized according to the dualistic gender system.

It *matters*, therefore, under which conditions and through which relationships sexuality is enacted. Following Bakhtin (1981, 293), all words and actions are "populated by intentions", are charged with social and culturally overdetermined significances which both consciously and unconsciously shape our felt experience of relations and practices. As these women's accounts will show, sexual exploitation acted as a kind of sedimentation, a node of resonance with wider patterns of social inequality, as well as with ongoing conditions of oppression and burden within their own more narrowly experienced personal worlds.

According to Trawick (1990), it is in childhood that the material for social strategies, that one's *habitus* 'enters the body'.⁵ The construction of a stable sense of self as a child includes a need for *recognition*, not in the form of a 'blind alterity' (Lash, 1996), but requiring a form of intersubjectivity that is mutual and affirming. The expectation for this mutuality to exist in the family is a powerful image, as kinship is culturally believed to serve as the major and originary place of 'deep seated longings' and affective affiliations (Trawick, 1990). This cultural framework of values

inevitably shapes the way interpersonal relationships within families are perceived and punctuated. As Kleinman notes, families “hold the world to be a certain way as an article of fundamental faith in local reality, not as a debatable position in a self-conscious philosophical reflection” (Kleinman, 1995, 54). As he goes on to say, the infrapolitics of family life and the interpersonal engagements and negotiations which take place there can properly be regarded as expressing a powerfully felt, and constituent local moral order.

Since the meaning of life events circle around ‘particular moments’ of community and class knowledges (Hitchcock, 1993), also embedded in each interpersonal acts are evaluations derivative of race, class and ethnicity belongings (Kaschak, 1992). According to Kleinman (1995, 13) stories of distress insist on the “broadest linkage between the political, the moral and the bodily” for comprehension of these stories as felt sufferings, and as social dilemmas. As the following testimonial accounts show, individual life histories are simultaneously personally felt and culturally informed trajectories, both existential and collective registers of the ways in which fields of meanings settle into and constitute lived social life.

Women’s testimony of childhood sexual abuse

“Vanja”, “Trisha” and “Peggy” are Causcasian women in their thirties and forties who currently hold professional jobs in British Columbia, Canada and who live with lesbian partners. Their lives are characterized by some very remarkable resemblances as well as profound differences. All three women grew up in families marked by differing degrees of chaos, unpredictability and disturbance, often unsupported emotionally or physically by their caregivers. Vanja and Trisha additionally grew up in working class conditions, with poverty interpellating them into a strong “*survivor mode*” orientation to their world. All three women describe therapy as having altered their lives in fundamental ways, although their view of having achieved a sense of stability or psychological health varies considerably between them. Alcohol misuse, poverty, verbal and physical abuses, suicide

and death of parents, abandonment by parent, and parental disturbances such as manic depression variously shaped the background conditions of these women's childhood lives, so that sexual exploitation must be seen as part of a series of *ramifying* conditions which impacted these women's sense of self and which co-shaped the meaning given to the sexually exploitative behaviours.

Vanja

Vanja grew up in British Columbia, in a working class family of five children, with parents who were both prone to 'alcoholic binges'. By the time she was 11, her father had died and about a year later, her mother committed suicide, followed shortly after by her own suicide attempt. Vanja and her siblings were split up, and with the disintegration of the family, Vanja spent much of her teenage years in and out of various institutional settings, acquiring her education in a residential facility. This is what she has to say.

So my father was a fairly strict disciplinarian and also was fairly abusive, you know, in terms of the family setting. And that varied, you know, both my parents were periodic binge drinkers and that would affect the level of violence that would happen in the house... My brother's experience was that he, you know, grew up being beaten in a fairly systematic, vicious way. You know, my dad would hit him with firewood- with anything that was at hand. So there was a constant dynamic between them that, you know, affected the whole family and affected the relationship between myself and my older brother, and myself and my mom, because my mom was, my dad was very paternal with me, you know, I was never hit... That set up a very odd family dynamic... And I think at the time, because of what the family dynamic was like, we were all so much into our *individual survivorship*... I think that if you live in that kind of climate of violence that- I wasn't aware there was much different about our family than other families. There was never any other kinds of family members around to kind of reflect on, you know, or see- like to compare what their relationship was like, to, like, we literally had no other aunts, uncles, anything like that, and as kids we were never exposed to any sorts of rituals, you know, like weddings, funeral, birthdays, anything that, you know, any kinds of things that kind of build your social repertoire when you're a kid. And I think part of that was poverty and part of that was the extreme isolation that my parents lived in. So my experience of family has been kind of odd, because I had some family at the very beginning but mostly I've grown up in various institutional settings. Like, I essentially gave up on the idea of family when I was fairly young.

Vanja describes her self-perceived role as 'kin-keeper' in the family.

Because, by virtue of being a woman, you know, I sort of for a while became *kin-keeper*. I had a huge amount of household responsibility- like at a very early age. Like it was the flip side of being patronized by my dad for being a girl, was that my mom had a lot of expectations

of me being the only girl, so I had a huge amount of responsibility for my younger brother, you know, did a lot of household stuff, cooking, cleaning. [And it] seemed to me, I don't know if it was directly communicated to me or not, but that [I was expected] to move in and pick up the slack. And that became an area of huge resentment between me and my mom in the last year that she was alive, because, I mean, I was 11 and wanting to go out and that kind of thing, and she was drinking and leaving the house for periods of time.

She further testifies to sexual exploitation by several adult men, starting with a neighborhood single, older male whose home originally served as a haven from the chaos of her own family home.

And so, he would leave a key under his mat and he would provide alcohol and drugs and basically his house was a place for kids to hang out. And so, I was probably the youngest at the time I was sort of indoctrinated into the group. But his place was a hang out. And he was, like most offenders, pretty predatory and I mean, I didn't realize until later that he had fairly systematically picked out a couple of kids who came to his house who he became a sexual offender of. And other kids he left alone. And now I can see how he made his choices, you know... So, I mean, the whole sexual abuse stuff started with, you know, his idea of this being a significant relationship, of this being something that was meant to be and that, [he'd say things like] 'even when you were a little girl I admired you from afar'.

Vanja goes on to describe how she was subsequently exploited sexually by her mother's boyfriend, who moved into their home for a period following her father's death.

So, [this situation was even more bizarre as here was] this person who was sleeping with my mother and attempting to sleep with me, that somehow this psychological dynamic was way more overwhelming to me than going to some place that was you know, ostensibly more safe, where you'd also be sexually offended but there wouldn't be this dynamic in it. It now makes perfect sense to me that that would be. It was a place of *no choices*.

According to Vanja, the longstanding disruption of her family initiated an overwhelmingly confusing and paradoxical dependency on her primary abuser, particularly as her life later fell apart and became characterized by repeated institutionalizations for 'psychiatric disturbances'.

I lived in a - what people would describe as probably a chronically traumatic situation, even before I was sexually abused. You know, in my family there was never any-there didn't seem to be any social aspirations- it was as if all the energy of the family went into, not even maintaining the family unit but somehow into just surviving in this very kind of fractured way. Like the total degree of instability and the fact that nothing was secure and that what was considered safe was like, it was really specious. It wasn't safe. It was only safe when contrasted with the fact that there was nothing else.

When I was an inpatient in the psychiatric ward in the hospital, he used to come and say that he was my grandfather and sign me out of the hospital and sexually offend me and bring me back to hospital. It was like it was an established [routine]. I mean, I essentially remained

fairly dependent on him. In a way that was increasingly repugnant to me as I got older, but I really couldn't figure out how to break the relationship.

For all her teenage years, Vanja, in fact, lived with the perception that perhaps she was a prostitute, due to her poverty-connected dependency on her abuser. It wasn't until in her mid-twenties that a health professional reframed her situation as sexual exploitation. Up to that time, she implicitly had carried with her the definition assigned to her behaviour by her abuser.

I had no sense at the time of how sort of skilled my offender was and how predatory he was, and I sort of had the ongoing sense that I put myself in that situation, you know, particularly in terms of spending large amounts of time at my offender's house because it was preferable to being at my house. And that the sexual abuse was inevitable, but it was just accepted because this was the pay off for having this environment. And I couldn't go any farther in my thinking, like, you know, [children shouldn't have] to trade off sexual favors in order to have a safe environment, but that's what I knew and was familiar with.

And I think, you know, at the time, that as it started occurring, there was an instantaneous sense of guilt. You know, because of the clandestine nature of it, because of the association of money, with the sexual abuse, you know, I wasn't clear myself, you know, I was 11, whether I was simply prostituting and exchanging sexual favors for money. I mean, money was a big hook. You know, in terms of coming from a background of extreme poverty.

[when it was reframed as exploitative, I was] shocked, because that was the other thing- was that I knew that I was smart and I had survived by my wits, so I was absolutely blown away that I hadn't been able to figure this out- and for somebody who has lived by intellectualizing, that's very frustrating.

Vanja goes on to talk about the perceived inevitability of exploitation, which she felt helpless to avoid.

There didn't seem to be any expectation in my family of like what you might want to do yourself. It was, what you were told to do. And should you choose to react to that, then you might expect a beating. There was an expected allegiance to the family unit, and mostly because it was beaten into you. Basically I was nothing. I had nobody. Nobody cared about me- this was evidenced by the fact that my mom had killed herself and that her boyfriend had sexually abused me. And the irony is that I was going to the house of my primary sexual offender, but it was still safer. And I mean, those kinds of events for him just facilitated a complete sense of omnipotence. And I think for myself when I was a kid, I think I just internalized that this guy was just like untouchable, like sort of omnipotent, that nothing was going to happen to him. And indeed that, I mean, that's what happened.

It was almost ritualized, you know, that you knew what the expectation was and it was basically you could do this thing of ward it off for awhile, but eventually you would sort of succumb to it. Because it was going to- I think I had this sense of sort of fatalism about it. You know, that it was going to happen. And then, it became much easier to be cooperative because that facilitated the process and speeded it up... And I think also that so much of the

stuff in my family environment was so obviously beyond my control, that this just seemed to be another thing.

The perceived inevitability of sexual exploitation was further accompanied by a confused sense of responsibility for the exploitation.

I think it was just utter confusion and a sense of being overwhelmed. [And] I didn't understand why this was happening simultaneously- like why this was happening to me in the first place, but why this was happening simultaneously. And not being able to see what I can see now, which was that I was in a very like, easy, vulnerable position to be victimized. Because it was one of the sort of things that was an issue for me when I first started doing therapy, was that feeling an incredible sense of responsibility and wanting to sort out, well, how come? Did I have something written on my forehead? Or like, what is this? And it still does escape me on a basic level, even though I've educated myself- I mean, I still don't understand [the whole sexualization of children] in any way. I guess to me, it's inexplicable that they do it.

Because, I mean, as an offender, he was an extremely confusing person. You know, for instance, I mean, I confided in him that I was being offended, and his reaction was that people like that should be killed and he should be emasculated and castrated, and that son of a bitch, and all that did was foster the thing with him of, you know, I'm the only person in the world that cares about you, so it's basically OK if I'm sexual with you because I love you. You know, that whole romanticizing of, like, if I wasn't 50 and you weren't 11, we'd be getting married. And I think in terms of trying to cope psychologically with that stuff, I mean, I just started to dissociate.

As Vanja testifies, part of the hopelessness stemmed from the lack of any sense of protection.

Well, I think for myself, it's not like my mother had ever been supportive in any other situation in my life, so you know, she would be the least likely person for me to turn to. In fact, I had a sense of my mother as a person who deliberately thwarted me in terms of success in my own life, for reasons that I'm still not, that I'm not sure of. And also would call me a slut, would speak to me in that kind of verbally abusive way- and if that was the kind of underlying factor of how she perceived my sexuality, then who would she be to assist me in terms of me wanting to say to her, excuse me, but it's like, you know, the white knight, your new boyfriend, is like, fondling me and what are you going to do about it?

The themes of confusion, the helplessness to avoid the sexual behaviours, guilt, ambivalence towards the exploiting adult and a belief in the lack of possible protection are themes which resonate in all three women's stories.

Trisha

Trisha grew up in England, in a working class family of Irish background, with two siblings.

In her early teens, her mother 'ran off' with another man, and shortly after, she herself left her family to enter a nursing cadet school. When she was 17, she was asked by a young man to marry him. Feeling trapped by his offer, she ran off to a large urban setting, there meeting her later-to-be first partner and father of her two children. Her memories of her childhood are marked by insecurity and lack of privacy, heightened by the crowded conditions of her working class environment.

My earliest memories come from ----, a village in England where my parents had moved to. My mother had been raped and I was the result of the rape and I was born in a convent and actually left there and we separated when I was only four days old. She'd gone back to live with her mother, and eventually married this much older man and they moved to England together and when she was pregnant with his child, she told him about me and they sent for me. We eventually moved to ----, [and it was while living in this place that] my mother ran away from home... and I remember my dad making us go to school as if there was nothing wrong. And that was very much the imperative, is that you kept up appearances, you didn't let people know what was really going on. I think that when you're crowded on each other's space like that, you have to keep privacy and to keep things secret- I think that was the second time that she'd done that, and this time she didn't come back. [It took about half a year for the welfare guy to catch up with us and] and he was fabulous. I mean, he took me right to school and I had an interview with the head master. There was no way that I was going to go back. So I ended up getting a job with----. And I remember being interviewed by the personnel officer for the job and she asked me about my mother and father, and I remember telling her my mother was dead. And she, I mean, she must have known the truth. I realize now that she was dead for me, and that I was so angry with her...[Later, I entered cadet nursing] which was for girls who had left school without a CSC or GCE, and you would go into cadet nursing school and you would work for two years....The first thing they did was straighten my eye. My mother would never let them do that, she didn't trust hospitals, she didn't trust doctors, she thought they'd make it worse. So they straightened my eye. And for the first time in my life, boys were interested in me. So I started dating. I used to go out to the pub with the cadet nurses because we had Wednesday nights off and I met this guy. And we started dating, and we got engaged to be married. I had a ruby and diamond engagement ring and we were looking at houses to buy- and I could hear the thump of the hammer, or whatever it is that they have in the foundry, and I kept thinking, what am I doing? I don't want to have my mother's life all over again, I don't want the life of the women I see around me, I don't want to live like that. But I didn't know how to get out of it. So I started making excuses to him, breaking dates and not showing up, and saying that I had to study. [He found me at the cellar bar one evening] and beat me up. [I returned to the nursing residence] and ended up in intensive care... I finally went home. He came and saw me there and he had red roses and he wept and he was so sorry. As soon as he left, I got out of that bed, and I put the ring in an envelope with a note addressed to him and a note to my dad, and I ran away from home.

When I got to ___ I went to the pub and ended up striking up a conversation with ----, telling him what was happening, and he rescued me. We spent three or four months living under a bridge. [He'd go to work and when he got off] we'd wander [and then]end up back under the bridges, making beds for ourselves out of cardboard. Then, we ended up getting an apartment

together. We moved in together just like that. Just like that. We were together from that moment on until we broke up, I think seven years later, with two children. Very odd.

Trisha testifies to the confusion and helplessness experienced during the period of sexual exploitation by her father, when still a younger child.

Well, certainly it was crazy making, having to live with this popular individual and knowing *this* sort of side, but the helplessness, I mean, I think, I mean, there was a stage when you know, I thought praying would help and I thought if you wished hard enough- it's like when you were a child, if you wished hard enough on Christmas Eve, you really will wake up and the pony will be under the Christmas tree. You know, you've let everyone know how much you want a pony, you don't know where you are going to put the pony, the family can't afford a pony, you know, the pony is completely unrealistic, but you're begging and pleading and praying in your heart that you're going to get the pony because that's what you really want... I mean, I believed in God and I believed that if, you know, I prayed hard enough it would change- when it didn't change, [I thought] what have I done wrong, you know, like, I've been good, I've made my bed, I've said my prayers, I've gone to communion, you know, I've done all these things right, what is it I'm doing wrong that you don't grant my prayers? [I remember a priest telling me] "ah, the ways of God are inscrutable, my child". You know, if God doesn't grant your prayers it's because he knows better, and you know, there's something in your prayers that He *is* answering, you just can't recognize it. I mean, you're telling this to a seven and eight year old who just wants God to stop something shitty happening to her, and then, there's this priest saying, well, if your prayer isn't being answered, there's a reason... I actually believed it at that time, that there had to be a reason that God wasn't stopping this.

For Trisha, there was a phenomenological link between the imposition of sexually exploitative behaviours and the early imposition of domestic responsibilities in the home.

But the sexual abuse, I never knew when it was going to happen, it was very secretive and I think that was the defining thing for me. And certainly, I think, part of my involvement with my father as I got older, being the caretaker in the family, and being the caregiver, certainly that sense was there- that for him at least, you know, a justification was that- his wife didn't do these things, and I wasn't his biological child, and therefore I could be this standin. And after she left, of course, I was. In terms of the household responsibilities.

Trisha testifies to her sense of self-blame, her ambivalence towards the father, and to an inability to confide in her mother.

But, you know, it was as if he blamed me too, so it was *me, it was clearly me*, [my fault, i.e.] there [seemed to be] no two ways about it. I think one of the reasons it's hard to let go of is, because if you're responsible for it, it does give you some power, you know, some sense of, if I could only figure this out, how I'm making this happen, I can figure out how to make it stop. You know, if I could only figure that out.

I don't know what to make of it, but, you know, that he was doing these things to me that I hated and wanted stopped. On the other hand, he protected me from *her [the mother]*, so maybe this was the payoff? I'm not sure - but maybe that was what was going on for me was that he *did* stick up for me and *he* was the one to give me praise for good marks at school and what I look back at now and see pretty much like Judas's pieces of gold, who would leave every morning and come in my room and put his hand under my pillow and he gave me three pence [to buy candy with on my way to school]... I think *now*, it was like conscience money.

A lot of this was done in silence. And it was kept very secret. I don't remember how I knew not to tell. I don't remember him telling me not to tell, but I remember leaving the bedroom and going downstairs to where my mother was and wanting to tell her and knowing that I couldn't- and thinking that she was going to look at me and *know*. And not saying- just *knowing* I couldn't- I felt *so* evil and dirty that I didn't know why she couldn't *tell* just by looking at me. I mean, *I* thought she should have *known*. I remember thinking that you can *see* sin, you commit a sin and you can *see* it. It's *visible*, it would show up. *I didn't* want her to know because I thought she would be *angry* with me and my mother's anger was *not* good.. and *I didn't* want her to be angry with me. I didn't, *I didn't* expect her to protect me. In *fact*, in *most* cases it was *him* protecting me from *her*, from *her* anger and *her* violence.

Due to their offender's simultaneous role as protector and offender, both Trisha and Vanja's experience of their childhood exploitation was fraught with confusion, placing them in a paradoxical situation of dependent gratitude and anxiety. The following testimony by Peggy reveals a slightly different context, with mental illness serving at least minimally, as a subconsciously understood rationale for the sexualized behaviors.

Peggy

Peggy is a 31 year old woman who grew up in a family of three children in the United States, with a father whose job required him to be absent for days from the home, and with a mother who suffered from (then) undiagnosed manic-depression. Peggy has a twin brother and younger sister, and describes a periodically chaotic home due to the unpredictable psychotic episodes suffered by her mother, who for years was wrongly diagnosed with schizophrenia, and accordingly was prescribed medication which exacerbated her bi-polar condition. Characteristic to her family was the practice of having a 'special person' assigned to each child, which in Peggy's case, meant her grandmother, whose love and nurturance provided a significant node of stabilization and support in her life. Her

grandmother's death was followed later by the divorce of her parents, an event which augured the hospitalization of her mother. With this family disintegration, Peggy spent her teenage years living with a number of neighborhood families.

Well, I'm a result of a pre-, I guess I'm illegitimate. My parents weren't married- my mother had been in a longterm relationship with this young man, and he dumped her or whatever, and she met my dad, and six weeks later they got a pregnancy test, and they were pregnant with me, and my brother. Which was like a double surprise. So, my mom's family had arranged to have her put in an unwed mother's catholic home and have the babies, and then put them up for adoption. They ended up getting married and [we grew up with them after all]...We were intact until I was about 14, and then my parents got a divorce, and my mom kind of unraveled. She had a bipolar disorder, which is manic-depression, and she had been in and out of hospital basically throughout my life... So then what happened to me at 14 is that I just started living with other families in the community. I was really lucky, because I was a good kid, everyone liked me, I got along with everybody. Growing up we had a great network of friends-.my mom was like a special director, everybody loved her. I mean, she had her highs and lows, but most people, bi-polar people when they're ok, they're wonderful to be around, so yeah, we had block parties and all kinds of stuff. So I was really creative, I could always fix things, I was like the mini mom in my family. And when my mom would go in and out of the hospital, I had more responsibilities, and in fact, a couple of years ago when I was talking to my dad, I said, "what was I like when I was seven?" And he said, "uh, well, you know, you had a real hard time, because you were kind of a bad kid, because you got irritated with having to help your mom with dinner, and having to do the laundry and things like that." And I was thinking, yeah, at seven, that's logical. My mom says one of her fondest memories is of me standing on a chair, with a wooden spoon, stirring oatmeal when I was four. [laughter] So I think generally fairly early on, I somehow knew something was wrong with my mom and I needed to try to help fix the family. Yeah, in fact, when I was 14, when I asked my dad why he left us, he said, "I was tired of being married to my 14 year old daughter", being me. And that was, although it was a shock, it was at the time, it was a bit of a compliment, because it was the first time my father had ever acknowledged how much I did.

I was least attached to both my parents. And we had what we called, our 'person'- my dad was my brother's 'person' in my family, .my mother was my sister's 'person', and my person was my nanny, who was my maternal grandmother. But when she passed away when I was 11, I was really, really affected by it. And I had lost that connection with my 'person', which is what we called it...And I remember after she died, several months later, you know, I was 11- and I remember on separate occasions, both my parents said, you know, you're just angry because you lost your person. [laughter]. Well, yeah, that's a piece of it, thank you for acknowledging that. It wasn't a compassionate thing, it was really kind of invalidating. It was almost as if I didn't have the right to be angry, and that I was taking it out on them. And I was really, grieving.

In contrast to Trisha and Vanja, Peggy's sexual exploitation was instigated by her mother, and in ways which support the literature on maternal abuse (see Reagan, 1993). As Peggy notes, the

exploitation was directly correlated with the 'psychotic' episodes suffered by her mother, and involved, among other things, a strongly sexualized concern with bodily functions and a preoccupation with pimping- like behaviour towards her daughter. She learned to predict the sexualized behaviour, and testifies to the sense of self blame and later, to a rejection of 'womanliness'.

I learned to read her moods really well, and her phases would go in days, like she would be manic for a few days, and then she'd be depressed for long periods of time...It was in part of this manic phase that became kind of psychotic that she would do the sexual abuse. So even though I didn't have a word for it, and didn't know she was bi-polar, I knew that she had these mood swings and I knew how to read when it was going to happen.

As a kid, I thought, well, as I said before, much of the sexual abuse was a result of something I had done wrong, whether it was wetting my bed, or whatever it was my mother decided I did wrong. So until that point, I thought it was my fault, and that's why I hid it. It wasn't that I was ashamed of the abuse, so much as I was ashamed of what created the abuse. [While in therapy, I had to] deal with things about guilt and what part of it you had, why you didn't stop it, this kind of thing, like, how could you have stopped it, you go over and over it in your head, what part of this is your fault. And children are quite narcissistic in that they tend to think that the whole world revolves around them, therefore, they cause everything.

She would encourage me and my sister to date. She was always bringing boys over, and she would bring pictures of us, and set up dates with us. And I'm talking when I was 12 years old and I wasn't interested in boys, you know, and she told my one boyfriend when I was 14, "you need to see if you're sexually compatible"...I didn't want to do that and then when you think about my background, it freaked me out. So what does it do to a 16 year old boy? That's the green light, Go- he can do whatever he wants, and I kept fighting him, every single day...At about 16, I started paying my own way and I drove myself to dates and I really drew that *line*. Nobody's going to do this to me anymore- I thought, hey, from now on I'm going to drive myself so I'm not powerless. I can't be driven somewhere where I don't want to be and I'm going to pay my own way so I won't feel obliged at the end of the evening. I was creative {in this way, to avoid those situations}.

I couldn't [even] say [the word] 'woman', couldn't say 'feminine'. I remember when I entered my first women's studies class, it was a real struggle for me to say 'woman'. It was such a political thing-don't call them girls, don't call them ladies, call them *women*. There was something sexual about it for me, because my mother would always say, being a woman is blah, blah, blah- and I can remember it, trying to come out of my mouth and struggling with it. I hated it. I wonder sometimes if that's why I was such a tomboy, because I did not want to be a woman. What that meant to me was a sexually abused person, involved in a sexual thing with my mother, and I hated it. And her being, her woman identity disgusted me. Well, that's kind of strong; I was ashamed of it. [My sense of being a woman was that] I was really humiliated.

[Only later did I discuss this with my siblings] and in fact, we didn't know that it happened to each other until the last couple of years, you know, you just kind of blocked that stuff. It was a really shameful thing, really disgusting. There were so many blurred *boundaries*.

These testimonials reveal the multi-leveled ways in which *meaning* as well as *identities* coalesce around complex *structures of feeling* emergent out of our social relations. Notwithstanding the variety of burdens in the women's lives, all three women testify to the *distinctiveness* of sexual exploitation.

The distinctiveness of sexual abuse: women's testimonies

This is what Trisha has to say about the distinctiveness of childhood sexual abuse.

It's really different because it's your *body*. It's such an intimate thing, it's like inside your skin. Physical abuse, there was a point to it, I mean, my mother would get angry and it would be something I'd done or said. I mean, I was very clumsy, I'm blind in one eye, but they didn't realize it for a very long time, but I was always knocking things over, and she'd hit me, but there was a clear cause and effect. You do A, B happens. You get a whack, you get smacked. In my childmind, that made sense and it ended, you know, you could go off crying, and you'd hold a sore spot. Violence against children was very common in the society I grew up with. So I mean, physical abuse was very prevalent and very effective, and it had a point, you know. You did something wrong as a kid in the British working class, you got whacked. I mean, it was very clear. But the sexual abuse was different, it didn't make sense. It didn't have a point. So I think it was very different. Not only did it seem not to have any point, but I couldn't explain it and couldn't make a link, like I could with physical abuse; it was secret. The physical abuse was open. I mean, you'd hear if you're crying and you'd look across the room and you can see a kid getting whacked; that was open and it was out there and like I said, it made sense....And I knew with my mother, that my chances of getting hit rather than kissed were like 90/10%. But the sexual abuse, I never knew when it was going to happen, it was very secretive and I think that was the defining thing for me, and that I knew I couldn't stop it.

Peggy talks about the distinctiveness of sexual exploitation in the following way.

Well, sexual abuse is certainly more intrusive than, I think, than physical abuse or emotional abuse. It's a different type of oppression, in that there's so much secrecy and thought out-for instance, if my mom didn't like something I did, or my dad didn't like something I did, they'd just take off their belt and hit or whatever, or grab. My mom would grab at anything and just beat the crap out of you. That doesn't take much thought process, it's instantaneous. Sexual abuse in my situation, she had to plan out when my dad wasn't going to be around, you know, when no one else was up, you just happened to be in the bathroom, in the middle of the night. There were all these things you know, being in the part of the house that could be locked. That's more oppressive, there's more of this inability of having it exposed to other people. Whereas the physical abuse, we always talked about that, and how we hated it. Because, it's so visible. So to me, the sexual abuse is more oppressive. And it's very different from physical abuse, where its cut and dry, you did something wrong, and your parents smack you. There aren't those emotional ambiguities.

Vanja testifies to the invisibility and unpredictability of sexual exploitation as making it distinctive from physical violence.

Well, I think part of the thing with sexual abuse is largely the invisibility factor. And you know, for me, I don't know, a lot of it has been the level of psychological intrusion that occurs with sexual abuse, particularly when it's over a long period of time. And the whole re-definition of self, in relationship to being somebody who has been sexually abused. And I guess that's where that developmental stuff comes up for me because I feel at some point, I just stopped developing, because, you know, most of my energy was invested in survival of what was happening. If you look at chronic verbal abuse or whatever, you can actually familiarize yourself to that. I mean- though we lived with a lot of threat of violence, though we lived with a lot of verbal violence directed towards us, generally, we could anticipate, you know, we could develop coping stuff around anticipating when that was more likely to happen, what was going to soften it, like if the adults were drinking, that there was a lot more illusion of control around being able to deal with it. And also, for myself, I was able to manifest some rebelliousness around the physical abuse, in that, you know, the last year and a half that I live at home, when my mom started hitting me a lot, I started to hit back. And I started to fight.

I guess when you're not raised with adults being figures of trust in your life, then no matter what the situation, why would you assume [you could do something about it?]. I'd seen my father, you know, exact a lot of physical violence on the family. I'd seen my mother not intervene in that, despite the fact, you know, my father had beaten my older brother to an extent where he could have been charged with it, and there was no intervention there. We felt fairly firmly ruled by who my parents were. There was no, particularly when my father was alive, there was no room for even negotiation.

The women's testimony concerning the inevitability, and inability to create *sense* of the sexual exploitation manifests concretely the workings of *power*, which as Connell (1987) notes, is a relation characterized by the potential use of force, the balance of advantage, the inequality of resources and the power to define reality. Notwithstanding the perceived distinctiveness of sexual exploitation, these accounts also show how sexual exploitation is deeply embedded in adjacent affective and material realities so that it acts as a kind of *reverberating touchstone* for other oppressions and burdens in their life circumstances. Not coincidentally, the imposition of sexualized behaviours is subjectively linked in women's minds with the imposition of 'wifely' or 'kin-keeping' domestic responsibilities, duties which tend to be hetero-normatively structured in contemporary 'western' society. The multivalent

experience of oppressiveness related to this imposition of responsibilities is thus overdetermined, for as Bourdieu (1977) notes, domestic practices tend to map *sexual hierarchies* within individual bodies.

All three women's testimony of sexualized behaviours with adults as *abusive*, lies in part with their social positioning in a relationship of dependency and reliance on adult protection, a social positioning always already governed by culturally specific norms for caregiving and responsibility. Their testimonies render visible the perceived *thwarting* of their social positioning. Their stories also show how already dependent or unequal relations (between adults and children) can be further destabilized through the imposition of unwanted, confusing and thereby existentially demoralizing sexualized behaviours and expectations. Their forced insertion into an incomprehensible adult activity, their sense of *enforced complicity* and their self perception of 'malignant inner badness' may be described as a world characterized by 'doublethink' (Herman, 1992). Herman (1992, 101, 102) summarizes these conditions well.

In [a] climate of profoundly disrupted relationships the child faces a formidable developmental task. She must find a way to form primary attachments to caregivers who are either dangerous or, from her perspective, negligent. She must find a way to develop a sense of basic trust and safety with caretakers who are untrustworthy and unsafe. She must develop a sense of self in relation to others who are helpless, uncaring, or cruel. She must develop a capacity for bodily self-regulation in an environment in which her body is at the disposal of others' needs, as well as a capacity for self-soothing in an environment without solace. She must develop the capacity for initiative in an environment which demands that she bring her will into complete conformity with that of her abuser. And ultimately, she must develop a capacity for intimacy out of an environment where all intimate relationships are corrupt, and an identity out of an environment which defines her as a whore and a slave.

The abused child's existential task is equally formidable. Though she perceives herself as abandoned to a power without mercy, she must find a way to preserve hope and meaning. The alternative is utter despair, something no child can bear. To preserve her faith in her parents, she must reject the first and most obvious conclusion that something is terribly wrong with them. She will go to any lengths to construct an explanation for her fate that absolves her parents of all blame and responsibility.

The child victim prefers to believe that the abuse did not occur. In the service of this wish, she tries to keep the abuse a secret from herself. The means she has at her disposal are frank denial, voluntary suppression of thoughts, and a legion of dissociative states...they may learn to ignore severe pain, to hide their memories in complex amnesias, to alter their sense of time, place or person, and to induce hallucinations or possession states. Sometimes these alterations

of consciousness are deliberate, but often they become automatic and feel alien and involuntary.

Herman's discussion poignantly identifies many of the doublebinds and confusions, the cadences of loss, and the yearnings variously characterizing the lives of the women interviewed. This first chapter, then, has been concerned to provide testimonial accounts of these women's phenomenological and material worlds as they were lived in the context of sexually exploitative relations. The following chapter deals with the methodological considerations of this thesis and describes how I came to the research focus for this project.

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY: DEFINING THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Listening is the ground of being upon which stones grow, against which story exists, and out of which storytelling weaves her particular magic. All voices have access to stories, all beings have access to voices; it is the act of listening that makes story manifest, makes it happen.

Joanne Arnot⁶

The individual's most personal and most deeply felt response to the specific afflictions that are characteristic of [her] own historical epoch must always be, I think, the first and foremost *source* of a critical and creative historical (i.e., social) response. (*italics in original*).

David Michael Levin⁷

Scholarship stands for changes and possibilities that widen the intellectual horizon as well as the space of experience.

Arthur Kleinman⁸

In the consciousness of our failures, we risk lapsing into boundless difference and giving up the confusing task of making partial, real connection. Some differences are playful; some are poles of world historical systems of domination. "Epistemology" is about knowing the difference.

Donna Haraway⁹

Comments on methods and methodology

This chapter on methodology and methods begins with discussion concerning the methods, motivations and negotiations involved in this research project. This is followed by a more general discussion of the concept of 'experience' as it will be tacitly used in this paper, and by thoughts about suffering and morality as they have come to animate this project's development. I briefly discuss how I arrived at my analytic focus for this work, outline the structural format of this thesis paper itself, briefly describe my theoretical orientation, and conclude with an acknowledgment of the limitations of this project.

It seems important to begin by noting that both Trisha and Peggy agreed to participate in this project because they wanted to support *feminist* research, *and* because they wanted to let other women know that sexual abuse did not inevitably result in an enduring life of distress, that it was possible to *feel healed*. Vanja's stated interest in the project was candidly straightforward: she wanted to know

what I might be able to make of the interviews. As she confided, this interest was partially motivated by her ongoing sense of frustration with her own lack of resolution about her past, and her continuing struggle to achieve a sense of comfort and efficacy in her social world. To that end, given her lively intellectual engagement with questions around therapeutic modalities and with current psychological understandings about sexual exploitation, Vanja's interest is clearly also pragmatic: what *might* an *anthropological* analysis have to say about her account and about conventional psychological frameworks that could provide her with fresh insight, give her a different set of tools with which to understand the dynamics of healing? *My original* intention was to conduct feminist/anthropological research which examined the changing and ongoing ways in which women made meaning of their childhood sexual exploitation, and to look at how they used their identity as survivors of exploitation to negotiate their ongoing social relationships.

These various aims and motivations make manifest the often complicated processes involved in research projects, for both researcher and participants. I hope to have explicated the interviewed women's distress in ways compatible with the aims of 'feminist anthropology'; chapter eight briefly deals with questions of healing in the context of this paper's focus on the significances of embodiment. The notion of *healing* itself is a complex issue. That therapy helped two women largely overcome their sense of social distress, and that it 'failed' to alleviate this distress for the third, in itself says little about the efficacy of contemporary healing systems. However, culturally dominant understandings about what it might mean to be healed, or how individuals achieve this healing state, *is* significant here. Culturally dominant notions of individuals needing to 'working hard' to achieve and maintain psychological wellbeing, and conventional understandings which implicitly encourage a belief that healing means (more or less) freedom from suffering, frame these women's sense of progress towards a 'healed' state. By enlarging the analytic field concerning culturally informed ways in which distress

may come to be shaped, understood and felt, I hope to also have indirectly generated different kinds of questions about what it might mean to talk about healing.

The testimonial encounter is both intense and intimate (Felman, 1995) and begs for a strong reflexive awareness of the multifaceted demands inherent in these undertakings. As Rosaldo (1983, 76) states,

Our questions are inevitably bound up with our politics. The character, constraint, and promise of our scholarship are informed as much by moral ends and choices as they are by the 'objective' postures necessary to research. For feminists, especially, intellectual insight thrives in a complex relation with contemporary moral and political demands.

Rosaldo's comments are a reminder of how the moral, political, personal and academic were simultaneously active as infusing elements in the production of their stories. Aside from the above mentioned aims, the interviewed women placed few expectations on me in terms of *what* I might want to say given their testimonies, other than wanting to ensure that their stories were taken seriously as accounts of suffering, and to ensure that the larger issue of sexual exploitation would be embedded in a critical social commentary. For my part, this project was partially shaped by my own involvement in a local women's centre, by my work as facilitator of a single mother's group, and by longstanding involvements with friends and others whose lives had been affected by sexual exploitation. It has also been strongly shaped by a frustration with current debates around sexual exploitation which circle endlessly around repeated questions over the truth or falsehood of claims of sexualized abuses. These debates, which I will talk more about in chapter four, have, in my view, reduced and simplified the complex political, moral, and teleological concerns and dilemmas which are embodied in women's stories of sexual exploitation more generally. The academic has constrained this project through the often alienating language characteristic of social theory (which I haven't escaped from in this paper) and through its often insistent emphasis away from the 'personal'. It seems notable that I felt restricted in terms of talking about the felt suffering of these women until I could find theoretical support for so doing.

To accomplish my *original* goal of examining women's interpretations of their past and the ways in which they negotiated social relationships, I conducted modified life histories with three women. My goal in conducting extended interviews (between 4 to 8 hours) was to capture the ongoing and changing interpretations and relationships which shaped women's sense of identity. I located these women, quite fortuitously, through informal means. Both Vanja and Trisha were directed to me by persons who were familiar with my research project; Peggy was made aware of my project through Trisha, and eagerly offered to participate. As already noted, Vanja and Trisha testify to a sexualized form of exploitation by males. Peggy's accounts of maternally instigated sexualized behaviour differs substantially from that of the other women in its form, in that it took place in the context of her mother's psychiatric illness, and as she has since learned, in that it was also perpetrated on her siblings.

Although I decided not to elicit details of the sexual abuse itself for this project, I was made aware of some of the features, which women found important to tell me. I have decided not to include these in the paper, primarily because I feel uncomfortable with the potentially voyeuristic possibilities which this might invite. That Peggy's experience of exploitation differs in its form and in the gender of perpetrator, may well have significantly influenced her consequent experience of distress in ways which this project has not addressed. This is an acknowledged potential limitation; on the other hand, the analytic focus for this thesis has not been aimed at 'proving' how exploitation affected these women, or at using their accounts as representative of sexual exploitation generally. Rather, as I will explain in later chapters, I intend to direct attention to issues of embodiment and to the embodied character of distress. This focus or approach hopefully opens up interpretive possibilities and may be amenable to multivalent kinds of applications; in other words, I believe it is not dependent on precise equivalencies in the form of exploitation or in the perceived effects. What will be important as a shared emphasis is the attention it will bring to bear on the *body*.

As this last comment suggests, the women's stories forced me to reconsider my original research aim and to challenge my own tacit, but overly cognitive approach. The interviews themselves were somewhat loosely structured, with questions prepared in advance, geared towards eliciting a life history, and divided up into various thematic sections related to demographic issues, questions related to family, to intimacy, friendship and sexuality, to interpretations of the sexual exploitation, and to a broad variety of open-ended concerns related to therapy, work, and so on (see appendix one). Trisha asked for these questions in advance to get a sense of what my research project might be like. When we began the interview, we both came to the realization that the interview would be more comfortable if she would use the questions as 'cues', but that she herself would structure how, when and what she wanted to say. This same interview style was used with Vanja and Peggy, and in fact, Vanja chose to begin her testimony at the point where my interview sessions had intended to end- with her account of the abuse and her interpretations over time. This interview style gave women the freedom to elaborate at their own pace and about issues most compelling to themselves, without the awkwardness attendant with a question- answer format. This format also allowed for minimal interruptions to the flow of narrative, and reduced the temptation to ask leading questions on my part, except for clarification.

I view these interviews as testimonies which do not simply report facts, but make us encounter social relations and conditions as multilayered configurations, and allow us to see how personal histories come to be punctuated through a series of felt oppressions - and how emergent pressures and possibilities may come to be transformed into a culturally registered envelope of distress. This project begins with the standpoint of three women: as Marshall (1994) argues, it is not structures and systems, but people who have needs, who act and who feel. Following Silverman (1985) and McMahon (1995), I argue that interviews display cultural realities and practices and provide material that cannot be identified as either biased or accurate, but as 'real' in the sense that they express social structures, felt meanings, relations and practices. Testimonies thus simultaneously illuminate the logic of

individual actions and the effects of system level constraints (Personal Narratives Group, 1989) through attention to small, local things, ‘including edges and brinks’, ‘surfaces and boundaries’, the many small and large importances of social life (Kleinman, 1995). As Connerton (1989, 2) notes, our experience of the present “very largely depends upon our knowledge of the past” and we experience our present “differently in accordance with the different pasts to which we are able to connect that present.”

In his book, *Writing at the Margins*, Kleinman (1995, 67, 124) forcefully reiterates the need to attend to the local knowledges and daily practices related to the body and self and to episodes and conditions of misfortune, as these illumine the “confounding connective tissue of intersubjectivity”:

...learning to live within and through the vital medium that emerges when symbolic forms interact with psychobiology places our lives squarely in the flow of things, bound to others and to the moral meaning that define a world of exigency and expediency.

Local communities and families provide frameworks through which memories become localized, and serve as referential milieus and material spaces that frame and shape our recollections (Connerton, 1989). Stated differently, every memory and recollection, however personal, is embedded in the “adherencies and adhesions” of group membership (Bourdieu, 1990a, 177, 178), and exists in relation to a whole ensemble of notions, to clusters of persons, places, dates, words, to forms of language, to the material and moral lives of which one is a part (Connerton, 1989). Following Luhmann, Alexander (1988, 290) argues that it is mistaken to refer to micro/macro frameworks as if they are empirical units. Rather, they might be seen as analytic contrasts, suggesting emergent levels within empirical units, not oppositional empirical entities in themselves. In the following section, I outline some of the definitions of culture, experience and suffering as they will be used in this paper.

Defining the terms

Following Kleinman, I am using a definition of culture which refers not just to sets of conventions or beliefs that can be taken up or discarded at will, but which rather sees it as a “process

of action, a mode of collective experience, an emergent in local relationships” and in material realities (Kleinman, 1995, 59). Culture, following this view, refers to lived meanings that are emergent and actualized in everyday social transactions, and as such are overdetermined but never fully determinate of lived experience.

One of the challenges in listening to women’s testimonies then, is to do so in a way that does not “reduce them to cliches or turn them all into versions of the same story” (Caruth, 1995a, vii). This is particularly salient given the tendency for complicated stories such as those provided by the three interviewed women, to be reduced to a core cultural image of victimization amenable to reconceptualization in medicalized terms (Kleinman, 1995). Kleinman talks instead of experience as an “interpersonal medium” shared by, engaged in, and mediating between persons in local worlds, rather than as a subjective phenomena one ‘has’. This interpersonal experience forms the ground of sociosomatic mediation so that ‘chunks of unified processes of memory, affect and physiology’ can be examined at a variety of levels- personal, familial, network and community. In this formulation, the ‘flow of experience’ is the condition for the emergence of “human nature” as both shared and culturally particular, and therefore inhering, both, some measure of indeterminacy and finitude. Kleinman (1995, 99) goes on to say that

understanding ethnopsychological categories, though essential, is insufficient: we know much more than we can say or understand; we are awash in the meanings of experience; the historical flow and cultural elaboration of experience lead us to organize figures out of grounds that are greatly relevant to particular occasions.

Experience, therefore, might be said to be the “outcome of cultural categories and social structures interacting with psychophysiological processes such that a mediating world is constituted,” and in which experience is the “felt flow of that intersubjective medium” (Kleinman, 1995, 97). This leads Kleinman to further state that as human beings, we are “intersubjective forms of memory and action” (Kleinman, 1995, 117).

This discussion is important in that it powerfully points to the culturally shaped ways in which felt worlds of suffering must be located in both local and wider *intersubjective* relations and practices, and in that it shows how these felt worlds always far exceed what can be captured by diagnostic or psychological categories.¹⁰ My own interest in this project was deeply enlivened by the interviews with these women, whose expressed suffering seemed to me to extend far beyond what was possible to contain within their own interpretative frameworks as were given them through therapeutic contacts. What struck me forcibly with each interview was the depth of women's past or continuing pain; although I had anticipated some of this, what I had not been able to anticipate was the degree to which I myself would feel saddened, immobilized, as well as angry. I often could not account for the depth of my own feelings, which ebbed and flowed in intensity throughout different stages of the writing of this project. I frequently felt despair just upon reading portions of their stories, and would put down my work to return to later. This aspect of the work of research is little talked about, although reflexive discussion concerning the difficulties of making contact, or the trials of negotiating relationships with interviewees is often described. *My being moved to sadness and anger*, also felt and continues to feel like a moral connection and obligation. Following the work of Miriam Young (1990), Kleinman states that moral evaluations start with an understanding of domination and oppression in real social spaces. Morality is thus an interactive process stemming from one's empathy for the suffering of others. In other words, suffering elicits and demands responses, creates ethical/moral bonds with others in that others' suffering beckons us, calls us into a relationship with them (see Levinas, 1988). It is recognition of the quality of women's suffering then which motivates much of this project, and which moves back and forth as figure and ground throughout the following pages.

As Kleinman points out, anthropologists often run the danger of constructing cultural archetypes out of messy accounts of distress, thereby rendering the human quality of suffering 'fungible'. As an intersubjective phenomena, suffering acts to constrain lived experience, creates a

resistance to elaborated life plans, and often results in a variety of 'bewildering' inexpediencies that shape the character of danger, as well as the "scope and possibilities of transcendence" (Kleinman, 1995, 98). Challenges to this felt world of suffering by critics who press women to believe their suffering is not real or 'at least not as bad' as claimed, is, as Kleinman argues about other claims of illness or distress, deeply angering and part of how suffering comes to be constituted in the first place.

Suffering, then, in all its felt qualities is evinced as an interpersonal medium which arouses 'intractable', inexhaustible existential questions, and which often makes it a deeply moral crisis in people's lives (Kleinman, 1995). As he says, (Kleinman, 1995, 124), moral processes are

what is most at stake for persons and families which assembles from contested preferences and differing priorities a sociosomatic linkage between symbol systems and the body, between ethos and the person. This linkage allows cultural meanings to provide structure for attention, memory, affect, their neurobiological correlates, and ultimately experience. Experience, seen in this structured way, is only in part subjective. A developing child in her or his cultural context is part of an ongoing flow of intersubjective feelings and meanings; in a sense, the child awakens cognitively and affectively within that flow...Ethnic as well as personal identity emerge in this process of entering into and finding a structured place within the flow of experience.

Attention to the moral aspects of suffering then concerns all the various relationships, resources, and practices which are at stake in everyday life because the moral is 'actualized not only in subjective space but in social transactions': this means that moral dilemmas can also be seen as social problems requiring action (Kleinman, 1995).

However experience is organized ideologically and through ruling relations, it often appears in our lives as 'fragments' and 'incoherencies' within our lived *bodies*, from which place we have, perhaps not the best view, but a concrete view upon which investigations might begin (Kleinman, 1995). According to Turner, researchers need to examine how the formation of self involves bodily connections with others and with intersubjective experiences (Turner, 1992). Both Desjarlais and Kleinman speak against a "too- simplified cognitive connection between language and the emotions" (Kleinman, 1995, 9); instead it is the felt experience of images, not their representations that produce

effects, and through which tensions and distresses become *incarnate*. In other words, social as well as anthropological theory has traditionally ‘overcoded’ the cognitive aspects of lived social life at the expense of grappling with the embodied, incorporated and felt dimensions of social/practical activity. Contemporary dominant discursive approaches which continually emphasize the linguistic ‘falsely’ *reduce* the felt complexity of social life through the premise that the world can be understood primarily as discursive, replacing ‘natural essentialism’ with ‘discursive essentialism’ (Shilling, 1993; Hollway, 1995).

The interviewed women’s stories also deeply challenged my own original, overly cognitive research goals, and forced me to rethink my project, in which I have come instead to examine how social relations and practices might become *embodied* in our lives. What I have tried to do instead then, is to look at the significance of the *lived body*, to examine the importance of the lived body to the interviewed women’s experience of exploitation, social anxiety, and to their difficulties in developing a sense of identity. In the following paragraphs, I will outline how the paper is structured, to show how I came to this (re)direction.

Thesis organization

This paper is organized as follows: the first chapter serves as an introduction to the childhood lives of the three women interviewed for this project. In this chapter, I have selected excerpts of these women’s testimonies which register the suffering and disturbances which accompanied their experiences of sexual exploitation. Following this chapter on methodological considerations is a chapter which outlines these women’s accounts of the effects of sexual exploitation on their lives. I situated parts of these accounts in conjunction with common interpretations offered within dominant psychological discourses. By so doing, I was able to identify a gap in dominant theoretical elaborations, and which is related to the importance of the *lived body*. In other words, I used women’s narratives themselves as a way of locating a theoretical absence in conventional psychological

frameworks. Simply stated, this absence concerns the significances of the interviewed women's testimony of bodily dissociation. Whereas most psychological interpretations emphasize the notion of dissociation, for the most part they do so in the context of a psychodynamic orientation in which mind and body is dualized, thereby denying the fully embodied character of social life. I identify this theoretical absence or gap through presentation of Trisha's discussion of the impact of sexual abuse on her sense of her body, and conclude this chapter by identifying the general research direction for this paper, which is this: what are the significances of felt bodily dissociation in the context of childhood sexual abuse? What might different sociological and anthropological theories of the body bring to bear on understandings of embodied distress through sexual exploitation?

Chapter four is designed to accomplish several things: as a context chapter, it is partly intended to identify the salience of this project by showing how sexual exploitation is a deeply contested issue in contemporary popular and professional debates. I have, therefore, pulled out two prominent aspects of these debates, notions about memory and trauma, and through a critical discussion begin to challenge conventional understandings of these concepts. This critical discussion instead emphasizes the intersubjective, embodied and psycho-socio-moral character of personal memory, trauma and suffering. This discussion is then looked at in the context of contemporary views of codependency and its endorsement of a cultural ontology of autonomy; this section shows how culturally hegemonic views and practices of individuality shape social experiences of distress, as well as shape and legitimate individualized notions of healing. Social theory as well as much of psychological discourse are also shown to implicitly posit a remarkably *disembodied* social actor. Collectively, these four chapters are intended to operate somewhat as steppingstones, as incremental stages in the reformulation of sexual abuse away from a purely psychodynamic problem, towards developing a more culturally embedded and interpersonal emphasis which tries to understand the *embodiment of injured and injurious social relations*. Because of this incremental process, certain

ideas will only be suggestively hinted at, to be later developed: some will be repeated in a variety of ways and in relation to different contexts, as a way of reinforcing these concepts. Structurally, these chapters alternate between testimony/narrative and theoretical elaboration; this seemed to offer the most intelligible way of drawing out and reconceptualizing the theoretical concerns implicit in the women's stories.

The remainder of the thesis is organized a little differently. Chapter five focuses on excerpts of the women's narratives which emphasize the significance of sexual exploitation on the phenomenological experience of their own bodies. Using women's testimonies, I re-define "dissociation" in more anthropological rather than psychodynamic terms, as bodily dissociation, or as a felt disconnection from their material bodies. This chapter draws out the importances of disrupted embodiment in these women's lives, which also forms the ground for articulating this project's thesis.

Chapter six is mainly a theoretical chapter which provides the background for understanding the cultural significances of the mind/body duality. Here I critically examine the culturally specific ways in which this duality has come to structure and organize social relations; I argue that culturally configured relations around this duality result in *resonant structures of feeling* which impinge on our experiences of health and distress. In the second half of this chapter, I review Johnson's (1987) work on the bodily basis of cognition. His work challenges the mind/body duality and shows how cognition relies on, and is emergent out of our own bodily experiences and orientations in the world. This chapter, in other words, begins to develop the basis for a paradigm of embodiment, for understanding the co-implicated nature of the mind/body complex, and the existential centrality of the *lived body* to social life. I further examine the significance of metaphors in pulling together and linking culturally significant ideas and things in ways which come to be felt as meaningfully integrated through the unifying field of bodily experience. I also argue that sexualized activity between adults and children is experienced *as* abusive through a non-propositional grasp, that it is felt *as abuse* through the

instantiation of disembodiment, through a fundamental disruption of knowledgeable embodied intentionality.

Chapter seven explicates my thesis that the lived body- that a fully (mindful-bodily) embodied orientation to the world- is fundamental to our lived sociality, that without a felt connection to the body, our emotional, kinesthetic, cognitive and perceptual capacities and attunements may come to be fundamentally thwarted, with significant implications for our abilities to 'grasp' the world, for developing meaningful social relations and practical intentionality, and for achieving a felt sense of identity. I argue that the lived body is crucial for meaningfully integrating past, present and future processes, that our embodied intentionality is always already a practico-moral issue so that its disruption speaks to a pervasive abuse of power.

Chapter eight focuses on questions of healing. Based on my earlier explication on the significances of embodiment, this chapter looks at how a felt sense of healing may occur through a re-ordering of practiced perceptions and habits, through the re-organization of bodily comportment and processes. I also examine the significances of the therapeutic metaphor of boundaries, arguing that its efficacy comes about through its resonance with culturally normative notions of personhood. I argue that these notions, related to autonomy and bounded individuality, are further linked to culturally particularized practices and values related to personal property, rights, and protection. In other words, its efficacy as a therapeutic idiom is due to its implicit ability to forge linkages between culturally salient ideas and practices, so that this metaphor comes to be bodily felt as a legitimation of a culturally authorized mode of being.

The ninth and last chapter has been written by the women interviewed for this project, who took up my offer to respond to the research process itself, and to my explication concerning bodily dissociation. Vanja's reflections were offered through an interview with myself; Peggy and Trisha's comments were given to me in written form.

Motivations and limitations

I noted earlier that I identified this project as feminist anthropology. By this, I mean that this paper is guided by a motivated effort to *critically* describe and investigate the (culturally and historically contingent) relations/conditions of power which interpellated these women into social relations that caused suffering, and which seeks to render visible (some of) the culturally overdetermined factors shaping the form and experience of this suffering. This undertaking takes gender (very broadly seen as those culturally patterned norms, behaviours, values and embodied practices believed to 'belong' to or attach to 'biologically' identified males or females) to be a major structuring index in western/North American social life, and, therefore, to be centrally implicated in the cultural logics of oppression and in the shaping of felt experiences of suffering. This fairly elastic conceptualization of feminist anthropology is purposely meant to be able to accommodate a variety of theoretical directions, although it takes as a premise the view that gender, class, race, etcetera, are not naturally occurring and developed *essences*, but socially constructed markers that tend to structure positions of inequality in culturally specific ways.

I also wish to emphasize that what spilled out of the interviews in terms of richness and complexity in women's lives, defies the application of a singular analytic focus. Keeping in mind that not all issues raise the same 'order of epistemological, ontological or theoretical' questions (Connerton, 1989), and that not all theoretical approaches are equally useful or respectful of the research material (Rhode, 1990), I want to point out that the focus for this project is largely intended by me as an *exploration* into the significances of the body to felt distress. I will argue for the idea of felt resonances in the structured feelings which may accompany one's embodied location in various socially marked categories, such as gender and class. I further posit that our bodies, in fact, are not only something we *have*, but are *lived modes of being*, in which bodily organized locations such as gender and class are fully felt and structuring aspects of our self-bodily mode of attention, perception

and being- in- the -world. I argue that sexual activity between children and adults may come to fundamentally disrupt one's embodied mode of being- in- the- world.

As an exploration, this research direction was provoked by the interviewed women's comments concerning their bodies, but is not meant to serve as an interpretation which is equally compelling as explanation of distress for all sexually abused women. Rather, it is intended much more as a speculative and probing investigation, an attempt to pursue a new direction to see what it might have to offer, in a way that is more attentive to the intersubjective, social and embodied practices of cultural life. It is therefore likely that I will have neglected important concerns and issues which deserve consideration but which fall outside the constraints of this focus and beyond the space constraints of a thesis project. Ethnographies are, of course, always already inherently limited because social experience "always exceeds our grasp; descriptions can never be complete. A large residue of human experience resists or exceeds understanding" (Kleinman, 1995, 65).

Notwithstanding a fairly sustained critical challenge to dominant psychodynamic interpretations, I view my project more as a kind of *displacement* than a *replacement* of these interpretations, intended to *expand* the field of questions which might be asked about 'personal' suffering. Throughout this paper, I try to develop a framework for understanding embodiment, to explore how this might generate insights into the structuring of the felt qualities of distress through sexual exploitation.

As Scheper-Hughes (1992) outlines in her introduction to *Death Without Weeping*, ethnographic work can be read at "mutually interfering levels", variously foregrounding moral, political, psycho-social and existential questions but finally, needing to see these as composite issues layered by multiple specificities. Contemporary debates related to sexual exploitation often function rhetorically to register gender anxiety and to express concern about changing family relations; they also can be seen as cultural struggles for epistemological ascendancy in the arbitration of troubled social

relations. I have tried to develop an analytic focus for making sense of the “epistemic murk” in the interviewed women’s lived social worlds through an approach which reconfigures the importance of the *lived body*. I take responsibility for having selected material (and thereby ignored other important concerns) which in my view, offered itself suggestively for reconceptualization away from purely psychodynamic interpretations. Embedded as I am in the cultural knowledges which have shaped the interpretations and debates around sexual exploitation as they currently stand, I can only hope that this project serves as a ‘good enough ethnography’ which will encourage ongoing critical reflection.¹¹

WOMEN'S TESTIMONY: THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

To know who you are is to be oriented in moral space...The disorientation and uncertainty about where one stands as a person seems to spill over into a loss of grip on one's stance in physical space.

Charles Taylor¹²

Sexual abuse: overview of residual and enduring effects

This chapter provides excerpts which focus on the interviewed women's perceptions of the *effects* of sexual exploitation, which are viewed by them as variously enduring and complex. By critically examining some of the theoretical issues implicit in these selections, areas of theoretical concern typically unaddressed in psychological literature will be identified; these provide the basis for constructing the research questions for this anthropological project.

Generally, and in variously dominant *or residual* ways, the women I interviewed view sexual exploitation as continuing to shape their ongoing sense of identity, and their sense of social-relational comfort and efficacy. These effects are not uniformly shared in terms of intensity or persistence, or in the degree to which sexual exploitation itself is perceived as having functioned (or as continuing to function) as a significant influence on their identity. Nevertheless, some consistent themes emerge from their testimonies.

Broadly speaking, the effects variously identified by them are characteristically related to the following: *intellectualization* coupled with a singular lack of affect or difficulty with *emotions*; a sense of *boundlessness*- viewed as disabling in terms of impacting their ability to effectively negotiate social relations; *social anxiety* and a fear of confrontation; an absence of a sense of *identity*, and in general, a sense of *mystification* about how to manage friendships or to deal with intimate relationships. These effects are described by them as social impediments, as ongoing problems which *thwart*, to varying degrees, their sense of competence in the social world. These women's descriptions suggest that they developed a *habitus* formed out of their 'phenomenological sensibility' to an environ

of helplessness, to the lack of a trustworthy social and personal world, and to a cluster of events and relationships for which they could develop little understanding.

Although typically identified by them as personal difficulties, it should be pointed out that these effects are notable for their consistent *intersubjective* emphasis. According to Herman (1992, 51), traumatic events such as sexual abuse may shatter the sense of connection between individuals and their community, creating a 'crisis of faith'. This breaching of a sense of community may profoundly disable an individual's 'system of attachment and meaning', and destroy one's 'fundamental assumption of safety' in the world. According to Erikson (1995, 186), traumatic conditions "move to the centre of one's being", often creating a sense of being *marked*, thereby generating an altered relationship to the social world and to one's own history through a kind of liminal placement- feeling displaced/marked and yet caught, impelled into the web of social life. Erikson refers to this fraught positioning as being stuck in "centrifugal and centripetal tendencies"-simultaneously feeling alienated from, *and* connected to others, precisely through the experience of distress and trauma.

All three women are established professionals, and identify intellect as one of the reliable areas of competency in their lives. Nevertheless, both Vanja and Trisha particularly, attest to an ongoing sense of incompetence and confusion in their 'interior' worlds. In the following excerpts, Vanja testifies to her struggle to feel comfortable with emotions, and her tendency to survive through her intellect. From a psychoanalytic perspective, persons responding to intense stresses 'allow' the event(s) to bypass consciousness and may suffer thereafter from "emotional constriction" (Van der Kolk and Van der Hart, 1995). Krystal (1995) also notes that traumatic events or conditions may result in persons fearing their emotions, as emotions come to be experienced as heralding trauma.

Vanja: emotion, cognition, and the disruption of identity and social identifications

A felt dissonance between emotion and cognition is described by Vanja in the following way.

Being fairly dissociative, I managed to not experience much feeling for a long period of time. And I deal with stuff by basically still displacing it. You know, it comes out usually as

sarcasm or anger, things that are still, or more controlled by, intellect. I have a real problem with direct confrontation; you know, it's bizarre to me, but I'm still working to, in terms of like linking up the basic, this is you telling your abuse story, with these are the feelings that are correlated with it, you know. And that somehow these have to synthesize and that's how you start to move on. [But] when I'm in situations where I feel threatened and end up with any feeling, it feels overwhelming to me, and I have that complete flight. And then I get very worried about people's perceptions of me, you know, because it does become inexplicable to people at points, because you can function really, really well in one aspect and then just completely bomb out in another one. But, I mean, that's also something I rarely choose to explain to people either.

I've been totally mystified by women who've had the ability to just be like, emotive, and actually connecting with their anger and to really directly connect with what they're feeling...I think, for all the lack of self esteem that I felt as a survivor, I think I've also had this sense of intellectual superiority. You know, I think some people call it terminal uniqueness- there were places where I could be successful. For instance, my intellect. You know, I could get good marks. But I was unable to understand why I could function in those situations and then not take away whatever the skills were in terms of being able to do that and adapt them into other situations when I was a young adult. Like for me, developing *intellectualization* and stuff like that as a coping mechanism is my sense of how I adapted to my sexual abuse, I mean, that I coped with my head. So that I've had a consistent sense of being *thwarted*, you know, in terms of what I've done has been dominated mostly by my *emotional* ability to tolerate whatever the situation is, not by intellectual ability. It's almost like a *dichotomy*, it's like having another life, you know, like your interior life is like a survivor where you have all that kind of stuff going on, but - it's not something that's visible. [If you were to ask me about my grief around sexual exploitation, it would be] like, who might my core self have been except for this. Which there's no point in pursuing but, I have a very *thwarted* sense around that at some points.

Vanja testifies to the inadequacy of intellect or cognition to alter her sense of being socially thwarted.

Because so much of it is *autonomic*, like it's the whole- like cognitive therapy doesn't really, like, *work*. It doesn't really- I mean, I've explored, I've reframed, I've done whatever, but it's still a reality that I have this massive problem with *anxiety* that is so at odds with how I feel in terms of self confidence or confidence [due to lack of] an *internal source of reference* .[I experience] you know, that *kind of dissonance, you know, between intellect and feeling*. You know, which in practical terms affects stuff like *decision making*. Like, I'm almost 40 and I still feel like I'm going through this process of defining myself in a way an adolescent would, and that's the frustration. You know, [this may be due to] that kind of sense of not having a core system to relate to [which may be] attributed to compartmentalization, dissociation, you know, those kinds of things. But that's still not helpful in terms of *practicalities* of how you live your life.

Dissonance between feeling and thinking is perceptually linked by Vanja to an ongoing sense of incompetence concerning the negotiation of social relationships, and to a sense of damaged community,

in that she herself has come to believe that her social habits or competencies are often not perceived by others as intelligible, or performed in usual, socially legitimated ways.

And for me it becomes an ongoing frustration as become older, because, you know, as I become older I expect that there should be continuity of relationships, like historical relationships because of my age. Yet I still find that like, no matter what my intentions are, that I'm still a fairly insular person. I'm definitely an over-achiever in my work situation, so I put a lot more energy into work, than I will into kind of facilitating any kind of social interactions. I've had extreme anxiety over a number of years that I chose to deal with by simply abdicating from the majority of social situations- I don't know if narcissistic is the right word but, you know, I wasn't able to, for years, take in other people's perceptions of things. I never considered that, you know, me just disappearing would have any effect on people who cared about me. I didn't understand about reciprocity of relationships at all. And I think, basically, I'm still in a learning process with that. I often have no clear sense of how I am perceived in relationship to other people in terms of my behaviour. And that, for me, is probably what keeps me hooked into going to therapy is that I'll go and think, I can hardly believe this: I'm 38 years old and I don't realize that what I've done in this interaction is use this tone of voice that would, like, shrivel this person, and I don't seem to have a sense of awareness about that.

So now, you know, in terms of therapy and stuff, what I choose to emphasize looking at, is how do I become more functional in the world? How do I relate to other people? How do I get rid of what I think is an impediment to me in terms of doing what I want to do? Instead of looking back at the abuse, like, to look at it in terms of how it becomes manifested in terms of behaviour. But either way, it's still a dominating factor.

Her phenomenological experience of an absent 'core reference' and a mind dissociated from emotion generated in Vanja a powerful sense of lack of control over her life. In response to this experience of 'ontological insecurity', Vanja describes her teenage need for structure and ritual, for rules which offered the comfort of familiarity. At one point she was dealing drugs, in order to impose a ritualized structure to her life, as well as to blunt the anxiety and confusion she experienced socially. According to Herman (1992), it is not uncommon for traumatized persons to attempt to induce dissociation through the use of alcohol or narcotics.

But my experience of it at the time was that it was extremely comforting to go to a place like, particularly to a place like boarding school that was highly ritualized. Where the expectations were laid out and clear, where you wore a uniform, and where the focus was on, not so much who you were but sort of on meritocracy. [Later in my life,] you know, because I'd been a heroin addict and I had sold heroin, and I had- I mean, my experience of being involved in that lifestyle was that, you know, it was highly ritualized. I understood what I needed to do and what needed to be done. There was a format and structure to your life which was fairly predictable. There was tons of blunting, because you were actively involved in substance

abuse, [and] there was an ability to function outside of the social system as it existed. I think that, for me, it certainly was because social or sexual relationships were far more threatening than going into an underground parking lot with five thousand dollars to make a deal. I mean, those things *were* inherently more, and *remain* more threatening. And I think partly, because of a huge lack of familiarity with- I mean, how do you function in a relationship when you've never had a model for a relationship? How do you function as an adult sexually when your experience of sex has been to be sexually abused but not experience sex essentially? Whereas, I know, for some women, they would describe, you know, prostitution.

Vanja further testifies to a phenomenological association between her experience of dissonance between intellect and emotion, and a kind of *boundlessness*, further described by Vanja as a lack of a sense of *identity*. According to Muller (1996), the development of a sense of identity is a semiotic process requiring the mutual *recognition* of and by others. Since identity is culturally perceived to be profoundly rooted in kinship and in 'cultural forms of address in specific social settings', the sense of *thwarted recognition* as is testified to by the women in the context of sexual exploitation, appears to further result in the subjective sense of a lack of identity. Moreover, as Muller implies, as a consequence of trauma or due to the lack of the "usual semiotic markers that make possible stable and predictable relationships" (Muller, 1996, 84), the dynamic semiotic process of social life may breakdown and result in a rigidified or fixed sense of social location.

I *still* feel a relative lack of sense of identity in terms of, you know, I still feel this- I don't know- existential, internal void. you know, I still feel like I lack some kind of- you know, core of reference that I feel would allow me to make informed decisions. And I think that's because I feel a lot of dissonance between how I think and how I feel, that the two are relatively separate functions. And that my primary way of identifying myself is through my job, you know, a core sense of myself is still inextricably linked to being a sexual abuse survivor, for whatever happened to me during adolescence and whatever when I wasn't in role specific situations, I didn't feel like I had an identity. You know, I would have described- I used to describe myself kind of like a *psychic amoeba*. That I literally had no [*identity*]. That I was numb to a point, that I didn't have any aspirations, I didn't have any hopes, I didn't have any real connections with people. [I would have described myself as a teenager, as] not having much insight into it. I would have described myself as chronically depressed and anxious. And that I truly didn't have much sense of identity except as it was derived from whatever situation I was in. So my functioning was so minimal in some ways that I just had a totally confused sense of myself. [And I was constantly experiencing acute psychological distress]. They don't understand that when I'm talking about anxiety, I'm not talking about the fact that I think I might puke in front of these people. I'm talking about nearly being phobic. I'm talking about taking 2 Fermazipam before I go out.

Except in situational or role specific circumstances, Vanja's sense of an absent identity is simultaneous to her phenomenological experience of being 'sexually neutered'. This subjective association between lack of identity and a lack of a sense of sexuality is not coincidental. As a dynamic and lived relationality, sexuality in western society is "densely saturated with meaning as the ultimate, yet curiously enigmatic, marker of identity" (Felski, 1995, 177). In other words, sexuality has increasingly come to be culturally portrayed as *the* crucial axis of identity, constitutive of a secure social identity (Burch, 1993), and viewed as the cultural marker most deeply constitutive of gender roles (Richardson, 1993). Problematic identities, therefore, are simultaneously problems of personal phenomenology as well as problems of social identification.

...in some sense I almost felt completely *neutered*, in terms of being sexual, you know. That I had no positive experience of it. You know, it created huge psychological confusion...[in my latter teen years] I'd lost a relationship that I wanted to have. At that point I did not understand why, and what was clear to me was that I didn't have the skills, the insight, the ability, the sexual functioning, whatever, to be an equal partner in a relationship with somebody who was moderately healthy. And that was sobering- I mean, it's hard to describe, but it's like I've had this particularly *neutered* sense, you know, it's like, that I didn't want to have sexual attention from men or women. That I didn't, that that seemed to be one of the protective modes that I went into in terms of dealing with my abuse, is that for years, I just was celibate. [Even now] I rate sex as such a low priority, the part of it that comes up that's reminiscent of my sexual abuse is the *obligatory* part- particularly when you're in a long term relationship. [To be celibate] meets my need, or lack of need, [although] I can never sort out what it means in terms of my partner, or how you work around that.

Vanja's sense of a neutered identity is perceptually linked to her sexual exploitation and informs her subsequent equation more generally, of *femininity* with exploitation.

Femininity has a negative context to me. Like, I don't know why that is but it's almost like I have a visceral- because I equate femininity with being feminine..[and I think] femininity was something I would have perceived myself as being an utter failure at. That as part of my sexual abuse that I think I have carried around with me, is that I have a very *neutered* sense of myself as a sexual being or as a gendered person- because I don't think I ever had a sense of identifying myself as a person with gender, but that my- the feelings if I would ever think about it, it would mostly come up for me in relation to unwanted male attention. It took me a long [time to feel comfortable about myself as a woman], I had a certain awkwardness around assuming the role that I felt like I should be assuming, as a teenager, you know- I felt like I was not attracted to and also was mystified by and felt incapacitated by, and inadequate in the face of, how I thought I should be adapting myself to be a woman, particularly in puberty. Because I was never able to identify my sexual abuse, it's like I didn't have any analysis for it, but I had this just intense discomfort with it, particularly because I lived in an all-female

environment. And I was aware that what was interesting to my peers was not interesting to me, and that things that were kind of like rite of passage things, like make-up, and going to co-ed dances and all of these things- that somehow that had become negative to me, because the purpose of all those rites of passage things seemed to be like the attraction of male attention. I would always describe myself as somebody who had a completely neutered concept of femininity and that that is one of the things that I think is missing in terms of my sense of self, is that I don't have a sense of identification, like a strong sense of identification with being a woman. The whole realm of being a sexual being, being a woman, being even in interpersonal relationships, was simply too- not something I could cope with. So I didn't.

Vanja's perception of the effects of sexual exploitation, therefore, involve a series of interconnections between the subjective sense of a decoupling of *mind and emotion*, a phenomenological sense of *boundlessness*, the general sense of a lack of *identity* as well as a *neutered sexual identity*, and, in general, a feeling of incompetence concerning the negotiation of personal and intimate *relationships*.

Peggy: linking boundaries and self-protection

Although Peggy's discussion concerning her sense of ongoing effects differs somewhat from that of Vanja, a resonant theme is that of a sense of *boundlessness*, which she relates to the difficulty of defining and establishing both social and personal 'limits' within the context of *relationships*.

Peggy's references to the notion of *boundaries* is explicitly linked for her to the issue of self *protection*, which she associates with the identification of desires, with autonomy. Her difficulty in establishing boundaries is related by her to a tendency to be a 'people pleaser', and to her difficulty in challenging unwanted situations or behaviours. It may be noted here that the notion of 'boundaries' is much used as a contemporary therapeutic metaphor, and more generally has come to serve as a social idiom for expressing the working out of social relations in an autonomous fashion.

...being able to be consistent, with what you think inside and where you want people to stop, as far as how close they get to you- and your ability to say "NO", is an incredibly difficult boundary to keep. And one that I work on, and struggle with. A lot of people seem to think that sexual abuse victims or survivors have poor boundaries because they've been exploited so much that they have a tendency not be able to draw those lines- but they never had a point in their life where they were able to. I'd probably have to agree with that to some extent. But, I've certainly gotten better. But I tend to, I'm a person, I say 'yes' too much, I don't say 'no' enough, and I'll go an extra mile and find that, you know, I've had to deal with professional

burnout a couple of times, because of it. So now I have to bit my tongue sometimes when I'm too eager to please and do things that I really don't need to. I feel that not having those boundaries really creates a lot of difficulties for me. And I struggle with it all the time. It's not that it's my fault *per se*, I mean, I didn't ask to be sexually abused, but as an adult, I need to *protect* myself as much as I can. And because I'm such a people pleaser, that's hard for me. So like I said, it's a real struggle for me all the time, and I think its primarily wrapped up in sexual abuse, but I don't think that it should be fully blamed for it. But I certainly think it's something that I will continue to work towards, and probably struggle with, till the day I die. I tend to *trust* too much.

This sense of struggle around defining and implementing 'boundaries', that is, clarifying one's needs or wishes and thereby 'protecting' oneself, is additionally tied up for *Trisha* with a sense of mystification concerning the negotiation of social relationships and friendships.

Trisha: sexualized identity, adaptability, and the mystification of social relationships

As *Trisha* testifies, a sense of mystification around the negotiation of social relationships is further and complexly connected to the absence of a sense of identity (in contrast to *Vanja*) other than a completely *sexualized* identity. According to Herman (1992), the sexualization of identity may be an attempt to capture a sense of autonomy in an otherwise chaotically felt world. This description matches *Trisha*'s testimony of her sexual identity as having served as an attempt to achieve *control* over her relationships. The experience of a chaotically felt world is captured by *Trisha* in the image of the *chameleon*, which similarly to *Vanja*, connotes a sense of *boundlessness*. This sense of boundlessness is again recursively linked to her perceived lack of ability to negotiate social relationships. As with *Vanja*, *Trisha* talks about her adaptability under particular role -defined or situational contexts as that which offered at least a semblance of competence in the social world.

I think, I'm not sure actually, that I had a sense of self. I think because of the things that happened to me as a child, that I was a *chameleon*. I didn't have a strong sense of self. I think that I could be whatever I had to be under different circumstances, so I had these incredible antennas that used to tell me how to behave in particular places, and I could fit in. And I look back on that now and I call those my *chameleon* days, when I could blend into every scenario. I think what happened to me was that my identity became sexualized. It wasn't just social relations that became sexualized. I didn't know how to be a friend, I didn't know how to be a lover, I didn't know- there were a lot of things that I didn't know how to be because this relationship with a man that I trusted and loved as a father had become so terribly distorted, and I think that what happened for me was that I learned how to control and manipulate men

sexually. My identity was so perverted and distorted by that experience, and I think that because of the stage in my development, psychosocial development that sex was introduced in, and the way it was introduced. So I don't think that I really had an identity outside of sexuality, because everything was geared to sexualizing how I related to people. My sense is that I really felt it as identity, like, my identity, my sense of self had been sexualized. It wasn't just the relationships- I think that what happened for me, or what I feel happened for me is that my very identity was sexualized, my sense of self was sexualized. Which is slightly different from relationships being sexualized, that what happened to me I think really affected my sense of self and my sense of identity. I didn't know how to be a friend, I didn't know how to be a lover, I didn't know how to be an autonomous independent human being. I only learned how to be sexual. I only learned that in a relationship with someone that you love and you trust, you have to do these things in order for them to love you and to keep looking after you and to be good to you.

And it's been a major, major crisis and problem to me in my life, that I don't know, when people talk about being friends and having conversations and having affection, that has been a *mystery* to me. I've had to really struggle to learn how to have those kinds of relationships with people. I have not been able to have friendships, or feel affection, or be close, or having conversations without introducing really overtly sexual messages which gave me the reassurance that I was loved. Being desired sexually reassured me that I was liked and loved, and wanted, and cared about. And secondly, it also in a wierd way, protected me from them because I could manipulate them and control them- that is how I kept men out, how I kept men at a distance and how I kept safe.

I think that what had happened to me sexually had contorted me in every area of my life. And that's why I equate the two, because I think if you take a child, and force sexual activity on that child, the things that a kid is supposed to be learning about who they are as a person- like how you relate to other human beings, gets completely distorted and linked into sexuality. I didn't know how to be simply friends with someone, I didn't know how to have affection, I didn't know how to love. And I sincerely think that people who have been sexually abused as children by someone with whom they have a caregiver relationship, that it really screws you up in ways that I don't know that the literature, or people who have thought about it very much know; in that sexuality which should be a piece of the jigsaw puzzle becomes the only piece in the jigsaw puzzle. And it becomes so central and core, I think it affected my relationships in a really fundamental way in that I really didn't feel worthy of friendships. So I think my social relations, those that involve any degree of trust, were, you know, problematic. So far as social relations with people in authority and with men, wherever there is a power dynamic, or a male, it's been hard for me.

I feel that not only did I have a sexualized identity, I also had no sense of self. Being that *chameleon* didn't give me that sense of who I actually was. And I think that one of the reasons my social relationships were so fraught with sex was because I had no concept of a shared space that I could enter into, in a ground that was mutual. And was asexual.

To broadly summarize, what Trisha, Peggy and Vanja variously testify to in these passages is an overwhelming sense of social incompetence due to the following: lack of a sense of identity; either a

total sexualization of self or complete absence of a sense of sexuality; a split between cognitive and affective aspects of self; and a subjective experience of boundlessness or lack of boundaries- manifested by a difficulty in defining and enforcing their own social needs or desires, or by a perceived lack of social competence except in rule governed or role dictated situations.

Discussion: placing women's testimonies in theoretical and cultural context

Dominant psychodynamic discourses typically point to these consequences as individualized and psychological consequences of the trauma and betrayal effected by childhood sexual abuse (Herman, 1992; Freyd, 1994). According to Herman, the primary forms of adaptation following sexual exploitation are dissociation, development of a fragmented identity, and the 'pathological regulation' of emotional states. Symptoms following sexual abuse may include depression, anxiety, depersonalization or out of body experiences, sense of isolation, interpersonal and social maladjustment, dependency, and an impaired ability to judge trustworthiness (Russell, 1995). Also destroyed may be the belief that one can 'be oneself' in relation to others, often coinciding with the elaboration of somatic and psychological symptoms (Herman, 1992).

Kamsler (1990) critically provides a brief but excellent summary of the major themes in dominant psychodynamic literature concerning clinically observed symptoms following childhood sexual abuse. As Kamsler notes, most of the literature identifies 'effects' as *psychological damage* which leaves women with long-term impairments in their 'personality', even going so far as to view these women as manifesting a 'syndrome'.¹³ Others, such as Blake-White and Kline (1985) view women's symptoms as overlapping those identified by the DSMIII as indicative of post-traumatic stress disorder.¹⁴ The major themes in the literature are those of dissociation and repression of emotion, ideas which underpin the therapeutic goals of 'getting in touch with repressed emotion' and 'dealing with repressed memories' (Blake-White and Kline, 1985). As Kamsler notes, these ideas are

based on the notion that helping clients understand the meaning of repressed conflict is likely to produce change in the client's behavior.

In her critical appraisal of this body of literature, Kamsler notes that the overriding focus on *psychodynamics* ignores the social and cultural context of social relations and ignores the contribution of the perpetrator's interactions with victimized women on the development of their self perception. Kamsler refers to the work of Ward (1984) in criticizing dominant psychology's tendency to tacitly characterize women and daughters as active parties and fathers as 'passive puppets' in assessments of accountability in cases of sexual exploitation, thereby encouraging a victim blaming stance.

Still other psychological literature views sexual exploitation within the framework of family systems theory, in which sexual exploitation is seen as the result of a dysfunctional family dynamic (see MacLeod and Saraga, 1988; Waldby et al., 1989). In this view, sexual exploitation comes to be seen as serving a function for the family, or to be a defence against loss (Gutheil and Avery, 1977).

Kamsler supports Herman's (1985) view that not all child sexual assault or exploitation inevitably leads to lasting emotional distress. Rather, she argues that there are contextual ways of viewing how difficulties might develop in sexually abused children. She notes that the development of a perception of self as dirty and guilty may lead to the establishment of patterns of behaviour such as secrecy and self blame, feelings which may be reinforced if disclosure is not believed and which may promote the 'survival of habitual responses and beliefs' related to feelings of unworthiness and self blame in her other and ongoing social relationships. As well, Kamsler points out that abuse victims are often powerfully under the influence of prescriptions for feeling, thinking and behaviour as dictated by the perpetrator of abuse, and furthermore, that these prescriptions often coincide with wider, culturally normative values and beliefs concerning appropriate *female* behavior.

Taking into account these general criticisms of the psychodynamic emphasis in dominant analyses of childhood sexual exploitation, one might nevertheless posit that the testimonies offered by

the women I interviewed, overlap with these descriptions of ‘symptoms’. Because one of the major ‘effects’ identified by the women is the perceived disruption or absence of identity, it might be useful to try to set aside for a moment, these dominant psychological interpretations and examine this issue through the lens of contemporary social theory and its concern with *identity politics*.

Although by no means a homogeneously used notion, current social and poststructuralist theory views identity not as an ‘essence’, but as a socially constructed and decentred multiplicity. In this view, identity may be seen as striated by the different cultural *axes* of race, class, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, etcetera. Identity here is a fully cultural product, signalling a ‘constructed’ subjectivity whose characteristics shift over time, through different social contexts, and within different relationships (McRobbie, 1992). In other versions, persons are viewed as socially positioned through multiple and often contradictory *discourses*, suggesting that persons should not be seen as singular, unified and cohesive subjects, but as multiple and fragmented (Flax, 1993).

Taking Trisha’s testimony of a sexualized identity as example, what this model of multiple personhood might suggest is that the axis of sexuality had somehow become separated from the rest of the influences and cultural markers which are said to constitute social persons. To adapt Bourdieu’s notion, Teresa had developed a *relational habitus* (or a relatively enduring disposition to her social world) which was only sexual. Trisha’s description of a sexual identity which ‘was all there was’ to her identity, is a description of the phenomenological eclipsing of the multiple aspects of identity, a form of dissociation, as it were. In contrast to the psychological notion of dissociation, Trisha’s account suggests a dissociation of the multiple strands of identity, and in such a way so that one of these strands (sexuality) came to be foregrounded. As she herself notes, sexuality, which should only be a *piece* of the jigsaw puzzle, became the *only* piece in the jigsaw puzzle. To repeat, what Trisha seems to be suggesting is a dissembling of the multiple strands of identity, so that she no longer could effect a knowledgeable negotiation of her social world except through her sexual identity. The ability to

sustain shifting emphases of identity in varying contexts had been dis-abled. Put differently, the tacit mutual influence of different axes of identity became phenomenologically disrupted through transgression of one of its parts, her sexuality. Furthermore, it seems that the implicit interconnection of these axes was revealed only through its unraveling.

While this theoretical notion of multiple identity seems at least potentially useful given the above analysis, its efficacy is reduced when further applied to Vanja's description of a felt *absence* of identity. In her perception, she suffers a loss even of sexual identity, and through the image of a *psychic amoeba*, implies a loss of any sense of interconnection between the different strands of her social positioning. At this point, one might argue that the model of multiple personhood is lacking in its theoretical ability to explain how, or through what mechanisms, the above described axial or discursive linkages are made, or how or why they might become disrupted. Indeed, in some versions of the notion of multiplicity, particularly in the notion of positionality, it is posited that individuals are not just *determined* by structural constraints, but are in fact, *enabled* by these multiple positionings to better negotiate the demands placed on them through the multiplication of *choices* (Giroux, 1992; (Smith, 1988). Many versions of the notion of multiple personhood, in other words, tacitly encourage a view of an ever conscious and cognitive individual, adept at invoking, deconstructing and reconstructing various aspects of their identity in order to deal with the fluid and contradictory events, imperatives and relationships in their lives.

It is apparent, however, that this model fails in its theoretical ability to account for the women's sense of disrupted identity, their sense of *fixity* in their social worlds and the ineffectiveness of cognitive measures to allay their experience of social incompetence or anxiety. Kleinman (1995, 133) refers to the sense of fixity in relation to suffering, as *resistance*, in the sense of a barrier, or "*opposition to the flow of lived experience.*" This notion of resistance condenses a felt sense of bodily alienation and a felt lack of social efficacy. Identity politics, in other words, shows itself to be a highly

cognate theorization of multiple social locations, but offers little by way of addressing the *phenomenological* experience of these locations, the significance of the *body* for one's lived sense of identity, or the implicitly *relational* character of identity. As later will become more clear, identity politics also fails to account for the ways in which the *subjective, lived* experience of social locations is achieved, at least in part, through inchoate, mobile and unconscious resonances of '*structured feeling*' which are not only personally felt, but deeply culturally informed.

Women's own accounts, however, offer another way through which to understand their sense of fixity and disrupted identity. This is what Trisha has to say about the importance of the sexually exploited *body*.

It really, it's got to do with somebody who's been silenced, somebody who's very soul- I mean, you inhabit this body and all of a sudden, your own body becomes your enemy. The problem is when you look at the violence perpetrated against women, you're looking at something that is qualitatively different, because what happens is you take the woman's body and use *that* as the violence. *That* becomes the weapon. It's not like a fist against your skin, it's not like a gunshot, it's not like something that comes from the outside into your body. It's your own body is the weapon, *is* the violence itself. And I don't know how to get that across- the difference between the physical beating and the sexual assault is that the weapon that was used was my body, not the other person's body. And I don't know how to explain that, because, you know, you're sexually abused and this guy is doing stuff to you, your body is being violated, there is a physical assault involved. But the sexual assault part is that it's your own body that is the weapon against you. And I don't know how to articulate that any better, it's that your own body is that person's weapon. They take it away and use it against you. And that's, that's like, that's the key, so you're silenced, your body is taken against you.

I think my sexual identity as a teenager was completely and utterly a fabrication. I observed what was going on around me and I duplicated it and that whole facade was worsened by the fact that I didn't really feel anything with my body anyway. My sexual identity was very much in my head and it wasn't in my body, I mean, my body didn't work. I think that for the longest time I really lived as if I had no body, it was always cut off from the neck, there was nothing from the neck down. I think that the distress that the incest caused when I was a child and the way of surviving, it really, for me, meant cutting off my body, cutting off the connection between my mind and my body, and I did that to survive.

Trisha here is not really referring to the psychology of abuse, or to a paucity of cognitive strategies. Rather, she testifies to the manner in which sexual exploitation dismantled the *interpretive grid* of her social world through a subjectively felt theft of her *body*, and a subsequent loss of

phenomenological *access* to her body. Her comments suggestively raise questions about the significance of the *body* to women's earlier described perception of lack of coherence between mind and body, and their perceived absence of a sense of *identity*.

According to Herman (1992, 52, 53), the trauma of sexual exploitation violates the autonomy of the person at the point of '*basic bodily integrity*', often resulting in the loss of bodily feelings. Consequently, the abused person may develop 'abnormal states of consciousness' in which the "ordinary relations of body and mind, reality and imagination, knowledge and memory, no longer hold" (Herman, 1992, 96). Additionally, they may experience 'numbing' or depersonalization, entering into an altered, dissociated consciousness, including emotional detachment, where events are disconnected from their ordinary meaning.

Following Kleinman, 'psychocentrism', which often insists on a stringent mind-body dualism, is profoundly flawed as an approach for understanding the experience of illness, suffering and healing. What is missing in most psychodynamic interpretations of distress following child sexual exploitation, and which is suggestively provoked by Trisha's account, is an adequate theoretical understanding of the significance of *embodiment* and an understanding of the *relationally indexed* and *culturally informed* ways in which distress is *in-corporated* and bodily lived. In other words, what is lacking is an understanding of *embodied distress* in which the body is not merely a *container* of psyche and mind, but the *culturally lived* and *existential ground for intersubjectivity* (Csordas, 1994).

This theoretical absence informs the direction for the rest of this research project. This thesis, then, is concerned to develop an understanding of the significances of embodiment in order to generate insights into these women's sense of bodily dissociation. To that end, my research focus is simply the following: what is the significance of the *lived body* to the felt experience of sexual exploitation? Put differently, what might different phenomenological, anthropological and sociological theories of the body bring to bear on understandings of the *lived, embodied experience of childhood sexual abuse*?

To explicate the significances of disembodiment requires first of all an understanding of what it means to be embodied; I try in the rest of this paper to outline a paradigm of embodiment. Taking as premise the notion that human sociality and agency is implicitly embodied, that is, requires a fully mindful-bodily connectedness, runs counter to culturally normative understandings. As will be reiterated throughout this paper, much of the *social organization* of our western world implicitly stems out of the cultural logics of a mind/body duality (see chapter six). In other words, I am suggesting that the *mind/body duality* is implicitly linked to the cultural organization of relations of power (i.e., class, gender, race) in the 'western' context. Relatedly, the mind/body duality also critically informs culturally specific notions of reason, emotion, health and agency. I will argue that the structuring of social relations along this duality *configures lived experience* in particular ways, that it results in *resonances of structured feelings*- resonances that, as embodied associations, infuse our experience of class, gender, race, agency and lived sociality. Put differently, I will be arguing that the structuring of social relations along this duality means that this duality imposes resonances of *structured feelings* which also impinge on and powerfully shape these women's experience of sexual exploitation. These structured feelings, in other words, are not just ideological, but are *felt* aspects of one's embodied social praxis, and are felt characteristics of our immersion in the lived flow of experience. I will also argue that loss of a sense of connectedness to one's body disrupts one's embodied immersion in the lived flow of experience.

By way of this analysis, I will move away from purely psychodynamic explanations, towards producing an anthropologically informed account of the culturally shaped ways in which the intersubjective, *lived body* is subjectively felt to become *thwarted* through sexually exploitative social relations. By so doing, I hope to be able to offer different kinds of explanations for (these) women's experiences of thwarted identity, boundlessness, dissociation between mind and emotion, and their sense of mystification and incompetence in the negotiation of social relationships. In the following

chapter, I briefly review some of the contemporary debates and cultural understandings which serve as the cultural context and impetus for this thesis.

PROVIDING A CULTURAL CONTEXT: TRAUMA, MEMORY AND THE ONTOLOGY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Ontological truth is a question of *existentially dialectical process*: it is a function of the power of an interpretation to make a fundamental existential disclosure; a disclosure that opens us to changes in our existence, our dwelling. The truth of an interpretation can only be measured by reference to the depth, and the character, of the opening-to-Being experienced by those human beings who have deeply and thoughtfully encountered the interpretation in question. The truth does not consist in an event...which somehow comes to pass in absolute non-relatedness to the being of human existence.

David Michael Levin¹⁵

Contemporary debates: the containment of issues surrounding sexual abuse

The lack of *anthropological* attention to issues around child sexual exploitation is somewhat surprising given its prominent profile in contemporary popular debates. These debates, which tend to circle around the validity and ‘truth’ of ‘recovered memories’, (or memories of sexual exploitation which were forgotten but later recalled in adult life), have come to dominate and overdetermine the kinds of questions one might ask about sexual exploitation, and have tended to circumscribe the ontological and epistemological concerns believed to be central to the issue itself.

One of the most visible organizations which has formed in recent years against the notion of recovered memories is the False Memory Syndrome Foundation (FMSF), a group mobilized in the early 1990’s by parents accused of child sexual abuse. This organization has been actively involved in challenging the psychoanalytic notion of ‘repressed’ or dissociated memories, controversial notions of memory usually associated with events of trauma or betrayal. Psychoanalytic views hold that trauma may result in altered storing or encoding of events so that they are inaccessible to the victim, but may be ‘recovered’ later in life, sometimes through therapy. Due to the fact that many of the *known* claims of recovered memories take place in therapy, and given the putative unproven character of the concept of repression, adherents of the FMSF are correspondingly able to claim that therapists are being trained to elicit false memories of abuse. It can be noted here that psychoanalytic theory in general has

historically viewed as axiomatic the notion that there is “never an interpretandum that is not already an interpretans” (Gatens, 1996, 84). In other words, rearrangements and retranscriptions of past events are believed to always already lend a ‘fictive status’ to personal histories. Challenges to the concept of memory are, therefore, not limited to ‘repressed’ memories, but extend to the commonsensical, everyday understandings of the ‘normal’ processes of remembering. To summarize, memory is argued by critics as lacking a veridical relationship to the past. Rather, memory is seen to be a reconstructive process, characterized by the creative re-organization of past and current impressions and beliefs, a process that is enacted through ongoing and open-ended narrative practices.

The FMSF’s problematization of memory, however, often tends to conflate two separate sociological phenomena: sexual abuse as ‘recovered memories’ in the lives of adult women (and men), and the ‘truthfulness’ of children’s accounts of abuse. By invoking a very narrow definition of ‘memory’ as the common critical ground between these cultural concerns, all the particularized and politically distinctive issues and questions which might be asked about these two areas of concern tend to be elided. In other words, the politics of memory- as they are articulated within these debates- involves more than questions about memory per se. It also speaks to how the idiom of memory, in very narrowly conceptualized terms, has come to be imbued with a kind of explanatory power capable of absorbing a variety of different kinds of political questions and culturally nuanced differences- and making them appear to be one and the same.

Because many of the psychological discourses on sexual abuse draw on clinical accounts, critics of the notion of recovered memory have been able to argue that women’s memories of abuse have been elicited by therapists, thereby ignoring large populations of women whose recovered memories, or forgotten but verifiable histories of abuse (Williams, 1994) are located outside of therapeutic contexts altogether. I have argued elsewhere (see Vanderbijl, 1996) that current attempts to frame questions related to sexual abuse along the dimension of memory, and to secure these arguments

through invocation of either psychoanalytic or cognitive models of memory (as well as through attempts to locate universalizable physiological processes in the mind), are attempts not only to determine truth or not-truth, but are part of larger cultural struggles over the *epistemic means* for arbitrating truth claims in the first place.

In this chapter, I will focus on several interrelated issues, briefly reviewing ideas related to 'traumatic' memory, cultural determinates for understanding memory, embodied memory, and to the cultural notion of co-dependency- so as to identify culturally normative notions of psychological health and/or distress.

Traumatic memory

The 'containment' of wider issues related to sexual exploitation occurs in part because of the entrenchment of psychoanalytic views of memory as they are connected to the notion of trauma, and to the concomitant association of sexual exploitation with the constitution of traumatic memories. This association between memory and trauma goes back to the turn of the century with the work of Janet, Breuer and Freud. Van der Kolk and Van der Hart's (1995) summary of the historical roots of the notion of traumatic memory show how Janet, already in the late 1800's, had distinguished *traumatic memory* as 'memory that takes 'too long', is inflexible and invariable, has no social component, is not addressed to anyone in particular and is a solitary activity, usually invoked under particular conditions in an automatic way under circumstances which trigger it. Janet viewed dissociation as the lack of 'proper integration of intensely emotionally arousing experiences', resulting in the dissociated formation of traumatic memories or 'subconscious fixed ideas', although still influencing the person's perceptions, affect and behaviour. In his view, dissociated, traumatic memories result in emotional constriction, or an inability to experience a full range of affect or emotions. Janet argued that traumatic memories were preserved in an abnormal state, and that the severance of the normal connections between knowledge, memory and emotion due to trauma incapacitated the 'synthesizing' function of the

mind. Not unlike Freud's later belief, Janet speculated that 'fragments of unintegrated experiences' might later manifest themselves in *behavioural enactments*. Janet believed that persons become 'attached' to the trauma in that they cannot come to make sense of their terror, which he referred to as an 'idée fixe' (in Herman, 1992), and which Freud later referred to as being 'fixated'.

Much of Breuer's work was done in relation to the diagnosis of hysteria, in which he believed that the tendency to 'split' or dissociate was basic to the pathology of *hysteria*. Breuer viewed trauma induced hysteria as 'state-dependent' (dissociated) learning, believing that hysteria originated during the presence of 'paralyzing' or frightening events. Freud moved away from this idea, arguing against the notion of trauma induced dissociation, and instead introducing the view that hysteria was the result of *repression* of incestuous activities. In his original 'seduction theory', Freud speculated that sexual abuse after a certain age would not be repressed. Freud's earlier view that hysteria was the result of repressed memories of sexual exploitation later were revised to the position that hysteria was the consequence of repression of conflict laden sexual and aggressive ideas or instincts. Interestingly, Freud appears to have used the terms dissociation, suppression, inhibition and repression almost interchangeably over the course of his lifetime (Singer, 1990).¹⁶ However unclear the distinctions, what might be noted is that repression posits a view of a vertically layered mind, in that what is 'repressed' comes to be *pushed down* into the unconscious, with the individual subsequently lacking access to it. In this view, its assumed existence may only be indicated through symbolic or indirect means. Alternately, dissociation suggests a horizontally layered model of the mind, implying that traumatic memories may be contained in an alternate stream of consciousness which may either be subconscious, or which may dominate consciousness during traumatic re-enactments.

Freud additionally proposed that the compulsion to *repeat trauma* is inherent to the process of repression itself; both Janet and Freud appear to have agreed that the main factor instigating the repetition of trauma was the presence of "mute, unsymbolized, and unintegrated experiences" (Van der

Kolk and Van der Hart, 1995, 167). Although Freud generally proposed repression to be a *motivated* act, it was later reconceptualized, largely through the work of his daughter, Anna Freud, as an *unconscious* process (Singer, 1990). Psychodynamic psychiatry has since attached critical significance to the therapeutic goal of putting memories into words and thereby integrating them into *narrative memory*. Janet also proposed that in order for memories to become ‘unfixed’ and successfully integrated, it would be necessary for the person to be able to mobilize adaptive actions, or in other words, to be able to have success in acting on their environment (Van der Kolk et al., 1995). Embedded in this view is the idea that the rediscovery of one’s history is central to the task of overcoming psychological trauma, and that psychological trauma occurs in the first place, when one’s action on their environment is ineffective, or of no avail.

It is clear given these disparate models of the mind, that memories can not both be dissociated and repressed. Although the terms repression and dissociation often seem to be used interchangeably in popular (and professional) debates, there appears to be a current move in the psychiatric field, at least, to favor the notion of dissociated memories, a notion perhaps more compatible with the concept of ‘recovered memories’. While I do not wish to rehearse these debates, I would like to add that the concept of dissociation is itself an elastic term and seems historically to have been a criteria for several diagnostic categories, including borderline personality disorder, somatization disorder, and multiple personality disorder, all three of which used to be subsumed under the category of hysteria. All three diagnoses include the criteria of dissociative characteristics and difficulty in relationships. In the context of sexual exploitation, these diagnoses today are as likely to be replaced by resort to the Post-Traumatic Syndrome Disorder (PTSD) (Herman, 1992).

PTSD, in its latest definition in the DSM-IV (see end-note), includes responses (may be delayed) to an overwhelming event or events that may take the form of repeated intrusive

hallucinations; entails numbing that may occur during or after the experience; and results in altered states of arousal to stimuli recalling or triggering the event(s).¹⁷

Freud, much earlier already, had argued that for those who undergo traumatic events, it was not the moment of the event only, but the passing out of it, that is survival itself, that constituted the crisis (Caruth, 1995b, 9). This understanding tacitly underlies the diagnosis of PTSD, as it suggests a history that ‘possesses’ the one who lives through it, and not as a conventionally understood testimony to the event(s), but as register of “a past that was never fully experienced as it occurred” (Caruth, 1995c, 151). Trauma, in this view, is not merely experienced as repression, but as a “temporal delay that carries the individual beyond the shock of the first moment” (Caruth, 1995b, 10). As Caruth notes, the past “encounters consciousness only through the very denial of active recollection” (Caruth, 1995c, 152). In other words, the history of trauma is referential “precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs”, so that history is graspable “only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence” (Caruth, 1995b, 8). This creates a situation in which the self *cannot effectively bear witness to oneself*; this lost capacity to bear witness to oneself may result in a sense of annihilation, “for when one’s history is abolished, one’s identity ceases to exist as well” (Laub, 1995, 67).

In this psychoanalytic view, testimony serves as the possibility of reclaiming oneself as witness or listener to oneself (Laub, 1995). In a general sense, then, testimony is not just cognitive, but performative (Felman, 1995, 56). Moreover, trauma here is bound up with the question of *truth* in a manner that extends beyond the question of individual pathology to also involve questions about the ‘location’ of historical meaning, the intersubjective nature of social worlds, and the socio-moral dimensions of suffering. This enlarged framework encourages a view that requires an integrated examination of social context, personal history and cultural norms and practices to uncover how these linkages lend traumatic meaning to events that might not be similarly disabling in other contexts (Caruth, 1995b). Trauma also needs to be understood as arising out of constellations of life

experiences and persisting conditions, as well as from discrete or acute events (Erikson, 1995, 185). Rather than applying pathological interpretations to human distress, Kleinman argues for a “humanly significant relationship of witnessing, affirming, and engaging the patient’s and family’s existential experience” (Kleinman, 1995, 36).

Biomedicine and psychiatry’s location in a western philosophical tradition has encouraged a view of an individuated, self defining self, along with a tendency to formulate ethical problems as “rational choice among abstract principles”, leaving the burden of responsibility for pain and its alleviation onto individual men and women (Kleinman, 1995, 49). Embedded in biomedicine and psychiatry’s insistence on such dichotomies as body/mind, functional and real diseases, is a jaundiced view of one’s individual experience of suffering, which tends to be seen as “biased accounts of a too-personal somewhere” (Kleinman, 1995, 32). In many ways, the psychological, social and moral are viewed as superficial or “epiphenomenal cover” that ‘disguises the bedrock of truth’, thereby promoting a ‘dehumanizing’ value orientation that is not present with the “same regularity and intensity, by other healing traditions described in the cross-cultural record” (Kleinman, 1995, 30, 31). In this western philosophical framework, psychotherapy, for example, can not be seen as a ‘quest for the spirit’, even though that is frequently how it comes to be felt for many. Kleinman further argues that the very idea of ‘life force’ or vitality animating bodies is not present in biomedicine or psychiatry, so that therapy cannot work by revitalizing devitalized neuronal or social networks; the possibility of ‘soul loss’, as might be felt in depression, for example, is simply not conceivable in western psychiatric formulations.

As Kleinman adds, the very idea of posttraumatic stress as a disorder tends to ‘invalidate’ the “moral and political meaning of suffering”, and obscures the “teleological connotations” inherent in distress (Kleinman, 1995, 115).¹⁸ Because of the emphasis on psychodynamic processes, what is lost is an avenue for exploring injustice, moral significances, the socio-politically infused nature of

experiences of alienation, and loss of emotional connections. The diagnostic capacity of psychiatric and medical categories to capture the vicissitudes of human distress tends instead to rest on issues of legitimation and delegitimation; this often means that diagnoses do not take into account local and historically contingent cultural logics of power and inequality. In the North American context, bereaved or traumatized persons are 'expected to get on with it', informed by an ethos that suggests suffering need not be endured, but instead 'worked through', rather than "commemorated" in a way so that the larger social collective remembers (Kleinman, 1995, 80). In Kleinman's view, we would 'do better' if we saw violence and exploitation and its consequences as "*processes* that are motivated by layered specificities and inexpediciencies of social and political forces" (italics in original) (Kleinman, 1995, 187). As he adds, the violated need not be romanticized or cynically deconstructed; rather, he encourages a cultural dynamics of witnessing that attends to suffering and distress in all its murkiness and with attention to all its felt qualities. As Kleinman notes about political trauma, trauma is "interwoven with moral-somatic processes that bring social memory into the body and that project the individuality of persons into social space" (Kleinman, 1995, 188).

This cross-animation of individual/ social memory is often lost in contemporary understandings, which is due in part to culturally particularized definitions of memory and to dominant cultural beliefs concerning the role of memory in the constitution of self (see Csordas, 1996). As Csordas notes, access to memory as a vehicle to a sense of psycho-cultural continuity and identity renders to memory an important status as a cultural symbol of self. In the following section I look briefly at some of the cultural factors shaping our understanding of memory.

Cultural determinates for understanding memory

In the context of the issue of sexual exploitation, and as the following discussion will elaborate, individual experiences or events cannot simply be understood by reference to specific signs/ acts or through identification of explicit features (Connerton, 1989). Rather, one's sexual experience might

better be understood as a *felt precipitate* of both the general (culturally dominant) and specific (personal and idiosyncratic) enmeshed expectations and psycho-moral associations which accompany, structure and animate sexual activities and relations.

Given this view, it is important to note that the links between memory, politics, psychosocial identity, language and history are culturally complex and stand in complicated, reciprocal relationships with one's sense of gender, class, individuality and other markers of cultural importance (Singh, Skerrett Jr, Hogan, 1996, 8). As Singh et al. note in their introduction, marginalized groups often struggle to maintain at the centre of social memory those events and conditions which dominant groups would like to forget. Given the fact that persons are socially located differently by cultural indices of class, gender, race etcetera, it is possible, in other words, that persons of varying social locations may develop and forget different meanings for the selfsame event(s), condition(s) or histories (Kaschak, 1992, 31). Moreover, what one is capable of seeing (and experiencing) as violence or distress is at least, in part, dependent on one's embodied social location (Lashgari, 1995, 7).

If it is true, generally speaking, that our cultural context "dictates what is and is not remembered and how forgetting occurs" then it also becomes possible to say that certain perspectives of events and conditions may remain invisible, because unrepresentable in current language and in current epistemological frames of references (Kaschak, 1992, 30). As Bruner (1986, 6, 7) notes,

some experiences are inchoate, in that we simply do not understand what we are experiencing, either because the experiences are not storyable, or because we lack the performative and narrative resources, or because the vocabulary is lacking.

In discussion of the holocaust, Felman (1996, 16) talks about "pieces of memory" that have "not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition, events in excess of our frames of reference". Hoogestraat (1995, 25) cites Rich's forceful statement : "If we have learned anything in our coming to language out of silence,

it is that what has been unspoken, therefore *unspeakable* in us is what is most threatening to the patriarchal order... All silence has a meaning.” (italics in original).

In challenge to the current dominant emphasis on the constitutive character of discourse and language, however, Bruner (1986) argues for an enlarged focus on the *lived experience* of people as corrective to the overarching concerns with cultural grammars. Lived experience, in this view, exceeds the boundaries of language and discourse, is far messier and more inchoate than can be expressed through language. These comments provocatively raise questions concerning the limits of both language and cognition to the interpretation of lived experience, to the development of memories of these experiences, and as importantly, raises concerns about the way we are culturally given to understand what counts as knowledge in the first place.

Political ideologies and values act as knowledges through their encouragement of particular forms of attention to societal arrangements, and are forceful not only as abstract ideas but through their lived modalities within cultural practices (Oakeshott, 1962). As well, some ways of knowing may be more enabling or better ways of knowing than others (in Lanzmann, 1995). That knowledge is more than can be located in a cognitive, coherently organized narrative of recall is especially important given the current emphasis by the False Memory Syndrome Foundation adherents on particular forms of memory which are required to be rendered scientifically verifiable, and additionally important, given their disregard for ways of thinking about *knowledges* or *'truths'* that don't appear in easily recognizable (narrative) forms. According to Connerton, culturally dominant theories of memory tend to privilege personal or cognitive notions of memory at the expense of habit-memory, and tend to view remembering as a *mental* act or occurrence, and as an *individual* faculty (Connerton, 1989). Connerton further notes that culturally dominant models of memory are cognitive models which see memory as an encoding process, a process which problematically depends on universalizable cognitive

structures. The weakness of this model may be better understood by examining what it may mean to talk instead of habituated, embodied memory.

Embodied, practical memory

Critical of the information-processing model of memory, Connerton argues that the notion of individual memory, separated out from social memory, is an “abstraction almost devoid of meaning” (Connerton, 1989, 37). Rather, he notes that persons have different memories attached to the different mental landmarks that characterize specific groups, and that subordinated groups develop memories with different details, different ‘rhythms’ and different narrative shapes from those of the dominant groups. As Connerton (1989, 21) says, “the narrative of one life is part of an interconnecting set of narratives; it is embedded in the story of those groups from which individuals derive their identity.”

Memory is, moreover, not just carried forward in words, but in *acts*, as well as through music, poetry, religious ritual, and in other material/symbolic practices (de Hernandez, 1996; Kleinman, 1995; Connerton, 1989).¹⁹ And very importantly, the *body's* “remembrance of formative events” (Kleinman, 1995) may occur through *habituated practices* so that bodily memory, biography and social history merge, suggesting that the body is a potent sedimentation of the “moral processes of social experience aggregated historical event, symbolic meaning, and social situations” (Kleinman, 1995, 143). In his discussion of illness narratives, Kleinman (1995, 143) talks further about the manner in which bodily complaints evoke social complaints, although not at a representational level, but as “lived and relived (remembered through experience) in the body”, suggesting the idea of a bodily indexed register of injured and injurious social relations or conditions.

By so doing, Kleinman evokes resonances with Connerton’s notion of *habit-memory*, in which he defines habit as “a knowledge and a remembering...in the body”, in which the body “understands” through the cultivation of habit (Connerton, 1989, 95). Drawing on Merleau-Ponty, Connerton notes that the phenomenology of habit requires that we revise our notion of *understanding* and our notion of

the body, stating that “meaning cannot be reduced to a sign which exists on a separate ‘level’ outside the immediate sphere of the body’s acts” (Connerton, 1989, 95). Rather, habits can be viewed as “affective dispositions”, the kind of activity “in which a cluster of features are collected together to form a practice: an activity which is acquired in the sense that it is influenced by previous activity” (Connerton, 1989, 93, 94). In this view, bodily habits are ‘continuously practiced activities’, and above all, should not be seen as mere ‘signs’. Connerton challenges current social theories which subject habitual practices or embodied experience to “cognitive imperialism”, and which subject them to linguistic models of meaning. He argues that reduction of the body to a sign or text, diminishes the life of human beings to a life ‘reported on and narrated’, rather than acknowledging a fully physical, phenomenological existence.

Connerton here is intent on challenging the ‘markedly cognitive tilt’ of current social theory, pressing the point that memory gets passed on in non-textual and non-cognitive ways, and involves instead, conjoining *recollection, with bodies*. In his view, habitual memory is better viewed as the way in which the “past is, as it were, sedimented in the body” (Connerton, 1989, 72). Echoing Bourdieu, Connerton discusses, as example, the *proprieties* of the body in which social skills such as posture and social manners, imbued always already with moral values, are ‘forgotten’ as maxims “only when they have been well remembered as habits” (Connerton, 1989, 83).

I have included the above discussion as a way of locating memory as a fully social, intersubjective, culturally informed *and* local, particularized set of processes, which links language, body, psychohistory, and socio-moral worlds in a complex web of knowledges and practices. This is particularly salient given the interviewed women’s variously ambivalent relationship to cognitive interpretations of their pasts and to their vexed and thwarted experience of their bodies. It also raises further questions, which I will attempt to address later in this paper, concerning (the interviewed)

women's perceived inability to incarnate a felt social identity, and their habituated experience of self-bodily un-ease and alienation.

The notion of habituated memory suggests that certain bodily practices may become habituated in such a way so that they form a particular self-bodily mode -of -being in the material/social world. This is especially provocative in view of sexual exploitation and in light of Trisha's discussion of her body as having been used as a weapon against her, and *taken from her*. What does it mean that the self-body is taken away, or inflicted 'against' oneself? In view of the concept of bodily habituated memories, what does it mean that one's body is no longer phenomenologically accessible as a habituated mode of knowledge? What does it mean that women experience detachment and dissociation from their bodies? What culturally normative values, practices and moral conceptualizations of the body overdetermine distress in the form of alienation from the body? What does this imply or incur for one's sense of situatedness within the social world? These questions largely form the impetus for this thesis, and will be addressed throughout the following pages of this paper.

In his summarization of Spinoza's work, Yovel notes that [for Spinoza], "knowledge... is more a mode of being than of having, not something we possess but something we *are* or *become*" (Yovel, 1989, 159) (italics in original). Quoting Schilder, Gatens (1996, 38) argues that knowledge is *lived as* an animate, situated body, a body which receives its possibilities precisely because a body "is necessarily a body among other bodies. We must have others about us. There is no sense in the word 'ego' when there is not a 'thou.'" In other words, not only do social values, practices and social relations become sedimented in the body as knowledges, but the self-body is *itself lived knowledge*, an *intersubjective*, practical, emergent mode of being- in- the- world, in a way that is simultaneously generative and product of lived (practical and social) history. As Bourdieu discusses through his notion of habitus, habitus is our "embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as

history- [it] is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product...The *habitus* is a spontaneity without consciousness or will” (Bourdieu, 1990b, 56).

Biomedicine and psychiatry’s reliance on ‘individual treatment solutions’, however, discourages examination of (*incorporated*) *intersubjectivity* and tends to ignore the culturally specific practices which shape the form and the experience of illness and distress. According to Scheper-Hughes (1992, 199), biomedicine has become a “technical practice for ‘rationalizing’ human misery and for containing it to safe quarters, keeping it ‘in its place’, and so cutting off its potential for generating an active critique.” As she further argues, medicine acts by subtly transforming everyday practical knowledges related to the body. Both biomedicine and psychiatry tend, therefore, to obscure the ways in which disease and distress are simultaneously medical events, individual experiences, intersubjective processes and *social signifiers*. They also tend to cast a diagnostic net around unmanageable experiences of alienation that accompany and animate times of illness or suffering, doing so in ways which obscure the intensely *intersubjective* quality of human distress. I want to point out here that particularly in the current climate (1990’s), there is a strong tendency towards a narrow, individualized analysis of sexual abuse, with very little emphasis on challenging the practices of family, or questioning culturally dominant sexual ideologies and practices.

To account for this tendency, the following chapter outlines some of the culturally normative values related to individuality, beliefs which encourage private, reflective selves. These tacitly coercive norms underpin many professional and popular psychological discourses.

Codependency: the cultural ontology of autonomy

As a contemporaneous therapeutic discourse, Greenberg’s (1994) critical analysis of the *codependence literature* provides a useful critique of the assumptions of ‘selfhood’ which underpin contemporary understandings of autonomy and relatedness. This set of discourses offers some insight

into the culturally informed channels through which a distressed person may not only come to experience their distress, but comes to be pathologized, in the context of specific views of selfhood.

In his provocative book *The Self on the Shelf*, Greenberg (1994) argues that the notion of 'abuse' has come to be seen as signaling an event or relationship wherein the victim has ceased to be the sole author of herself, and has come to be "bound" to others. This notion of abuse has important conceptual links to the 'problem' of *codependency*, a situation wherein a person "has let another person's behaviour affect him or her, and who is obsessed with controlling that person's behaviour" (Beattie, 1987, 31). In other words, 'sickness' here is felt to emerge out of connections with other persons, as these connections are believed to potentially interfere with one's own self determination. In this view, having and maintaining a healthy identity requires independence from the influence of others. As Krestan and Bepko (1990, 220) note, tongue in cheek,

the culture's current obsession with codependency may be, on a metaphorical level, another version of the quest for painless relatedness...Recovered from codependency, one could magically achieve the paradoxical feat of being perfectly fulfilled in relationship without ever focusing on the other person.

One of the basic claims inherent in the notion of codependence is that people today pay too little attention to self. Rather than holding a view of persons as inhabited by others, Greenberg notes that the codependency construct conceals this inhabitation and makes pathological what are really exaggerations of culturally prescribed roles for women, and of connectedness or relationships (Greenberg, 1994). This construct, in other words, has created a population of women apologizing for their complicity in behaviours they did not formerly know to be pathological or problematic.

As part of this general concern over self, a popularized notion of *self esteem* has also come to be elaborated. In this view, self esteem is promoted as a sense of self value that is both internally *generated* and *located* within. Self esteem and personal dignity is not to be found in a public space but in 'the privacy of her own internal supply' (sic), with loss of self esteem signaling a 'lack of dominion' over one's own life story. Self esteem here is also viewed as a *right*, and to claim this right is a moral

imperative. In other words, the self is separated out from the outside world, as rights are seen to be a possession, rather than a relationship. Greenberg argues that the notion of self esteem “becomes the ultimate hedge against uncertain economic times, a property value that is constant precisely because there are no others who can confer it, revoke it, or depreciate it” (Greenberg, 1994, 137). This view not only obliterates Others and Otherness, but produces obligations as an issue of health, rather than social responsibility. The “significant web of interlocution becomes a self’s conversation with itself” (Greenberg, 1994, 207). As Kleinman adds, psychologists are trained to empower individuals to make their own decisions, refraining from specific advice for concrete problems so that they do not usurp the patient’s “existential responsibilities to the self, including the responsibility to succeed or fail *with authenticity, on one’s own*” (Kleinman, 1995, 56) (italics in original).

Whereas it is clear from the women’s narratives that dependency on adults for nurturance and protection (that is, being “bound” to others) constituted a significant aspect of the experience of abuse, this literature on codependency is generally not overtly concerned with questions of power, age, class or gender; rather, it is more generically concerned to outline a view of personhood wherein *relationships* with social ‘others’ is inherently seen as problematic and potentially pathological. More specifically, this view tacitly defines persons, *sui generis*, as bounded, autonomous individuals.

Instead of looking to others for identity, this view thus requires that persons journey “inward,” to “take possession of her history”; self esteem here is not constituted by history but by an *inward* focused (psychological) trek to locate one’s truth (Greenberg, 1994, 139). These inner truths may involve the discovery of either innocence or evil; as Weinhold and Weinhold (1989, xx) state,

we believe that true freedom comes from within and not from without. True freedom cannot be achieved by focusing on the social ‘evils’ outside yourself. To be free you must also focus on the psychological evils that exist inside you...The more you become aware of all your internal psychological parts and can orchestrate or direct them consciously, the more freedom you will experience in your life.

The notion of an ideal, autonomous, self reflecting self permeates much of psychological discourse more generally, calling on individuals to exercise authority on the basis of self-identified needs and emotions. This requires, however, a continual and intense self scrutiny, so that the “self that is liberated is obliged to live its life tied to the project of its own identity” (Rose, 1990, 254). In this view, however tied to this project of identity construction, the self as subject is nevertheless argued to be freed from the constraints of others; this freedom is ostensibly attained by crafting one’s own personal desires, and carefully charting one’s own life trajectory. The psychological language of self construction resonates with wider, culturally specific vocabularies of self determination, thereby entrenching a taken- for-granted conceptualization of individualized social identity. In general, the ‘good life’ here is primarily a psychological state, an interior, private accomplishment (Rose, 1990; Poovey, 1995). Following this view, health comes to be seen as an achieved status, with persons being expected to ‘work hard’ at being healthy (Scheper Hughes and Lock, 1987, 36). The autonomous self here is the designated key to any analysis of social ills and cures (Rose, 1990).

As Becker (1995) states, this contemporary preoccupation with our existence as ‘selves’, the emphasis on our own individuality, and the search for a personalized identity is shaped by the practices and ideologies of western individualism. Notwithstanding a heterogeneity among psychological perspectives, I am arguing here that there is a strong encouragement within hegemonic (professional and popularized) models of psychotherapy to cultivate a morality of independence, freedom and self-reflective responsibility (Bellah, et al., 1985), and that these normative values and beliefs, as regulatory practices, inform lived experience in culturally specific ways.

The cultural norms and values embedded in the notions of codependency and psychological self-construction are significant to the context of sexual exploitation in several ways. First, they render visible the paradoxical situation women finds themselves in, on the one hand expected to provide protection and service to family and social relationships, and on the other hand , inviting pejorative

labels for so doing. By supporting and further entrenching already culturally powerful views of women as 'naturally' predisposed to codependent, pathological behaviours and relationships, women are implicitly encouraged to view themselves responsible for their own social-relational distresses. Secondly, while pathologizing women's social roles, these views simultaneously reinforce traditional (western) liberal concepts of autonomous selfhood which have historically been the associated with males, and which concepts have conventionally obscured or underplayed the notion of *responsibility to others*. Relatedly, the notion of the autonomous actor obscures any sense of the social. Rather, it encourages a view of distress as an issue of individual pathology, or an issue of individual health rather than a matter of problematic social relations, thereby replacing a view of obligation towards *redress or political action*, with a notion of *self repair*. The depoliticizing tendency of psychological or therapeutic frameworks, therefore, is not just a function of the focus on individual intervention or pathology, but is a consequence of an acceptance of a concept of the self which is already and inherently de-socialized. I am suggesting here that the notion of an interiorized, private selfhood is culturally normative in our western context, and that it infuses our cultural understandings of health, distress and social responsibility, and that it shapes our evaluations of practico-moral behaviour.²⁰

It would be mistaken to conclude that these concerns and understandings are shared by everyone, or that they are everywhere *explicitly* elaborated within cultural practices. I am suggesting, however, that it is within this cultural set of practical and ideological conditions that women who have been sexually abused experience their sense of social incompetence, are forced to try to make sense of their feeling of boundlessness, and feel a responsibility for constructing more satisfying, socially efficacious lives. In other words, I have tried to show that there are a series of recursive values related to autonomy, self esteem, self determination, boundedness and social competence which implicitly animate the interviewed women's struggles, and which simultaneously feed into their sense of distress - *and* into their visions for more satisfying social identities and psychosocial health. As (hegemonic)

underlying assumptions and tacit understandings, these ideological injunctions are deeply implicated in the phenomenology of local social worlds as *felt ideational processes*; this occurs because of their embodiment in person's lives, through the daily carrying out and participation in, complex networks of cultural practices.²¹ As Bourdieu says, "the experience of meanings is part and parcel of the total meaning of experience" (in Wacquant, 1992, 9).

To further explore the idea of *felt ideational processes*, I want to go beyond examination of psychological understandings. This project aims instead to elaborate an understanding of the cultural processes and significances of *embodiment*. In other words, rather than invoking a mind/body duality- and assuming that distress is merely a psychological or mentalist condition, I will try in this paper to explore the significances of these women's distress through a paradigm of embodiment- through a paradigm which posits that the mind and body are mutually imbricated, a fully interconnected complex through which we grasp our worlds.

The tendency to view distress as *psychological* arguably occurs, in part, because the mind/body duality, as a powerful set of cultural logics, underwrites much of our understanding of agency, rationality and health. There are at least three interrelated significances of the mind/body duality that impinge on a view of distress as primarily psychological. I will only briefly outline these three issues here, but they will be more extensively explored in the remainder of this thesis. These issues ultimately must be seen as interpenetrated issues which inform the organization and felt character of lived experience.

First, and as I have previously outlined, the mind/body duality is implicitly linked to culturally specific constructions of class, race and gender, such that social relations (in the western context) have (at least, in part) come to be structured hierarchically through the logics of this duality (see chapter six). This speaks to the notion that the mind/body duality serves as a pervasive structuring principle, that it is deeply implicated in the organization of social life. I will also argue that the cultural logics of

a mind/body duality further exists as a series of ideological and metaphoric associations which form a moral-ideational continuum, a cosmology which shapes our lived experience in culturally specific ways. This cosmology is not merely ideational, but fully *felt* in that this cosmology structures and pervades our everyday *practical* negotiations and interactions. Through our practical daily activities, in other words, we come to *feel* ideas- our practical activities give rise to *embodied resonances of structured feelings*, which shape the *character* of our habituated modes of being- in- the- world, as well as the character and nature of felt distress. (I will later (see chapter six) also argue that ideas themselves become meaningfully felt through our bodies, because of our own bodily experiences and orientations in the world.)

Second, and derivative of the above, the organization of social life through the structuring action of the mind/body duality means that culturally specific notions of agency, personhood, and responsibility, as well as culturally normative understandings of psycho-somatic well-being, derive significantly out of the specific kinds of power relations instantiated through this duality. Third, the mind/body duality has profoundly influenced our understandings of human existence itself in that it posits a separation of our cognitive, psychological processes from our material bodiliness. This separation of mind from body has come to mean that the body is often perceived as irrelevant to the 'health' of the mind, to our rational and mental well-being. In this paper, I will be arguing instead that our practical-moral-social interactions and wellbeing involve and require a fully embodied - a (co-implicated) *thinking-feeling modality* of being-in-the world, that the mind and body are inseparable. This perspective will ground my further analysis concerning the interviewed women's lack of felt connections to their bodies. To summarize, the significances of a mind/body duality include three interrelated issues: it speaks to the wider organization of cultural life, to our notions of health, agency and personhood, and to our understandings of human nature itself.

My own analytic direction which emphasizes *embodiment*, overlaps with Connerton's elaborations concerning habit-memory, in that ideologies and cultural values must be viewed not just as abstract or cognitive /mental ideas or processes, but as practical knowledges which are emergent, acquired, lived and embodied through the daily carrying out of cultural activities and through involvement in social relationships. Through these processes, one might say that these ideologies are incorporated and *felt*, in the strains, animations, resistances, and vitalizations characteristic of our psycho-somatic and practico-moral social involvements. This formulation posits, against normative cultural beliefs, that the lived body is an intersubjective, active and historo-generative mode of being-in- the -world, and that these women's distress through sexual exploitation must be viewed with an eye to their personal psycho-social histories and local socio-moral worlds, and with a recognition of the centrality of the *lived body* to social life.

In the following chapter, I provide excerpts focusing on the interviewed women's accounts of their bodies; these excerpts form the basis and grounds for the subsequent development of a notion of embodiment with which to examine the cultural and personal significances of their distress.

BODILY DISSOCIATION AND THE DISRUPTION OF COMMUNE-ITY

I live my body...The body is what I immediately am...I *am* my body to the extent that I *am*.
Sartre²²

The lived body is an irreducible principle, the existential ground of culture and the sacred.
Csordas²³

Women's testimonies of bodily dissociation

In Jackson's (1989) introduction to his book *Paths Toward a Clearing*, he notes that making *lived experience* the starting point for his analysis is not based on according it epistemological privilege, but derives from a desire to explore the *character* of lived experience rather than its *nature*. Similarly, the following selections which come primarily from Trisha and Vanja's accounts, are testimonies which convey the character of felt distress as related to their sense of alienation or dissociation from their bodies. I am here using the notion of *dissociation* to refer to the interviewed women's sense of bodily disconnectedness, or to their sense of detachment or lack of perceived feelings in their bodies. This is to be distinguished from definitions of dissociation which are more mentalist, derived from psychoanalytic models of memory.²⁴

A number of themes resonate throughout their accounts: a sense of role playing and adaptability related to skill at intellectualization, lack of affect *or* a sense of being overwhelmed by feelings, a dissonance between feeling and intellect, avoidance of attention to their bodies, and bodily detachment, accompanied by a sense of lack of control over their bodies. Although some of these themes have been looked at previously, I want here to reiterate their interconnectedness to the experience of bodily dissociation. These themes are widely acknowledged within dominant psychological accounts as well (see Herman, 1992).²⁵ This analysis differs in that it will explore these issues in the following chapters from a framework of embodiment.

Some of the most potent images offered by both Vanja and Trisha are related to their testimony concerning a sense of bodily alienation. These are Vanja's words.

Well, I think even now, I mean, in the last couple of years I've made some progress in it, but that, you know, I've lived like a head perched on top of something I've chosen to ignore for the most part. I think I have such a generalized sense of discomfort around my body for the most part. You know, I kind of experience it just like it's there, but it's not connected.

Well, in all seriousness, I probably have thought of myself as an intellect with a body, right, and the body could be genderless as far as I'm concerned except that I happened to be born female. And that sense remains to this day, that if I- on a very basic level, I still struggle with a sense of being disembodied, like that my body is a kind of receptacle, or- like, it's taken me years to kind of even practice any kind of self-care, whatever, in terms of even like, you know, looking after my body or whatever, but it seems to be a kind of de-real-ization or whatever. I mean that seems to have stayed with me, you know, that strong sense of because, I mean, it's been there since the very early parts of my abuse, was that sense of being disembodied, cut off, you know, almost like there was a demarcation line that went from here to there. And the only way that you're aware of here was that it might come up to here sometimes, you know. I would say I would consider [my body] the housing for my brain.

Trisha also lived for a long while with this sense of bodily dissociation.

I went through a thing when I was still dealing with it being my fault, that I'd caused it, that I didn't want to acknowledge that I had a body. I didn't want to be touched by anybody. I didn't want to recognize I had any Being from the neck down. Except with my kids. I had a very prickly barbed wire fence around [my body], my body was an engine that I did certain things to- it had to be kept to a certain level of cleanliness and fed, but other than that, I ignored it. I didn't have a body.

I had such a terrible time accepting that this- remembering my father's face when he looked at me- no that's wrong, he didn't look at *me*, he didn't look at my face and my eyes, his eyes were always on my body and feeling that therefore that this body did it. And that was such a clear cause and effect. I didn't, I literally did not feel my body- I don't know how to explain that- it went completely numb.

I think that for the longest time I really lived as if I had no body. It was always cut off from the neck- there was nothing from the neck down.

I mean, all those relationships with men, I never felt my body. I never enjoyed sex, sex was something you did in order to get particular things. I could be outside [my body] and I could be an observer and I was very good at giving them what they wanted- and I didn't feel anything. I was always stage managing and directing, so that I could control the whole thing. And was never really there, not feeling my body, and I think that for most of my life, I haven't liked my body and I felt very cut off from it for most of my life. I really didn't feel things physically. I've read about self mutilation and I can understand that because if you can't feel, you try, you do things to try to make yourself feel. And I think that's why I had so much sex with men, because I kept thinking, something will happen, you know?

What Trisha and Vanja both imply then, is that abuse was perceived as such through objectification of their own bodies, which in turn, *turned their own bodies into an object to themselves*. As both women describe, their own bodies became alien, an object to be controlled and tended, but ignored if at all possible. In addition, sexuality, for Vanja, is both inexplicable and intrusive, and is also linked to a more general and paradoxical lack of mastery over her (already absent) body.

You know, physical affection is not a high priority, being touched is not a high priority. I'm a fairly insular person. You know, I don't experience libido per se, it's hard for me to understand- I don't rank it as something that has a primary importance. And I think part of that is also a purely defensive mode, in that, it is so uncomfortable, it is so- that what would be involved with divesting myself of that attitude seems almost overwhelming to me. [I can't seem] to overcome the extreme aversion that I have to any kind of like what I experience as physical intrusion.

Like I still experience any kind of physical [medical examination], you know, as humiliating. I mean, it reduces me to tears. It's irrelevant to me whether it's a male doctor or female doctor, it doesn't matter. For some reason it seems to bring up all that sense of intrusion. And I struggle with that because on some level it just seems incredibly immature. And that's something that, as a grown woman, I should be pushing myself through. But I don't seem to have the ability to do that at this point. Because I have a hard time to rationalize that I'm nearly 40 and I haven't had a pap test for like 14 years because there's a part of me that, even though rationally and intellectually, you know, like I know that there's a health concern.. but I can only look after my body symptomatically in terms of illness. Like, if I can't walk, I might go and do something about it.

[I view] as a deficiency too, this lack of mastery over this thing [my body] which I basically view as a receptacle, but which I still don't have a sense of mastery over. Because if I did have a sense of mastery over it, then I would have it be the average size, the average, whatever. [This I see as] a definite shortcoming, because if you can exercise control in all sorts of aspects- other aspects of your life, then why can't you do it in relation to your body? And I think that why I can't do it in relation to my body is a) I'm not highly motivated to- or that I'm motivated in a sort of shame based or inadequate way to do it, or that I don't have enough relationship [to my body] to exercise that kind of control. I don't know if that makes sense. That has mystified me at points too because I think that I control almost everything else in my life. To a fairly strong degree. And that I view body size among women as, you know, the bigger you are the more of an exhibition of personal failure- that's almost the way you're perceived by the world, fair or unfair.

As noted in an earlier chapter, Vanja also links this sense of bodily dissociation and lack of bodily mastery with a perceived dissonance between feeling and thought, and with the lack of an

'internal referent'. Her intellectual skill, described by her as a survival mechanism, is not experienced as altogether salutary, for as she notes, without a sense of connection to her body, she is not sure whether her ideas are her own, or whether she may in fact, be an impostor, a chameleon. In turn, her sense of her own competence comes from her perception of tasks as roles, as rule governed situations which inhere little relationship to any distinctive desire or connectedness to the work/tasks themselves, that is, as something she might enjoy or believe in.

I did very well in role specific situations. I did extremely well at boarding school. I got high marks, I was the head of my house. You know, if you placed me in an environment where I didn't have to deal with family per se, and there was a strong- that there was a prescribed role, I could fit into that, I was as adaptable as a chameleon. I mean, I graduated, and it was like, I didn't know what to do.

[In terms of therapy], it was a major assistance to be reminded that I was a child, not a mini-adult in a small body, because I think that was my perception. You know, I so much lived in my head and I was fairly intellectually sophisticated for my age, and I didn't ever perceive myself as a child, so I was really confused in terms of the responsibility stuff because I really honestly thought that I should have been able to outwit my offender in some way.

So, as you move on to different situations- my experience has been as I move from community to community-is that I really quickly adapted, you know. And yet, for myself, I wasn't sure whether that was something that was true to me or just true to the situation that I was in. So that, when I worked in a women's center, I was impassioned by lots of ideas about feminism. I'm fairly impassioned about my work. But sometimes it almost seems rote, you know. That I'm able to integrate ideas, I'm really adaptable, I'm a quick study, I pick up stuff really well, but sometimes I think there's not much originality in that or creativity, in that I'm not sure that that's truly what I believe. Sometimes it feels like mere chameleon-like, you know, a thing I've taken on and that I've been very successful at doing that though it still doesn't quite feel real to me. You know, and for the most part, I'm clear on the fact that I'm confident and I do a good job [but] I feel disengaged from being able to articulate what I think would be my original thoughts about it. You know, that are- like I often feel that I'm able to portray that I understand more than I actually understand because of having good language skills, that kind of thing. [I feel like I have an] impostor syndrome.

To me it's been quite negative in that I've put myself into situations that I've ended up being intellectually capable of but emotionally overwhelmed by, which to me, is an ongoing frustration. And then, for myself, the way that the emotional part is manifested is often quite visible, in that I still have like choking symptoms and that I become tearful, in that I have severe anxiety, yet part of me has come to realize, you know, recently within the past year, is that the whole- that at some point you have to feel your feelings, and endure a certain level of discomfort to put some of this stuff as far behind me as I'd like it to be. But I have a complete repugnance around any kind of a display of emotion around people. It's that I have very little sense of -probably self empathy- and I don't know where the strong sense comes

from, but I find it both attractive and repugnant to think about expressing emotion in front of somebody.

[In terms of feeling emotion] and yet, I appreciate when it feels connected. And one of the first things I was taught when I went to therapy initially was that thing about being a shallow breather- like I still- it's completely an autonomic response, right? It's like years, like I can remember doing it when I was 11 and disassociating and while my offender was having intercourse with me, actually having almost an out of body experience, and that still, I mean, I don't breathe below here generally. And I've had huge reactions to people trying to make me breathe and feel it. It's like, not a chance. [And if I did breathe properly] like, when I did that, I experienced too much sensation. But I have a complete repugnance around any kind of a display of emotion around people.

Trisha also talks about the importance of intellect to her sense of identity, almost describing intellectually curiosity as an emotion.

I've developed a real critical skill and analytical skill and I think that's really important to my identity because I'm able to think about myself and what I'm doing and I do that, self consciously. I'm consciously aware of who I am and how I'm moving in the world. And it's still a very strong emotion in me today is wanting to know things, and not being easily put off from wanting to know. I think it's something that kept me alive, was that it had to get different, it would change, and therefore I wanted to see how things would work out.

Indeed, both Trisha and Vanja refer occasionally to emotion as a *force*, as a kind of *dynamic movement* which propels thought and instantiates sensation and connectedness. Particularly for Vanja, without this propelling force, thought itself feels disconnected to an originary source, seems personally unidentifiable. In the following section, I discuss these women's testimonies in the context of culturally specific understandings of, both, emotions and "bodies".

Discussion: the interconnectedness of emotions, bodies and social relations.

According to Jaggar (1992), the notion of a split between cognition/reason- and emotion has a long standing history in the 'western' world. In this historical tradition, emotion has often been submitted to overly rationalist accounts and definitions, even among anthropologists exploring cross cultural variations in emotional lexicons, in which emotion- words are evaluated for their strategic usage in various cultural contexts. In the western positivist tradition, emotion usually has been viewed as potential distortion or impediment to knowledge, the latter which has been held to be almost

synonymous with reason. Acknowledging that not all western accounts of the dichotomy between reason and emotion are fully similar, Jaggar argues for the importance of viewing emotion as an existential form of structured attention and perception to the world which is both socially constructed and through which the social world is actively constructed. As she notes, emotions are neither fully intentional or unintentional, although emotion and value are clearly related and presuppose each other.

Women's references to emotion implying a view of emotion as 'force' - and hence as part of human experience beyond one's control- is arguably integral to dominant 'western' folk theories of emotion (Lutz, 1988). As Parkinson (1995) further outlines, western assumptions about emotion posit it as intensely *private*, as experienced *internally*, as 'happening to us', as *felt* things, as about things that matter *deeply* to us, as felt *directly*, and as that which requires *expression*, or an 'out'. The hydraulic metaphor and the metaphor of a 'container' are the most dominant (western) metaphors associated with the notion of emotion.

Vanja's testimony additionally, however, points to her experience of emotion as 'knowledge'.²⁶ That is, implied in her testimony is a sense of emotion as that which might provide her with a remembered experience of the abuse- sensations return, which are overwhelming and frightening, and which harbor remembered sensations and feelings of abuse. In this testimony, there is a sense in which sensations appear to be *affixed to* and *fixed by* the history of abuse. In other words, emotions are harbingers of, as well as knowledgeable memories of abuse: emotion, in this context is *affixed knowledge*, knowledge of the abuse in the form of remembered sensations and frightening feelings. These sensations are *fixed* in that emotions appear (to Vanja particularly) to augur sensations which, *sui generis*, are perceived as debilitating and overwhelming in any given sensate context or set of social relationships.

Importantly, one might also argue that since emotion (to Vanja) seems to be suggestive of a felt connection to the past, and to remembered relationships and events, that emotions are, indeed-

rather than merely private or internal, or even expressive- *intensely intersubjective*. Emotions here seem to be suggestive of, or to serve instead as *connections*, as felt links to communities and intersubjective relations. Emotion instantiates Vanja *into the felt and lived flow of experience*, as participant in the interactive world of persons, places and events, one which she both longs for and fears.

At the same time, her *cognitive* appraisal of her past seems almost surreal to her, as if unconnected to herself. In Vanja's own words,

I mean it still feels like fairly narrative, like this is your life, and that I've been dealing with this stuff for like 27 odd years, and so sometimes it's quite immediate and sometimes it's quite- sometimes it's like narrating: so this happened and this happened and this happened, you know. I mean, I used to kind of describe it with a complete lack of affect.

Without emotion, intellect comes to be experienced as sterile, rote, as lacking a personal signature of meaning, as disengaged. In both their descriptions of their intellectual capacities and in their described experience of disembodiment, Vanja and Trisha invoke a series of similar and interconnected adjectives or images to formulate a cosmological template of disembeddedness: role playing, stage managing and directing, feeling like an impostor, adaptive, chameleon-like, observer, body as an engine, cut off, disconnected, dissociated, lack of mastery, lacking control. In turn, their experience of social relations is mystifying, irresolute, and insular, and the world of culturally normative gender habits and affiliations incomprehensible. Following women's accounts, emotion, when cut off from bodily awareness, may permit an intellectual negotiation of the world, but with a reduced sense of meaning or engagement. Without an existential experience of bodily connectedness, intellect is *mere acting*, social relations are mystifying, emotions are fugitive, and identity is elusive, un-incorporable. In other words, contrary to normative western accounts, emotion and intellect are tacitly shown here to be integrally connected and mutually constitutive- only felt as separable or dysjunctive through the experience of bodily dissociation. Whereas dominant western folk models of emotion are prone to link emotions with the body and the intellect with the (immaterial) mind, Vanja's

account particularly, suggests not only an integral connection between intellect and the body, but a *reciprocally constitutive* relation between intellect and emotion.

It is important to also note here that there are strong cultural imperatives to view our bodies as an object that we possess or own and that we are forever culturally enjoined to control, master, constrain, or alternately, to adorn and cultivate our bodies for a variety of different social ends (Martin, 1987; Falk, 1994; Turner, 1992). As Becker (1995) and Bordo (1993a) note, control over bodily maintenance and cultivation of bodily expression and presentation are some of the most potent culturally authorized means for achieving a socially valid identity, for accruing an idealized autonomous self. As expression of self, the controlled and regulated body often comes to be seen as both a personal resource and as social symbol. That this is part of Vanja's perception of the significance of the body is clear from the way she views her own body as an object; her perceived failure to master size or appearance weighs on her as evidence of a failed self.

To some degree, it is common for all of us to have some experience of our bodies as an object, as impediment to and/or invitation to a culturally vital sense of self and identity. What I am suggesting however, is that women's described sense of disembodiment is qualitatively different from that- that for most of us, daily conduct in the social/material world is carried out in an implicitly embodied way- that our embodied selves- as Beings- in- the - world are possible as such precisely because our bodies, for the most part, are *not* objects to us, but are generative modes of active attention, perception and habituated practice (see chapter seven). The experience of one's body as an object, with all the attendant difficulties testified to by the women (that is, a lack of a sense of identity, a sense of dysjunction between cognition and emotion, a lack of personal connectedness to ideas, social anxiety) is, I suggest, a correlate of women's sense of dissociation from their bodies more generally. The interviewed women's sense of their bodies as an object and as potentially representing the success or failure of self is *invigorated* by culturally normative beliefs and practices, but in itself serves as an

inadequate explanation for their widespread sense of dis-ease and disembeddedness from a personally comprehensible or manageable social world.

I am suggesting then, that the interviewed women's distress is deeply rooted in their experience of a dissociated body and must be examined in the context of a concept of personhood which takes as its starting point, an unpolarized mindful body. If it is true that the lived body is the existential ground of self and culture (Csordas, 1994), it becomes important instead to at least minimally develop a framework for understanding *embodiment*. The rest of this paper is concerned to do just that, to challenge the mind/body duality and look at the consequences of phenomenological bodily dissociation for one's ability to meaningfully grasp the world. In the following chapter, I start with an exploration of the significance of, and problems associated with, the mind/body duality as it has come to structure Euro-western cultural and social worlds.

REVIEWING AND CHALLENGING THE MIND/BODY DUALITY

[the social is that] with which we are in contact by the mere fact of existing, and which we carry about inseparably with us before any objectifications.

Merleau-Ponty²⁷

My body has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of my 'symbolic' or 'objectifying function'.

Merleau-Ponty²⁸

It is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh.

Aristotle²⁹

Any adequate account of meaning and rationality must give a critical place to embodied and imaginative structures of understanding by which we grasp our world.

Mark Johnson³⁰

Introduction

In order to find a way of interpreting the interviewed women's described sense of *bodily dissociation*, I want to devote this chapter to reviewing and developing some theoretical perspectives which will serve as background to my own analysis. I begin by reviewing the cultural logics of the mind/body duality, one of the most tenacious structuring philosophical tenets in the recent history of the Western world. This duality has long served as the conceptual basis for understanding subjectivity; in other words, *the self-body's experiential unity is at least partly established on the basis of particular cultural understandings and instantiations of the mind/body complex.*

Despite a recent outpouring of theoretical writing on the body, (and as noted earlier), much of current social theory is still patently cognitive in its approach, with the body often portrayed as a materiality without memory. Notwithstanding this emphasis, it is important to point out that social relations, inequalities and oppressions are always differentially *embodied* (Shilling, 1993). As well, according to Turner (1994, 28), the body has historically served as the site of some of "the most

fundamental forms of social inequality and control in contemporary society, as well as some of its characteristic forms of mystified social consciousness.”

The body, in a non dualistic understanding is not merely a neutral target of cultural inscriptions (Jackson, 1989), nor should it be understood as semiotic phenomena (Turner (1994). As Tyler (1986) adds, meaning and lived experience can not be read literally or directly out of discourse. Rather, following Csordas (1994), culture itself is grounded in the *lived human body*, and *embodiment* must serve as starting point for rethinking our existential experiences as human beings. Embodiment, in its most general sense then, refers to a fundamental connectedness between mind and body, and concerns the ways that people come to “inhabit” their bodies in habituated ways, so that people live in and through the body in ways that ‘go without saying’ (Scheper-Hughes, 1992, 184, 232).

Given this understanding of embodiment, it is not surprising that the interviewed women’s testimony of dissociation (from the body) is felt as experiential disorder- a threat to a felt sense of coherent selfhood as well as a felt sense of disrupted communit-y. To make sense of this simultaneously intensely personal and culturally shaped experience, I want to start this chapter with a review of the culturally specific ways in which the body has been used as an index for organizing or hierarchically structuring social relations and practices. By examining the cultural instantiations of a mind/body duality, it becomes clear that this duality is centrally implicated in the social construction of some of the most pertinent social markers of *inequality* in the western world, notably those of gender, class, and race.

The structuring of social practices and relations around the mind/body duality means that this and associated dualities are not just abstract principles, but are *lived and felt*. In other words, these dualities ground practical social life, so that in their various instantiations these dualities come to form *lived resonances of structured feelings*. These *structured resonances* may otherwise be understood as *felt ideational processes* through habituation in our daily embodied social practices and relations. Felt

ideational processes shape the character, the intensity, the sense of felt strains and animations within the *lived flow of experience*. In the next chapter, I will explore more fully what I mean by the lived flow of experience (as metaphor for the emergent, dynamic character of *embodied* social life). For now, it is important to note that the cultural logics of the mind/body duality significantly shape the conditions of intelligibility for notions of sociality, personhood, agency, time as well as for notions of health, distress and healing. The mind/body duality therefore largely shapes the patterning of our life-worlds, patternings which include the “philosophical tenets, aesthetic values, and moral constraints that go into the composition of any cultural interaction” (Desjarlais, 1992, 71).

Embodiment, in other words, occurs in culturally specific ways, affecting how we live and come to inhabit the world, or put differently, how we live our embodied lives within the *lived flow of experience* through the “interplay of habitual patterns of body use and conventional ideas about the world” (Jackson, 1989, 124). Following this section, I will look at Johnson’s (1987) work on the bodily basis of cognition, as a challenge to the mind/body dichotomy. These two sections form the basis for a more detailed examination of the significance of a ‘dissociated’ body for how one comes to be engaged in, or *disembedded* from, the *lived flow of experience*.

The cultural logics of a mind/body duality

In Turner’s (1992) view, the Euro-western philosophy of a mind/body dichotomy and neglect of the issue of human embodiment serve as major theoretical and practical problems in the social sciences (and in allopathic or western medicine), where little interest is paid to the *lived body* as opposed to the objective body. As Jackson (1989) notes, the Euro-western world continues to move farther and farther away from earlier grounded notions of bodily activity as inseparable from the quotidian world. As he argues, before the scientific revolution, acts of participation in the world *was* knowing, was lived as participatory knowledge; bodily or somatic knowing itself served as a form of consciousness. Current theoretical attempts to recognize the significance of the body still tend to

reduce the body to a sign onto which social patterns are projected, which continues to reproduce a splitting of the thinking and knowing subject from an unknowing inert body.

In this section, I review the significances of the mind/body duality, in an effort to examine how the Euro-western world has come to organize social life and to give ontological priority to an individualized identity. As Taylor (1993, 49) summarizes,

we easily tend to see the human agent as primarily a subject of representations: representations about the world outside and depictions of ends desired or feared. This subject is a monological one. She or he is in contact with an 'outside' world, including other agents, the objects she or he and they deal with, her or his own and others' bodies, but this contact is through the representations she or he has 'within'. The subject is first of all an 'inner' space, a 'mind' to use the old terminology, or a mechanism capable of processing representations if we follow the more fashionable computer-inspired models of today. The body, other people or objects may form the content of my representations. They may also be causally responsible for some of these representations. But what 'I' am...is definable independently of body or other. It is a centre of monological consciousness.

The "Cartesian" division between subject and object, between mind and body forces a view of subjectivity in which persons are primarily distinguished by an 'interiority', or more specifically, by a disembodied rationality. Here, the mind is generally "up, rational, active, voluntary, controlled, strong masculine, form (immaterial), immortal, while body is down, irrational, passive, involuntary, uncontrolled, weak, feminine, matter, mortal" (Kirmayer, 1988, 76). In other words, the self is associated with the conscious self, as seat of control, and the "authorized subject" gains its authority by their ability to keep the body "radically separated" from the ego (Scheman, 1993). In the widespread information- processing model of cognition or reason, perception and understanding are *separate*. More generally in the objectivist tradition, a boundary is drawn between mental, conceptual, rational, cognitive or theoretical capacities and the physical, perceptual, emotional, imaginative or practical dimensions of subjectivity.

The 'dominance' of mind over body and passion has its correlate in western understandings of the body politic- seen to be the product of reason. That is, reason is believed to be that which instrumentalizes and controls both the human body and the body politic, that which is guardian, moral

and otherwise, of social life, as well as chief instrument of *knowledge* (Gatens, 1996). Moreover, the *male body*, as idealized bearer of reason, has come to be used as the ideological template for ‘envisioning’ the body politic. From this overly brief synopsis, I would like to further develop a series of more elaborated points- each implicit to or arising out of the notion of a mind/body duality.

First, the mind/body dichotomy has, particularly over the last century, been deeply instantiated through the essentialization and polarization of ‘biological’ or anatomical differences between bodies, or *between male and female bodies*, so that gender has come to be a dominant structuring domain ‘scripted’ around notions of sexuality. One’s categorization as male or female is thus heavily imbued with symbolic meanings; these meanings are instantiated within complex networks of signifying practices- and are designed to maintain differences between men and women (Maynard, 1993). As Gatens (1996, 86) argues, bodies cannot act as “ontological touchstones for the differing social and political treatments of ‘men’ or ‘women’, since part of what it means to be a man or woman is to live out, or literally embody, the historically variable social and political significances of sexual difference.” At issue here is not just the ‘socialization’ of women or men to differing social identities, but the valorization or marginalization of persons and bodies on the basis of perceived sexual differences through the placement of bodies and behaviors in culturally elaborated networks of social inequalities (Gatens, 1996). As Connell (1987, 80, 81) notes, these elaborations are *required* because “*biological logic [alone]...cannot sustain the gender categories*” (italics in original). Gender itself has been one of the more enduring references through which political power has been conceived, legitimated and criticized (Scott, 1989).

Since the resilience of perceived sexual differences occurs through culturally elaborated systems of meaning that both constitute and perpetuate these differences, notions of ‘masculinity’ or ‘femininity’ cannot be seen just as arbitrary inscriptions conjoined to an indifferent body.³¹ According to Gatens (1996), the notion of a sexed body must take into account the materiality of the body, as

well as the way in which the structuring of sexed bodies often takes place ‘below the threshold’ of conscious decision making -so that gender comes to be sedimented along many layers of meaning. While gendered subjectivity should not be seen as fixed, one may still argue for a pervasive continuity in that gender itself has come to be constructed as a domain *characterized* by difference (Moore, 1994). These differences are not merely discursive; as Gatens argues, power constructs differences by differentially constituting particular kinds of bodies, empowered to perform particular sorts of jobs. The qualitative manner in which persons live their embodied lives is thus crucially connected to the social legitimacy and intelligibility of their bodies, so that meaningful social life itself cannot be separated out from the cultural significances governing (and governed by) the character of, and habituated patterning of, the lived body.

In other words, as Kaschak (1992) points out, whereas the body is always gendered, it is also true that gender is always *embodied*. The stability of gender, found in the ‘gender system’ itself thus occurs through the performance of gendered practices which operate as ‘material forces’, shaping and being shaped by existing bodily practices in ways that tend to reinforce particular images of femininity or masculinity (Shilling, 1993). Importantly, because of this, sexuality, gender and subjectivity come to have different meanings for those in differently lived bodies (Farwell, 1996). As Gatens further explains, the ‘feminine’ male may have experiences socially coded as feminine, but these experiences are qualitatively different as they are always lived in an already socially lived and signifying male body. The lived body may variously intervene to confirm, reiterate or deny social significances, but tend to do so in ways that lend “an air of inevitability to patriarchal social relations” (Gatens, 1996, 10).

Second, as I have already suggested, we live and “make over” our worlds, in culturally overdetermined ways through patterned social relations and practices informed by the mind/body duality. Generally speaking, however, women have historically been seen as *closer to nature*, or seen to be more closely associated with the *body*, and ruled by their (irrational) bodies (Ramazanoglu, 1989;

Kirmayer, 1988). Moreover, every aspect of a woman's body is considered to 'say something' about her value as a person (Kaschak (1992). As Laqueur (1987) outlines, beginning in the nineteenth century, the body came to carry a new meaning and impetus for the gendering of social relations- and which meaning was particularly brought to bear on women's bodies. Laqueur notes how attention to particular characteristics and pathologies of women's bodies represented the anxieties of the social body, encouraging a view of women's bodies as simultaneously valorized and problematic.

Masquerading as 'facts' of nature, cultural ideals of the nineteenth century introduced a new model of 'sexual incommensurability', based on the re-interpretation of women's reproductive biology. This re-interpretation corresponded to ideological disruptions emanating from socio-political and philosophical challenges to the old world order. The emergent view of female sexuality and female bodies did not destroy hierarchical models of gendered bodies, but rather, re-articulated differences as *incommensurate*, thereby positing women's bodies as unequal.

Women's bodies consequently also became infused with a new reality, associated with plenitude and imagined as both, source of value and of exchange (Gallagher, 1987) The widespread insertion of women into commodity production, however, collapsed important materially organized sex differences. In order to sustain historically salient symbolic differences, increasingly elasticized definitions of masculinity and femininity were required. As women's bodies became more crucial in defining male/female relations, women also became increasingly viewed as having a nature which demanded interpretation.

In order to transform women's bodies into suitable objects for interpretation, Poovey (1987) argues that an indeterminate body had to be constructed- to allow for mutable or changing avenues for interpretative control. By so doing, however, the female body also produced an *excess of meaning*, whose ambiguity was *difficult* to control. Sexuality was particularly problematic in that it depended on a reproductive body which produced a cluster of images signifying both fecundity and pleasure. As

Bordo (1993b) notes, bodies, especially women's bodies, serve even today as a 'postmodern' battleground.

The identification of women with their bodies and with sexuality has also encouraged cultural models of sexuality which have allowed men to blame women for their own sexual feelings, often in such a way so that women's physical or sexual limits have been delineated by men's perceived needs and sense of entitlement (Kaschak, 1992; Seidler, 1995). Although women are often designated as 'gatekeepers' for appropriate sexual behaviours, almost paradoxically, they also tend to be culturally enjoined to develop their bodies as objects of perception and utility for others, particularly for men.³²

Although the historical and philosophical associations between women and their bodies are multiple and complex, there appear to be substantive cultural continuities which encourage a view of women's bodies as disordered and unreasonable, and which encourage women to experience their bodies as their enemy (Kaschak, 1992). These cultural enjoinders have widespread instantiations and consequences across all socio-cultural domains, having served historically as justification for various oppressions of women and for their exclusion from public affairs.

Third, the association of women with their bodies has cultural implications not only for women. Dominant western notions of a mind/body duality have encouraged an extreme objectification of and alienation from the body.³³ Many dominant or normative discourses encourage understandings of the body as something to be escaped from or alternately, "to be worked on" (Becker, 1995). In his discussion of the work of Max Scheler, Levin (1985) points out that the body, in the western world, has historically been viewed as the prison of the soul, leading to strong cultural imperatives to discipline, control and perfect the body. By so doing, individuals are increasingly held responsible for the design of their own bodies, with bodies seen to be personal (rather than community) resources for expression.³⁴

At the same time, the thinking/cognitive self is able to lay claim to authority precisely through separation from the body, even as the empowered mind requires the scrutinization and disciplining of the body (Scheman, 1993). This disciplining process involves a process of “becoming”, inviting the notion of a project to be worked at to accomplish a legitimated social identity (Shilling, 1993). The ‘problem’ of the body in the current (western) cultural world thus involves a variety of paradoxes, as individuals are enjoined -often simultaneously- to exercise *constraint* and *discipline* while at the same time being invited to fulfill and *cultivate* bodily desires and passions.

As Bordo (1993a) summarizes, the culturally dominant negative evaluation of the body has several consequences: first, the body comes to be experienced as alien, as the ‘not-self’, as ‘crude matter’ at the command of will or intellect. Second, the body is viewed as a confinement, and as either limiting or as polluting. Third, the body is seen as enemy, as the locus of all that threatens attempts at control. According to Shilling (1993, 3), we currently live in a cultural and historical period where we have the means to exert an unprecedented degree of control over our bodies, yet we also live in an age of crisis over the meaning of the body, “which has thrown into radical doubt our knowledge of what bodies are and how we should control them.” Illness and distress are particularly likely to disrupt the illusion of bodily control (Becker, 1995). As Becker further notes, in the West, illness and distress not only tends to separate the self from the body by casting the body as adversary, but tends to separate self from community through its capacity to stigmatize and isolate persons who are suffering.

The disciplining of the body also has implications for understanding emotion. Following the mind/body duality, reason is seen as transcendental, and emotions are often seen to be fixed by ideas; as Gergen (1989, 70) notes,

we speak of ideas, for example, as they are shaped by sense data, bent by our motives, dropped into memory, recruited for the process of planning and so on. And we describe how our emotions are fixed by our ideas, suppressed by our conscience, modified by our memories, and seek expression in our dreams. In effect, we have at our disposal a full and extended ontology of the inner region.

Emotion is here understood to be directed by reason, or as requiring modification or suppression through reason; the body as well as emotions are believed to interfere with reason (Gordon, 1988). In this view, knowledge and consciousness derive from or are associated with the mind, not the body. Although knowledge is acquired through the senses, the body is generally seen as 'ignorant' or neutral.

Fourth, the Cartesian dichotomy not only separates mind from body, but also one person from another (Hermans and Kempen, 1993). In the western world, the character of the 'liberal', rational and autonomous subject is thought to reside in an 'essence' of 'being', rather than being seen as processual or constituted by relationships (Gordon, 1988). As Brown (1995) adds, the autonomous self of the liberal/rational subject is civil rather than familial, moving freely in civil society, capable of providing for self (and therefore, not dependent), and is self oriented, with presumed self interests. The dualisms characteristic of liberalism involve such dichotomies as equality/difference, liberty/necessity, autonomy/dependence, rights/needs, individual/family, public/private, and contract/consent.

Whereas the liberal subject is characterized by '*rights*', the family, on the other hand, is seen to be governed by *needs*; as Brown argues, rights relations presume conditions of formal equality, while needs relations legitimate inequalities based on differences, notably differences between dependent children and their parents. Rights relations, in other words, presume autonomous, rational relations while need presumes intimacy and dependency. Furthermore, due to the historical relegation of women to familial duties, rights and possessive individualism have been traditionally felt to be the proper inheritance of men rather than women. The mind/body duality hereby provides a metaphoric basis for the conceptualization of individual will and social responsibility (Kirmayer, 1988). Western rationality has thus historically operated as a "one sided autonomy" that refuses to recognize dependent

relationships, particularly those of men, a situation Benjamin (1986) argues, characteristically leads to domination.

The separation of persons from each other, therefore, refers not only to an individualism, but to the construction of hierarchical, gendered and age related divisions which presuppose further qualitative differences. That is, these divisions are often further elaborated through stereotypes which construct the 'masculine' as agentic, self protecting, self asserting and expanding, and formed through *separations* and boundaries from others. The 'feminine', on the other hand, has historically been associated with *communal* aspects and proclivities, characterized by connection and attachments to others (Bakan, 1966). Notwithstanding these presumed differences, it is culturally normative to characterize human *meaning* as *subjective*, as a *mental* accomplishment, and as an *individual's* private property (Gordon, 1988).

The body itself also tends to be *internally* polarized- between public parts such as the face, and private parts such as the genitals, a dichotomization which duplicates other conventional polarities such as higher and lower, and in the western tradition, to varying degrees, the polarities of good and bad (Synnott, 1993).

Fifth, it might also be noted that the cultivation or presentation of the body does not accrue similar cultural legitimacy or intelligibility across social groupings. As Scheman (1993) points out, oppressed or marginalized groups frequently share an already defining (negative) connection to the body, either as a sexual body, a laboring body or as an insufficiently controlled body- whereas the powerful are rarely defined by the meanings and uses of their own bodies *for* others.

Importantly, the mind/body duality has historically come to be mapped onto or displaced not only on to the dualism of gender, but also onto divisions of class and race, as well as serving as justificatory ground for such cultural divisions as those of public and private realms (Cranny-Francis, 1995). Moreover, this mapping takes as its norm, the 'normal' body of the Anglo , middle class,

heterosexual, youthful male. In the context of *gender*, which has already been discussed above, the male/female division has historically inherited the following associated dualities: activity/passivity, sun/moon, culture/nature, day/night, head/heart, subject/object, tough/soft, intelligible/sensitive, and logos/pathos. These binaries operate by constructing one as the negative of, but necessary (usually unacknowledged) precondition for the other.

The mapping of the mind/body duality onto *class* has meant that the working class in the Euro-western world has typically tended to be constructed in terms aligning them with animality, physicality, emotionality and with the body- in opposition to the 'civilized', rational middle and upper classes (Cranny-Francis, 1995). The working class has thereby historically been characterized as deficient or lacking, often subjected to classifications which would render them more easily scrutinized or pathologized, thereby misreading oppression for pathology (Walkerdine, 1995).

Similarly, from the end of the nineteenth century on, the working class has also tended to be aligned with sexuality, as dominant discourses rendered them simultaneously sexually competent and sexually promiscuous- and therefore dangerous as well as exploitable (Cranny-Francis, 1995). The sexualization of the working class also meant that the female body could be used as a potent marker of social class, thereby making class easily conceptualizable in gendered terms (Marshall, 1994). These typifications of the working class enabled the maintenance of boundaries and divisions that marked relations of power and inequality- and did so through readily recognizable cultural codings emanating from the mind/body duality, codings which invited tacit cultural *resonances* through their (already) corresponding operation in everyday gender relations.

The mapping of the mind/body duality onto *race*, as with class, has also historically exploited imagery of animality, physicality, emotionality, degeneracy as well as having drawn associations with the body and sexuality (Cranny-Francis, 1995). Race, like sexuality, is a bodily marker easily naturalized to legitimate social categories as well as relations of oppression (Cranny-Francis, 1995;

1Nelkin and Lindee, 1995). The intersection of race with sexuality particularly, provided powerful ideological templates for structuring relations of colonization, encouraging the racialization of sexual ideologies. As Stoler (1991) confirms, the codification of sexual behavior in colonial settings simultaneously enforced racism, demarcating not only positions of power, but prescribing and constructing personal and public boundaries of race as well as well as of sexual behavior.³⁵

To sum up this section, I have argued that the body has been used as an index to organize relations of gender, class and race in historically contingent and culturally specific ways in the Euro-western context. These ‘mappings’, as interlocking cultural codes, create *resonances of structured feeling* in that the logic of the mind/body duality permeates and comes to stabilize cultural notions of gender, class and race in persistent, although not necessarily consistent ways. This is not to suggest that these cultural categories are *only* defined and constructed through this duality, but that this duality serves as a major constitutive, structuring influence in the western world.

In a general sense then, the cultural logics of the mind/body might be seen as a ‘force-field’, a loosely coded interpretive grid, a cultural undertow- a symbolic matrix of responsive social and material relationships and activities which organizes *lived experience*, and is both intersubjective and practical-moral in character. Cultural logics tend to generate images, metaphors and tacit motifs that come to be located within a particularized “moral-ideational continuum”, and serve as an “implicit philosophy”, an “organizing scheme immanent in practice” (Boddy, 1989, 95, 74). These images and metaphors tend to be reified or routinized to make available a ‘lexicon’ of the body (Becker, 1995); in turn, one participates in cultural life *through* these background assumptions, not being necessarily conscious of them (Gordon, 1988). These cultural lexicons and conventions constitute the “epistemological field that underwrites the salience acquired by identity categories” in various historical contexts (Poovey, 1995, 3).

At least one of the benefits of acknowledging these culturally structured resonances lies in its potential to render visible the complex interconnectedness of gender, class and race - so that they come to be seen not just as separate/additive markers or strands in one's identity, but fully co-implicated and resonant bodily orientations and lived connections which animate and shape our bodily 'being' and the 'having' of our worlds. In other words, the body serves as a linking tool, and 'calls up' a series of physical, psycho-moral, interpersonal and cultural associations simultaneously, associations which are always already gendered, classed and racialized- and which involve 'structurally enjoined sentiments' and 'conventionalized patterns' (Trawick, 1990) that provide the cultural grammars and lexicons for social experience. These grammars and lexicons are not just ideational, but are embodied- to be understood as *felt ideational processes*, in-corporated through the carrying out of daily social life.

The notion of *felt ideational processes*, or *resonant structured feelings*, provides a way for thinking about the body as "a certain setting in relation to the world" or as a "general power of inhabiting all the environments which the world contains" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 303, 311). As a setting in relation to the world, the body inhabits the world through practices that involve *perceptual activity*, so that the body may be seen as a simultaneous field of perceptual practice (Csordas, 1990).

According to Williams (1977), "structures of feeling" invoke emergent forms of consciousness. Persons, therefore, gain consciousness of, or grasp the meaningfulness of social life through dynamic, interactive processes, obtaining knowledge of cultural 'rules' and values through taken for granted schemata, gaining practical knowledges *implicitly* through daily perceptual practices. As Bourdieu (1977, 79) adds, practices may remain "obscure in the eyes of their own producers"; on the other hand, there is a realm of "buried possibility" in which practices are "objectively adjusted to other practices and to the structures of which the principle of their production is itself the product." Stated differently, cultural logics are what "one *sees with*, but seldom what one *sees*" (Hutchins, 1980, 12)³⁶ (italics in original).

I have emphasized the notion of *resonant* structured feelings to invoke an understanding of the *simultaneity of lived associations*, and thereby to avoid reductionist tendencies which encourage the notion that social practices- in this case, sexual practices- are open to any old (cognitive) *interpretation*. Much of the current criticism of the idea of sexual behaviours between adults and children as exploitative or abusive implicitly rests on the premise that therapists may be eliciting “false” interpretations of their past sexual experiences, suggesting that interpretations can be taken on at will, as a matter of choice. The issue of therapeutic practice remains an important concern and is being addressed elsewhere by others.³⁷ For the purposes of this paper and as I will develop more fully in the next chapter, I simply wish to reiterate that lived experience involves an experiential unity of lived associations. In other words, these associations are culturally overdetermined such that one’s embodied, lived practical experience always involves some degree of overdetermined resonant feeling which is pre-abstract- or pre-cognitive. In this view, “understanding” is initially an embodied, felt immediacy, and only secondarily comes to emergent consciousness, comes to be submitted to cognitive elaboration. What is important here is that women’s testimony of bodily dissociation refers to the *lived immediacy of felt exploitation*. In that cultural knowledges are, in part, accrued through embodied associations, I am suggesting that culturally specific instantiations of the mind/body duality organizes lived experience, *delivers over to us culturally specific associations that in-form the nature and character of felt distress* (such as in the case of bodily dissociation in the context of sexualized behaviour between children and adults). Knowledge and understanding, in other words, is not first of all a conceptually based knowing, but a visceral bodily connectedness and capacity for ‘feeling worldly’ (Flax, 1990). As May (1972, 225) points out, “in the process of knowing, we are *in-formed* by the thing understood, and in the same act, our intellect simultaneously *gives form* to the thing we understand” (italics in original).

In the following chapter, I will elaborate on the concept of a *lived flow of experience* and examine how our embeddedness or immersion in this flow is characterized by a fully embodied orientation to the world. By this I mean that we live most of our life as “mindful bodies”(Scheper-Hughes and Lock, 1987), in that we, as self-bodies, inhabit the world through unified mind-body dispositions within the social/material world. Before I do that, I first intend in this next section to explore Johnson’s (1987) work related to the bodily basis of cognition, in which he argues for this unity of the mind/body. Johnson emphasizes that the body, rather than being separate from or in opposition to the mind, is in fact deeply implicated in the development of (social) thought. This work has suggestive implications in light of women’s expressed sense of dissociation from their bodies, laying the ground for a different kind of analysis of the interviewed women’s personal/social distress and their perceived lack of identity than is typically found in dominant psychological discourses.

Mark Johnson: the bodily basis of cognition

According to Johnson (1987), meaning and rationality must be understood through acknowledgment of its embodied character, or through the structuring importance of the human body. His work arises out of a critique of the objectivist tradition which posits meaning and reason as processes governed by the rules of logic and in which the very *ways* through which humans grasp things *as* meaningful is considered to be incidental and/or irrelevant. As well, his work is a challenge to the western philosophical tradition which tends to align feeling, imagination and perception with the body, and reason with the mind. Rather, he argues that the embodiment of human meaning and understanding arises out of ‘forms of imaginative structuring of experience’ that emerge out of bodily experience by way of *image schemata*: these schemata , in turn, form the basis for the development of meaningful thought through metaphorical elaboration and projection.

Image schemata are described as the “recurring, dynamic patterning of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that give coherence and structure” to our experiences (Johnson, 1987,

xix), or as “embodied patterns of meaningfully organized experience” (Johnson, 1987, 9). That is, image schema emerge first as structures of bodily interactions and have a dynamic, non-propositional, experiential, figurative character. These non-propositional structures can be regarded also as non-representational, and include such bodily orientations and experiences as those involved in the physical experiences of gravity, light, heat and wind, etcetera. Image schemata thus give rise to such varied things such as our sense of containment, boundedness, our sense of in and out, part-whole, our sense of separation, up and down, differentiation, restriction, trajectories, compulsion, diversion, enablement, attraction, blockage, counterforce, etcetera. These schemata inhere a fully kinesthetic character ‘not tied to any single perceptual modality’: schemata are that, therefore, which give ‘comprehensible structure and definiteness’ to our experiences. In other words, they are the means by which we achieve coherent, patterned and sharable representations. As such, propositions exist as a “continuous analog pattern of experience...with sufficient internal structure to permit inferences” (Johnson, 1987, 3, 4). Propositional content, therefore, occurs through the metaphorical elaboration of complex webs of non-propositional schematic structures that emerge from our bodily experience; these in turn may be linguistically augmented in culturally specific ways. This image-schematic capacity for ordering experience is what Johnson calls ‘imagination’. Image schemata thus structure meaning through their non-propositional and figurative character, as “structures of embodied imagination” (Johnson, 1987, xix).

As Alverson (1991, 117) summarizes, image schema are “intentional-significance bestowing devices, not ... schematic diagrams of actualistically conceived geometric configurations.” Image schema, as “irreducible experiential gestalts”, (and as ‘structures’ emerging in our perceptual interactions and bodily movements) can thus be said to arise in source domains to be elaborated metaphorically to target domains; the notion of metaphor here is used to signify the mapping from a source domain to a target domain, as a “projective structure by means of which many experiential

connections and relations are established...” (Johnson, 1987, 104). Metaphorical mappings are thus ‘motivated’ by the force of the source domain in preconceptual bodily experience (Alverson, 1991, 101). Johnson notes, as an example, that the culturally normative notion of physical appearance entails the notion of *physical appearance as a physical force*. As he notes, the notion of ‘force’ involves a gestalt structure which includes a sense of interaction, a vector quality, a path of motion, origins and sources, degrees of power and intensity, and sequences of causality. He then goes on to summarize some of the ‘entailments’ arising out of the notion of physical force- attraction, enablement, compulsion, diversion, blockage, counterforce, etcetera. His examination of how people believe, understand, and use the notion of physical attraction supports his argument that the ‘entailments’ arising out of the physical property of ‘force’ carries over metaphorically into our understanding of what it means to be physically attracted to another person. Thus, in a situation described by Johnson wherein a man discusses his attempts to ‘*resist*’ sexual involvement with a women, he states such things as “she’s *giving off* feminine vibes”; “I’m supposed to just *take it*”; or, “she *forced* me to *react*.”

Although image schemata are flexible and can generate complex patterns of meaning through *entailments* and combinations with other schemata, they may also serve to *constrain* inferences and thus, reasoning. In other words, they are not just the background against which meaning emerges, but are themselves “*meaning structures*” (Johnson, 1987). Moreover, metaphorical elaborations (or “imaginative rationality”) may also restructure both source and target domains in unanticipated ways, so that, as Alverson notes, using Levi- Strauss’s phrase, “things ordinarily thought *about* become things for thinking *with*” (in Alverson, 1991, 100). In this view, behaviors, practices and relationships are differentially shaped and constrained by the particular metaphorical elaborations which are culturally dominant concerning any given issue or idea.

As Johnson summarizes, understanding via metaphorical projections from the concrete to abstract, ‘makes use’ of physical experience in at least two important ways: first, bodily movements and interactions in physical domains of experience provide structuring image schema which are metaphorically elaborated onto abstract domains. That is, metaphor ‘appropriates our experience of embodiment to organize abstract understanding.’ Second, these metaphorical elaborations are not arbitrary, as bodily experience may constrain not only the ‘input’ to metaphorical projections, but also constrain the kinds of metaphorical mappings which are possible (Johnson, 1987, xv). Image schemata and their metaphorical projections are thus constitutive of meaning in that they “blend” bodily, perceptual, cultural, linguistic, historical and economic influences into a fabric of meaningful experience (Johnson, 1987, 104). As Johnson (1987, 137, 138) notes,

understanding is never merely a matter of holding beliefs, either consciously or unconsciously. More basically, one’s understanding is one’s way of being in, or having, a world. This is very much a matter of one’s embodiment, that is, of perceptual mechanisms, patterns of discrimination, motor programs and various bodily skills. And it is equally a matter of our embeddedness within culture, language, institutions and historical traditions. [Understanding is therefore not about beliefs, but rather,] our understanding is our bodily, cultural, linguistic, historical situatedness in, and toward, our world.

Notwithstanding Johnson’s acknowledgment of the significance of historic and culturally contingent contexts, his work arguably lacks adequate attention to the specificities of historically situated and contingent cultural processes and to the influence of people’s apprehension of the world as already socially organized.³⁸ As well, his work offers little attention to possible differences in embodied experiences which might be associated with gender, or with other cultural markers of significance. Nevertheless, there are a number of points I would like to reiterate and expand on which seem to me to be especially provocative for the purposes of this paper.

First, Johnson’s conclusion concerning understanding as a *mode of embodied living* in our worlds, and his emphasis on the structuring of attention and perception which constitutes habituated

patterns of practices and relations, is compatible with earlier (and later) discussions concerning embodied social life as offered by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu.

Second, what is important here is that understanding emerges not primarily via abstract, logical thought but is shaped and acquired via ‘lived through’ participation in daily practical life. Meaning is therefore not merely private or psychological but inherently cultural, and emerges out of, and through, our daily social interactions and activities (see McMahon, 1995, 16).

Third, and related to the above, although metaphors are in some way dependent on bodily based schema, they are not universally shared in the sense that specific metaphors may be more particular to, and be more widespread in, specific cultural environments. Moreover, some metaphors are more widespread or dominant than others, and have more signifying power in particular cultural contexts. Many metaphors become routinized and function as taken for granted understandings of the social world. Similarly, historic and culturally specific metaphoric projections may generate compatible kinds of associative metaphors which cumulatively, give rise to a relatively cohesive cosmology. As Lakoff and Johnson argue (1980, 14), there may be certain kinds of “orientational metaphors” which organize a whole system of concepts in fairly unified ways. Through this process, a cosmology may come to naturalize specific kinds of power relations and inequalities. This is not to imply that all metaphors are culturally organized compatibly; clearly, different metaphorical elaborations may contradict each other, offer different kinds of understandings which are incompatible. Nevertheless, it may be true that certain dominant metaphors are sufficiently elaborated and pervasive enough to support power relations in consistent ways.

Fourth, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) note, metaphors allow us to elaborate concepts in detail, and tend to highlight certain aspects while hiding others. As well, metaphors may extend concepts in certain directions but not others, and may prevent us from focusing on conceptual aspects which are inconsistent with the metaphor. As an example, Johnson discusses the work of Hans Selye, whose

groundbreaking work on stress was made possible through the adoption of a different kind of metaphor for thinking about the body. Rather than viewing the body as a machine, Selye began to think of the body as homeostatic organism, thereby inviting revolutionized notions about the nature of disease and about forms of intervention. One of the things that is significant about this process is that ‘truth’, in this view, depends on categorization, or on the kinds of metaphorical projections which are in place. In other words, ideas or statements can only be said to be true or false in relation to the metaphorical elaboration against which it is measured, that is, ‘relative to the properties’ highlighted by the metaphorical categories upon which the idea is elaborated. Johnson refers to this understanding of ‘truth’ as the possibility of a “fit”- or the “grasping of a situation as instantiating certain schematic or else failing to do so” (Johnson, 1987, 189). In the context of sexual exploitation, evaluation of the character of sexualized behaviors as abusive or exploitative are perhaps, in part, being made on the basis of culturally *subordinate* metaphorical understandings concerning, for example, sexuality- which might partially explain their highly contested character.

According to Johnson, certain aspects of the meaning of *sexuality* arise out of culturally shared dimensions of our experiences in the physical world, and exist at the preconceptual level. The culturally dominant notion of sexuality as a ‘force’ or ‘drive’ ‘emerges meaningfully’ out of bodily based image schema which are ‘carried up into the meaning of sexuality’, in such a way so that it comes to be constitutive of our understanding of sexuality. Lakoff (1987) further argues that the culturally dominant metaphorical elaborations attached to our understandings of anger and lust, together with various folk theories on sexuality, contribute to the apparent linkages in western societies between *sexuality and violence*. In other words, he argues that American culture particularly has a large stock of interrelated metaphors that might be viewed as rationale for sexual violence. The evaluation of sexual behavior as abusive then, rather than arising out of a subordinate metaphorical

understanding of sexuality, may as plausibly be *consistent* with dominant metaphors related to sexuality more generally.

Fifth, however suggestive the above analysis may be, I would like to focus more narrowly on Johnson's notion of the pre-conceptual or non-propositional character of lived experience for what it might offer to an understanding of the existential character of abuse or exploitation. Recall that Vanja testified repeatedly about her experienced lack of a core reference. If Johnson's theory concerning the bodily basis of cognition is true, it becomes possible to relate this lack to her perceived absence of a phenomenological sense of attachment to her body. Vanja also noted that she felt like an impostor, that she had no way of knowing whether or not the ideas she lived by were really her own, or whether she was merely role playing. Recall also that Vanja testified that cognitive reframing made no difference to her experience of distress. In other words, concepts, without bodily connection, or without a basis in one's bodily orientation to the world, *may* lack a felt sense of meaningfulness: *without bodily connection, cognition may become mere logic*, devoid of bodily felt understanding. (This is suggestive of something which is undeveloped by Johnson, namely the *phenomenological* implications of his work).

I wish also to suggest here that the experience of sexualized behaviors testified to by the women as *abusive*, is first and foremost *not* the result of cognition, not due to cognitive knowledge concerning culturally normative sexual practices, or concerning appropriate behaviors between parents/adults and children. In other words, this was *not* a matter of children's ability to *rationalize* the behavior as exploitative. (As I will discuss in the next chapter, the experience of *abuse* is arguably linked to the various kinds of culturally salient metaphorical elaborations associated with parent/child relationships, metaphors which are derailed in such a way so that meaning-structures and embodied understandings are profoundly disrupted.) *If Johnson is right, one might say that the phenomenological experience of abuse occurs as an experiential gestalt- through the experience of*

being dissociated from the body, and through which experience the ground for meaning making and understanding is disrupted. In other words, the experience of abuse or exploitation arose non-propositionally through their experience of a fundamental disruption and impairment of their embodied being-in-the-world. As Trisha notes, the body is taken away, and made into an object even to themselves. If embodiment means 'having' a world, and knowledge is something we 'are', then the loss of a phenomenological connection to the body may simultaneously come to be felt as a loss of connection to a knowledgeable world, to a felt sense of commune-ity.

As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) add, 'causation' is best understood as an emergent, experiential gestalt, involving a cluster of components that together forms the gestalt - and which is experienced as causation through their simultaneous recurrence as a cluster of properties. In the context of women's accounts of sexual abuse, the repeated experience of bodily dissociation accompanied by the sense of helplessness and inevitability, the overwhelmingness of physical/emotional sensations, the sense of confusion- all of these together arguably formed aspects of an experiential gestalt that are likely to support the women's sense of their distress as fundamentally linked to and 'caused' by the sexualized activities enforced on them as children.

Sixth, *meaning*, in this view, as a matter also of *understanding*, requires image schema in that objects and relations only acquire meaning *for* persons when graspable within some network of meaning- structures. Meaning is also always dynamic, interactive, and a matter of *relatedness*- with other persons, environments or temporal horizons- such that it only becomes intelligible within the context of public sharable communities as well as in relation to both past and future (Johnson, 1987). The sense of bodily dissociation as described by the women arguably entailed a fundamental disruption of shared meaning-structures, thereby also coming to be felt as a disruption of a sense of relationship to wider communities.

Seventh, according to Lakoff and Johnson, it is not easy to change the metaphors we live by: moreover, one cannot change metaphorical elaborations on the basis of a conscious decision. This is powerfully attested to by the testimony of Vanja, who emphasizes the ineffectiveness of cognitive ‘reframing’ of her experience. On the other hand, Lakoff and Johnson point out that new metaphors have the power to create ‘new realities’, to alter conceptual systems and redirect and restructure attention to and perception of the social/material world. Words in themselves do not change reality, but the clusters of connections made through new metaphorical elaborations may change what is real for us and how we ‘have’ our worlds. The importance of this will become more clear later, as I briefly discuss the transformative power of the ‘boundary’ metaphor to reshape one’s sense of ‘being’ in the world (see chapter eight). For now, what is important is that metaphors and experiential gestalts are multidimensional ‘events’ which ‘pull together’ or create significances and relations among various properties or aspects such that resonances may be created between seemingly disparate events, relationships or behaviors. Practices and social relations thus come to form ensembles of meaningful experience which are imbued or impressed with significances in culturally specific ways. As Johnson (1989, 175) notes, “understanding is...a historically and culturally embedded, humanly embodied, imaginatively structured event.”

In the above section then, I have offered a brief review of some of the more provocative aspects of Johnson’s work on the bodily basis of cognition in order to accomplish the following: to begin to formulate a paradigm for understanding embodiment by looking at the significances of the lived body to *reason or cognition*; to reiterate the importance of acknowledging how the lived body is the existential ground for *culture*; to suggest a more *phenomenological* potential to Johnson’s work; to argue that sexual exploitation must first be seen as a *non-propositional* happening; and more generally, to begin to explore the significance of bodily *dissociation* for one’s ability to ‘have’ a world. One may suggest here that embodiment entails *felt ideational processes* - through the felt structuring basis of thought

and cognition *in the body*. Ideas are also *felt* through embodied participation in practical social life. In other words, embodiment, or the unity of the mind/body, serves as the ground for a fully felt and generative 'having' of our thinking-feeling life-worlds.

I argue that sexual exploitation may, for some women, result in a thorough-going phenomenological detachment from the body such that the self/body, as the generative matrix of social life, is fundamentally disrupted and thwarted. The following chapter elaborates my thesis that bodily dissociation may constitute a pervasive dis-ordering of one's self-bodily capacities. I argue that the interviewed women's phenomenological experience of detachment from their bodies might be seen as a *lived estrangement*, an estrangement from a meaningfully organized experience of self, and a disruption of the integrative capacities required for developing 'knowledgeable' relationships with persons, places and things.

THE LIVED FLOW OF EXPERIENCE: EXPLICATING WOMEN'S DISTRESS

I have the use of the information that that which I see, the images, or that which I feel as pain, the prick of a pin, or the ache of a tired muscle-for these too, are images created in their respective modes- that all this is neither objective truth or is it all hallucination. There is a combining or marriage between an objectivity that is passive to the outside world and a creative subjectivity, neither pure solipsism nor its opposite.

Bateson³⁹

Introduction: the significances of the lived body

In the following pages, I elaborate the notion of the lived flow of experience and explore some of the implications of embodiment in order to draw out various significances of experiential bodily dissociation. To explicate the interviewed women's distress, in other words, I take as starting point the premise that the lived flow of experience requires a mindful- bodily connectedness. Throughout these pages then, I develop an analysis which explores the implications of bodily dissociation for one's ability to meaningfully grasp the life-world. This analysis requires a view of the body not as an object, but as the lived medium whereby the world comes into being. As self-bodies, in other words, we encounter the world, forging links and organizing gestalts of personal and cultural significance (see Leder, 1990; Hastrup and Hervik, 1994). The self-body here is to be understood as the matrix for integrating meaningful connections to the world and to people, where gestures and actions refer to the capacity not only for doing, but for Being (see Levin, 1985).

Following this view, I will use the notion of the *lived flow of experience* to suggest a felt, interactive, dynamic, and continuously emergent sense of connectedness to the material and social world. I loosely define this lived flow as a kind of *teleological immersion* in one's social worlds, and more specifically, as an *embodied immersion* in a not fully determinate patterning of social life- particularly as it has come to be shaped by the mind/body duality. This speaks simultaneously to the idea of a 'thrownness' into cultural life,⁴⁰ a situated locatedness, and to the possibility of a teleologically

meaningful 'having' of social worlds, a 'having' which is both product of, and produced by, embodied social actors in structured social spaces.

This lived flow of experience is, of course, not a reified 'thing', but as a heuristically useful image, may be used to refer to our embodied, dynamic engagement with our life-worlds, lived within a repertoire of idioms, symbols, oppositions, values, social and material relations and "embodied aesthetics" (Desjarlais, 1992) which are constitutive of local and wider cosmologies within specific cultural settings. As Boddy (1989, 7) says in reference to her own work in Sudan, (and following Bakhtin), a cultural world might best not be seen as "an entity, or reification, so much as a heuristically bounded set of intersecting, overlapping discourses" -and I would add, sets of resonant, sometimes contradictory social practices. "Having" a world then, involves clusters of practical-moral, ethical, and fully kinesthetic engagements at crosscutting private/public levels of social activity. Following Sartre (1982), Jackson notes that in "seeking to understand the world, we situate ourselves squarely within it rather than taking up a vantage point outside it" (in Jackson, 1989, 49).

The lived flow of experience is thus fully *embodied*, as our bodies provide us "with a way of access to the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 140). Moreover, since 'knowing' according to Heidegger, is a mode of (embodied) being-in-the-world, *being in the lived flow of experience is also a form of knowledgeable "being-with, a concern... with and inside the world"* (Steiner, 1978, 85) (my emphasis).⁴¹ It is only through recognition of our *embodiment* then that we can recognize particularity (Marshall, 1994, 103) and through which subjectivities come to "hold sway" in the world (Husserl, 1970, 107).⁴² The lived flow of experience thus includes both the idiosyncratic and shared dimensions of our social lives, in which *shared* experience does not necessarily imply *identical* lived experience, but rather, suggests that persons are thrown into, and are made to attend to similarly overdetermined cultural categories, conventions and practices (Hervik, 1994). On the other hand, the notion of the lived flow of experience is also meant to capture some sense of a provisional and opened movement

or journeying through one's life-world, to acknowledge both the bounded and transitive processes of lived experience.

At this point I would like to turn attention again to the shared experiences (as above defined) of the women, and particularly of Vanja and Trisha. Recall that they emphasized a sense of emotional restriction or disconnectedness, a sense of intellect that lacked a felt personal meaningfulness, lack of a core, internal reference, social anxiety, mystification concerning the negotiation of everyday relationships, lack of identification with gender habits and concerns, and a lack of sense of identity. I am suggesting here that these characteristics are fundamentally linked to these women's sense of dissociation from their body more generally.⁴³ The rest of this chapter is concerned to explicate this thesis.

Before I begin, I want to point out again that the experience of our own bodies as objects, is not unfamiliar to any of us. Indeed, lived experience accommodates shifting experiences of ourselves as both subjects and objects, as "acting" and "being acted upon", as belonging and feeling estranged, conjunctive and dysjunctive, as world makers, and feeling as if we are being made by the world (see Jackson, 1989, 1996). Leder (1990) argues, in fact, that it is precisely this accommodation, the tendency for the body to disappear or be concealed from our conscious awareness, and for it to re-appear- (in his terms, dys-appear), particularly in times of illness, bodily stress or distress- that *naturalizes* the notion of a mind/body dichotomy. He further argues that the body's own tendency to self-concealment is largely responsible for the neglect, and possible devaluation of the body in general. The actual intertwining of the mind/body tends to be misunderstood, so that at times of bodily self-concealment, we tend to speak of being governed by reason, and in times of objectification, refer to our bodiliness.

It is characteristic of lived embodiment, therefore, to be, both, a subject, and an object available to external actions. Moreover, at times of bodily 'appearance', the body tends to exert a

demand on our attention, compelling our awareness and action. It is notable that Leder observes that much of (western) women's consciousness of their own bodies is rooted in the experience of unequal power relations; that is, women are culturally predisposed through discrepant relations of power to experience their body as objectified, and as an object, both, of other's manipulations and to themselves. One's body image, therefore, is deeply *intersubjective* in that our experience of our self-body shifts between a sense of attachment to and detachment from others; it is also dependent on the gazes of, and on interactions with, others, notwithstanding the culturally normative privileging of certain *individualized* modes of experiencing (Gatens, 1996; Jackson, 1996).

Trisha and Vanja's sense of detachment from their bodies, I am arguing, exceeds the normal kinds of shifting experience between that of subject/object as described above. Except for intrusive episodes of anxiety, Vanja and Trisha both describe a fairly complete absence of bodily connection, and a lack of connectedness to their bodies even when tending to bodily self care, such as cleaning and feeding. Indeed, what seems to have been disrupted for these women is not only their implicit embodied being-in-the-world, but as part and parcel of that disruption, a thwarting of the characteristic shifting experience of oneself as subject and object, as active and passive beings.

Whereas much of this shifting accommodation between our experience of self as subject and object occurs outside consciousness, it is also true that we can, and do, intentionally call into awareness our bodily feelings- we can and do objectify our own bodies, mostly through conscious reflection. If Freund (1982) is correct, our sense of self/bodily wellbeing depends on an awareness of our mind/body connections, depends on our ability to exert some degree of control over this shifting movement between subject and object- that we require the capacity to be able to monitor and interpret our bodily feelings and processes. Levin (1989) also argues that much of 'psychopathology' comes about through a lost holism in lived experience. It is precisely this holism, this integrative capacity which appears to have been thwarted through women's disrupted embodiment, through their phenomenological sense of

detachment from their bodies. As Desjarlais notes, lived experience entails an “aesthetics of integration”, involves ongoing attempts to achieve a sense of coherence, of tying our worldly impressions and experiences together through time. Without an implicitly embodied disposition to the world, this ongoing task is thwarted, and also explains the interviewed women’s sense of historical dysjunction and disunity.

The notion of an “aesthetics of integration” also suggestively points to the notion that in the lived flow of experience, one’s lived experience is *of a whole*, that there is a lived immediacy to our attention and perception which is *integrative*. In other words, we grasp the world through experiential gestalts, drawing relations between objects, things and persons, thereby organizing our experience of the world. Ideas originate, in part, in the sensuous, kinesthetic capacities of our bodies, and our perceptual capacities disclose and reach out to create realities, rather than discover them. As Johnson argues, our bodily forms and orientations serve as the ground or medium for our grasping of the world. Our comportment thus entails image schema or gestalt structures, which provide us with “somatic modes of attention” (Csordas, 1993). Through our daily activities, therefore, we come to constantly define and redefine a corporeal field- a social space wherein people are linked together through physical, sensate and moving bodies- and in such a way so that the lived body comes to incarnate, through practice and improvisation, cultural habits and values (Hastrup, 1996, 89).

I am arguing therefore, that the experience of dissociation from one’s body- as a disruption of embodiment- may result in a fundamental disruption of a sense of self, of community, of identity, of the ability to grasp the world as a whole, to integrate experiences of objects, things and persons, to create linkages and to ‘have’ an embodied sense of sociality. I will reiterate these issues in various ways in the following pages, and in response to different theoretical insights. In other words, the following analysis is not so much a linearly developed explication, but a shifting, recursive engagement between women’s narratives and various theoretical provocations. Where this format precludes the

development of a tidy, progressive kind of analysis, I hope it compensates for by delivering a sense of the messiness and entanglements of lived experience.

This analysis, then, takes as a starting point the position that our bodily selves are simultaneously *biological* organisms, *psycho-moral* orientations within our life-worlds, the ground for *personal identity*, and that our bodily selves are irreducibly *social*, so that disruption of the unity of our mindful bodies has implications for *all* of these aspects of our Being, that bodily dissociation invokes a pervasively *disorganizing phenomenology*.⁴⁴ If knowledge is something we *are*, rather than *something we have*, one might say that gaining knowledge means that we exist differently, that we have our worlds, differently. These women attest to a fundamental re-ordering, a pervasively altered modality of being- in- the- world. This view challenges those critics who object to the broadness, the extensiveness of the “signs and symptoms” (in dominant psychological models, for example) potentially arising out of sexual abuse.⁴⁵

To begin my explication then, I want to start by situating this analysis in a cultural context, to specify some of the reasons why sexual activity between adults and children might come to result in distress, in a dissociated body in the first place. In other words, women’s suffering occurs in an historically and culturally specific milieu. Notwithstanding the fact that the lived flow of experience contains an excess of meanings and involves uncertainty and indeterminacies, lived experience also always carries with it some sense of confinement, of limits that are predetermined and “peripheral to consciousness” (Jackson, 1989, 50). As Boddy (1989) notes, while cultural logics entail ‘pliable’ structuring activity, there are parameters, limits to differences: there are horizons against which meanings become emergent (Angus, 1995). These horizons serve as circumscriptions or impediments to the formulation of alternatives, through the work of *power relations* which work to constantly define and redefine the horizon of meaning against which we can make over the world to and for ourselves.⁴⁶

Within the lived flow of experience then, creative and interpretive license is always circumscribed by *power*, by one's habitus, by the particular givens of the cultural environment into which we are 'thrown' (see Jackson, 1989, 1995, 1996). The next section briefly examines some of the characteristics of this horizon within the 'western' context, and within the current historical setting.

Sexuality as key construct: the overdetermination of 'abuse'

I want to preface this section with the observation that in addition to the overly *cognitive* orientation of many theoretical approaches, most social theories are also *overwhelmingly adult centred*. The apparent conflation of adults and children as social actors, or perhaps more accurately, the invisibility of children- the dominance of adult oriented theories of agency, for example- tends to result in the erasure of the specificities of children's lives, discourages exploration into the ways in which children and adults may differ in the apprehension and grasping of social life. Although children can and do, practically and strategically, form their worlds through agentic activity, it would be irresponsible not to point out that children are materially and in terms of *power*, dependent on adult nurturance and protection.

All three women's familial relations were profoundly destabilizing, causing severe emotional dislocation. As Trawick (1990) argues, kinship relations are generally considered to be the place where reciprocity is experienced and learned, where one's emotional disposition to the world is shaped and constituted. Family- rather than a category- is first of all experienced as a set of relations, as affective fields- as sets of feelings which make the family system meaningful. If Benjamin (1983) is correct, domination begins when dependency needs are thwarted, when *recognition* and *reciprocity* is denied. Benjamin argues that we gain an efficacious sense of self (which she refers to as autonomy) only through reciprocity, and through one's ability to act on the world, and to act towards others, with effectiveness. Levin (1985) and Leder (1990) both argue that the development of our human capacities are reliant on gestures of love, of caring, solicitude, on mutual *in-corporation* through empathy (see

Levin, 1985; Leder, 1990). Whereas this formulation may speak most closely to western notions of ideal human interaction, it is arguably the case that regardless of cultural elaboration, some measure of (always culturally specified) recognition and reciprocity is necessary for the construction of a sense of social belongingness, for the development of a sense of efficacy and experiential knowledge of our life-worlds.

As Trisha testifies, enforced sexualized behaviour resulted in the experience of her own body being turned into a weapon against her. Not only did she lose a sense of her own bodily integrity and ownership, but her own body was, as she says, used against her, became her own enemy, inaugurating dissociation. As all three women imply, their local moral worlds were turned upside down, making emotional attunement to the world all but impossible.⁴⁷ Leder's (1990) work is suggestive here, in that he argues that the forced submission of one's body to another's actions often results in an altered relationship to one's own bodily self, that the reality of our self/bodily image is created intersubjectively, constituted through the instigating actions and perspectives of others. This is how Polly Young-Eisendrath (1988, 157) says it.

Through our relationships with other persons we (human beings) become persons... There is no knowledge or experience of being a person that is first learned alone and then attributed to others; in order to see ourselves as persons, we need the reflections, definitions, and perceptions of others. Personal experience is originally and continuously a shared existence. A 'self' is secondarily acquired, on the other hand, through commerce with a culture of persons. As a theoretical construct or belief about individual subjectivity, the concept of self takes on meanings of the culture in which we develop as persons.

Perhaps even more so than adults, children experience intersubjective relations and things "acutely" in the *physical* sense. Children 'feel' and think the world *concretely* through their *bodies*, their bodies serving as a primary medium for orienting them to other persons and to places (Sibley, 1995). Merleau-Ponty's (1964) work suggests that children particularly, learn less by reflection than by being *in-formed bodily*, by attunement to the patterns of life in local moral settings, absorbing tacitly an understanding of what life is about through the (formative) organizing processes of one's

bodily engagement in relationships and in material circumstances. In other words, a knowledgeable being-in-the-world occurs through embodied organizing processes which configure our lived experiences of sociality. Learning is thus a process of taking bodily possession, of directing ourselves at the world through our body. As a consequence, a child's family relations are deeply constitutive of one's entire form of thinking, attending to and perceiving, of *growing into* the life-world into which they have been thrown.

I want to turn, at this point, to the notion that sexuality is more than a practice, much more than what we physically do, in a limited, empirical sense. Rather, it is deeply constitutive of our way of being-in-the-world *unto others* in that it comes, using Scheper-Hughes' (1992, 213) phrase, "trailing [its] own metaphorical meanings and symbolic associations." I am arguing here that sexual activity is saturated with meanings which ramify beyond the physical actions themselves.

Jackson (1989) argues that there may be *key symbols, metaphors or constructs* which come to stand for, or serve as, a *condensation* of a whole cultural milieu. That is, these symbols or constructs serve as a condensation of an entire series of implicit, associated understandings and practices which guide and characterize that society's cosmology and organization. I will suggest here that in the Euro-western/ North American context *sexuality* serves as key construct and one of the most condensed symbols, supplying us with an entire set of metaphorical and practico-moral schemas and values for organizing cultural life, telling us 'how things are or should be' (Boddy, 1989). As a potent structuring symbol, sexuality refers not only to sexual behavior, but is part of a larger 'moral-ideational continuum' (Boddy, 1989, 95) that is saturated with wider socio-political and moral implications-providing us with a series of associated perspectives and injunctions for imagining, acting, thinking and feeling in the world. In other words, sexuality signifies in multiple and complex ways.⁴⁸

Sexuality also serves as the basis for the 'gender order' and hence is one of the most potent symbols through which our *embodied* selves comes to be structured. Benhabib (1987, 80) argues that

the gender order is the “grid through which the self develops an *embodied* identity: a certain mode of being in one’s body and of living the body”, and through which embodied individuals come to be reproduced (italics in original). As Ramazanoglu and Holland (1993) note, grounded embodiment, sexuality and *power* are complexly interwoven- and can be seen as the matrix through which social identity comes to be effected. As crucial structuring symbol then, sexuality is central to the concrete and symbolic organization of *power* itself and has come to be seen as a key symbol through which we gain intelligibility of our personal and social identities (Foucault, 1978). The gender order or system, although inhering multiple contradictions and variations, may nevertheless retain its systematic ordering of *differences* and inequalities by accommodating and reformulating them. Hill and Mannheim (1992, 389) note that

although it is an arena of conflict, the [gender] category system continues to function in everyday contexts even for speakers who are examining and purposefully remodeling their behavior, for, even as one part of the category system is brought into conscious contention, other parts remain in place unchallenged. The category system creates a particular cultural hegemony, the unquestioned acceptance, by both men and women, of men as a normative, unmarked category of person. The hegemonic structure is reproduced below the speaker’s threshold of awareness, unconsciously, but is challenged from above the threshold of awareness, consciously.

The enduring character of the gender/sexuality order then lies in part with the *pervasiveness* of its structuring power, with its *unconscious* reproduction- in part, through the embodied character of lived social life- and because of its ability to *accommodate* changes in various aspects without losing its overall structuring power. Immersion in the *lived flow of experience*, in other words, means that our embodied selves ‘have’ our social worlds in the context of the pervasive structuring action of sexuality as key node, symbol or metaphor in organizing relations of power and in pulling and linking together - organizing aspects of lived experience in culturally specific ways.

According to Jackson (1989), key metaphors and symbols ordinarily operate in implicit, *quiescent* ways. Meaning, in this view, is “carefully built up through the use of metaphors and [ramifying] associations” (Boddy, 1989, 57) in a way that “goes without saying because it comes

without saying” (Bourdieu, 1994, 163). In times of crisis, however, these metaphors and symbols may become *activated*, and the ordinarily quiescent metaphoric connections which link personal, social and ‘natural’ bodies together may become disrupted. According to Jackson, there are particular occasions when these mundane metaphors become *activated*, are drawn to our attention in ‘extraordinary’ ways- often in situations of distress or illness. In other words, stress and crisis are the ‘universal’ conditions which may activate ordinarily quiescent, metaphorically organized understandings of our social worlds by bringing ordinarily implicit connections and associations to felt awareness, or by drawing new relations between formerly unconnected aspects of social life. These activations or redrawings of relations are made possible because of the ‘inseparability of conceptual and bodily activity’- which, as Jackson argues, explains why metaphors often ‘mediate’ forms of illness and distress. I will come back to this in the next chapter. For now, it is important to reiterate that in the *lived flow of experience*, we apprehend the world *as a whole* through implicit metaphorical understandings which pull together certain aspects of lived experience in culturally particularized ways- and that at certain times, these metaphorical understandings may become explicit, come to felt awareness, or come to be fundamentally *disrupted*.

I am suggesting here that this latter is what occurs through children’s unwanted sexualized activity with adults- that children’s struggle between the maintenance of self bodily integrity and possession and their objectification by another, was an existential struggle between an experience of self and not- self- and that this struggle signified phenomenologically as a negation of their being, *as a disruption and breaking of bodily connection-making ability*, instantiated by bodily dissociation, by suspension of the unity required for acting self bodily, for being- in-the- world. *I am also suggesting here that bodily dissociation occurs because of a fundamental derailment of the kinds of implicit connections usually made, that are drawn together, through adult-child dependency relations- which are relations of need, protection, nurturance. Instead, these children were thrown into sexual activity*

which, following the above discussion, draws together and instantiates linkages of a culturally overdetermined nature related to the organization of power, such that dependency relations were overturned, destabilized, thrown into confusion- and with that, children's entire embodied connection- making ability unraveled. Stated differently, one might say that relations of sexuality and dependency involved pervasive experiential contrasts, contrasts that, as instantiations of power, punctured children's modes of being-in- the- world, initiating bodily dissociation.

I noted earlier that the interviewed women's experience of exploitation as children should not be seen as a cognitive interpretation, but as a non-propositional or synchronous event, that is, that their experience of *abuse* came about through an experiential bodily dissociation that arose as a felt immediacy, a felt disintegration of mind/body unity. Cause and effect, in other words, might better be described here as a synchronous event rather than a linear one. Clarification of the non-propositional character of lived experience also explains why Vanja may not have been able to cognitively identify her past as abusive. Understanding, in this view, is not primarily linked to our capacity to reflect, but to the way we have experiences in the first place. As Johnson (1987, 102) argues,

understanding is the way we "have a world", the way we experience our world as a comprehensible reality. Such understanding, therefore, involves *our whole being-* our bodily capacities and skills, our values, our moods and attitudes, our entire cultural tradition, the way in which we are bound up with a linguistic community, our aesthetic sensibilities, and so forth. In short, our understanding *is* our mode of "being in the world." It is the way we are meaningfully situated in our world through our bodily interactions, our cultural institutions, our linguistic tradition, and our historical context. Our more abstract reflective acts of understanding...are simply an extension of our understanding in this more basic sense of "having a world" (italics in original).

Meaning here is first and foremost non-propositional, in that it "permeates our embodied, spatial, temporal, culturally informed and value laden understanding" (Johnson, 1987, 172). The intentionality of meaningful action is understood here as arising through the 'set' of one's body, as well as through a 'purpose' in the mind (Jackson, 1989). Merleau-Ponty (1962, 185) says it this way.

The communication or comprehension of gestures comes about through the reciprocity of my intentions and the gestures of others, of my gestures and intentions discernible in the conduct of other people. It is as if the other person's intention inhabited my body and mine his...There

is mutual confirmation between myself and others...The act by which I lend myself to the spectacle must be recognized as irreducible to anything else. I join it in a kind of blind recognition which precedes the intellectual working out and clarification of the meaning.

In other words, body movements may make intentional sense without being 'intentional' in the linguistic sense -rather, it is felt as an immediacy. Merleau-Ponty (1962, 184, 185) says,

[a] gesture *does not make me think of anger*, it is anger itself...the sense of the gestures is not given, but understood, that is, seized upon by an act in the spectator's part. The whole difficulty is to conceive this act clearly without confusing it with a cognitive operation. (italics in original).

Meaning and understanding, following this view, is firstly non-propositional in that it is 'seized upon' through an immediate feltness, in which intellectualizing is a kind of secondary process. The interviewed women's sense of abuse, in other words, came about *in and through the actions themselves*. That is, following Merleau-Ponty, sexualized behaviour by trusted adult figures in their lives, was understood, seized upon as an abuse of power, through its disruption of their embodied being- in- the- world, rather than necessarily being cognitively understood to be an abuse of power. Indeed, it was the dysjunction between their felt sense of exploitation and lack of cognitive understanding which compounded these women's sense of confusion and their experience of guilt following sexual episodes.⁴⁹

This makes sense if we understand that thinking through the body largely remains beyond speech or anterior to speech, in that we may understand bodily communication before we can put the communication into cognitive language; indeed, bodily gestures and habits may and frequently do, betray us, 'belie' our cognitive and conceptual habits. In other words, persons don't necessarily act on the basis of epistemological criteria or opinions to locate meaning for their actions; we become knowledgeable bodily-selves through participation in the lived flow of experience. In this view, intentional bodily movement does not necessarily require elucidation of what the movement 'stands for' or symbolizes, it is 'reality' itself (see Jackson, 1989).

This discussion reiterates the need to look at how we come to *experiential truths that issue forth bodily*, so to speak, and which provide a form of ‘understanding’ which cannot be reduced to an intellectual grasping. In other words, the interviewed women’s testimony of sexual exploitation must first be seen not as governed by a cognitive explanation of *the idea of abuse*, as a kind of retrospective *decoding* of their experience, but as having arisen out of a spontaneous, emergent disruption of their embodied being-in-the-world, as an *incarnate significance*.

Following this view, *agency* refers less to conscious, interpretive activity than to a flow of intersubjective and interactive conduct in which persons are constantly confronted with sets of problems that are lived and solved through practical engagement in social activity, and which give rise to emergent consciousness.⁵⁰ That Vanja, for example, feels as if her work is rote, lacks personal, connected meaningfulness is, in part, because for agency to feel like agency- that is, to feel like we are capable of practical efficacy in our social life- requires a fully embodied engagement and immersion in the lived flow of experience.⁵¹

To further explore what I have called a *disorganizing phenomenology*, I focus in the following section on issues of perception. I argue that our perceptual capacities are fundamental to how we are able to organize lived experience, and that bodily dissociation may dismantle our integrative capacities. I further link this to the interviewed women’s described sense of *fixity* in their lives.

Disrupted perceptual capacities: the disorganizing phenomenology of disembodiment.

In this section, and following Merleau-Ponty, I start with the view that a paradigm of embodiment places the body, as “zero point of perception”, as a nodal point from which a person’s senses project out into the world and whereby we establish our self-other bodily horizon.⁵² I will argue that bodily dissociation, as testified to by Trisha and Vanja, disrupts one’s entire complex of perceptual capacities for meaningfully grasping one’s life-world. Whereas Merleau-Ponty does not fully develop the notion that perceptions may be structured in particularized ways through specified cultural

practices, his work is crucial in providing an understanding of the significance of a fully embodied praxis.

It is important to begin by acknowledging that the grounds for being human are both neurophysiological and cultural; we can neither discover the world nor just ‘make it up’, but we *attend to the world* in culturally specific ways (see Jackson, 1989). Cultural norms therefore regulate the ‘ideal proprieties’ by which actions are judged and the way persons compose bodily experiences and social relations, although “there is much to experience that eludes the logic of signs” (Desjarlais, 1992, 32). Social embodiment itself may also have physiological implications in that physiological changes may be brought about through social interactions (see Lyon and Barbalet, 1994). From the perspective of a paradigm of embodiment then, we *are* our bodies, and the abilities of our bodies enable and constrain our experiences of the world.

The body also carries a creative capacity to understand and to embody cultural logics. As Bourdieu (1990b, 69) notes,

adapting a phrase of Proust’s one might say that arms and legs are full of dumb imperatives. One could endlessly enumerate the values given the body, *made* body, by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy which can instill a whole cosmology, through injunctions as insignificant as ‘sit up straight’ or ‘don’t hold your knife in your left hand’; and inscribe the most fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of a culture in seemingly innocuous details of bearing or physical and verbal manners, so putting them beyond the reach of consciousness and explicit statement (*italics in original*).

Our being-in-the-world refers then to a ‘temporally and historically informed sensory presence and engagement’ that carries with it an existential immediacy (Desjarlais, 1992). This sensory presence and engagement serves as the ‘tacit habitus’ of actions, and as felt immediacies, are both constitutive and product of lived experience. As embodied skills, our sensory engagements are transposable across social domains, and are varyingly durable (Desjarlais, 1992). *Particularized modes of attention and perception are thus constitutive of the lived flow of experience, constituting our understanding of, as well as the ‘having’ of, our worlds.* Importantly, particularized modes of

attention and perception, as sensuous activities, vary in accordance with, or arise out of (often unarticulated, therefore implicit), differing philosophies of human nature (Shilling, 1993; Taylor, 1993, 50).⁵³ In this elaboration of the character of the lived flow of experience, understanding derives from the ongoing flow of practice, and is displayed through our comportment, our habituated attention, our perception and appreciations of life-worlds. When *perceptual-comportments* are disrupted, interrupted or go ‘awry’, conduct becomes more deliberate and effort filled (Pile and Thrift, 1995, 28).

Our perceptual capacities and our comportment in the world is deeply *constitutive of and constituted by* our interactions with other persons, places and things. According to Merleau-Ponty, a corporeal scheme refers to our bodily being ‘to-the world’, our bodily constituted ways of ‘doing’ - the stock of, or the sedimentation of our manners of conduct. Our abilities to define a corporeal field relies on, as well as in-forms the character and possibilities of our *relations with others*. As Merleau-Ponty (1964, 118) says,

to the extent that I can elaborate and extend my corporeal schema, to the extent that I acquire a better organized experience of my own body, to that very extent will my consciousness of my own body cease being a chaos in which I am submerged and lend itself to a transfer to others.

Our perceptual capacities, therefore, are largely that which create or organize our immediate social and material worlds. As Merleau-Ponty (1962, 100) says, “my body appears to me as an attitude directed towards a certain existing or possible task. And indeed, its spatiality is not, like that of external objects or like that of ‘spatial sensations,’ a *spatiality of position*, but a *spatiality of situation*”. To attend to, and to perceive involves the spontaneous organization of sensuous activity into (non totalizable) wholes (see Levin, 1989). *Bodily praxis, when the mind/body is unified, generates possibilities, expands the world through the engendering of myriad relations to the world, which is also that which is partially responsible for providing us with experiences of indeterminacy and contingency.*

Our social interactions and activities always already occur, however, in the context of culturally structured relations and conditions of power. Consequently, and as Desjarlais (1992) also points out, cultural constraints on knowledge may contribute to the kinds of suffering that come to be culturally recognized and to the frequency of certain forms of suffering. As well, cultural constraints on knowledge will determine how well healing rites *attend to* differing forms of suffering. In either health or distress, a theory of embodiment is implicitly then, at least in part, a theory of perception and structured attention, in which there are recursive feedback loops between personal and wider demands or appeals on our perceptual capacities and activities, as well as on how these capacities and activities are recognized, culturally legitimated.

Derailment of the experiential unity of the mind/body, therefore, has far reaching implications for one's ability to 'grasp' the world- perceptually, emotionally and cognitively- for one's ability to relate to other persons, and to achieve a sense of self, a sense of legitimated social identity. Without an experience of unified embodied sociality, our perception and attention to the world loses its sense of felt immediacy, so that we may come to feel estranged not only from self, but from other persons, and from culturally elaborated practices which organize lived experience and shape our appreciations and identifications in the life-world. Bodily dissociation, in other words, appears to have incurred a fundamental disruption of children's abilities to grow into their life-worlds, to engender relations and connections to persons, places and things.

I would also suggest here that without an experience of embodiment, a characteristic sense of *indeterminacy* is also thwarted. Although the lived flow of experience is of a whole, it involves 'conjunctions' as well as dysjunctions- that is, it is an *active, emergent, processual flow*, characteristic of (using William James' notion, in Jackson, 1989, 3) a 'plenum of existence'- in which practice "follows a continuum between indeterminacy and redundancy" (Csordas, 1990, 30). In other words, not only does the lived flow of experience include 'refractory' and liminal events, crises and reversals

(see Turner, 1985), but being *in* the lived flow of experience always exceeds what can be known at any time, and therefore always involves an indeterminacy, an excess of meaning beyond our immediate grasp. Jackson adds that praxis always involves a vital and 'indeterminate relation with givenness', that praxis 'overflows' our cognitive limits.

Whereas the lived flow of experience admits of crises and reversals, dysjunctions and liminal events, without an experience of embodiment, there can be little experience of the felt strains and animations which characterize lived social life. According to the women's accounts, there was little sense of *movement*, of vitality, only an experience of stuckness, of being thwarted, of lack of connections, of mystification. This makes sense if we relate this discussion on perception to Johnson's notion of metaphor. In other words, our perceptual capacities, as with metaphors, are that which pulls together relations between objects, people or events, organizes lived experience *-because of, or through its emergence in bodily experience.*

Because lived experience arises through our bodily Being- in- the- world, our self-body is an embodied *intentionality*, in which the senses, as active perceptual systems- as sensuous human activity- are perpetually building and elaborating specific ways of apprehending and making over the world, thereby personally animating the anatomic, interpersonal and psycho-moral worlds we inhabit (see Haraway, 1988; Chodorow, 1995). In her discussion of Merleau-Ponty's work, Cataldi notes that grasping the world in person or "in the flesh" is to be taken literally, that *touching* and *to be touched* by something or someone, are simultaneous processes. Moreover, perceptual practices are of a whole, a coordination of *all the senses*, involving notions of surface, depth, color, transparency, alignment, absorption, mirroring, heaviness, roughness, etcetera, in a grid of linkages. These linkages are constitutive of the *character* or *quality* of the *lived flow of experience*, which is only lived *as such* before conscious reflection.

Bodily praxis thus gives rise to vectors of forces and movement, gives rise to a fully kinesthetic grasping of the world, articulates and discloses immanent tendencies and possibilities (see Leder, 1990; Levin, 1989). Given this view, it becomes possible to say that without an experiential unity of the mind/body, metaphors and ideas may not come to be bodily felt due to *a disrupted bodily ability to organize and re-organize the ways in which we can grasp and understand the world. In other words, bodily dissociation may come to thwart our capacities for drawing and elaborating myriad relations to persons, things and events in the life-world.* I am suggesting here that bodily dissociation, through its disruption of the normal processes of embodied living (and through disruption of the normal shifting processes between subject and object), appears to have disrupted the ‘vital indeterminacy’ characteristic of lived experience, resulting in the women’s sense of *fixity*.

Interestingly, Janet referred to his ‘hysterical’ patients as being dominated by an “*idee-fixe*”, by the repetitious intrusion of phrases and sensations which refused alteration or re-organization (Herman, 1992). The phenomenology of abuse through dissociation, in other words, may come to be felt as rigidified, immobilizing patterns of Being, through an inability to re-articulate linkages and connections between personal, social and bodily aspects of being- in- the- world. One’s unifying, integrative capacities, in other words, may be fundamentally disrupted through bodily dissociation, creating a *mechanical* sense of self, of identity and sociality. Following the work of R.D. Laing, one might say that disruption of the mind/body complex disrupts our relations not only with ourselves, but derails our ability to experience ourselves as “together with others” or at home in the world.⁵⁴ Bodily dissociation thus may give rise to a *contraction* of one’s life-world, to an *incarnate sense of estrangement*, to a sense of fixed alienation from one’s own sentient experience.

The interviewed women’s described experience of a lack of sense of self might also be clarified by noting that a sense of *unity* or coherence of self refers not to some underlying essence, but to a notion of the mindful- bodily- self as a process, as a processual achievement of integrating changing

perceptions and relational connections within our life-worlds. Without an experiential mind/body unity, I am suggesting that we may come to experience a profound disorientation, a disequilibrium, a lost grasp of reciprocity and responsiveness, a lost footing in terms of *knowing* the paths, the inroads, the furrows and by-ways, the ways of going and coming in our lived 'spaces' in the world.⁵⁵ I want to emphasize that this disorganizing phenomenology refers to both a lost sense of self and loss of community, in that we come to *be* selves only in relation to others, in or under circumstances that we did not, or could not choose.

Intentionality, understood from a perspective of embodiment, can thus be seen not merely as an inclination of mind, but as fundamentally related to our practical possibilities, to the "I can-ness" of practical sociality through unified mindful-bodily dispositions in the world. Following Merleau-Ponty, Jackson (1989, 130) points out that being-in-the-world, having a unified mind/body, serves as the condition for intentionality, is the means whereby we 'stretch out' ourselves into and toward the world.

In Merleau-Ponty's (1962, 388) words,

our body, to the extent that it moves itself about, that is, to the extent that it is inseparable from a view of the world and is that view itself brought into existence, is the condition of possibility, not only of the geometrical synthesis, but of all expressive operations and all acquired views which constitute the cultural world.

Intentionality is closely related here to agency, to an embodied ability to forge relations, to our self-bodily capacities for community, for inhabiting our life worlds. Whereas it is true that we are 'thrown' into given worlds, our sense of agency arguably derives from our ability to "make over" the world for ourselves, that is, we act through embodied intentionality as if our practical and conscious choices make a difference.⁵⁶ I am suggesting that the interviewed women's lack of a sense of agency is deeply connected to their lack of a phenomenological sense of embodied intentionality, without which there may be a reduced sense of social and practical efficacy.

My discussion thus far has centred on some of the implications of bodily dissociation in the context of perception, and in relation to the women's described sense of fixity, to their disrupted sense

of self and community and to the notion that agency depends on a fully embodied intentionality. In the next section, I further develop the notion of *practical consciousness* through Bourdieu's notion of habitus, and go on to challenge the idea of a split between cognition and emotion. I argue that the women's perception of a dichotomy between thinking and feeling arises out of their experience of disembodiment, and that both cognition/reason and emotion, as mutually constitutive modalities, require an experience of bodily connectedness. I also argue that bodily dissociation may impair one's 'understanding' of the world through the shunting of one's *perceptual-emotional* capacities and *attunements*. Bodily dissociation may also impede the development of a coherent sense of self because of a disrupted ability to create linkages between the past, present and future.

Cognition, emotion, practical knowledge and capacities for "Being".

Recall that the interviewed women attest to a phenomenology characterized by habituated responses, that they describe a kind of automatic doing and acting which was outside their own conscious processes, or rather, that lacked conviction, lacked a felt, meaningful connection to their own being. Vanja particularly views this sense of autonomic movement through life as derivative of a fundamental dysjunction between cognition and emotion, to the lack of a core reference in her body.

To make sense of these testimonies, I start this section by reiterating earlier challenges to overly cognitive approaches for understanding lived experience. I then carry on to explore the implications of bodily dissociation in the context of cognitive and emotional capacities. To do this requires a fairly complex and critical examination of taken for granted cultural understandings of knowledge, reason, and emotion.

Following Johnson's work on the bodily basis of cognition, and taking as a starting point the paradigm of embodiment, I want to start by suggesting that an understanding of the lived flow of experience demands that we challenge the concept that life is at the service of ideas and concepts, that our emotional and perceptual habits can be altered at will (see Jackson, 1996; Hastrup (1994, 1996).

In his discussion of the work of Dewey, Jackson notes that we *are* habits; in other words, our conscious commitments are often undermined by habituated ways of being-in-the-world, so that we may engage in “incontinent actions” (Davidson, 1980), actions that go against our own cognitively elaborated beliefs and understandings. In large part, this is because concepts do not transcend our own life-worlds, do not take us *outside* of lived experience. Thought, as Heidegger reminds us, is a movement *through* the world, a way of attending to the world. And as Johnson argues, ideas are emergent out of our own bodily experiences; they *do not transcend* them.

Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* is useful here in clarifying instead the notion of *practical* knowledge.⁵⁷ He reminds us that immersion in the *lived flow of experience* is always mediated through one’s *body*, having as consequence the fact that persons are always grounded in particular embodied standpoints, in a *habitus* (see also Csordas, 1994, introduction). In his work, Bourdieu develops a method for examining the relation between the social agent and the world (structure-agency ‘duality’) as one of ‘ontological complicity’ or ‘mutual possession’; his then is a methodology for examining the relation between habitus, “as the socially constituted principle of perception and appreciation, and the world which determines it” (Wacquant, 1992, 20). The body may therefore be understood as the bearer of a form of “kinetic knowledge” (Jackson, 1983), endowed with a “structuring potency” (Wacquant, 1992, 20). The significance of the body here is in its emphasis on the lived habits of persons, and on their active, interactive and dispositional modes of attention and appreciation within specific cultural settings.

Habitus thus refers to a person’s durable dispositions for acting in the world, which, as generative principles, organize practices without presupposing a *conscious* manipulation of these practices. As Moore (1994) summarizes, praxis here is not about the *cognitive* learning of cultural rules, but about understanding social distinctions *through* the body, through in-corporated knowledge. ‘Meaning’, therefore, is not just a matter of understanding something, but refers as much to how one is

situated within a community, a cultural setting, and an historical context (Johnson, 1987). Heidegger puts it similarly, when he says that ‘being-in-the-world’ is always a kind of dwelling (Heidegger, 1977).⁵⁸

To summarize, Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of habitus is that of a not fully determinate, structuring mechanism, a strategy-generating principle which integrates past experience and functions as a “matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions” that enable the ongoing accomplishment of diversified tasks. The notion of habitus is a way of trying to capture the pre-reflective, corporeal contact of persons with their social/material worlds and to emphasize the body’s practical intentionality. It also refers to one’s habits of *moral* action whereby one comes to *know* how to behave in interactive contexts (see Lemert, 1995).

Whereas our habitus, or *embodied standpoints* are partially informed by affective investments in certain ways of being and doing in the world, and arise out of our intersubjective activities (Hitchcock, 1993), they are also always produced *through* power relations and are *productive of* power relations. In other words, differences of class, race and gender are best seen as (power inflected) interactive aspects of our embodied presence in the world which both enable and produce limits to our ‘having’ of social worlds. Our embodied standpoints are thus always already connected to sources of power and are therefore not just an *individualized* concern, nor an endlessly *multiple and shifting* ground, as much current social theory would have us believe. Heidegger (1982, 10)⁵⁹ implies a similar concept of habitus through his notion of knowledge.

Thoughtful knowing...does not simply have some practical behavior as its consequence. Thoughtful knowing is in itself *comportment*, which is sustained in being not by some particular being, but by Being. (italics in original).

This discussion concerning habitus is meant to draw attention to the fact that our habituated comportment in the lived flow of experience is *of a whole*, that our habitus is a way of appropriating the world into which we have been thrown, making it over to ourselves through *incorporated*

knowledges, shaping our sense and experience of *identity*. To return to the beginning of this section, Bourdieu's notion of habitus reminds us that our ideas don't constitute the world in any simple way, that the knowledges whereby we *live* our lives may not necessarily be identical with the knowledges whereby we *explain* life (Jackson, 1996). As Jackson reminds us, *use*, not *logic* conditions belief, so that knowledge might better be seen as that which is urgently *for* the world, rather than only *about* the world- and more fundamentally, as that which generates the wherewithal for life. Following Merleau-Ponty (1962), consciousness is less related to "I think that", but to "I can"; Jackson refers to this notion of consciousness as a being-*towards*-the-world, as active comportment within one's life-world.

Bourdieu's notion of habitus clarifies why cognition may be ineffective in alleviating the distresses inaugurated through bodily dissociation. In the lived flow of experience, we require a fully embodied standpoint, a fully active, intentional, embodied matrix of perception and action with which we 'make over' or inhabit the world. In a paradoxical sense, Trisha and Vanja describe a habitus of disembodiment- an habituated standpoint of disconnection and disruption of knowledgeable being-*with*, and being-*in*-the-world. Vanja and Trisha particularly, make it clear that what is important is not only a cognitive understanding of their pasts, but what matters are the *practical realities* with which they are left- the difficulties in relationships, the immobilizing anxiety, the lack of affective, connection-making abilities. Without an embodied standpoint, one is left, as was earlier suggested, with *logic*, rather than with an embodied, felt, practical knowledge of the world. The work of both Johnson and Bourdieu suggest that reason and knowledge depend on a fully embodied relation to the world, that bodily praxis both conditions and reinforces the *interconnectedness of emotional and cognitive* modalities of being.

A paradigm of embodiment therefore emphasizes the interconnectedness of reason and emotion in the *lived flow of experience*. Both Vanja and Trisha testify to habituated responses to the world in which emotion and cognition are at odds with each other, undermine each other, lack unification,

thereby impeding their own sense of self knowledge as well as their understanding of the world.

Women's sense of separation between cognition and emotion stems, I suggest, from their experience of disembodiment more generally. In other words, embodiment entails the ability to act knowledgeably, to value some things and to challenge others, involves the ability to *be moved to act*, to *care*, to feel some things more than others, as *mattering*; that is, they involve a unified emotional-cognitive complex, grounded in a unified mind/body.

Notwithstanding the fact that emotions are often viewed as capricious and unreliable, Kleinman (1995, 12) defines emotion as the "bodily nexus of social relational, moral and political connections." In his definition of emotion or affect, Kleinman (1986, 177), argues that

to feel is to value or devalue, to connect with or stand apart, to act in resistance to or to be paralyzed by our embodied social circumstance and our socially projected bodily experiences.

Interestingly, in Braidotti's (1994, 165) discussion of the work of Deleuze, the latter speaks about thought in much the same way as Kleinman talks about emotion.

thought is made of sense and value: it is the force, or level of intensity, that fixes the value of an idea, not its adequation to a pre-established normative model...Deleuze's rhizomatic style brings to the fore the affective foundations of the thinking process. It is as if beyond/behind the propositional content of an idea there is another category-the affective force, level of intensity, desire, or affirmation-that conveys the idea and ultimately governs its truth value. Thinking, in other words, is to a very large extent unconscious, in that it expresses the desire to know, and this desire is that which cannot be adequately expressed in language, simply because it is that which sustains language.

Emotion and thought, in this view, are *deeply co-implicated* - and are so largely due to their embodied character, because emotions are bodily modes of being- in- the -world in which the body is intrinsically geared towards deepening and expanding the experience of the "openness of Being".⁶⁰ According to Heidegger (1979, 100), "every feeling is an embodiment attuned in this or that way, a mood that embodies in this or that way." In other words, our moods and emotions are bodily modalities, so that we *are our bodily attunements* to the world.⁶¹

Our bodily presence in the world thus involves a “mindful body” (Scheper-Hughes and Lock, 1987) where emotion might better be thought of as a *relation* to the world, not as a substance or ‘inner thing’.⁶² This relation further might be said to be a kind of bodily geared attentiveness or attunement. As Boss (1979, 110)⁶³ notes in his discussion of Heidegger’s work,

every attunement *as* attunement is a particular mode of the perceptive openness of our existence. The prevailing attunement is at any given time the condition of our openness for perceiving and dealing with what we encounter; the pitch at which our existence, as a set of relationships to objects, ourselves and other people, is vibrating. What we call moods, feelings, affects, emotions, and states are the concrete modes in which the possibilities for being open are fulfilled. They are at the same time the modes in which this perceptive openness can be narrowed, distorted, or closed off...Whatever its momentary attunement, the openness that is our existence always determines as well the particular breadth or narrowness, brightness or obscurity of that existence.

There are a number of important points to be reiterated, following this view. First of all, reason and emotion function together in a complex and integrated, non hierarchical relationship.⁶⁴ Secondly, the notion of emotion, as *attunement*, refers to the qualitative character, the tone, intensity and openness of our ‘being’ in and towards the world, and therefore speaks to the phenomenologically felt level and quality of our *immersion or embeddedness in the lived flow of experience*.⁶⁵

To be embodied, and to be immersed in the lived flow of experience, then, is to be “tied to a certain world...our body is not primarily *in* space: it is of it” (italics in original) (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 148). This is congruent with Johnson’s notion of the *non-propositional* character of lived experience- we are first and foremost, immersed in and oriented towards the world through our bodily being. Mazis states it thus.⁶⁶

E-motion seems to entail both the motion away from the person to his or her world, and away from the world to the person. In the etymologies of words used as synonymous for the emotions, one finds terms indicating literally a movement ‘into the subject’ *and* ‘away from the subject’...the motion of e-motion undercuts any division into ‘subject’ and object’, ‘active’ and ‘passive’. There is an indeterminacy in e-motion, which is really an interconnectedness that is a mutual enriching circularity: an expression of the subject and an impression of the object, or actually rather, a *circulation* of meaning *within the circuit of both*. (italics in original)

This collapse of the mind/body duality is furthered elaborated in the following statements by Merleau-Ponty (1968, 123).

When I find again the actual world such as it is, under my hands, under my eyes, up against my body, I find much more than an object: a Being of which my vision is a part, a visibility older than my operations or my acts. But this does not mean that there was a fusion or coinciding of me with it: on the contrary, this occurs because a sort of dehiscence opens my body in two, and because between my body looked at and my body looking, my body touched and my body touching, there is overlapping or encroachment, so that we must say that the things pass into us as well as we into the things.

The intertwining of reason and emotion, and the re-definition of emotion as *attunement*, speaks compelling not about mere capacities to reason or to feel, but about the *quality* of lived experience, about our *capacities* to perceive and attend to the world, to be touched and moved by people and events, to be able to develop a sense of reciprocity with others, to engage in social relations and activity without a sense of mystification. This also speaks to that which Vanja feels is lacking - an experiential core reference- which allows ideas to be meaningful, which allow us to feel directed and possessed by passions, as that which animates us, gives us vitality and a sense of purposefulness. With a 'core reference', we feel ourselves immersed in, embedded in the lived *flow* of experience where ideas, feelings and passions may enliven us, mobilize or restrain us, enervate and arouse deep seated longings and attachments, warn us of dangers, allow us to grapple meaningfully with the contingencies of life. In this way, understanding is made possible, not through a cognitive grasping of ideas, but through a practical wisdom of bodily Being such that we *feel openings* towards life, towards our life-world, and can experience an emergent sense of *possibilities*. Immersion in the lived flow of experience is also always a *moral-practical* orientation to our life-worlds, as 'understanding' and the sense of possibilities are central to a moral engagement with the contingencies of our practical existence.

Emotion are thus deeply entangled with our *perceptual capacities*. Cataldi (1993) argues that emotions are capable of *changing* our perceptions, so that changes in our ingrained emotional habits

may effect perceptual changes, break the habits of our practiced perceptions and simultaneously, effect changes in our perceptions of *ourselves*.⁶⁷ This corresponds to Johnson's notion that emotions have correlates in our sensori-motor experiences, which, in turn, form the basis for our metaphorical elaborations, for the folk models which govern our understandings of emotion.

As Johnson and Heidegger remind us, moods, as with ideas, first arise or are made meaningful non-propositionally through our bodily orientations and movements in the world. Our self-bodily intentionality, therefore, can not be separated from our tactile, kinesthetic capacities, making emotions and moods dynamic, fully kinesthetic, felt relations to our socio-practical worlds (see Johnstone, 1992). This is compatible with my earlier discussion concerning Vanja's testimony of anxiety, as that which instantiated her into the intersubjective, felt flow of lived experience. If Csordas (1996) is correct, a sense of "kinesthetic flow" is fundamental to our experience of cause and effect, to a sense of the past. That is, feeling bodily efficacy is intrinsic to our ability to *feel connections to the past*, and serves as the condition for the possibility of things, events, or relationships *mattering*. Vanja's intrusive episodes of anxiety, I am suggesting, are as disabling as they are for her, in part, because of the degree to which they evince a felt mattering- an *overwhelmingly* felt mattering- and because of the way in which anxiety has become *the* manifestation of mattering in her affective world- a mattering which is felt as fixed by, or affixed to, her history of sexual abuse. If it is true that emotional habits can alter our practiced perceptions, and that a sense of kinesthetic flow is necessary to feel connected to our *past*, it becomes possible to suggest that without a dynamic emotional attunement to the life-world, our perceptions of the world may feel static, fixed, disconnected. Recall that Vanja testifies to a kind of phenomenological detachment, a distanced, narrative recall of her past.

Vanja also attests to a sense of immobilizing terror in her accounts of intrusive episodes of anxiety. In her discussion of 'deep' emotions, Cataldi argues that terror is experienced phenomenologically as a *life threatening event*. The experience of one's entire life *being at stake* is a

fully mindful/bodily experience, that is, it involves a fully embodied- physiological, psycho-moral, cognitive disequilibrium. In anxiety, in other words, our entire physiology and perceptual attunements are constricted, provide us with a literal sense of inescapability.⁶⁸ Heidegger argues that anxiety shatters the public, shared context of everydayness, leaving one without a context for knowing what to do (see Vogel, 1994, 72). However, without an already implicitly embodied orientation to the world, anxiety in Vanja's case appears to shatter the everydayness of a felt *disconnection* to the world, to instead *assert* her presence in the everyday world of public response-abilities and relations. David Smail (1984, 82) puts it well.

Far from being a mechanical fault, a 'symptom', a 'dysfunction' or an indication of 'maladjustment', the experience of anxiety constitutes our assertion of the real nature of our subjective engagement in the world. To fall prey to anxiety is, at least partially, to fall *out* of self-deception, since the phenomenon of anxiety is an insistence that the subject's experience be taken seriously, that the person's *actual* predicament cannot and will not be ignored.
(italics in original)

Smail convincingly identifies the urgent sense of inescapability involved in anxiety, the feeling that one's predicament demands as well as requires attention. As Leder points out, the "dys-appearance" (the bringing to one's awareness through pain, illness or distress) of the body has a strong *demand* character to it, calls for our responses. Emotional attunements, in other words, structure our attention and perception in compelling ways, impinging on our self concept, our sense of attachments and hopes such that they cannot easily be dismissed (see Connell, 1987). Levin (1985) and Shotton (1993) both argue that recollection or memory is always channeled *through bodily felt claims*, that *remembering* begins largely with feelings and emotions. According to Gingrich (1994), emotions also often constitute the very essence of our experience of *time*, serves as that which tacitly propels the construction and deconstruction of our sense of time. Vanja's experiences of anxiety arguably serve as an ongoing reminder of past, *felt inevitabilities*, which in present instantiations, continue to impede her current sense of social efficacy in the world, and her sense of change or development (or rather, lack thereof) over *time*.

I might also point out that bodily dissociation enforces a denial or refusal of 'normal' perceptual-emotional attunements and capacities, such that sexual abuse may end up *domesticating*, as it were, one's emotional habits for being-in-the-world. By this I mean that women's emotional capacities became shunted through bodily dissociation, that dissociation disorganized their phenomenological experience of Being-in-the-world by pervasively disrupting their bodily based connection-making (or life-world unifying) abilities. In other words, *sexual abuse may end up shunting women's own capacities for bringing their abuse to emergent consciousness, and to identify the behaviour as abusive through meaningful, experiential truths arising out of their own bodily intelligence.*⁶⁹ Recall that the interviewed women all expressed a sense of dismay at not having been able to identify the behaviour as abusive, despite their cognitive sophistication.⁷⁰

Put somewhat differently, the interviewed women's habituated comportment of disembodiment might be seen as a form of *stultified knowledge*. This assessment derives from the perspective that under mindful bodily conditions, *memory* itself is embodied, that the *past* is, as it were, sedimented in the body. Here, memory is both incorporated and passed on in non-cognitive, non-discursive ways; as Connerton (1989, 95) notes, habits are "a knowledge and a remembering in the hands and in the body; and in the cultivation of habit it is our body which 'understands'." As corporeal beings, our self-bodies are the "repository of a generative, creative capacity to understand" (Pile and Thrift, 1995, 28).

The interviewed women's "knowledge" in the form of disembodiment, in other words, is neither of a cognitive nature, nor to be understood as simply a matter of requiring a *decoding* of bodily disappearance. Rather, women's knowledge lies *in* their disembodied comportment in the world, so that gaining understanding is less an issue of cognitive decoding, than a need for a felt sense of *bodily re-connection*. Recall, however, that Vanja repeatedly speaks of the difficulty of developing a sense of bodily connection. One's embodied history, or in this case, one's disembodied comportment, is clearly *not easily changed*. As Gatens (1996, 105) points out, our embodied history cannot be "thrown off as

if it were a coat that one has donned... involuntarily”; *it cannot be wished away by acts of will*. Rather, “past contingencies become the materials of present necessities.”⁷¹

Given this perspective, I am also arguing that our self-bodies *are* history, and at the same time, that our self-bodies are a *unifying process*, that our lives are simultaneously *past, present and future inflected*. Merleau-Ponty (1962, 239, 240) notes that embodiment enfolds temporal dimensions, that

in every focusing movement my body unites present, past and future...My body takes possession of time; it brings into existence a past and a future for a present; it is not a thing, but creates time instead of submitting to it.

Interestingly, Heidegger talks about *recollection* as much more than retrieving discrete memories; rather, it involves a process of “*developing* our bodily awareness and *cultivating* its capacities” (italics in original) (in Levin, 1985, 53). Following this view, recollection may be seen as the “repetition of a possibility of existence that has come down to us”, or, in other words, *going back* to the possibilities that “has-been-there” (Heidegger, 1962, 437). Recollection here is not a mode of passive inquiry, but involves a complex and dynamic interaction with past potentialities still present through recollection, and therefore, available as ongoing future possibilities. This is how Merleau-Ponty (1962, 136) describes it.

The life of consciousness-cognitive life, the life of desire or perceptual life-is subtended by an ‘intentional arc’ which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological and moral situation, or rather which results in our being situated in all these respects. It is this intentional arc which brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility. And it is this which ‘goes limp’ in illness.

What I am suggesting, therefore, is that without bodily connectedness, our experience of a unifying past, present and future may also be thwarted, that the possibilities existent in our pasts cannot easily be, as it were, returned to in order to invoke a different kind of future. If Heidegger is correct, the sense of *fixity* described by these women, is at least in part, related to the fact that bodily dissociation interrupts the possibilities invoked through the process of bodily felt claims and memories, that it interferes with the possibility of revisiting or re-engaging, as it were, the possibilities that inhered

in past experiences. Quoting Mazis, Cataldi (1993, 156) notes that the opening up of perceptual experiences allows emotion to give rise to a “*new past of greater possibility*” (italics in original), that emotions are crucial in re-organizing past experience.

This perspective also has suggestive implications for issues of (cognitive) understanding or *interpretation*. I am arguing here that cognitive interpretations are also always intertwined in past, present and future processes, that under normal embodied conditions, they never merely exist as an interpretive *event*, that they are not fixed, intractable *moments of disclosure*.⁷² This perspective challenges those who argue that therapists (and others) mislead women by provoking interpretations of their past which they themselves might not formerly have held, that therapists somehow plant ideas in women’s heads. As I have noted earlier, I am not implying here that there are no problems with current therapeutic practice. I have, however, already argued that cognitive reframings in themselves may not be transformative of practical lived *understanding*. Instead, I am criticizing the notion that individuals come to cognitive interpretations in a vacuum, somehow outside any cultural or interpersonal processes, and that (cognitive) understanding is static, a one-time kind of disclosure.

First of all, women’s story-making activities or narratives are never just *about* the past. Rather, narratives are also a significant means whereby we envision future possibilities, engage with past and present circumstances and understandings in order to open up future potentialities. Secondly, arguments that women are somehow being fed new and suggestive interpretations of past events rely on misleading notions concerning the character of (cognitive) interpretation, that they misrecognize not only its inherently *processual* nature, but also the inherently *cultural* character of *all* interpretation. I am arguing instead that cognitive interpretation is always *emergent*, that it is *dynamic*, that it is always, in part, an *intersubjective accomplishment*, and that interpretation is always characterized by *some* measure of indeterminacy. I am not implying here that we can somehow *escape* the conditions of our past, that interpretations are arbitrary, or that suffering can be cogitated away. However, I am

suggesting that cognitive interpretations might better be understood as an ongoing emergence, as inhering the possibility of a deepening, *as a dynamic engagement between past, present and future in which interpretations are never fully fixed or complete*. Because language cannot capture all the messiness of lived experience, and in that our cognitive interpretations are largely dependent on our habitus, on our limited locations, there is necessarily a contingent character to our cognitive elaborations that implies partiality, and hence, implies the possibility of emergent shifts in understanding. In other words, shifting circumstances, ongoing interpersonal and practical bodily activities, and changing cultural vocabularies always impinge on our cognitive elaborations, invite the possibility of altered understandings. Indeed, the experience of thwartedness, of fixity described by Vanja, for example, testifies to the oppressiveness of static interpretations, attests to the degree of suffering imposed by one's dis-abled bodily, perceptual, and emotional capacities to re-organize past experience, and hence, to one's dis-abled capacity to experience a felt, dynamic interpretative relationship with one's past.

To briefly summarize this section then, I have examined some implications of bodily dissociation in the context of these women's felt separation of reason and emotion, in reference to anxiety, and to their sense of fixity. I have also suggested that bodily dissociation may lead to impairment in one's ability to develop a unifying experience of past, present and future. Cataldi reminds us that emotional perceptions always involve some occlusion, some limits to our perceptual 'depth', and that they have a constitutive bearing on our sense of *identity*. In the next section of this chapter, I want to focus on the *intersubjective* aspects of emotion and embodiment, in order to come up with a different understanding of what the interviewed women refer to as a lack of sense of *identity*.

Identity redefined

Recall that both Vanja and Trisha testify to a lack of felt identity. I noted in an earlier chapter that many contemporary theories of identity are overly cognitive. By this I mean that by invoking

identity as a series of intersecting *positionalities* made available through class, gender, race, age, sexual orientation, etcetera, these theories take reified categories of analysis and assume that we understand ourselves to be such and such kind of person, as a category. What I am challenging here, is not *merely* the fact that these categories themselves involve heterogeneity, so that they cannot be invoked in a kind of easy, taken for granted manner. What I am speaking to is the fact that identity is *not* first and foremost *about categories*, or about the conjunction of categories- somehow located within, possessed by, or consciously and strategically invoked by, an *individual person*. As a spatial term, the notion of *positionalities* also masks the fully kinesthetic aspects of our identity.

Rather, I am arguing that our *experience of identity* speaks first of all to our *felt sense of relational connections and possibilities within practical, everyday activities and interactions, within particular communities of relevance, and within particular cultural and historical contexts*.

Culturally significant markers such as gender, class, etcetera, are markers of differences *between* people, places and things, differences which are not always felt similarly, and are not similarly important at all moments (see Kaminsky, 1993, 24). Moreover, since cultural markers never exist in isolation from each other, differences from one context may be used to reformulate differences in other contexts, such that gender, for example, may be used to amplify other classifications, such as class (see Moore, 1994, 61; Thorne, 1990). Nevertheless, our lived experience is *of a whole*, such that these markers always are made to signify phenomenologically through chains of meaning *which are not separable*.

I am arguing here that identity is about *how we feel ourselves to be connected to other persons, places and things*, is about how structures of feeling pervade our comportment in the world, about how felt ideational processes infuse our sense of possibilities, about our perceptual-emotional capacities to take up (or challenge) identifications with culturally authorized modes of being. It is also about our felt sense of recognizability in the world, about our embodied sense of being-in-relations, not

just in spatial or locational terms, but in fully kinesthetic terms, and including the tone, intensity, openings, and potential expansiveness of one's embodied, interactive possibilities. I might point out that sexual abuse did not suddenly catapult women out of the 'categories' in which they were "positioned"; that is, they arguably still were located or positioned in particular classed or gendered ways. I want to emphasize here that I am not challenging the reality, for example, of objective, structured economic positions that impose real consequences of constraint and enablement. Women's sense of a lack of identity, however, speaks less to the presence or absence of empirical categories, than to their felt experience of *ex-communication*- to a sense of disrupted connectedness to persons, places and things, to felt disconnection from '*know-able*' communities of relevance in their life-world.

In the following paragraphs, I want to elaborate this 'definition' of identity through discussion of the intersubjective and interactive character of the lived flow of experience. Our bodily selves, using Merleau-Ponty's phrase, are socially constructed through "perpetual incarnation", that is, we are 'informed' through our social practices in the context of personal histories within *particular families* and within particular cultural and historical contexts. More specifically, embodiment is intrinsically *relational or intersubjective*: as Taylor (1993, 53) states,

my embodied understanding doesn't exist only in me as an individual agent; it also exists in me as the co-agent of common actions.

Persons are inherently interconnected through complex webs of reciprocal interactions and practices, where the personal is always part of patterns of 'exo-topy' towards others within a "mobile socio-political field where there is neither pure identity nor pure alterity" (Radhakrishnan, 1989, 283). Our bodily selves then always exist through the experiences of being a "person-among-persons" (Young-Eisendrath (1988, 160), through the "crucible of relationship" (Greenberg, 1994). As Taylor (1989, 15, 36) notes, dignity

is woven into our very comportment. The very way we talk, move, gesture, speak is shaped from the earliest moments by our awareness that we appear before others, that we stand in public space, and that this space is potentially one of respect or contempt, of pride or shame.

I am a self only in relation to certain interlocutors; in one way in relation to those conversational partners who were essential to my achieving self definition; in another in relation to those who are now crucial to my continuing grasp of languages of self-understanding...A self exists only within what I call “webs of interlocution”... The full definition of someone’s identity thus usually involves... some reference to a defining community.

Our experience of identity is thus fully entangled with our perceptual capacities as well as with relational practices or involvements, and is deeply linked to lived *embodiment* -in that our bodily (embodied) selves cannot be separated out from relationships to other social bodies (see Turner, 1992). In Jackson’s (1989, 8) words, the self is a ‘moment of interaction’ where knowledge might be seen as a mode of “being-together-with” others. “Bodily paths” thus intersect with others to create complex biographical webs (Pile and Thrift, 1995); as well, our ‘body images’ are also always accompanied by and arise out of the images of others (Turner, 1992). The ‘intertwinings’ and ‘reversibilities’ of bodies, (as perceived and perceiver, as fully kinesthetic beings) thereby constitutes the “intercorporeality” of communities (see Levin, 1985). As Lyon and Barbalet (1994, 55) note, acknowledgment of the interactive and active bases of embodied agents in- relations, allows one to recognize the ‘intercommunicative’ (or plural aspects of the) body, which in turn, involves or incorporates the experience of ‘embodied sociality’. All human bodies therefore take part in a ‘system of exchange’, in an ongoing system of identification and mimesis- through social interaction (Gatens, 1996); in other words, ‘transcodings’ between different levels and forms of social and psycho-moral activities are effected “through the intensifying grid of the body” (Stallybrass and White, 1986, 26).⁷³

Cultural *logics* and/or categories, furthermore, are also embodied through *social interaction* (Laderman and Roseman, 1996, 4). Moreover, social relations are not just explainable through material conditions of inequality, but are themselves, fully embodied (Connell, 1987). As Shilling (1993) further explains, not every inequality is embodied and some embodied qualities are more ‘malleable or intransigent’ than others, as the self-body in relation to others is a dynamic, ongoing process. Nevertheless, he argues that some processes of embodiment are not always reversible, but

may be relatively enduring or even permanent in their effects. Cultural logics and categories therefore in-form the very character of our embodied (inter-relational) existence: as Levin (1985, 198) states,

the continued presence, in a culture, of its traditional religious symbols, themselves the cultural projection of archetypal images originally carried within the primordial body, will protect the perpetual reincarnation which is human existence, so long as they are transmitted from generation to generation in ways that directly correlate their wisdom with the body's capacity to retrieve them from its own *felt sense* of being. (italics in original)

Because of the embodied character of human existence then, there is possibility for both continuity and dysjuncture in one's perceptual-practical activities: moreover, even dysjunctures in cultural/ social organization and practices may offer continuities of embodied experience through the influence of naturalized values/practices carried over from the past, from residual or pre-existing domains of organized social life (Poovey, 1995; Stallybrass and White, 1986).⁷⁴ Some inequalities and perceptual habits may be transcoded, or be trans-posable across a variety of social domains to create *resonances of structured feelings, or resonances of felt experience*- resonances which may cut across different kinds of social domains- and across different culturally marked categories of identity. These transcodings, involving varying degrees of continuity (across historical periods, across social domains or across identities) involve fully felt, psycho-moral and practical formations of bodily manners, habits and attitudes which operate in a "special dialogism with its own implicit principles of *domination and subordination*" (Stallybrass and White, 1986, 198, 199) (emphasis mine).⁷⁵

Through this discussion, I am trying to point out that our sense of identity derives *processually and historically*, and through practical engagements with persons, places and things. In this view, identity might better be seen as a complex *phenomenological process*, involving the elaboration of perceptual capacities and relational connections such that our identity is always a *fully embodied, intersubjective, interactive accomplishment*, and so that our identities involve *resonant feelings* which suffuse our bodily presence and being-in-the-world. As such, our identities are also *moral-practical* orientations to the world, in that intersubjectivity confers moral claims through our interactions, in that

developing our humanity requires that others take us seriously, that reciprocity -or lack thereof- serves to either enable or constrain our sense of belongingness and identity.⁷⁶

I want also to connect this understanding of identity with earlier discussion concerning emotions, to reiterate the idea that our identity, as a modality of embodied being- in- the -world, is deeply connected to our emotional capacities, and hence, to our intersubjective connections. Recall that emotion, as a *relational* bodily mode involving physical and phenomenal aspects, is a form of *connectedness* to other persons, has a social-relational genesis (Lyon and Barbalet, 1994). As Blacking (1977, 21)⁷⁷ notes, “feelings, and particularly fellow-feeling, expressed as movements of bodies in space and time and often without verbal connotations, are the basis of mental life.”

In his discussion of the work of Freund, Shilling (1993) reiterates that emotions are fundamental to human life and arise out of interactions with others. Emotional modes of being connect our embodied selves to others in ways that fundamentally shape our capacity for bodily well- being. In other words, *our experiences of health or distress arise out of and are deeply connected to our social relations*. Lyon and Barbalet (1994) go so far as to say that (embodied) emotion is the means whereby human bodies even achieve a social ontology, through which links between the body and social world can be drawn. Emotions are thus “the creation and (secreted) conveyance of ‘living’ meanings which emerge ‘in’ the expressive space of a body’s purposeful movements” (Cataldi, 1993, 100), and are, in part, that which links bodies together.

Lived emotional meanings are here defined as openings, as that which “clings to certain contents”, “which the mobility of our bodily experiences ‘forces us to recognize’” (Cataldi, 1993, 94). Emotions thus compel us, are intrinsically dynamic, apprehended kinesthetically through living bodies (see Cataldi, 1993, 94). Notwithstanding visibility as the culturally dominant metaphoric correlate of knowledge, emotions are apprehended through all the senses, causing us, for example, to be *moved* or

touched by our social interactions. Emotions thus are central to understanding the “agency of embodied praxis” (Lyon and Barbalet, 1994, 54).

What I am arguing here is that our identities are fully affective, thinking-feeling, perceptual, intersubjective and dynamic embodied processes which arise meaningfully out of an embodied modality of Being. Disrupted embodiment, in other words, may not only impair one’s perceptual and integrative capacities, emotional attunements, and connectedness to other persons, places and things, *but thereby* may also impair the possibility of developing a felt sense of identity, of belongingness, of developing an actively meaningful complex of felt relationships to the life-world.⁷⁸

I also want to emphasize here that insofar as our identities emerge meaningfully out of our personal bodily experiences and interpersonal relationships, they are also inescapably linked to relations of *power*. That is, if identity flows two ways, as it were, if it is an intersubjective process, it must be strongly emphasized that this exchange is always already inflected with power, that this ‘flow’ is never simply a mutual or equal exchange of possibilities. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) remind us that emotions, for example, involve widespread bodily processes and sensory-motor experiences which form the basis for many of the metaphorical understandings or concepts for emotion operative in given cultural contexts. Consequently, lived social experience tends to engage “the same culturally prepared bodily processes” (Kleinman, 1995, 107). I am arguing here that metaphorical elaborations and cultural models invariably situate persons differently within these constructs, that culturally prepared bodily processes inhere inequalities, *that bodily processes are always already prepared differentially through relations of power and inequality*. I am also suggesting here that power relations and interests always overdetermine the kinds of thinking-emotional bodily connections and processes that come to be culturally intelligible or legitimated in any social-historical settings (see Jenkins and Valiente, 1994). In a real way, one might say therefore, that power is *felt* by persons- that through our relational

positioning and prepared bodily processes, power or lack of power, is a fully kinesthetic and experiential quality of being, of being- among- others.

In the same vein, I want to emphasize that my notion of identity as an active, dynamic and processual experience of relationships to persons, places and things speaks to the idea of lived experience as a flow, as a somewhat indeterminate movement through time. At this point, I want to qualify this understanding by cautioning against an overly *mobile* notion of identity. That is, whereas the dynamic character of our identity arises out of our *ongoing* lived experiences within myriad relations to persons, places and things, I also want to point out that an overly mobile view of identity tends to mesh a little too problematically not only with a view of history as a *progressive* trajectory, but thereby also with a view of identity as experienced by persons in places of privilege, who can, in fact, effect change and movement precisely due to their positions within relations of power. In other words, oppressed groups and individuals are such precisely because of structurally shaped conditions and relations of *constraint*, of *thwarted mobility*, or, through their placement in conditions of *enforced* mobility (geographic or categorical).

Also following this view, if it is true that sexuality is a key construct, that it sediments the organizing relations of power in our western cultural context, then Trisha's experience of a disorienting *sexualized identity* speaks not only to how sexual abuse disrupted the culturally salient ways in which we come to have an embodied social identity, but also speaks to how sexuality, unmoored from other culturally organized conditions of intelligibility may, in fact, become a pervasive condition of felt powerlessness, of *disrupted referentiality*. Recall that Trisha talks about having acted in ways unintelligible even to herself, and refers to a kind of mystification of her world.

Sexual abuse, in other words, is fundamentally about abuse of power. Throughout this paper, I have referred to emotions, perceptions, and bodily capacities as they might relate to one's personal experience of embodiment. I want to re-emphasize here that our capacities, the openings for Being

which in-form our identities, are always already overdetermined through various relations of power into which we have been thrown. What makes these women's accounts distinctive is that sexual abuse, along with other ramifying conditions of domination and oppression, disrupted their entire phenomenological capacities for functioning with efficacy, immediacy and personal meaningfulness in their life-world. This speaks to a pervasive and incalculable *abuse of power*, in that it may also deprive one, to varying degrees, of the self-bodily capacities for re-organizing lived experience.

I am arguing here, in agreement with Levin (1989), that one of the most damaging ways in which power oppresses is by blocking or denying persons their own capacities and competencies in the world. Along with Levin, my discussion also challenges current theories which overly emphasize the social constructedness of things such that people disappear from view as subjects whose own bodily presence, particularly in the context of suffering, makes its own demands on the world. In other words, the interviewed women's distress through bodily dissociation can be seen as an intolerable condition which, through its own particular kind of bodily wisdom, has a demand character of its own, and calls for redress. As bodily beings, our suffering bodily selves are important means whereby we can address history, make claims on the character of our social worlds, help us imagine the kind of life-world we want and need.

Summary

This chapter then has been concerned to explicate the implications of bodily dissociation for one's ability to 'have', 'know' and act in the world. As a pervasive disorganizing phenomenology, bodily dissociation may inaugurate an incarnate sense of estrangement, be disruptive of integrative capacities and of a meaningful sense of self and community. To ground this explication, I have drawn from theoretical perspectives which emphasize the following aspects of lived experience: its intersubjective nature; the non-propositional character of much of lived experience; the bodily basis for, intersubjective character of, and interconnectedness of reason and emotion; the structuring

influence of dominant metaphors and symbols- the cultural logics of given social worlds; and the simultaneous 'thrownness', finitude and uncertainty (Jackson, 1989) of lived social life which is always already shaped by *motivated* relations and conditions of *inequality and power*. In this view, lived experience always inheres/adheres past, present and future aspects which condition and serve as conditions for one's sense of *identity* and belongingness within cultural settings. Lived experience is also of a whole, in that one's identity and grasp of the world involves fully co-implicated structuring markers of cultural significance such as those of class, gender, age, race, sexual orientation, etcetera.

The *lived flow of experience*, in other words, might best be understood not primarily through elucidation of abstract codes or linguistic systems but must be seen as rooted in and conditioned by social practices (Hastrup and Hervik, 1994). In this lived flow, experience is characterized by a felt immediacy, by the ongoing integration of multiple aspects of the perceptual/sensual environment, in which meaning is grasped in dynamic, interactive processes, always relating to past experiences and taking place within loosely patterned systems of values and moral aesthetics. Our bodily selves are thus a source of practical intentionality, in which the world becomes meaningful through the spontaneous grasping of tendencies immanent within social or environmental worlds (see Wacquant, 1992). Through bodily orientation in space, and through social practices, ideas thus come to be corporally *felt*.

I have argued that sexual abuse is not experienced as such through a cognitive decoding, but through a pervasive disruption of embodiment, and thus a disruption of one's immersion in the lived flow of experience. The range and character of these women's suffering is also implicitly linked to the culturally specific ways in which the mind/body duality has come to structure social life, to the way in which practical-moral interactions always already impose *resonances of structured feelings* which shape the nature and forms of distress in particular cultural and historical contexts. Sexual abuse, as an abuse of power, is arguably a potent condensation of the power structure characteristic of our western

world. This is not to say that sexualized activity between adults and children might not be an abuse of power in other cultural contexts, but that the organization of power in any cultural setting informs the character and nature of felt suffering, that both power and the abuse of power configure lived experience in particularized ways. According to these women's testimony, sexual abuse initiated a profound disruption of *practical-moral sensibilities and capacities*, initiated a pervasive disruption of *a teleologically meaningful immersion in the lived flow of experience*. Their distress speaks to a phenomenology of *radical individualization*, in that they testified to an abrogation of felt connections to self and community, and in that culturally authorized conditions of referentiality were pervasively disorganized through sexual abuse. I am arguing here that sexual abuse not only *signifies* an abuse of power, but that these women came to *live* this abuse of power, to incarnate the relations of power into which they were thrown.

I want to point out here that whereas bodily dissociation had a long standing effect in Trisha's life, she currently attests to a sense of bodily re-connection, to having been 'healed'. In the following chapter I select excerpts of her narrative which suggest how this may have occurred; as Moore (1994) suggestively remarks, shifts in meaning, alterations in our habituated comportment may come about through a "reordering" of practical and relational activities.

In the next chapter I also examine the therapeutic notion of boundaries as it has come to be used as a therapeutic device in the context of sexual abuse. I argue that the metaphor of boundaries is effective in re-establishing a sense of efficacy in Peggy's life through its capacity to draw together, to make significant links between aspects of social life which in this cultural and historical context, are of particular salience.

PROCESSES OF HEALING

...the Other is anything but esoteric: it is the mark made upon subjectivity by the real, historical conditions of living, in love and hate with other beings, the very fabric of life. Otherness is not some uniform mush within the psyche, but the specific product of specific relationships.

Kovel⁷⁹

People say what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're really seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive in our bodies.

Joseph Campbell⁸⁰

And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

T.S. Eliot⁸¹

Introduction

This chapter briefly explores notions of healing, examines how Peggy and Trisha particularly, came to establish a sense of social/ practical efficacy in their lives, how they re-established a sense of self and community. I focus on the testimonies of these two women specifically, as they testify to somewhat different healing processes - processes which may be provocatively explicated in the context of this paper's focus on metaphor, and in the context of my elaboration of a paradigm of embodiment.

In the first section of this chapter, I focus on Trisha's testimonies, pulling out excerpts of her narrative which suggestively imply that healing, in the context of sexual abuse, may be connected to one's ability to re-establish a felt sense of embodiment. Trisha's phenomenological experience of bodily re-connectedness seems to have come about conjunctively, through re-ordered practical (sexual) activity and through a re-structured attention to her own bodily presence in the world.

Trisha: coming to embodiment

One of the important relationships I had to negotiate socially was with myself. I would do things that had no rhyme or reason at the time...[And at one time, the abuse] was all I thought

about, it was inside my skin and my eyes and my body and everything, and it was my breathing and it was everything. It overwhelmed me.

[My therapist] was really good, she told me that I had to choose a patch of skin on my body that I was going to love, and I was going to be good to. I thought this was a particularly *stupid* idea but she said no, come back next week and tell me there's one square inch, and you've got to come up with some ideas about how you could treat it nicely. Well, I decided the square inch on the back of my left wrist. So I decided that I would buy it a watch and a bracelet, I would put lotion on it and I would stroke it and touch it and you know, pat it. I mean, I felt really stupid, but she thought it was a good idea and by this time I respected her enough to try it. So I bought a new watch and I bought a new bracelet, and bought some coconut something or other cream which I just put on it. But I had not touched myself, I had not hardly, you know, even to dress, I was not looking at my body, I was not touching it, it didn't exist. And then she said, well, you've got to start loving a bit more. And it worked, I mean, I started to be able to, I mean, I started to take baths and relax, and feel the warm water all over my skin. And she taught me how to love and accept myself, which is something which as parents we should be giving our kids. They shouldn't have to go through tortuous time in therapy to figure out that, you know, you're not a ghou, you've got a body and it's the way it is, and you can lose or gain weight, you can exercise, you can do all of these things, but it's *your* body, it belongs to *you*, and you can be nice to it and other people can be nice to it if you invite them to.

I didn't know what intimacy was. I think I tried to manufacture it through abusing sex, and I really didn't have a sexuality, what I had was an ability to manipulate [sexuality]. Before therapy I didn't know my body. Post therapy I have an incredible sense of my body, not always, you know. [It was partly through a sexually intimate relationship with a lesbian partner] that I really felt my body for the first time.

[Through sexual abuse] you're silenced, your body is taken against you, and then you're in a therapy session, you need to get that back, you need to be able to speak about this, you need to reclaim your body. I think that dealing with the incest for me has really been a sense of reclaiming and re-owning my body. To this day, the smell of potato sacks are still- I still feel safe and secure whenever I smell burlap, because that's where I used to hide, and he didn't find me. So really, reclaiming my body first of all had to do with me. I think that through this process, I've got my body back, and an understanding of my sexuality that was out of my creation because I got the slate wiped clean. All of those things that are imprinted on you by our society, all the messages, the things that we acquire consciously or unconsciously as we were growing up- got wiped clean because I really had to start over. Nothing made sense anymore. So it really was, the only way I can describe it, is like a clean slate. [That became evident to me] once I started to realize that I had a body again. I remember, I was walking back from _____, and I decided not to wait for the bus. And I was feeling, it was spring- spring had come a bit early and I was walking along and I had my coat open, and I remember feeling the wind on my breasts, and feeling it, actually feeling my breasts. I don't know how to explain this, like if I'd had felt the wind before I would have in my mind gone somehow, 'that's the wind on my body.' But this time I was thinking of something else, and my *body* felt it and sent the message, not an intellectual recognition sending the message back. I don't know if any of this makes any sense. But I felt the wind on my breast, and I felt my skin respond to that slight cold and chill and it was an amazing sensation, and I remember writing a

poem about it, something about, you know, after the long chill of winter, the spring thaw has set in, I mean, literally, *like my body was thawing*.

And I think that when I got involved with [my lesbian partner] it was a very confusing period for me, because aside from anything else, I'd assumed I was heterosexual. Here I was going through a period of learning to *feel through my skin*, *stirring* things inside of me in a way that had never happened before. And what I've learned about my body and what I've learned about sex has been incredible. [Through, both, my sexual relationship and through therapy], I got my body back, that I got myself back. There are bits of my body that I don't like, but I've come to a place where I feel confident and I feel surges of energy- and I feel that like *electricity*, and things *move* inside me again.

There's something about me [now] that I have a lot to give and a lot to offer, that's coming from a really strong place deep inside that's healed, and I'm happy. I think for a long time that sexual abuse *was* my sense of self. It was so overwhelming in my life, that that's all I was- and so I think there was a point where I couldn't separate my self from the sexual abuse. I think that now, it has dropped down, it's back in the jigsaw puzzle of who I am. I'm seeing myself as very strong- I see myself as a very strong woman, and very committed to causes- I'm committed to social justice, I'm committed to my parenting and my relationships. So that's how I would describe myself at this moment.

Trisha's testimony implicitly characterizes her healing as a process of gradual re-connection to her body, to a felt sense of embodied sociality which not only is related to sexual relationships, but which carries with it a newly found sense of identity and an immersedness in the *lived flow of experience*. Trisha refers to things *stirring* and *moving* inside of her again, speaks of an opening up of perceptual capacities which simultaneously gives her a sense of being able *to be moved by* persons, places and things, of being actively engaged in the ongoing dynamic processes of social life. It seems notable that bodily re-connection occurred in part through a mutual and caring sexual relationship, that a meaningfully integrated organization of lived experience was re-established through sexuality. Trisha provocatively refers to her past as a piece in the jigsaw puzzle, suggestively implying that through her newly felt sense of embodiment, conditions of referentiality are now re-configured in knowledgeable ways- past events, relations and places assume their places in ways that can be fitted together, or rather, in ways that no longer pervasively disorganize her grasp of the life-world. In a sense, Trisha describes a re-established connection to a felt community, testifies to a re-established embodied intentionality, and to the possibility of things mattering, of being able to make a difference in the world.

Although Trisha's further testimony admits of difficulties and struggles, they are understood by her as the characteristic challenges of everyday quotidian life, as impacted by past abuse, but that sexual abuse is no longer wholly determinative of her sense of felt competencies and social efficacy. The past, in other words, can not be erased or transcended, but may enter into the integrative flow of a more unified past, present and future experience of lived sociality, such that the past may come to be fruitfully re-engaged, as it were, in the construction of ongoing and future possibilities.

In the following section, I examine the therapeutic notion of boundaries. I argue that the metaphor of boundaries is much more than an image which challenges physical or sexual intrusions, but that it implicitly pulls together a variety of culturally important values such that persons may come to 'experience' the metaphor of boundaries as an empowering, integrative device by positioning them as specific kinds of culturally authorized persons.

Peggy: boundary as mediating metaphor

Recall that both Trisha and Vanja testify to a sense of boundlessness, through the use of imagery such as "chameleon" and "psychic amoeba". Recall also that Peggy speaks of boundaries as something which gives her the *right* to speak her mind, to make her own *decisions*, to *refuse* to act in ways she is uncomfortable with, as something which *protects* her by according her *autonomy*.⁸²

Boundaries, in this view, helps to protect her from unwanted physical intrusions by defining a kind of reified geographical space which *belongs* to her. Boundaries also imply a form of conceptual freedom; having a solid boundary implies an ability not only to hold one's own views, but an ability to hold these views in the face of opposition. Boundaries, in other words, are a form of self-enclosure, a protective device which marks out territory, separates out one person from another, and thereby grants the circumscribed individual the right to protection, to freedom from physical or conceptual intrusions. In this view, boundaries are implicitly viewed as self-constructions, with boundary creations seen to be the responsibility of the individual. That is, without a good boundary, the individual is setting themselves

up for intrusion; hence, boundaries are a moral obligation to oneself, a form of self defense. This is how Peggy earlier discussed the notion of boundaries:

...being able to be consistent, with what you think inside and where you want people to stop, as far as how close they get to you- and your ability to say "NO", is an incredibly difficult boundary to keep. And one that I work on, and struggle with. A lot of people seem to think that sexual abuse victims or survivors have poor boundaries because they've been exploited so much that they have a tendency not be able to draw those lines- but they never had a point in their life where they were able to. I'd probably have to agree with that to some extent. But, I've certainly gotten better. But I tend to, I'm a person, I say 'yes' too much, I don't say 'no' enough, and I'll go an extra mile and find that, you know, I've had to deal with professional burnout a couple of times, because of it. So now I have to bit my tongue sometimes when I'm too eager to please and do things that I really don't need to. I feel that not having those boundaries really creates a lot of difficulties for me. And I struggle with it all the time. It's not that it's my fault *per se*, I mean, I didn't ask to be sexually abused, but as an adult, I need to *protect* myself as much as I can. And because I'm such a people pleaser, that's hard for me. So like I said, it's a real struggle for me all the time, and I think its primarily wrapped up in sexual abuse, but I don't think that it should be fully blamed for it. But I certainly think it's something that I will continue to work towards, and probably struggle with, till the day I die. I tend to *trust* too much.

I will argue in this chapter that the therapeutic metaphor of boundaries condenses a whole series of culturally salient practices, ideas and values, and that the effectivity of this metaphor derives precisely from its ability to invoke connections between these various aspects of cultural life such that persons re-establish a felt sense of social and practical efficacy. Recall earlier discussion concerning metaphor as a linking tool, as a *meaning structure* which forges connections between various practices, ideas, and objects. Jackson (1989) argues, in fact, that metaphors are a form of praxis, that they structure linkages between social, material, bodily and conceptual horizons. He suggests that this occurs because of the complex ways in which metaphors invoke, or serve as correlates to, patterns of body use and interaction. In other words, metaphors mediate patterns of practical activity, evoke connections within bodily experience. As a mode of praxis, Jackson argues that metaphor is effective especially in healing rites because of the inherent inseparability of conceptual and bodily activity. He also notes that metaphors are particularly effective in situations where the "unity of being- in- the-world" has been broken, in that metaphors unify ideas and practices, facilitate movement between

various social domains, restore the ability to act in areas where one has lost the power to act (see Jackson, 1989, 149, 150). As he states, metaphors mediate between material objects and the world of ideas. In a crucial sense then, metaphors re-order quotidian meanings and activities, (re)-organize our felt sense of being-in-the-world.⁸³

In the following pages, I briefly identify a number of interrelated concepts and practices which are implicitly invoked through the notion of boundaries, and which produce it as a meaningful structuring metaphor in this (North American) historical and cultural context. These include psychological and psychoanalytic views on ego boundaries, culturally specific views concerning (bounded) individual autonomy, private property, and the liberal notion of rights. These interrelated aspects already tacitly impinge on our understandings of health and ideal personhood, and are brought together meaningfully through the image of boundaries. Recall that Peggy invoked notions of rights, protection, autonomy and bounded space in her earlier discussion

Boundaries: connections and separations

Heidegger argues that human existence is a matter of building, of being housed- metaphorically and literally, that our material and social habitus always establishes a perspectival view, a particular sensibility in which boundaries come to serve as a precondition of meaning (see Jackson, 1995, 86, 87). It is not surprising then that debate about the character of lived sociality often revolves substantially around issues of relationship or community versus individuality, largely creating these as exclusive categories.⁸⁴ Earlier discussion concerning the characteristic shifting of experience between subject and object suggests that this polarization is simplistic; rather, we live our lives feeling ourselves as both, separate *and* connected to others, and that *different cultural settings may predispose our embodied sociality more strongly in one way or another*. In current cultural usage, the notion of boundaries as a demarcation of our individuality tends to set up the notion of boundary transgression as a slippage into community, potentially creating community as inherently problematic.

As already described in an earlier chapter, many current psychological and self help discourses tend to promote a strong individualized view of self. Popular self help books on codependency, for example, invoke boundaries as an invisible fence to be erected around ourselves for protection from physical intrusion, as well as to promote an ideal sense of individuality (see Beattie, 1987). The opening quote in Beattie's (1987) book notes that happiness is impossible to find except **within** oneself. The notion of boundaries, therefore, calls into play a whole range of existential, social and ideological concerns related to ideal conditions of sociality, to power and powerlessness, and also implicitly speaks to the character of moral (personal and social) responsibility.

Although the therapeutic notion of boundaries arguably derives from psychoanalytic work, much of psychoanalytic thought itself is perhaps more attuned to the inter-relational character of persons. Psychoanalytic understandings of personhood have changed substantially since Freud's initial work and I am not going to review all the various offshoots of psychoanalytic thought, some of which have reworked Freud's notions to posit a much more intersubjective, social perspective on the character of human development.⁸⁵ What I want to point out is that psychoanalytic thought has always inherited some ambivalence about the nature of human nature, so to speak, in that the process of *individuation* always already was seen to take place *through* one's placement within intersubjective relations.

Nevertheless, much of traditional psychoanalytic work focuses on the eventual bounded structure of a developed ego, implying the emergence of a strong inside/outside demarcation between persons (see Winnicott, 1971). The ego, in this view, is deeply connected to a sense of bodily distinctiveness, that is, the ego is primarily a bodily ego, referential of a bodily bounded individuality (see Muller, 1996, 37). The well structured ego is thereby also believed to be deeply connected to one's mental wellbeing, and to one's ability to maintain stable categories of thought (Scheman, 1993; Muller, 1996). According to Greenberg (1994), this perspective encourages the view that traumas act

to prevent one's capacity to maintain ego boundaries, to maintain a differentiated experience of selfhood.

One of the most crucial boundaries identified by psychological discourse then is that between the inside and outside of persons, such that the body itself has come to stand for individuality and self-control. Because thought and emotion are believed to reside inside the individual, boundary intrusion also comes to be seen as inducing a loss of emotional and cognitive control, thereby potentially inducing pathology within the individual person (rather than seeing it as a disruption of intersubjective capacities, of social relations). This also encourages a notion of the social as on the outside, to be introjected or taken on, internalized or warded off by the individual.

Lacan's complex re-working of Freudian (psychoanalytic) notions of individuation still posits that absence or lack, as well as the ability to create a distinction between outside and inside, are necessary conditions for healthy separation or individuation. In Lacan's view, a psychic 'map' of the body is constituted not by drives (as with Freud), but through significations and fantasies of the body; in other words, one's body image is produced through the internalization of the body images of others and thus can be said to be socially produced (see Moore, 1994). According to Lacan, this internalization is begun in what he calls the child's "mirror stage", but is never fully accomplished. In this stage, the self begins the process of self recognition; here, the infant is confronted with their first experience of corporeal unity (which, in turn, is related to the beginning formation of the 'ego') (Urwin, 1984). It is the unfinished character of this work, however, which constantly draws persons to each other, and which means that we always depend on others for recognition and for a robust sense of self.⁸⁶ His work is less focused on the establishment of the individual, and more on the construction of subjectivity; notwithstanding his problematic explanations of gender development, his work more persuasively emphasizes the intersubjective aspects of social identity (see Moore, 1994). In arguing that body images are never static or complete, are part of dynamic exchanges between persons and

groups of persons, Gatens (1996) further insists that these ongoing exchanges form the basis for ethical behaviour, that ethical relations, in fact, depend on recognition of, and by, others. Gatens also underscores the etymological link between integrity and morality, arguing that bodily integrity can be understood as a basic requirement for the establishment of ethical relationships (see also Cornell, 1995). This psychoanalytic perspective arguably has some resonance with earlier discussion concerning the dynamic, intersubjective character of identity, and about our perceptual and emotional capacities for being-in-the-world.

Given these views, one might suggest that boundaries can be understood as a *cleavage*, a descriptive term which simultaneously implies conjunction *and* dysjunction, connection as well as rupture (see Jagose, 1994). In other words, the discussion thus far has shown that the notion of boundaries implicitly carries with it a double meaning, that of intersubjectivity and separation. The notion of boundaries *as separation* meshes with culturally idealized versions of autonomous individuality; I have earlier already discussed some of the cultural manifestations of such a view within western medicine, and also as it relates to cultural injunctions concerning bodily self control, bodily discipline, and self-fulfillment. Although I agree with Becker (1995) that this representation of western selves is somewhat too monolithic, and perhaps a little overstated, it nevertheless provides insight into normative understandings of individuality in the western context. In this view, the individual is typically understood to be a ‘corporeal sovereignty’, with the body portrayed as the *property* of autonomous, free persons (Falk, 1993). Boundaries here are shown to simultaneously serve as figurative devices of demarcation, ownership and protection; hence, the self is obliged and encouraged to occupy and defend its own ‘space’.

It is important to add here that the most common target of cultural injunctions to create boundaries are women. There may be several reasons for this: first and most obvious, this metaphor arguably arose, at least in part, in response to physical and sexual assaults against women. As a

therapeutic idiom, the image of boundaries promotes the sensibility of barriers, of impenetrability. Second, in light of the fact that the female body has historically tended to be viewed as passive, as a receptacle (Gatens, 1996), the injunction to create one's own boundaries invites a *proactive* construction of individuality, of personal bodily integrity, inviting also notions of rights and self protection. In the next section I focus briefly on resonant cultural understandings concerning private property, and on the related issues of property protection and rights.

Property, boundaries and rights:

In this section, I want to briefly identify some of the cultural notions relating to the issue of private property; I will be arguing that these notions and practices come to be implicitly connected to the notions of bodily bounded individuality through the therapeutic metaphor of boundaries. In other words, psychological and civil understandings of personhood are indirectly linked, and co-shape our views on ideal, culturally authorized individuality.

According to Nedelsky (1990), much of contemporary constitutional protection is an attempt to protect individual autonomy from intrusion by the collective, and for which goal the notion of private property has traditionally provided an ideal symbol. As she notes, this model of autonomy supports a view of *the most autonomous person as one who is the most perfectly isolated*. In the construction of private property, territory is appropriated, boundaries are constructed, and rules are established which codify the redrawing of territorial space. Autonomy comes to be seen as synonymous with circumscribed territory, with separation from other bounded spaces (and people). The linkage of private property to autonomy further encourages a view that *possession* (of property) is a prerequisite to autonomy, that boundaries provide *rights*, rights particularly against invasion. Consequently, boundaries invite the notion that security can only be secured through one's ability to *count on protection*. In other words, boundary invasion is understood as a consequence of inadequate protection, as a violation of one's rights and a threat to one's autonomy. This resonates with

therapeutic usage, in that boundary invasion has also come to imply a failure of adequate protection.⁸⁷

In Nedelsky's view, the most compelling problem with this formulation is its problematic reduction of autonomy to that of a static individual characteristic, rather than seeing autonomy as a dynamic *capacity* to be developed *inter-relationally*. As well, sharing and sociality tacitly come to be viewed as a matter of *largesse*, rather than being understood as an indispensable ground for our being-in-the-world.

Rights, boundaries and property are thus deeply co-implicated concepts, in that property has come to be envisioned *as rights in things*, and rights, as a multinodal concept, themselves have come to be conceptualized *as boundaries*, as markers of power, as claims, and as protection (see Gaines, 1995; McClure, 1995). Although I cannot rehearse all the various debates around the social efficacy of, or the historically gendered nature of rights, it is important here to note that in the western liberal tradition, property possession, rights, autonomy and "possessive individualism" have historically been associated with males, with women often viewed as *related to autonomous individuals*, dependent on protection *by males*, and through their location in "private" domains, seen to be in relations characterized by needs, rather than 'possessing' rights (see Marshall, 1994).

Possessing property, moreover, has also historically been associated with the 'right to enforce' that is, always containing the threat of force (Gaines, 1995, 145). According to McClure (1995) the "withdrawal" or isolation that both private property and rights infer, has as its cost the obfuscation of the character of domination, violation or exploitation, that the entire notion of enclosed boundaries, in fact, leaves the individual to struggle alone, and speaks to a (depoliticized) universe which radically separates out the self from the world. In essence what this speaks to is a negative freedom, the freedom from intervention, with the focus less on responsibilities to others, than on the responsibility *to construct adequate protective devices*. There is arguably some murkiness here, in that positive liberty rights speak to *autonomous* subjectivity whereas negative liberty rights speak to a *protected*

subjectivity (see Gaines, 1995). Historically, males have been accorded both forms, albeit with sometimes contradictory implications. Nevertheless, what is important here is that rights are often viewed as transferable, if not residing in our possession of private (material) property, then in our persons, in that our own persons come to be understood as property, to be defended. According to Gaines (1995), there is a deeply resonant exchange of meanings between our understandings of private property, boundaries, rights and protection- and western notions of personhood. In the next section, I will link these interconnections to the efficacy of the boundary metaphor in therapeutic practice.

Boundaries as healing metaphor

I am arguing here that the therapeutic metaphor of boundaries calls up, as it were, deeply entrenched cultural concepts and understandings, that the image of boundaries links together, unites these concepts through a resonant series of associations. These associations have to do with the characterization of persons as separated out from others, as possessing bounded corporeal spaces that require protection, that persons have the right, if not the obligation, to ensure the construction of adequate boundaries as means of protection. I am also suggesting here that part of the efficacy of the therapeutic idiom of boundaries as attested to by Peggy has to do with the fact that this metaphor *invites women into culturally authorized modes of ideal personhood* through its endorsement of their rights to protection, and to the construction of self delineated boundaries which confer both some sense of autonomy and individuality. In other words, women here are being encouraged to take on an idealized version of personhood, a version which historically has often excluded them.

As noted earlier and following Jackson, metaphors may be understood as a mode of praxis, as a means of *doing* things, rather than just of saying things. I am suggesting here that the metaphor of boundaries serves as an image and praxis of unification, that it implicitly serves to re-organize embodied or felt apprehensions of the world. Recall that Peggy's description of boundaries implies that she now experiences herself, however tentatively, as having rights, as having the right to create

boundaries which define her definition of her reality, and which gives her the grounds to refuse certain social interactions, to defend and protect herself against unwanted physical intrusions. Jackson's notion of metaphor as praxis suggests that metaphors *work* not only by connecting up ideas and objects, but by forging these links bodily, that metaphors unify through a bodily felt sense of forged links that foster a sense of "wholeness of Being" (Jackson, 1989, 154).⁸⁸ Following Jackson then, metaphors are "crucial synthesizers" of social and bodily environments, that they have the capacity, particularly as instruments of healing, to "make over" persons towards the social world, and reciprocally, to "imprint" the social world onto our bodily selves. In other words, metaphors dialectically mediate the relationship between conceptual and physical domains, and as such, must be understood in a non-dualistic manner- as invoking a synergistically re-organized mindful-bodily complex. In this view, metaphors may come to be constitutive of new meanings, of a changed sense of social and practical efficacy in the world. The therapeutic metaphor of boundaries, in other words, is a potent meaning structure which condenses a whole series of interrelated concepts and practices. It's efficacy as a therapeutic device, however, is not merely ideational, but derives from the way it realizes culturally meaningful unities in our own felt bodily experience.

In the last section of this chapter, I outline some implications of this thesis for understandings of healing. I argue that healing, in the context of bodily dissociation through sexual abuse, refers to a complex set of felt, embodied alterations in lived experience. I suggest that a sense of being healed is not just a cognitive appraisal, but a re-orientation within one's life world that is felt and lived. In other words, it speaks to a sense of revitalized social connections, to the establishment of a teleologically meaningful immersion in the lived flow of experience.

Healing: the felt re-organization of lived experience

In this concluding section, I wish to focus briefly on the issue of healing in the context of this thesis' emphasis on distress through sexual exploitation, and to comment on what it might mean to feel

healed. Both Peggy and Trisha talk about a felt sense of belongingness to communities of relevance in their lives, speak of a changed, more satisfying and more efficacious relationship to persons, places and things. For Trisha, this includes an altered sense of reciprocity with others, an ability to meaningfully grasp the thinking-feeling processes of others, and involves an altered kinesthetic appreciation and set of embodied attunements to her life world. For Peggy, this has come to mean an ability to meaningfully establish boundaries, to realize a felt sense of autonomy and self determination as well as to *experience* a right to self-protection. In other words, through fairly different therapeutic means, both women came to an altered sense of organized embodiment, came to a more meaningful and efficacious experience of embodied intentionality.

Throughout this paper, I have reiterated that habits of body use cannot be altered through acts of will, that we can't just 'pull ourselves up by our bootstraps' through a *desire* to alter our habituated modes of being- in- the- world. Rather, disembodiment may come to be changed through a re-ordering of our practiced habits and perceptions, or through the practical work of metaphors in re-configuring sets of ideas or things in ways which meaningfully coalesce, which induce felt linkages within the unifying field of bodily experience. In other words, healing involves fully mindful-bodily processes. Following Desjarlais, healing reaches into all aspects of our being- enters into the "visceral reaches of the body", activates our senses and connections to our life-world, engages as felt immediacies in our lived experience. This also speaks to the possibility that healing may be less about locating *meaning* (as a cognitive evaluation) for one's suffering, than about being able to establish a meaningfully felt, embodied experience of sociality, of being able to engage efficaciously with culturally significant conventions, practices and modes of being. Healing here, in other words, is largely about *use*, not about the abstract.

In this context, I want to add a few comments about the metaphor of boundary. At first glance, it seems somewhat ironic that the usefulness of the therapeutic metaphor of boundaries comes

about through its work in establishing an experience of self determination and autonomy, characteristics which arguably are deeply implicated in women's historical oppression in the larger, western cultural context. Following Jackson's (1989, 196) insight, however, one might say that even epistemologically unsound models may produce practical efficacy, so that choosing therapeutically helpful metaphors may be less an issue of epistemological correctness than an issue of finding metaphors which can make effective linkages between the world of ideas, values and things.

Healing might also be understood as a re-legitimation of the lived flow of experience (Kleinman, 1995). This speaks to a complex re-organization of our felt capacities and perceptual/emotional attunements, to the processual character of configured experience rather than to an event of 'curing'. In other words, healing is not a discrete happening, but a dynamic process, a change in the structures of feeling which animate lived experience. As Kleinman also notes, healing is transformative of small "but crucial" alterations in bodily processes, changes which have social effects. As with lived experience, healing is also about small things, about "small importances", "brinks", "edges" and "boundaries" (Kleinman, 1995, 4). Healing works through "incremental efficacy" (see Csordas, 1996, 106), through a gradual re-constitution of felt social belongingness and practico-moral efficacy in local and wider social settings. This formulation is important in that it speaks to the idea that a felt sense of healing, as in Trisha's case, does not refer to a wholesale excision of all struggles or unhappinesses in life, but that it speaks to a re-connected immersion in the lived *flow* of experience, to a meaningful capacity to practically engage the struggles, to experience the resistances and vitalizations of lived social life.

Healing practices also reinstate a more dynamic, integrative flow between past, present and future processes. Recall that Trisha speaks of the past as having settled as a piece in the jigsaw puzzle of her life history, that there is a sense of an integrative flow in which sexual abuse no longer pervasively dominates her lived experience. This also speaks to an immersion in the lived flow of

experience which allows for a felt sense of indeterminacies, of possibilities, in which there no longer exists an abiding sense of fixity.

Finally, I want to emphasize that our self-bodily sense of integrity and our embodied movements within our life-worlds are always already practico-moral issues, in that we, *as lived bodies*, are deeply constituted through our intersubjective relations, and in that our practical knowledges always emerge in the context of culturally configured relations of power. I am arguing that bodily and moral domains are inescapably linked, that the suffering imposed through disruption of our bodily capacities is inevitably an ethical issue, and a disruption of one's moral sensibilities. The biblical notion of our bodies *as* the temple of God may hold little purchase today, but it was once taken literally, was lived as such. This lived notion still resonates compellingly and urgently in the context of this thesis' emphasis on the character and quality of our embodied immersion in the lived flow of experience, as it persuasively discloses a deeply spiritual aspect of our embodied Being-with and Being-among others in life-worlds where our knowledges, relations and practices matter, and often matter overwhelmingly.

A thesis, as with personal narratives, speaks not only to what is or was, but also implicitly to how things might be. As well, it bears witness, albeit incompletely, to lives in which things urgently are 'at stake' (see Kleinman, 1995). Kleinman suggests that the margin between theory and the ethnography of social suffering is a threshold, a liminal space available for exploration, a space which carries the potential for critical pressure being brought to bear on issues that matter to those whom we encounter in our research situations. To facilitate that end, the interviewed women themselves conclude this thesis with their own reflections about the research process itself, and about my explication concerning the significances of bodily dissociation.⁸⁹

Following Jackson (1996), the *truth* of (women's) lives is not an uncovering of something that has been hidden or mystified, but refers to forms of disclosure which *do justice* to it, do justice to the

complexities of lived experience.⁹⁰ I therefore view this thesis as part of an (ongoing) conversation, with the women I interviewed themselves, with other theorists and ethnographers who generated much of the theoretical impetus for my own analysis, and with others whose provocations and disclosures seek to *do* justice to the felt suffering of human lives.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Ann

On a personal note, one of the most challenging aspects of producing this thesis has been the struggle to convey the felt suffering of these women, within the constraints of often distancing theoretical language. As Trisha and Vanja allude to in the following sections, the abstractions and intellectualized language of academia may not even begin to adequately convey the monumental sense of loss, of chaos and confusion, the existential disorientations and pain of experiencing oneself as disembodied, without a felt connectedness to a meaningful sense of self or community. Lived experience cannot be wholly captured by language, and certainly not in a tidy, isomorphic manner; nor can it be reduced to our implicit or explicit theoretical stances. Language can stumblingly speak to our lived experience, and theory can try to impose order on it, but always with some loss in the translation. This is not to disparage the need for analysis, but rather, to find ways of doing analysis, of talking about human suffering which enables the search for justice in the real world, to produce ideas which might encourage social change.

It has also been vexing for me that much of current social (postmodern) theory tends to reject the phenomenological aspects of lived experience. As noted earlier, I felt somewhat stymied until I could locate substantive theoretical and ethnographic works which validated the exploration of the felt suffering of human lives. This speaks to a huge indictment of our contemporary intellectual climate. It has become increasingly difficult to simply state that people are suffering, which must be taken seriously, without also facing those who would cogitate this away by recourse to various social constructionist arguments, by positing that everything is merely a socially constructed interpretation. I have come to believe that the issue of social constructionism is a (sometimes irrelevant, sometimes dangerous) redundancy. That is, what *matters* about things being socially constructed is that it implies- and insists on- an enormous responsibility concerning *how* we come to construct *and* interpret our worlds, what kinds of activities we engage in, how we endorse and structure conditions of (in)equality and relations of power.

All interpretations are ever only partial, and all are motivated by some agenda. I was motivated in this project to take seriously the felt suffering of women who have been sexually abused and to try to create an analytic framework which could address the full complexities- including contradictions and continuities- of lived experience, thereby taking the terms of current debates around sexual abuse away from reductionist understandings of truth and falsity. My concern with the disruption of integrative capacities and unifying processes was intended not to mask the ambiguities and messiness of life, but to argue that our ongoing attempts to meaningfully grasp the world in a mindful-bodily manner requires that we are capable of organizing lived experience, of linking things together, of creating figures out of grounds in ways that come to be meaningfully felt and understood. It was intended to show that our bodies matter, that they matter overwhelmingly.

I have a sense of who I am, who I believe myself to be, who I am personality-wise, that there is still a level of constraint, that I feel constrained in some way. Much less constrained than I used to be, you know, obviously the ultimate constraint was to feel agoraphobic, to feel depressed to the point of being immobilized. You know, a lot of that stuff has shifted for me. Probably five years ago I would have valued functioning over feeling, because I think there was a point for me when I was in significant psychological distress, you know, experiencing depression, and worried about my ability to function in the world. And that ability to cope was the real critical thing for me because I saw my inability to cope as part of what kept me tied into a long term association with my sexual offender. You know, that that's how that continuum occurred, which is that I became dependent at an early age on my sexual offender. And whether or not I had role specific functioning, it was not enough to get me adequately- you know, to master the tasks of adult daily living. Things like being gainfully employed used to be very problematic. And they were problematic both in terms of my beliefs about my ability to do it, and also in terms of being emotionally compromised, in terms of ability to function.

I think the whole idea of, you know, of where I feel very focused in terms of wanting to access feeling, that that is definitely self driven, because I get glimpses of it. If I had questioned before whether or not -when I first went to therapy, it was sort of explained to me that part of this cutting off, this kind of autonomic breathing- that part of that was around suppression of feeling. And because I didn't feel very much for a long time, I had no reason to believe that that was true. As I get into recovering, like I've come to believe that it's true, because it's come in waves, it's come in the form of severe anxiety, you know, it's definitely there. I get pockets of it. It was really crushing for me when I realized I wouldn't be able to do cathartic work, you know, because I thought that was the thing to do. And I sort of struggled with the idea of being a therapy failure, because of not being able to do that. Like I saw that as - that was the be all and end all. Now I accept that that doesn't work for all people. But it's a fairly fixed idea with me that - that my feelings will make me feel more authentic in the world, and that I believe that I still need to grieve. And I think what I've been able to abandon is that there's kind of a prescribed way to do that. Because that would just be another kind of like thing to lay on myself, in terms of a probably unrealistic expectation.

For me, I know somewhat the extent to which I have been disembodied, and have seen other women self mutilate, that for myself, after drug addiction where you kind of - you know there's a kind of nihilism in drug use, there's an amazing disconnection with your body while you regulate your feelings by use of the drug. I'm interested in the correlation between substance abuse and sexual abuse too. Because for me that was part of when I felt most disembodied, when I was actively using drugs. You know, because intellectually you're aware that it's a completely self-destructive process, but part of the allure I think for me, as somebody who had felt very *dead*, was that to be able to induce feeling by use of drugs is fairly alluring, when you don't have much feeling. [Doing drugs can] induce body sensation which for me was something I wasn't able to experience in any other way. My experience of addiction was that I felt very *flat*, and that I had a much different relationship with my body when I was using drugs. [To quit drug use] for me meant getting physically sick, with hepatitis, and also reaching a point - oh, this doesn't work either. [It was later as I was recovering from getting physically sick] that I saw it clearly as a coping mechanism in relation to sexual abuse. Because a lot of my earlier abuse coincided with being given drugs and alcohol, you know, as an inducement, enticement- to precipitate the sexual act.

There's an intense amount- you know, depending on the age of onset of the abuse- there's an incredible psychological confusion around being sexual. When I started to be sexually abused, I had no idea what the importance was of the sexual act to my offender. Was completely mystified by it. Knew there was something clandestine, secretive- but there was also something very mysterious, powerful- if you have the type of offender that one of my offender's was, this kind of seductive offender, that that is part of the - as a child you are made to feel powerful in terms of being able to gratify an adult person sexually, although you don't encompass what this means. You also have no sense of *your* body, not that it makes sense to me now. I don't understand sexual feeling in relation to a child's body. I thought I would come to grasp that more. I don't. I thought that by learning more about offenders, you know, styles of offenders, that somehow I would come to this bigger understanding. But I haven't. I've resorted to looking very individually at my situation. I don't know where my offender is in terms of a continuum of offenders, but I do know that my primary offender is somebody who was very skilled psychologically, at creating a dependency relationship. My dependency was pretty entrenched, reinforced by lack of social supports, and having no family. [It felt like] an incredible entrapment.

Over time I also became more willful about deliberately shutting down my body. Part of my response was that I will give you nothing. I won't speak, I won't feel. That's part of this sense of when this corpse like [experience of my body became reinforced]. When I was older, I would say, that it was like a necrophiliac, you know, it was like, what is in this act? To me, you know, that's the ultimate of being objectified. And I don't pretend to understand it now [even though] for a long time I tried to sort it out. The experience of dissociation started with the experience of [sexual intrusion], this was the most out of control feeling that you can have. The physical intrusiveness of being sexual abused is what caused me to dissociate, which was essentially- I can't get you out of my body so I'm getting out of my body. The loss in that, being that while you can ward off what's happening when you're being abused, is how that gets globalized. For myself, [this then became] entrenched. But it's interesting to me that it works very differently for different people. I know of sexual promiscuity- it's interesting to me how it manifests itself differently for different people.

I struggle with the idea of what is normative sexuality. Sexual dysfunction for me has been the lowest priority in terms of what I've chosen to work on in terms of therapy. I struggle with, is this ok that this is such a low priority, I mean, this is a highly sexualized society. So is this really bizarre to be an adult- and- that I could quite easily chose to be celibate. I mean, there's a huge emphasis in our society on sex. I guess for me I believe resolution to the sexual stuff will come which you have a sense of embodiment. That it doesn't make sense to approach it any other way. And I don't want it to be a long term legacy either. The central idea still, you know, the alienation- bodily alienation- that still feels very true for me.

I have this critical sense of wanting to keep a balance- I have no desire for being perpetually victimized. But on the other hand, I still feel like I have identified impediments that are still there, that are real, that are there in relation to abuse. That if I don't do something about them, they will impede me, and that that will be unnecessary. And yet I really go back and forth on that, because I think sometimes that the longer that you work on something, like therapeutically, you lose your sense of it. I have a hard time determining, you know, of what value is going to talk about this. And one of the places my therapy has taken me is towards doing body work. You know, because that seems to be, well, it's logical. You know, I've

identified that I am incredibly cerebral, and [am working on a kind of therapy that is based on breathing exercises, on focusing, trying to locate in your body a felt sense]. That kind of stuff is very difficult for me to do. I've just started doing yoga, because, you know, that's a breathing discipline. For me, I'm still very hung up in that I am truly, like, autonomically cut off- that if you don't breathe and experience sensation, you don't feel and experience the world in the same way. And that it's a loss, you know, that it's definitely a loss. I see this stuff as something that's left at the end of the continuum- the body stuff- the way that I function in the world now as something that I can remedy. Obviously there's a whole other part of the continuum, you know, like grieving loss of potential, like all the things of who you might have been had you not been in that situation. Those are things I find harder to cope with at times, you know, feel saddened by.

One of my frustrations in terms of being a survivor is that, you know, I'm going to be forty next year, and I'm still grappling emotionally with stuff that sometimes its like at a six or ten year old level, like, you know, who do I trust? When do I trust? What's safe? How do I feel? And sometimes I have a hard time in the therapeutic setting, not reacting to my own sense of how limited I feel, in terms of emotional expression, ability to identify emotion. And for some reason, I prioritize that ability. Because for me I reference that back to, if I don't have an accurate sense of myself, if I can't accurately identify my feelings, then what kind of sense of authenticity do I have in the world?

Generally this research process has been comfortable for me [although] probably I got more triggered at some points in talking about specific things. And body work seems like a logical extension of therapy that I've already done, but it also means buying the idea of repressed memory. [That is], what I believe about myself is that my sense of being disembodied is a lot about unexpressed feelings. For a long time I struggled with the feeling- you know, to go into therapy at all was [following] this idea of your body as a repository of everything that's happened to you so that for instance, when you do body work, that you have repressed memory, and that you have certain areas where you actually- like have pockets of repressed memory. For a long time, I think that I was so dissociated that I didn't have any sense of it, I didn't have any sense of it being true either, which made it hard for me to go to therapy, because I not only had a sense of disconnectedness, but I had a sense of disbelief around the fact that anybody could assist me to feel connected. So it's been through a process of therapy- that I've actually become more aware of feeling, of having a felt sense, which I don't always identify easily, but which I feel as a physical force in my body- and that's a transition for me, to actually get to that point.

[About your ideas about the bodily basis of cognition]- I guess I've always thought about it more in terms of personality development, or disruption, more in that school [of thought]. Like, if you believe in the idea of personality development as sequential building blocks, and there being these fixed points at which you learn to embody things like values, and a sense of conscience, then, for me, that's where I feel a sense of being fundamentally skewed. That's where I feel like there was disruption. [Other things also are important here], for example, being a child of a suicide. Is sexual abuse all that needs to be focused on, is that what needs to be focused on? And who determines that? And I haven't figured that out yet. [I think I focus on sexual abuse] because of the longevity of it- that it was a dominating factor. [Other factors include] dealing with issues around my mother's suicide. I've described that as akin to going into shock and not coming out, and then that being exacerbated by sexual abuse. All of

those things, the inception of my abuse, and my mother's suicide all occurred within the same year.

I think that part of what I learned in my home which groomed me for sexual abuse was to be pleasing, never to talk back, and that invisibility was like a good coping mechanism. It's been interesting to me that what distinguished me in my family is that I was the only girl, [which is that] which stopped me from being intensely physically abused, but led me to be sexually abused. One of the things I've thought about in reference to sexual abuse is- what is this idea of survivorship? Why do some people fare better than others? One of the things one of my therapists has pointed out is [that] I have a sense of being valued- no matter how skewed. [That is], in the context of my family the inappropriate valuing I got just for being female, like, you're cute, you're blond, you know- there was a sense of valuing because of my gender that set me apart from my brothers. Somewhere I've learned to survive in a different way than other people in my family.

The debunking of therapy scares me, you know, I think there's a trend towards that, and I know myself, I've struggled with all of those things. And yet, I think sexual abuse is something that is too psychologically complex and confusing for anybody to sort out on their own. I mean, you can have a prodigious intellect, but the very nature of sexual abuse will render that useless, or not useless, but will nullify your ability to have your intellect work for you in terms of recovery, because it's not about intellect. So it totally frustrates me. We [live] in a socio-economic climate where access to resources like therapy aren't [equal]. So I think, where do the resources lie for people? There can be this abstraction around sexual abuse, and the construction of sexual abuse. I've tried so long to synthesize ideas, but part of what I would want people to know, is that people are in incredible pain.

Peggy

As far as disembodiment goes, there are two related things I want to say. First, my own experience of disembodiment did not last for an extremely long time. From about sixteen to twenty years of age, I had begun a sexual relationship with another woman. I always dissociated through these encounters, and would not be able to recollect having been intimate. It took a couple of years to get to the point that I could be 'present' while being intimate.

The other point I want to make is that I think that I used my body as an object to protect myself from further exploitation. For example, at age nine I cut my hair really short, wore boy's pants, and looked like a boy. It was as if I was using my body to steer away the abuse, by making myself undesirable and unattractive. On the other hand, I was bothered that peers and adults mistook me for a boy. Although it often reduced me to tears, I didn't change the way I looked. It's interesting to me that my sexual abuse stopped at this age, at the age when I pointedly started making myself as unattractive as possible. Later, by driving myself to dates and paying my own way, I was 'protecting' my body by avoiding potentially vulnerable situations.

I very much appreciate the approach you have taken with this topic. So often survivors are seen as "damaged for life" and beyond repair. I do not define my life by the abuse I survived.

It has shaped my life in a way that I can not change. However, I, as well as others, can and do live happy and productive lives.

I liked that you addressed the false memory movement. I understand that memory is not a fully understood concept. Your academic focus validates my experience in a much needed way. Empathy can assist one just so far. To understand and conceptualize one's trauma is not only helpful but difficult. Without understanding the effect the abuse had on me, I can not fully heal. You have given me a different understanding about healing.

Trisha

First, I want to begin by thanking you for this forum, a place to stand and speak my reality. It was a valuable and learning experience. Aside from your degree, I felt heard and validated, and that I had something to give out of the shambles that passed for a childhood in my life.

I also want to say that I respected the work you have put into this. I felt you really struggled with some important issues, with how to honour our voices (my voice, I must speak only for myself), with how to tell our stories without appropriation or distortion. I think the process of the interviews was respectful and effective. It allowed me to articulate and explore issues that I have been settling and grappling with for some time.

This is the value of academic work, I think, to make order out of chaos, sense out of irrationality. It meant a lot to me that you saw and felt what I was trying to say in such muddled ways; "subjective theft of the self", for example, encapsulated what I was living. I was impressed with how you wove together common themes and still gave us the respect of individuality and recognized our differences.

And especially, I treasure the belief. Though I know there must be some false memories out there, and some unscrupulous therapists, I am convinced the burden lies not in falsity but in a too true and painful reality. After all, the abusers get away with it because they are plausible and respectable, skilled in deceiving themselves and others that they do not do what it is those of us who survive know with our bodies they do/did. I wish I could convince just one supporter of the false memory syndrome [adherents] that, horrible as this may be, the truth is children are sexually, emotionally and physically abused in ways that are too horrible to think of and imagine for those rooted in sanity and caring. But please don't compound the crime, do not hurt us even worse by denying the truth of our reality.

How to tell what you know when you fear rejection and disbelief, when the shame and sense of responsibility for it is so strong. Your work gave me a place to do that, to overcome the shame and the guilt, to speak to those with the power to effect change. You provided a framework, a challenge and support. Thank you.

My response to your notion of embodiment is a sense of rightness, a gut reaction that this is real. My thinking since we spoke has not changed, perhaps strengthened. But I don't know that I am any clearer or more coherent than in our conversations. It was fascinating to read of Peggy's notion of boundaries, for example, because I think in losing my body I lost boundaries as well. I did not know, literally, where I began and where I ended. Now I have that sense. I know where people are standing in relation to me, I can sense how close they are

or how far. I don't know how to articulate this except with an example. There is a colleague at work, she comes to speak to me and stands incredibly close, I'm sure inside what the sociologists would call *intimate distance*, and I can feel, with my body how close she is. It's not a mind calculation as it would have been before.

I was also stunned by the closeness I felt to Vanja, even to sharing some phrases.

I'm frustrated by the inability of words to convey how my body speaks to me now. I feel sexual desire, I feel the existence of myself, I know these things through my body. I went to dinner with my partner- we'd both been working late and by the time we sat down in the restaurant to eat, we were both starving. I ate too much and too fast. When we left, I could feel the extra weight I was carrying. This is new, actually. I haven't suffered from eating disorders because my eating patterns were, like so much else I did, modeled on what I saw going on around me. I would eat the right amounts, have polite manners, because I copied. Even my tastes were framed by watching others. In terms of being healed I know it is still going on, for example, I am still finding out what I like to eat, what my tastes are, what food tastes like. I am still discovering parts that were left out or cut off by what happened.

But this does not frighten me any more the way it did once upon a time. I know that I will be learning and reclaiming my sense of self for the rest of my life, constructing and rebuilding what was destroyed. And maybe I will mourn and feel grief for what was stolen, for the me I might have been if this had not happened, if I had loving and courage building care in my childhood.

But I survived, he did not kill me, he did not kill my spirit. I have not let him take me away completely. The alienation from my body was a survival mechanism, because what he did, hurt. By cutting off feeling, I did not feel the pain, but it wasn't a gradual process, or a temporary or a controllable process. I cut off feeling to stop feeling pain, and ended up cutting off the ability to feel anything with my body. I still don't even know what all you can feel and know through the body. Others can take for granted and not even know or recognize the extent of their bodily knowledge or how their body works and moves in the world with them. I'm still gathering this, slowly.

So, the revisitations to the place of pain that memory holds is not easy. They are less frequent and I know now that do not destroy me. They have lessons each time.

My youngest daughter came to visit. I asked her how it had been for her, having a lesbian as a mother. She said it was different for her generation, so many of her friends had grown up knowing lesbian and gay parents among her peers, and they (her own group of close friends and her generation in general, she thought) were much more accepting and tolerant than my generation. I asked her if she could have had it differently, would she have wanted me to be straight. She said, sure, it would be easier for her, and it was hard for her to understand because she was straight. I said, I guess understanding doesn't matter as much if you still love and accept the person, that, for example, if she or her sister murdered someone I would be convinced they must have had an awfully good reason. She didn't answer, but I could feel, through my body, something was wrong (we were walking arm-in-arm). I looked at her and she was crying. I stopped and held her and she spoke of how much she missed me (we live in separate cities now). I knew her distress, I felt it with my body.

This long example is to say, that in reconnecting with my physical self I have found other emotional and intellectual capabilities opening up. That, yes, like Peggy, I have a new sense of boundaries but I also have a sense of boundlessness- my body is out there feeling and communicating. The boundary between my mind and my thinking and my body has dissolved. Does that make sense, that the body can think for you? Can act as a receiver of messages? I stand in a room now and no longer have to visualize a pose and assume it, to run movie clips in my mind of actions to do, ways to move, before I actually do them, rehearse poses, movements. This is how to walk, this is how to look, as continual rehearsals and reminders in my mind's eye accompanying my daily routine. I live in my body now, not operate it like some machine.

Not all the time, of course. The familiarity of being in the driver's seat and steering my physical self through the world is still strong. I find I slip back into comfortable patterns, when I am stressed or anxious, old ways resurface. I flirted outrageously with a colleague recently- completely inappropriate behaviour and all the old parts of my self that I don't like resurfaced. (Don't get me wrong, I'm not a prude, I'm not against mutual flirting as a fun, though lost and dying art). But flirting to avoid intimacy, to control fear, to manipulate others without their consent- no. As they say, I don't even want to go there. I still have to fight the desire to please men who I perceive as powerful.

The idea of the body as a landscape, invaded and terrorized by imperialist forces and the body going underground, becoming a resistance fighter hiding out in the deeper recesses of your own body is strong for me. I feel the imperialist forces have been driven out, and the process of rebuilding has begun. I don't recreate the traumas in order to resolve them. I don't revisit the pain every day. I don't even hate him any more.

I don't know how clear I'm being, trying to say what I live; what you are speaking about academically is what I'm living. There's a passion and fire that the concepts and the metaphors quench. That's what I want to offer here, in this last space. The great strength of the academy, to make order out of chaos, is also a great weakness. The strengths and complexities of chaos, how we live in relation to the barrage of life and experiences and cope with it, the extra ordinary heroics developed by small children in an insane environment, does all get lost in the ordering?

I was left with a question as I read your work. Hardly relevant maybe. Do I wish it could have been different? Of course. I want every child to have a loving person, or as many as you can gather for each child. Doesn't have to be the parent. Nice if it could be the parent/s. But to have people who look at you, in the eyes, and love you regardless. Who encourages you to el strong and good about yourself. What a small thing to ask for, with what huge payoffs. As a feminist, as a woman, as a teacher, as a partner, as a parent, I struggle to offer these things, to look for and shore up strengths, not to seek deficiencies, or to look for others to fill mine. Ethical and caring, it's what I want in my life, in my relationships, and in my world. This is what I work for, and why I participated in your project. Again, thank you for allowing me to be a part of it, and for producing such a strong argument, giving validation and affirmation. I know you will get you degree out of this, but I'd like you to know there was something else beside the academic work you have skillfully engaged. I have believed that my survival had a point. I've learnt the courage to speak but had no-one to listen. Thanks for hearing.

APPENDIX ONE

Note: The following questions were initially intended as a prompt sheet for me. In the actual interviews, however, they were only indirectly used, as women spoke of issues most compelling to themselves. In other words, some of these questions proved germane to women's own concerns; others were only indirectly, if at all, touched on. The following divisions reflect the fact that this research process involved a series of interviews.

Interview one: BACKGROUND

- 1) Age: of self, partner (if any), parents, siblings
- 2) Childhood and current family configuration
- 3) Description of childhood: neighborhood, hobbies, friendships, relationship to parents, siblings, extended family, neighbors, significant others
- 4) School experience: teachers, friends, gender climate, extracurricular activities
- 5) Family roles: family members, extended family members, personal, relationship to parents
- 6) Hopes and aspirations as child: goals, dreams, influences on above, parental response to above
- 7) Changes in above as growing into teens: sense of self in family, sense of family dynamics, friendships, neighbors, extended family, school, activities
- 8) Feedback

Interview two: FAMILY AND GENDER

- 1) Definition of family: what does it mean to you?
- 2) What did family mean to you as a child? How and why has it changed?
- 3) Distinguishing characteristics of family of origin? extended family?
- 4) Differences/overlaps with families of neighbors, friends?
- 5) What images, values, understandings do you associate with "family"?
- 6) What is the ideal imaginary family?
- 7) Are any of the values or understandings of family held as a child still important? How did it influence your current family configuration?

- 8) Femaleness/femininity: what do these words mean to you?
- 9) What did it mean to you as a child?
- 10) Influences shaping your understanding of being female: by family? friends? media? school?
- 11) Gender practices?
- 12) Meaning of being a female as adult: gaps, contradictions, ambiguities?
- 13) Gendered practices in family of origin?
- 14) Gender as a current issue: family, friends, work, partner, as parent
- 15) Feedback

Interview three: SIGNIFICANCES OF ABUSE

- 1) Without providing an actual description of the abuse, tell me about: age it occurred, relationship to abuser
- 2) How was it interpreted at the time, by you? What shaped this interpretation? How did you make sense of it? Did you talk to someone about it? If not, why not? If later, what prompted disclosure?
- 3) Was anyone else aware of it? Did you think others might have been? Should have been?
- 4) Behavioral responses: changes? responses to changes?
- 5) Responses to disclosure? from offender? family members? others?
- 6) How did you deal with it? How was that useful, or not?
- 7) If therapy, what ideas or relations were helpful? What was not helpful? Retrospective questions, challenges, speculations
- 8) How do you make sense of it now? What influences shape your current understanding?
- 9) Blame/responsibility: as an adult, how do you assess responsibility?
- 10) How is sexual abuse the same as, or different from, other oppressive events, practices or relations?
- 11) Has, and if so, how has your history affected your current social relations?
- 12) Describe some of the positive influences/ significant others in your life.

- 13) Were there any events/ relationships that stand out as important in having been able to counter the effects of abuse in your life?
- 14) What (if any) relationships, practices, beliefs, values etc. give you strength, are central to your ongoing sense of self and to your current social situations?
- 15) Popular psychology often distinguishes between being a victim and being a survivor? Does this distinction mean anything to you? How? Why?

Interview Four: SEXUALITY AND INTIMACY

- 1) Tell me again about the important influences, other than abuse, in your life?
- 2) How would you describe the effects of sexual abuse in your life more generally?
- 3) If this includes sexuality, how would you describe the effects of abuse on your ongoing sense of intimacy?
- 4) Has, and if so, how has your understanding of abuse shaped your further relationships with friends, family, work, or other aspects of your life?
- 5) What does intimacy mean to you at this point?
- 6) What are the factors most important to your current sense of identity? Changes over time?
- 7) Tell me about friendship: what does it mean to you?
- 8) How has your sense of self stayed the same or changed over time? How would you describe yourself at this point in time?
- 9) What are your hopes, expectations, dreams for the future? Do you expect it to be different? Same? How or why?
- 10) Feedback: Effects of research process?

ENDNOTES

¹ See Bakhtin (1990, 26).

² These interviews took place in January and February of 1996.

³ The notion of ‘trafficking in possibilities’ comes from Bruner, cited in Anderson (1989). See also Vanderbijl (1993), “Narrative and its Limitations”, (unpublished paper). As Jackson (1996, 38) insightfully notes, our oral narratives and histories are as much about ‘sustaining the life of the living’ than they are about keeping records of the past. Desjarlais (1992) also argues convincingly that the reduction of stories to rhetorical ploys, to a ‘politics divorced from the heart’, does no justice to the felt immediacies and significances inherent in the telling of one’s life stories. Stories may also be understood, as Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) notes, as a form of writing *against culture*. In a real sense then, the telling of stories always already entails the taking of a moral stance (Bruner, 1990).

According to Levin (1989), the objectivist tradition, with its encouragement of a subject/object dichotomy, has historically served as an instrument of power in that it has often been used ideologically to discredit the potentially “subversive” authority of lived experience. Hastrup (1994) also argues that new or first experiences are “maximally suggestive” in that they initiate changed perceptions, may invoke an altered way of being-in-the-world. New experiences and major losses also tend to be primary motivators of account-making activity (Harvey and Uematsu, 1995).

Throughout this paper, I will be using the notion of “experience” to refer to a continuously lived engagement with our life-world. Speaking from experience, in this view, speaks to our attempts to bring to language the felt immediacies of this lived engagement. Jackson (1995, 160) cites the work of de Certeau who argues that language always excludes aspects of lived experience, and that it is “the memory of this remainder” that ‘haunts us’. Our stories, therefore, are not *just* about events, but are, in part, the means through which we grapple with the undefinable, the elusive excesses of lived experience. Scott (1992) points out that experience is not a self-evident disclosure of reality, but is that which demands explanation.

⁴ Levin (1989) makes an elaborate argument for the moral character of listening. He states, in other words, that hearing and listening are activities which inhere moral claims, make moral demands on us.

⁵ According to Bourdieu (1990, 56, 57), one’s habitus is “embodied history, (*internalized as second nature*), and so forgotten as history. [It] is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determination of the immediate present... The [habitus] is a spontaneity without consciousness or will... [It is also the means] through which agents partake of the history objectified in institutions, [it] is what makes it possible to inhabit institutions, to appropriate them practically, and so to keep them in activity, continuously pulling them from the state of dead letters, reviving the sense deposited in them, but at the same time imposing the revisions and transformations that reactivation entails”. Habitus thus refers to the ‘enduring dispositions’ and habits of practice which are enacted outside conscious awareness. See also chapter seven.

⁶ Quote by Joanne Arnott (1994, 28).

⁷ See Levin (1985, 82).

⁸ See Kleinman (1995, 3).

⁹ See Haraway, (1985, 79).

¹⁰ Kleinman (1995, 276) notes that Latour calls the medicalization of suffering the “Pasteurization of suffering”.

¹¹ The notions of ‘epistemic murk’ and ‘good enough ethnography’ are borrowed from Schepher-Hughes (1992).

¹² See Taylor (1989, 28).

¹³ Kamsler (1990) refers here to the work of such authors as Ellenson (1985).

¹⁴ See Blake-White, J. and C. M. Kline (1985).

¹⁵ See Levin (1985, 27).

¹⁶ In Singer's (1990) review of Freud's work, he points out that as Freud's own terms began to proliferate, he began to use the construct of 'defense' as a generic rubric for all the mechanisms which rejected painful experiences. Even his notion of defenses, however, was continually modified over the course of his lifetime.

¹⁷ The DSM-IV criteria for diagnosis of PTSD are as follows: A: person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present. 1) the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others. 2) the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness or horror. Note, in children, this may be expressed instead by disorganized or agitated behaviour. B. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways: 1) recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event including images thoughts or perceptions. In young children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the trauma are expressed. 2) Recurrent distressing dreams of the event. In children there may be frightening dreams without recognizable content. 3) Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring. (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on a waking or when intoxicated). In young children trauma-specific reenactment may occur. 4) Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event. 5) Physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event. C Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma) as indicated by three (or more) of the following. 1) Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with the trauma 2) Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma, 3) Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma 4) Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities. 5) Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others. 6) Restricted range of affect (example, unable to have loving feelings). 7) Sense of a foreshortened future. (example, does not expect to have a career, marriage, children or a normal lifespan). D Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma) as indicated by two (or more) of the following: 1) Difficulty falling or staying asleep 2) irritability or outbursts of anger 3) difficulty concentrating 4) hypervigilance 5) exaggerated startle response. E Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in criteria b, c and d) for more than one month. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

¹⁸ For a critical discussion on current usages of the notion of trauma in the diagnosis of PTSD, see Kleber et al. (1995). These authors argue that trauma goes beyond the individual and must be understood and evaluated in the context of contingent cultural values and specific socio-political contexts. Against the notion of a pathology, they argue that traumatizing experiences are often continuous and sequential, making the chronicity of symptoms less a sign of individual maladjustment, than of chronic oppression. They also note that trauma must be viewed in terms of the dynamic interactions between the victimized and their social environ over time, rather than viewing trauma as a static entity or discrete event located within the individual's psyche. Post traumatic stress, in this view, are less private problems than indictments of social contexts producing them. Moreover, trauma is better not seen as the outcome of a linear trajectory, but as simultaneously produced by the social context, and given by this self same context, the methods for both interpreting and coping with the trauma. Seen this way, trauma might be said to imply a breach between individual and community, creating a lost sense of certainty and connectedness. PTSD lacks the ability to capture the complex ways in which individuals, communities and whole societies 'register tragedy'.

Summerfield, in this volume, also notes that it is mistaken to assume that because signs and symptoms may be regularly identified, that they therefore *mean* the same thing, a problem Kleinman (1987) has identified as a 'category fallacy'.

¹⁹ See also Lienhoudt (1961) for an account of the Dinka, whom he argues have no internal concept of the mind, and hence no account of an interiority in which memory resides. Rather, what we would call internally generated memories are to them *external* forces acting upon them

²⁰ Greenberg emphasizes that the point of bringing to attention the norms and values underlying contemporary psychological constructions of selfhood is to render visible the suffering they seek to ameliorate, and to 'interrogate' the problems as well as the solutions which they endorse.

²¹ The phrase 'felt ideational processes' is loosely borrowed from Connerton's work in which he speaks of the 'felt course of ideational processes'. His phrase refers to a somewhat different issue; I will instead be using it in the context of lived experience, to talk about the manner in which we come to feel ideas through participation in socially organized life. In a similar vein, Desjarlais argues that it is the felt experience of images and ideas, not their representations which produce effects.

²² In Sartre (1966, 428-460). Cited by Synnott (1993, 32).

²³ See Csordas (1990, 22).

²⁴ See Schacter (1995) for an extensive review of psychological understandings of dissociation. See also Freyd (1994) for an explanation of dissociation as due to betrayal of trust.

²⁵ Herman (1992) describes in detail many of the same issues (and more) which I am discussing here. She describes the following: complex mind/body disruptions, alterations in consciousness, numbing, disconnectedness from the ordinary sense or meaning of social events or relations, sense of observing rather than participating in the world, feelings of surrealness, de-realization and depersonalization, and emotional detachment

²⁶ Nickie Charles (1996) notes that in the western philosophical tradition, knowledge is typically associated with rationality. She argues for the notion of feeling as an important part of knowing. While feminists have tried to argue for emotion and feeling as valid epistemological sources, they have also tended to duplicate the more or less intractable dichotomy between reason and emotion, or alternately, created fairly rationalized versions of emotion.

²⁷ See Merleau-Ponty (1962, 362).

²⁸ See Merleau-Ponty (1962, 140-141).

²⁹ Cited in Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 190).

³⁰ See Johnson (1987, xiii).

³¹ Much has recently been written concerning the 'multiplicity' of, and the ambiguous sexing of, bodies. Notwithstanding this body of work, I would argue that we generally live in an historical and cultural world wherein sexual difference according to two sexes, male and female, still organizes -conceptually and practically- much of our social worlds- and that by and large, dominant cultural institutions as well as many communities, will not tolerate much sexual ambiguity or variance from the 'norm'. Even those practicing contested sexual behaviours often base explanations on simplified oppositional (to heterosexuality) grounds. In other words, while one might argue that the male/female dichotomy is not straightforward, it still functions pervasively as a dominant structuring principle for much of organized social life, however contradictory or unstable some of its instantiations might be.

³² See Shilling (1993).

³³ See Martin (1987), Shilling (1993) and Becker (1995).

³⁴ See Becker (1995) for an ethnographic account of a Fijian community in which the body, contrary to western notions, is understood as expressive of community; in other words, ontological priority is given to the relational body.

³⁵ According to Cranny-Francis (1995), the body politics of ethnicity function similarly to the body politics of race, as described here.

³⁶ Cited in Hervik (1994, 83).

³⁷ See Haaken (1996) and Cohen, Berzoff and Elin (1995).

³⁸ See Naomi Quinn (1991) and Hoyt Alverson (1991) for their critiques of Johnson's work. Both, with different emphases, argue that Johnson fails to develop an adequate culturally sensitive elaboration of embodied reason.

³⁹ See Bateson (1977, 245).

⁴⁰ This notion of 'throwness' comes from Heidegger- who argues that we are 'thrown' or 'delivered over' - into the world, that is, we come into an already structured world which we in turn, act upon, create and recreate through our social practices and activities. See Steiner (1978).

⁴¹ "Being", in Heidegger's term, refers to an 'expansive space of disclosure and horizon', in other words, to a field of possibilities, possible comportments, attitudes, bodily postures and perceptions, etcetera. (Levin, 1985).

⁴² Holding sway, in Husserl's terms, refers to the 'wielding' of the body and its organs so as to have some control of one's surroundings. See footnotes in Husserl (1970), pp 107ff.

⁴³ I might point out here that the traumatization and objectification of one's body through rape has also been widely reported as resulting in at least temporary feelings of a mind/body separation. See Winkler and Wininger (1994).

⁴⁴ See also Leder (1990).

⁴⁵ For critiques of the pervasiveness of signs and symptoms following abuse, see Lindsay and Read (1994) and Loftus and Ketcham (1994). Many of the studies undertaken by these researchers are under experimental conditions within laboratories, and through reconstructions of situations or events. Bourdieu (1977, 81-83) incisively criticizes these forms of research. He argues that all social interactions involve deeply sedimented dispositional knowledges and practiced perceptions which mitigate against the possibility of isolating and controlling the conditions of knowledge within these experimental contexts. In the following excerpt, Bourdieu (1977, 81-82) speaks specifically to the class knowledges and dispositions which are brought into experimental situations.

Thus, when we speak of class habitus, we are insisting, against all forms of the occasionalist illusion which consists in directly relating practices to properties inscribed in the situation, that "interpersonal" relations are never, except in appearance, *individual-to-individual* relationships and that the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction. This is what social psychology and interactionism or ethnomethodology forget when, reducing the objective structure of the relationship between the assembled individuals to the conjunctural structure of their interaction in a particular situation and group, they seek to explain everything that occurs in an experimental or observed interaction in terms of the experimentally controlled characteristics of the situation...In fact it is their present and past positions in the social structure that biological individuals carry with them, at all times and in all places, in the form of dispositions which are so many marks of *social position*...

(italics in original)

⁴⁶ I would like to add that that our lives cannot be simply reduced to- or be seen to be isomorphic with our social/cultural circumstances or ideological presumptions. The lived flow of experience involves contradictions so that a "lived hegemony" is processual, and must constantly be "renewed, recreated, defended and modified"; a lived hegemony, therefore, is also always being contested through counter-hegemonic practices (Williams, 1977, 112, 113). Due to both, contradictions and to the 'excess of meanings' in the lived flow of experience, practical consciousness (Bourdieu's notion, which will be elaborated later in this chapter) can be seen as involving both activated and suppressed aspects, and as referring to a not fully determinate 'having' of social worlds. As with Bourdieu's notion of habitus- which he describes as a generative matrix, admitting of contradictions as well as of some mobility- lived experience involves both habituations and indeterminacies.

⁴⁷ For elaboration of the notion of emotional *attunement*, see the latter part of this chapter.

⁴⁸ As Smith-Rosenberg (1989) adds, during times of social unease or disruption, sexuality and the physical body come to serve as particularly 'evocative political symbols' for representing disorder and uncertainty.

⁴⁹ I might also add here that touch, more generally, is often an expression of power, and that many of our tactile metaphors are deeply interconnected to culturally elaborated notions related to emotional interactions with others (Synnott, 1993). In other words, our physical skin, our tactile perceptual capacities are a significant medium through which we express and feel power, through which we come to understand (and feel) how we are situated hierarchically in our social relations.

⁵⁰ See Hastrup (1994, 1996) for excellent elaborations of the issue of agency as embodied, as opposed to merely rational.

⁵¹ Jackson (1989) refers to the work of Minkus, who reiterates also that persons don't want to consider themselves as victims, but need to see and feel themselves as having influence on their surroundings and relations.

⁵² For the notion of a 'horizon of the self', see Hastrup (1996, 95).

⁵³ See Synnott (1993) for an historical review of the ways in which the senses have been understood or thought about (in chapter five).

⁵⁴ For further discussion of Laing's work, see Rubenstein (1987).

⁵⁵ Merleau-Ponty's notion of space, as noted elsewhere in this paper, is not geographical, but refers to how we come to inhabit the world. The characteristics of paths, by-ways etc. come from his work and were first made known to me through the work of Jackson (1989), as well as Zaner (1964).

⁵⁶ Following Sartre, Jackson (1989) reiterates that although we are thrown into given conditions not of our own choosing, we *actively enter into and 'make over' these conditions*, we realize these conditions, to varying degrees, as possibilities; we actively engage the life-worlds we find ourselves in. Jackson refers to the work of Victor Frankl, who argues that the 'last freedom' we have when conditions and circumstances deprive us of the ability to act, is the ability to decide how to construe this, to live as if we still have choices.

⁵⁷ In his discussion of the work of Merleau-Ponty, Turner (1992) points out that Merleau-Ponty believed perceptual and emotional attunements always depended on ones' particular location in a given cultural context, which in turn depends on one's experience of a lived body. The notion of perception, in other words, is not possible without a concept of embodiment in which the body is actively oriented to the world through one's habitus, thereby constituting an incarnate subjectivity.

⁵⁸ Heidegger's notion of a dwelling refers to the temporality of, and manner in which we *are* or *stay* in the world, to the conserving and care of our life-worlds.

⁵⁹ Cited in Levin (1985, 44).

⁶⁰ See Levin (1985, 51).

⁶¹ As Heidegger (1979, 98, 99) further says about feelings, "ultimately we dare not split up the matter in such a way, as though there were a bodily state housed in the basement with feelings dwelling upstairs. Feeling, as feeling oneself to be, is precisely the way we are bodily. Bodily being does not mean that the soul is burdened by a hulk we call the body...we do not 'have' a body; rather we 'are' bodily."

⁶² See also Hastrup (1996), and Lazarus, Coyne and Folkman (1984).

⁶³ Cited in Levin (1985, 50).

⁶⁴ See also Lyon and Barbalet (1994) and Di Giacomo (1992, 112). Di Giacomo, following Wikan (1991), argues for greater attention to the unities of feeling-thinking as key to understanding the compelling significances of lived experience.

⁶⁵ Cataldi (1993, 174) puts it this way: "deep emotions are those we describe ourselves as being 'in'. This *in* is not the *in* of a 'container' or 'receptacle' view of empty or 'air' space", but as embodied beings, we experience ourselves as "in-merged with-in a surface of sensibility, 'Flesh'."

⁶⁶ Cited by Cataldi (1993, 184).

⁶⁷ Cataldi (1993, 205) quotes Moustakas who says the following about falling in love.

The relationship of love when it permeates one's being changes the entire world...Nothing remains the same. Colors, textures, sounds, food, all of life takes on a fresh, dazzling beginning. Rooms brighten and move; energy skyrockets. All at once the world is a beautiful place, and there is a sense of being able to do what one wants, a sense of great freedom, of visions and dreams...All of one's senses come alive in the glory of the revelation, the glory of the fullness of intense feelings...

⁶⁸ See Levine (1992) for his discussion of 'somatic experiencing'. Levine argues that chronic anxieties are the result of habituated physiological responses to dangers which feel inescapable, and in which one's physiological processes never are permitted to move into the experience of escape. His therapy focuses on enactments which induce the completion of the physiological processes involved in successful escape.

⁶⁹ Rather than passive, the body here is seen as the ground for human action; in this view, reason is active because it affirms the bodily existence of particular beings (Gatens, 1996). Jackson (1989, 133) talks persuasively about bodily activity providing "experiential truths" which seem to issue from within one's own being.

⁷⁰ What is also suggested here is that as children, these women lacked a vocabulary for making sense of their experiences. Various oppressions and abuses, in other words, may well endure socially and culturally, in part, because they remain tacit, precisely because they are not available in conscious language and within public, or political awareness.

⁷¹ The notion of social constructedness, she notes, suggests far less freedom for change than is often implied.

⁷² Jackson (1996, 4) quotes William James who argues that the truth of an idea is not a static, inherent property but that its truth is an active process, that ideas are made true by events- that truth "*happens* to an idea." In other words, ideas are dynamic processes, not an unmasking.

⁷³ Jackson (1989, 5) cites the work of William James, who speaks of "conjunctive relations", or the continuities of experience across cultural settings, and across time, and which enable us to 'reach into' experiences seemingly alien to us. In a different vein, residual traces or legacies of meanings over time may thwart change. In other words, because cultural practices involve tacit understandings, persons may reproduce the very patterns and values which they wish to challenge or overcome.

⁷⁴ This corresponds to Talcott Parson's notion of residual categories: "facts or observations that can't be explained or accounted for by the main analytic components of a system of thought" (Talcott, 1937, 17; cited in Turner, 1992, 70). In other words, discourses and practices carry many deeply entrenched connections and 'explanatory schemas' from the past, which contribute fundamentally to current, dominant forms of sense making, thereby constituting 'systems of dependencies' (Henriques et al., 1984, 104).

⁷⁵ According to Felski (1995, 176), "rather than an orderly sequential chain of epistemes, one needs to imagine a messy entanglement of discursive fields at any given moment; older conceptual frames do not simply disappear but interact with newer paradigms in complicated processes of mutual containment as well as active contestation." Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (1989) says much the same thing, arguing that discourses are always amalgams of earlier discourses, vocabularies, meanings and grammars that are never fully lost, only muted.

⁷⁶ Shotter (1993, 31) puts this nicely. He says,

we can see that in the ordinary two-way flow of activity between them, people create, without a conscious realization of the fact, a clinging sea of *moral* enablements and constraints, of privileges and entitlements, and obligations and sanctions -in short, an ethos. And the changing settings created are *practical-moral settings* because the different 'places' or

‘positions’ they make available have to do, not so much with people’s ‘rights’ and ‘duties’...as with the nurturance or injury to the basic being of a person. For individual members of a people can have a *sense* of ‘belonging’ in that people’s ‘reality’ only if the others around them are prepared to respond to ‘reality’, only if the others around them are prepared to respond to what they do and say *seriously*; that is if they are treated as a proper participant in that people’s ‘authoring’ of their reality, and not excluded from it in some way. (italics in original)

⁷⁷ Cited in Jackson (1989, 208).

⁷⁸ See also Flanagan (1996). In his chapter called “Identity and Reflection”, Flanagan examines processes whereby persons lose their sense of identity; he notes that persons in crises of identity have only a “dim and inchoate self-awareness”, that they lack a robust capacity to identify with the social world (p 153).

⁷⁹ See Kovel (1981, 48). Cited in Greenberg (1994, 34).

⁸⁰ Cited in Levine (1992, 106).

⁸¹ See T.S. Eliot’s *Little Gidding*, from *Four Quartets*. In Abrams (1968, 1806).

⁸² Although I have not included it in this paper, Trisha speaks about boundaries as a social space, an area which figuratively lies between persons and which requires mutual negotiation. Her conceptualization speaks to a more intersubjective notion of personhood.

⁸³ Following Jackson, metaphors only mediate connections when they are not fetishized, when they are not seen as an end to themselves, but rather, are understood *as* a facilitating metaphor.

⁸⁴ These debates are more than ideological jousts in that they have had material and felt effects in people’s lives, having historically been crucial in differentially defining the ideal properties, for example, of men and women.

⁸⁵ There are numerous feminist and other re-interpretations of Freud’s work (see Elliott (1992), Wright (1992), and Chodorow (1989)). Object relations theory, for example, focus on the intrinsic connections between self and other, concedes that the self/other is a dynamic psychic structure, that the nature of the psyche is object (person) seeking (see Burch, 1993). Whereas Chodorow initially argued that the social structure of families encouraged girls to develop less differentiated boundaries than boys, she has also argued that differentiation is less a matter of distinctiveness, than a particular way of being connected to others.

⁸⁶ See also Merleau-Ponty (1964) for his recognition of Lacan’s work.

⁸⁷ See also Vanderbijl (1995) for an unpublished paper, “Towards an Outline of an Analysis of Childhood Sexual Abuse”. Here I critically review the tendency both within many psychological as well as legal practices to hold *mothers* culpable for sexual abuses perpetrated by fathers. These discourses blame mothers for *failing to provide protection* to the children.

⁸⁸ Jackson’s notion of “Wholeness of Being” as I have borrowed it, is in reference to the metaphorical-like work of poetry in organizing felt experience.

⁸⁹ Because of time constraints, my interview with Vanja took place before she had an opportunity to read this thesis. Instead, I tried to summarize some of the main issues and concerns during the interview. Peggy and Trisha’s response follows their reading of this paper.

⁹⁰ Jackson borrows this idea from Walter Benjamin, who said that truth “is not an unveiling which destroys the secret, but the revelation which does it justice” (Jackson, 1989, 43).

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