Research Article

"I Just Wanna Be a Woman": Some Not So Simple Ways: Families, Femininity and/as Affective Entanglement

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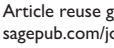

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Abstract

Catherine is age 21 years. She is part of a research project that has followed her life from age 4 until 21 years. She is driving along in her car and we hear a song, with the lines "I just wanna be a woman" sung plaintively over and over again. This article considers what the song might mean in the context of what we learn from a very close reading of observation and interview data with her, her parents, and teachers at various stages of her life. The article describes the process of conducting a slow reading and argues that it presents to us an approach to what I call "affective entanglement" as an antidote to classificatory prescriptions of causality. We begin to understand how the complexity of the entanglement of family lives, lived at particular historical periods and in specific geographical locations, gives us a detailed insight into not only the entanglements that shape Catherine's life, but also allow us to understand something about the affective transmission of class, gender, and sexuality in all its complexity.

Keywords

affect, affective entanglement, close reading, slow science, femininity

Introduction

I'm so tired, of playing
Playing with this bow and arrow
Gonna give my heart away
Leave it to the other girls to play
For I've been a temptress too long
Just
Give me a reason to love you
Give me a reason to be, a woman
I just want to be a woman
From this time, unchained
We're all looking at a different picture
Through this new frame of mind
A thousand flowers could bloom
Move over, and give us some room.

It is 1995. Cathy is age 21 years. As she drives along in her car, she has cleverly placed a video recorder so that the camera captures her driving while playing Portishead's debut single, Glory Box.

The refrain "I just wanna be a woman" is soulful and heartfelt.[1] Cathy is part of a project in which 21-year-old young women produced video diaries and had been part of research at the ages of 4, 10, and 21 years.[2] Just what did Cathy want the viewer to see? Certainly, in her interviews for this project, she detailed very difficult relations with men, but what I want to do in this article is to think about some aspects of how she gets to this place, what it tells us in relation to how we might approach affective issues of gender, sexuality, and intergenerational transmission, and to introduce a way of working that details a slow close reading of entangled texts, that I came to call "affective entanglement" (Walkerdine, 2015). In my original conference paper, I demonstrated the process of reading all the material collected over time across family members and a teacher. What emerged was a complex narrative in which, in some cases, a view of the same event or issue across different family members emerged. Not only this, but the resultant complex account crossed several generations and geographical locations. It was this that led me to use the term "affective entanglement" to describe approach.[3]

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I explore a way of working with affect that goes beyond a trite distinction between what has been referred to as an archaeology and a cartography. This distinction has appeared in work that prefers a flat to a deep ontology. But instead of making this distinction, I am working with the sense that time and place are fluid and mobile. The conversations that form the combined narrative move around in time and place, and invoke other people in other times and places, as well as family and other memories. In thinking about this issue, I am proposing that we need to take account of both an "archaeology" and a "cartography." An archaeology excavates what is underneath the surface—a kind of deep mapping. That is, thinking about the ways in which we unearth a buried past are many—historical and biographical information we did not know, information buried in our bodies—the work of epigenetics, for example, that which has circulated in a relational dynamic but cannot be overtly "known" but is certainly understood in some form by participants as, for example, a feeling in our bodies, which troubles us but we cannot name (see my work on the Maternal Line, including the bodily evocation of singing; Walkerdine, 2014), a gap or disturbance in the flow of communal time, a sense of being in two places or times at once.

In this article, I explore these issues by developing a method of very close reading of transcripts from interviews and observations that relate to one family over time. In doing this, I take the reader through what Isabelle Stengers (2017) refers to as a form of "slow science." The slow way of working came up as part of a project in which I had the opportunity to look again at a complex corpus of data from a series of projects all of which worked with the same group of British girls, born in 1974 and 1975 and who were the participants in a number of research projects at ages, 4, 10, and 21 years. The corpus of data consisted of nonverbal IQ tests at 4 years, transcripts of home and nursery observations at 4 years, transcripts of teacher and girl interviews at 10 years, test data at 10 years, transcripts of interviews with the young women and parents at 21 years, and participant video diaries at 21 years. There were originally 30 girls, 15 working and 15 middle class, chosen according to parents' occupational status and education. All girls were originally presented by the original project team (Tizard & Hughes, 2002) as White, although, in fact, one was mixed race. In addition, there proved to be a considerable amount of movement and migration within the sample, mostly between Ireland and the United Kingdom and internal migration within the United Kingdom.

I had the opportunity to work again on these data, from 2012 to 2015. What I discovered was that, given the new opportunity to work with the data over a sustained period of time, I was able to search and read the data in far greater depth than on the previous funded time-limited projects. Those projects concentrated on answering a set of research questions, whereas in this work, I was able to be more exploratory and to follow leads. I made notes on many aspects of the data, which led me to notice aspects of the data that we could not have previously analyzed in detail, such as trans-generational aspects, as well as more complex issues of class and sexuality than we had time to probe.

To make this approach understandable for the reader, I go through my reading of one entangled story for one participant, who I call Cathy, short for Catherine.

Tizard and Hughes (2002) noted that, at 4 years old, Cathy had a nonverbal IQ of 134, the third highest in the sample. Whatever we understand such measures to mean, one thing is clear. By the age of 10 years, she was considered by her teacher to be one of the worst performing students with no ability at all and by 21 years she had left school with no examination passes. So what happened in between and how might we explain this huge decline? And how might this relate to the pleas to be a woman implied by the Portishead song?

How I Worked

The data I was working with in this case comprised observations at home and at nursery school at age 4 years made by Tizard and Hughes (2002). These observations recorded and transcribed the conversations between mother and daughter and child and teacher, and added notes made by an observer who was present but noninteractive. These recordings took place in 1979/1980. She was later part of another study that interviewed her and her teacher at age 10 years, around 1984/1985, and when she was age 21 years in 1994/1995, and this time she was interviewed as well as her parents. She also made some video diaries at age 21 years.

I began by reading all the material in chronological order several times. I kept making notes. I kept feeling that this wasn't enough and I went back again and again making more and more notes and cross-checking different statements at different time periods. In the end, I settled on line-by-line notes in a chronological sequence.

It was only this slow and painstaking work that allowed me to understand the sequence of the issues raised and the way they were raised. At that point, I then created an overarching narrative that thematically linked what different participants said about one topic, so that I was also able to see not only who said what but also when they said it and thus to begin to understand what else was happening then. It also meant that I could work across participants (e.g., child and parents). This means that I had some sense of complex relational links both across time and across people. This included, for example, the ways in which parents' memories of aspects of the histories of their own parents came into play in relation to what was happening to Cathy in the present.

What I recount below is my understanding of this material through a complex amalgamated narrative. Indeed, we

see that it is only through the detailed engagement with the material across time, and by reading across the narratives presented by different family members that we are able to understand that the educational outcome for Cathy can be understood as produced in a relational dynamic in which each of the protagonists only presents their own point of view of something that is created together in circumstances that cross generations and which cannot be separated from the historical and geographical circumstances in which the narratives take place.[4]

What is specific to this, and all of the case studies, is a cross-generational relational dynamic that can be seen when all the material is considered but is not within the simple grasp of any of the members of the relationship who all bring aspects to the dynamic. I would submit also that it is not best understood through a discourse of pathology. Such an approach does nothing to understand the complex affective entanglements that could never be absent, whatever the time, space, and situation for all assembled relations, and whatever their character. Rather, I want to see them as affective and not simply conscious as they take place in the ways in which the past of the participants is experienced affectively by other members, in a way that circulates and becomes further entangled.

Yet such is the weight of normalization, pathologization, and psychologization in our contemporary present, that we have to be aware that this reading subverts the explanations of causality put forward by Cathy's teacher at 10 years, "no ability," with a snide pathologization of her mother ("I wouldn't put her at the top end of academic parent"), reference to having inherited a problem personality (both mother and father), further explanation of other players, such the mother being "agoraphobic" (as told by a psychiatrist), the older sister being designated by the school as "disturbed and aggressive" as well as a tomboy, the father presenting himself as "depressed" and "lacking in self-confidence," and a strong discourse of Cathy's pathological overevaluation of friends leading to bullying from the secondary school. In a sense, these explanations of self and others, which we have come to recognize as a kind of truth of personality, that we are this or that, and that families themselves may cause certain traits is an exercise in classification and thus a form of power. In attempting to subvert what has become taken for granted, I argue, there is no simple causality. Just as Foucault argued against a simple economic determination, so I argue for entangled affective pathways that cross times and places. I go on to show how I worked and thus reached this way of approaching the issue.

Reading the Data

In reading through the notes and trying to understand how we can use the reading to help shape an account of the entangled production of Cathy as the woman who asks her audience, in the video diary that she made, to listen to the Portishead song. I want to explore what we might term complex affective entanglements in the data. That is, we see that the relational linkages and explanations between family members go back in time to previous generations, as well as forward to, in this case, terminated fetuses. We see that relational linkages are no respecters of chronological time. In addition, the entanglements revealed in the amalgamated narrative also demonstrate that entanglement itself has its own other affects, not known but only felt by some of the participants, who experience the intensity of the encounter yet remain in the dark about what seems simultaneously to be a dual locatedness of participants within other imaginary space, often a space of intensity from their past.

I begin with the chronologically first moment at 4 years, where we have an observation of mother and daughter at home. On reading the transcript, I form the impression—an affective sense of disturbance that I cannot name—that something in the way that mother and daughter interact seems strange. In other words, I feel disturbed although I cannot name what disturbs me. What do I do with this sensation that cannot be named, except to say that I feel disturbed and uneasy? How might I use it in the work? Or indeed, must I discard it as my own bias and strive for a more neutral or objective reading of what happens? The best I can do in trying to understand what literally makes me feel uneasy is to say that, while the mother and daughter interact a lot and indeed the daughter does seem very demanding of the mother, the mother and daughter feel like they are somehow missing each other like people who should be meeting and yet slide past each other, missing the meeting. I cannot say any more about why I feel this bodily disturbance. But it is something in the way that the mother appears to meet the daughter's constant demands but somehow never meets something that seems to be lurking in the demands. When, right at the end of the recording, the mother vigorously brushes her daughter's hair, and the daughter cries out in pain, the meeting is angry, painful. Indeed, the observer[5] is led to remark that at this point the daughter clutches a teddy in the way that children clutch security blankets.

What do I make of my feelings? Many schools of psychoanalysis (but certainly not all) would make something of this feeling in the analyst, would see it as a communication from the body of the patient to that of the analyst. However, I am not an analyst. I am simply a researcher reading a transcript. I do not get to follow this up in any way with either mother or daughter. So, it might be said best to ignore it. After all, who knows what it is drawing on in my own affective geography and how helpful or misleading this would be to explore. But there is, for me, what some would call a strong "feeling tone" to this reading. So, I decided to do nothing with it except to keep it on the back burner, so to speak, and see if anything I read could shed any light on my

feelings of disturbance. Several bodies of work on affect do engage with similar affects—Deleuze (1994) speaks of intensities, Massumi n.d., following Stern (2010) speaks of vitality, and Davoine (2007) uses the idea of heightened sensation as when everything appears very vivid, although none quite engages with unease.

As I later began to see, when presented with the entirety of the data, there is something disturbing to members of the family going on at this chronological time. We learn, from the mother, and separately from the daughter and the father in different ways, that, at the time of this recording at 4 years, the father was staying at work as long as he possibly could to keep away from home, where his wife was a "quasi doormat." We learn that she was in her daughter's words, "agoraphobic," which Cathy explains as her not feeling able to leave the house with the children, and that she (as told by herself and her daughter—learned in a session with the psychiatrist) was considering leaving her husband. We learn that he was "domineering" and that his wife did not generally argue back. We learn that the elder daughter, 6/7 years at the time, was having problems at school and was understood by the teachers as "disturbed" and "aggressive," and was reported by her sister later to be a tomboy, who would only wear boys' clothes and not the little girl clothes that their father favored.

So, in fact, there was plenty of disturbance circulating in the relational field. We also learn later that Cathy had great subsequent difficulty in friendships and tended to have intense friendships that eventually blew up; that according to her mother, she had a tendency to want to buy friendship and could not find the close loving relationship that she wanted; that she tended to demand something from her father that he could not give, tested him and blew up at him; had the tendency to play one parent off against the other and had been intensely bullied at secondary school, not being able to either stand up to the bully or reveal the bullying. She later became what her parents described as very aggressive, especially with her father.

If we explore this disturbance farther back in time, we see that its tentacles stretch back to the previous generation. We learn that the father refers to his own mother as "domineering," "unsteady," easily "flying off the handle," very easy to upset "takes things the wrong way," and "sensitive to criticism," and he describes his sister as the same and also one granny as "forceful." So there is some sense for him that all women, including Cathy, are the same—although he "gets on well with women." Thus, we understand a bodily affect from that time present for him in his interactions with all of his female family members, although it plays out in different ways—in particular, his own wife "calms him down." They in turn experience and respond to the affects coming at them from him given their own relational and affective histories. For Cathy, dad was always shouting at her and she shouted at him and slammed doors, when she was being bullied, but before this, reacted to the bullying by not outwardly reacting, before that was a loner who wouldn't show her "real feelings" to others at school, what her mother described as "goody two shoes." And before this, even as a baby in a pram she could not tolerate being in a room with a man and screamed. For the elder sister, the reported reaction appears to have been presenting herself as a fearless boy, someone who did not mind getting into physical fights. The mother tried to discuss the problems with him and they had arguments but he always won them and said that his work was important. He was dictatorial and she considered leaving him when the children were small because she felt so alone. Keeping with dad, farther back in time, we also find a war, Japanese prison camps, fighting in jungles producing his own father who was "quietish and just got on with life" in the face of a wife's demands (as I write this, the demands made of a Japanese prisoner of war come strongly to mind[6]), a man who himself could not express affection to his son and who left his son, dying early, leaving a disturbance for his son that played out as wanting to be independent and not asking his father for help, becoming rebellious and "metaphorically" leaving home at age 14 years to do what he liked. He is a complex person, who can be moody. He didn't and doesn't like authority and being told what to do. Going farther back again, we find a Welsh "patriarch," popularly imagined as tyrannical and distant. We have a sense from dad that for him Cathy has inherited something from his own mother, the same domineering, unsteadiness, something which he cannot stand, and that, farther back, domination as an issue features both for his own father, his mother, his sister, and his grandfather, although we are not able to learn any more of the historical circumstances producing this. We do not learn what caused his mother's "unsteadiness," but we do learn that his father had survived horrific experiences of domination. Thus, there are many reasons why dad would both find female "aggression" difficult, and why "getting away from this" both literally and metaphorically made sense. When we read the account of both Mum and Cathy, that Dad could not show affection, left Mum to cope with the children alone, could not bear to be in the presence of female "aggression," something begins to make sense. However, we also learn other things: that he left his wife alone with small children, and that he was very depressed at one point and lacked self-confidence. He says that he could not show affection to the girls for fear of rejection and that when the girls are older he has problems seeing them as women, saying that men his age go out with girls of 16 and 17. Thus, we understand that there is also some other disturbance within this entanglement that we cannot support through anything other than speculation. We may suspect that the time taken up by Mum in looking after two small children made her less available for him and he could not stand this and stayed away, which also makes sense of his

expressed desire not to have Cathy back after she has left as life is much quieter without her. That he also had great difficulty in keeping his own sexual desire in check and indeed in being able to see his daughter as a woman.

We find further entanglements in which Dad gave up a secure job as an engineer to work with his brother-in-law (not clear whether wife's brother or whose brother) to set up a courier company, which partnership he had to leave because of "relationship difficulties." Given that this happens during a recession and he has grown older in the process, he cannot find work in his old trade and has to take more menial work and suffers from a severe depression at the same time as Cathy is feeling depressed after the overdose and leaves home. While he eventually finds a sense of freedom in truck driving, which is narrated in a way similar to the freedom described when he left home as a young man (thus conveying a form/sense of relief of distance from a difficult relational situation), he also suffers a sense of insecurity and lack of self-worth, also conveyed elsewhere in the interview as being afraid of not getting it right.

Mum narrates her own experience of loneliness when the children were small, although it is her daughter, not her, who mentions "agoraphobia" and says that her grandmother had to take the children out. Thus, we understand that, at some level, she found child care difficult and lonely—that she felt that Cathy saw herself as a victim like her own mother, something which Mum found difficult. Thus, we begin to understand the entangled affects enacted for Mum when Cathy is clingy and demanding. Mum also recounts her mother's victimhood as brought about by having to look after her father, who had survived a terrible Landrover accident in which all the other occupants died, left him in a coma, and he had to be looked after for the rest of his life. She also says that her mother found it difficult to trust people and relates this to her being overshadowed by a beautiful older sister who got all the attention. Mum's brother also got all the attention with his learning difficulties diagnosed as dyslexia, when she suffered with learning difficulties and undiagnosed dyslexia of her own, with no one offering her anything in the rough school that she went to. This left her feeling insecure but she asserts that she could not have been stupid as she has attended several courses and is now doing well at work. Thus, does Mum send subtle affective messages to Cathy about victimhood, keeping Cathy at bay? Both Mum and Dad express insecurities about their own self-worth and educational abilities. Cathy narrates her own experience in similar terms. So, we might also ask how this sense transmits itself between the participants present and past and how the teacher of Cathy at 10 years can understand this differently as simply "low ability."

Turning to Mum, we note that her own parents did or did not express their affection for her and that she also suggests an inheritance between a family member and Cathy. Thus, for both father and mother, Cathy is experienced as like a family member with whom they have some difficulties. We learn that for Mum, Cathy sees herself as a victim, just like her own maternal grandmother, who was forced to look after her husband after a horrific accident that left all the other occupants of a Landrover, dead.

When I first viewed the transcript of the day at home, at age 4 years, Mum's constant reference to her daughter as "Catherine," rather than any diminutive form, made me think of the U.K. television show from the 1990s, called "Keeping up Appearances," which featured a lower-middle-class woman who was constantly aware of her presentation to the world and presenting herself as high in status. All I could think of was whether keeping up the appearance of everything being OK on the surface, was more than Mum could bear.

In making a connection between her mother and her own daughter, we begin also to recognize the complex affects produced for the mother in witnessing her daughter's behavior and its effect upon her of this past in the present.[7] We can begin to establish several entwined disturbances that move across time and space. In a central place is the father's disturbance with both what he describes as his passive father and aggressive women—mother, sister, Cathy, with the grandfather's disturbance through the cruelty in the Japanese prisoner of war camp, where doubtless the way to live was to be passive. Yet the mother's own disturbances enter the field, as well as Cathy, the bullying, the distress about men even as a baby, the sister who refuses to dress as a girl, in a dress. I want to draw attention to this entanglement not to offer a cause (which one would we choose?) but perhaps more to speak of Cho's assembled relations (Cho, 2008) or, perhaps better, an ecological field, in which past and present, other people's pasts and presents, affective intensities, and disturbances constantly cross and recross, mingle, and dissolve in the affective encounters of the everyday. But in relation to 21-year-old Cathy's desire to be a woman, we are presented with the entanglements that gesture to just how difficult and complex a task that might be.

In Cathy's world outside the home, how does a teacher, an employer, a boyfriend, or a friend come into the entanglements of these affects and read them through their own situation? In this instance, we only hear from her teacher at age 10 years, but she can only see a child with poor levels of ability and self-confidence, a social isolate. In Cathy's understanding of her own situation at age 21 years, she tries and does not present herself as so isolated. However, I am most concerned here in the damning sentence given by the teacher—"this is a child with no ability who has to set her work sights low." While Mum reports that later, after the bullying, some psychological support is offered, the perpetuation of a sense of insecurity, of not being supported, of wasted talent, seems set to continue further down the generations, although Mum, Cathy, and Dad have all attempted

to develop their own work situations through their own initiative.

In relation to sexuality, there are a number of issues emerging. We have already noted the complexity of "who wears the trousers," so to speak; we have learnt about Dad's lack of confidence and difficulty with women in his family he views as aggressive, with the near divorce from Mum, his staying away from the family at work a lot, combined with Mum's agoraphobia, but we also learn that when little, even from a baby, Cathy found it difficult to have men around her; so a set of disturbances around masculinity, femininity, and proximity emerge. But other issues of proximity and distance are brought into play, in relation to several comments that Cathy tried to buy friendship and was too close, a practice continuing into adulthood, with her parents, as reported by Mum. This issue came to head in secondary school during which her tough older sister kept bullies at bay, but when she left school, at the end of Cathy's first year, the bullying became intense and lasted for 2 years, during which time she took an overdose, something which, we learn, also happened to her father, although we do not know exactly when. It is after this, that Cathy's aggression is reported by Mum and Dad. She says she will now stand up to people and not let herself be bullied. This happened with a man too, who cheated on her when she was age 19 years and she reported that he was surprised when she stood up for herself so well. It is during this time that she had an abortion, one that she didn't tell her parents about, but after the interviews are finished, we learn that she became pregnant and had a baby.

Affective Entanglement

Through this close reading, we learn that family relations operate through complex affective dynamics that move backward and forward through time and space, and connect into other affective relations encountered at school, in work. In understanding transmission this way, we cannot reduce intergenerational transmission nor socialization or development to behaviors, activities, and cultural practices. While I would not want to reduce transmission to the family nor to essentialize complex processes, understanding the relational field as comprising affective entanglements based, as here, entirely on what participants themselves say, we see the potential as a form of analysis. In understanding relational dynamics as conveyed affectively, we are potentially able to understand social forces and relations without reducing them to structures, cultures, or essentialized personality or behavioral criteria[8] (Studdert & Walkerdine, 2016).

In claiming that we can understand these data as forms of affective entanglement, I am referring to an emerging tradition of work, which draws on a number of sources within a relational ontology (Benjamin, 2015; Clough, 2010; Studdert, 2006, Walkerdine, 2010). Clough and Halley (2007) use the term entanglement in their introduction to affect, in relation to an understanding of intergenerational haunting and trauma, referring also to Ramadanovic's (1998) reading of Cathy Caruth's idea of "unclaimed experience," that is, experience in the present belonging to a haunting from the past, as well as Abraham and Torok's (1994) concept of the crypt. It is also present in concepts such as that of postmemory, developed by Hirsh (2012) and discussed by Frosh (2013).

"Entanglement" as a term is also used by Karen Barad (2007) to refer to an agentic realism in science studies in the sense of an entanglement between matter and human in the production of science, itself developed from work in quantum physics. It has been widely taken up in the humanities and social sciences. By putting affect together with the concept of entanglement, I am attempting to find a way to work with the complexity of the huge relational field of nodal points over time and space present in these data.[9] The concept of entanglement has been the focus of critique. For example, Giraud (2019) argues that simply grounding an ethics and politics in the recognition of relationality is not enough to explain how the entangled relations act together through what she describes as an ethics of exclusion. For her, this means paying attention to "entities, practices and ways of being that are foreclosed when other entangled realties are materialized" (p. 2). Thus, she argues that it is necessary to pay attention to frictions, foreclosures, and exclusions. In other words, is it enough to demonstrate that everything is entangled without understanding what frictions and bracketing offs exist within those entanglements? In this entangled narrative, we certainly become aware of frictions—frictions that have multiple precursors. We can also find foreclosures, not least that the explanations offered by various people (mother, father, teacher, and psychiatrist) foreclose and exclude the very relational field that emerges in the narrative. In addition to this, we become aware of the central pivoting place of the relational dynamic brought by the intergenerational aspects of the affective life of the father and how these circulate with and rub against the other affective pathways and trajectories in play in the relational field. While clearly there is a long way to go to develop the method that I have begun to sketch out here, nevertheless, it demonstrates the necessity of explanations that go beyond the liberal individual with assumptions of normality and pathology.

Here, I am particularly interested in the way that actually making this composite narrative through this painstaking work over time and through space can act as a method that can afford new insights into a number of issues. In this case, I am concerned with its application to understanding some aspects of the relational complexities of becoming a woman.

Back to Cathy

How do we understand her path to becoming a woman now? I have only presented a fraction of the narrative but it is relatively easy to produce a standard normative explanation of Cathy's "development," relating to her mother's and her inability to bond and her father's distance. We certainly have in this explanation a sense of relational dynamic, creating a particular developmental pathway in which no friendships and relationships ever work. But in presenting what I would understand as a more transversal approach (following Guattari), I would not want to offer a singular causality, nor to fail to include the movement between generations and geographies. What we notice, is that there are ghostly presences everywhere. We might ask, who is affectively in the room when Dad interacts with his wife and his daughters? But, of course, Cathy can never know that they are not alone in a sense. She can only experience the affective resonances of an encounter that she cannot name.

The bully as a figure has close resemblances to domineering mothers, to overbearing fathers, and even to doormat wives or victims, as her maternal grandmother is described. Distant paternal grandfathers who have themselves suffered bullying in Japanese prisoner of war camps, get mixed up with paternal grandmothers who have been wearing the trousers in the family, so to speak. So, who is the bully and who is bullied shifts around in these ghostly presences that invade the scene. Who can be close to whom, who is looked after and who does the looking after, who wears the trousers (literally with the sister). It is hard not to feel that Cathy must feel caught inside a whirlwind but one in which all of these shadowy presences are only ever felt and not understood/known (not able to be thought).

So many attempts to deal with proximity and distance that is not right, or needs and responsibilities that cannot be aligned.

Inside of complex cartography is a genealogy too. We can think of the designation of bullying as a problem, of dyslexia as a condition, and of IQ scores and low ability, for example. And we can think of genealogy as a family tree in which each of the family ancestors enters into a field of personal and historical events. We find that overturned Landrovers, or Japanese camps, enter the field of masculinity, never mind the tomboy entering this field too as against the dresses that must be worn to be daddy's girl; a girl who must hover somewhere between the polarities of harridan and victim to find a man who is always distant or to whom she is too close.

Do we wonder then that she wants the viewers of her video diary to hear her plaintive cry that she just wants to be a woman, who calls out to a lover that she is tired of being a temptress, of playing with her bow and arrow, and now wants a real relationship with a real man. And so, Portishead's album enters our collection of objects that vie with the ghosts in the virtual mausoleum in this complex multidimensional hypertext that we are creating.

Considering Nonconscious Affects

Do other approaches already provide the same results? We might look to psychoanalysis and to family therapy for methods that also engage with relational matrices. Indeed, it is clear that Clough and Halley's work on affect owes a deal to psychoanalytic thinking in their reference to the entanglements of intergenerational haunting, and I myself have referred to psychoanalytic approaches to affect and to Davoine and Gaudilliere (2013) to think about intergenerational effects (e.g., Walkerdine, 2010; Walkerdine & Jimenez, 2012); however, I have not before undertaken such a detailed reading that shows up the complexity of the affective relations. That entanglements cross time and persons is well-known, but I think that this way of working shows us a degree of entanglement that we may not be able to see in other ways.

I am not interested in discussing a pathology and its antecedents as is usually the case in working psychoanalytically in a therapeutic setting, either to diagnose a problem with a patient in the present or indeed a family dynamic. However, it is important to note that psychoanalytic methods have developed a great deal of skill in understanding the complexity of dynamics in relational settings. The concept of the defenses, while not considered here, may indeed have something to offer to this line of enquiry because of the supposition that a nonconscious realm exists in which difficult affects are deflected in a variety of ways. That sense of deflection is picked up by Giraud (2019) in her critique of entanglement as she demonstrates how entanglements do push away certain features. How to think of the complexity of the relational field as it traverses time and space—that is, it goes both backward and forward through time and, at the very same moment, traverses small spaces between family members and larger spaces as they enter into other relations in other moments and other places. In this story alone, we travel to a Japanese prisoner of war camp on one hand and Wales on the other.

Conclusion

I am putting forward this method of working with close readings as part of an approach to affective entanglement, which is itself an aspect of a method that mixes genealogy with cartography to produce an account of lives in the present as part of an ecological relational field, if you like, a vibrational matrix, in which the entanglements are precisely what we need to uncover and work with without producing a simplifying and pathologizing overarching narrative of, in this case, development, normative sexuality, or whatever form it may take.

In the positioning of Cathy somewhere between harridan and victim, with a father whose friends go out with girls her age—so what is expressed in this longing to be treated as a woman—a sexual woman—at the same time as dad cannot bear to recognize this? And what about the objects and artifacts, from trousers to songs, to Landrovers and Japanese prisoner of war camps? And the cartographies that place the participants simultaneously in many places at the same time, with many people from different places, eras, and generations?

If we return to the song and to what the 21-year-old has assembled, we should note that she is framed in a very creative and imaginative narration of the self for the camera. We have moved from a 4-year-old, with a high nonverbal IQ, through the child with no talent or intelligence, to the bullied dyslexic and later the imaginative video maker and finally mother. In all of those genealogies, archaeologies, and cartographies, complex relational fields across time and space sit one nested in the other to create a present forged out of the affective entanglements across several generations and no doubt progressing into the next.

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Notes

1. I'm so tired
   Of playing
   Playing with this bow and arrow
   Gonna give my heart away
   Leave it to the other girls to play
   For I've been a temptress too long
   Just
   Give me a reason
   To love you
   Give me a reason to be
   A woman
   I just want to be a woman
   From this time, unchained
   We're all looking at a different picture
   Through this new frame of mind
   A thousand flowers could bloom
   Move over, and give us some room, yeah
   Give me a reason
   To love you
   Give me a reason to be
   A woman
   I just want to be a woman
   So don't you stop
   Being a man
   Just take a little look
   From outside when you can
   Sow a little tenderness
   No matter if you cry
   Give me a reason
   To love you
   Give me a reason to be
   A woman
   I just want to be a woman.
2. What became known as Project 4/21 was in fact comprised of a number of distinct funded research projects with the same girls, who were born in 1974/1975. They participated in projects at ages 4, 10, and 21 years. Write-ups can be found in Walkerdine and Lucey (1985), Walkerdine et al. (1985), and Walkerdine et al. (2001). A detailed reanalysis of the entire data set is currently being undertaken, with the aim of producing a book.
3. It has taken a long time from the initial work to come back to this article, which has gone through several iterations, mostly because taking the reader through the example and hence the method, is quite cumbersome, but this is my latest attempt to do this.
4. It could be argued that such complex relational dynamics are central to many approaches to psychoanalytic and family therapy modalities, often working on clues in the affective relations themselves. However, my particular concern is not to understand the relational production of any kind of symptom or pathology, but rather to provide a way of engaging with complex affective relations as a methodological tool for social and cultural research.
5. All observations at age 4 years, undertaken by Tizard and Hughes, had a silent observer present in the room, who later transcribed the recording and wrote up their notes.
6. See, for example, Richard Flanagan's (2013) account of his father's experience in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in his novel The Narrow Road to the Deep North, New York, Random House.
7. Of the many aspects that can be taken forward, I would like to note the way in which participants present an understanding of heredity. In this case, both Mum and Dad talk about this in relation to Cathy and a parent of theirs (mothers in both cases). This sense that a personality type must be inherited is obviously a common understanding and will be addressed in other forthcoming work.
8. It is also important to note how much of the presentations of Self and Other are framed by the participants using psychological and medical discourses. Of course, a great deal has been made of this in scholarship from Canguilhem and Foucault onward, but in thinking of this anew, how might we understand its place in these relational dynamics?
9. Equally, we could think of this as an assemblage, or follow Laing (Ref) as Blackman (ref) does, in calling it a knot, We could use the language flat ontologies, with their fluxes, flows, and intensities, but I am left wondering whether any of

those approaches is adequate to the task. What I am describing is not a rhizome, more twisted, entwined, and entangled operating in a plane that surely cannot be described by a flat ontology as so many aspects morph into other aspects in other chronological times and physical locations, so that each participant is both the result of the entanglement and a part of a larger assemblage, as we would find in every relational field everywhere.

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Author Biography

Valerie Walkerdine is Distinguished Research Professor in the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, Wales, UK. The work presented in this article is part of a larger project understanding political, cultural and economic change from the 1960s to the 90s drawing on a deep analysis of qualitative data on a cohort of women born in the mid 1970s and their families. The analysis explores how the women and their families faced the changes in in work, education and class from periods covering the beginnings of second wave feminism to neoliberalism.