

“Baffling Power’’: History, Pedagogy and Body Politics

An Interview with Philip Corrigan *

Arleen Schenke & Handel Kashope Wright

Philip Corrigan is perhaps best known for his critical work on state formation, disciplinary practices and historical sociology. In the following interview, Corrigan’s genealogical approach extends to the equally important areas of critical pedagogy and cultural studies. Arguing for a history of the present that attends to struggles over competing formations of historical knowledge, he traces the relations between official and unofficial practices of history. Official practices such as colonial, imperial and national ‘Histories’ are, for example, juxtaposed here with traditionally marginalized practices like oppositional histories, personal histories, and histories of resistance. Corrigan sees these formations existing not in isolation from one another, but connected in dynamics of power which occasion contradictory relations of collusion, competition, and mutual transformation. In extending his argument to cultural studies, he calls for an approach that refuses the canonization of textualized knowledges. What needs to be pulled forward, he argues, are the performative, situated, and embodied aspects of cultural production.

* See also *trans/forms: Insurgent Voices in Education* (2), 1995, for another interview with Philip Corrigan conducted by Arleen Schenke and Handel Kashope Wright.

Corrigan continues to be an influential figure in the development of critical education internationally. He was recently in Toronto where we spoke with him at a downtown bar. We were particularly interested in eliciting his current views on history, pedagogy, and cultural studies. The following excerpt from our discussion opens with reference to Corrigan's recent article "Doing/ Being 50" (*Border/Lines*, 26, 12-20), and the relationship between personal and social histories.

Arleen Schenke: *I'd like to start with a reference you make in one of your pieces to the importance of the personal: "through memories the personal can be written into the text." You were speaking earlier about how you felt that "the personal is limited in certain forms of historical sociology." It seems to me that your project — "Being/Doing Fifty" — is to break with some of those limitations. Yet what also runs through my mind is that situating the personal within writing also risks what Trin Minh-Ha calls "vanity ethnography." And I wonder how you would talk about that space, about your own efforts at introducing the personal and that moment of dancing and the self in your writing.*

Philip Corrigan: Well, I'll answer that by a quotation — I think it was Godard quoting somebody, maybe Walter Benjamin — and that is: "we have to learn to live historically." I'll begin to answer it like that. Taking that seriously means for me to take it in terms of one's self, and not to say "let me find an academic knowledge about this" but "what knowledge do I possess myself which is historical? And how does that bear upon my sense of my self in this present — the sense of my body in this present?." I was having a discussion with somebody this morning in their garden and I said I was quite worried, and I remain quite worried, about the fact that although much work is being done about the present, that work is *not* often informed by the fact that it's possible to write a history

of the present; that it is possible to understand the present as a historical moment. I have a favourite character to whom I often write love letters — “the future historian” — and “the future historian” is somebody I imagine looking at the world that we are now living through, in the way that I look at, say, nineteenth-century England; you know, the way I burrowed beneath official explanations and rambled around corners and found hidden voices or voices that weren’t very widely known, and therefore was able to reconstruct a different sense of the nineteenth century. Clearly somebody will be able to do that, if anybody’s left alive, in the next century. But I think we now possess the means to do that for ourselves today. We will never have as complete a knowledge as the future historian but *we can be, as it were, our own future historians.*

Handel Kashope Wright: *Is that a personal project? Is that an individual project? Or, when you think about it in more collective terms, if we take that seriously, then on the one hand I see the possibilities opened up by the idea of us being our own ‘future historians,’ but I also see certain dangers. The possibilities being ‘finding yourself’ or being able to ‘represent’ yourself. The dangers being, for example, some of the types of Afrocentrism that say this is who we are, this is our knowledge which we will not find in Eurocentric texts or Eurocentric accounts of the history of America. Somewhere between your own individual ruminations and findings of yourself or those bits that are missing from ‘History’, and larger collective projects of finding histories and representing selves, there’s the danger of constructing knowledge that is valuable only for one person or one group. There’s a possibility that one history has nothing to say to another history. At that point, we can only divide up the world in terms of a great multiplicity of histories.*

PC: Well I think I probably differ from you. In the piece I wrote in 1980, “Towards a celebration of differences,” (in P. Corrigan, *Social Forms/Human Capacities*, London, 1990; “Innocent Stu-

pidities” in G. Fyfe and J. Law, eds., *Picturing Power*, London, 1989.) I discuss what I call the necessary moment of separation for a group that has not existed in ‘History’ — and this is history with a capital ‘H’ I’m talking about, the academic discipline. I’m referring to the notion of the way that Englishness celebrates, as it were, ‘History’ right — a certain claimed form of Englishness or Canadianness or Americanness, etc., etc. — so it’s not only an academic thing, it’s actually bound up in notions of nationalism and imperialism and so on. So there is what I call *the necessary moment of separation* — which for a group that’s either not been there at all in the way that many aboriginal peoples have simply been written out of history, right; or it’s been there but only there in negative representations, the docility of the ‘Oriental,’ the docility of the ‘Indian,’ the savageness of anybody who was African, the whatever, whatever, whatever, all those negatives — they were there, but only in the most negative difference, right. I want to come back to that multiple sense of difference.

I quite agree with you, it can never be an individual public. And I, by the way, don’t have an individual sense of my own writing; I never have had an individual sense of my own writing; my name is, as it were, at the top, but I wouldn’t claim that there’s any sense that I am sole author. In fact I’ve said this in one or two of the things I’ve written; there’s a quotation from the French poet Paul Valéry, “I am not telling you anything you do not already know.” And there’s a sense in which, it seems to me, that much of the time, I’m speaking of what I have learned through conversations and from others which has enabled me to talk in certain ways about myself, but that self is not isolated, it cannot be understood in an isolated way. So I don’t believe, in that sense, in authorship, the singular creativity of the author.

What I regard as the necessary moment of separation is — and this is a raging debate in the one ethnicity with which I have some loose connection, which is that of Irishness — there is now big debate in Ireland concerning whether in fact it’s possible to have what might be described as a nationalist historical sense, a national culture, a nationalist orientation to the world which somehow

provides an authentic Irishness. And this is crisscrossed by two sorts of debates, one which I absolutely abhor and refuse which is to dismiss entirely the moment of, what I call, 'separation,' the moment of attempting to find what it is that has not been said, what there is to discover that has previously been erased. That debate that says it is all a romantic myth, it is all inevitable; I will not tolerate; I will fight against. This is the 150th anniversary of what is properly called 'The Great Hunger' (a.k.a., The Irish Potato Famine, on which see Philip Corrigan, "lament," *Common Knowledge*, Summer 1995).

The other one I think is much more interesting and maybe it's the other one you're alluding to. And that is that *all histories are ultimately in states of connected situations*. There can rarely be, except in very early moments of human history, isolated histories, since histories always involve connections of various kinds. It may be connections of people who travel on foot from the neighbouring village — the wonderful work of Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker on the way that sailors and travellers carry messages and images from other countries. Or, much more seriously, of course, the ways in which imperialism and colonialism have stamped the world with imposed histories, which nevertheless left the space for the history of resistance. So, *all histories are crisscrossed by other forms of history*. And internally, in the case of Ireland, although I would say that this is true generally, that means that something called a genuine Irish 'History' is always thrown into crisis and question because it's crisscrossed by the history of, for example, Irish women, or the Irish working-class or indeed the Irish upper-class or the people on the west coast of Ireland as opposed to the people of the east coast, peasants versus townspeople, etc. So, the idea that you can abstract from that an absolutely unproblematic concept of "Irishness" is immediately thrown into crisis. But, as an umbrella term, as a notion that something loosely can be identified as an "Irishness" that wishes to claim back an understanding which in this case "English" history denied to it, it seems to me that that moment of separation is important, without — I think the word that was lurking behind your question is — 'essentializing', the Other.

But I still think I'd probably go further than your question would want to go, and say that I don't have some of the problems that many of my comrades and fellow academics have with a certain form of separatist history. And the thing I would say very crudely is, you know, 'we,' as the oppressed groups, will deconstruct if 'you' deconstruct. In other words, we should stop this notion that there is 'History' and then we use additional history to add it on — women's history, African history, etc., etc. — leaving 'History' with a capital 'H' unchallenged. If 'you' deconstruct your history then fine, 'we'll' make our history much more complex. But at the moment we are engaged in a set of, not binary divides, but very complex contradictions — and here I would agree with you I think — that there is much in the history of the imperializer that can be turned to the advancement of the history of the imperialized. There are ways of reading — as you know, my main area is of the state document — to read the state document, as Foucault says, "mining it for it's silences," finding out what it is covering up, what it is not covering up, what it is making too much fuss about in order to be silent about something else.

HKW: *My question would then be: where do we go and what do we do with the cacophony that results from this? It's very easy if you are, for example, in an all women's state to have African women's knowledge; but in a state where African women are living not only just with men, but with men outside of Africa, say in the U.S. or in Canada, for example, African-Canadian women — how do you deal with that knowledge, that history, juxtaposed with those other histories? I think somebody, Gerald Graff probably, talked about "teaching the contradictions," and then there's your quote, "why should any marginalized group deconstruct when the powers that be keep on keeping on whether guiltily or not?." I've decided that this now gives me license — which I don't think you were giving me — to do whatever the hell I want, create my own story. I'm just saying that as representative of the ridiculous extreme. But what do you do with that cacophony because, for example, what's happening with history in the States in the whole idea of say*

Afrocentric history comes up again as 'History' with a capital 'H' to oppose Eurocentric 'History' and there's no sort of resolution and you can simply do the liberal thing and teach one beside the other. See what I'm saying? What I'm getting at is once you do get this cacophony of histories, and we can all be against 'History' with a big 'H', but in dismantling the 'History' with a big 'H' what do you do with the cacophony?

PC: I find nothing wrong with cacophony. I find nothing wrong with chaos. I mean it's one of the things academics — a word we've not mentioned — avoid with the enforcement of disciplines — the discipline of 'History,' the discipline of 'Sociology,' and unfortunately what I think is becoming the discipline of 'Cultural Studies.' Those disciplines are barricaded and boundarized and those boundaries are, as with all boundaries, policed. There are, as it were, immigration and naturalization police at those boundaries who let in certain versions (see "Mau Mauing Multiculturalism," *Border/lines*, 36, and C. Y. Ogilvie, "Niggah Script," *Laundry* (Peterborough), 1; H. Bannerji, *Thinking Through*, Toronto, 1995). And what I have always found myself opposed to from a very early point is what I call optionalization; so you leave 'History' with a capital 'H' in command as it were but you add on third or fourth year options or graduate courses — African history or Native Peoples' history or women's history or whatever it might be, which of course leaves 'History' with a capital 'H' unchallenged. So, I'm not afraid of chaos, I'm not afraid of anarchy. Many of my academic colleagues are.

AS: *It strikes me, if we go to Foucault, that there's a political project behind the doing of histories. Histories are 'done' — there's a reason for this, there's a context for doing them. It seems to me the histories that are pulled forward — the personal histories, the memories in Philip's case — are there within the project of talking about an expanded version of critical studies that carries some integrity to the project of embodiment. These are not random histories, nor is it necessarily a cacophony. There's a political*

project there. What's important are the ways in which those studies are done, the historical knowledge struggles. And that's where the dialogue — and the dialogue may not be the harmonic voice, it may be the conflictual voice — potentially comes in: in how different groups are doing their struggles. Philip's struggle may look different from my struggle which may look different from yours. It doesn't necessarily produce cacophony.

HKW: *What I'm talking about is the real power struggle. My point is that the cacophony we are discussing is not a cacophony that exists outside of power struggles. I'm not dismissing the project, the process, or the politics of creating multiple histories. I'm trying to go beyond that and saying once we have produced them what do we do with them and how do we begin to make meaning of them in praxis? How do we negotiate meaning between those different knowledges that we are producing in very concrete terms, in people's everyday lives (as Dorothy Smith and Philomena Essed would emphasize), in terms of people getting a degree and not getting a degree, getting published and not getting published for example?*

PC: Yes, absolutely. So we've got the intersection there of knowledge and power. And some knowledges are validated and some knowledges are not. Some knowledges I mentioned earlier are placed in an optional extra category; they are there so that the university itself, the institution, can say "we are covering these things." But they're covering them in a way that reproduces their marginality. One of the things is that there is an intersection, there is no such thing as a politics only for the academy, a politics only for the intellectual project (N. Dirks and B. Cohn, "Beyond the Fringe," *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1, 1988).

But politics comes in and that is another place where the academy and the disciplines within the academy are permeable. They are, in fact, whether they like it or not, *connected* to wider social, political, etc., struggles and movements. And indeed much of the change that has occurred within the academy we can trace

back fairly straightforwardly to struggles external to the academy, initially at least. That is to say, certain things are put on the agenda in political struggles, internal to countries and between countries, which then force themselves on to the academic agenda. And my fear is, to use an old-fashioned term from Herbert Marcuse, that they often end up in what he called “repressive tolerance”; i.e. that they are there but they are so marginalized that the university can say here is our *smorgasbord*, here is our menu, we are covering our bases, but we are secretly covering our asses at the same time. But really what is happening is that we are still teaching the mainstream ‘Sociology,’ the mainstream ‘History,’ the mainstream ‘English’ or the mainstream whatever. So that’s one comment, that the political struggle inside the academy — let me be dogmatic about this — cannot ever be successfully conducted if that political struggle is not linked to struggles outside of the academy; and that would be my first fundamental point. As I said earlier, I’m not afraid of cacophony, I’m not afraid of a certain amount of chaos.

I’ve just written several pieces (“What the Right Fears Most,” *Border/lines* (34-35) Nov. 1994; “Undoing the Overdone State,” *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 19, 2, 1994; “Rae Day Dreaming,” *Our Schools/Our Selves*, Spring 1996; “Trudging through the filth,” *Border/lines*, Summer 1995) which are about the cultural struggles which are going on in England and Canada and the United States — which you’re very familiar with — where the Right is demanding a return to the traditional curriculum, a return to standards, a return to — we know the language. Now it seems to me that what has to be paid attention to there is the way in which they can invoke the notion of ‘standards,’ of ‘professional discipline’ and thus a *standard* which they claim some of these other knowledge forms do not meet and therefore they are said to be inadequate knowledge forms. And so the politics within the academy is such that the mobilization of a certain notion of standard can dismiss other knowledges. So these are inevitably political matters.

But to go right back to the interior question from you about *what* in a sense, *is to be done*, I still think most of our gains are very marginal and they’re very precarious. I think we’re living in a world

which is going to get tighter as resources get scarcer and scarcer. My greatest fear at the moment is for those tiny, *tiny* gains — which I once compared to the contrast between a tiny birthday candle and an arlight in the force that they possess. What I'm afraid of is that they, that is 'we,' will become more and more marginalized. So that rather than being in a winning and on-going positive situation, I think they're/we're in a more beleaguered situation than we were 'x' years ago, whatever 'x' is to refer to. Secondly, to go back to what needs to be done with what might be called, to use a term out of the sociology of science, incommensurable histories, a term I prefer is *untranslatable* histories. First of all that has to be worked out. I mean before there can be a possibility of comparison and of dialogue, everybody has to have a chance, in cacophony, in chaos, to *work out*.

Let me tell you, if you'll allow me to take the space, about a historiographic revolution which hardly anybody knows about because it took place in the University of Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania. This introduces something else that I know is not unfamiliar to both of you, and that is that often what is taken to be a revolution in knowledge is a revolution that takes place in a very limited number of countries that we could very easily name. Let's call them the OECD countries or the G-7 countries, let's just call them the *imperializing countries*. So there's Dar-Es-Salaam, in Tanzania, a beleaguered state with hardly any monetary resources after the crisis of 1975, so the fact that this revolution took place never got communicated to the rest of the world because quite literally — when I was there in '80 and '81 — the university didn't have paper photocopiers and had to duplicate on an old-fashioned duplicator. We didn't have a Xerox, you know, we used to crank every thing out by hand. And the ditto machine ran out of ink and so there was about 6 months when they simply couldn't make copies.

Let me just go over the sequence of this because I think it's a paradigmatic sequence. During the period of struggle against English colonialism — which you know was actually preceded in that case by German colonialism — during the anti-colonialist, nationalist struggles — I'd like to make a division between those two

words, they're often run together. It seems to me anti-colonial struggles need not only and always be nationalist struggles. That's a huge topic. During the anti-colonial and nationalist struggles in what was then called Tanganyika, up to the moment of independence, one of the things that was obviously on the agenda, as it is with every country I've ever studied, was of course the *definition of the history of the country concerned*. In this case it was a history which was to challenge imperialist 'History', to challenge English 'History' and to some extent German 'History', and with that, the general notion of what they might call, using the term from Said's book on Orientalism, *Africanism*, to use that parallel, right? Now, the first struggle then during the struggle for independence and after independence is to establish something called "African history" in the place of the history of the colonizer. And often that became a nationalist history and so it involved making differences between a territory called Tanganyika-Zanzibar, Tanzania. So the boundaries became very important. The colonial boundaries became the national boundaries and some quite odd things happened there. Then somebody — I mean I'm telling you this like a fairy story, but it actually is a very important fairy story — somebody then discovered that of course in 'African' history, in this 'African' history that was being celebrated, there were people called kings and chiefs and so on. So we then got a history which celebrated the fact that there had been powerful and distinctive forms of social organization and it hadn't simply been a mass, the typical massification of colonial history. And then somebody, almost like the boy who shouts out "the emperor's got no clothes," somebody said *if there were kings there must have been subjects, if there were chiefs there must have been non-chiefs, if there was property of various kinds there must have been propertylessness*. And so you get the beginnings of what I would call a social or a sociological history, which then means you can no longer simply celebrate the past; *the past is no longer*.

This goes back to you, Handel, very much and what you brought up about the notions of Africanicity and African-American history. You begin to get differentiation within these histories; they can no longer be the history of "us" versus the history of "them" or *their*

history of us. Then, immediately you've opened those doors, you begin to get histories of gender, histories of enslaved populations, histories of forms of warfare which were not any longer between the oppressed and oppressor but were intra-wars between different formations and different parts of the country. So what I'm saying is, this is a very, very standard formula, but it's important to follow through its stages. It is important to observe that the first moment of resistance is often to claim a *holistic Other*, that we are now, we are naming ourselves; the wonderful Stokeley Carmichael poem, *we shall define ourselves, we shall not be defined, we shall define ourselves* — which is, to repeat, what I call the necessary moment of separation, we shall define ourselves. So you get people saying black is beautiful, sisterhood is powerful, proud to be gay, queerness is wonderful, working class and proud of it; you know: that whole series of groups says "I'm going to turn your words back against you." And that notion of turning I think is crucial, getting hold of something, wrestling with it and then turning it round. I've always used the image of the mirror there; they've always offered you a mirror of what you were supposed to be and you get hold of the mirror and you turn it back and say this is what you are. Yes? Does that make any sense?

AS: *Yes, it does, but it's not enough.*

PC: No, it's not enough. But I want to finish it off. Then, the current moment of the revolution in historiography in the history department at Dar-Es-Salaam — which, to me, is as important as all the others — is to rewrite, reconstruct, the history of colonialism, from a very, very different set of standpoints: from the standpoint that the colonial Other — in other words the Colonial becomes the Other — the colonial Other was not itself all of a piece, you know. There were varied differences between the military, the capitalists, the district officers, etc., etc. Secondly, because that was all not of a piece, the history becomes a complicated one with different kinds of struggles — and now I'm back to your point. Now, I would say that that is a paradigm — what I've just given you very abbreviat-

edly, is a paradigmatic path through which all struggles to obtain a voice, a representation, an alternative, an oppositional history, has to go. The initial moment is always “we are we” and “they are they,” there’s “us” and “them.” Yes? You see the difference I’m making? Immediately “us” *becomes internally fractured*.

HKW: *I see your point but I would add the caveat that it doesn't happen as chronologically as that because it would not be true, for example, to say that women in Tanzania waited until after this and this stage to articulate Tanzanian women's history. So there is a way in which it goes back to your initial statement about, I think Arleen quoted it earlier, about the fact that difference works in complicated, jumbled/juxtaposed simultaneity but you can't write it that way.*

PC: No. I've always wanted to write like photographs: that's one of my desires. If you imagine what I mean by *writing like photographs*, it would be that you would have a photograph without necessarily saying what it means; that is, what it is about, what it concerns. Then you would have another photograph, and you would say with the second photograph “and at the same time,” “and at the same time,” “and at the same time,” right, which is of course using Eisenstein's, Brecht's and Walter Benjamin's notion of montage which I'm very, very in love with (P. Corrigan, “In/formation,” *Photo Communique*, Fall 1988; “Untying the Knots,” *Journal of Educational Thought*, Dec. 1990).

AS: *Now the question is, how can you teach that way? Supposing this were a pedagogical moment? A classroom? This is a pedagogical moment, but assuming — assuming a more formalized pedagogical moment, how would you teach that way?*

PC: One of the things I have always done which infuriates many people is I will often give a presentation in a graduate seminar while simultaneously passing things around; pictures, newspaper cuttings, whatever. Some of these would be simply of the order of the

imperatives, the teacherly imperative: *look at this, look at that*. Sometimes what I hand out is an example of what I'm talking about, sometimes it contradicts what I'm talking about. These would circulate in the room while there was also a teacherly discourse at the same time — this is all post-1980, post-Tanzania. I haven't yet come to terms with what going to Tanzania did. I mean it still is an explosive moment which I don't fully understand; it changed my writing. If you look at anything I wrote before 1980 and what I wrote after 1980, it's transformed. Why it should transform at that level is still a puzzle to me — my teaching changed. So one thing that's going on is a circulation of a multiplicity of pieces of information — something people find irritating and I quite accept. We're in a bar so we can actually talk about this irritation. At the moment there are, from my viewpoint, one, two, three television programs showing on different channels and there is a juke box in the background.

AS: *You want to capture that. This is the collage.*

PC: And there's this multiplicity of something at the same time. I've written a piece for *Border/lines* where I talk about the multiplicity of things that now happen to be in English pubs, right, where you actually have verses muttering to you in the background (P. Corrigan, "I'd Rather be Anywhere Else than Here," *Border/lines*, 33, 1994). But anyway, that's their pedagogy.

HKW: *It seems to me that what you have just given us is not only an interesting way of taking up pedagogy differently, but a way of disrupting traditional pedagogical expectations. Does this translate into more public, more influential spheres? Does it lead to a different way for example of seeing and representing one's role as a professor/intellectual so that the academy's power and the professor's mystique are challenged, disrupted, displaced, undermined? Can this different pedagogy be made to operate in a wider sphere?*

PC: Right. My great mentor in so many things — I've made clear in many places — is a lecture that Roland Barthes gave. Incidentally, Barthes didn't get a tenured job until he was probably only a little younger than I am now or in his late 40s. He clung on to the edges of the system and when he got a tenured job he then ran this seminar on notions of communication and semiotics. And then got, as you know, a chair at the College de France, which is the pinnacle of French academic life. And he gave this lecture (R. Barthes, "Lecture," in S. Sontag, ed., *Barthes Reader*) which has always been a model for me of how to make fun of an institution when you're actually getting inducted into it. So he talks about himself as the *joker* in the pack and getting his *wheelchair in semiology*. And that lecture was a very important lecture about what you've asked me about, which is about pedagogy. And he says, "once we are inscribed in institutions we know that we cannot defeat power." He's quite clear on that. And I would want to say that too. The institution itself would have to be radically transformed and in fact in a certain sense it wouldn't be that kind of institution any more if we were to defeat power. What we can do is what he calls lightening — lightening, lifting and baffling power. And he says what we need to do in speech is digression, that is, we don't give a linear description, we interrupt ourselves. The second thing he says, in psychoanalytical terms, is that we are not the analysts, and the students are not our analysands. 'We' are the analysand, we offer up our dreams and our hopes and the students can join in those conversations. The students analyze us, we do not analyze them. And the third thing he says, in writing, as I said earlier, is in fragmentation, because you get away from a linear discourse. So he's against linearity. And it seems to me that linearity carries a very particular power which is *the power of control*; who speaks, under what conditions and about what, who is told by the teacher that they are deviating from the subject in the classrooms in the schools, and in graduate school you are often — and I've said it myself many, many times — 'let's get back to the agenda,' 'let's get back on course,' right. And of course it is often those deviations

where some of the most important issues are being raised by some people because for them it's not a deviation, it's central.

So, it seems to me that — I would hold to this politically — as institutionalized academics with tenure — senior, 'head-honcho' professors — it would be ridiculous to claim that *we are, as it were, outside of power relations and can defeat power relations*. We can't do that without a radical transformation far wider than our institutions. But we can lighten and baffle and lift and therefore raise questions about the power relations in the room. And the last thing I'd say, my friends, is — the last quotation from Roland Barthes, is that he always said that the seminar is the *circulation of desires*. And it seems to me that people come there with different — and this goes back to issues of pleasure — different wants, different desires to speak, different desires to listen. To recognize the seminar as the circulation of desires is that there are major ways in which people will come in quite off topic, off the agenda, which actually turn out to be the major contribution to that agenda. To use a term which I don't particularly like, a contribution to its deconstruction, no, to recognizing there *is* an agenda, i.e. getting away from the notion of hidden agendas, hidden curriculums and so on.