Through the Back Door

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ABSTRACT

The legacy of early women university students is valuable as a marker of achieved social access, just as it provides the occasion for examining the individual and social consciousness of young women. Seventeen women admitted to a liberal arts program between 1912 and 1945 — all of which graduated — were interviewed. This study examines how they processed the cognitive dissonance of discrimination, by relying less upon an ideology than upon a delicate balance of ambiguity and creative myth-making. Though their descriptive recall about the facts of discrimination is nearly unanimous, so is their conscious semantic undermining of its meaning. Instead, they use myth-making to bridge gaps between ideology and status. Recently observed and utilized in psychotherapy, art and literature, myth is utilized here as a social tool that substitutes for alternative ideologies.

RÉSUMÉ

L'histoire des premières étudiantes universitaires est précieuse en tant que trace du niveau social atteint lorsqu'il s'agit d'étudier la conscience sociale et personnelle de ces jeunes femmes. Dix-sept femmes qui ont été admises à un programme de sciences humaines entre 1912 et 1945 — et l'ont complété — ont été interviewées. Cette étude est centrée sur la façon dont elles ont transformé la "dissonance cognitive" de la discrimination — non pas pour des fins idéologiques mais par besoin d'un équilibre délicat d'ambiguïté et de mythes créateurs. Non seulement sont leurs souvenirs descriptifs des faits de la discrimination pratiquement unanimes, mais leur processus d'effritement sémantique visant à nier leur signification l'est aussi. Observé et utilisé récemment dans la psychothérapie, dans l'art et dans la littérature, le mythe personnel figure ici en tant qu'outil social, se substituant ainsi aux idéologies alternatives.

"We had a good time. We didn't know we were having a hard time."

Introduction

The legacy of early women university students provides a marker of achieved social status and is valuable for examining the individual and social consciousness of young women. In seeking to understand and share this historically and socially valuable legacy, we conducted oral interviews with women graduates who attended Bishop's, a small Canadian liberal arts university, in the first half of this century.

There are two kinds of primary historical literature applicable to our undertaking. First, there are the straightforward histories of women at various universities in Canada, such as McGill's *We Walked Very Warily*, 1981; Toronto's *A Path Not Strewn With Roses*, 1985; Mount Allison's *Historical Notes on the Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854-1954*, 1954.[1] Second, there are the more recent collections of autobiographical essays, such as McGill's *A Fair Shake*, 1984 and Queen's *Still Running*, 1987.

Ours, though inspired by both of these types of undertaking, diverges from them in the following ways. Although it was designed to investigate the experience of early women graduates at Bishop's, it was intended neither to be a complete history of the subject nor to take a narrative form. In addition, though we sought to generate primary data, as did the anthologies, we were, from the beginning, aware of the need to structure such material by virtue of systematic interview procedures. These were designed not only to elicit historical data on the academic and personal experiences of early women graduates, but also to discover what kinds of discrimination and awareness of it existed for them.

In choosing our subjects, we sought to record the memories of the oldest women graduates, while still available, and of those who had remained in the Eastern Townships community. In addition, our experience in Women's Studies and as women professors at a uniquely small and intimate university

setting influenced our choice of subjects and topic. We sought to avoid the potentially, if unwittingly, elitist results of the aforementioned collections, whose methods of selection (the best and the brightest) and occasions of publication (anniversary celebrations) might be inapplicable or inadvertantly skew the investigation. This means that, though small and locally specific, our sample is more socially and academically representative than those used in the McGill and Queen's works.

A group of 17 women admitted to a liberal arts program between 1912 and 1945 were interviewed. Regardless of their social background, all had graduated, many with distinction; some went on to post-graduate degrees. All subsequently worked, achieving occupational successes, despite their quasi-segregation within a co-educational, if masculine, intellectual context.

This study examines how these women processed the cognitive dissonance of discrimination, by relying less upon an ideology than upon a delicate balance of ambiguity and creative myth-making in understanding the meaning of their experience. Though their descriptive recall of experiences of discrimination is nearly unanimous in occurrence and content, so is their unconscious semantic undermining of its meaning by disclaimer and denial. Instead, they make mythic use of personalities important to their experience to bridge gaps between experienced status anxiety and ideological explanation of it. Myth is utilized as a social tool that substitutes for the creation or utilization of alternative ideologies.

Conceptual Framework

In analyzing the experience and structuring of its meanings by the women interviewed, two conceptual approaches have been combined. The first derives from psychological perspectives of Leon Festinger and others on "cognitive dissonance," or the individual's practice of making sense of conflicting experience and conventional explanations of it. This is expanded to the social realm via the sociological perspective of C. Wright Mills, whose concern was with how people translate "private troubles" into "social issues." The second moves from a Jungian psychological approach concerning meaning-making as myth to its contemporary feminist reinterpretation in the treatment of literature and the visual arts.

Cognitive dissonance can be used to demonstrate a conflict between ideology and experience and the drive to resolve the conflict at the ideological level, by denying the dissonant information from the experiential level by changing the ideology or by acting to change the social circumstances that are troubling and discrepant with the ideology. At the individual level, "a person will try to justify a commitment to the extent that there is information discrepant with that commitment."[3]

There is presumed to be either a tendency to bring cognitions into correspondence with impinging reality, or to revamp that reality (perhaps in recall or rationalization) to produce a greater fit with a given meaning structure or ideology. As Leon Festinger observed, "Rats and people come to love the things for which they have suffered."[4] Presumably they do this to reduce the dissonance induced by suffering or anxiety, and their method of dissonance-reduction is to enhance the attractiveness of the cognitive choice in order to justify it. In the analysis of the interview data, we detected both a commonly experienced anxiety and a romanticization of past experiences of a discriminatory nature, or an undermining of their social significance through a refusal on the part of most to name these articulated experiences as "discriminatory."[5]

Our study treats an era and a group of women for whom ideologies alternative to a dominant liberal one (which itself denied inequality of men and women) did not appear to be available in their social context or curriculum. In contrast, contemporary Canadian women's varied tendencies to translate private troubles or experiences into public issues or ideology about gender rights involve a clearer awareness and feminist consciousness, which is often based on C. Wright Mills' concern about the development of social action through the translation of awareness from private experience to the domain of the public/political.[6]

The occurrence of "breaks," "lapses," "brissures" or "slippages" in the accounts of pre-war women graduates, in their biographical "plots," and their apparent connection with the creation of "myths" at the personal and small-group level required a different framework of analysis. Such "brissures" represent unconscious failures to or alternative means of resolving conflicts at different levels in biographic plot and narrative structures. The formation of meaning, where conventional ideological tools or belief systems

are missing, lends itself to literary and mythic analysis, as these have been applied to fiction, film, visual arts, and everyday life.[7]

It was the repetition of images and incidents in many of the respondents' accounts that made us aware of this means of dealing with their common experience of status and of ideological versus experiential conflict as a collective "text." Karl Jung suggests that such repeated images and stories demonstrate the existence of "archetypal" figures and myths. Feminist adaptors of Jungian archetypal figures maintain that these are not static, as Jung suggested, but changing, revealing the preoccupations of different eras and groups. Archetypal figures created by and responded to by women are different from those of men.[8] These differences bring myth-making into the realm of people's ordinary personal practice and their practice as socially identifiable, gendered groups, or into what Joseph Campbell has termed the realm of "living myth":

> In what I am calling "creative" mythology ... the individual has had an experience of his own — of order, horror, beauty, or even mere exhilaration — which he seeks to communicate through signs; and if his realization has been of a certain depth and import, his communication will have the value and force of living myth — for those who receive and respond to it of themselves, with recognition, uncoerced.[9]

Although such analysis is blossoming in contemporary treatments of literature and the visual arts, we are not aware of its application to oral history.[10] For this reason, our attempt involves a certain amount of "risk" itself, but we believe the correspondence between literary and visual archetypes and the nature of the data we uncovered justifies such an approach.

Methodological Framework

We undertook oral interviews with 17 women graduates, ranging in age from 57 to 89, who were admitted to Bishop's University between 1912 and 1945. Four of them entered in the teens, five in the twenties, five in the thirties, and three in the forties.[11] None were resident on campus. Women's residences were not built until the 1950s; indeed, some had daughters who attended after residences were opened to women.

Exclusion of women from on-campus residence formed their major collective experience of discrimination. It did not depend on individually differing experiences, but applied *de jure* to all women students. This was the visible and undeniable social and physical feature that distinguished women from the rest of the black-robed academics — faculty, administrators and students alike, and administrators such as the Principal. For some time, this exclusion was accompanied by sanctions against women's very presence on campus after certain hours in the afternoon, which could — and sometimes did — interfere with their social and academic activities. Thus, division between "Town and Gown" (often mentioned in the interviews) was replicated and reinforced as a "brissure" along gender lines. This produced the striking and somewhat schizophrenic twist for women students in that they shared these two contradictory statuses or identities (non-male and non-academic). Yet this anomalous status was not a conscious, rational feature of their existence or a basis for social protest. Rather, they spoke of being "tolerated," "endured, but not encouraged," "interrupters" in a man's world, who accepted the existing conditions with stamina and even high spirits. How did experience and ideology as creative myth-making interface to sustain their individual and collective endeavour? How did they remember and interpret this experience?

Analysis of the Data

1. University Attendance: Parental and Background Influences

Until residences were established, women students usually came from the Eastern Townships. Some commuted from home, since trains, fortunately, were far more frequent and reliable in the teens and twenties than today, with some forty-five passing through Lennoxville daily. Usually, however, they boarded with individual families in this still small village. Only one of those interviewed shared an apartment for a year during the Depression. Hence, off-campus living constituted neither a sign of greater independence nor a marker of an overflow of students, but was an indication of institutionalized resistance to full integration of women at Bishop's. The university passed the burden to the women themselves and to the community, which took a familial, proprietary and moral interest. Most said that had it not been so close to home, they would not have been able to afford or

been allowed to attend university. Indeed, proximity, cost and career opportunities combined to facilitate their attendance, and their parents were eager to send them.

One had a mother who was a nurse. Seven had mothers who were teachers. Indeed they came from families where the mothers often had more education than their husbands. (In the Appendix, under "MFOc," the parent with the highest mentioned occupation or education is listed.) Thus, attendance at university was not always a status leap, but it assured middle–class status, with employment and self–support, if necessary. In five cases, the mother, the father, or both had a B.A.; and, in half a dozen other instances, the father was a doctor, a businessman or self–employed.

Though several expressed the idea that women's attendance was exceptional at the time, the majority gave much credit to parents' encouragement as a factor in their decision to attend Bishop's. No one mentioned having gone to university against her parents' will; rather, it was expected in most of their families. Most even followed parents' subsequent career dictates by taking the teachers' specialization after the B.A.

About as many speak of fathers' encouragement as of mothers'. However, they believe their fathers were particularly "liberal" about supporting their attendance, regardless of which of the four decades in which they entered university. One from the forties calls her father "ahead of his time" in suggesting women's education was particularly important even if they did not "use" it afterward (#10). Another, from the thirties, whose father had only an eighth–grade education but whose mother taught, said, "My father took it for granted that the two girls would get a university education. My father used to say boys could make a living, but, if girls didn't get a good education, they would end up doing housework or something of this kind. And, it was sort of drilled into us from an early age that an education was the thing" (#5). Even during the Depression, women attended, though many had to drop out because of financial reasons. Another thirties graduate wanted to go directly to art school, but her father insisted that she go to university first for an intellectual foundation, so she did (#11). Also, two who attended in the teens suggested that it was common practice for Anglican clergymen, themselves frequently educated in theology at Bishop's, to send their daughters there for the B.A. (#15 and #16). So, while

not common in all social classes, university education of women was practised in the middle classes and was not necessarily a mark of "liberal ideas" so much as an economic insurance policy.

2. Intellectual and Career Aspirations

Several of those interviewed had ambitions other than teaching after the B.A. (such as art, medicine, nursing, business) and, though most taught, they were less than sanguine about the prospect of making it a career. However, parents persisted in pushing daughters in that direction. Even the woman who became a major nurse–administrator for the U.S. in World War II had been admonished to teach.

Surprisingly, parental class and occupational background did not seem to have any impact on this single–minded perspective on daughters' proper, if limited, career option. As one woman put it, "I knew I wasn't a teacher, but in those days there was nothing else for a girl to do" (#4). Farmer and doctor alike steered them, like their mothers, in the same direction, even though Bishop's had had a medical school which, earlier, admitted women. One woman, whose father was a doctor, explained "it wasn't because he didn't want to be a doctor himself ... he just took the general line that you put it out of your mind. It is something you cannot do ... and, once it was established that I was going to Bishop's, there was nothing further said. I would get my degree. Then I would take the teacher training course, and that would be it" (#3). In fact, most of the women interviewed saw it as the "lesser of three evils," consisting of secretary, nurse, or teacher. So, while the B.A. was an adventure, teaching was a practical kind of feminine conformity rather than a breaking of molds.

The fact that teaching was an acceptable, if gender–typed, career tacked on the tail of the B.A. seemed a small price to pay for a three–year feast of unrestricted and delightful scholarship. Though they studied hard and frequently "walked off with all the prizes," the women often spoke of the university experience as a period of freedom, an intellectual awakening or escape from the imminent adult sacrifices of women in the early part of the century: marriage, parenting, teaching, and caring for ill or aging relatives. It may have, in part, been the fact it constituted a vacation from such cares which caused many to

minimize or even deny the component of discrimination involved.

Following graduation from Bishop's, many married and settled in the area. This made it easier for us to locate and interview them and it also meant Bishop's has remained an important institution for them and often for their children. Fourteen of these women became high school teachers, a quasi-career that, unlike any other, made them adaptable to that other full-time career most undertook, marriage, and to the vicissitudes of a husband's work, singlehood, or widowhood. One became a Bishop's University professor and married one. Another, who did not marry, became a nurse-administrator in charge of U.S. nursing operations during World War II. The only other exception to the teacher rule became a journalist. Their university majors, however, had varied widely, ranging from French, English, and Latin, to History, Philosophy, and Chemistry, the curricular gamut at the time, except for Theology and Physics which remained masculine preserves, though women could and did take any of the courses offered in the calendar.

In addressing the question of the impact on their lives of a liberal arts university education, idealistic aspects such as opportunities for intellectual growth, pursuit of general interests, high ideals, and culture — all in capitals — were often mentioned. However, pragmatic concerns, such as career adaptability and preparation, friendship, social advantages, or marriage options, were equally important. These two seemingly divergent tendencies appear to reflect tensions in their status as "women students," equal to men in their pursuit of knowledge, but circumscribed in their career and social options.

3. Discrimination: the Experience and the Ideology

We wondered what the early women students felt about this marginal status, that is, whether or how they might have experienced everyday forms of discrimination and how they recognized, processed and explained such facts and feelings. The experience of discrimination was elicited by a series of discrete questions of fact. All were asked about being a numerical minority (How many women were in their class, and program? Was there a formal or informal quota?) They were asked whether they or their friends had experienced any "negative attitudes" by faculty, students, or administration, and whether they had been denied facilities (academic or social). They were also asked whether they felt advantaged or disadvantaged as women; harassed or safe; and, whether they felt the curriculum denigrated or made women invisible. Finally, they were asked directly whether they believed women were "discriminated against."

On first reading the transcripts of the taped oral but structured interviews, we were struck by the impression that the responses were riddled with contradiction and ambiguity. Upon closer analysis, we recognized that the form of response shapes the testimony and offers an important clue to their processing of its meaning. Most interviewees superimposed a verbal and semantic structure upon their response to each question, which interlocked affirmation and denial of discrimination. The quotations below demonstrate this structure:

(1) "It (discrimination) didn't worry me. Life wasn't as competitive as it is today. So we did not feel that. Although we had the feeling that we were not wanted." (#11)

(2) (Negative attitudes?) "Not to my knowledge. It never came out in person. It never came out in a personal way. Some of the profs were ... well, as I say, we were tolerated. You know, we were there, and we went to lectures, did our work, got to our exams, and that was all they expected us to do. They didn't dwell on it and neither did we. That was just the way things were done." (#13)

(3) (Discrimination?) "No, there was just this rule to be off campus by five o'clock." (#17)

(4) (Were you as a woman faculty member discriminated against?) "No, as far as I know, we weren't even discriminated against in any way by salaries concerned. But there again, I don't really know, because I don't really know what everybody got paid. But, as far as I know, there was ... wait a minute, there was a bit, but nothing to do with the teaching aspect of it. My husband was on the religious faculty too, and he taught physics. And, while my husband was teaching we had a college house, but, when he retired and I was still employed, they said 'no, houses for men, but no, not for women' ... I don't know if there was some point to that..." (#2)

(5) (Curriculum?) "I can't really answer that ... there were always the jokes, allusions and things, but I found there wasn't anything there. I never have been touchy on that subject anyway. The only snag about it was the lab time ... especially towards the exams. The boys, who were living in residence, would come into the lab and do things they hadn't done before, you know. And if you didn't do your labs the time you supposed to, you know, I never had a chance to catch them up." (#3)

(6) (Discrimination?) "Well, no, not in my time. But I have heard talk since, many years after my graduation ... saying one particular professor had no use for girls, and you had a failure even before you started the course, you know." (#7)

(7) "I think that women lost out a lot by being out of the college (residence), but we must remember, it wasn't that long that they had been allowed to go at all. And the first women who went to Bishop's had to go into the back door. They weren't supposed to even use the front door, so by the '30s we had come quite a long way. We were accepted in the front door anyway." (#5)

As can be seen in these examples, the facts affirmed range from specific instances of discrimination to a general feeling of exclusion. Notice the forms denial takes. In the fourth quotation, there are nine negatives employed in the process of admitting the exclusion of women faculty from housing privileges, beginning with a sharp "No," itself undermined by the disclaimers "as far as I know," "I don't really know," and "I don't know." By the end of this response, "no" has switched meanings entirely, becoming the affirmation of exclusion in the sentence "no, houses for men, but no, not for women." In the third quotation, discrimination as a general principle is denied, while a specific instance is affirmed in a single sentence. In the last two examples, denial takes the form of semantic displacement in time; discrimination is denied in the interviewee's "present" or own experience and displaced to either the past or the future.

Another particularly vivid example of the interlacing of affirmation and denial is the response by two sisters who attended in the teens:

"We had a lovely time. [But], you must realize, it took a good many years before girls were ever admitted to anything after one o'clock in the afternoon. We were admitted at nine, and we left by one. And, we were not allowed to put a foot on that sacred property if we had forgotten anything!" "We were just there for the lectures and nothing else." (No clubs or anything?) "Well, we didn't have them, no." "The men, of course, had their playing fields. They played football ... I can see them playing football when there was slush on the ground, you know, at the beginning of winter. We used to stand around and watch it, and, of course, talk and lived in dreams..." "We had no responsibilities except to pass our exams." "I was there three years; that was about three (prizes) each year. We both had all kinds of Governor General's medals." "Oh yes, we had a good time, we didn't know we were having a hard time!" (#15 and #16)

We believe that such affirmation and denial reflects "cognitive dissonance." Attendance at a co-educational university implied the existence and experience of equality with men. Any experience of gender-based or other forms of inequality would create the occasion and the need to resolve the contradiction through ideological explanation or through denial. The entitlement to this educational opportunity is most clearly contradicted by the residence barrier, mentioned by all, which cannot be repressed as either difference or disadvantage. It is visible and administratively sanctioned evidence of the precariousness of the women students' status, inherent in the calendar's admonition that women be admitted to lectures but not residences.[12] It meant women were, in the words of many, "tolerated," "just there for lectures and nothing else," "endured, but not encouraged."

Faced with this dilemma, did they apply existing ideologies, or did they fabricate anew? The dominant liberal ideology implied by equal opportunity in higher education was inadequate in bridging the gap of cognitive dissonance between experience of discrimination and its justification or explanation. It could only attribute discrimination to temporary circumstance or particular personalities. Anything other than constitutional change was foreign to the liberal political process. An understanding that, despite democratic infrastructures and ideals, discrimination might be institutionalized by social interests and groups was unavailable in the traditional liberal curriculum. Also, for them, discrimination implied total exclusion, usually on racial grounds. They were not attracted to direct identification with Blacks or Jews, though they shared a desire for inclusion and assimilation with these. When asked about "discrimination" point blank,

one woman spoke of the experience of the only black at her time, instead of her own. Another praised Bishop's liberality in admitting Jews who, during the War, were being turned away at McGill.

Women students seem to have accepted the liberal ideology that, in an educational context, inequality was temporary, residual, personal intolerance or resistance which time would eliminate. In the interviews, they often select and arrange the facts to show gradual progress. They remind the interviewer that it was "not so long ago" that women were not even admitted, or (later) had to leave campus by 1 p.m., or (later) by 5 p.m. This is the same liberal version that today tells women, "You've come a long way, baby!"

Many imply that barriers vanished once residences were built for women, citing the subsequent rise in the number of women as proof. However, the one woman who most clearly links discrimination to the refusal of residences as a means of maintaining an informal or *de facto* quota on women points out that a new form of quota and discrimination appeared when the influx of women began after 1950.

> There was one thing that would amuse all women: they [the men] were suddenly afraid when they were building this women's residence that they were suddenly going to be overrun with women! And people, the male chauvinists, who didn't like women there anyway, thought this was going to be a very bad thing, so they decided to raise the entrance standards for the women, so that only the very best would get in, and I guess the men's level stayed about the same. Well what happened was that they got all these brilliant students and then in a year or two the women were walking off with all the prizes and the men weren't getting anything. So they balanced it, I don't know exactly what they did ... because they only had so much space, they didn't need to worry, you could only take so many. It was funny — there was great alarm as they found the women were so bright! (#11)

Thus, partial inclusion, combined with dominant ideology, appears to have blurred the very meaning of discrimination for most. One denies discrimination because, not only could women take any course and win any prize, but they could even "marry onto the faculty," presumed to be final proof of acceptance and equality. Indeed, even recent attempts to conceptualize women's status in society as that of caste, class or minority group have been inadequate. In what other

instances are the members of the different categories raised in the same family, or routinely intermarried? Where do such present or future "personal dependents" find common ground, except in the view that it is "natural," beyond explanation?[13]

To admit discrimination may have meant, at an emotive level, to admit inferiority or to admit the even more contradictory position of marrying the "discriminator" (whether faculty or fellow student). Though many recall the facts of discrimination in both painful and humorous detail, they cannot call it by its name. Some repress the experience. Some displace it to other times or social groups. Some are aware of this curious break between their own experience and their collective meaning. "Because we were in the minority there, we probably didn't have any expectation of being treated equal to a man"; "we didn't know we were having a hard time"; "that (discrimination) is a modern concept."

4. Archetypes and Images

The women's ideological procedures function on a number of levels: denying and affirming discrimination, and creating their own piecemeal means of expressing liberal images based on actual personalities who come to play important roles in their imagination and their selective memories about their collective lives at Bishop's. Three archetypal figures emerge from the interviews: Mrs. Carrington, Dr. McGreer, and Mary Reid. On the basis of these mythic figures, the gap between ideology and experience is bridged. This procedure is now being recognized by psychologists as a common means of resolving personal conflict.[14]

Mrs. Carrington

"Mrs. Carrington (wife of the Dean of Divinity and later Bishop of Quebec) was very much wanting to promote the cause of the girls. So, she persuaded us to organize into a sort of club. And, we actually rented premises in the village ... Mrs. Carrington persuaded the girls to ask for more, I suppose, like Oliver Twist." (#2) "The club house was over where the pizza parlor is, upstairs, in a little room. And we had to furnish it and make it attractive all by ourselves. Yes, she was there I can recall ... and we used to meet for the readings, play readings mostly." "She was a fine woman ... from New Zealand." (#7)

Mrs. Carrington had dances at her home. "Well she thought we ought to have some kind of life. And if you came from a distance, as I did, and you boarded, well Bishop's, once the lectures were over, that was the end until the next day. And you saw nobody but your roommates. And she felt this was a bad thing. The boys had lots going in the residences." (#3) "When she came, we were there, but we were more or less ignored, and she thought that was terrible. So, she really got busy and she got a constitution drawn up and got us really established as an association." (What kind of person was she?) "Well, she wasn't very well liked ... she was quite domineering. She and the Principal didn't get along too well. Because one time, she put on a party in Lent and that was an unheard of thing ... the people that didn't work with her, like we did, they didn't appreciate her ... but she did it, and sure did a lot of things to give women students a boost at Bishop's." (#12)

Dr. McGreer

"I don't think the Principal liked us very well. On one occasion we were told that the Principal, that was Dr. McGreer, wanted to talk to the women students. And we didn't quite know what was coming off. And we met, I think it must have been in the Faculty Common Room. And all he told us was that we must always come in the back door!" (#2) "The Principal, in those days, did not want women there. And, if there were ever any choice between a man and a woman, there was, in his mind, no choice." (#3) "He was a big man with great big bushy eyebrows, and here I was, poor little me, you know. I didn't have a hope! I might just as well have stayed in bed that day, because he just poohpoohed the whole thing (the constitution for women) and said it was ridiculous ... Oh, that was the most useless trip I ever made over to Bishop's that morning. Today, I'm sure he is pirouetting in his grave!" (#13) "The Principal objected very much to our going to the chapel services. I think they, of course, the men had to go, it was compulsory in those days. And, it was an Anglican service, and an awful lot of us were Anglicans. So it was like coming home, in the sense that one was specifically brought up in the church..." (#3) "Up on top of that hill there used to be a really lovely house, beautiful grounds and flowers, and so he kind of overlooked the campus..." (Like God or something?) "Yes, something like that ... then his tragic death, and then, I think the university was in a state of 'what shall we do now?'" (#14)

Mary Reid

"When I was an undergraduate there was a very tall old lady, always dressed in black and she always had what looked like men's rubbers on and a big flat hat, all black. And she was supposed to be named ... Mary Reid, and we all cherished the idea that she was the first woman graduate at Bishop's. She was a peculiar looking figure!" (#2) (Were there any women faculty?) "Tell her about what's her name ... that great big tall girl who went to Bishop's before you ... Reid." "I didn't know very much about her, but she was very odd ... Well, she was very, very, very tall ... and this one day she was coming to a lecture and I suppose there were, perhaps, two other women in the whole university. And they had ice on their feet, and she opened the door to come in ... and it made her fall, and she sprawled her whole length as she came in! And they said not one boy flickered one smile. They did everything but help her up. And that was it. But afterwards they found it was awfully funny. Poor her! The boys were polite towards one another ... yes, they were very nice to us, as far as I can remember, and, as I say, most of them came from rectories, you see, and they were nicely brought up. And that made it very nice for us, you know." (#15 and #16)

Mrs. Carrington is remembered as the motherly role model and protector, who uses the liberal political tools of constitution and freedom of association to further both the academic and social aspects of the "girls" lives. She comes into conflict, at times, with the patriarchal figure, of forbidding brow, Dr. McGreer. These parental and role model figures embody the conflict over the women students' status. Mary Reid is the dark twin, alter ego, who symbolizes the pain and embarrassment of the illegitimate "interrupter." She is a warning of what can happen if the limits (set by both the parental figures often enforced socially by the "brothers") are transgressed. A number of painful experiences are recounted, which could be said to demonstrate subconscious awareness of this fearful identity with her.

"We (the women) had to provide our own (sport) uniforms ... I had to buy some purple material and make some shorts ... and I fell in such a way that I slid twenty feet and just left a purple streak right down the ice that came out of my shorts. The next time I was skating, it was still there." (#17) "My first year I was just neglected. One of these girls wasn't invited either,

so she and I decided we would go to a movie. Seven o'clock I walked up to the corner to get the bus and she didn't show up. Everybody else was all dressed up, going to the formal. It turned out she got an invitation about five, didn't tell anybody. So I was the only one, I thought, in the university who wasn't going to the formal. It seemed like the end of the world. But it wasn't, it didn't." (#13)

Like the recollections of the witch–like figure of Mary Reid (even when other questions precede them), these unsolicited revelations interrupt the structure of the interview. Individual social rejection is a means by which the vague and subconscious feelings of not belonging, mentioned by most, can be partially formulated. These images of separateness and embarrassment literally and figuratively leave a mark. The residue, for us, is the failure of ideology to resolve the painful cognitive dissonance these women collectively experienced. This can only be mediated in the realm of myth and memory.[15]

NOTES

1. Margaret Gillett, *We Walked Very Warily*, Montreal: Eden Press Women's Publications, 1981; Anne Rochon Ford, *A Path Not Strewn with Roses*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985; and Raymond Clare Archibald, *Historical Notes on the Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854-1954*, Sackville, New Brunswick, 1954.
2. Margaret Gillett and Kay Sibbald (eds.), *A Fair Shake*, Montreal: Eden Press, 1984; and Joy Parr (ed.), *Still Running*, Kingston, Ontario: Queen's University Alumnae Association, 1987.
3. Jack Brehm and Arthur Cohen, *Explorations in Cognitive Dissonance*, New York: Wiley, 1962, p. 300. See also Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson, 1957.
4. Leon Festinger, "The Psychological Effects of Insufficient Reward," *American Psychologist*, 16:1-11. See also David Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 5, Macmillan and Free Press, 1968, p. 415.
5. Georgia Sassen reviews such meaning/anxiety considerations and criticizes "fear of success" models about women and education or occupational motivation for the failure of these studies to take into account the possibility of different structures of meaning/knowing for women. Georgia Sassen, "Success Anxiety in Women: A Constructivist Interpretation of its Source and its Significance," *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 1980.
6. M. Patricia Connelly and Linda Christiansen-Ruffman, "Women's Problems: Private Troubles or Public Issues," in Himmelfarb and Richardson (eds.), *Sociology for Canadians*, 1984, pp. 112-121. See also C. Wright Mills, "The Promise," in Frank Lindenfeld (ed.), *Radical Perspectives on Social Problems*, New York: Macmillan, 1973, pp. 4-11.
7. Annette Kuhn, *Women's Pictures*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979; and Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981.
8. See, for example, Estella Lauter and Carol Schreier Rupprecht, *Feminist Archetypal Theory: Interdisciplinary Re-Visions of Jungian Thought*, University of Tennessee Press, 1985.
9. Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology*, New York: Viking Press, 1968, p. 4.
10. Estella Lauter, *Women as Mythmakers: Poetry & Visual Art by 20th Century Women*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984. See also Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981; and Kathleen Wall, *The Callisto Myth from Ovid to Atwood: Initiation and Rape in Literature*, Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988.
11. See Appendix. To preserve requested anonymity, names are listed separately. Interview numbers identify quotations in the text.
12. See, for example, Bishop's University calendar 1948, whose fronticepiece says, "A residential college for men. Women students are admitted to lectures and degrees."
13. Margrit Eichler, "Class, Caste or Personal Dependents," in Marylee Stephenson (ed.), *Women in Canada*, Toronto: New Press, 1973.
14. Daniel Goleman, "Personal Myths Bring Cohesion to the Chaos of Each Life," *The New York Times*, Tuesday, May 24, 1988.
15. "Identification of fear at the imaginary level offers a way around the epistemological 'mauvaise foi' that recurs in women's public statement about their experience in institutions." Adele Holcomb, Fine Arts and Women's Studies, Bishop's University, Letter to the authors, July 5, 1988.

APPENDIX
EARLY WOMEN SCHOLARS AT BISHOP'S
INTERVIEW SUMMARIES

Interview number	Years at Bishop's	Major	Final Degree Obtained/Year	Age	Occupation Mother's or Father's Occupation	Years Interviewee Worked	Married	Children Attended Bishop's	Children Attended Bishop's	Why Interviewee Attended Bishop's	Impact of Bishop's Experienced	Discrimination Experienced	Discrimination Ideology
1	23-25	H	Ed26	80	tch	M=tch	+	Yes	3	2	cr	In	No	No
2	25-28	H	HMA29	77	prof	M=tch	14	Yes	3	3	Mcr$	Cr	Yes	No
3	26-31	Fr/Lt	HMA30	76	tch	F=MD	9	Yes	5	5	Th	Th	Yes	Yes
4	17-20	H		83	tch/bs	F=BA	+	No	0	5	MF	y	Yes	No
5	34-38	En/Fr	Ed39	71	tch	M=tch	31	Yes	3	3	cr	cr	No	No
6	14-17	Langs		88	nrs	M=BA	45	No	0	0	M	In	Yes	No
7	27-30	En/Fr	Ed31	75	tch/bs	labr	35	No	0	0	Ncr	fs	No	No
8	33-36	Fr/H	Ed37	70	tch	F=se	+	No	0	0	cr	ad	No	No
9	42-45	En/H	Ed67	59	tch	M=tch	10+	Yes	4	3	cr	Th	No	No
10	41-44	En/Fr	MAFr	58	tch/cs	M=tch	7+	Yes	3	1	MF	Id	No	No
11	36-39	H/Phl	Art	66	jnl/cs	F=se	+	Yes	2	0	F	F	No	No
12	26-30	En/H	Ed31	78	tch	M=tch	22	Yes	2	1	M	cr	Yes	No
13	36-40	H	Ed40	67	tch	M=ns	+	Yes	4	0	cr	cr	No	No
14	45-48	En		57	tch	F=bs	+	Yes	6	2	Ed	fs	No	No
15	12-15	Langs		89	tch	M/FB	+	Yes	6	0	FM$	cr	No	No
16	17-20	Fr/Lt		84	tch	M/FB	+	Yes	0	0	FMS	Th	Yes	No
17	32-35	Chem	Ed38	70	tch	tch/B	45	No	0	0	cr	cr	No	No

Abbreviations or symbols:

+ = some
0 = none
$ = cost
ad = adaptability
B = Bishop's
BA = Bachelors of Arts
bs = business
Chem = Chemistry
cs = civil servant
cr = career
Ed = Education Degree
(MA or "High School
Diploma")
En = English

F = Father('s)
Fr = French
fs = friends/social
H = History
Id = Ideals
In = Interest
jnl = journalist
labr = labourer
Langs = Modern Languages
Lt = Latin
M = Mother('s)
MA = Masters Degree
MD = Medical doctor
ns = nurse

prof = professor
se = self-employed
tch = teacher
Th = Thought
y = young

In the "Impact of Bishop's" category,
capitals are used for idealistic impacts
and small letters for pragmatic ones:

Thought   {versus}
Interest
Ideals
adaptability
career
friends
sociability

In the "Discrimination Experienced"
category, "Yes" or "No" refers to
whether *examples were admitted.*

In the "Discrimination Ideology"
category, "Yes" or "No" refers to
*admitted (or not) as Ideology of the
time.*

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