

Losing my Religion: Bodily Confessions of an Organism Trying to Make a Body without Organs

Susan Naomi Nordstrom, The University of Memphis, snnrdstr@memphis.edu

Abstract

This article is a script of a performance at the 2018 PhEmaterialism conference in London, UK. In this script, I offer a series of bodily confessions, experimental tales of making a Body without Organs (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) on the neoliberal academic stratum. Each tale moves between the stratifying forces of the neoliberal academy that seek to organize my organism and experimentations that seek to produce different and more freeing organizations for my organs. Each tale talks back to the priests of the neoliberal academy by telling what happens to an organism, my organism-my body, as I try to make a Body without Organs.

To situate the script, I provide a lengthy appendix that details narrative reflexivity (Spry, 2011) decisions about the script and performance. Like any performance piece, the piece is to be viewed, heard, and experienced, rather than read. Performance pieces are not and should not be read as typical journal articles. They are their own genre of writing that eschews traditional notions of writing. With this in mind, this appendix provides narrative reflexivity about the performance (Spry, 2011) for readers who may need it.

Keywords: Feminist Killjoy, PhEmaterialism, body

Chapter 1: Overcome with Misery

I'm going to say too much (REM, 1991). I'm not going to say enough (REM, 1991). Saying my unsayable that is wordlessly said by my body. Doing as Roxane Gay (2017) did in *Hunger*, "forc[ing] [myself] to look at my guiltiest secrets... cut[ting] myself wide open" (p. 5), exposing myself. Choosing my confession (REM, 1991). Confessions, to be honest. Bodily confessions. Experimental tales shifting "what remains of me, unalterable and changing in form, crossing thresholds" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 161) as I try and try again to make a body without organs on the neoliberal academic stratum. Dancing with what is left of me as I try to keep up with you. Asking you to consider the hints that bring me to my knees (REM, 1991).

I'm a Creep

You float like feathers in the neoliberal academy. You seem to have the right stuff (Stengers, 2018). The right speed of writing. The right kind of research. The right journals. Publication after publication after publication. The right political moves. The right smile. The right body.

But, I'm a creep. I'm a weirdo. I'm slow. I don't belong here (Radiohead, 1991, "Creep").

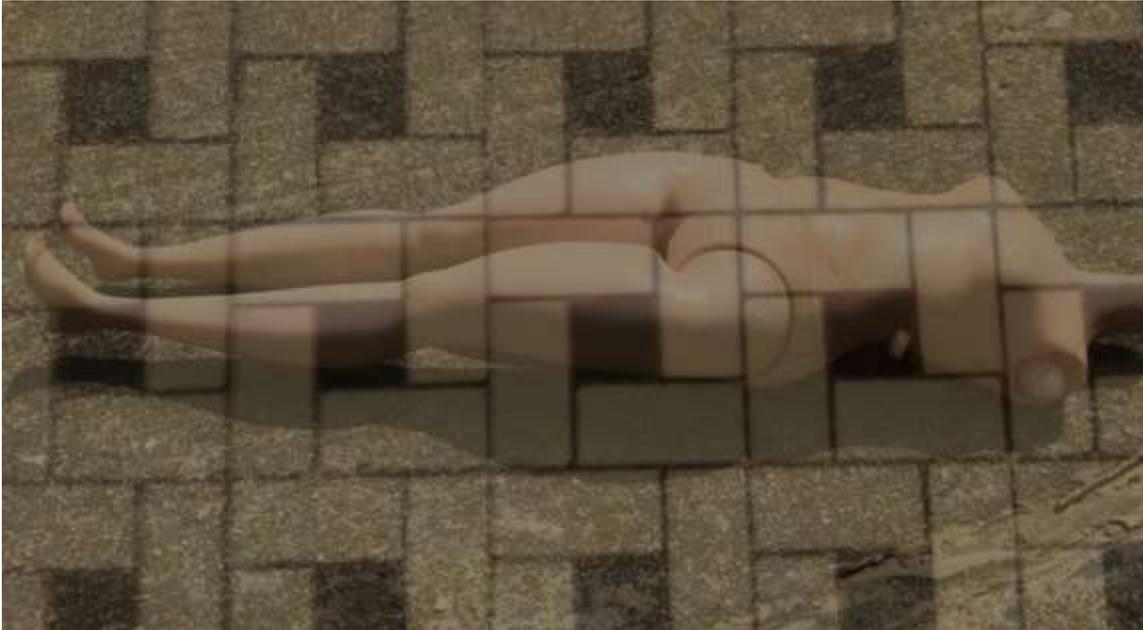
I want the right stuff. I want the right speed of writing. I want the right kind of research. I want the right journals. Publication after publication after publication. I want the right political moves. I want the right smile. I want the right body.

But I'm a creep. I'm a weirdo. I'm slow. I don't belong here (Radiohead, 1993, "Creep").

I don't care how much it hurts. I want it so bad. All the right things. Doing whatever it takes to make you happy. Whatever you want. The right stuff.

But I'm a creep. I'm a weirdo. I'm slow. What the hell am I doing here? I don't belong here. I don't belong here (Radiohead, 1993, "Creep").

Chapter 2: The Bodily Confessions



I confess...

My GI tract awakens me. I sit on the toilet losing my religion. My hands follow the etchings the cool tile left on my body. My feet feel the warmth my body created on the tile. Again. And. Again. And. Again. By morning, my body has become a mosaic of tile imprints and my feet are warm.

My skin stretches around a swelling GI tract. Six inches. I measured. Zippers and buttons cannot contain it. Elastic waistbands and tunics are purchased. Hospitality gifts for Bob. Bob, I name my six inch-bloated belly Bob, a neoliberal bureaucrat, someone who counts, who measures, whose sole pleasure in life is to commoditize everything. He penetrates me and tries to mold my organs to his liking. I am pregnant with him.

Yet, I'm also pregnant with possibility of doing research differently. The words of my dissertation conflict with the right stuff of the academy. The job market is tough. Any job is a good enough job for someone not doing the right stuff. But, I don't have a job yet. I look out at the audience at my research presentations and sometimes people look at me like I'm a witch. But, my witchy words feel so right as they come out of my mouth and fingertips. I see others who did do the right stuff, the right research, getting the "good jobs." I wonder whether I did the right thing. Risky witches don't seem to get jobs. Still, I write more risky words. They're my drugs. Each risky word resists the stratification of the right stuff. Bob exacts his revenge. My stomach, my body, becomes a warzone of the striated spaces that Bob desires and the smooth spaces the risky words generate. Perhaps each night in the bathroom, the

Body without Organs (BwO) tries to scatter the organs that Bob seeks to organize. Each inch added to my waist is a diffusion of organs he seeks to stratify.

In the wreckage of organs, my body is dismantling it—myself. I become loose groupings of organs covered in a porous skin marked by cool tile etchings in search of my BwO. My search grows urgent—a “question of life and death, youth and old age, sadness and joy” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 151). I have to do it because “it is where everything is played out” (p. 151).

I Confess...

I botch it. I go to the doctor. Who then recommends a psychiatrist. Who then recommends a therapist. Blood tests, anti-anxiety medication, and photographs of Freud. To make my body less of a warzone. I am told to find myself. How can I find a scattered self in a warzone? I am asked to consider whether I really want to be an academic. I cannot imagine my life without my research, my lifeblood that circulates with risky words of doing things differently. I begin to pick up body parts that pump risky words and shove the parts together. I sedate them to docility.

Bob continues to come and go as if my body is some roadside motel. He scatters me each time. Other neoliberal forces come and go. I stop naming them. There aren't enough banal bureaucrat names for these forces. They come and go, penetrating me, molding me until I scatter—losing my religion. A U.S. southern saying, also the title of a famous REM (1991) song, that means losing civility or one's temper or to be at the end of one's rope. A body. Losing its religion. At the end of its rope. Again. And. Again. And. Again.

Each time, I search the warzone for body parts. I stitch them together to resemble a body. I stitch with the rope that I am at the end of. I sedate a stitched-together self. But the stitches itch and never heal. Another force hits and I burst. This warzone, my body, stretches the stitches and moves across fields of active landmines. Still, I stitch it back up. I sedate it. Again. And. Again. And. Again. I botch it so many times it becomes unrecognizable.

I Confess...

My hair weaves messy, entangled patterns with my hands. Hands entrapped by hair search my body for other bald spots, tiny smooth spaces on my body. Hair circulates around my hands. Each strand strangles me and brings forth a line of flight. Maybe each strand was part of the organism these forces sought to stratify? Maybe each strand said “no.” Maybe if I stitched myself together with my own hair, the stitches wouldn't be so itchy.

I Confess...

I hear only pounding against the soundtrack of Dorothy, Blanche, Rose, and Sophia talking around their kitchen table. Body seizing. Barely breathing. Hand clutching chest that cannot seem to contain my

heart as it pounds. Can my skin contain my body? Has my body finally said, “enough”? Is this the end? What is passing? What is being blocked? What blocks forces?

I Confess...

I cannot seem to lose weight despite a good diet and exercise.

I Confess...

My body speaks the weight of experimentation as “the biological and political, corpus and socius, politics and experimentation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 150) move through it.

I Confess...

Every day I try to assemble myself within my skin. Afterwards, I force myself to look in the mirror. My mouth contorts itself into a smile.

I Confess...

Every day I take my blood pressure to measure how the academy systematically circulates through my body.

I Confess...

I start my car, but my body stops breathing. I have to tell my body to breathe as I drive to campus.

I Confess...

That I told my parents this job would kill me first, cigarettes would just be an accomplice.

I Confess...

That other explosions have happened. Explosions that I can't word. But, if you listened to my heartbeat, you would hear them tell their stories.

I Confess...

That I am lodged on this neoliberal stratum. Whether I like it or not. I am here. It is where I have to build my BwO. It is where I have to experiment.

I Confess...

That I lose my religion, my faith, in this stratum and its promises almost daily.

Chapter 3: Losing Your Religion



And, so, here I am in the corner. Losing my religion. Trying to keep up with the academy. And, it isn't just me in the corner. It isn't just a dream. I heard so many friends laughing, singing, crying, flying...trying. I heard them over phone lines crossing many miles, sometimes oceans. I heard them as we walked together. I heard them as we looked at each other, knowing that the words were too painful to say. I heard the words they were not able to speak. I know the work they're doing, the very lovely risky work and what they pay to do that work. We're in the corner together. It wasn't just me. It never was. It isn't just my body. BODIIES are screaming, have screamed, and will continue to scream.

I've never heard my male colleagues complain of such things. In fact, these "allies" are many times the ones who say, "Just get over it. Relax. Have a glass of wine. You'll be fine." But, there isn't enough wine. And you can never get over the stratum. And you can never just relax. You're always crafting, surveying, the stratum. You're never just fine. You're just not right.

Those of us in the corner have something in common. We never had the right stuff. We're women, queer women, women of color, trans women. We do some of the riskiest and most exciting work in the academy. We write slowly. We study futures to come. We ask what the world demands of us. We publish in journals with maybe not the highest impact factors.

My friends, my dear brilliant friends, and I are NOT toeing the line. We're pushing it. We're running up against the brick walls and beating them down with our bodies that are not wanted in the academy. Like my body, their bodies have become warzones between risky work and the neoliberal academy. Our bodies will never have the right stuff. Our bodies will never generate the right stuff.

We are in the corner. Losing our religion. Our tempers. Our hands grasp at ropes and we wonder if we can hang on or whether our sweaty hands will finally lose their grasp. Our bodies are breaking. Ahmed (2017) dedicates a small paragraph in her feminist killjoy survival kit to bodies and the health of feminist bodies. Our bodies, our very feminist bodies are screaming bodily confessions. And we must, as Ahmed, noted develop feminist ears to listen to our bodies. To build on that paragraph and Audre Lorde's (1997) work in *The Cancer Journals*, we must listen to the terror of the neoliberal academy and what havoc it can and does wreck on our bodies. Because we need those bodies to be feminist killjoys. No body. No killjoy.

But, it means very little to simply state these symptom-confessions. Stating symptom-confessions upholds the institutional violence of the neoliberal academy. A litany of bodily confessions will never suffice. We are not lunatics with a checklist of symptoms with easy remedies like workforce wellness programs or whatever we may do to dull the pain. We exist within a neoliberal assemblage that we are constantly trying to tip (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). And, in that tipping, the neoliberal academy seeks to parcel out our organs. Still, we persist in making our BwO. We lose our religion, holding onto a rope that if we're not careful might strangle us.

We go to our doctors and we are told again and again, "Stress. You have to cut back. You have to do something for this stress." But, the doctors don't seem to get how we lose our religion on this stratum. They don't seem to understand how our bodies have become the warzone of forces. They don't seem to understand the barbarians of the neoliberal academy are always taking and never giving (Stengers, 2018). The doctors seem to say "cut the rope. Take a pill." But, cutting the rope means cutting the lifeblood of what we do. A pill can help... but sometimes the pill makes my body too submissive. Not able to do the work that is my oxygen...*not doing the work that is my oxygen?*... I cannot begin to think that thought.

If I cannot cut the rope, then my fingers can search out what comprises the rope upon which I cling. That's the funny thing about ropes. They are made of flexible fibers that are woven or twisted together. The fibers can come loose and we can feel the fraying fibers against our fingertips. In the past, I used the rope to stitch myself back up. Now, my eager fingers search the fraying fibers to see what else can be made with them.

Chapter 4: Come to Your Feminist Killjoy Jesus



I see the discarded organs around me that have exploded in the warzone. I begin to take each organ, each body part, and cradle it in my hands. I carefully turn it around to study it to see what had passed through it, what got blocked, and so on. As it passed through, where was it headed? With what am I keeping up? And, for whom? And, at what cost? Sometimes the costs are great and worthy. Others are not. The costs of keeping up are always grounded in discourses that seek to striate bodies (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

NO. No, my dear priests. I have already started to smooth myself in your striations. I work at home, so that I can work in my feminist space. My on-campus office with joyful feminist objects for when I am there. Carefully placed items to ensure people see them as they come, invited or uninvited, to my on-campus space. A book. A gift from a student. A photograph of a bobcat. My clothes become armor, each piece carefully selected for the striated space. Make-up and hair and shoes. Some days I don't care. I see you, my dear priests, you're not taking me down anymore.

And as I pick up and hold what was once part of my body on the warzone, I see that most of the forces came from capitalist and patriarchal bombs. Bombs set off by you, dear priests. Bombs provided by structures you want so fiercely to protect. Bombs set off at the academy that is changing in ways that threaten you. There are just too many vaginas walking around. And, those vaginas might live in bodies with different colored skin. Those vaginas might be in bodies not born with vaginas. Or maybe the bodies look like they should have vaginas, but they don't. We don't like you. We never will. We're birthing something else, with or without vaginas.

We're not going to play your game. Your game has long since been played. Go take your toys someplace else. Take them to your grave. We never wanted them in the first place.

We don't want your toys, because they have blown us up. We have picked each other up, sewn each other back together with great care. We see what your toys can do. We want nothing to do with them.

And, we know that some people will want your toys. Some people have benefitted from them. But, I think there are more of us than them. We have generations of willful fussy creatures (Stengers & Despret, 2017). We have our elders who have taught and continue to teach us well. We're preparing our students to deal with your toys. And we're like rabbits. We breed. And we like to breed. We breed so we're not alone. We breed for more allies. We help those allies find each other. We're crafty people. Everyone at the margins is generally pretty crafty. It is how we survive.

So, when you see us huddled in the hallways of our buildings or at conferences and you see us smile sweetly at you, we're planning your demise, fiber by fiber. It is what we've been doing for so long. It really isn't anything new. We smile, you look away, we roll our eyes, and laugh. You fancy yourself clever. We don't. Fiber by fiber.

That's what happens when you've been blown up too many times. When you've had to put yourself together too many times. When you've helped stitch back together your dear friends. You learn the ways of the war. You learn what is being fired at you and from where it comes from and what it is intended to do. You begin to anticipate the bombs and craft tactical responses. You begin to know your enemy better than they do themselves. And you know who you are? You are barbarian priests. Striating others. Striating spaces. Violently. With words. With actions. See, we've got you figured out.

To survive, we've learned to maneuver. We've learned to dance around you. We've twisted our bodies around striated spaces to create smooth spaces. We're dancing toward futures to come. We dance. We maneuver. We survive. Because otherwise it is death at your hands. And, trust me, my dearest priests, you all aren't worth my last breath.

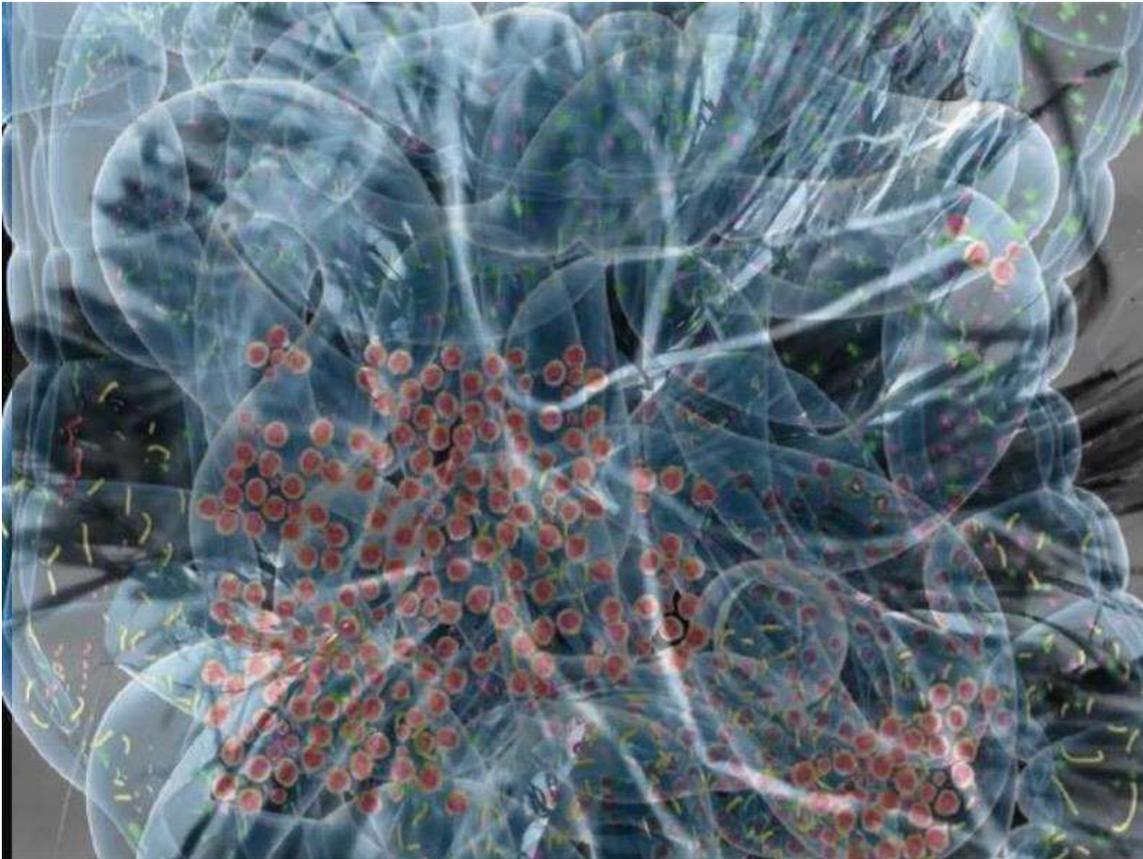
You all are not worthy of any of our last breaths. We will care for each other. It is what we do. Our lives demand more. The issues we care and research about demand more. The people and things we study demand more. The world demands more. And we will persist. And we will reclaim. And we will give

each other breath. And we will sew each other up, because we know you're not finished with us. We're ready for the long battle.

Know this. Each time you try to separate us, blow us up by making our bodies into warzones, we will come back stronger. Again. And. Again. And. Again.

And, so, let me teach you about another U.S. Southern saying: "come to Jesus." You all just came to your feminist killjoy Jesus. Reach out and touch faith (Depeche Mode, 1989, "Personal Jesus"). Please consider me your own personal feminist killjoy Jesus. I'm not having your foolishness anymore. I see you all. You all are no longer in charge of me. You all never were.

Chapter 5: The PROFESSIONals



Wrong bodies doing the wrong stuff in the neoliberal academy do not need to do an examination of consciousness. You're always going to be wrong. Confessions will not absolve us of our wrong stuff. No acts of contrition will save us. The priests of the neoliberal academy will only have us returning again and again to their confessional booths. Where they can tell us how very wrong we are, how very witchy we are, how we need to just be good girls who do their right things. Never confess to barbarian priests.

Instead, profess, profess, profess. Profess that the neoliberal academy will not save us. Never will. Profess the wrong stuff. Profess what the world demands of you. Profess toward the future we have been waiting for. Profess mobilizing and creative forces that breed the academy we both want and need. Profess to survive. Profess to breed. Profess fiber by fiber. Profess to witch. Again. And. Again. And. Again.

I Profess...

Missy Elliot's beats in "She's a Bitch" makes my body bounce rather than REM's song that makes me want to sit in a corner. I am done with that corner. I'm going to roll up in my car, keep rockin' till the clock don't tock, keep it hot, light my ass on fire... asking "What ya talk? What ya say? huh? Gotta flow, gotta move it slow, huh? Better you runnin' out the door, huh? You gon' be a long-lost soul, whacha say?" (Missy Elliot, 1999, "She's a Bitch").

I Profess

As I roll up to campus, I sing along to Dolly Parton's (1980) "9 to 5" so that I, too, can just make it through the day, knowing that the academy is all takin' and no givin', using my mind, and giving me no credit... and knowing it will drive me crazy, if I let it.

I Profess...

You don't own me. I'm not your little toy. None of us are. Don't tell us what to do. Don't tell us what to say (Leslie Gore, 1963, "You Don't Own Me").

I Profess...

That when you do tell me what to do (because I know you will), I'll say fuck you very much in such a way that you won't know I'm doing it (Lily Allen, "Fuck You", 2009).

I Profess...

That every day I will laugh at the barbarian priests of the neoliberal academy. They can be quite amusing and laughter is a powerful weapon.

I Profess...

That every day I will try to make people wonder why they let me into this space.

I Profess...

That every day I will show how very wrong my stuff is.

I Profess...

That I will try to unravel the rope that strangles my fellow beautifully risky willful fussy creatures' necks.
That I will give breath to them.

I Profess...

That I will breed other willful fussy creatures like a rabbit.

I Profess...

That I will teach them what I have learned and care for these new creatures and learn from them.

I Profess...

That I will be theirs and your witch, casting a circle of protection around you. Protecting you from the barbarous neoliberal academy.

I Profess...

That I will more than likely have to pick up my body and others on the warzone again and again. But, when I do, Missy Elliot's (1999) "She's a Bitch" will be on repeat.

I Profess...

That each time I stitch myself up or help someone stitch themselves up, that we will be stronger.

I Profess...

That I will study my beautiful warzone body in the mirror every day. That I will thank my cells for bearing witness to the forces that move through them.

I Profess...

That I will honor what makes *me* feel, imagine, and think (Stengers, 2018) and I will honor what makes *you* feel, imagine, and think.

I Profess...

That I will take the body they take from me and make into particles (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and unleash those luscious, risky particles on that which seeks to stratify them.

I Profess...

That I will reclaim. That I will resist.

I Profess...

That I will be the witch (Henley & Leadon, 1972) with the wrong stuff (Stengers, 2018).

Appendix

The article presented here was a performance piece for the 2018 PhEmaterialism conference in London, UK. Like any performance piece, the piece is to be viewed, heard, and experienced, rather than read. Performance pieces are not and should not be read as typical journal articles. They are their own genre of writing that eschews traditional notions of writing. With this in mind, this appendix provides narrative reflexivity about the script performance (Spry, 2011) for readers who may need it. I use the term script and performance interchangeably throughout this appendix.

When the conference organizers approached me to write and perform a keynote performance for the conference, I considered the conference's aim of disrupting racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and the politics of terror and violence. While ruminating this aim, my thoughts kept coming back to the private and sometimes very personal conversations I have had with other academic feminists about stress-related illnesses. I then located a growing body of literature on women faculty's experience with stress and burnout (Black & Garvis, 2018; Gerdes, 2003; Gutiérrez y Muhs, Flores Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012; Guzmán, 2019; Isgro & Castañeda, 2013; Jean-Marie & Lloyd-Jones, 2013; Walters, 2018). In Gutiérrez y Muhs, Flores Niemann, González, & Harris's (2012) editorial introduction to their collection about stress and burnout, they mentioned potential contributors to the book that declined because of stress-related illnesses. I had also finished reading Roxane Gay's (2017) body memoir *Hunger* in which she courageously shares the memories that mark her body. I soon realized that I had been given a gift to say what many times I could not say to myself and what others have said to me. I could take pain, affirm it, and then generate possibilities from that affirmative work.

I also wanted a way to further articulate antimethodology (Nordstrom, 2018). Antimethodology gets to work in the between spaces between the reterritorializing forces of conventional qualitative inquiry and the deterritorializing forces of poststructural and posthumanist theories. As these forces come together, they create articulations of antimethodology. I viewed the script and performance as a way to consider what an antimethodological autoethnography might look like and do.

To do this work, I studied Tami Spry's (2011) performative autoethnographic work about performing personal experience and narrative reflexivity (which this appendix attempts to do). In particular, her idea that autoethnography begins with the body was particularly useful when thinking about the violence of workplace stress-related illnesses. This combination lent itself nicely to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) body without organs (BwO). They define the BwO as follows: "The BwO is that glacial reality where the alluviations, sedimentations, coagulations, foldings, and recoilings that compose an

organism—and also a signification and a subject—occur” (p. 159). The BwO is an articulation of both an organism and the power-knowledge discourses that produce subjects. In this way, the BwO is an embodied subject that rejects the Cartesian split. The BwO is a shifting reality of tenuous articulations of middle spaces. It is a series of never-ending articulations of movements between reterritorializing systems (or strata) and deterritorializing lines that open up spaces of freedom. It is both constricted and free, as it “cannot break away entirely from the system that it desires escape from” (Message, 2005, p. 33). Put another way, a BwO can never escape the system (or stratum) as it works toward a sense of freedom. A BwO is constantly disrupting the system as it engages in a continual becoming that has no endpoint.

Conceptualizing the academic body as a body without organs extends Davies’ (2005) work on the necessity of a “both/and” approach to existing within the neoliberal academy. I quote her at length:

It is not a choice between compliance and resistance, between colonizing and being colonized, between taking up the master narratives and resisting them. It is in our own existence, the terms of our existence, that we need to begin the work, together, of decomposing those elements of our world that make us, and our students, vulnerable to the latest discourse and that inhibit conscience and limit consciousness. (p. 13).

The BwO is not an either/or concept. It is a both/and concept. The academic body is always in between compliance, resistance, colonizing, being colonized, taking up master narratives, resisting master narratives, and... and... and.... It is in the both/and of the BwO that we get to work and begin to articulate ways of being and knowing in the academy.

With the body as a site of performance (Spry, 2011), the BwO (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), Davies’ (2005) work on the both-and of the neoliberal academy, the existing literature on feminist bodies in the neoliberal academy (Black & Garvis, 2018; Gerdes, 2003; Guitérrez y Muhs, Flores Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012; Guzmán, 2019; Isgro & Castañeda, 2013; Jean-Marie & Lloyd-Jones, 2013; Walters, 2018), and the countless conversations I have had with my feminist colleagues, I began to write the script for the performance piece that enacted these ideas by materializing the shifting nuances of the in-between spaces in which I and others have found themselves.

To do this work, I created what I call bodily confessions. Bodily confessions are experimental tales of making a Body with Organs (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) in the neoliberal academy. Each tale moves between the stratifying forces of the neoliberal academy that seek to organize my organism in particular ways and experimentations that seek to produce different and more freeing organization of my organs. Each tale talks back to the priests (Deleuze and Guattari playfully refer to priests throughout the BwO plateau) of the neoliberal academy by telling what happens to an organism, my organism—my body, as I try to make a BwO. Each tale is an articulation of the both-and of existing—both surviving and thriving—in the neoliberal academy (Davies, 2005). In this way, each confessional tale is an articulation

of becoming within and against the neoliberal academy. The performance, itself, can be viewed as a performance of the BwO.

An unanticipated aspect of the performance materialized when an attendee commented that she understood antimethodology following the performance. As the script moves in between spaces, works with tensions between reterritorializing and deterritorializing forces in the neoliberal academy, the script performs antimethodology. The performance contains the affective bodily residues of another set of research events—moments in which habits and concepts unite to create generative research conventions—that pass through me, change me, and become part of me. While I have discussed research events in other publications (see Nordstrom, 2018) in more methodological ways, this performance is the more personal side of those affective residues. The script offers what happens to the body of the researcher doing the work of experimental qualitative methodologies, not so much the methodologies themselves. The script shows the create movements of forces as they slow down and pick up speed as well as the wide range of emotions these movements generate. Like antimethodology, the script affirms and encourages experimental qualitative work.

To create these confessional tales, I studied my medical history, personal journals, music, art, objects, existing literature (Black & Garvis, 2018; Gerdes, 2003; Gutiérrez y Muhs, Flores Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012; Guzmán, 2019; Isgro & Castañeda, 2013; Jean-Marie & Lloyd-Jones, 2013; Walters, 2018), and communication with friends, family, and colleagues. In effect, I studied the assemblage from which each tale emerged to carefully create fleshy material doses of experimentation on the neoliberal academic stratum. I also drew inspiration from another fleshy, material tale of destruction and hope for a better day, the book of Lamentations that appears in both the Torah and Old Testament. Each of the five chapter-poems of the book contains rich imagery that about the destruction of the city, its pleas to God, and its hopes. In the five sections of this performance piece, destruction and hope move together in both material and human ways. Much like the destruction and hope of Jerusalem presented in Lamentations, these bodily confessions are what is left from the work of moving across the freeing spaces of feminist, poststructural, and posthumanist theories and the limiting spaces of a neoliberal academy. These shifting confessions hopefully and affirmatively try to find allies, other feminist killjoys (Ahmed, 2017). The confessions aim to keep an eye on others as we work with “these imperfect bodies [that] we don’t know how to cope with” (Gay, 2017, p. 188). Most important, the aim of this performance piece is to take pain and suffering and turn it into something else, something affirmative in which we all can support each other as we try to make a BwO in the neoliberal academy.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2017). *Living a feminist life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822373377>
- Allen, L. & Kurstin, G. (2009). Fuck you. [Recorded by Lily Allen]. On *It's not me it's you* [compact disc]. London UK: Regal.

- Black, A.L. & Garvis, S. (Eds.). (2018). *Lived experiences of women in academia: Metaphors, manifestos and memoir*. UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315147444>
- Davies, B. (2005). The (im)possibility of intellectual work in neoliberal regimes. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 26(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596300500039310>
- Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. (B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Elliott, M. M. & Mosley, T. M. (1991). She's a bitch. [Recorded by Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliott] on *Da Real World*. [compact disc]. Virginia Beach, VA: Goldmind.
- Gay, R. (2017). *Hunger: A memoir of (my) body*. New York City, NY: HarperCollins Publisher.
- Gerdes, E. P. (2003). The price of success: Senior academic women's stress and life choices. *Advancing Women in Leadership*. Retrieved from <http://advancingwomen.com/awl/spring2003/GERDESB1.HTML>
<http://advancingwomen.com/awl/spring2003/GERDESB1.HTML>
- Gore, M. (1989). Personal Jesus. [Recorded by Depeche Mode] on *Violator*. [compact disc]. Denmark and Milan Italy, Mute.
- Gutiérrez y Muhs, G. (2012). *Presumed incompetent: The intersections of race and class for women in academia*. Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- Guzmán, L.D. (2019). Academia will not save you: Stories of being continually 'underrepresented.' *Journal of Humanist Mathematics*, 9(1), 326-343. <https://doi.org/10.5642/jhummath.201901.20>
- Henley, D. & Leadon, B. (1972). *Witchy woman*. [Recorded by The Eagles] on *Eagles* [compact disc]. London, UK: Asylum.
- Isgro, K.L. & Castañeda, M. (2013). *Mothers in academia*. New York City, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Jean-Marie, G., & Lloyd-Jones, B. (2011). *Women of color in higher education: Turbulent past, promising future*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited. [https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3644\(2011\)9](https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3644(2011)9)
- Lorde, A. (1997). *The cancer journals*. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute. <https://doi.org/10.1038/bjc.1997.504>
- Madera, J. & White, D. (1963). You don't own me. [Recorded by Lesley Gore]. On *Lesley Gore sings of mixed-up hearts*. [compact disc]. Los Angeles, CA: Mercury.
- Message, K. (2005). Body without organs. In A. Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze dictionary* (pp. 32-34). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Nordstrom, S. (2018). Antimethodology: Postqualitative generative conventions. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 28(4), 215-226. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780041770446946>
- Pardon, D. (1980). 9 to 5. [Recorded by Dolly Parton]. On *9 to 5 and Other Odd Jobs* [compact disc]. Nashville, TN: RCA Records.
- Radiohead, Hammond, A., & Hazlewood, M. (1993). Creep. [Recorded by Radiohead]. On *Pablo Honey* [compact disc]. Oxfordshire, UK: Parlophone.
- R.E.M. (1991). Losing my religion [Recorded by R.E.M]. On *Out of Time*. [compact disc]. New York City, NY: Warner Bros.

- Spry, T. (2011). *Body, paper, stage: Writing and performing autoethnography*. Left Coast Press, New York City, NY.
- Stengers, I. (2018). *Another science is possible: A manifesto for slow science*. (S. Mueke, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Stengers, I. & Despret, V. (2011). *Women who make a fuss: The unfaithful daughters of Virginia Woolf*. (A. Knudson, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Walters, N.M. (2018). Trump's America is making microaggressions an even greater reality for women faculty of color: An African American faculty member's lived experiences. *Women, Gender, and Families of Color* 6(1), 63-68. <https://doi.org/10.5406/womgenfamcol.6.1.0063>