

Appendix B

Pig and Deer

This piece shows me using writing as inquiry. As a result of doing this writing (in a CARPP writing workshop) I came to understand the latest of my moments, the Pig and Deer moment, through making sense of my process through writing.

Again the text is quite messy, but I think worth persisting with. It was written longhand during a writing workshop at CARPP, and later typed-up by me, when I added a layer of reflections.

The 'pig and deer' motif has become important to me as it stands for the balance of earthedness and swiftness of my latest moment in my PhD learning journey.

Cycles of vulnerability and strength.

A note to the reader:

Main text is in Century Gothic

Contemporary reflections on content and process, written at the time, are in Arial.

Reflections on how it feels writing, written at the time, are in Times New Roman.

Additional notes made as I type up (2001) are included as footnotes.

And I suspect all the above a bit jumbled. Just read it please and come closer.

Started 24th May 2001, continued 14th June 2001.

My inquiry concerns the way my biography, and identity affects my practice – where and what I practice, with whom, in what way(s).

Part of the discipline of living my reflection is being in therapy. It is here that I met my pig and my deer.

My pig is confidant, with a low centre of gravity and *fantastic* teeth. My deer is easily startled, with long legs and large eyes and ears. They are both beautiful.

My practice is facilitation within contexts of unequal power. Often the meeting point, or potential meeting point between powerful statutory organisations, rich with expertise and position power. And small community based groups, rich in experiential knowing/lived expertise, but with little influence.

Except here comes Tony Blair and his cronies with their simplistic approach to the new localism, active citizenship and neighbourhood – led regeneration.

What does this mean? Why does it break in here?

Why am I laboriously explaining myself in this way?

My energy and spirit is to write from the autobiography into the present. But I am afraid of losing my audience.

When I was very small I wanted to be seen. I wanted to be heard. I wanted to be at the centre of things – which then meant bang in the middle, between my parents.

There were two problems with this:

1. they were even then at war with each other. Both in their very different ways trying to control each other, and me
2. when I was 2 ½ my brother was born. I have never forgiven my parents for not considering me (to be) enough. For creating another focus for their attention.

I continued to want to be the centre of their attention. I continued to fail to be so, other than by explosive demands and (a) refusal to conform. My anger and sense of abandonment took two forms: silence and argument.

When I was fourteen I left home, and went to live with a friend's family where there were adults who listened to my demands for attention, and wanted to know more about me. What made me tick, why I did what I did, who I was deep inside.

I found that when approached with these questions, particularly when there was any degree of conflict or challenge between us, I could not speak.

I could think, I could speak *inside* my head. I just couldn't get the words to come out.

It was as if I could learn and listen, but I could not teach, I could not speak of what I knew.

I was very, very afraid.

Here there is pain and fear. I lose my adult self easily into this fear.

What woke all this up?

Trying to put-on a sense of something being *for me*. (My therapy space).

Not for anyone else but for me.
"What did (do) I want from it?"
I can't say, I can't form the words, I am lost in silence³¹⁸.
I finally glimpse my silenced self, the image is a deer.

I notice how this is similar to my experience with the academy. I cannot hold onto the concept of undertaking research for me. I have to try to please someone else, and then they become the tyrant I cannot please. My deer appears, shy and quick to run. Any false move and she is off.

Between sessions I feel desperate. Both very angry and deeply sad. I develop an anxiety about one of my teeth (an already damaged tooth that repeatedly develops infections).³¹⁹

At the root of which I repeatedly develop infections.

I become convinced the tooth is going through a bad patch and is coming loose.

My late night scenarios concentrate on potential battles between myself and the dentist, who I expect will not give me the space to articulate my fears but will just prescribe strong antibiotics. As he has done before, and I just ended up throwing the prescription away.

I feel like I have to mediate between my dentist and my doctor, who will say the antibiotics are bad for me, (and I think she is right).
But I'm afraid I won't be able to find a voice, or be given the space to do so.

The warring parents again. With no space or voice for me.

(I notice already this is getting very complicated – do I need to simplify the layer upon layer?)

³¹⁸ I notice in typing this how I feel. At this point, typing the words "I can't say, I can't form the words, I am lost in silence" I feel panic rising inside me. So much so that I've just avoided retyping the words, and have cut and paste them instead. I feel the pressure pushing against my skin from the inside. Threatening to burst out with an uncontrolled rush, a violence that will devastate not you but me. It will make me smaller, less able to be heard. I can anticipate myself shrinking to the size of the unworthy to be heard, the dismissed, the displaced. As others talk over me, as the world carries on as if I have never spoken, and never existed.

³¹⁹ Note to myself: I could write here about the tooth. IG's noticing. The fact it was damaged through being pulled about by braces, that I was never asked whether I wanted. That took away my resemblance to my father (and grandfather). That took away my natural bite. The way my bone melted around the tooth, the fear of the dentist, the regrowth of such a tiny thread of bone, against all odds. How it stops me biting in a straightforward way.

Finally I ask myself, in the depths of these anxieties "what do you fear most?". The image is of the dentist putting his hand into my mouth and pulling out my tooth. Wrenching it out without my permission. With a self satisfied sense that it is for my own good.

I wake in the morning from a dream of failing to produce a report for my dearest client.

I am five years old.

I feel completely alone and abused by those I have trusted.

My deer is running into the wood.

On the Saturday morning, between sessions, I meet up with friends to go onto Levellers Day celebrations. I discover that one of my pigs has just caught her tooth in the wire fence, she frightened herself and everyone else with her squealing.

Eventually she has freed herself.

On talking to one of my friends I discover that earlier this morning he hit and killed a deer while driving.

I continue to be kept awake by anxieties about my tooth.

On Tuesday I tell my therapist the above, after a long silence!

I discover my pig self. Strong, frightening, powerful and not to be messed with even when in pain.

She appears in the space created by full attention for me.

So where are these two animal selves in my work?

What do they say about: -

Where and with whom I practice

What issues I work with?

How am I in action, (how) are these animal selves embodied in me?

Where are they in this writing?

This feels very halting. A burst forward, then a retreat.

I wrote the above during a writing workshop day here at Bath.

I was really hesitant about sharing it with the group, in fact at one point had decided not to share it, to exercise my option not to.

However I chose to go with the inquiry, to go fearward;
And saw the whole contained within the moment.

I was afraid to fill the space, anxious about performance.

Feedback at the time:

Was that it was a clear piece of writing, not confused (as had been my anxiety).

It was also moving and took others into these painful places, and brought them back again.

One person wanted to hear more about my pig-self. Watch this space!

It linked my autobiography and my practice together, and demonstrated the style of inquiry and writing that I am using currently.

Also the method of linking therapeutic experiences and insights, dreams and journals.

It left me wondering whether I need to link it more explicitly into "what I do when I leave the house"?