

Post Qualitative Inquiry in Academia

Post Qualitative Inquiry in Academia:

*Animating Potential for
Intensities and Becoming
in Writing*

By

Mary Catherine Garland

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and Becoming in Writing

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For my parents Maureen and Dennis with love and thanks for always encouraging me, supporting me and fighting for me, and with me, to have those all-important second chances in education.

“The author[’s] hope...is that elements of [this book] will stay with a certain number of its readers and will weave into the melody of their everyday lives.”

(Massumi in Deleuze and Guattari, 2015a, xii)

“There’s something about writing books that is out of time. As though the writing only really knows what it’s after once it has begun to make its way into the world.”

(Manning, 2016, ix)

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FOREWORDING?

Conversations with friends and others alight and ferment in the middle of the night. Engagements with philosophers emerge out of the mist and enliven these conversations with fascinating insights, theoretical conundrums and provocations that are always animate in the creation of movements toward, movements elsewhere, movements that make the process of inquiry active in the rejuvenation of substance.

In this fascinating, multi-dimensional and always research-creative book Mary is always taking us on journeys, always surprising us with forays in to the ever presencing of the not yet known and always prompting our readings on to another page and then another page and ... Mary's book is a joy to read, and, in this, it demands a close reading. No book should ever be complete. No book should have a beginning or an end, all books should activate middlings, motivate rhizomatic wanderings, elucidate pensive and imaginative wonderings; always, in becoming, enactive in keeping its readers on their toes, always refreshing memories and always prompting encounterings and thresholdings with the canons of the normatively inscribed, the discursively constructed and the customary lassitudes of the uninspired.

Mary's book does this and more. In her beautifully scripted, intelligently illustrated and carefully worded writings, the vibrancy of her text weaves and folds the fluidities of stories, the animations of characters and the exemplification of theories into always interesting, often exciting and ever tantalising textual experiencings. The moving structuring of Mary's book enacts the force, capaciousness and multiplicitous energies of Deleuzian *agencement*. In this the aridity of linear accounting, the doldrums of prosaic historical development and the predictabilities of the hand holding directing of storying from beginning to end are forcefully and determinedly problematised, challenged and ultimately set aside. In carefully and effectively appropriating the plateaus of Deleuze and Guattari, the landing

sites of Gins and Arakawa and the processualism of Whitehead, the transversal dynamics of the book activate engagements with the images of thought that Mary provides in the book in lively effervescent and constructively rhizomatic ways. Further and in these respects, the liveliness of the creative textual dynamics that Mary sets in play in her writing in this book serves to ensure that this is less a book that provides the reader with information and more a book that is always, to use Simondon's neologism, in-formation.

As a consequence of these structuring forces, the reading and the concomitant theoretical and narrative engagements that entering the always shifting landscapes of Mary's book offers are always on the move. Picking the book up, reading a passage, putting the book down, making some notes, picking it up again and so on, offers a form of repetition that invariably facilitates multiple research-creative differentiations. Mary's characters are deeply involved in the driving forward of the book. These involutions are imbricated with the evolution of the book and always enactive in providing the book with a lively theoretical force. These characters have the capaciousness of compositional, always composing selves, their emergence and re-emergence in the text of the book serves to de-territorialise any flaccid and symbolic sense of characterisation and fixed identity. The population of the book is always on the move, its members are always susceptible to change and in their various exchanges never satisfy the reader with consolidated and established views or the over coded fixities of interpretation and representation. In this we find exemplification of Barad's ethico-onto-epistemological approach where the simplicities of difference and interaction are invariably scrambled and intensified by the sensing of multiplicity and the complexities of always differentiating intra-actions. The composite selves that are always in-formation in Mary's book are not to be pinned down. Like the territorialising play between Deleuze and Guattari's wasp and the orchid, their larval comings to life are always vibrant, incessantly unpredictable and excitingly refreshing as the book unfolds and makes courses in numerous, different ways. In this, Mary's book has the potential to create revelations. The reader can be found following the path of a character, that is perhaps acting an important role in the dramaturgical emergence of the book, when, unexpectedly, something

shifts, a line of flight ruptures the stasis of a given and the ensuing image of thought works to take the surprised reader off in another direction. The energies loosened by the enactments set in play by this dramatic trope parallel the theoretical excitements that Mary's book also offers. In their writing Deleuze and Guattari work to engage a free and wild creation of concepts and Mary, in encouraging us to think with the movements of these differentiating compositional selves, pushes us toward similar practices of experimentation, speculation and thinking differently. In this, the potential of opening doors to the neurodiverse and in creating opportunities that offer challenge to the privileging of the more than simply neurotypical is immense. This is important: in this wonderful book, Mary not only provides us with a sense of the infra-thin, a hint of where it is coming from, it also points forward, suggesting quite emphatically that there are injustices to look at, things to be done and, in worlding, words, thoughts and actions to be invented and forcefully brought to bear.

Ken Gale
University of Plymouth

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Finally, whilst it is my name on the front cover, this book would not exist without all our "Chloes"...

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Dear Readers,

*You may be expecting an introduction here,
but, first, you are asked to read two stories...*

“Chloe’s”...



and

...“Mad Mary’s”

...where the lines for this book



first intersect...

CHLOE'S STORY



“Get up *now*, Chloe!”

“Why? What’s ‘appened?” I ask sleepily. Hannah’s a pain—she’s my twenty year old sister and thinks she knows everything.

“You’ve got college. You’ll be late!” Oh great, fucking college. I only went for the interview to shut Hannah up. I even swore at that manager woman with the short dark hair—what was her name? Tina, Tracey—that was it. She still said I could start the next day—said I had to behave and I mustn’t swear in college, but that I could join. It’s my first day today—lucky me! Oh well, there’s nothing else to do so I may as well go. I won’t learn anything—I never do. I was kicked out of school last year, sent to a pre-sixteen class at another college, but I didn’t go; they couldn’t make me! The other people were awful; they didn’t do any work—I couldn’t concentrate even if I had wanted to.

“Chloe, come *on*!” I can’t even think without Hannah interrupting!

I get out of bed in the room I share with Hannah and my seven year old sister Danielle, step over the toys and make-up covering the faded pink carpet, sort my hair out and search for some clothes: Hannah has clean jeans and a nice cream jumper in her drawer so I take those. I put my mascara, brown eye shadow and dark red lipstick on as heavily as I dare and then search for some food and money. I can’t find either so I slam the door and begin the thirty minute walk to college. It’s early and I don’t see anyone on my estate—lucky them probably still in bed. On the main road there are kids in different uniforms—the clever grammar school ones and the stupid ones like me.

Walking down the College drive, I look at the huge building ahead of me. My lessons will be in there: it's new this year, they said. So what? I thought anything would be better than school, but, suddenly I wish I was going there where I know people, where people are scared of me and where I can do what I like. The door opens and I take a deep breath before walking in. A man in a black uniform stops me:

"Can I see your ID please?"

"Who are you?" I ask—I think I do well not to say "who the fuck are you?", but I'm gonna try not to get kicked out this time.

"College security," he says, "have you got your ID card please?"

"No, it's my first day." I have to give my name and wait while they check that I really am a student. I look around—there's a funny wooden owl on a stand and some boring pictures. Loads of people are hanging around—some must be students, others look old (probably staff); I hurt my neck trying to look up at a weird plane hanging from the ceiling: I hope I won't have to make anything like that! There are another two floors above this one: how will I find my way around? "I can't see you on the system, Chloe. What course are you starting?" I bite my tongue as I try not to swear—I want to get as far as the classroom; I want to try and fit in:

"Sorry, I dunno, but Tracey's in charge." The man picks up a phone.

It's Hannah's fault I swear so much—she makes me angry—she needs to learn to stop interfering with my life. Since Mum left three years ago, Hannah's become unbearable—she's always on at me—worse than Mum ever was. That was when my life changed.

"Okay, Chloe, that's fine," says the security guy putting the phone down, "you can go up to room P20."

"Thank you. Could you tell me where it is please?"

"I'll show you." It's actually quite nice when you're polite to someone and they help you. I do feel a bit nervous, if I'm honest. It's much bigger than school and I don't know anyone. At school everyone knew me—I could order

the younger kids and my classmates around... Most of the teachers were scared of me. I did what I wanted and no-one could stop me.

"Thank you very much," I say to the guy as he walks me to my classroom. So many stairs—isn't there a lift?!

I look at the other students waiting outside. Some look scared—just out of school like me, I suppose—others look older, more confident. They don't scare me. I may be small, but I can look after myself. No one messes with Chloe Blackwell.

"Come in, come in," says a woman from the classroom door who I assume is "Mary". She's not wearing a suit, but she looks smart. She's younger than that manager woman yesterday—maybe she won't be as fierce. She introduces herself as "Mad Mary" and I wonder if she is... She wants us to play some stupid game putting an ajecktif or somethink beginning with the first letter of our first name in front of our name. Before that we have to repeat everyone else's ajecktif and name. I'll never remember—I'll look stupid in front of everyone. I don't even know what an ajecktif is—oh, someone else doesn't know either! I'm not the only stupid one here, but, suddenly, I can't help it, I find myself asking, "why the fuck are we doing this?" "Mad Mary" hesitates for a moment, but then says something stupid about it helping us to get to know each other. I don't want to get to know her or anyone else here, and I certainly don't want them getting to know me, but part of me does want to fit in so I mutter "okay" and go along with it. When it's my turn, I say I can't think of no ajecktif. Someone else, trying to look clever, suggests "cheerful" so that's who I become: "cheerful Chloe". D'oh! My other classmates include "tiny Tom" (he is tiny!), "daring Deryn" (he might be fun!), and "amazing Anna" (she's posh—what's she doing in a dump like this?). I switch off as Miss explains we're all going to do some crap test on a computer. At least I can work on my own—I hate having to talk to anyone.

Halfway through my stupid computer freezes and I suddenly hear myself saying, "Oh for fuck's sake!" The teacher is beside me in an instant. Fuck, I'm in trouble now: I just didn't want to have to start the fucking test again, but she won't understand that! Unbelievably, she just asks if I'm okay. How

stupid: of course I'm not! If I was okay, I wouldn't be saying "oh for fuck's sake", would I? Can't she see the fucking computer's frozen and now I'll have to start the whole stupid test again? Without thinking, I'm shouting at the teacher:

"Fuck off!"

Realising what I've said, I run out as fast as I can. Mad Mary's already let me off saying fuck twice, there's no way I'll get away with it a third time! "Chloe?" I hear her call, not angrily, but I keep running—I need to get as far away as I can. Fuck, now what do I do? She'll tell that Tracey woman, and I'll be kicked out. Just when I thought I might give this place a try. Oh well, fuck 'em, it's done now, but, first, they'll have to find me!

I find the perfect hiding place in university grounds opposite the College. I hang around there hidden amongst the trees and some beautiful tiny blue flowers; no-one questions me and I start to relax, I'm invisible! But then students appear and I realise I'll have to face the music sometime. I walk back slowly, find the classroom again and walk in as if I've been there all the time. Amazingly, the teacher doesn't say anything about me swearing at her or walking out—she just helps me log back on. When she says she is going to get something, I believe her, and by the time my name is called sharply from the doorway, I'd almost forgotten what I'd done. How stupid! Of course I wasn't going to get away with telling a teacher to "fuck off"; I feel sick as I follow Tracey to her office:

"Sit down, Chloe."

I do as I'm told for once, but I stare around the small room filled with boring looking folders trying to look as if I don't care; the only interesting things are a couple of photos on the desk. The children, probably hers, look about my age—I bet they have everything they want. They've got a mum for a start. I'm starving. How long until I can get out of this dump and try and find something to eat? I'll get £30 a week for being here...¹

¹ This refers to Educational Maintenance Allowance paid to students aged sixteen to eighteen in full-time education at the time.

"What did I say to you yesterday, Chloe? You seem to have a very short memory from what I've heard from Mary."

I knew it—that teacher's split on me. I deny everything; I say Miss swore at me. But I am told to leave. I protest—I even sound all my letters like Miss:

"Sorry, I really tried, but it just came out. I was angry with the computer. I won't do it again, I promise."

Tracey looks at me and just for a minute I think it'll be alright, but then she says: "Mary gave you at least two chances, Chloe. You were disruptive and rude. You're clearly not ready to be in a classroom. I can't let you stop everyone else from learning and you can't swear at my staff."

"Fuck you", I yell, "I'll do wha' I wan'!"

"Not here, you won't, Chloe. You've had more than enough chances: you are to leave this College right now. Go!"

Just like that. Tracey reckons she gave me a chance, but I've wasted it. She's right. The College ain't a bad place: the other students have no personality, but they might of been okay. Oh well, back home to Hannah until she finds somewhere else for me to go. At least I've hopefully got that teacher into trouble—teachers think they're above everyone—they deserve to be taught a lesson. I hate them all and the nicer they are and the more they let me get away with, the more I hate them.

"Is that you Chloe?" yells Hannah, "wha' you doin' 'ere this early?"

"Fuck off!" I shout as I run to the bedroom. I so wish it was my own room, but I've got it to myself right now. Fuck, Fuck, Fuck. Why do I always mess everything up? I started off so well—I was polite to the security man, I even joined in that fucking stupid game—cheerful Chloe huh! It was the fucking computer's fault and fucking mad Mary's fault. She didn't have to tell on me. If she can't deal with someone saying "fuck" in her class, she shouldn't be a fucking teacher is what I say.

"Chloe? Wha' 'appened?"

“They kicked me out, whadya think ‘appened? Leave me alone!”

“Oh, Chloe. Why can’t you just be good for five minutes? Wha’ ya gonna do now? You can’t ‘ang around ‘ere all day. I won’ ‘ave it.” As usual, Hannah blames me. Everyone always blames me even when it’s not my fault or even when I’ve tried to be good.

“It wasn’t my fault,” I say defensively.

“Yea right, whose was it then?”

“Everyone was mean to me, the computer lost all my test, the teacher’s crap and that manager’s nasty. She kicked me out.”

“Come on, Chloe, she wouldn’ of kicked ya out for no reason.”

“I swore at the computer and that teacher said I swore at ‘er.”

“Did you?”

“No, course not. She lied”

“Right then, come on.”

“What? Where are we going?”

“Goin’ to sort this out, aren’t I, can’t have fucking teachers lying abou’ my kid sister.”

FUCK. “Just leave it, Hannah, it was my fault as usual, okay, I swore at the teacher...”

MAD MARY'S STORY

Waking up early, preparing to face the challenge of my first class of sixteen–eighteen year old NEETs.² I feel a mixture of excitement and nerves. I recall the final words of my PGCE³ tutor, “enjoy it!”, as I left the safe confines of the University, my life as a trainee over, theoretically ready to teach solo... And I have been enjoying it, but, until now I have been teaching adults under the Train to Gain scheme:⁴ adults working in factories, care homes and hospitals. There have been one or two reluctant students, but, being taught in their workplace, often on their own, offers little scope for “challenging behaviour”. It is the thought of not being able to control a class that makes me nervous today. I have not taught this age group since I finished my PGCE course nearly eighteen months ago, but I rose to the challenge then and I will do so again today... Surely being an actual lecturer, rather than a trainee, will give me the necessary authority to control teenagers???

Time to get up! I go in search of my boys–Eliot and Joe. Eliot is in his usual place on the sofa. I stroke him; he follows me to the kitchen for food. I can't find Joey, but this is not unusual–he is probably just under the tree. I shower and dress putting on jeans and a top initially as I have got to go down the garden and hopefully get Joe in! Yes, there he is, curled up in a ball–he has not even heard me approach.

“Hi Joey,” I murmur quietly picking him up. I hold him close and carry him inside. In the kitchen, I feed him, stroke him and then go back to my bedroom to get dressed in the clothes I chose yesterday; clothes I feel make me look like a lecturer and that I feel confident wearing: my smart, formal grey trousers and my long-sleeved black top with white at the top. I clip the sides

² The term “NEETs” describes young people not in education, employment, or training.

³ Postgraduate Certificate in Education.

⁴ Train to Gain was a Government initiative (discontinued in 2010) enabling employees without Literacy and/or Numeracy qualifications at level 2 (considered equivalent to GCSE grade C or above) to be taught at their workplace.

of my hair back and look in the mirror. Do I look like a lecturer? I think so! I have the right balance between formal and approachable. Stroking each kitty in turn, telling them I will be home later, I leave them more food before calling out “‘bye Eli, ‘bye Joey” as I leave the house. I get into my small, blue car on the drive and begin the thirty minute journey to work.

I turn into the College’s drive—sunrays on my face and arms can only be a positive sign. We are not allowed to park without a permit, but it is so early that there is no-one in the security hut—it is so much quicker to park here than to do “park and ride”, or “park”, wait ages for a bus, “ride” and then walk...

My heart beats faster as I approach the building. Don’t worry, you’ll be fine, I tell myself taking some deep breaths as I walk through the doors. The office is empty; I have already prepared my materials so I spend the time printing and photocopying, and running through my planned session in my mind, yet again.

“Hi Mary, how are you? Big day today, you’ve got Rise Up, haven’t you?”

I turn around and greet Phil trying to look more relaxed than I feel: Rise Up is the name given to the course for sixteen-eighteen year old NEETs many of whom have been excluded from schools because of their behaviour. Its very name sends shivers down my spine, but Phil and I were on the same teacher training course and did our first placement together so there is no need to “act” with him; I am conscious, however, that he now has an additional year’s experience of teaching this age group and I do not want to appear nervous.

“Can I have a quick word, Mary?” The section manager, Tracey, appears at my side. Desperately trying to hide my nervousness, I say quickly, “Yes, of course.” Tracey sits down:

“There’s a new student starting in Rise Up today—Chloe. She was a bit mouthy in her interview, but she’s assured me she wants to learn. Let me know how she gets on this morning.” My stomach turns over. I wasn’t expecting this. Knowing there is definitely a potentially challenging student

in the group is much, much worse than knowing only that there could be one.

“Is that okay?” Realising I have been silent for too long, I say quickly, “yes, of course, it’s fine.” Who am I kidding?!

With twenty minutes before the start of the class, I gather my resources, take a few deep breaths and prepare to meet Rise Up. Not for the first time I wonder why I am putting myself through this! My plan, once I had completed the PGCE course, was to teach German in Adult Education. I was never going to teach in a FE college: I enrolled in one aged eighteen, but left at lunchtime! What had compelled me to not only apply for this job, but, accept it? There is no backing out now—the students will be here shortly. Please, please, please let it be okay...

Standing in the classroom, I organise my materials and try to look busy. Thoughts are running through my head the whole time: you can do this, you have been fine before and you will be fine now; in two hours this class will be over! I take a deep breath and open the door: the students come in—some looking nervous, some relaxed, one or two actually look quite defiant, but they could be covering up their nerves (like me!). One of those is probably Chloe... Oh, they are waiting for me to say something! I am the lecturer; I have to start the session... Hopefully sounding less nervous than I feel, I greet the class, introduce myself, and explain the first activity: introduce yourself using an adjective with the same letter as your first name, but, first, repeat all the adjectives and names already given. I had taken this idea from one of the teachers who I had observed teaching a similar cohort in one of my PGCE placement colleges: it had worked well. Knowing this, and that it is an appropriate activity, gives me confidence. One student, not unexpectedly, asks what an adjective is. I am pleased that I remember to invite other students to answer (although I must drop the ends of my words more to sound more approachable) and hope my relief is not obvious when one of the boys explains an adjective is a describing word; I was worried that my question would be ignored. I start the activity by looking at the student nearest me and saying: “I’m mad Mary,” (I would later regret this choice of adjective!), “who are you?” when I hear:

“Why the fuck are we doing this?” Uh-oh, what do I say now? My first challenge! I think quickly and, sounding much calmer than I feel, reply:

“So we can all get to know each other; it will help me remember your names.” The girl, who has short, blonde hair, must be Chloe—if not, there are two potentially “challenging” students in the room! I pray that she will accept my answer and join in: hopefully concealing my relief as she mutters “okay”, and I repeat my opening sentence.

After the activity, I feel a sense of achievement: everyone participated, and as a group, we managed to go round the table getting everyone’s name (and adjective) right, and the girl who I now know is Chloe joined in. But, she did say “fuck” and I did not comment. Too late now. Oh well, she was not swearing at anyone and she may not have joined in so easily if I had told her off. Right, move on quickly, get them settled at the computers and then the pressure is hopefully off me. Poor things—I can’t believe they have to take the English diagnostic assessment on their first day! Trying to reassure them I present the assessment as “answering some questions on a computer so we can see what you know and what we need to help you with during the course”. I still do not sound like the students, but I worry they will think I am imitating them as I try not to sound the ends of my words too much. I am suddenly very conscious of my voice and that they might think I sound “posh”. I do not think I do, but I know my PGCE peers who spoke more like the students had better relationships with them. I am still not familiar with the assessment website, but I have got the temporary login and password and just hope that nothing goes wrong...

One hour after the start of the lesson everyone is quietly working through the assessment and I start to relax: this is okay, I should not have worried so much. However, the silence is suddenly broken:

“Oh for fuck’s sake.”

Chloe! What do I do? I move over to her and say quietly:

“Are you okay?”

"Fuck off!" I stand there, heart thudding faster and faster, louder and louder, knowing I have to think very quickly and knowing I cannot ignore the language this time as it was directed at me and I cannot have the whole class thinking they can swear at me, and suddenly a line from a PGCE behaviour workshop comes to mind, just when it is needed most:

*"I don't swear at you, Chloe, so I don't expect you to swear at me." Will it work in practice? I hope so! My palpitations continue: I am expecting to be told to "f*** off" again, but, Chloe simply storms out of the room. I am not sure which is worse! The other students look nonplussed and carry on with their work. What should I do now? Where is the real teacher? When will I be rescued from this horrible, horrible situation? Oh, I am the teacher, no-one is going to come and help...*

I want to run away, but I cannot leave the room. For the first time, I feel very alone. It is entirely my responsibility to handle this situation correctly, but I do not know what the correct thing to do is. I look at the clock: it is a little early for a break. I take a deep breath and tell myself I cannot do anything until then and then I will go and, and do what? I am going to have to tell Tracey what I have done. What will she say? I am afraid of having done the wrong thing, of having failed the first test by not being able to handle a sixteen year old girl. I am more than twice her age—what is wrong with me?

"Okay, everyone, time to have a short break," I say, trying to conceal my relief and my fear for, although I can now go and get some advice, I will also have to admit what has happened. When the last student leaves the room, I lock the door and go in search of Tracey. Fortunately, she is at her desk: I knock, she looks round and asks, "Alright? How's it going?" I am suddenly unable to speak; I stand there desperately trying to hide the fact that I am fighting back tears now that I am out of the classroom, and fervently wishing I had not come straight here. You are a lecturer, I remind my self, you cannot cry in front of your new manager! Tracey looks at me impatiently and demands to know what has happened:

I utter Chloe's name: Chloe has happened...

Looking annoyed, Tracey says, “well, something’s obviously happened, but, I can’t help, if you don’t tell me what it is.” I realise I have got to say something—I am making the situation worse by acting like a total idiot—what is wrong with me? There are a thousand words going round my head, but I cannot get any of them to come out. I have to regain my teacher persona very, very quickly. I take a deep breath:

“Sorry ... Chloe ... Chloe stormed out of the classroom.”

“Why?”

It is the obvious response, but so hard to answer. I take another deep breath: “She swore at me and when I told her not to, she left the room.” There, I have said it. Now I just have to wait for the axe to fall.

“What did she say?” Oh no, what do I say. Do I use the “f” word in front of Tracey?

“She told me to “f off”.”

“Why?”

*“Chloe was doing the assessment on the computer and I heard her say “oh for f***’s sake” so I asked her if she were okay and she told me to “f off” and walked out.”*

Tracey sighs and says, “right, that’s it, she can’t speak to my staff like that. I’ll go and talk to her.” I panic: the whole class will think I am stupid now—the manager has to come and deal with a student because I cannot handle her. My first class and I cannot cope. I feel a total failure. I want to say “no”, but I know I have no choice.

We walk to the classroom: all the students are patiently waiting outside, except Chloe. I let the students in. Tracey says quietly: “Come and find me if Chloe comes back,” pats me on the arm, and walks away. What does that gesture mean? Does it mean Tracey has noticed how pathetically shaken I am? I feel even worse now. I take yet another deep breath and face the students again. About half an hour later, just as I am beginning to relax, Chloe returns. I cannot say anything; I help her log on before telling the

students I am just going to get something from the office. Tracey is not there: I panic; I go into the staffroom and am relieved to see Phil. Dropping my act, I say:

"I've messed everything up. One of the students swore at me and stormed out."

"Hey, that's not your fault. Have you told Tracey?" I explain that she asked me to come and get her when Chloe came back, but she is not in her room.

"Don't worry, go back to the class and I'll send Tracey along when she comes back."

"Thanks, Phil," I say gratefully.

Will looks over, "you okay to go back?"

"Yes, I'm fine, but thank you," I lie, anxious not to lose face completely.

Walking back to the classroom, I tell my self that I have just got to go back in, and carry on as if nothing has happened. I enter the room—the students are still working on their assessments. My mind wanders as I wonder what made Chloe swear at me, what I could have done differently to avoid the incident, how I could have handled it so that Chloe stayed in the room...

"Chloe! Come here!" I cannot look at Chloe or Tracey (she sounds so authoritative—will I ever be able to be like that?) so I pretend to be busy with another student. Hopefully hiding my relief that Chloe is now out of the room, at least for a while, I finish the class. I feel sorry for the students at having witnessed the incident; they are a nice group. I try to act like nothing has happened as I say goodbye, and see you on Thursday. I go back to the staffroom and wait, for the second time today, for the axe to fall.

I do not have to wait long. My heart pounds again as Tracey comes in and sits down next to me:

"Lovely girl: she swore at me too."

"Oh," is all I can manage.

"I need you to complete a misconduct form. I've told her I'm withdrawing her place and she must leave the college premises immediately."

My heart sinks. It is worse than I thought—Chloe has lost her place because of my inability to handle the situation. I risk saying: "She'll settle down, it's only her first day," meaning "I'm sure I'll learn how to handle her better."

"It's too late for that; I warned her in her interview that I wouldn't tolerate behaviour like that. We gave her a chance, but she's blown it."

I blurt out, "I didn't handle her right."

Tracey looks at me and says: "This isn't your fault, Mary; it's Chloe's fault. There is something I need to ask you though: did you swear at her?"

"No! I asked her if she was okay and, after she swore at me, I just said that I don't swear at her so I don't expect her to swear at me."

"Okay, I didn't think you would have, but Chloe said you did so obviously I have to ask. Are you okay?" I say yes although I am not. Tracey looks at me again and says: "Sometimes, students just aren't ready to learn. She'll probably come back in a few years when she's grown up a bit and can control her behaviour." As I begin to realise that Tracey doesn't hold me responsible, she leaves the room and I feel partly reassured, but also slightly sick that I was the first lecturer Chloe met and her college course is now over. I find the misconduct form that Tracey requested. Once I have done that, I will reflect on the incident in my reflective journal: that usually helps me see what I could have done differently.

Sitting alone at my desk, my thoughts are racing: you should not be a lecturer, Chloe took the brave first step of walking through the doors of the College and you ruined it for her; if she had had anyone else first, she would still be on the course... "Hey," calls a friendly voice—Will—as if he can read my mind, "don't worry about it, she just didn't want to be here."

"But she did," I say, "she came to class today and I ruined it for her."

"No, she ruined it for herself," says Will firmly. "You're not so important that you have the power to ruin someone's life." I frown, Will's right, I'm not important, I don't have power over anyone...

"But, because of me, she's having to leave College."

"No, she's leaving because she swore at a lecturer and at the section manager." Will de-personalises the situation and I know he is right. The fact she also swore at Tracey, the manager, takes the responsibility away from me, but, if I had not reported it...

"It wasn't personal, you know, you just happened to be the lecturer in front of her at the time. It could have been me or Phil: it wouldn't have mattered who it was." Will's words reassure me that maybe I haven't done anything too seriously wrong, but doesn't everyone, especially a sixteen year old, deserve a second chance?

PREFACE



Written for everyone ever denied the opportunity of fulfilling their academic potential, this is “Chloe’s story”. Using *composite selves*, a phrase chosen to indicate multiplicities and movement, to story both the initial event leading to “Chloe’s” immediate withdrawal from a Further Education college and an imaginary second chance to support her whilst at university, this Deleuzo-Guattarian (2015a) “assemblage” of post qualitative inquiries offers challenge to discursively constructed structures and writing conventions in academia. Adopting a posthuman approach to theorising to shift attention towards affects and intensities always relationally in action in multiple “assemblages”, these inquiries aim to decentre individual “lecturer” and “student” identities. Illuminating movements and moments quivering with potential for change, then, hoping thereby to generate second chances for all, different approaches to writing are exemplified which trouble those academic constraints by fostering inquiry and speculation: moving away from “what *is*” towards “what *if*”.

With the formatting itself also always troubling the rigid Deleuzo-Guattarian (2015a) “segmentary lines” structuring orthodox academic practice, imbricated in these inquiries are attempts to exemplify Manning’s (2015; 2016) “artfulness” through shifts in thinking within and around an emerging PhD thesis. As writing resists organising, the verb *thesisising* comes into play to describe the processes involved in creating an always-moving body of writing. Using “landing sites” (Gins and Arakawa, 2009) as a landscaping device, freely creating emerging “lines of flight” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2015a) so often denied to students forced to adhere to strict academic conventions, this “movement-moving” (Manning, 2014) opens up opportunities for change as in Manning’s (2016) “research-creation”. Arguing for a moving away from writing-representing towards writing-

inquiring, towards a writing “that *does*” (Wyatt and Gale, 2018, 127), and toward writing as immanent doing, it is hoped to animate potential for intensities and becoming in writing, offering opportunities and glimmerings of the not-yet-known.