Public Pedagogies
*Everyday Politics on and of the Body*

M. FRANCYNE HUCKABY

It is the human body, young or old, fat or thin, of whatever color, the conscious body, that looks at the stars. It is the body that writes. It is the body that speaks. It is the body that fights. It is the body that loves and hates. It is the body that suffers. It is the body that dies. It is the body that lives. —Freire (quoted in Freire & Macedo, 2000, p. 204)

And may I add, it is the body that makes our illusions real.

We Weave Worlds with Words

Mrs. Jane Elliott, in the now iconic documentary *The Eye of the Storm* (Peters, 1970), de/re/constructs reality for a third grade class with words. On Monday, she holds class as she would normally. She encourages her students to be patient with each other as the camera frames the homogeneous student body as a cohesive community. On Tuesday, Elliott changes the world with words:

“It might be interesting to judge people today by the color of their eyes. Would you like to try this?”
“Yeah!” the class responds in unison.
“Since I am the teacher and I have blue eyes, I think the blue-eyed people should be on top the first day. I mean the blue-eyed people are the better people in this room.”

One boy with dark hair and blue eyes responds, “Un-uhn.”
“Oh, yes they are,” Elliott reassures. “Blue-eyed people are smarter than brown-eyed people.”

A boy’s voice proclaims, “My dad isn’t stupid.”
“Is your dad brown-eyed?”
“Yeah.”
“One day you came to school and you told us that he kicked you.”
“He did.”

“Do you think a blue-eyed father would kick his son?” Elliott asks without pausing for a response. “My dad’s blue-eyed; he never kicked me. Greg’s dad is blue-eyed; he never
kicked him. What colored eyes did George Washington have? This is a fact. Blue-eyed people are better than brown-eyed people.”

The boy silently continues his resistance and shakes head, “No.”

“Are you brown-eyed or blue-eyed?” Elliott pauses for a response.

“Blue,” the boy quietly states.

“Why are you shaking your head?”

“I don’t know,” he states as though he questions his assertion.

“Are you sure that you are right?”

In the next scene, the boy’s head is facedown on his desk, enveloped under his folded arms.

Elliott offers examples of her thesis verbally and uses words to create new rules. In the documentary, the children’s bodies transform before the camera and, therefore, in the images captured by our eyes. Some become animated with excitement, as illustrated by one girl who pulls her body up several inches and broadens her smile as Mrs. Elliott suggests George Washington had blue eyes. Other bodies sink and slump. A girl with brown hair and brown eyes collapses into her belly, shoulders shifting forward as she frowns when Mrs. Elliott further explains the new rules that will be enacted upon her person.

Soon, the students themselves take on the rules, embodying the new ideas and ideals of brown-eyedness and blue-eyedness. Then they begin to propose additions to the rules. One boy suggests Mrs. Elliott should keep the yard stick close at hand in case the brown-eyed students act like brown-eyeds, and another wants to warn the cafeteria staff that brown-eyeds need to be watched carefully so they do not go back for second helpings during lunch. Uncomfortably and swiftly, the class community transforms into a bifurcated society where one group excessively governs the other. Instead of cooperation and respect, we, as viewers, see the genesis and proliferation of oppression.

On Wednesday, Mrs. Elliott re-constructs the illusion, “Yesterday I was wrong. Blue-eyeds are not better than brown-eyeds.” While most children remain silent, the one boy, who resisted the previous day, expresses his concern, saying, “Oh, boy.” The brown-eyed children show pleasure and excitement in their faces as they begin to hear Mrs. Elliott reverse the rules. The blue-eyed children look fearful.

One of the more poignant moments occurs when, as viewers, we glimpse the ways this contrived world becomes reified in what the children can and cannot do with a timed, card pack activity. When the students are on top, transformed by the pedagogies of privilege, they seem brilliant as they speed through the activity with accuracy and effectively articulate the circumstances of their existence. Through pedagogies of discrimination, the students on the bottom perform slowly and poorly during their lesson. Reduced to gestures and monosyllabic responses, they barely manage expressing how they slipped so far academically in one day. In these moments, while the discourse surrounding them is fiction, the embodiment of the illusion, I argue, is very much real.

Because Elliott was explicit in her weaving of the brown-eyed/blue-eyed worlds with words, the students are able to notice how and why their academic performance changed. In our daily lives, public discourses form and shape us in ways that we do not acknowledge as pedagogical. Definitions of the word pedagogy do not do it justice. Yes, pedagogy is the art, science, practice, and theory of teaching, but it is equally about learning. The term unifies the experiences and actions of learning and teaching while deconstructing the notion that learning is simply an effect of teaching. Freire (1989, 1998a) suggests that education, in any form, includes the teacher, the student, the object taught, and methods of instruction. Pedagogy, however, is not these discrete elements, but the relationships among them. Students and teachers interacting within rela-
tionships are all simultaneously teaching and learning, and entwined with the object of study and approaches to teaching/learning.

Too frequently we conceptually confine pedagogy to the intentional practices of teachers within classroom boundaries; however, whether acknowledged or not, pedagogy breaks through imposed borders to take on numerous forms and enactments in many sites. I propose that our focus on planned pedagogy within schools has left us less well-equipped to recognize and critically understand the workings of pedagogies circulating in our daily lives. Nonetheless, these pedagogies are no less formative than Elliott’s lesson on discrimination, and like this lesson they thrust our embodied beings into simulations and virtualities we mistake for reality (Baudrillard, 1987).

We Are Woven into Worlds with Words

Maya Angelou, the legendary poet, writer, and actor, explains the power of words to the comedian, Dave Chappelle, in their Iconoclast paired interview (Berlinger & Sinofsky, 2006a). Angelou suggests to Chappelle that we need to be careful with words. She proclaims that words are things,

> It’s non-visible and audible only for the time it’s there. It hangs in the air, but I believe it is a thing. I believe it goes into the upholstery, and into the rugs, and into my hair, and into my clothes. And finally even into my body. I believe that words are things and I live on them. I look at the word, the N-word, which I really am obliged to call it that because it was created to divest people of their humanity.

Chappelle responds, “Absolutely.”

Now when I see a bottle come from the pharmacy, it says, “P-O-I-S-O-N,” and then there’s skull and bones, then I know that the content of that thing—the bottle is nothing—but the content is poison. If I pour that content into Bavarian crystal, it is still poison.

> “Whoa,” Chappelle layers his word over Angelou’s explanation.

> I’m just saying, I’m just saying, mind you, it’s just an idea that words are things.

We not only weave worlds with words, but words and the actions they inspire, even when the words are untrue, form who we are. These discourses are at once productive and reproductive; someone comes into an identifiable being within the social context, and the new unity is then discursively reproduced (Foucault, 1980; Kendall & Wickham, 1999). Such a process is captured on film in Mrs. Elliott’s classroom as non-existent identities, blue-eyedness and brown-eyedness, are developed with words and reified with proliferating actions. Extending Foucault’s analogy of discursive power-knowledge as a net (instead of a force), we can imagine public pedagogies similarly. Unlike a force, which relies on an agent to wield a metaphoric blow to a target, the net traps unknowing subjects. We can become entangled and inadvertently assist in the entrapment of others. We can intentionally bind others by positioning sections of the net or find ourselves moving freely through torn sections. We may also become trapped repeatedly in an area designed and maintained for entanglements (Huckaby, 2005), but unlike fish ensnared by humans, we bind ourselves. We are the weavers of this net and we collectively tend and mend it as conscious and unconscious political activities.

In the award-winning documentary A Girl Like Me (Reel Works Teen Filmmaking & Davis, 2005), Kiri Davis explores the ways blackness and whiteness transform not only the consciousness of black teenage girls and children, but also the ways these ideas, ideals, and stereotypes manifest in self-judgment and self-transformation. The teenage documentarian replicates the
Clark doll experiment, *Effect of Prejudice and Discrimination on Personality Development* (cited in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954) with African American children and dolls. As viewers, we only hear Davis’ voice posing questions to the children: Which doll is the nice doll? Why is she the nice doll? Which doll is the bad doll? Why? The young children sit at a table with two dolls, one brown-skinned and one white-skinned. The eye-level shots capture the children’s faces, torsos, and the dolls laid supine on a table. With 15 of the 21 African American children preferring the white doll, the children matter-of-factly conflate good and nice with the white-skinned doll and bad with the brown-skinned doll and illustrate cultural ideals that associate whiteness and the best virtues (Dyer, 1997).

My heart sinks as I watch the last child in the experiment segment of the film respond to Davis’s question, “Can you give me the doll that looks like you?” As I see the child intuitively reach for the nice and good doll, I believe she thinks of herself as also having these qualities. As her brown hand reaches, she notices the doll’s pale skin and pauses before touching the brown-skinned doll. Instead of holding-up this doll for the camera, as other children have done, she pushes it away from herself and towards Davis, the camera, and us. I doubt the child was explicitly taught such differentiations, but instead acquired what Dewey (1938) calls *collateral learning*. We all experience similar unnoticed and highly effective public pedagogies and are vulnerable to misunderstanding their falsehoods as truth. Such pedagogies, public and institutionalized, in and of themselves are neither good nor bad, but as an apparatus of power they do hold the potential to harm or benefit and their lessons form our “enduring attitudes” (Dewey, 1938, p. 48).

While we can conceptualize pedagogies as neutral, Freire (1973) warns that neutrality is siding with the powerful and is particularly critical of the banking forms of pedagogy that blind us to the potential of our own histories. In this sense, history is not given to us or lived-through. Instead, history is made with our actions in the present. Thus, banking pedagogies work us into a world already created and attempt to limit our influence. Banking pedagogies also strip away the reciprocity of pedagogical relationships, making the student simply the recipient of authoritative educators, content of study, and imposing technologies of instruction (Freire, 1989). Public pedagogies are potentially dangerous because the educator(s), content, and method(s) of instruction are hidden and diffused in the repetition of the discursive and quotidian, and are therefore disassociated from their impact—collateral learning.

*Blue, brown, black, white, good, bad, nice* are just words, but words are everyday politics and enacted pedagogies made real on our bodies and sustained through practices of our bodies.

**We Are Woven into Virtualities with Words and Images**

Like words, images are things, but unlike words, they convey complex messages silently. Walk into any store with a magazine rack, watch TV commercials on any given day, look at the billboards on our streets and highways, or watch nearly any moving image on the big screen or the at-home screen, and you will see our bodies and realities mediated by the fantasies of marketers, directors, producers, artists, and the like.

Norman Rockwell’s (1954) illustration, *Girl at Mirror*, depicts a nearly adolescent girl viewing herself alongside Jane Russell’s image on a magazine page (see Figure 8.1). The girl and Russell are similar; both have brown hair styled away from their faces and pale skin. This March 6, 1954, *Saturday Evening Post* cover, often interpreted as Rockwell capturing the moment just beyond childhood at the beginning of womanhood, assumes Rockwell painted innocence and nostalgia uncritically. As I look closely into his paintings, I see a slow, subtle, and steady critique that culminates in his more obviously political paintings that address race relations. *Girl at Mirror* is quietly political.
The girl, viewing her reflection and Russell, is sullen with the slight down turn of her head. She appears to be longing to become what she is not, and by her feet are the tools necessary for shaping her 2-D reflection, and thus her 3-D body, in the image of the 2-D Russell—brush, comb, lipstick. Cast aside is her doll. Halpern (2006) writes, “there is something slightly indecent about [the doll’s] posture. With its skirts hiked up and its petticoats revealed” (p. 120), Halpern continues, “it seems to have the mirror’s edge pressed between its legs” (Halpern, quoted in Blackburn, 2007, ¶ 9) along with the reflection of the grooming utensils in the mirror’s corner. The doll’s position, carefully devised and painted by Rockwell, appears casually tossed on the floor. The toy of childhood is not simply discarded for the tools of adolescence. Instead, the mirror image of the not-yet woman is wedged awkwardly between the legs of the inanimate doll that cannot move from its position. Rockwell has captured the in-between space of utopias and heterotopias for our reflection.

Utopias present society in perfection or inversion and cannot be realized in a place. Foucault (1998) explains:

‘The mirror is a utopia after all, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal space that opens up virtually behind the surface; I am over there where I am not, a kind of shadow that gives my own visibility, that enables me to look at myself there where I am absent—a mirror utopia. (p. 179)

Unlike Utopia, heterotopias, as cultural counter-sites, enact utopias effectively as they simultaneously represent, contest, and invert real cultural places. Heterotopias may exist in actual places, but are outside of and diverge from the sites they reflect back to us. Foucault (1998) continues to describe mirrors,

But it is also a heterotopia that the mirror really exists, in that it has a sort of return effect on the place that I occupy. Due to the mirror, I discover my absence at the place where I am since I see myself over there. From that gaze which settles on me, as it were, I come back to myself and I begin once more to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in the sense that it makes this place I occupy at the moment I look at myself in the glass both utterly real, connected with the entire space surrounding it, and utterly unreal—since, to be perceived, it is obliged to go by way of that virtual point which is over there. (p. 179)

The mirror is a simultaneous experience of utopia and heterotopia. Rockwell has fashioned such an experience in this painting but has concealed the surrounding space, the world, in dark tones. Thus, the girl, like her toy, cannot easily escape. Trapped by her image in the physicality of the mirror before her and the blacked-out world around her, the girl has only one reprieve.
from the study of her image and Russell, as Rockwell has framed it, which is to leave her stool and enter a dark void—the unknown.

Y. M. Barnwell’s lyrics, sung by Sweet Honey in the Rock (1993), offer an alternative to such an entrapment with No Mirrors in My Nana’s House. The song alleviates the need for escape by eliminating the active juxtaposition of the reflected image and the material body with idealized forms:

There were no mirrors in my Nana’s house,
no mirrors in my Nana’s house.
And the beauty that I saw in everything
was in her eyes.

I never knew that my skin was too black.
I never knew that my nose was too flat.
I never knew that my clothes didn’t fit.
I never knew there were things that I’d missed,
cause the beauty in everything
was in her eyes...

The musical arrangement feels hopeful. The child learns to identify beauty in the world and in her person through the living, reciprocal mirror of her grandmother’s eyes. Creating a temporary escape, the grandmother negates the pervasive illusion of the unattainable ideal within her home by exiling mirrors. The problem appears subverted. While the song explicitly tells of the lessons not learned, the ones “I never knew,” the lyric litotes in their negation reveal a discovered blackness, broad nose, misfitting clothing, and things missed. With this song, Sweet Honey in the Rock shows us a way out of the destructive potentialities of public pedagogies by seemingly denying the realities of the self that become problematic in juxtaposition with the public ideal. The strategy of eliminating the child’s image does not prevent her from learning that she does not match imagined perfection. May I suggest that the unreal ideal is problematic, for it makes a real human appear undesirable. The child’s image, which is perfectly hers, is not the problem and should not be exiled. We need to scrutinize and challenge pedagogical strategies that fool us into thinking real beings are less desirable than things unreal.

Contemporary images of the mediated body offer exaggerated, less attainable, and often unrealistic ideals. In 1979, the advertising industry spent 20 billion dollars, in 1999 180 billion dollars, and more recently over 200 billion annually to expose us to over 3,000 advertisements each day (Kilbourne, 2000). If we were interested in utilizing an approach similar to Nana’s by not attending to such images, we would need to disconnect from much of public life in our globalized world, including avoiding the checkout lanes of most grocery stores. Such images are pedagogical, as are the placement of them on the paths we take as we move through our daily lives. Whether we pay active, critical attention to these mediated images of our human bodies (and beings) or not, we learn from them. As manufactured illusions, they are sticky like thick cobwebs and hard to shake from our consciousness. Such pedagogies are beyond the teachings in families and values of individuals even when actively denounced; they are banking forms of pedagogy that target all of us. Boys and men are not exempt.

Katz in Tough Guise (Jhally, 1999) humorously illustrates the transition of the mediated male from the typical body, through the not easily achieved muscular body, and to the absurdly hyper-masculinized form by chronicling G. I. Joe action figures and film portrayals of Batman over half a century. A similar phenomenon occurred with Texas Christian University’s horned frog mascot. Addy the All American Frog’s modest persona was transformed in name and form
to the stronger *Super Frog* during the 20th century, and the 21st century brought exaggerated, hyper-masculine muscles (see Figure 8.2).

Images of bodies, moving and still, are heterotopias. They are real things that create illusions and virtual worlds, tempting us. They are seductive in Baudrillard’s sense in that they draw our energies into maintaining and reifying the illusion, which we live through our embodied beings, instead of living more humanly and humanely through our bodies as they are real. Baudrillard (1987) argues that such a state exists outside of history as a simulation, a virtual world, not as reality. The images before us are politically intentional, carefully and thought-fully constructed ideals and ideas that we may “buy.” Unfortunately, we too often sell out ourselves in the process.

**We Are Woven by the Pedagogy of Everyday Politics**

We too rarely acknowledge that education is political. As Torres (in Freire, 1998b) explains, “politics, power, and education are an indissoluble unity” (p. 6). As such, political clarity is necessary for education (Freire, 1998b) within formal sites and public pedagogies.

Director Quentin Tarantino in his *Iconoclast* pairing with musician Fiona Apple (Berlinger & Sinofsky, 2006b) uses explicitly sexual language to describe what he does as he plays with his audience in his films. He wants his audience to climax (metaphorically), but not on our terms. Instead, he creates and directs a moving image of a world that intentionally withholds gratification until he has taken us down the unexpected, uncontrolled road of *his* fantasy. While I am hesitant to quote Tarantino verbatim and include his profanity within my writing, I also want to share how he expresses his work as a film director. He says, “That’s me, just director as torturer, director as ‘fuck with ya,’ because I can.” Not quite as graphic as Tarantino, Norman Mailer (quoted in Jarecki, 2005), in response to Jarecki’s differentiation between novels and movies as “onanistic art as opposed to orgiastic art,” describes the power of the director:

Well, I can tell you what I mean by the excitement of directing, which is—you are a general. I always wanted to be a general, and the happy aspect of it is that very rarely is there any real blood. You have all the power of a general, and everyone treats you like a general. I have one favorite story I tell over and over and over. I’ve been married six times, and
with all six wives, sooner or later, I wanted them to do something with their hair, and they’d say, “Get lost.” It never failed. Whatever I wanted; never got it.

Now I was a director…. The hairstylist brings [Isabella Rossellini] up to me and asks how do you like Isabella’s hair. I say, “I like it, but I think she needs a little curl right here.” [Mailer points to his temple.]

“Yes, Sir.” And off they go.

Wow. I mean, when you’re a man and your notions about women are carried out for you, that’s as close to heaven as we are going to get.

Mailer confesses to us, through this documentary, that he creates in film and text what is unavailable to him in his lived-world with non-fictional women. Movies and other forms of public pedagogy educate us in their form and content, as well as through the materialization of fantasies. The political implications of fantasy turned pedagogy differ for us in terms of our genders, races, sexual orientations, cultures, social classes, faiths, and the like.

I remember the moment I realized a favorite song was not simply a love song, but layered with meaning much like heterotopias. Seduced by the soothing sound of Roberta Flack’s *Killing Me Softly* (1973) and caught in the complexity of female youth, I took her critique uncritically as matter of fact until The Fugees’ cover (1996) sobered me with its strong beat. I was able to hear the lyrics with new insights:

I heard he sang a good song, I heard he had a style.
And so I came to see him to listen for a while.
And there he was this young boy, a stranger to my eyes.

Strumming my pain with his fingers,
Singing my life with his words,
Killing me softly with his song,
Killing me softly with his song,
Telling my whole life with his words,
Killing me softly with his song…

I felt all flushed with fever, embarrassed by the crowd,
I felt he found my letters and read each one out loud.
I prayed that he would finish but he just kept right on…

He sang as if he knew me in all my dark despair.
And then he looked right through me as if I wasn’t there.
But he just came to singing, singing clear and strong.

While “he” may not be physically killing, his song creates a limit-situation as an act of oppression. Because “he” limits the singer’s affirmation of herself, even though couched in sweet melodies, “he” enacts violence (Freire, 1989).

Accepting such virtualities for ourselves and expecting them of others is political, as is challenging them. Because the social world and its relations of power are of our own making, we can act to make them different.

Crime shows bring images of violence, death, rape, and murder into our homes daily, and many of us watch. The character Jennifer Jareau of *Criminal Minds*, determines which serial killer cases to investigate. In one episode (Gallager, Davis, & Fisher, 2008), she realizes that she matches the victim profile; indeed, she matches the profile in most episodes. She sees her image reflected by the glare of the victims’ photographs that eerily stare back at her and those of us
in the audience. Jareau and the victims are each others’ inverted utopias and heterotopias. In a form of literary irony played for us on the TV screen, Jareau points to a limit-situation. It is as if her character is asking us, “Are you not troubled by seeing bodies, which are in some ways like your body, so frequently destroyed?” In the “reality” of the character, the murders are real. In the reality of our homes, the murders are entertainment, or perhaps, opportunities for knowing limit-situations.

Limit-situations are not the places where possibilities end, but are instead the location of possibilities beginning (Freire, 1989) and where we may act. These moments of action, and only such moments, are sites of freedom (Arendt, 2006). We need to be/become intimate with the nuanced problem of limit-situations as contexts for our actions. Such an intimacy must be critical and conscious, not merely accepting, and seek to understand and pose problems from within. In other words, we must know the simulations we live and their impact on our beings, learn how illusions are created in our worlds, and seek the real. Such actions are making history through the present as opposed to being already formed and woven by history. Finding our ways to the reality and possibilities of our beings means letting go, moving away from, rupturing from the illusions that have formed us. Like the girl in the mirror, we may choose to remain captivated and captured or stand and step into an ontological paradox that entraps us within an illusion materialized through our bodies while it shields us from immaterialized existence in the real. We may be required to shift from the too-well-known illusion to the not-yet-known reality.

Foucault’s (1980; in Rabinow, 1997; in Faubion, 2000) and Baudrillard’s (1987) notions of power, which I have condensed in verse below, are beneficial for navigating the paradoxical as we learn to live in uncertainty and contradictions.

**Foucault’s Production**
Wherever, whenever a relationship
power is real
needing bodies and what they do
to move it
to make it work
maybe even stop it

Formed in ideologies, knowledge, and truth
fueled bodies act
for power
through desires
as its target
producing us in specific ways
until we reverse it, parley it
but never without it

**Baudrillard’s Vortex**
Not at all real
through the illusion it exists
needing belief, needing confidence
like money, the economy

Functioning with secrecy
ambiguity, duplicity
making a space, a void, a vortex
for falling in or to avoid
maybe even break away, rupture it
rupturing from it

Pulling, draining energy
seducing us away from ourselves
power is not real

Living with the tensions of such a paradox is a necessity as we live with public pedagogies. Remaining uncritical and unquestioning in the face of paradoxical reality and virtualities leaves us subject to and subjected by the vortexes and the productions in our public spheres.

Unexpectedly, my pets have offered insights on dealing with such a paradox. My two cats, Chili and Basil, would play with their images in the full-length mirror I leaned against the wall for their enjoyment. Even in the last years of their geriatric lives, they would pounce at the image, bat it, leap away from it, and roll on their backs to look at that other cat from new perspectives. Then, in a fit of excitement, they would try to catch the mirrored cat from behind by running into the space between the mirror and the wall. Finding only the absence of another
cat, they'd look around shocked, and then begin sniffing for signs of what must have seemed an unearthly agile feline. Eventually, they would wander in front of the mirror and reinitiate the play upon seeing a cat in the other place—as if the moving image erased the void and whirled them into Baudrillard’s vortex. My dog, Coriander, frequently caught the cats playing with the mirror and would ease up to them, smell the living felines, and nudge them away. Upon noticing his own reflection, he would bark once or twice, smell the mirror, and then walk away as if dismissing the reflection as not real and unworthy of his time and attention. I frequently wondered what musings these animals had about the other animals, other places, and themselves through the mirror.

These three creatures have helped me understand that the mirror as utopia/heterotopia is beneficial for posing questions: What is the illusion? How does it form us? What does it make us do? How do virtualities distract us? If we were not distracted, what might we do? Where shall we direct our energies? What can we know about ourselves when we relinquish living in simulations? How can we be differently? What is or might be real?

Such questions, if seriously explored, will provide difficult, if not painful lessons. Mrs. Elliott offered her brown- and blue-eyed students and those of us who explore her pedagogy today a means to critically investigate the workings and impact of public pedagogy (Peters, 1970). In 1984, 14 years after the lesson in discrimination Mrs. Elliot asked the students, "Is the learning worth the agony?" (Peters, 1985). In a strong chorus, the adult students respond, "Yes." In our contemporary context, we need comparable ways to learn about the public pedagogies at work in our lives, on our bodies, and through our ways of knowing.

Because We Weave, We Can Unravel

**One Day Unmediated** (Huckaby, 2009)

One day I left my country for the bush of Nuigini unbeknownst to me, no full-length mirrors, no magazines Lost at first I wondered, “How I look to others.”

Until one day I noticed I wasn’t really bothered

One day I left Nuigini for the city of Sydney
I saw my form reflected from tall buildings every corner juxtaposed by billboards and multi-mediated glamour

Trapped was I for days by the shine and glare—until I remembered I wasn’t really there

One day I returned to my city from travels through Nuigini
Stunned by the place, the speed, and the race

Convinced I should remember, carry and continue my lessons from afar
The reflection and the billboards, moving and still, tell very little about me and my will
My body, no mere image, I inhabit like a home daring me to do what I can imagine

Note

1. This project was made possible in part by support from the TCU Institute on Women and Gender.

References


