

Gatecrashing the Oasis? A Joint Doctoral Dissertation Play

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Ken Gale,¹ Jane Speedy,²
and Jonathan Wyatt³

Abstract

This article explores the institutional and individual struggles surrounding the submission for examination of a jointly authored doctoral dissertation at a U.K. civic university. Two of the article's authors (Gale and Wyatt) were the dissertation's authors, and Speedy, the article's third author, is their supervisor. Joint doctoral dissertations are rare and the dissertation was unique in this department's history. The article is written as play script, which allows for different points of view to be offered and juxtaposed and for key issues to emerge and be explored. These issues include the institutional and individual impact of challenging what counts as original doctoral scholarship, the supervision relationship, and aspects of the experience of the completion of a doctorate. With a nod to the Deleuzian concept of *the nomad*, a significant theoretical component of the joint dissertation, the play works with the metaphor of nomadic journeying across desert terrain toward the "oasis" of membership of the academy as an image of the doctoral process. The play begins as the dissertation's two authors hand in their dissertation for examination, and ends on graduation day, with its primary focus being the eleven weeks between submission and the *viva voce* examination.

Keywords

joint dissertation, *viva*, doctoral supervision, nomad, collaborative research

Scene 1: Back Story—Narrator

Ken Gale and Jonathan Wyatt submitted their joint EdD dissertation (*Between the Two: A Nomadic Inquiry Into Collaborative Writing*) on April 11, 2008, for examination. Joint dissertations within social science and humanities are rare but not unknown (e.g., Huber, 2000; Whelan, 2000). Theirs was certainly the first within this particular department.

Successful completion would grant each of them access to the "oasis," the community of academia. Their *viva voce* with their examiners, the oasis' "gatekeepers" (e.g., see Jackson & Tinkler, 2000; Morley, Leonard, & Miriam, 2002), was set for June 25, 11 weeks later.

On that handing-in Friday in April, the two "nomads" met at 10.30 a.m. at the Boston Tea Party (BTP) café, toward the top of Park Street, just along from the university precinct. They talked for a while, on occasions pausing to gaze at the cardboard boxes containing the six soft-backed dissertation copies, plus appendices, by their side. At midday, they carried them around the corner to the department, up the lift to the first floor, handed over all six (three for Ken, three for Jonathan), and politely insisted that they each be given a receipt. After, they sat on a bench in the gardens opposite. Ken felt faint. They did not see Jane Speedy, their

supervisor, who was out of town that day. Later, the nomads separated, Ken toward Plymouth, Jonathan to Oxford.

Within the week copies of their dissertation were sent by the department to the university's examinations office and from there to the oasis' "guardians"—those who check that all is in order and that a dissertation can be examined by the gatekeepers.

It was at this point that the wind got up and the sand began to swirl.

Scene 2: Viva Minus 10 Weeks—at the Oasis' Administration

[The guardians talk. They can't be seen. Only snippets of their conversations¹ can be heard over the sound of the increasing gales.]

¹University of Plymouth, UK

²University of Bristol, UK

³University of Oxford, UK

Corresponding Author:

Jonathan Wyatt, Oxford Learning Institute, University of Oxford, Littlegate House, 16/7 St. Ebbes Street, Oxford, OX1 1PT, United Kingdom
Email: jonathan.wyatt@learning.ox.ac.uk

I was informed today that we have two identical EdD theses, *deliberately* submitted jointly, same title, identical work, same examiners. There is concern that this might be in breach of the university's regulations—joint submission, that is, while collaboration as such is not.

Submission could be legitimate providing the independent examination of each candidate is handled appropriately. Their *viva voce* is only weeks away and the gatekeepers have not yet been sent copies . . .

The dissertation has been through the appropriate departmental channels.

It will be helpful to know about the approval processes the students underwent prior to embarking on the work.

Scene 3: Viva Minus 8 Weeks—at the Oasis' Administration

[Dr. Speedy stands before the guardians to deliver her report, "The history of the joint dissertation trajectory for Jonathan Wyatt and Kenneth Gale." Occasional sounds of "humph"; "yes, yes"; "indeed, indeed"; and "preposterous" can be heard from her audience.]

The possibility of a joint dissertation was mooted during the academic year, 2005-2006. This was raised by myself, Dr. Jane Speedy, and discussed informally with the then director of programs, who supported the project. The idea, in principle, was subsequently raised with the then graduate dean who advised that there was no specific or explicit obstacle to joint dissertations within the regulations for doctoral degrees but that the regulations were designed with the implicit assumption that doctoral dissertations were single-authored works. If a joint dissertation were to be produced it would therefore need to be thoroughly justified as it would be subject to rigorous scrutiny. It would need to be double the word length of the EdD dissertation requirements.

[She pauses to drink water before continuing.]

There would need to be a clear indication of individual responsibility and authorship within the dissertation, and sound academic and methodological arguments would have to be presented justifying the joint submission. Each candidate's submission would need to fulfill all the regulations and requirements. The examinations office had no specific guidelines to offer on joint viva examinations, but made it clear that *all* higher degree candidates would need to be

examined and comply with *all* regulations and suggested that any viva arrangements included individual as well as joint examination. We concluded from this that examiners would need to examine the candidates individually as well as jointly to determine whether each had met the requirements or not.

[She finishes. The guardians exit amongst nods and mutterings, leaving Dr. Speedy alone. She turns to speak to the audience.]

It was a seminar on autoethnography. I didn't realize it at the time, but introducing Jonathan as one half of "Gale and Wyatt" somehow sealed their fate. After that there was no going back. And when the request came from them to produce a joint dissertation I was somehow expecting it, even though I hadn't thought about it at all. This narrative doctorate² seemed to just keep writing itself into the next space. . . . I definitely wanted to be in on this. I remember thinking that I'd be really fed up if they chose another dissertation supervisor.

Before we all got carried away I decided to check with the guardians and discovered that I was pushing at an open door. The requirements and criteria were to be the same, but this dissertation needed to be twice the length and the authorship of each aspect needed to be clearly identifiable. This all seemed straightforward, although the latter criterion came to seem more and more absurd as time, space, and identities passed and bypassed each other and folded in on themselves.

I was off with two nomads, or, at least, they were off and I was watching from an open door. I was standing on the threshold and could see both ways—down the dark corridors behind, lined with shelves of scholarly texts and manuscripts, and out into the sand and wind beyond—brightly lit, but hazy and uncharted.

Dust storms. I anticipated dust storms from the outset.

Scene 4: Reflection—Ken, Alone in the Early Hours

And in these dreams . . . is it three in the morning? God! . . . I remember the desert, the darkness, and the emerging pin pricks of light appearing then receding in the intense swirling.

I remember the lurching of the camel, the dusky shadows of the palms diminishing into the fast approaching desert night, as the lights of the souk gradually grew, became strong, and transformed our vista. As night took over from day, I remember becoming aware of people, new faces, moving into the crowded spaces, the smell of mint tea, the

taste of strong, sweet coffee, and the rich fragrance of exotic perfumes intoxicating the excited traveler. Nomads moving in space–time consciousness, following lines of flight, unsure of direction, and indulging in the pressure of the force fields of uncertainty.

In those intense moments I became unaware of the dust storm swirling around the tent outside; a million grains of sand stinging the taut tarpaulin of warmth surrounding us in the heady, vibrant atmosphere of the souk.

Exterior, interior, folding in, unfolding; conjuror’s words . . .

I slowly move into consciousness and the pain in my temple insists on keeping me awake. The night is still dark but I can hear the birds. The blackbird is singing and clicking, sharp and resonant, noisy, and busy in the garden just below my window; the strident song of a thrush rings from the top of the tall ash in the field behind the house. I turn over with the covers over my head but I know I am awake; in these anxious moments, night gives way to day. I shudder. Turning on the bed-side lamp is an admission of defeat and I seek solace in my book. It has been there with me for days, waiting to be read. I know that it is waiting to be read. I know that I should follow its linear, writerly path but my ability to concentrate has been shredded by deadlines, sour tastes, and a million words constantly rearranging themselves in my head. Picking it up and opening it, seemingly at random, is the cue for a story. Perhaps the path of the nomad invites serendipity but at the same time surprise:

The desert landscape is always at its best in the half-light of dawn or dusk. The sense of distance lacks: a ridge nearby can be a far-off mountain range, each small detail can take on the importance of a major variant on the countryside’s repetitious theme. The coming of day promises a change; it is only when the day has fully arrived that the watcher suspects it is the same day returned once again—the same day he has been living for a long time, over and over, still blindly bright and untarnished by time. (Bowles, 1949/2006, p. 240)

Where am I? This is absurd. I remember what Jane said . . . where is it? I printed it off. What did she say? Jane our voyeur, Jane watching us, watching *with* us, watching over us. Jane watching, yet being so much a part of what we are doing, our writing, so wrapped up in ourselves, yet so wrapped up in Jane’s awareness of that writing. Jane, what did you say?

A mess of jumbled papers on the floor, the NME gig guide, the *Observer Review* unread, scribbled over, photocopied journal articles just managing to stay in page number order and last night’s e-mails printed off for the

last rites of work, before unexpected unconsciousness took over:

I was off with two nomads, or at least, they were off and I was watching from an open door. I was standing on the threshold and could see both ways—down the, dark corridors behind, lined with shelves of scholarly texts and manuscripts, and out into the sand and wind beyond— brightly lit, but hazy and uncharted. Dust storms. I anticipated dust storms from the outset.

God, I am so tired but I need to write. Paper, where is the paper? A pen. Right, write. Jonathan. Jane. Those words, that swirling dust storm of words:

I remember
those words
conjuror’s words
in these dreams
“the watcher suspects
it is the same day returned once again”
I anticipated dust storms from the outset.

Scene 5: Viva Minus 7 Weeks—at the Oasis’ Administration

[The guardians’ anxious conversation is heard above the hubbub.]

It may breach university expectations about examining an individual as such.

Concerned about a number of issues in relation to the viva voce examination and the implications if this should go to appeal.

There will be many eyebrows raised at the very least, even if the regulations do not preclude joint submission.

I need to talk about this as a matter of urgency.

Scene 6: Viva Minus 7 Weeks—Jane, at the Oasis

As it happens, for the moment, the guardians were not taking much notice of me. They were all far too intent on watching out for the nomads on the horizon and in guarding and preserving their oasis and its ancient laws. For centuries now only one man (or more recently woman) had been permitted to drink at these fountains at any one time. This had not always been how things were but rather how things had got themselves somehow fixed. Indeed, the ancient scholars had always worked together on their illuminations. This individualized cult of the oasis was more

recent and, thus, aroused strong passions amongst followers. The nomads had at first stumbled on, then articulated, and now actively sought to extend the possibilities at the oasis. And they were coming. Coming to claim their right to drink here together.

The faint dust cloud on the horizon had been moving nearer for some time. I could just make out two camels and riders. They were heading this way quite fast and even, perhaps, quite eagerly. I could think of no way of warning them without revealing my own identity.

On they came, the nomads. They were unarmed and, I suspected, had been looking forward to reaching this oasis. It was my map they were following into this trap. They would not be expecting this. What was I going to do? I had not been expecting this. Suddenly it came to me that what we needed to do was to slip away, to lose our footing, to come adrift, and get completely lost. We had always been expecting dust storms and now we were going to need one to wrap ourselves up into. We needed to get lost, sharpish, partly as an act of philosophical ethnography (Lather, 2007), partly not so much to exclude the oasis and its dwellers, as to overturn and overthrow its received idea (Derrida, 1994), partly to redraw the landscapes of space and time in ways which allowed for more generous, reparative, and perhaps even slip-slidy readings of the oasis dwellers than we could currently envisage (Sedgwick, 1997), but mostly to avoid ambush.

Scene 7: Viva Minus 4 Weeks—at the Gates of the Oasis

[The gatekeepers' and guardians' anxiety levels are rising.]

This situation does sound tricky!

Given the atypical nature of the submission. . . . I gather the whole issue was thrashed out prior to the submission.

Any assistance you can give me on this would be helpful. Without help it seems a daunting responsibility.

Scene 8: Viva Minus 3 Weeks—Narrator

[Jane stands outside the oasis' gates, looking out for the nomads' approach.]

Watching them approach, Jane realized that although the oasis had once seemed like their destination, it was now more like a passing place on some bigger journey. They were (all of them) already en route somewhere else; indeed, the oasis, was already behind them, part of a trajectory that was eclipsed. Even now as she watched them coming, she saw that they were not moving in a linear way but were also zigzagging, disappearing, and then reemerging

somewhere else along the horizon. It was hard to keep a grip on them. The slip-slidiness had already begun.

And as she slid away into a reverie of her own—a kind of re-membering of their lives—she drifted back to their beginnings together, at that first doctoral class.

Jonathan a bit aloof, or shy perhaps, she couldn't decide. He wove her some connections, a research conference (and she did vaguely remember the tall, lanky figure in the doorway) and Carolyn in Adelaide, a mutual connection, which made her think of those plastic tree frogs Australian kids always have in the bath and of coffees on Hutt Street in the sun. . . . She held the ends of the threads between them lightly, head on one side, not sure where this was going.

Ken was bubbling over with it all. He came up at the end of the class and thanked her, she remembered, and she realized that he was a teacher at heart, someone who knew what it all cost in human terms, knew how much it all mattered to her. She had warmed to him then, when he hugged her, warmed to him more really to start with (it was later, through the writing, that she had fallen so completely for the other one). Yes, Ken had been her first love really.

And they had singled each other out quite quickly she remembered, the nomads, settling in together in her office. They had rooted each other out, those bright, sharp, edgy ones, in record time, she noticed. . . . and off they'd gone with the ball, full tilt. They were glorious.

And at some point she noticed that they'd noticed each other. She couldn't remember when exactly, but she knows that she'd noticed them noticing the different energies, the different writings. The "Writing as Inquiry" class stood out for her for some reason, that dreary room. That first afternoon, with Ken in his stride, tripping over himself with concepts, song lyrics, and nomadic moments. He was eloquent, clever, excited, funny. . . . and she caught hold of Jonathan, watching Ken in the moment: "Clever bastard," she thought she saw Jonathan thinking.

Next day was the poetry-writing workshop and Jonathan blew her away. . . . blew her right across the landscape with the story of his life in 50 words.

[Jonathan's voice]

Born. Kenya.
Sifted Smarties dropped into damp soil.
Baboons.
Mum, dad, brother, sister.
Trains, tears, sport: school
Bully. Bullied.
God, no sex.
Trains, sport, studies: university.
God, no sex.
Excitement. Existentialism. Liverpool teenagers.
Guildford, home, more teenagers.
Despair.
God, no sex.

Teacher. Teenagers. Tyneside.
Tessa, Tessa, Tessa.
Sex, no God.

She laughed, along with the rest, but there were also tears in her eyes . . . and she caught hold of Ken, his eyes flickering between her face and Jonathan's, back and forth, back and forth. "Clever bastard," she thought she saw him thinking.

Leaning against that tree in the desert it came to her, not for the first time, that they could so easily have become each other's rivals, these two men: terrorists within each other's landscapes even, had they not chosen a more nomadic life. It had not been by chance their love and friendship, or so it had seemed to her then looking back. It had come about through a mutual determination to trouble and unpick each other's edges and seams instead of ruffling and scuffing up against differences. Once nomads of course, they depended on each other for survival. Once nomads, it was collaboration or death.

It had had something to do with vulnerability, she thought, but then memories can shift their shape according to the refractions of the remembering moment . . . rather like the false shimmerings or mirages in the desert.

Scene 9: Viva Minus 2 Weeks: Camel-Riding on Park Street—Jonathan

The ride is no longer comfortable. Other than during that period of early unfamiliarity I have scarcely noticed, but suddenly I am sore. My camel, I realize, is reluctant; he tips markedly from one side to the other and I wonder if he is intentionally attempting to sling me off. I hold on, but barely. It is a long way to the ground.

The terrain has changed. We have been in wild and desolate regions. Others have been warm and inviting and still others cool and harsh, but they have always been unfamiliar, disorientating places. Ken and I have been together through them all. At times we have been aware of a third traveler alongside us, looking, behind her disguise (a disguise that, in truth, we have chosen to drape over her) much like the Jane that we meet at our regular but infrequent rendezvous. Now, suddenly, we seem to be on familiar but strange territory, and nearing our destination. Cars pass, slowing as curious drivers peer unnerved at the strange sight, like film characters at a spaceship.

We see Jane ahead, outside the BTP, which will be our last opportunity for refreshments. We will tie our unlikely steeds to the lamp posts, dismount, and drink coffee as we make final preparations for our attempt to be admitted to the oasis. Jane has seen us coming and will give us sound advice. We have come to trust her implicitly.

We are close but not quite there. She, BTP, and the oasis seem some way off still. I look at my companion: He also

seems tired, but content. Still full of life and vibrancy and energy even after this arduous trip. We long to reach the oasis to engage with its gatekeepers and, with luck, win them over. I long to be there, but as we make our approach I am feeling pulled away, distracted by other pressures, other competing forces from back home. These heighten my awareness of this journey's preciousness. If and when we get to the oasis—and it's not a certainty even now—I am determined to stay, or, at least, to take it with me. I am in love with these travels (see Lee, 2005). I am in love with our nomadic existence. I may not love my camel just at this moment but I am deeply grateful for where he has taken me.

I am full of wonder at the beauty and richness that we have experienced. And I wonder how we come to be here, how we started, how I started. I glance again at Ken, who is rolling with it, waving enthusiastically at Jane a few hundred yards away. In his excited gesturing he disturbs the concentration of the cyclist hurtling down the hill towards us at great speed. She wobbles worryingly.

I remember so clearly that first encounter with them both, Ken and Jane, up there at the top of the hill. Ken, sitting at the back of the open rectangle of tables, facing Jane, sharing his picture of his parents, mentioning guinea pigs, and later—though not too much later—his first reference to Deleuze as he asks a question. Jane, at the front. I'm pleased we made our brief Adelaide connection. A few months previously at a conference I had been drawn to her session on autoethnography, knowing nothing about either her or it. I didn't introduce myself. Downstairs later, I collected a leaflet about the Bristol narrative doctoral program, and, back at Oxford, chased her by phone during the summer, leaving message after message, calling and calling until we talked. Then I was hooked.

As I watch her now, up there ahead leaning against the café frontage, I reflect that it's her edginess (she refers to herself as "mad" sometimes; Ken writes about his "madness" too) that I love, that I've been drawn to all this time, that sense of wildness, her passion, her willingness to live dangerously (as I see it). I trust these experiences of her, and trust her. I find that she cares, for me, for us, for the work (see Acker, Hill, & Black, 1994; Deuchar, 2008).

I feel a little wary, though. It's because I feel staid beside her, and beside both of them. Beside Jane and Ken I feel, well, a little colorless. A girl I liked once watched me play rugby, a game I've hardly ever played. She told me afterwards that she worried for me because I looked like I might snap. (That rugby game was the end of her interest.) Alongside these two I sometimes feel brittle though I have another knowing, which is that they seem to recognize a *daimon* (Cavarero, 1997/2000) that they appreciate. By definition, I don't quite get what they see, but I trust their knowings.

Yes, it's Ken's *color* that is part of the attraction; I was drawn to it during that first experience of sharing our writing, with Chris, in Jane's room, with Jane's paper about her

late brother (Speedy et al., 2005). A connection. The beginning of our travels, though we did not know it then. Wandering around with Jane we were, even at that point. Sometimes, when Ken and I have been wandering we have believed that we have been alone: Immersed in our surroundings, we have written as if it were only us. Jane has been there as our reader, our guide, our politically adept ambassador. Our collaborative writing, Ken and me, has always in truth been a *ménage à trois*.

The camels struggle upwards, unused to the smooth, slippery tarmac, and steep upward angle. We glance up to the top of the hill toward the University Tower Building, a symbol of the oasis. My optimism rises.

Scene 10: Viva Minus 3 Weeks—Crisis at the Gates of the Oasis

[Another hubbub. Another dust storm. The gatekeepers and Jane are in urgent, frantic conversation. There's a newly discovered viva-day diary clash.]

I am really sorry, but I need to ask if you can either rearrange the timing of the vivas. . . . I realize that this is very inconvenient.

Well, if you think the candidates would be OK to wait until July, which is the earliest date I could possibly do it.

I think we should go with the date we've set and find someone else. I don't think it's fair on them to have to wait.

I wasn't aware that you were not free. There are complexities about this viva that make it important that we get this right.

I suggest we stick to 25th June no matter what. These candidates have been through enough already.

I am out of office for several days.

I am in Berlin can you deal with this?

Have to leave for meeting in London. Will ring from the train. Blimey, what a palaver . . .

I could do earlier but not later, which would probably mean leaving the viva by 11.30—we might be hard pressed to fit it in by then.

Off air now until this evening.

Okay it seems we could start really, really early.

Brilliant, brilliant.

Scene 11: Viva Day—Jonathan

The camels are watered and fed, and so are we. I sit outside our tent at an ugly rectangular table, its fixed benches too far way to sit at comfortably. The morning is overcast but warm. I think that I've probably made the right call in wearing a long-sleeved shirt. What to wear has been a question for me this morning.

How formal should one be for gatekeepers? No tie, white shirt, black trousers. Formal enough. Ken, who is still inside the tent settling up, is also in black. The Nomads in Black.

It's nearly 8.00 a.m. We're meeting Jane at BTP and then it'll be time to meet the gatekeepers. We're nearly there, I think to myself. Nearly there. We've made it to the oasis, the arrangements are in place, and there have been no last minute emergencies. Just.

Last night, over dinner, Ken and I talked about today, our writing, and more besides. Families, relationships—the stuff of our writing. By then, we had begun to relax, to feel here, to realize that we nearly belonged. We talked about our anticipation of today.

But before dinner, on our way from the tent to our first watering hole, Ken had asked, as we walked through the heart of the oasis, "After all the fuss, like changing the time, what could possibly go wrong now?" We speculated: We could eat something dodgy, and one or both of us could wake up feeling ill. Or, maybe, one of us would get into a fight (preferably not both of us, and definitely not with each other) and end up in hospital. A few moments later, waiting to be served at the bar and continuing to talk, immersed in more optimistic thoughts about where our collaborations might take us next, the barman asked, "Who's next?" Ken, instinctively and without looking around, replied, "Yes, please." The man to Ken's left immediately responded, "Actually, I thought it was me," which the big, bullet-headed man to *his* left, glaring down the line at Ken, supported with, "Yes, it's him next, then me, and then you."

The worst looked like it might happen.

I told Ken that I was going to sit down and, like a good friend does, left him to resolve this alone.

Scene 12: Viva Day—Jonathan

We're in a room on the top floor. It's light but institutional. The gatekeepers sit across the table. They begin.

Well, firstly, we want to say that this is a strong piece of work. We'd like to see this as an opportunity for a scholarly discussion.

And I begin to believe that we really are in.

Scene 13: Viva Day—Ken

Jonathan describes "a room on the top floor (that is) light but institutional." I see the gatekeepers, the bright light, and the extensive view across Bristol behind them, and wonder, somewhat irrationally, if this is intentional. I think of old black and white war movies, the Gestapo, and the interrogation room; it was always light in the agonized prisoner's

faces, with the questioner's faces, always sinister and half hidden in shadow.

I shiver:
I can hardly see their faces.
One, off to the left, seems quiet and reserved:
Oh no, I hope this is not a good cop, bad cop.
For me this is viva as *haecceity* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2004).
What was that question?
What did he mean by that?
Jonathan seems cool: What did he say?

God Ken, forget the view, get focused, try to be in the moment.

Jonathan and a gatekeeper are having a conversation. What are they talking about? They are bound to draw me into this in a moment: What the hell are they talking about?

I wonder, in which direction are the docks? It must be to the west. Ah yes, over there, where the clouds are. Goodness, it's raining, I knew I should have brought my jacket this morning, what am I going to look like in a soggy black T-shirt after this is over?

Concentrate. Concentrate. Come on, you have only one crack at this. A question. Come on, you can take this one:

You don't think that your work suffers from an overemphasis on the work of Deleuze? He is a central figure in your work; would it be fair to say that his presence in your dissertation is somewhat obsessive. What do you think?

He's looking at me.

Come on, now's your chance, get in there, you can do it.

No, I don't think so.

[We talk a good deal about the inhabitants' of our work and these people and the conversations we have about them help to constitute the "habits" of our writing.]

Yes, I think you are right to say that Deleuze plays a central role but I don't think we are obsessive in our use of his work. For myself, throughout my life, I have been drawn to philosophies of rebellion and resistance. They have attracted me and helped to mobilize my idealism, my thoughts, and actions. So my thinking, feeling, and writing in this dissertation has been charged by the writing of Marx, of Foucault, and now, most recently, by Deleuze. These are my ancestors! But, as I say explicitly in the writing, there have been many others: Without effort I think of

Sartre and De Beauvoir, Kerouac and Ginsberg, and Irigaray and Butler, but, if I think of a history, a chronology, then it is these three that seem to signify important stages in my life. I find it fascinating that whilst each gradually over time has displaced the other in terms of my thinking, sentiment still draws me back, from time to time, to their historical predecessor. So, yes, Deleuze is important, very important, but I want to stress the importance of looking at the way in which he resides with the other inhabitants of our work.

They are smiling. Jane is writing furiously and grinning. I hope she shows us what she has written; I'll never remember all this. She'll have to type it up, otherwise I'll never understand her writing. Stop drifting off, stay with it dude, you're on course now, stay focused. That's what all the footie coaches say.

Another question now: It's about *projective identification* (Klein, 1946/1984). I have a spin on that but it's philosophical rather than the psychoanalytic approach that will show that I understand what Klein was talking about when she used the concept. Jonathan is looking really confident. This is his domain. He is going to take this one.

Scene 14: Degree Day—Narrator

[Jane is waiting in her specially tidied office.]

She imagines that they probably won't recognize it without any piles of papers on the floor and is worried that she'll never find anything again. The champagne is in the fridge and she has set out glasses and nibbles on the coffee table. They are due. They're having their photos taken. All Ken's children are here and Tessa has come down with Jonathan. They both looked glorious this afternoon in the Great Hall in all the gear.

Whilst she waits, she decides just to catch up on the e-mails. "Oh great," she says to herself, "there's one from the Bluestockings group":

As long as all five of us write thirty-five-thousand words, is it okay to present our doctoral dissertation as a feminist collective biography?

"Yikes," she thinks.

[Looking out across the square Jane can see Ken and Jonathan and their entourage heading up the hill toward her, still in their gowns. Behind them, in the distance, there seem to be dust storms gathering over the Senate House building.]

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Notes

1. These are based upon fictionalized/anonymized extracts from e-mails
2. The narrative and life story strand of the university's doctor of education program.

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Bios

Ken Gale is a lecturer in education working in the Faculty of Education at the University of Plymouth in the United Kingdom. His particular teaching interests are located within the philosophy of education, poststructural theory, and the application of narrative and autoethnographic approaches in education research. His research interests focus upon the theory and practice of collaborative and performative writing practices as methods of inquiry and how these might be applied to areas of subjectivity, friendship, gender studies, and in education studies and professional development. He is currently engaged in collaborative writing research projects with groups of colleagues in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia. Ken has three children, Katy, Reuben, and Phoebe and lives in Cornwall, United Kingdom.

Jane Speedy is reader in qualitative inquiry in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Bristol, United Kingdom, where she directs the Centre for Narratives and Transformative Learning and coordinates the doctoral program in narrative inquiry.

Jonathan Wyatt is head of professional development at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom, and a counselor in primary care within the National Health Service in the United Kingdom. He is interested in the performative writing and autoethnography of life and loss.