different subject matter into sections which challenge the reader to think about travel in terms of "Arrivals" (journeys to Australia), "Away" (journeys abroad) and "Journeys Within" (travel within Australia).

"Arrivals" includes stories such as Emma Ciccotosto's "The New World" which records her mixed feelings of sadness and excitement as she journeys to her new life in Australia, and Ada Cambridge's "On The Ship" which explores her sense of exhilaration when travelling despite her bouts of sea-sickness and brushes with physical danger. "Away" has a selection of stories ranging from Jessica Anderson's account of escaping an unsatisfactory marriage to Kate Jennings' musings on the pros and cons of being a travel writer. In "Journeys Within" Ruby Langford and a group of urban Aboriginal women visit Uluru for the first time, Leanne Hollingsworth recalls her first experiences of embarrassment, humility and pride on a short train ride and Robyn Davidson relishes the thought of journeying into the unchartered only to become painfully aware of her own vulnerability as she crosses the desert alone.

Individually, these stories provide insights into the pains and joys of women who have ventured forth either physically or spiritually. Collectively, they record and provide comment on the sometimes conflicting social, political and spiritual experiences of women.

In Drusilla Modjeska's account of a mother and daughter making separate journeys to Crete, both women "recognise and remember" the essence of woman as it was once known to the Minoan-Mycenean civilisation. Yet in "Uluru", Ruby Langford's first encounter with the symbol of her culture's beginning is spiritually powerful, not because she is a woman, but because she is first part Aborigine.

When Mabel Edmund travels to Cambridge in "The Only Black Woman at Ealing Station" she recalls her pride at being acknowledged as the first descendant of the original Australians to attend an Arts and Communication Congress. For Marnie Kennedy in "Hit the Road", being "a darkie" meant not being offered the hospitality normally afforded every traveller in the outback.

The diversity of Wilder Shores makes it an interesting read, if not a tantalising one. It will introduce readers to a number of Australian women writers, hopefully drawing them to many of the short stories' original sources.

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Eric A. Wilson


Most people who are remotely interested in contemporary feminist thought and who have read the current literature in the area will recognise the name of Dr Dale Spender and her writing. Dr Spender has published more than thirty
books and countless journal and series articles. She sits on many international academic and advisory boards and is acknowledged by her peers as one of Australia's pre-eminent spokeswomen on feminist and equity issues. She is currently focussing much of her work on Information Technology and the role of computers in scholarship.

Dr Spender was recently Keynote Speaker at the 5th Regional Conference of the Cape York Council of the Australian Reading Association and the Cairns Branch of the English Teachers' Association of Queensland, where she delivered an address entitled "Literacy in a Visualcy World".

Spender began by referring to the scriptoria of Medieval Europe, through the early development and the evolution of the printing press, to text as we know it today and the male dominance of that entire process. This was all delivered in a very entertaining way, with plenty of personal anecdotal relief and historical reference to medical reports of the ills which might befall the individual, especially women, who took up the socially unsavoury practice of reading.

Spender then extended the analogy to contemporary "expert" thought on the problems, both physical and psychological, which might be visited upon anyone, especially young people, who "waste too much time" in front of computers. She implored the gathering to share her ridicule of such suggestions as we now express mirth when reminded of what "experts" were saying, only a century ago, about people who took up the "solitary practice of reading and the accompanying ills it was sure to cause them".

Dr Spender took up the cause of convincing us that print, as we know it, will soon be obsolete and that it is incumbent upon us, as the educators responsible for the task of teaching young people what they need to know for their future lives, to ensure that we highlight technology in our classrooms. As the printing process went from scribes copying verbatim text from ancient tomes by hand to the mass-production of print via the printing press, so computers have gone from being used as simple word-processors to multi-media interactive work stations in a matter of a decade.

It was at this stage that Dr Spender included a couple of bits of information that caused my gender equity flags to be raised, and which really led me to share these reflections. Spender had just returned from America, where she had observed many young computer experts who, as she put it, couldn't wait to get home from school so that they could get on their P.C.'s and do some "real learning". These, by the way, were nearly exclusively young men, as Spender mentioned in passing. Spender had also recently attended a major exhibition of computer hardware and software products being shown in Sydney, and nearly all of the people available to discuss these products were men. This was also mentioned as an aside accompanied by a humorous comment about her general reaction to most of them, causing laughs from the audience.

Neither of these pieces of information are particularly startling in themselves. However, I began to reflect on them in the context which I had described above, a nearly all-female group of literacy and English teachers attending a conference on literacy where virtually all other discussion was about text and all displays by educational supply houses were of books and
teaching materials about books. I began to feel like I had travelled back in time and was sitting in a scriptorium of old!

Don't get me wrong. I am not suggesting that books, as we know them, are close to obsolescence, mere artefacts of a by-gone era (maybe they are but that's another story). The point I do want to make is that I see a significant gender event happening here that is being over-looked. This group of women, who are dedicating genuine effort to better learn how to teach all about book-based text, appear to risk being out of step with a whole generation of technology and they may be seen as representative of the Australian female population.

Let's look forward a couple of decades to when we, as Dale Spender suggests, shall find humorous the idea from the 1990's that spending time in front of computers playing games is a danger to one's health. I suggest that we might also see male dominance of the vast, as yet unimagined, range of Instructional Technology in use.

Looking back to today we might see that this apparently innocuous male presence in the as yet embryonic technology area, treated by one of the leading feminists of the day, Dr Dale Spender, as fodder for humorous asides, may have been "the canary in the mine" that was ignored. Several generations of young girls were "taught", through the hidden curriculum, that they couldn't do maths and so were excluded from the "hard sciences" (it's no accident that current technology is driven by the male-dominated military complex where computers allow people several hundred kilometres away to put a "smart bomb" through the window of Iraqi targets; compare that to interactive multi-media Instructional Technology and the real priorities of decision-makers becomes obvious). I digress!! It is time now that we look at the hidden curriculum that allows boys and young men to be the computer "hackers/geniuses" of today. My seven, nearly eight-year-old, daughter already seems to sense that computers are sort of boy things; what self-respecting seven-year-old girl wants to play "Street Fighter" or any other favourite computer game of the day, anyway!!

Sure there are girl hackers, women working with computers, even if it is mainly as word processor operators. I don't mean that these aren't excellent careers worthy of our respect. I do suggest that most women working with computer technology today aren't generally the decision-makers, on the cutting edge of discovery.

Sure there are women at the top of the computer corporate ladder. There have always been exceptional women who have operated outside of the majority. But to have limited options available only to the exception is not good enough for my daughter and it shouldn't be good enough for yours. It is time for educators to look at "now" when talking about hidden curricula, and not to feel that just because there are now men in children's books hanging up the wash and women mowing lawns that all is well with the world.

Thank you Dr Dale Spender for your wise words. It always surprises me just how much can be gained by looking closely at context and meaning. For all educators, this is a really fine example of such an event.