-for my students

Afternoon. Across the garden, in Green Hall,
someone begins playing the old piano-
a spontaneous piece, amateurish and alive,
full of a simple, joyful melody.
The music floats among us in the classroom.

I stand in front of my students
telling them about sentence fragments.
I ask them to find the ten fragments
in the twenty-one-sentence paragraph on page forty-five.
They've come from all parts
of the world-Iran, Micronesia, Africa,
Japan, China, even Los Angeles-and they're still
eager to please me. It's less than half
way through the quarter.

They bend over their books and begin.
Hamid's lips move as he follows
the tortuous labyrinth of English syntax.
Yoshie sits erect, perfect in her pale make-up,
legs crossed, quick pulse minutely
jerking her right foot. Tony,
from an island in the South Pacific, sprawls
limp and relaxed in his desk.

The melody floats around and through us
in the room, broken here and there, fragmented,
re-started. It feels mideastern, but
it could be jazz, or the blues-it could be
anything from anywhere.
I sit down on my desk to wait,
and it hits me from nowhere-a sudden,
sweet, almost painful love for my students.

'Nevermind,' I want to cry out.
'It doesn't matter about fragments.
Finding them or not. Everything's
a fragment and everything's not a fragment.
Listen to the music, how fragmented
how whole, how we can't separate the music
from the sun falling on its knees on all the greenness,
from this moment, how this moment

contains all the fragments of yesterday
and everything we'll ever know of tomorrow!'

Instead, I keep a coward's silence.
The music stops abruptly;
they finish their work,
and we go through the right answers,
which is to say
we separate the fragments from the whole.

Love in the Classroom
Zolynas (1995).

Chapter Six

Exploring the Complexities of Feminist Teacher Identity

When those who have the power to name and to socially construct reality
choose not to see you or hear you,
whether you are dark-skinned, old, disabled, female
or speak with a different accent or dialect than theirs,
when someone with the authority of a teacher, says describe the world
and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium,
as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.

Adrienne Rich (in Maher & Tetreault 1994).

Introduction

This study, *Enacting feminisms in academia,* was conducted with tertiary women educators from a diverse range of ideological and geographical landscapes, who were identified either by themselves or others as feminist teachers. Although this made it impossible to establish a unitary definition of feminist teaching, or to stipulate who could be considered a feminist teacher, it did provide a rich source of data from which to explore the multiplicities and complexities involved in the intersection of feminisms and higher education. The ensemble of data sources, but the autobiographical essay and the semi-structured interviews in particular, focus variously on tenets central to feminist discourses. These include the attendant issues of power and difference, and the reconceptualization of feminist knowledges in multilingual classrooms.

Central to the examination of the tenets of feminisms, is the understanding that identities affect teaching discourses and practices in ways that we will perhaps never fully understand. Identity constructions and perceptions also influence the range of options and understandings which teachers and students are able to choose from in developing classroom discourses. The shifting terrain of both teacher and student identities, and diverse epistemological reconfigurations emphasize the need for constant examination of the roles of teachers and students' identities in the shaping of classroom discourses.

In exploring the above issues, I was cognizant of the complexity of conceptualizing the work of teachers, students and pedagogies. The complexity owes largely to the fact that it is constituted by diverse socio-cultural, historical and racial intersections and interactions. To complicate matters further, I had to be cognizant of the proposition that these points of intersection and interaction are fluid. This is consistent with Ellsworth's acknowledgment

(1989 in Ropers-Huilman 1997), of the dilemma inherent in relating to individuals constructed in post-modernist sensibilities. Ellsworth contends that:

> … people cannot fully understand each other, but they can try to understand how identity is subjective and can be used as a source through which power operates. These identities are not static or timeless. Rather, identities, as well as power and knowledge constructions, are fluid and constantly being redefined.

Chris Weedon's (1987:125), insights are also useful in considering the nature of poststructuralist subjectivities. In this regard she writes:

> Although the subject in poststructuralism is socially constructed in discursive practices, she nonetheless exists as a thinking, feeling subject and social agent, capable of resistance and innovations produced out of the clash between contradictory subject positions and practices. She is also a subject able to reflect upon the discursive relations, which constitute her and the society in which she lives, and she is able to choose from the options available.

Accepting the fluidity and complexity of identity positionalities, in the ensuing discussion I focus on themes, which heavily influence and were influenced by identity constructions of feminist teachers both in the literature and feminist teachers' community of practice. The discussions are framed around Gore's (1993), conceptualization of the feminist teacher's authority, which she differentiates as *authority versus nurturance, authority as authorship*, and *authority as power*. Given the centrality of recasting pedagogic relations within feminist pedagogical discourses to render teacher-student relations more democratic, in this chapter I examine the inherent, and often inescapable power relations prevalent in pedagogy, to ascertain the sincerity, possibilities, and pragmatics of erasing/sharing power in the feminist classroom.

Section 1: Authority versus Nurturance

Within patriarchal society the notion of woman is laden with the traditional functions of care-giver and nurturer, thus apparently rendering it incompatible with the ability to exercise authority within public spaces. The perceived dissonance between authority and nurturance has become a recurrent theme within discourses on feminist pedagogy. The contention being that while women are required to assume authority in educational and social spaces, traditional conceptions of women render notions of authority incompatible with the role of women as nurturers and care-givers.

By definition to nurture, embodies the actions of feeding and protecting, supporting and encouraging, bringing up, training or educating. To nurture a person, therefore, essentially encompasses some of the basic functions of what a teacher does. Nurturance pedagogy finds parallels with maternal, connected, holistic, and empathic teaching, all of which are defined by the same basic characteristics. Nurturing in the theatre of pedagogic performance is defined in both positive and negative ways and is related to the effectiveness of teachers' impact and influence on student learning. Jarratt & Culley *et al.* (in Bell & Nugent 2001), highlight the positive aspects of nurturance teaching. They contend that helping a student become a better and more involved learner is an important issue when talking about nurturance teaching because it exists as one of the ultimate goals of an encouraging and supportive teacher. Productive student learning, therefore, is an asset and valued outcome of any positive and effective teaching method, including nurturance teaching. For the most part, a nurturing attitude is looked upon as a necessary element of teaching because it provides students with a safe environment for their ideas to flourish.

Some scholars like Dorsey (2002), Eagleton (1998), and Mercer (1997), however, signal the drawbacks of enacting nurturance pedagogies, especially within university contexts. They argue that the definition must be expanded in the context of universities where the nurturing teacher is meant to challenge and stimulate university age adults, and not merely foster simplistic growth. Essentially, they propose that at this juncture, a more scholarly interpretation of nurturance be appended to the discourses in order to strengthen the claim that it belongs in the realm of higher education. A nurturing educator may, in this context, be posited as one who creates a supportive, non-threatening and accepting environment; one that is discursive, interactive, yet challenging.

Against this landscape of different views, the participants in my study raised the following issues regarding the maternalisation of teaching; their conceptions revolved around:

- Language the Symbolic Order: identifying language as a possible source for the conflation of female teacher with mother;
- Teacher as Bounteous Mother: highlighting the consequences of operationalizing the teacher as mother personae in academia; and
- Familial and Friendship Practices, Caricatures and Condescension: employing technologies of distancing oneself from being cast in the role of extended family member (such as mother, sister or friend).

In the following discussion, I elaborate their views.

Language the Symbolic Order: identifying language as a possible source for the conflation of female teacher with mother

In identifying the possible source for the conflation of female teacher with mother, Jennifer advances a psychoanalytic interpretation, which she argues is tied to the role language plays in configuring and conflating the female teacher with mother. She articulates the predominance of gynocentric conceptions of the teacher in the following excerpt:

> **Jennifer:** … we create ourselves and are constructed by others in the medium of language, which has been called 'the Symbolic order' by psychoanalytical theorists such as Kristeva and Lacan. The Symbolic order, a linguistic realm characterized by difference and separation, is constructed upon the foundation of erasure of the maternal union with a child. In this dyad, boundaries are fluid, dependency is acceptable and even body spaces are permeable. In order for the child to enter society, s/he has to forsake the maternal and construct a sense of self that is premised on separateness. Language, therefore, is made possible by revoking union with the beloved other, whose very body encompasses all the infant's desires. This, I believe, is a key aspect of what Kristeva means when she describes women's position in society as primarily sacrificial. The element of choice enters in when the individual becomes aware of herself as gendered by others' expectations and discourse and can then choose how to respond to that construction. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 22).

Discernible in Jennifer's explication of the Symbolic order is a push-pull tension. This is evident in several phrases in the above extract. The 'pull factor', which signifies maternal presence, and entails drawing the mother and child towards each other, is captured in the acknowledgement that *boundaries are fluid; dependency is acceptable and body spaces permeable [to] the beloved other; whose body encompasses all the infant's desires.* The 'push factor' which, signifies maternal absence, repels the mother and child away from each other, and is captured in the phrases: *difference and separation; erasure of the maternal union with a child; for the child to enter society s/he must forsake the mother … self is premised on separateness; revoking union with the beloved other.* It is within this dynamic that we see the psychoanalytical theoretical exposition of maternal absence and presence. This oscillation between maternal absence and maternal presence becomes the basis for the child's ego development. Grumet (1988:27), argues that it is only in the mother's absence that the child begins to perceive his or her own selfhood so that their intermittent separation is the basis for the first identification of self. But the converse is also true, in that the willingness and capacity for separation pivot on the prior and anticipated satisfaction of the child's need for intimacy, dependence and nurturance, which are contingent on maternal

presence. Thus, the developmental needs of both mother and child simultaneously sustain and contradict the concrete, symbiotic origins of their relationship.

In attempting to understand the applicability of mother-child relations of union and separation to education, Frank's (1995:35), work has been useful in unraveling what goes on between teachers and students, and why. Using discourses of psychoanalysis, he examines the transference relation that persists between teachers and students, and concludes that the end of transference requires separation, which then allows the other to be perceived as someone else. When mirrored against the classroom context, a feminist epistemology reflects this dialectical dependence of subject and object in teacher-student relations. Severed incrementally from the biological mother, the child (student) continues this psychosocial, bio-cognitive relationship, first with female school teachers who dominate early childhood learning, and often many students perpetuate the remnants of this pattern with female faculty in institutions of higher learning. In this regard, the feminist classroom becomes a fertile ground for the prolongation of mother-teacher/child-student relations given its preference for connected learning, and recognition for women's ways of knowing and being. Within the context of the school, the 'pull' dynamic between the teacher and her student is evident in at least two ways. The first refers to creating a conducive bio/cognitive environment for learning. This entails the teacher literally engendering a learning space that makes the student feel physically at home, and then drawing/socialising ('pulling') her/him into academic discourses. Second, once she has succeeded sufficiently in socialising/ drawing/'pulling' the student into academic discourses, the 'push' dynamic of challenging and reconceptualising pedagogic and educational knowledges is operationalised. This means that she discourages the student from uncritically consuming her views and that of hegemonic discourses, thus pushing the student away towards alternative ideas/knowledges, etc. The mother/teacher push-pull/absence-presence equation is succinctly captured by Grumet (1988:20-21), when she relates this psycho-social-bio-cognitive arrangement to curriculum concerns, and suggests that the aim of the project of curriculum:

> … is to claim the child, to teach him or her to master the language, the rules, the games, and the names of the fathers. Contradicting the symbiotic nature of maternity, the maternal project of curriculum is to relinquish the child so that both mother and child can become more independent of one another.

Examining the mother-child relationship from the perspective of the role language as Symbolic Order plays in defining relational dynamics facilitates understanding its transference and replication in teacher-student relations. Furthermore, it provides an explanation as to why students expect the teacher not just to assume the role of mother, but

to play the role of the bourgeois, self-sacrificing, and bounteous mother, at that. This expectation is an issue I explore in the following discussion.

Teacher as Bounteous Mother: highlighting the consequences of operationalizing the teacher as mother personae in academia

Jennifer's thesis regarding the gendered expectations of the sacrificial nature of women is clarified in Carol's observations regarding the roles female faculty are generally expected to perform in academia. In highlighting the consequences of operationalizing the teacher as mother personae in academia, Carol expands on the expectation of female educators to acquiesce to motherly and nurturing pedagogic performance as naturally inscribed in their social script. This is evident in the following extract:

> **Carol:** … Women's tendency to pay attention to students' needs in line with their conditioning as women, particularly at a university like UWC, which serves a disadvantaged body of students, means they are not promoted as quickly. On the whole, men have a greater sense of their own worth, and a greater sense of entitlement to promotion and pay rises, than women. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 29).

Carol elucidates Jennifer's comment that *women's position in society [is] primarily sacrificial.* While Carol does not offer any comment in her extract on the agentic potential of women educators to subvert socially gendered expectations of them, she does address the sacrificial ethic of women educators on two complementary levels, which may be explained by examining them in relation to the Nature/Nurture coupling. Generally, the Nature/Nurture coupling is presented within the reductive binary of the either/or logic. Within the traditional debates Nature is viewed as biologically determined, while Nurture is associated with cultural influences that shape the social actor.

First, although Carol disassociates herself from, and is highly averse to arguments that support women's instinctual or maternal nature[1], from above extract, readers may erroneously interpret Carol's reference in the sentence fragment: *women's tendency to pay attention to student's needs* as connoting an apparently natural predisposition, a general course, a propensity, and inclination for women to attend to students' needs. Such an

[1] In her comments from the respondent validation, Carol wrote: Although my words "Women's tendency" might suggest Nature's influence, I in fact see women's nurturing behaviour as a consequence of socialisation. I've never bought into the arguments from instinct or nature about women's maternal nature and, in fact, am highly averse to them, seeing them as dangerous to the feminist cause. Always, in lectures, I've emphasised that right from the time we're born we're treated differently according to whether we're female or male and that this influences us powerfully. Further, we do not know what is 'natural' because we live within society/culture. So, I see what you've written (while it may follow from the way I've phrased my ideas) as in fact not an accurate representation of them.

interpretation may obtain from the etymological association of the word ‘tendency’ to the family of words: ‘tend’ (which means to care for), and ‘tender’ (which means having or expressing warm feelings, being gentle and delicate, sensitive to moral and or spiritual feelings). Proponents who associate women with innate tendencies of caring and nurturing foster the expectation that women educators will respond to students’ needs as a natural consequence of their essentially organic and ‘true’ natures. Second, Carol’s extract also refers to female teachers responding to students’ needs *in line with their conditioning*. In this instance, she attributes women’s attention to students’ needs to Nurture influences, which shape and condition their behaviour. This tier of the binary coupling posits that the female teacher’s maternal response to her students is as a consequence of socially created and environmentally engendered expectations of her. Thus, the Nature/Nurture binary summarises the social expectation of female educators to acquiesce to maternal and nurturing pedagogic performances both as organic and naturally occurring manifestations of their disposition, as well as culturally learnt expectations inscribed in their social script.

Furthermore, contained in the sentence segment: *particularly at a university like UWC*, *which serves a disadvantaged body of students*, Carol alludes to an intensification or extra appeal to maternalistic and nurturance pedagogic relations when serving a disadvantaged body of students. Dorsey (2002), has coined the adjective ‘intellectualised mammy’ to illustrate how students selectively and strategically expect female faculty to guide them towards intellectual growth, while also nurturing them. This is accentuated when female teachers have to work with students who hail from disadvantaged socio-economic and political circumstances. Often such students arrive at university with stymied conceptual skills and lacking in basic reading, writing and study competencies. Generally, substandard pre-tertiary educational experiences exacerbate the challenges these students have to endure when adjusting and acculturating to academia. This necessitates additional care-taking responsibilities, which as attested by Carol, are taken up by female faculty, as they are cast into the role of intellectualised mammy. This expectation of maternal practice is poignantly captured by Mercer (1997), who describes the traditional mother-teacher as the:

> … bourgeois all-sacrificing, all-nurturing, well-resourced, power-sharing ‘good’ mother. This mother has no desires of her own, no needs, no problems, no will of her own except to nourish and empower all her students/children, whom she loves equally and without reservation.

Central to Mercer’s descriptions of teacher-mother, is the ineluctable sacrificial ethic that Jennifer identified in the mother-child relationship. Carol illustrates its consequences for women educators, when she alludes to the career mobility sacrifices female educators make as they are called upon to pay attention to students’ needs. Given that the benchmark for

upward career mobility in academia is tied to research and scholarly publications, Carol confides that female educators by attending to students' needs *in line with their conditioning means they are not promoted as* quickly. In addition, she points out that: *women … work harder at proving themselves, often ending up doing much of the donkeywork.* (See section titled: *Women's Gendered Academic Citizenship* later in this chapter for more discussion on this issue). In this regard, Douglas (1977), also laments that the cruellest aspect of oppression is the logic by which it forces its objects to do the dirty work in their society. She points out that:

> … women through our work as mothers, as students, and as teachers need to understand how we have contributed our labour to institutional and social organisations that have extended our own subordination and contradicted our own experiences of nurturance.

Valle (2002), observes that when female faculty resist or are genuinely unable to attend to students' needs they are quickly criticised for being 'heartless bearded mothers'. In addition, locked into teacher-mother roles inevitably results in perpetuating the equation of teaching with women's work as opposed to scholarly research that faculty and students generally associate with men's work. Assailed with care-giving and care-taking responsibilities invariably eventuates in undermining the female faculty's scholarly abilities and contributions. The persistence of the teacher as mother image associated with a pedagogy of nurturance, care-giving and sentimentalism has essentially defined and confined the role women play in education and broader society. Grumet (1988:87), identifies the grim consequence as follows:

> … many women, mothers and teachers, [live] through other people's stories. Having relinquished our own beginnings, middles, and ends, our stories of teaching resemble soap operas whose narratives are also frequently interrupted, repetitive, and endless.

Familial and Friendship Practices, Caricatures and Condescension: employing technologies of distancing oneself from being cast in the role of family or friend

In the following discussion, I explore Vijay and Phumzile's contention that there is a tendency for students and faculty to recreate familial and friendship patterns within the education domain. Vijay addresses the positive and negative debates that have defined maternal and nurturance pedagogies. She does not, however, stereotype maternal/nurturance pedagogies as either essentially good or bad, but provides a balanced view on the debate. First, she expounds the importance of fostering nurturing teacher-student relations. Second, she acknowledges the proliferation of dependency syndromes among emerging adults, and the

need to engage teacher-student relations in such a way so as not to encourage student dependency. Third, she is critical of the replication of hierarchical parent-child obedience rituals, which are usually discernible in families, from being re-created in teacher-student relations. She says:

> **Vijay:** … my students have taught me to interact at a more human level. Engagement for me has been highly politicised, because with my Department, the engagement is clinical. In a way that is satisfying to my feminist ideals because it engages, it nurtures, but it maintains a learning distance.
>
> … A lot of people are looking for mother in the classroom, and unfortunately women academics get confused with mother. From my own experience it is a difficult one because if you buy into that then the student won't deliver and won't grow. At the same time you have to buy into it sufficiently to nurture, but you have to keep giving the student tough kinds of reactions. It's almost like the way a bird will push a fledgling out of a nest. Those are mothers. They are educators also, and it is around survival. I really don't want any of them dependent on me because I am not going to be around all the time. I do have some good relationships with former students but with most of them I've had to take that trip down that road which said, 'Excuse me I'm not your parent. Don't keep feeding me this kind of crap'. It is that kind of thing where most of us need to replay those familial roles. But in the learning situation, there is a very fine line between dependency and developing a student who is strong, and confident. (Interview).

There at two important points that emerges from the extract. First, in arguing for the importance of connected teaching and learning, Vijay comments on the pervasive chilly climate that new student recruits to academia experience. She admits that feminist insights have taught her to interact with her students on a more human level. Her more connected interactions with her students have become politicized in the faculty she is attached to because, as in most other academic institutions, it runs against the grain of faculty-student traditions that tend toward clinical and aloof interpersonal relations. The sense emerging from Vijay's view, positions nurturing teaching and connection to students as a meaningful intellectual activity that help to fuse a bond between student and faculty. A nurturing attitude, from this perspective, serves teaching at university level in a positive way in that it demystifies teacher-student relations, and presents teachers as human beings.

It is however, important to note that Vijay's view is fraught with the push-pull dynamic enunciated in psychoanalytic theory. Central to psychoanalytic theories is the notion of separation and difference, which celebrates both maternal (teacher) absence, and maternal (teacher) presence as the basis of ego development. Vijay captures this repeatedly in statements such as:

> … it engages, it nurtures, but it maintains a learning distance;
> … you have to buy into it sufficiently to nurture, but you have to keep giving the student tough kinds of reactions;
> … It's almost like the way a bird will push a fledgling out of a nest. Those are mothers. They are educators also, and it is around survival. (Interview).

The push-pull dynamic between teacher and student is an underlying educational principle. It is inextricable to the logic of fundamental pedagogic philosophies, which portray the more experienced adult leading the child towards self-actualization. This process requires that the teacher remain in touch with the emotions, confidence levels, intellectual growth, and social dynamics that the student has to deal with, without negating the importance of argument and critical engagement. Given that the project of education aims at developing students' intellectual, cognitive and social survival strategies, means that parochial images of maternal pedagogies inclined to sentimentalism and protectionism are more than likely to stunt students' emotional, psychological and cognitive growth. This in and of itself would be antithetical to the mission of teaching and learning. It is against this backdrop that Vijay asks her students: *Can't I treat you like adults?* She then proceeds to declare: *You are adults.* Embodied in her question and answer is a desire to believe that at university level students have indeed entered the portals of adulthood, and from henceforth she need not relate to them as children, neither should she be expected to entertain infantile patterns of behaviour, and a dependency syndrome. The paradox of parental (teacher) presence and absence is summarised in: *I really don't want any of them dependent on me because I am not going to be around all the time.* The crux of the educational project is summarised in the paradox that while students will graduate out of her physical presence she will remain present symbolically in their lives as they assimilate, adapt, challenge and change the various ideological, sociological and psychological views that she has shared with them, as their teacher. Like the mother's biological genetic material remains embodied in the child even after separation, similarly, the student will carry the educational and ideological 'genetic' influences of Vijay, their teacher, long after they have graduated out of her class.

Second, Vijay also points out that: … *A lot of people are looking for mother in the classroom … and women academics get confused with mother.* Inferred in this statement is the tendency for some students to operate from the belief that female faculty are supposed to be open to intimate, even familial relations with their students as a necessary counter- point to patriarchal tradition. An area already fraught with interpersonal tensions then becomes the site for students to act out childish patterns of interaction with maternal figures. Dorsey (2002:221), is of the opinion that good teachers do nurture their students, encourage

independent thought, and help them improve academic skills, there is, however, a distinction between nurturance and intellectualised mammy work. Thus, while acknowledging the need to be supportive and nurturing of her students, Vijay reminds them: *Excuse me I'm not your parent. Don't feed me this kind of crap.*

In these statements, Vijay introduces the third point regarding the modelling of pedagogic relations on a nuclear family paradigm. Both Mercer (1997:42), and Shalem (1992:308), critique the continuing use of the family model in relation to pedagogic relations. Mercer ponders:

> … why should teachers be modelled on either mothers or fathers? Why not develop an ethic of teaching which steers well clear of any romantic, version of the nuclear family?

Shalem (1992:320), observes that the ideological configuration of school management structures is 'continuously legitimated by presenting the triad of teachers, management, and pupils as essentially homologous to the family structure'. In other words, the school structure replicates the patriarchal structure of the family, with female educators cast in the role of mothers, the men who administratively and procedurally manage the school and who are invariably responsible for training, supervising and evaluating, play the role of the proverbial 'head of the family', and in combination within this institutionally heterosexual sanctioned marriage they jointly perform parenting roles to the children/students. Gatens (1994:13), also ponders what are the impediments circumscribed by the imposition of a familial psychoanalytic model onto pedagogical relations, and what happens when those relations are re-imagined outside of those traditional roles?

In responding to what can possibly transpire when familial roles are re-imagined in the class, Grumet (1988), points out that women teachers' own passivity is largely meant to provide the model of obedience for students to emulate. Expanding on how she discourages developing parent-child relations from being inappropriately replicated within pedagogic relations, Vijay, in the following extract, also comments on the concept of obedience and its manifestation in teacher-student relations:

Vijay: … it is this obedience thing. I really don't want them to do something for form sake, and because she wants it, and because it is going into the register. I want them, even when they are doing their notes, to pick up what is relevant and meaningful to themselves, and to not give it back to me like good children – I'm saying to them, 'Can't I treat you like adults? You are adults. Don't pander and patronise me in the kind of stuff that you give me, because that is not what tertiary education is about'. (Interview).

Vijay conceives of student obedience in two ways: first, students engaging in learning activities for *form sake,* and/or b*ecause it is going into the register,* suggests that students indulge pedagogic routines out of a sense of formality, and have no real interest in its educative value. Probably, if students know that the work will be recorded in a register, this acts as a monitoring, surveillance and control measure and they conform to the teacher's technologies of micro power as a way of satisfying administrative requirements. Second, students may perform obedience rituals *because she wants it,* thus they may oblige learning as a way of humouring, or appeasing the teacher. Evidently, students adopting such strategies do not impress Vijay, since she is more interested in their not attempting to win her favour or approval by reproducing what they imagine might be pleasing to her. Essentially, she discourages students from indulging in narcissistic teacher reproductions and reflections, hence she implores them not to *pander and patronise* her *like good children*. In a further attempt to discourage ritualistic obedience pedagogies, she tells her students not to give back notes to her *like good children … Can't I treat you like adults? You are adults.* Contained in these statements is her desire to relate to them as adults; adulthood, in this instance being associated with critical thinking - a by-product of independence and cognitive maturation.

In addition, some students, who deviate from construing the female teacher as mother, generally opt for the teacher as 'big sister' or friend. This is illustrated in the following extract from Phumzile's interview:

> **Phumzile:** So you would have Black students coming for one thing and then 2 hours later they're still there and you realise they're just lurking. I mean there was an academic issue to be dealt with, but also there's some other function that you're serving which goes beyond the immediate material that you're teaching and a kind of fascination because there are so few Black lecturers on campus. ... You can understand me being read as a kind of a big sister in some ways - which is fine for me as long as that does not mean that you expect certain privileges, or certain allowances because of that. (Interview).

Phumzile posits that if students are given the impression that the feminist teacher overtly and covertly sympathizes with them, or suggests that she understands them and identifies with them based on racial and/or gender similarity, we should not be too surprised if in trying to make sense of themselves students become bound up in the teacher, either in excessive admiration tied to a kind of fascination, or unrealistic expectations that certain privileges, or certain allowances will be made to accommodate them. Choosing to identify with a Black woman in authority is a manifestation of a positive self-identity, especially, in the minds of

young women who live within a society that regularly endorses negative and dysfunctional images of Black females. Aware of this state of affairs, Phumzile does not object to being read as 'big sister' but inserts the proviso: as long as that does not mean that you expect certain privileges, or certain allowances because of that. Implied in Phumzile's statement is the forewarning that her potential acquaintance with the student's personal problems or circumstances should not be interpreted that she will entertain substandard work, grant concessions about deadlines or extend special privileges to them.

Students' endeavours to recreate familial and friendship relations with female faculty, may be attributed largely to the expectation that: teacher=family/friend=emotional blanket. Many young students still dwell in the realm of the familial, thus when translated to classroom practice they expect female teachers to primarily concern themselves with student casualties, and function in the capacity of emotional blanket, on whom they can rely upon for rescue and support. This is elucidated in the following episode Vijay provides regarding a bulimic student seeking her out to discuss a personal issue.

Vijay: One of the students had come to tell me that she was a bulimic, quite early in the year. I barely knew her. She clearly needed to talk, and engage with a woman in authority, or a teacher. I couldn't figure it out whether it was gendered or not. I have to practice a thin line there where you both have to comfort, but you can't get confused with mother. (Interview).

Vijay recalls: *I barely knew her.* In highlighting her unfamiliarity with the student, Vijay signals that generally people confide highly personal matters, not with strangers, but those one is acquainted with. This draws attention to yet another variety of invisible labour that female faculty perform, and relates to Bartky's (1990:102), Marxist interrogation of women's emotional labour – an activity many female teachers are familiar with. Family, motherhood, sisterhood can be quite complicated relations, and have the potential for conflict, as well as support and connectedness. A feminist pedagogical strategy that encourages students to draw parallels between family and friendship relations runs the risk of tapping into tensions rooted in dynamics that may be less benign than envisioned by a more expansive vision of such relations.

Finally, another reason for female educators distancing themselves from being construed as teacher-mother relates to the nurturing mother being associated with the imagery of food. By definition to nurture, embodies the actions of feeding and protecting. While feeding and protecting are generally regarded as positive behaviour in society, the image of feeding take on less positive connotations by Vijay and Thembi in relation to teaching and learning. For example, Vijay's comment: *[d]on't feed me this kind of crap!*

While there are several meanings that could be attached to the word *crap,* it may be safe to extend its association with regimes of knowledge regurgitation. If interpreted in this light, it could find support when read in the context of Vijay's statement: *I want them, even when they are doing their notes, to pick up what is relevant and meaningful to themselves, and to not give it back to me like good children.* Her call for students to engage their education in a critical and informed way highlights the important discussion on knowledge production and reproduction as taken up by feminist and critical theorists. (See Weiler 1988).

Continuing on a parallel trajectory, Thembi sustains the imagery of food and nurturance by introducing the metaphor of spoon-feeding. In doing so, she demonstrates the agentic potential female teachers possess to transcend parochial associations of mother-teacher with nurturance and nourishment. Thembi declares:

> **Thembi:** Spoon-feeder. I don't want that. I don't want to be looked at as one who spoon-feeds or an uncommitted teacher. (Interview).

Through the food image, Thembi proceeds along a related but tangential trajectory to that of Vijay, in her emphatic disassociation from images of the teacher-mother as nourisher. Through her double denunciation to be construed as a: *Spoon-feeder*. *I don't want that. I don't want to be looked at as one who spoon-feeds,* Thembi emphasizes the negative stereotyping that occurs when teachers are perceived as spoon-feeders. Her spirited and repeated disassociation from this metaphoric image of spoon-feeder can also be traced to teaching and learning paradigms Freire (1968), critiqued for bearing the marks of banking/ transmission systems of education. Traditional pedagogies have been critiqued for spoon feeding and even force-feeding students. Notorious for undermining both students and teachers' critical propensities 'spoonfeeding/transmission pedagogies have come to be associated with teachers and teaching philosophies that reduce students to empty receptacles into which teachers pour received, scared knowledge which parade as universal truth. A transmission mode of education is at odds with Thembi and Vijay's stated objectives to provoke their students to critical thinking.

Thembi's refusal to be seen as one who spoon-feeds or an uncommitted teacher combines an unconventional binary, that of the spoon-feeder and the uncommitted teacher. Her use of the either/or binary is an unusual departure from the way binaries operate. Generally, in a binary the first component of the coupling is elevated and privileged, while the second is devalued and disprivileged. In setting up the binary *spoon-feeder/ uncommitted teacher*, Thembi disassociates herself from the entire binary because each entity in the coupling has come to be associated within educational circles as unscholarly and lacking in

professionalism. The negative consequences of acquiescing to spoon-feeding pedagogies court the risk of earning the educator a reputation for being unscholarly, theoretically uninformed, and an uncommitted teacher, who is merely a conduit for cultural reproduction and cognitive cloning. Awareness of the possibility for women educators' to be undermined, it is likely that against this backdrop, Thembi attempts to steer clear of reproducing the caricature of the uncommitted teacher among her students.

In as far as Thembi's objective is aligned to the food for thought maxim, as opposed to spoon-feeding pedagogical practices, she echoes Grosz' (1989:124-125), stance that teacher-student relations should be understood as active subject-to-subject exchanges, during which:

> … the mother must give the daughter more than food to nourish her, she may also give her words with which to speak and hear. The gift of language will always be reciprocated, as food can never be: it is `returned' to the mother `with interest', in the daughter's new-found ability to speak *to* rather than *at* her mother.

It may be surmised that this is at the heart of what Thembi hopes to achieve in her teaching relationships. Her preference to subvert traditional gynocentric pedagogies point to broadening portrayals of female teachers. Imagining the teacher's role as providing a `gift of language/discourse' not only reinvests the concept of `mothering/teaching' as positively enabling, but also displaces the hierarchical model of teaching as knowledge transference into a more interactive and dynamic relationship.

Synthesis

From the insights that have emerged from an investigation into the *authority versus nurturance* debate, the participants in my study collectively acknowledge the narrow conceptions in which female teacher identity has been defined. They point to significant departures from this staid image that has come to predominate the discourse. Each participant provides possible reasons for the existence of these limiting conceptions, and explains their personal responses to the teacher as mother cult phenomenon. Jennifer submits that psychoanalytic analysis offers a convincing explanation for the transference of the mother-child union being mirrored within patriarchal education system. Carol, Vijay and Phumzile indicate that in various guises, students attempt to forge familial relationships with their female teachers, either casting them in the role of benevolent mother, sister, or friend. While the participants acknowledge the need for students to form close pedagogic connections with theirteachers, they also signal the setbacks that arise when mother/parent/

sister patterns are performed in educational domains. In synthesising discussions around *authority versus nurturance*, the following key points emerge:

The first relates to Gore's (1993), formulation of the theme *authority versus nurturance*. Gore suggests that authority in the construction of feminist pedagogies is addressed in three ways, viz.: *authority* ***versus*** *nurturance*, *authority* ***as*** *authorship*, and *authority* ***as*** *power*. We notice that her identification of the *authority versus* nurturance framing highlights an important departure from the way she frames the two other themes viz. *authority as authorship*, and *authority as power*. In the two latter themes authority is not set up as binaries, instead authority as authorship and authority as power are presented as forms of authority not in opposition to another category/concept. In presenting *authority versus nurturance* as a binary, Gore highlights the either/or oppositional logic that frames the debate. The participants in my study instead confirm that authority is neither oppositional to nurturance, nor inconsistent with the personae of the female teacher. Critical incidents in Vijay, Thembi and Phumzile's extracts illustrate the impetus not to ignore the tensions created in the classroom by their female bodies. While willing to engage connected learning paradigms in their feminist classrooms, they do not shy away from stances that subvert maternalized, personalized and ameliorative conceptions of the female educator. For example, Vijay pointedly reprimands her students telling them not to feed her crap, and she reminds them that she is not their parent, and they are not her children. Such exchanges with students shatter assumptions of both herself and her students and provide a space for the development of their personal independence, and independent knowledge constructions. This is an especially important message for students who are likely to interpret female teachers' caring, connective and emotional support as an end in and of itself, rather than as a means towards achieving independence and development.

The second point that emerges from considering the *authority versus nurturance* delineation, relates to the notion that the classroom replicates the familial drama and functions as a foundational understanding of the educational dynamic. Miklitsch (1994), considers the difficulty students are likely to experience when attempts are made to disrupt familial patterns/models within schools. He acknowledges that if the female teacher cannot assume traditionally respected male or paternal authority, and the authority of the feminine becomes a denigrated configuration of the maternal, this forecloses the space for articulating a productive female pedagogy. He also concedes that all teaching attempts to alter students in some way, and students may be assumed to understand that change is an integral aspect of the educational experience. Miklitsch is, however, wary about a radical shift (change) in primary assumptions regarding the replication of familial patterns in educational contexts. He contends that ideology is not simply an intellectual matter. He argues that:

> … if ideology, like hegemony, is primarily an unconscious process, critical pedagogy must engage affect and intellect, emotion and cognition if it is to be persuasive, which is to say transformative.

This is a sentiment that most participants in the study are sensitive to. While they are keen to acknowledge psychoanalytic notions of separation and difference, they are aware that oscillation between proximity and retreat is often present in the feminist classroom. The task remains holding in creative and constructive balance the push-pull dynamic of teacher-student relations. Good teachers do nurture their students, encourage independent thought, and help them improve academic skills, however, the participants stress that a distinction be made between nurturance and parental condescension/intellectualised mammy work.

Third, participants critique traditional feminist scholarship that overlooks the possibility that a female teacher is perceived as a manifestation of maternal authority rather than as someone with no authority at all. A feminist pedagogy that stands in opposition to the patriarchal model denies the maternal as a particular kind of authority. This denial according to Jarratt (1991 in Bell & Nugent 2001), highlights:

> … the deep ambivalence toward and repression of the mother in our culture. A focus on male configurations of power situates the female always in relation to the male and represses the understanding that within the confines of her own classroom, constructions of female authority dominate. While, for the feminist teacher, attaching negative connotations of authority with the male may valorize a facilitative or nurturing stance, the female teacher cannot assume patriarchal authority, so there is no need for renunciation of that role. The presence of a female body in the classroom denies that possibility.

Finally, presenting nurturance in confrontation to authority invites the charge of being caught in a false binary between connection versus disconnection, mothering versus managing, and healing versus empowerment. A considerable body of feminist pedagogical theory would persuade us to move towards some more satisfactory third term, by incorporating our contradictory claims into a higher level of theory. Walsh (1996:192-193), argues that feminist teachers should resist binary and hierarchical demarcations by embracing feminist pedagogy's ameliorative, inclusive and healing function by recontextualising it within a discourse of empowerment, thereby reconciling the apparent contradictions between feminist teaching as therapy and politics. If feminist teachers are rejecting the image of the traditional maternal role as paralyzing for both students and teachers then their teaching bodies could also be configured as female and non-maternal. While not articulating their conceptions of what it means to exercise nurturance and authority as stridently as Broughton (in Potts & Broughton 2001), who writes: 'I would rather be disliked, resented, and extruded from the

scene of learning than enmire my students in a minefield of mother–daughter relationships, or worse still, in my own neuroses, my own fantasies of friendship and/or feminism' - the participants in my study, nonetheless are also wary not to replicate teacher-student relations that are likely to be counterproductive to the education enterprise.

Section 2: Authority as Authorship

Pagano (1990:99), suggests that feminist educators can engage questions of authority by focusing on authorship, in which *authority as authorship* involves sharing stories based on particular attachments to the world and to each other. Understanding authority as authorship, embodies the suggestion that feminist educators might consider teaching as an enactment of a narrative in which authority refers to the power of both teachers and students to (re)present reality. In so doing, feminist pedagogical sensibilities have reconfigured teacher and student 'personation' both as pedagogical strategy (linked to student-centred pedagogies), and as material for epistemological purposes (in which personal experience is regarded as a valid source of knowledge). Allied to this is the recognition that if student personal is political and pedagogical and is called upon to be made available to each other, then students collectively, should have the right to call upon the teacher's 'personal' as a pedagogical resource. The pedagogic merit of feminist educators bringing the 'self' into the classroom, and asking their students to do likewise, prompts the question: what are the implications of resisting some of the more patriarchal and traditional methods of teaching in valuing students and teachers' experiences, and providing spaces for them to have a voice? This further triggers the following series of questions:

a) is there a shared assumption that the personal is good and the impersonal bad? Is there a need to reconsider the merits of the impersonal for feminist teaching?

b) given that other discourses of the personal are operating in the feminist classroom, exactly which personal are we referring to when we seek to accommodate personal experience as a valid source of knowledge? Broughton & Potts (2001), suggest that it is important to differentiate between the private crafted dimension of the personal, and a political position within teaching.

c) what counts as valuable and valid knowledge, and how does the educator assess personal experience? In this regard, cognizance must be given to the fact that educational institutions are ultimately credentialing dispensing/generating organs, which make the enterprise of accountability, standards and assessment central to their identities.

Bearing in mind the above issues, in the ensuing discussion, I draw on the views of the five participants in my study to explore the following key aspects as they presented themselves in the autobiographical essays, interviews and lecture observations:

- First, in a section titled: *Perspectives on Teacher-Student Personal in the Feminist Classroom:* I present the different perspectives on teacher-student personal as epistemological content. Here, I consider different views participants forward regarding drawing on teacher and student self-disclosure in the classroom. In this regard I explore:

a) *Teacher Personal as Epistemology:* I present Phumziles and Vijay's differing views in relation to the positive and negative repercussions of drawing on teacher personal in the class, both in terms of its impact on teacher-student relations, and as pedagogic content and strategy.

b) *Student Personal as Epistemology:* I examine participants' different perspectives on the employment of student personal disclosure in the classroom. By identifying and analyzing various instances from the lecture observations, I examine the ways in which the feminist educators encourage students to assume *authority as authorship*, by activating:

(i) *authorship as invention* (engaging students in the writing of autobiographical essays);

(ii) *authorship as experiential and theoretical praxis* (integrating personal and social experience with theory), and

(iii) *authorship as positionality* (encouraging students to declare their positionality through legitimising and/or challenging theories, texts and theorists).

- Second, in a section titled: *Exemplar of Teacher-Student Self-disclosure:*

a) I refer briefly to student personal disclosures from different lecture observations, and present an exemplar of a student-teacher disclosure from Jennifer's lecture. The example is employed to illustrate the nature of some of the disclosures teachers and students make in the classroom, and their explicit and tacit pedagogic significance.

b) *Strategies for dealing with Sensitive Personal Disclosures:* I consider this issue in relation to the potential for personal disclosure to be sensitive, and the strategies teachers employ to ensure that neither they nor their students are traumatized, hurt or embarrassed in the classroom when such disclosures are made.

- Third, in a section titled: *Seeking relevance, averting solipsism, pursuing critical analysis and the politics of assessment,* I explore the criteria of relevance, integration, contextualisation and critical analysis, which the feminist educators employ as benchmarks against which to weigh the pedagogic significance of student disclosure.

This is an important aspect of teaching and learning, which is ultimately linked to the assessment and accreditation demands of the institutions they teach in. I explore this issue in relation to the value, validation and evaluation of student personal disclosure in the feminist classroom.

Perspectives on Teacher-Student Personal in the Feminist Classroom

a) Teacher Personal as Epistemology

In addressing the dynamics of teacher disclosure, Potts (in Boughton & Potts 2001), contends that teacher intimacy/personal may actually encourage a more dynamic learning situation. Potts explains that the personal, and intimacy which, she as a teacher invokes/provokes is associated with being approachable and supportive, and mutually listening to and sharing personal revelation from one's stories and experiences. However, such an understanding of teacher self-disclosure in feminist pedagogy portrays a nominal conceptualization of the practice, in that it fails to highlight the complexities and demands that are associated with such a teaching/learning perspective. This is a debate that has been taken up by Gallop *et al.* (1995), who have theorised the question of the 'personal' in teaching as, for good or ill?

The two different views presented by Potts and Gallop *et al.* is also discernible in the different perspectives offered by Phumzile and Vijay regarding the use and/or avoidance of teacher personal for pedagogic purposes. In the following extract, Phumzile explains why she largely steers away from using herself as 'text' in the class. Referring to her personality trait and preference for privacy, she says:

Phumzile: As far as sharing my experiences, I don't, because I don't want to be that accessible to my students. And my students are my students. I don't share personal experiences very easily generally at the best of times. Even my friends and family have to probe. I don't use myself as text in classroom situations. I may refer to something briefly in a conversation with my students in a different context, but it is highly unlikely that I am going to go into detail. (Interview).

Phumzile does not differentiate between avoiding private or political personal disclosures, as Potts & Broughton (2001), do but she makes a blanket statement about avoiding the sharing of personal experiences, in general. She does, however, forward several reasons for not indulging personal disclosure in the classroom. The first relates to her wish not to be *accessible* (read: open to familiarity, obtainable, available) to her students. Evidently, she would like to engage her students from a professional distance. The tautologic statement: *And my students are my students,* signals that the nature of her relationship with them is that of teacher-student (a hierarchical relationship), and is decidedly different from the nature of the relationship she has with significant others in her life (like friends and family). She attributes her reticence to remain 'accessible/available' to students to her general personality trait about being guarded, and introverted about personal disclosure. Predisposed to not indulging in self-disclosure easily, not even with people close to her, she is even less likely to draw on her personal in a class situation, with her students. On the rare occasion that she may do so, her disclosure remains characteristically brief, and vague and is context dependent. Although she does not offer much elaboration in this extract, in other data sources in this study, Phumzile refers to her conscious decision to maintaining a professional distance from her students. Apart from her not wanting to foster teacher-student familiarity by blurring their professional relationship, the context in which she teaches also plays a significant role in dictating the nature of relationships she forges with her students. This owes largely to the fact that as a young, Black female teaching at a predominantly White institution, she is the object of an assortment of undermining tactics that cast aspersions on her professional integrity and capabilities. (See section titled: *Bodies are the objects of pedagogical power relations* later in this chapter, where I discuss the impact of age, race and gender on teacher-student power relations). It is possible that teacher personal disclosure (of both a private and political nature) is likely to exacerbate the disparagement of her professional standing in a context predisposed to such practices. Thus, teacher 'impersonality' for Phumzile derives from her personality trait and contextual specificities, and services her philosophy regarding teacher-student relations.

Offering another dimension on the use of teacher personal as pedagogic content and strategy, Vijay admits:

> **Vijay:** I try and refer to myself because I find that's an easy way to teach something that people are unwilling to learn. I say, 'When I was 18 … whatever …' I find that works. I find that sometimes I've got to use leadership, take a position, stick my neck out. Show them how it's done. The most important thing that I do in teaching sensitive and personal issues, (I've done a lot of that this year through race issues), I have to teach it through my own values. I try not to lay it on too thick, but I try and suggest a way of talking about it. (Interview).

Disclosure on the part of the teacher is one way to get students to understand the connection between the ideas being studied and life experiences. Vijay attests to this in the extract, when she explains that she draws on her personal experience as an easy way to teach difficult issues. By sharing with students her personal experiential and cognitive journeys, she exemplifies with reference to 'real life' autobiographical anecdotes how she has had to deal or dealt with sensitive issues. By, for example, sharing her engagement with issues when she was a certain age, she probably tries to show the evolution that has taken place in her thinking, and/or the way the social and political discourses on the issues have changed over time. Thus, it appears that her intention for sharing personal experiences with her students is meant to serve as a point of reference against which they could compare, contrast and critique similar issues in relation to their lives, and the course material they are studying.

In assuming the 'teacher as role-model paradigm', Vijay makes the following significant statements in her extract: *I find that sometimes I've got to use leadership, take a position, stick my neck out. Show them how it's done.* From these statements, two important points emerge: first, Vijay alludes to the potential to render herself vulnerable by 'sticking out her neck'; and second, she highlights the need for assuming teacher leadership. First, in sticking her neck out, Vijay points to the real potential of making herself vulnerable by taking the risk of exposing herself. While, on the one hand, the likely positive spin-off from teacher self-disclosure may be the narrowing of the affective gap between teacher and student, and the strengthening of teacher-student connections, on the other hand, personal disclosure allows students access to unusually deep levels of teacher's personal experiences. Depending on the content and nature of the disclosure, some students may misunderstand/ misinterpret the intention behind the disclosure and this may potentially harm teacher-student relationships. There is also the real possibility that because Vijay draws on her personal experiences and teaches through her own values, this may be misconstrued as attempts at narcissism, and/or she may alienate herself from students who subscribe to a value system different from hers, and/or it may be read as an invitation to pursue familiar relations with her.

Second, the issue of leadership is intricately linked to the discourse on feminist teacher authority. I take up more in-depth discussion on the issue of feminist teacher *authority as power* later in this chapter; however, in this section I briefly explore the significance of teacher's personal, as a leadership strategy to promote pedagogical intents. Briskin (2002), notes that feminist educators in attempting to be sensitive to the psychological and cognitive marginalisation of students' lives have often denied themselves their professional authority by de-emphasizing their leadership role in the classroom. While rejecting teacher authoritarianism, Briskin conceptualises teacher authority as authorship by

advocating the acknowledgement of teacher (professional and personal) expertise. Vijay's conceptualisation of leading from the front illustrates Briskin's call for a revised perspective on feminist teacher authority. By sharing her personal experiences/expertise or responses to *sensitive and personal issues*, such as race, and teaching *something that people are unwilling to learn,* Vijay suggests to students ways in which sensitive, and personal issues may be addressed. In this way, she draws on the lessons she has learnt from her experiences, and offers it as a 'reference text' to her students. Taking a similar position Valle (2002:168), forwards the concept of 'modelling', which she describes as leading 'by example, utilizing real life experiences to exemplify a point'. Thus, in dealing with sensitive issues, like race relations, this is probably one way in which Vijay can teach the boundaries of acceptable language about the *Other*, and the ways in which students may construct themselves and *Others* in multiracial relations. As a way of, s*howing [students] how it's done*, her personal experiences become an exemplar students can refer to.

In addition, assuming teacher leadership as a pedagogic strategy carries the potential of making the medium the message. This means that the teacher can teach leadership by being a leader in the class. By taking the 'lead' in discussions, she models/exemplifies leadership strategies.

In drawing on her personal experience and feelings as pedagogic strategy, Vijay echoes Shrewsbury's (1987), sentiments on the role of teacher leadership. Shrewsbury writes:

> Leadership is a special form of empowerment that empowers others. …The goal is to increase the power of all actors, not to limit the power of some.

Linking leadership to empowerment submits to the reality that students and teachers' ability to claim power in the classroom varies on the basis of gender, class, race, sexual orientation, etc. These differences have to be addressed and one strategy is to teach leadership directly. Vijay refers to race as a sensitive issue that she teaches through her own values. Other topical issues in her *Language and Power Module* include course content on gender, class, language diversity, all of which are potentially sensitive topics because they are marked by strong power imbalances. Thus, as a young Black academic, Vijay (in her interview) referred to isolated instances when by virtue of her age and gender her power was undermined by male students. By responding in a confident and assertive way against such discriminatory relational behaviour, Vijay serves as a role model to other women in the class modelling, leading, educating and empowering them on possible ways gendered power differentials could be negotiated. Her personal narratives of racial and gendered relations are employed

to educate others, how not to dominate through power, but to script the use of power productively and confidently.

While discussion on teacher personal as pedagogy has not been the subject of widespread debate, feminist educational discourses have been substantially more vocal on student personal as epistemology. This is an issue I examine in the following discussion.

b) Student Personal as Epistemology

Much of the impetus to encourage student voice and experience in the pedagogic encounter emanates from the disenchantment with mainstream pedagogy, which invariably disregards their experiential realities. This often results in the silencing of students' voices, and the subsequent denial of the representation and acknowledgement of their experiences. The challenge remains seeking ways in which students can be encouraged to articulate the knowledge they have gained from experience and contrast and compare this to their theoretical studies. This according to Clifford *et al.* (2001), encourages students to examine the political nature of knowledge, and requires identifying classroom practices that foster the exploration, and discovery of knowledge, and the articulation of personal experiences relevant to their studies. Lewis (1990:170), suggests that the focus of feminist pedagogy must be the political struggle over meaning, and the encouragement of students to: 'self consciously examine and question the conditions of our meaning-making and to use it as the place from which to begin to work toward change'.

An examination of the participants' various data sources confirms their commitment to encouraging student *authority as authorship*. The positive aspects of student personal and voice in the feminist classroom, relate to creating, fashioning and encouraging critical perspectives on knowledge construction. I address the potentiality for activating student voice by exploring ways in which teachers promote student voice in relation to:
(i) *authorship as invention* (through engaging them in autobiographical writing exercises); (ii) *authorship as experiential and theoretical praxis* (juxtaposing personal and social experiences with theoretical insight); and
(iii) *authorship as positionality* (critiquing and deconstructing texts and theories).

In the following series of extracts, we note that activating student voice is achieved on two distinct levels. The first level is concerned with activating student voice through the *creation* of personal texts, (in the form of written and oral autobiographical experiences). The second level encourages student voice through the critiquing of *created* texts (i.e. texts that are already in existence, such as prescribed readings, theories, etc.). This level is characterised by *authorship as positionality.* This means that students' responses to texts do

not necessarily emanate from the basis of their personal experience, but operate from their interpretational, evaluative, and philosophical standpoint/positionalities. Within the genre of *authorship as positionality,* we can further differentiate between *authorship as legitimisation* (in which students endorse the views expressed in the text), and *authorship as resistance* (in which they offer alternative interpretations). In the following discussion I examine authority as authorship by considering the pedagogical rationale and the merits of employing students' personal as content and strategy in the feminist classroom.

(i) Teachers can encourage student authority as authorship by promoting a*uthorship as invention. Authorship as invention* provides a rich forum from which to examine the evolution of students' voice as a means of self-expression. This is a stance supported by Jennifer, who in her essay wrote:

> **Jennifer:** … as a feminist teacher of language, I believe that students' own experiences are relevant to their studies and to their language acquisition. This is in contrast to the traditional model of academic study; where the student is supposed to develop objectivity and erase all traces of his or her own subjectivity. Therefore, I use autobiographical writing exercises as a resource for students to develop fluency and communicative competence in what is often a second or third language. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 20).

Jennifer shares her views on the role of students' knowledge in the teaching and learning process. Her views capture an important principle in feminist pedagogy and sociolinguistic studies as it relates to authority as authorship, viz. that students' personal experiences are relevant to their studies and language acquisition. The recognition of student voice in feminist pedagogy is intricately linked to validating personal experience as a legitimate source of knowledge, an acceptance of which allows for the acknowledgement of subjugated and alternative knowledges. In acknowledging the relevance of student experience to learning and language acquisition, Jennifer critiques traditional models of teaching and learning that ignore student subjectivity, and endorse a universal truth script that is intolerant of diversity and alternative knowledge claims. In attempting to encourage and recognize the subjective/ individual experiences of students' lives, Jennifer sets language tasks that require them to write about their personal (autobiographical) experiences. She believes that asking students to reflect on, and relate their personal life stories and experiences helps them to develop fluency and communicative competence in English. This is especially so among non-native English speaking students. Thus, the practice of writing is one concrete strategy to use in the classroom as a way of encouraging authority as authorship, and it illustrates how teachers

can encourage student identity as invention. More writing on the part of students is already a recommendation in many reform reports. The motivation behind writing is not to reproduce or re-present how much of the teacher's knowledge students have acquired, but to serve as an avenue for practicing authority as authorship. Jennifer employs authorship as invention as a useful confidence building strategy. By writing autobiographical pieces students reflect and document experiences that they are familiar, and closely connected with. They are thus, more at ease to concentrate on the development of fluency and communicative competencies, by writing about topics/issues in which they may, arguably be regarded as 'authorities'.

(ii) Teachers can promote authority as authorship by encouraging *authorship as experiential and theoretical praxis.* This means that theory could be created by studying people's reaction to and negotiation of their experiences. In the following extract, we see Vijay inviting her students to incorporate and relate their vernacular/local knowledges and experiences into their learning. She asks:

> **Vijay:** … Whose voices do you want to record? And this is where Vasie's topic provides an interesting counter. The voices of the dissidents are fairly well known and fairly well documented, whereas the voices of, perhaps, your peers, your friends, people you know, people you live with are not so well heard. What do you think about AIDS, and does anybody know what you think about AIDS or HIV infection? Is it important, that your own voice is heard? (Lecture Observation).

Vijay engages her students in the AIDS Assignment as a way of excavating subjugated voices and knowledges. She encourages students to document the voices of *peers, your friends, people you know, people you live with*. In addition, she asks *does anybody know what you think; … Is it important, that your own voice is heard?* By posing these reflective questions, she inspires students to find, fashion and make audible their own voices, as well as the voices of those who have been relegated to the margins of mainstream discourses. Furthermore, the exercise is designed for students to explore for themselves, by purposely using the public and private discourses of their daily lives, (that is, the discourses of their families and communities). It requires critical engagement with knowledge based on experiences that have remained invisible to mainstream investigation. In so doing, students can redistribute the narrative field, and yield new and alternative theories geared toward action and social change. Comparing, contrasting, and documenting subjugated knowledges alongside official public discourses and debates highlights yet another dimension of authorship as invention.

In her extract Thembi, draws attention to yet another dimension of authorship as authority. This is related to the connection between the evolution of voice, and the languages of experience and theory. Thembi explains that the shift from private stories to more public discourse often demands that students bridge the gap between these two languages. She says:

> **Thembi:** … Remember you wrote an essay for us about your experiences regarding gender issues. You wrote a biographical sketch of about 1 – 1.5 pages, situating yourself within your own environment at home, at school, at the university or at church or within larger society. … I want to suggest to you that there is a very close connection between this statement, 'What is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing,' from Mill's essay, and what you wrote for me in your essays. So would you apply these thoughts to your own experience and elaborate whether you disagree or you agree in terms of why you think the 'nature of women is an eminently artificial thing'. (Lecture Observation).

Thembi encourages her students to intersect and interact private and public experiences with the discourses of expert knowledge. Rather than writing exercises that faithfully replicate prior knowledge, the process of activating authorship as invention promotes the cross-fertilization of discourses of daily life (local and meta-narratives) with the narratives of grand theory. Essentially, it requires mediation between the range of personal voices and the voice of theory. Connecting personal experiences to theory helps to compare, contrast, critique, elaborate and exemplify conceptual issues from both personal experience and theory; hence Thembi says: *you apply these thoughts to your own experience and elaborate whether you disagree or you agree.* Linking their own experiences with broader theoretical discourses is intended to help students bridge the language of theory and experience.

In reviewing the rationale and merit of activating student *authorship as invention,* we note that Jennifer, Vijay and Thembi strive to achieve the following pedagogic objectives:

- Jennifer encourages authority as authorship through the creation/invention of autobiographical texts, she encourages a*uthorship as invention* by engaging students in autobiographical writing, as a confidence building strategy, and to develop fluency and communicative competence among students for whom English is not a first language.
- Vijay draws on students' vernacular and personal experiences as pedagogic strategy as a way of contributing to knowledge creation, and she impresses the importance of excavating subjugated voices and knowledges.
- Thembi draws on student personal as a way of connecting and comparing personal experience with theoretical insights.

The preceding discussion highlighted the creative and positive spin-offs of encouraging student *authorship as invention.* It is, however, also important to signal the practice of *authorship as inauthenticity.* This refers to instances when the origins of authorship are disputed because they are not 'genuine'. Jennifer refers to plagiarism (literary theft), which is the illegal appropriation of the voices and intellectual property of others as one's own. This is becoming an escalating phenomenon in academia. She says:

> **Jennifer:** I encountered the paranoia about plagiarism that a lot of the members of university management have. At Unisa it is very severe because the top management feel that they have no control over what the students write and the students can write essays for one another, or get their parents to write or whatever … We had a great number of fights with Unisa management to allow us to use a year mark system and the portfolio where we set students highly individualised tasks so they cannot plagiarise. (Interview).

In addition, to activating authentic, original autobiographical pieces, Jennifer refers to the practice of setting highly individualised writing tasks that potentially reduce instances of inauthentic authorship.

(iii) While *authorship as invention* derives largely from personal experiences, *authorship as positionality* involves permutations of students legitimising texts and theories by endorsing/ accepting the viewpoints offered therein, and/or resisting/challenging theories, by critiquing and deconstructing dominant ideologies. In an attempt to unmask the potential for texts to be open to critique and deconstruction, Jennifer writes:

> **Jennifer:** … This extends to my teaching of literary critical skills, where the text is no longer seen as oracular, but rather as interactive and constantly under construction by its readers, including my students. (I hasten to add, though, that I do not embrace radical relativism in literary interpretation, but still adhere to the guiding principles of coherence and inclusivity as criteria for acceptable interpretations). (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 20).
>
> …….
>
> **Jennifer:** … We would like you as postgraduate students to get away from the idea that meaning is inferred in the text; that the researcher is objectively taking it out of the text. There is a box containing meaning and you are just taking it out. It is actually to talk about your own biases; your own concerns and to say that I am interested in the following, or I like to read with this angle in mind … (Lecture Observation).

Intrinsic to encouraging subjective engagement with teaching and learning activities is the intention to develop students' critical literary skills. Of particular importance is the task of

reversing traditional engagement with literary texts that require students to dissect them according to fixed formulae[2] as if in doing so one could unravel the author's original intention (as if a single interpretation and meaning was resident in the text). Given the inevitability of individual ideology and readership idiosyncrasy, in addition to the fact that students emanate from diverse demographic backgrounds, means that they bring different interpretations and understandings to literary texts. Jennifer echoes the views of literary theorist Roland Barthes (1967), who posits that the text is re-written with every new reading of it. Such a view de-authorises and de-essentialises the text as divine revelation, closed to multiple interpretations (See Perumal 2002; Perumal 2001a). Jennifer believes that the text must be engaged in an interactive, inter-relational and discursive way. This is consolidated in two separate exchanges with students during the observed lectures in Jennifer and Vijay's classes, respectively:

Jennifer: I really recommend that you go and read Freud for yourself, because Freud has suffered so badly at the hands of popularising intellectual culture, and actually he is such a complex theorist and such a meticulous psychologist, in terms of writing up of cases-admitting complexities, problems and difficulties. For example, he didn't say that you have to be straight. He said that it is more socially acceptable to be straight. That's a big difference.

Danielle (White female)**:** I have a problem with that …

Jennifer: With Freud?

Danielle: No. I did English Honours and I did all this theory …

Jennifer: My suggestion is that you should find something in it that you can relate to …

Danielle: It is not something I can't relate to. It is about evaluating it. I keep thinking that minds far greater than mine have said that, and that's why I can't challenge it …

Jennifer: It must be true?

[2] For example, analysing literary texts using the SIFT SEI Method, in which the acronym provides a formula for the analyst to:
a) look for the following in relation to the author:

- **S**ense (gist of the text)
- **I**ntention (author's intention)
- **F**eeling (feelings expressed by the author)
- **T**one (tone of the text)

b)comment on the text in relation to the impact/appeal it has on the reader:

- **S**enses (appeal of the text on the sensory dimensions of the reader)
- **E**motions (emotive impact of the text on the reader)
- **I**ntellect (intellectual impact of text on reader).

The SIFT SEI protocol in literary criticism derives from the debates around relativistic and absolutist notions of criticism, the former based on the premise that the critic employs any or all systems, which aid in elucidating the nature of a work of art. The absolutist critic holds that there is only ONE critical procedure or set of principles and no others that can legitimately be applied to appraising art. The SIFT SEI approach appears to be based on the absolutist position, which assumes that the purposes of criticism are to:
1. justify one's own work or explain it to an uncomprehending audience
2. justify imaginative art in a world that finds its value questionable
3. to prescribe for writers and to legislate taste for their audience
4. to interpret works for readers who might otherwise misinterpret or fail to appreciate them
5. to judge works by clearly defined standards of evaluation
6. to discover and apply the principles which describe the foundations of good art. (Holman 1972).

Danielle: I look at the interpretation that I feel is closely allied to how I read the book. But I think that's the problem with all theories …

Lisa (team teacher)**:** Theory is mediated by other voices, and you feel who am I to add my voice to that mediation?

Danielle: Yes. It is not so much about developing a theory as it is about developing a language, and that's an enormous problem …

John (team teacher)**:** You said that you felt quite inadequate when we were talking about Freud. It is quite interesting to valorise this ubiquitous patriarch in psychoanalytical theory. Look at Irigray who went against him. It is quite interesting that the way in which he is treated is that you dare not challenge the father of psychoanalysis-and this links into the whole power of the father-that you don't question! He is the law. He is the embodiment …

Lisa (team teacher)**:** Luce Irigray wrote her doctoral thesis on it. She was expelled … She destabilised Freud. (Lecture Observation).

While Jennifer is disinclined to *radical relativism in literary interpretation*, she does, however, encourage students to engage their texts dialogically and critically. Her encouragement is however, not embraced with unbridled enthusiasm by all her students. In the above extract, for example, we read a classic response of reticence from Danielle, a female student, to challenging theoretical perspectives advanced by *minds far greater* than hers. Implicit in Danielle's reticence is the preference to adhere to the hierarchical order established in terms of whose voices/opinions/interpretations matter, and whose do not. Undermining her own propensity for critiquing and creating alternative theoretical and interpretative postures, Danielle's voice is swathed in a sense of self effacement, self doubt and self silencing technologies. Her fear of critique is confirmed in findings from the collaborative research of Belenky *et al.* who in their much-celebrated book, *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986), identified five categories[3] to describe the epistemological perspectives held by the women they interviewed. Danielle's response in the extract correlates to at least three of the categories developed by Belenky *et al.* viz. *silence*, *received knowledge*, and *procedural knowledge.* Belenky *et al.* elaborate these categories as follows:

- *Silence:* refers to the condition when women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority;
- *Received knowledge*: refers to the condition when women conceive of themselves as capable of receiving, even reproducing knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities, but not capable of creating their own; and

[3] The other two categories are: *Constructed Knowledge* … women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing.
Subjective Knowledge … truth and knowledge are conceived as personal, private and subjectively known or intuited. These are two categories that Jennifer encourages her students to explore.

- *Procedural knowledge*: refers to the notion that women are invested in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge.

These categories, which Grumet (1988:16-17), calls 'masculine epistemology' correlate with categories of *received* and *procedural knowledges,* and the subsequent silencing that their politics and practices produce. Cumulatively such stances legitimise the text, rather than resist or critique it. Belenky *et al's.* categorisations aptly describe Danielle's reluctance to add her voice to those *whose minds are greater than hers,* thus, producing a double-barrelled silencing. The first relates to the belief that others have said it (have engaged the issue) so there remains no need for her to enter, reiterate or expand the conversation. This is evident in Danielle's statement: *I look at the interpretation that I feel is closely allied to how I read the book.* The second, relates to the notion that it would be audacious for her to refute or challenge the wisdom of the 'fathers' or other official voices. Team teachers Jennifer, John and Lisa recognise the fear Danielle experiences, and by referring to Luce Irigray, they provide an example of at least one person who was brave enough to challenge Freud (the Father of modern-day psychology) with an alternative interpretation on the psychology of women, hence illustrating *authorship as positionality.* By trusting her interpretative instincts and articulating her views, which ran against an established institution of thinking, Luce Irigray was able to change the tide of understanding women's psychology. In this way the teaching team attempts to encourage Danielle, and the other students, into critical thinking, and the power of multi-perspectival analyses. The attentive student would have picked up the different opinions that Jennifer and John have about Freud. We note that Jennifer is more celebratory of Freud when she draws attention to the way he has been misunderstood/ misrepresented by popular theorists. She points out that: *Freud has suffered so badly at the hands of popularising intellectual culture, and actually he is such a complex theorist and such a meticulous psychologist.* In comparison, John considers it *quite interesting that the way in which he is treated is that you dare not challenge the father of psychoanalysis-and this links into the whole power of the father-that you don't question! He is the law.* More elaboration from Jennifer and John regarding their different views on Freud and the status of his theories would have served as a significant example on how different scholars hold different views on the same subject.

Student Danielle, also alludes to another impediment students experience when she says: *It is not so much about developing a theory as it is about developing a language, and that's an enormous problem.* This is an observation that Haring-Smith (2000), makes when she writes:

> Any field has an insider's code that won't make sense to your students. As a graduate student, you learn to write and speak within the context of your field, though it might seem like total

> nonsense from the outside. You learn the language of the discipline. Under-graduate students rarely have that language. Therefore, you need to find out where they have come from in order to take them anywhere.

Danielle's lack of confidence is related to the fact that she has not internalised the code or discursive register of the discipline. Critical analysis requires being conversant with a language peculiar to the discourse. It requires socialisation in a specific register that has to be acquired in order to operate confidently and fluently within the discourse. Being able to read/enter the discourse is a prerequisite for attempting to challenge the discourse.

Vijay extends a challenge similar to that of Jennifer, John and Lisa when she encourages her students, in the following extract, to engage their prescribed texts critically. She says:

> **Vijay:** … But the point is resting on an argument that's unsound, and what informed that argument is unsound, and I already warned you about Webb. I said, 'I like his textbook, but there are some real problems with it.' And I'm not prepared to be the only one to pick these things up, you must also pick it up. … When you start to read thoroughly and carefully this is what's going to happen. You are going to disagree with textbook writers, and it is fine to do that. You may even write to them in the country, and say, 'Excuse me, what were these people speaking originally, and for how long have they been speaking Afrikaans, and what were the factors that led them into that? Because they learned Afrikaans does not mean that they had to lose their mother tongue. Did it? (Lecture Observation).

The fear of agency on the part of students is corroborated by Vijay's comments, when she draws their attention to the inaccuracies in their prescribed text by Webb. In an earlier extract Vijay, in reference to the AIDS Assignment, pointed out that some voices are well documented. She alerts students to the possibility that those who receive more exposure and whose voices are widely documented (the voices of experts) are not infallible/ flawless. Like Jennifer, who pointed out that *the text [should] no longer [be] seen as oracular,* Vijay also points out that the arguments of experts may be *unsound,* and *there are [likely to be] some real problems with it.* As a way of provoking authorship as resistance, Vijay encourages her students to assume critical interpretative responsibility by reading *thoroughly and carefully*. In this regard she says: *I'm not prepared to be the only one to pick these things up, you must also pick it up.* In this statement she is suggesting to students that interpretative authority is not the exclusive domain of the teacher 'expert'; that as students they also possess the power to de-authorise, re-authorise, deconstruct and reconstruct the text. She also suggests that they go one step further and match their critical reflection and interpretation with activism by writing to textbook authors, and sharing their critique. In the

same way that Jennifer and John assure student Danielle that challenging the experts is what academic discourse is all about, Vijay too assures her students that it is fine to disagree with textbook writers.

Like Jennifer, Vijay also discourages her students from passively re-producing knowledge and reverentially accepting arguments, or claims made by ostensible experts, in the field. As feminist teachers of English they suggest that students should instead actively construct arguments, and make a case for a particular theoretical/interpretative position. In so doing, students can assume authority as authorship, develop resistance identities, and become producers rather than consumers of academic discourses. In addition, Jennifer alerts students to the fact that even as their own biases, prejudices, ideologies and world-views shape their interpretative engagement with texts, these same variables also infiltrate the sentiments/arguments that authors present in their texts.

The following extract from Thembi's lecture observation encapsulates some of the key issues around which the discourse of authority as authorship pivots. Thembi tells her students:

> **Thembi:** … what we want to urge you to do from now on is try and make a critical evaluation of your experiences. Not only that, make a critical evaluation of the experiences of the theorists, or words or thoughts or expressions of the theorists that you are reading. In other words, we do not expect you to look at an essay by John Stuart Mill and then say, "John Stuart Mill says this," period. If you agree with John Stuart Mill I think it's important to tell your reader your own position regarding the issue at hand. In other words, engage yourself in the debate too. The debates are going on, the debates are going to go on. For as long as we live we are going to have generation after generation looking at the same issue, looking at it differently and building on what they have read and carrying it forward. (Lecture Observation).

First, Thembi acknowledges the value of personal experience in the feminist class, but qualifies that personal experience must be accompanied/surrounded by a critical evaluation of one's experiences. Second, she urges students to engage theorists and their theories critically. Merely paraphrasing them, for example, saying that: *John Stuart Mill says this period* is inadequate. Academic discourse requires interacting with the views of different theorists and their debates, and articulating one's own position regarding the issue at hand. This resonates with team teacher Lisa's observation that: *Theory is mediated by other voices*. Such mediation may take the form of *questioning, disagreeing, destabilising* the voices/views/theories of the experts. Third, Thembi's understanding of *positionality as authorship* suggests the temporal and contextual variability of theory, when she refers to the generational, genealogical and evolutionary nature of theoretical issues. This is evident in

her statement: *For as long as we live we are going to have generation after generation looking at the same issue, looking at it differently and building on what they have read and carrying it forward*. This supports Jennifer's conceptions that *the text is no longer seen as oracular, but rather as interactive and constantly under construction by its readers*. In both Thembi and Jennifer's conceptualisation of the nature of texts, which is also consonant with reader response theories, there emerges a sense of the mutability, permeability, creative and pro-creative nature of knowledge construction. Aligning themselves with such conceptions of knowledge provides a rationale for employing student personal as pedagogy. The activation of student critique and interpretation of texts provides another way of challenging, elaborating, exemplifying theory, while simultaneously encouraging student personal as epistemology.

Finally, student experience, voice and positionality are also articulated through the process of *authorship as dialogue*. Given that student-centred pedagogy is a preferred teaching methodology in the feminist classroom, student-teacher-student dialogue provides ample opportunities for students to find, fashion and shape the voices of others as well as their own. *Authorship as dialogue* is characterised by communities of personal disclosure, critique, confrontation and consolidation of diverse socio-cultural, religious, racial and gendered relations and ideological positionalities. I do not entertain expansive discussion on *authorship as dialogue* here, but consider its dynamics and politics later in this chapter, in a section titled: *Pedagogy proceeds via a limited set of specific techniques of power.*

Activating student experience and voice as authorship first, compels students to focus attention on subjects in their own lives as well as within broader social discourse that they previously may not have thought about in much depth. Second, it moves students from vague feelings about an issue or concept to working through those feelings toward critically informed thinking and reflection. Third, it engenders a state of permanent criticism by challenging students to re-examine those assumptions that inform the processes of how they come to understand social representations.

Having considered the delineation *authority as authorship* in relation to: (i) authorship as invention; (ii) authorship as experiential and theoretical praxis, and (iii) authorship as positionality, in the ensuing discussion, I summarise the contents of the student disclosures that emerged from my lecture observation, to highlight their substance, and the emotional sensitivities associated with them. In addition, I identify some strategies teachers employ when disclosures of a traumatic/sensitive nature are made in class.

Exemplar of Teacher-Student Self-disclosure

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that there is widespread support for regarding the personal as a legitimate source of knowledge. This is especially so when personal disclosure is conceptualised as *authority as authorship*. Generally, the preferred approach to responding to topics is to begin with a personal account of a situation, and disclosing the feelings it had aroused. This presents the familiar dilemma regarding the degree of control each person has over the management of the private domain (as opposed to public) in the life of the class, and in the context of the course. This precipitates the questions: what are the implications of self-disclosure in classroom discussions? Whose interests are met and whose displaced if this mode of working is to be accepted?

In the light of the importance feminist pedagogical discourses have invested in teacher-student disclosure as valid knowledge sources, in the 28 hours of lecture observations I undertook for this study, I identified only approximately five instances of personal self-disclosure; (four by students), the content of which I merely summarise (below) to illustrate the nature of disclosure, and (one teacher-student disclosure by team teacher, Lisa and student Pauline), which I analyse in depth.

In the four students' personal disclosures that were made during lectures, I found that they related experiences, and feelings about themselves, or friends and family close to them.

First, for example, in a discussion on the reductive nature of the heterosexual patriarchal system, Alison, an adult female student disclosed: *My partner has one testicle, and his father was a doctor, and he was given all manner of things-and he lives with that shame. Now think about how society views the eunuch, the male who is sexually different or who does have undeveloped testicles or one testicle. It is the same thing.* To which team teacher John added: *And the phallus is just as reductive. Everything that is associated with it, all the activity is also confining the male within that aggressively sexualised, thrusting and penetrative realm.*

A second example came from Pauline, another adult female student in Jennifer's lecture, who confessed her complicity with patriarchally scripted roles for women, when she said: *I'm guilty of the masquerade … half of me has enjoyed being a woman, and having all the privileges … of* a *chivalric husband who opens my car door, who walks between me and the traffic; who loves me to bits, who will do absolutely anything for me. It's been like this all the time. But at the same time there is a big rebellion in me which feels totally trapped when I know that I'm able to fulfil myself properly as a person. I've just become a wimp! Unless he organises, and does everything for me, I don't do it. I've lost out …* To which team teacher

Lisa adds: …*all that love and protection has in fact inhibited you in strange ways,* to which, Pauline emphatically agrees*.*

Two examples of personal disclosure in Vijay's class were shared during the negotiation of the AIDS Assignment topic. One involved a student relating the story of her cousin who was in denial about his HIV positive status and eventually died; and the other from a student who talks to her friends about AIDS, who have subsequently become suspicious that she might be HIV positive, and they try to steer away from the conversation because the stigma is too hard for them to handle.

In the above instances the teachers merely added on 'tag' comments, and there was no deep probing on their part. In the case of the student who told the class about her cousin's AIDS related death, Vijay suggested that it would be safer to address the topic from a point that would not be painful, for example, they could research the topic from an angle that dealt with AIDS prevention.

Jennifer's team teacher, Lisa seemed not to mind sharing (at least on a political level) her personal experiences with her students. She, for example, spontaneously shared what appears to be a deeply personal and painful experience with the class. It appears that during tea break, student Pauline requested Lisa to speak to the class about Black feminism. Scarred by an unpleasant experience at a conference, Lisa relates to the class the source of her fear and pain, and through this self-disclosure, makes visible why she resorts to technologies of epistemic avoidance to safeguard herself, as a White woman, from being criticized for researching/discussing the experiences of Black women:[4]

Lisa (team teacher)**:** … As far as Third World, Black women's writing is concerned, I've been through a particular history with it, and I'm not sure where I stand now. I was a person who did a lot of articles and research into it, until I went to a conference in Nigeria and that changed my life and my attitude. I actually haven't gone back to it since then. So it is a source of pain for me and I am still very scared of Black women's anger, and Black women's responses, and their righteous/riotous anger, and their mockery-not mockery-but criticism of what I am and what I do. So when you asked me at lunchtime to talk, I thought I am so scared of talking about it even now, because it is always not from my own position. There is still a sense in me-why should I take them as an object of my study and use them perhaps to get into a conference when they themselves object to that most stringently.

John (team teacher)**:** That is pretty much like saying, unless you are a gay person you can't enter that area. What do you feel about that objection-like what right do you have to speak on my behalf? Does

[4] As a White feminist, Frankenberg (2000:448), notes that in her study of the social construction of whiteness … it seemed as though White feminists had a limited repertoire of responses when they were charged with racism: confusion over accusations of racism; efforts to communicate with White women about racism, despite it; frustration and the temptation (acted upon temporarily or permanently) to withdraw from multiracial work.

that mean that you can't have any influence in that area? Should it necessarily preclude you from participation?

Pauline (White female)**:** We've had this thing in Zimbabwe where after the Boer War women's literacy and issues became quite prominent. We formed a women's net to march for peace and various things, but the committee was so problematic. And somebody said, 'My Black friend …' and the chair said, 'Oh, 'I don't like that term. I want to be called African'. That's interesting because my other friend wanted to be called Black, but if you want to be called African, that's fine. Then we realised that even before we got together, there were absolute basics to negotiate. We were asked what we found difficult? And someone said, 'when a meeting is scheduled for 11 o'clock it should start at 11'. And then someone said, 'that when you're invited for tea at 4 it is an insult, because when we invite people for tea it's all day. You can come anytime. It's not just for two hours'. I've changed my paradigm so much in a year.

Lisa (team teacher)**:** I think that this is my own particular crisis. I am much happier now. I'm researching colonial women in Natal where I come from; sticking to 1850, which is safe *(class laughs).* I want to interrogate my 'Whiteness' and what colonial residues hang on me because of where I come from. That's what I'm doing. So I will never say that you can't. But there is also the other aspect that if I shut up and we all shut up, then who is going to publicize and support Black women's rights when a lot of Black women are not in the academy to do so? I know that I can be criticised for my stance now and I will change, but I am not there yet.

Pauline: I'm really sorry that I've asked you to talk about this, but this came up a couple of days ago, I thought that Black Feminism was taking the cudgels with White, Western feminism, on the basis of things like motherhood. That's what I thought you were going to talk about …

Lisa (team teacher)**:** O.K. I can, but I can theorise …

Pauline: Is that what happened at the conference?

Lisa (team teacher)**:** No, no, no. The conference was in 1992, Mandela had been released and we were in that euphoria-now we can belong to Africa. I'm a White woman, but still I'm alright-Mandela's out, but it was before 1994, and we all went up to the first conference which was called: *Women in Africa and African Diaspora.* We thought that we were legitimate, and so did quite a few other women from the States, Australia, and Canada. When we got there all hell broke loose! African women were not antagonistic. It was African-American women who demanded we leave. They were coming home. They were genuinely, absolutely aghast that White women were there -from South Africa of all places! They said that they were coming home to find their Roo-oots *(said sarcastically, and class laughs).* I'm sorry, I get a bit angry. Meanwhile the Nigerian women, who were hosting the conference, were so open and warm. It got so ugly. It was only a group of women who had come from Namibia (1 White, and 6 Black women), they said, 'If they leave, we leave'. That resolved the whole issue and we all stayed. But by then the atmosphere was so tense and everyone had broken down, and we were all crying *(surprised, sympathetic responses from the class).*

Jennifer: It is interesting to see African-American women so protective of their Africaness. I think it is because they feel so de-racinated as Americans, and being such a minority, and so economically down-trodden in American society that they are ready to latch onto something, and they begin to

mythologise their root spirit, and really make Africa their homeland … There is this ghastly scene in the *Color Purple*, how she goes to Africa to find friendly elephants rambling through the fields …
Pauline: … and how much of reaction there was to that woman, Alice Walker who wrote the novel, *Color Purple*. My daughter, who was at Harvard, says that there was such an attack against that woman from the people that she tried to help, because she made a movie in a few days, and the people she made it for never saw it. They had no input into it. They didn't take ownership of anything.
Lisa (team teacher)**:** Sorry, I can talk on a detached level on various issues. Of course I can talk of various issues that come up in African feminism. The whole embodiment of the African woman, in terms of nature, as opposed to the westernised forms of culture. The African woman is either idealised as Mama Africa, which is in a way a kind of containment of her, and yet you have to ask the question, is it? Or is it a celebration for her? I don't know. You have to ask. In the same way, that the country is seen as feminised-a feminised land of Africa …
Jennifer: The Dark Continent. Women are also called the Dark Continent. (Lecture Observation).

There are several crucial points to be made in relation to the above extract. Since Lisa's self-disclosure was not a planned part of the lecture session, none of the teachers on the team discussed the contents of the self-disclosure to make explicit its educative and pedagogic value. In the absence of such a deconstruction, and taking the view that relevant teacher-student self-disclosure, more often than not carries pedagogic value, I examine the above extract and point out what I believe to be potential lessons that students may have gleaned from both Lisa and Pauline's sharing of teacher-student personal narratives.

Perhaps the most striking observation to be made in relation to Lisa's self-disclosure is that during the tea break, student Pauline requested that Lisa talk to the class about Black feminism. This is a theoretical strand in feminist thinking that could, arguably, have been discussed at an 'abstract, theoretical level', and did not necessarily require Lisa sharing her personal experience or interpretation on the discourse. This is confirmed by Pauline's apologetic response: *I'm really sorry that I've asked you to talk about this … I thought that Black feminism was taking the cudgels with White, Western feminism, on the basis of things like motherhood. That's what I thought you were going to talk about.* Pauline's response clarifies that she had not planned on intruding into, or drawing on the teacher's personal experience, in as much as she was hoping to draw on the teacher's theoretical/educative expertise/knowledge. Essentially, it would have been possible to engage the question on Black feminism from a theoretical stance, and explain to students the debate between mainstream feminism (which has been criticised for its association with middle class, White women's preoccupations), and the development of Black feminism as a counter response to the marginalisation of women of colour. However, in sharing her painful personal experience, we note that Lisa does in fact implicitly (through invisible pedagogy) teach some important lessons that students (if they cottoned onto the subtext) may want to bear in mind

during the course of their own research; thus probably justifying the pedagogic value of self-disclosure.

First, in sharing her experience, Lisa sheds light on, and gives substance to a primary factionalising element that would have precipitated the theoretical fracture between mainstream (White) feminism and Black feminism, that being the theorising of the experiences of women of colour from White women's perspectives. While not signalling this as a stated objective to be achieved in this particular lecture, the potential unintended outcome of Lisa's self-disclosure about the race related incident would have partially answered Pauline's question about Black feminism. This is essentially why Lisa, as a White woman, has disengaged researching/speaking on behalf of Black women, since the incident at the conference in Nigeria revolved around the legitimacy of White South African women considering themselves African, and speaking on behalf of Black African women.

As a result of the hurtful experience, several times in the extract Lisa displays a distancing and dichotomised perspective between herself and Black women. This is evident in for example: *There is still a sense in **me**-why should **I** take **them** as an object of **my** study and use **them** to get into a conference when they **themselves** object to that most stringently,* which creates the dichotomy: me/I/my-them/themselves. Earlier on in the lesson Lisa lectured on the patriarchal tendency to divide the world into two unequal, hierarchical parts. (See Chapter 3 Section 3: *Overview of Course Taught and Partial Student Demographic Profile*). The discerning student would have been able to make the connection between the theory on dichotomies that was presented earlier on, and the practical implications/manifestations in Lisa's self-disclosure.

In addition, the sharing of Lisa's personal experience draws attention to pertinent questions as they relate to recurrent motifs in the discourses on feminist research methodologies (these include, researcher positionality, the ethics of researching the *Other*, researcher voice, researcher intentionality, objectification of the researched, rewards/ benefits that accrue to the researched/if any at all, authorship/acknowledgment of the researched in conferences, and academic publications, identity issues, etc.).[5] In spite of her fear about talking/researching the experiences of Black women, by sharing her personal experience, Lisa does in fact, (through invisible pedagogy) teach students about the need for sensitivity when conducting interracial research, and the ethics and challenges of researching the O*ther*.

[5] In addition, both Lisa and Pauline's narratives highlight the relational nature of human interaction. They also point to the reductive nature of identity markers. This incoherence of effects, non-unitariness, and heterogeneity is evident in the different way that Black women reacted at the conference-Black women who were in solidarity with Lisa and the other White delegates at the conference, and Black women who demanded that they leave. Similarly, Pauline reports that some Black women in the Women's Net wanted to be called 'Black' and others wanted to be called African. See Chapter 1 on Identity Politics and Chapter 5 on individual and group heterogeneity.

Second, in sharing her experience Lisa unintentionally also highlights the distinction between theory and experience. An important departure from mainstream education has been the accommodation of personal experience as an important source of knowledge creation. Indeed, the essence of *authority as authorship* pivots on teachers and students sharing personal experiences and interpretations based on their different engagements with the wor(l)d. As a result of her painful experience, Lisa contravenes this hallmark of feminist pedagogy on two crucial counts:

a) students are constantly asked to engage theory and personal experience dialectically. They are often told that theoretical abstraction (in their essays) demonstrates that they have not made the connection with the Word and the World; and that they should do so by showing the relevance of theory to their daily lives. When Lisa says: *I am so scared of talking about it even now, because it is always* ***not from my position*** *…* ***I can theorise*** *… Sorry,* ***I can talk on a detached level*** *on various issues that come up in African feminism,* she points out that she is comfortable identifying recurrent theoretical themes/debates in feminism, but she wants to do so in the absence of her value judgement or analytical interpretation. She is afraid of forwarding her personal views, hence her tentativeness, in the statement: *I don't know. You have to as*k.

b) part of the impetus of sharing personal narratives is to break the silence of women and marginalized *Other*, hence Lisa's crisis: ***if I shut up and we all shut up****, then who is going to publicize and support Black women's rights when a lot of Black women are not in the academy to do so?* Lisa is aware of the importance of shattering women's silence, which is a recurrent theme in feminist discourses, as she is aware that her wilful, self-silencing, self-censorship, and the silence of marginalised Black women will not further the cause of making women visible/audible in patriarchal society.

Third, central to the slogan, the personal is political, is the intent to dismantle the liberal hope of an abstract, rational, self unified political subject. This is in direct opposition to liberal epistemologies, which frown upon the display of emotion, and instead extol reason and rationality. The above extract is littered with words, phrases, and expressions that reflect Lisa's emotions of pain, fear, anger, and shame, and they give us a sense of the deep personal impact the experience at the conference has had on her. Lisa says: *it is a source of* ***pain*** *for me and I am still very* ***scared*** *of Black women's* ***anger****, and Black women's responses, and their righteous/riotous* ***anger****, and their* ***mockery****-not mockery-but* ***criticism*** *of what I am and what I do … I am so* ***scared*** *of talking about it even now. … I'm sorry, I get a bit* ***angry****.* Lisa's sharing of her painful, life-changing experience highlights the potential for self-disclosure to be sensitive and highly emotionally charged. Aware of the deep emotions it

evokes in her, Lisa apologizes several times to the class for her anger, sarcasm, and epistemic avoidance in not wanting to discuss the topic.

Lisa's self-disclosure evokes expressions of sympathy and apology from Pauline, the White, female student who asked her to talk about Black feminism. Pauline says: *I'm really sorry that I've asked you to talk about this.* One can only surmise that the Black students in the class must have been affected by this exchange in some way or the other, but since no Black students entered the discussion, it is difficult to speculate what exactly their sentiments on the issue were. However, we note that the level of self-disclosure bridges the affective gap between Lisa and the majority of the students in the class. In addition to Pauline's apology, we note other students expressing shock and surprise at Lisa's experience. Evidently, the students relate to Lisa's feelings of fear, and personal pain, and their expressions of shock and surprise probably offered them an opportunity to see reflected parts of themselves in her narrative. The Lisa-Pauline exchange confirms Srivastava's (1997), observation that:

> The classroom cannot help but be, at times chaotic, confusing and disordered, a place of pain, denial, anger, and anxiety-all of which we expect, we have to expect, when challenging others and ourselves to examine, even simply reveal, the ways in which all sorts of racism have inflected our/their identities.

Furthermore, Lisa's self-disclosure created an environment in which at least one student, Pauline, felt free to expand on other aspects related to Black-White, western-non-western cultural differences. Probably as a way of easing the shock and surprise, and empathising with Lisa, Pauline provides three examples from her personal experience. One is intended to elucidate Black/White cultural differences in terms of conceptions of time and punctuality. The second serves to provide further exemplification on the heterogeneity among Blacks. Lisa notes the different responses from the Black Nigerian women at the conference who protested in favour of the White South African women remaining and participating in the conference, and the Afro-American women who were hostile and aggressive, demanding that the White women leave. Pauline's example about the preference some women have about being referred to as Black, while others prefer being referred to as African is probably forwarded to further exemplify heterogeneity among Black women. Then later in the discussion, the ethical dilemma Lisa referred to regarding White women researching Black women, finds a parallel in Pauline's third example to support Lisa's experience. This relates to the response Alice Walker received to her novel *Color Purple,* which also raised ethical questions about author positionality and the objectification of those written about. We note that Lisa's self-disclosure stimulated the sharing of anecdotal experiences from student

Pauline, who also had to make a paradigm shift based on reactions from colleagues culturally and racially different to her. Interestingly though, at no point in the Lisa-Pauline exchange does Lisa probe Pauline's disclosures. Despite Pauline's punctuating (interruptions) 'ruptures' to Lisa's narrative, Lisa seems more occupied with sharing her experience and does not ask Pauline to elaborate on her anecdotes. However, Pauline's ability to reflect on episodes from her experiences demonstrates that she was able to make a connection to similar issues from her personal experiences and legitimate/lend support to Lisa's experiences. If other students in the class were able to make the connection with Lisa's personal experiences they may be prompted to begin questioning how the same subject matter affects them as well. This critical engagement would lend a sense of immediacy and would likely facilitate the development of students' critical consciousness without their discourse having being made central.

b) Strategies for dealing with Sensitive Personal Disclosures

The numeric scarcity of teacher-student personal disclosure is not meant to undermine or reduce the value of self-disclosure in the pedagogic encounter, but to support Carols and Phumzile's observation, that people do not readily confide personal or sensitive issues within the realm of the classroom. This is confirmed in their following extracts:

Carol: … I think often in a teaching situation there is an element of competitiveness even if you try not to establish that as an overruling dynamic. People do not always want to pour out their innermost thoughts. So I don't push in that area necessarily. And I think often students continue their discussions out of the classroom with people that they're more comfortable with. (Interview).

Phumzile: It doesn't really come up. Maybe I really so badly don't want it to come up in this situation that I'm shutting out all the possibilities. I don't know. If it came up I would have to deal with it. How to deal with it? I would have to think about it. People will talk about general issues. People don't (within the class situation) bring up really personal issues. I think the boundaries are clear. I'm relaxed and open, but I'm not their friend. I'm not sure they would want to tell me. I'm not sure what they would want me to do with it. I'm also aware that if you open it up completely then it's going to require certain skills and certain abilities on my part to manage the situation that I don't have. So, for instance, if a student wants to talk about experiences of violence, I'm never quite sure what to do with it. On the one hand, I am a trained lay counsellor for violence, but then this is my student. So there's a conflict there. While I'm generally hesitant to compartmentalise my life, I think it works in that instance. But if students are talking about general life experiences that are not too intense, that don't need specific containment counselling, then it's fine within limitations. (Interview).

Carol and Phumzile attribute the paucity of self-disclosure to various factors. These include the element of competitiveness that makes people want to present themselves in a light that depicts that they are in control of themselves. In addition, students may prefer to confide personal issues/experiences with people they enjoy close personal relations, and with whom they are more comfortable with. While Carol surmises why students may avoid personal disclosure, Phumzile alludes to teacher choreography in curbing student personal disclosure in class. In declaring that she is not their friend, Phumzile confirms Carol's view that students are more likely to discuss/relate personal experiences with friends or people they are familiar and comfortable with. Hence, there is a tendency for student to *talk about general issues*.

Enabling students to fashion a voice does not necessarily mean that they will or should talk at that particular moment in the class, but that they may be able to identify with the issues under discussion, and express themselves in more appropriate contexts. In this regard, Carol thinks that: *often students continue their discussions out of the classroom with people that they're more comfortable with.* Consciousness-raising, counselling, the confessional, all seem to be implicated in some respects in personal disclosures. Phumzile's reluctance to draw on teacher and student personal in her classroom, may be linked to Broughton's (in Broughton & Potts 2001), query as to why feminist pedagogies so readily welcome an analytic, therapeutic, counselling or confessional mode and in a way that no real analyst, counsellor, therapist or confessor would ever dream of doing, with no boundaries, no time-limits, no clear goals, no support network, no self-analysis. In the following extract, we also see Carol expressing sensitivity to being too probing of student personal for fear of embarrassing, hurting or traumatising them in her class. Although she does not ever recall resorting to changing the subject when a classroom discussion infringed on a student's sensitive area, she does recommend it as a strategy when dealing with sensitive issues that may traumatise a student. In the event of sensitive personal disclosures surfacing in the class, Carol comments on the way she handles it:

> **Carol:** They quite often arise when you teach feminism. I try to let the students deal with it, but if I feel somebody is suffering or things are going awry, or somebody's being attacked and that they need a little bit of support, I might intervene. I might even change the subject, although, I can't remember it actually happening. But I suppose I try to leave it to the students to deal with it. But I wouldn't be too probing as well. Because you don't know what other people's areas of sensitivity are and how you might be tapping into an area, which is traumatic for that person, especially when you're in a group … (Interview).

While Carol and Phumzile comment on student disclosure of sensitive issues, in the following extract Jennifer alludes to the possibility that a topic may be sensitive for the teacher. She comments on how she responds to students who raise issues/express sentiments that may be insensitive to her, as a teacher, and possibly other students in the class. She says:

> **Jennifer:** I'll use the example of being gay. Strategy number one, breathe deeply. Strategy number two, allow the student to finish. Strategy number three, keep to the course content, don't engage on a positional level, and answer the question. (Interview).

During my lecture observation of Jennifer's seminar on *Heterosexuality and its Alternatives*, student Joan spoke about homosexuals in an insensitive and irresponsible manner. Joan suggested that they must have suffered a trauma that caused an abnormality, thus resulting in their becoming homosexual. (See section titled: *Pedagogy proceeds via specific techniques of power* in this chapter, where I examine the exchange in more detail). In the Joan-Jennifer exchange, as supported by Jennifer's comments in the above extract, Jennifer allowed the student Joan to finish making her point. This ensured that the student was not interrupted, and there was a measured calmness to the dialogue. Jennifer drew the student back to the course content (the novel under discussion) so as not to engage the student on a positional/personal level. Jennifer suggested that the student stop to listen to herself, and think about what she was saying, and make her comments in relation to the novel under discussion.

Given the importance feminist pedagogical discourses attribute to personal epistemologies, in the preceding discussion, I examined an instance of teacher-student disclosure as a way of getting a sense of its nature. The discussion highlighted that personal disclosure does carry pedagogic value, but teachers need to make the pedagogic and educative relevance of personal disclosure explicit to students. The discussion also highlighted the potential for the disclosure of personal experience to be painful for both teachers and students. However, for the most part teachers and students do not readily disclose deeply personal experiences in the class. Such disclosures are usually made to people one feels closely connected to. In addition, despite the high premium feminist pedagogy places on personal epistemology as a valid source of knowledge, from the lectures I observed for this study, there were not an overwhelming number of personal disclosures made either by teachers or students.

Seeking relevance, averting solipsism, pursuing critical analysis and the politics of assessment

In the following series of extracts Vijay, Phumzile, Jennifer and Carol emphasise that personal experiences also need to embody certain key ingredients in order to qualify as relevant and meaningful knowledge in the classroom:

Vijay: I would be concerned about solipsism because in literature-it is a kind of conservative process where it involves one scratching one's wounds, as James Joyce famously said-kind of private activity that has no real meaning for the rest of the world. Does it involve the way one interacts with the larger world? I think that the most productive kinds of reflection do that. I think that it has a role. I'm not prescribing it as a cautionary check because literature is all about the subjective, internal world and it can sometimes be taken to a fault. I have to keep asking myself what have I learned from things? (Interview).

Phumzile: If it's directly relevant to the course and you find a way to integrate it to the issue under discussion, otherwise students will write autobiographies instead of essays. Autobiographies are fine, but if you're supposed to be analysing a particular novel, then it's not really. (Interview).

Jennifer: In general, personal experiences must be accompanied by critical reflection. It is no good just saying that this happened to me. One must be critically reflective of it, and relate it to the issues that are being studied in the course. (Interview).

Carol: … But you have to move between the personal and other areas of knowledge, which might be using a particular theoretical model. It needs to be contextualised. Yes, a person's experiences are valid; it's a kind of knowledge. Feminism positions the personal as political, and one of the things that we're saying is that women too are entitled to a voice. And one of the things post-modernism does is it asserts that differentiated kinds of voices are important. But I think you've got to do something with that voice. You've got to relate it to a theme, or an issue, or a theoretical model … You might have to surround it with some kind of analysis to give it more value. (Interview).

Both Vijay and Phumzile address the issue of self-disclosure in relation to literature. Vijay is cautious in her comments about the role of the personal for pedagogy in her submission that literature is, by its very nature, concerned with the *subjective, internal world.* She is however, aware that preoccupation with the personal can be taken to a fault and evolve into a solipsistic activity, where students become so caught up in their own experiences to the exclusion of recognizing its relevance in broader social discourse. Hence, her comment that there needs to be meaningful interaction of the personal *with the larger world.* Phumzile too

is open to student self-disclosure if that is what the academic task at hand requires of them. However, if the learning task requires literary analysis of a prescribed text, then students must justify the incorporation of self-disclosure by explaining it's direct relevance *to the course* and also *find a way to integrate it to the issue under discussion.*

It is in the light of the potential for discussion to circulate exclusively within the realm of something familiar, like personal self-disclosure, that Jennifer also welcomes student personal with the proviso that it is related to issues under discussion. Carol corroborates this proviso when she says: *You've got to relate it to a theme, or an issue, or a theoretical model.* Thus, it seems that while the accommodation of personal experiences of all participants in the teaching and learning dialogue needs to be affirmed, there emerges the call for it to be nestled in a theoretical dialectic that moves narratives of self-disclosure from the realm of the personal (what Vijay refers to as *solipsism … private activity that has no real meaning for the rest of the world*) into the arena of public discourse and theorising. This implies that students' personal disclosure needs to clarify public discourse. This is perhaps one way in which students can begin to understand the experiences of others and understand differently their own. Given that authorising experience invariably presents the dilemma of how to avoid the dichotomy between personal experience and a structural and political understanding of it, Carol encourages students *to move between the personal and other areas of knowledge.*

From the above extracts there emerge at least four criteria that Vijay, Phumzile, Jennifer and Carol suggest as a regulatory mechanism for the inclusion and qualification of student self-disclosure as pedagogic knowledge. These include:

(1) clarifying the **relationship** (social, political, personal connections/dealings) of self-disclosure to the course material under discussion,
(2) **contextualising** (providing details regarding pre, post and in process circumstances relevant to) self-disclosure within the discussion,
(3) **integrating** (incorporating, amalgamating) self-disclosure into the discussion, and
(4) explaining/demonstrating the **relevance** (pertinence, bearing) of self-disclosure to the course material.

Stipulation of these criteria is linked to the challenge that the teacher has in guarding the classroom from simply becoming a space for student personal disclosure and support to the exclusion of engaging issues more critically so as to contribute to theory building, effective and strategic social interventions. From the four criteria identified, above, it appears that student self-disclosure could be characterised by the following three distinct 'moves':

- Move One: recounting a relevant experience that is related to the material under discussion.

- Move Two: integrating, contextualising, and critically analysing the self-disclosure in relation to the course discussion.
- Move Three: gleaning the lessons that experiential and theoretical praxis produce with a view to effecting personal and social change.

The significant point emerging from the preceding discussion is that a focus on students' interests and identities, and drawing subject matter from their own lives, language, and cultures must be accompanied by a critical reading of dominant socio-political constructs from which to envision and enact social change. The advantages of critical and analytical reflection in the classroom have been a focal point in recent educational theory and research, and much has been written explicating the transformative potential of critical approaches to teaching. Hence, the participants in this study, do not merely want to invite student self-disclosure, instead, they seek to socialise their students into practices of critical, analytical, and productive reflection. Jennifer talks about personal disclosure being accompanied by *critical reflection*, Carol talks about surrounding self-disclosure with some kind of *analysis*, and Vijay talks about *productive reflection*. Egalitarian pedagogies posit that critical, and analytical reflection are key to enabling students develop critical consciousness, thus helping them recognise and evaluate oppressive social power structures. It further challenges them to consider their own positionality within these structures exposing their complicity and/or victimisation therein. Critical reflection moves the reflector to take a stand either for or against something. Although feelings are a natural and necessary part of the critical process of self-reflection, it has to be linked to what Vijay calls *productive reflection*, that is, reflection that does not remain merely affective or cerebral, but is action/activism-oriented, thereby making explicit its meaning/implications for the rest of the world.

In this vein Laditka (1990), points out that for Freire, reflection and action go hand in hand. Praxis must begin with reflection, but reflection alone is merely an empty word, as incomplete as would be action alone. Concurring that the constitutive aspects of critical analysis is crucial for the construction of knowledge, and the distribution of social justice, Glenn (2002), points out that this is:

> … the primary means for helping students develop an awareness of their agency enabling them to identify and/or create conditions for the possibility of change in oppressive socio-political constructs. Performing as critically thinking, [writing] and speaking subjects in the classroom provides, for students, the basis for performing as citizen-critics outside it.

In addition, the crux of the discussion regarding the place and qualification of what constitutes academically relevant and valid knowledge is succinctly captured in Bernstein's

(1996:170-171), argument that the private/public dialectic of knowledge may be better conceived of if coached in a language of horizontal and vertical discourses. Bernstein, notes that everyday, commonsense knowledge is expressed in horizontal discourse which is 'local, segmental, context dependent, tacit, multi-layered, often contradictory across contexts but not within contexts'. He argues that in contrast, a vertical discourse 'takes the form of a coherent, explicit, systematically principled structure, hierarchically organised, or it takes the form of a series of specialised languages.' On entering educational domains, students become subject to, and participants in a new network of activity systems, thus combining networks from home and community. This necessarily involves them in boundary crossing, translation, analysis and synthesis of different sources of information, as well as to new semantic orientations and/or new forms of regulation. Bernstein's concepts of vertical and horizontal discourse offer a convincing explanation of why hoping to introduce personal, informal (horizontal) discourses will not make learning more effective for students, but quite probably have the opposite effect. A preoccupation exclusively with the horizontal nature of personal experience may hinder the conceptual coherence and progression of knowledge formation and acquisition, which underpin the purpose of the educational enterprise.

Conscious of both their educative and pedagogic roles, concepts like value, validation, and evaluation surface in, for example, Vijay's comment, when she says: *I have to keep asking myself what have I learnt from things?* Carol concurs in her statement; *You might have to surround it with some kind of analysis to give it more value*. This brings us full circle to Thembi's question: *Who has the right to decide what is valid/valued or not?* In the following extract, Thembi submits that personal experience constitutes a store of knowledge and information, but ponders who has the authority to qualify/sanction/certify such knowledge forms as valid or legitimate. She comments:

Thembi: Personal experience implies that one knows and is informed about something. … Yes, it constitutes knowledge. But the question whether it constitutes valid knowledge-the question from me would be who decides? Who has the right to decide that this is valid or not? (Interview).

The questions that Thembi poses are perhaps succinctly answered by Clifford *et al.* (2001). They point out that:

> As staff we are accountable to the institution in which we work. We are agents of the institution that validates dominant constructions of knowledge. We are expected to uphold certain priorities and values. Yet we also want to empower students, to value the skills of personal reflection: the ability to make connections between the academic learning and one's own life and the ability to think critically and transformatively about the very basis of the disciplines which students are studying.

Evidently, assessment still remains the means by which educational institutions declare what in the curricula they regard as valid and valued. Assessment of what we value in education immediately leads to an exploration of the political dimensions of curricula. Assessment is the place where students must fulfil the requirements of understanding, knowledge and skills that grants them formal recognition and validates their knowing. As such, it drives students' learning by telling them what the institution really values, and provides feminist teachers with opportunities to explore just how prepared we are to use the institutional power that we hold, and what we ultimately value in learning. Since feminist educators do not seek to enculturate or reproduce the world, but to change it, the important question remains, how do we assess as valid and relevant personal self-disclosures? How do we measure the extent to which students have made connections between the political and the personal, how much have they developed their critical and analytical thinking skills? What criteria can be usefully applied? In the following extract Jennifer shares how she has to resort to adopting *old academic criteria* for the assessment of students' deeply personal and traumatic responses to writing tasks:

> **Jennifer:** … for example that rape poem I mentioned, it's very incendiary and it drew it a lot of extremely personal responses from students who told us in their written essays that they were rape victims and the trauma that they had suffered. How does one assess that, when you set an assignment and say 'respond to the poem?' Then you get these very traumatic stories. But then you mark it on the old academic criteria.
>
> … I'm not 'an anything goes kind of teacher'. I tell students that they have to meet certain criteria in their writing and that they will be assessed in terms of what they write. I forever ask students to make an argument, and to make it logically and clearly. I don't know whether you can call me a feminist teacher because I still have pretty firm criteria about what I want students to produce. I'm very strict on grammar, but it is a very complicated matter because at postgraduate level you expect, as our Head of Postgraduate Studies says, 'fault free essays: no comma mistakes, no quotation mistakes, no bibliographic mistakes. It must be flawless'. That presupposes a norm of what is correct grammar. One doesn't get it from students for whom English is a second or third language. In that case, I read the student's essay with an eye to communicative competence. (Interview).

There are several important points that emerge from Jennifer's extract. First, she refers to the dilemma of having to assess the disclosure of traumatic experiences students may relate in response to an academic assignment. She poses the question: *How does one assess that?* She then proceeds to answer it by outlining the criteria she adopts. She is fully cognisant of the trauma and suffering that the student may have endured, and there is an expectation in civil society for suffering and hurt to be met with empathy. It is at this juncture

that Jennifer's test both as an empathetic human being and an educator appear to be at odds, in that while she may empathise with the trauma of the student the grade she assigns to the student's academic work may not necessarily reflect her empathy. The student has thus, to deal with the trauma of the rape and the trauma/disappointment of a poor grade for not responding to the question according to the stipulated criteria. Hence, we note that there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the severity of the trauma (rape), and the awarding of a high grade.

Second, Jennifer outlines the criteria she employs. This is underpinned by adherence to *old academic criteria,* which includes producing (at postgraduate level at least) *fault-free/ flawless* essays, with no grammatical errors, no punctuation errors, and no bibliographic errors, in addition to presenting an argument that is logical and clear. Several times Jennifer stresses her commitment to abiding by these criteria. Her commitment to the stipulated criteria is captured in the imperative *they **have** to meet the criteria, … I **still have** pretty firm criteria, … I am very strict on grammar.* Her insistence on adhering to these criteria is further solidified by her declaration: *I'm not an anything goes kind of teacher'.* This declaration when read in conjunction with the sentence: *I don't know whether you can call me a feminist teacher because I still have pretty firm criteria about what I want students to produce* touches on a common perception about feminist teachers. The perception rides on the essentialist notion that for feminist teachers 'anything goes', or that their criteria for assessing students may be lax, and lacking in strictness. This perception is tied to the expectation that the democratic ideals that feminist teachers strive to engender in their classes translate into a carte blanche, laissez faire/anything goes philosophy, even where assessment is concerned. The participants, in this study, all of whom are self-identified feminist educators, actively distance themselves from this prevailing perception. They attach varying degrees of importance to the adherence to grammatical rules and language conventions. This is evident in the following series of extracts:

Phumzile: If there are rules, then they must be followed. (Interview).

Thembi: I take the English language like any other language, which has its own voice - grammatical rules. I think for anybody to communicate effectively, one has to follow those rules. … when you ignore that then the argument you make becomes either nonsensical or illogical. If you want to communicate effectively, you want to learn by following certain rules. (Interview).

Carol: We have constantly to make decisions as to which of such influences from Afrikaans and Xhosa should be accommodated, and which in fact blur meaning. When does an 'unidiomatic' phrase become vividly expressive of a student's worldview? How important are 'correct' prepositions? How

formal does the language of an academic essay have to be? We have had to distinguish between rules and conventions, recognizing that language conventions are just that, a matter of what is socially acceptable, rather than a fixed rule of the language. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 20).

Vijay: … correct grammar and logical argument is all around clarity. I really have no vested interest in any of the conventions. … It is mainly around clarity and it is about teaching a style of being clear. (Interview).

Like Jennifer, Phumzile and Thembi recognise the role adherence to grammatical rules play in effective communication. Carol and Vijay appear to be more accommodating of deviation from grammatical conventions, however they, as with all the other participants have an underlying concern with logical and clear arguments.

Clifford *et al.* (2001), observe that it is perhaps in the area of assessment that feminist teachers' power sharing with students has proven to be most fallacious. The participants in varying degrees expect from their students logical, coherent arguments and the responsible use of the English language so as to promote meaningful communication. The grades they assign to students are not based on the level of empathy students can elicit from them, in as much as they would grant concession, and be considerate towards students for whom English is not a first language. As feminist teachers their empathy is evoked more by the consideration that it may be unfair to demand 'native-like' control of the English language from the student for whom English is not a first language.

Synthesis

Pagano (1990), suggested that *authority as authorship* be understood as the mutual sharing of teacher-student personal experiences. In reflecting on the central points that emerged from exploring her suggestion in relation to teacher-student personal as epistemology, several defining theoretical themes pivotal to feminist discourses were highlighted. These include the redefinition of teacher-student relationships; altered conceptions of what constitutes valid knowledge and who are considered legitimate constructors and contributors to it; blurring the distinction between the personal and the public; the place of emotions in teaching and learning; and the assessment of personal as valid epistemological content. The key points emerging from an exploration of *authority as authorship,* are:

First, admitting teacher-student personal into our teaching confirms that it does not just subvert the status quo by disrupting the division between the public and private. Instead, it also represents an active critique and challenge of staid pedagogic practices that have sanctioned what constitutes sacred official knowledge, and its transmission through the exclusive voice of the teacher expert. While feminist pedagogy has been instrumental in

subverting this arrangement, the preceding discussion on the admittance of teacher-student personal as pedagogic content and strategy begged the question whether allowing the personal into the classroom does really enhance teaching and learning, and whether it does disrupt the boundaries of the public and private in a politically and pedagogically positive way?

Responding to these questions in relation to the implications of teacher disclosure, Phumzile and Vijay forwarded two different views. Referring to her personality trait for valuing her privacy, Phumzile explained that she chooses to maintain a professional distance from her students, thus her disinclination to making personal disclosures of a private and political nature to them. Her preference for privacy is further accentuated by the contextual climate that prevails at the institution she teaches, which has a tendency to undermine staff along race, age and gender lines. Depending on the nature of teacher self-disclosure, Phumzile is cautious that disclosure under such conditions may militate against her. Vijay, on the other hand, uses herself as text in the class, both as pedagogic content and strategy to teach difficult issues, and to provide a 'leadership' model that students may refer to when addressing sensitive issues.

The question on the merits of inviting student personal into the classroom received much support from the participants. There was widespread encouragement for activating student voice through various interpretations of *authority as authorship*. For example, through *authorship as invention* the feminist educators engage students in autobiographical writing and research projects in which they can make public their personal experiences, and the experiences of their friends, families and peers. In so doing, students are encouraged to contribute a corpus of knowledge alongside the voices of the experts, and those already well documented in mainstream discourses. In considering *authorship as positionality* teachers urged students to develop critical voices that engage dialectically their experiences, and that of received theories and texts. The pedagogic intention behind schooling students into the process of critical and dialectical analyses is intended to make visible the deep structures of apparently legitimate, naturalised hegemonic thinking. In addition, it makes students conscious of their agentic potential to counterpose oppressive social practices. However, important criteria for the narration of personal experience in the feminist class is linked to making explicit its relevance, relationship, contextual appropriacy of the personal disclosure, and its integration into the academic discussion under consideration. The participants were unanimous in stressing that personal disclosure be coupled with critical reflection; thereby constructing the conditions for informed socio-political judgments and transformation. This means that within the teaching context it is important to consider strategies for managing the personal, and showing how it is implicated in the political, and vice versa. In the absence of

such criteria educators court the risk of students becoming preoccupied in self-absorption technologies, narrating personal revelations that circulate within the realm of the familiar, solipsistic, narcissist, and egotistic without concretizing its pedagogic relevance. This is especially important given that assessment is linked to the demonstration of academic skills of critical thinking, the presentation of relevant, coherent, logical, clear and convincing arguments, and not to the intensity of empathy or sensationalism personal disclosures can evoke from its audience (unless that is the stated objective of the learning activity).

In this regard, Moi (1999:167), suggests that there is a need to continue a clear-eyed analysis of our practices, motives and investments in the personal. It should not necessarily be incorporated wholesale into our vision of positive pedagogy. In her essay *I am a Woman*: *the personal and the philosophical*, Moi questions the current vogue for celebrating the personal, the located and the subjective at the expense of the impersonal, the general and the objective. She points out that issues of relevance and power are at stake in both cases, and that whether one chooses impersonal or personal forms of pedagogic content and strategy, argumentation should depend on context, on purpose, and on the particular body of knowledge in question. Her argument is that:

> The turn to the personal needs to be justified by showing what problem it solves. In the same way … one cannot assume that any attempt to turn to the impersonal is a universalist, patriarchal plot. The analysis of the particular case—of the individual speech act—will tell us whether this is a likely explanation.

The second significant point emerging from an exploration of *authority as authorship* relates to feminist discourses engendering the notion that the personal is political, by challenging the normative, essentialist idea of the social actor, and by interrupting attempts to divide the world into two parts (reason/emotion, mind/body). Against this backdrop and allied to the above discussion, is the recognition that self-disclosure has the potential to bring to the surface deep emotion. In practice teachers encounter and struggle with their own internal and external boundaries and limitations. This was, for example, evident in Lisa's narration of the painful episode she experienced during a conference she attended. The traumatic experience has led her to a point of epistemic avoidance about engaging issues on Black women. Students too, in actual classroom disclosures, and in their writings often grapple with sensitive and traumatic experiences, which may need professional counselling and support networks. Caught in the bind of not compromising their professional rapport and being misconstrued as teacher-mother/emotional blanket, the participants are aware that problematic moments arise from teacher-student personal disclosure. Thus, the ideological predicaments of teaching from a feminist perspective need to be debated alongside material

and practical dilemmas of responding to sensitivities requiring emotional support, which teacher resources and workloads may not be equipped to handle. It is at this juncture that teacher-student personal may become potentially detrimental to good pedagogical practices, and Miller's (1995), observation gains credence in this regard. Miller notes that sometimes personal disclosure just moves the boundaries, so that either the personal expands to fill the space available, or the public infiltrates the private. It is in the light of this possibility that Miller advocates:

> … bringing this crux out into the open: refiguring contemporary pedagogy as management of the vernacular at all its levels, and, rather than celebrating the personal relationship between the teacher and her class, distinguishing sharply between the personal and the relational.

The third point regarding the discussion on teacher-student personal disclosure emerges from the gaps/silences in the debate. Much in the exploration of teacher-student disclosure attends to the arousal of traumatic/painful emotional experiences. This marks an interesting skew/bias in the representation of the spectrum of human emotions and experiences. Human beings' experiences and emotions are not generically and pathologically traumatic. As social actors we experience a kaleidoscope of emotions, not just painful and traumatic ones. However, from the preceding discussion there appears to be a silence around this spectrum of the emotion/experiential continuum. It is possible to attribute this 'skewness' to the preoccupation of feminist discourses with identifying oppressive social structures and women's victimisation within it, hence the over-representation of trauma and pain. This may be corroborated by reference to Pitt's (1997:133), observation that there are two discernible narratives consistent with feminist knowledge production, viz.: (1) victimization; and (2) resistance to victimization, hence the preoccupation with pain and trauma.

The fourth point relates to the potential for self-disclosure to be sensitive. Thus, apart from the recognition of emotion that emanate from team teacher Lisa's self-disclosure, a tangential, but equally important point for consideration relates to the issues of personal experience, epistemic privilege and epistemic disenfranchisement. The political implications translate to the notion that when experience of oppression is the condition upon which one can know, anyone who occupies a dominant social position (in terms of race, class, sexuality, gender) is summarily excluded from the enterprise of creating feminist knowledge. This results in a curious outcome in that people who cannot be/are not experiential knowers of oppression are unaccountable for the creation and consideration of feminist knowledge. The utility of this disenfranchisement becomes suspect because it renders those who have been oppressed primarily responsible for directing and defining the production of feminist knowledge. In so doing, it relieves those who have not experienced oppression of the

responsible for constructing knowledge about difference, exploitation, and liberation. Macdonald (2002), recommends a realist theory of identity that challenges the assertion that there is a determinate relationship between the experience of oppression or privilege, and the knowledge conferred upon the oppressed or privileged by virtue of that experience. This is the point that team teacher, John raises in response to Lisa's disengagement from researching Black women, when he notes: *That is pretty much like saying, unless you are a gay person you can't enter that area. What do you feel about that objection-like what right do you have to speak on my behalf? Does that mean that you can't have any influence in that area? Should it necessarily preclude you from participation?*

Amidst the merits and de-merits associated with teacher-student personal being called upon as pedagogic content and strategy, a key concern that emerges relates to how pedagogic relations are redefined by power differentials in the teacher-student dyad. This is an issue that I consider in the ensuing discussion *authority as power,* which explores Gore's (2002), proposition for developing a theory of power in pedagogy.

Section 3: Authority as Power

In their book, *Women's Ways of Knowing,* Belenky *et al.* (1986), cite the comments of a new entry university student after engaging with a professor for the first time. The student is reported to have said:

> Our teachers appear to us first in the guise of gods and are later revealed to be human. We think the revelation might occur sooner if those of us who teach could find the courage-and the institutional support-to think out loud with students.

In elaborating on the student's experience of her professors being more godlike than human, Belenky *et al.* describe professors as having a fear of stepping down and joining in on a more familiar discourse with their students (not only on a personal level but also on an institutional one). It is against this dominant backdrop that Lubrano (2002), advocates for taking a more nurturing and connected teaching style to help students dispel the myth of professor = god. Thus, it is not surprising that in responding to the interview question: What type of teacher identity would you not want your students or colleagues to construct of you, the participants in my study, invariably disassociated themselves from the imagery of dominant authoritarian, as is evident in the following extracts:

Jennifer: The unassailable authority figure, I don't want that-the idea of the oracle, or she who must be obeyed. Certain colleagues and students think I am unapproachable, and I wouldn't actively foster that idea. The idea that I can't be questioned or I can't be enquired of or asked for help, that is the identity I don't want. I would also hate to be put on a pedestal where every word is holy truth. I'd hate that because sometimes your students are complete strangers, and then they feel like they need to show respect and to genuflect at one's altar. It makes me very uncomfortable and then I feel like I have to draw the student out and try to tell them that I am a person, and if I wrote something in the tutorial letter, it doesn't mean that it's the word of God, it's simply my point of view. (Interview).

Carol: Bossy, which I am at times. (Interview).

Vijay: I wouldn't want to be considered authoritarian. I like having authority in the class, but authoritarian, I would have problems with that. (Interview).

Jennifer, Carol and Vijay's unanimous distancing from being construed as *bossy*, *authoritarian, unassailable oracles of authority*, is consistent with the ideal expressed in feminist and critical discourses as they relate to the issue of teacher power and authority. Bent on not replicating the teacher-as-single-authority figure that mainstream patriarchal education has been critiqued for feminist educators strive to make their classrooms collaborative, experiential, egalitarian, empowering, relational, and affective. In doing so, they attempt to de-centre authority, and remain learners in the classroom. Feminist educational literature has emphasized sharing power with or empowering students in an effort to distribute classroom authority more evenly and to diminish the potentially negative effects of traditional classroom hierarchies. Despite these egalitarian ideals, several scholars (among them, many feminist themselves, like Ellsworth 1992; Gore 1993; Clifford *et al.* 2001), ring out the sobering reminder that feminist teachers exist within the social and political power structures of the university. This must be recognized in order to make explicit the power relations that exist therein, while also acknowledging that power relations are fluid and identity-related.

As a way of spotlighting the conceptual gaps in traditional feminist discourses on feminist teacher authority, I draw on Gore's (2002), propositions for developing a theory of power in pedagogy, which I discuss under the following four categories:

- pedagogy is the enactment of power relations between teacher, students and other stakeholders and is endemic to the teaching and learning dynamic. Thus, rather than construe it negatively, its positive and enabling elements should be harnessed to foster emancipation;

- bodies are the objects of pedagogical power relations and in pedagogy, different differences matter. (I discuss these two propositions concurrently, justifying their conflation on the premise that bodies are raced, sexed, gendered, classed, clothed, aged, languaged, etc. and these identity markers constitute difference). Discussion also explores the gendered academic citizenship status of female educators in academia. It explores the barriers women have to negotiate as a result of their genders, and the resistance strategies they employ.
- the kind of knowledge produced in pedagogy interacts with its location and the techniques of power employed there. First, the selection, sequencing, pacing and assessment of teaching material are not arbitrary activities, but entail premeditated considerations and planning on the part of the teacher (a dimension of teacher labour, which often remains invisible). Second, the conceptual and ideological perspectives enshrined in the goals, aims, mission, and vision of both the feminist educator and the institution within which she performs her pedagogy shape the corpus of knowledge produced therein. This constitutes the educative authority of both the institution and the feminist teacher; and
- pedagogy proceeds via a limited set of specific techniques of power (I discuss pedagogical strategies/teaching methodologies that educators employ in the teaching/learning situation. I focus more expansively on dialogic, student-centred learning-a preferred pedagogical strategy in feminist and critical discourses). This invariably results in regulating and normalising pedagogic technique and content in order to service the pedagogic and educative goals outlined for the course of study.

Pedagogy is the enactment of power relations

In her proposition *pedagogy is the enactment of power relations,* Gore (2002), contends that power is inescapable, and as such should not be despised and shunned as an evil in the classroom. She also contends that the power relations of pedagogy are normalising, hence there are limits to feminist educators' efforts to create power-free classrooms. She concurs with Foucault's (1980), argument that power is ever present; therefore teachers should not be afraid to exercise their authority and power, but use it sensitively for the positive construction of relations among participants, themselves, and in the construction of knowledges.

Reiterating the sentiments of Gore, de Lauretis (in Luke & Gore 1992), submits that it is necessary to distinguish between the positive (enabling/creative) effects, and the oppressive (disabling/coercive) effects of power. Foucault (1980), elaborates the invisibility

and pervasiveness of power in society. He describes disciplinary power as circulating rather than being possessed, productive and not necessarily repressive, existing in action, and often operating through technologies of self. Gore's (2002), view derived from Foucault, demonstrates how the power relations inextricable to pedagogy govern and regulate bodies and knowledge and she argues that discourses are constructed out of pedagogy itself. From this perspective, power is not simply the imposition of one will on another. Its subtleties and nuances need to be acknowledged in a way that transcends the mere imposition or reproduction of broader societal power relations. In the following autobiographical disclosure, Thembi provides an illustrative episode on the fluidity of power configurations.

> **Thembi:** I immediately resolved in my mind that if a man sitting on the department chair thinks he is there because he is any better than a female colleague, then I should de-stabilize what he thinks is a fixed position. I should show him that he is in that position simply because we cannot all be Head at the same time; that he is chair not because the rest of the staff, especially women, are incapable. My resolve was to unseat him; to show him that leadership is not about asserting the inferiority of others, thereby asserting one's own superiority. My goal was to begin to work towards being the next chair as a way of changing the stereotypical beliefs so rife even in academic circles. And of course when the time came, I gladly took over as the next and first woman chair in that department. The roles had been reversed. I was in control. And what did I discover in that ivory tower? Power is in one's mind. You simply feel it only if you want to. Indeed it is fluid, not fixed. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 22).

In the light of the fluidity and relativity of power dynamics, much of the discussion in this chapter examines the lead teachers take in enacting pedagogic power relations. However, given the notion that power is not simply the imposition of one will on another, in the following extracts from a series of Vijay's lectures, we witness that students are not passive, powerless, subservient victims in the class; they also exert power, and sometimes are courageous enough to challenge the teacher's script, as well as each other's. In the ensuing discussion, I identify a few instances in which students:

1. challenge the teacher, and
2. act as accessory to the teacher's authority by challenging fellow students.

1. *student challenging teacher authority*: the following series of extracts pertain to the negotiation of the AIDS Assignment topic that Vijay was preparing to engage the class in. The extracts span over a period of 3 lecture sessions, and involve the following exchange between student Vasie, and teacher Vijay:

Vijay: What is the question that you need to deal with in the AIDS Assignment? … It's not a question that I set. The whole point about the assignment is that it refers to your needs as an intellectual, and as a member of society. (Lecture Observation: 18 April 2001).

…….

Vijay: … Vasie, have you done your homework? I can almost tell that you haven't. Come on prove me wrong.

Vasie (Indian female)**:** No, you tell me.

Vijay: I can almost count how many lectures you have attended …

Vasie: *(student says that Vijay is picking on her. First when she indicated that she would like to work on a different aspect of the AIDS topic, Vijay insinuated that she would be submitting work done by someone else, now she is picking on her about her attendance, and the homework, and that's not very nice; to which Vijay responds):*

Vijay: Of course that's not very nice. But it's for you to challenge me, and say, 'but of course it is my work!'

Vasie: It is my work. I spent many hours on the Internet getting the information …

Vijay: If you got it from the Internet, then it's not your work.

Vasie: Everything, every bit of information is somebody else's work.

Vijay: But how you work through it is critical. But let's talk about your homework. Did you do it?

Vasie: No.

Vijay: But you were not here last week.

Buyee (Black female)**:** But Vijay we knew about it. This was given to you ages ago, and you were supposed to have photocopied the chapter.

Vasie: I'm not the only one in class who has not done it.

Vijay: No, indeed, but your performance is a bit-you know …

Vasie: I have passed all my tests.

Vijay: But it's not just your test, your performance mark is important too. (Lecture Observation: 18 April 2001).

…….

Vijay: Have you worked out the questions for the AIDS Assignment?

Vasie: I wanted to know whether I could do another topic regarding AIDS?

Vijay: What other topic?

Vasie: The one where we talk about the dissident views regarding the AIDS debate.

Vijay: You could, but it might be a good idea for all of us to work on the same topic, so that we can learn from each other.

Vasie: I've done a lot of work on …

Vijay: You have a friend who's done a lot of work on it?

Vasie: No, no, no, I have, sincerely. I've asked around …

Vijay: How does it tie with the *Language and Power Course*? *(pause).* Think about it … obviously it has to be related.

Vasie: I've got my information if you want to have a look at it first … (Lecture Observation: 18 April 2001).

…….

Vijay: *(Vijay goes around the class asking each person by name, whether s/he would be able to do a 3-page assignment on the AIDS topic).* Vasie so we are going to take you out of the dissident question and into this. Are you all right with that? I'll probably talk to you a bit about that. (Lecture Observation: 24 April 2001).

…….

Vasie: I asked you the question about the difference between HIV and AIDS, you said we are not going to get technical.

Vijay: Did I say that?

Vasie: And now you said it's fine.

Vijay: Ah, maybe that's prejudice. Let's investigate it. What did you say in your question? Maybe there is a slight difference to the question. I don't know. Do you think that there is a difference between HIV and AIDS?

Vasie: I asked the same question.

Vijay: What is the difference between HIV and AIDS? I'm sorry I don't even remember. This was yesterday. Maybe what I was focussing on was attitudes …

Vasie: But you said it's a good question when Tammy asked it.

Vijay: Now that's good, because if I am practising prejudice then I need to know about it. What was your question? Let's look at the question once more and think it through … you will notice that I am not approving all Tammy's questions.

Vasie: No, I'm not saying that. I'm talking about justice. (Lecture Observation: 25 April 2001).

……..

Vijay: …You are simply there to ask the questions, gather the information; and avoid making assumptions. Vasie will tell you that I made assumptions about her research the other day and how damaging that can be, and how unproductive that is. *(Vasie nods her head).* So it is important to avoid making assumptions. And if you make an assumption, you better sort it out. (Lecture Observation: 25 April 2001).

From the series of extracts, the following points emerge: Vijay declares: *It's not a question that I set. The whole point of the assignment is that it refers to your needs.* The implicit and explicit message being that students have freedom of choice in compiling and finalising the assignment question. Thus, student Vasie assumes that since the assignment refers to her *needs as an intellectual, and as a member of society,* it would be O.K to research the AIDS question from the point of view of the dissident voices. This, however, runs counter to Vijay's intention for containing the research topic so that there would be commonality in what the students investigate. However, subtexts on various issues, (viz. attendance, homework, and student integrity), which are unrelated to the AIDS Assignment topic, *per se,* filter through

and result in a 'running battle' between teacher Vijay and student Vasie, which span a series of lectures. The substance of Vijay's discontentment is related to regulatory/disciplinary politics and educational **values** like maintaining academic integrity, by not plagiarising by downloading articles from the Internet.

The Vasie-Vijay exchange combines several issues viz. attendance, homework, student integrity, and the normalisation of pedagogic content, hence the power dynamics in the exchange become quite complicated. It is further exacerbated when Vijay throws down the gauntlet on the student by challenging her: *Vasie, have you done your homework? I can almost tell that you haven't. Come on prove me wrong …* (The teacher expectation being that Vasie would produce evidence that she has done her homework; that her work on the AIDS Assignment, is indeed hers; and she has neither plagiarised from the Internet nor from a friend). Hence Vijay says: *But it's for you to challenge me, and say, 'but of course it is my work!'* Rather than humour Vijay with a defensive explanation as to why she has not done her homework, student Vasie opts for challenging teacher telepathy, when she cheekily responds: *No, you tell me.* Implied in Vasie's retort is the suggestion that since Vijay presumes to know that she has not done her homework, and has plagiarised from a friend, she, as the all-knowing teacher 'expert' should have telepathic knowledge to support these allegations. Here we note that although Vasie has defaulted on her homework and attendance, she is offended when her integrity is called into question, and is unafraid to let the teacher know that that is unacceptable.

Much of Vasie's subsequent responses during the exchange seem to revolve around her appeal not to be pre-judged (that is for Vijay not to make assumptions about her), and to being treated in the same way as the rest of the defaulting students. In this regard, student Vasie is able to describe her feelings and provide examples of the times Vijay has singled her out for challenge and reprimand. *Vasie says that Vijay is picking on her. First when she indicated that she would like to work on a different aspect of the AIDS topic, Vijay insinuated that she would be submitting work done by someone else, now she is picking on her about her attendance, and the homework, and that's not very nice.* Later in the exchange, Vasie points out to Vijay: *I asked you the question about the difference between HIV and AIDS, you said we are not going to get technical. … But you said it's a good question when Tammy asked it.* Teacher Vijay moves Vasie's allegations of perceived injustice against her by being able to name and frame the problem as a concrete accusation of teacher prejudice. Vijay says: *Ah, maybe that's prejudice. Let's investigate it … Now that's good, because if I am practicing prejudice then I need to know about it.* To which a courageous but cautious Vasie responds: *I'm not saying that. I'm talking about justice,* which arguably is the same thing that Vijay is saying. In hearing Vijay name the problem (of alleged teacher prejudice) so starkly

articulated, it may be assumed that a diplomatic Vasie recognises that the confrontational exchange she has entered into with her teacher is uncharacteristic of teacher-student exchanges, and potentially not in her best interest. She thus, begins to downplay the accusation she is levelling against Vijay. Vijay also senses that she has *overstepped it* with Vasie and offers a cautionary word to the class, when she says: *Avoid making assumptions. Vasie will tell you that I made assumptions about her research the other day and how damaging that can be, and how unproductive that is. So it is important to avoid making assumptions. And if you make an assumption, you better sort it out.*

The apparent 'running battle' between Vasie and Vijay illustrates that not all students accept with passive reverence the teacher's authority. Although, often out of deference students may avoid confronting a teacher, Vasie an undergraduate student, risks pointing out to Vijay what she perceives to be *prejudicial* teacher behaviour. Given that the Vasie-Vijay exchange extended over several lectures, I was able to raise the issue with Vijay in the post lecture interview. Vijay commented on the exchange as follows:

> **Vijay:** The other day you were there when I actually overstepped it with Vasie. I had to think about it … how could you do that? I had to think back on why I was reacting like that. In a way I'm glad that you are asking me these questions, Juliet, because I wouldn't have thought through that one so seriously. Boy, I really need to watch this! I was a bit surprised at my own response to that. This voice of authority is so corrosive.
>
> Even today in the class finalising the question, adding a few more, gonging out certain questions, is quite interesting. Vasie raised me on that question. Actually it was quite productive, because she made me think: 'Hang on, yesterday I thought it was not valuable, today I think that it is valuable. What actually is it?' It turned out that that was a very powerful intervention by her. I hope that I affirmed her. She was a bit uncertain. Any student would be a bit uncertain. I don't know whether I would have the guts to ask the lecturer that, as a student, because for me it would have spelt a confrontation. They are too innocent. I don't know whether it is because I am over-exercising my power. I really do want more spunk from them. But as you saw when poor Vasie gave me a bit of spunk what I did.
>
> … It is the Freirean notion of critical reflection, and the importance of challenge. For me, power has to be questioned in the class ... You need to question power and the teacher's power is up for question. It can never be taken for granted. It's the only way we really improve. I've found that I don't lose anything by listening to students. It's like Vasie in class, today, it is tempting to say, 'Oh, shut up! What do you know?' It is so easy to be off-hand, and dismiss them. I always find that I am not as clever as I think I am. (Interview).

Vijay provides a classic example of critical teacher reflection, and the need for teacher repentance. Vijay commends Vasie for having the courage to publicly challenge her

authority, and points to the potential 'damage' unchecked teacher authority is likely to have on students who may not have the social capital and courage to 'stand up' and challenge the teacher's script. Vijay's repentance for *overstepping it* with Vasie, and her commendation of Vasie for challenging her teacher authority is framed within the educative goal of the feminist English language class, i.e. to educate students to confront corrosive power structures/ agents, including teachers, if the need arises. That Vasie confronted the teacher on her 'repressive/ disabling' power performance actually testifies that she has learnt to exercise her agentic potential to challenge unproductive power plays. The cumulative effect being that Vasie's challenge was according to Vijay: a) quite productive in that it made the teacher think about her responses to the student; and b) was powerful in that teacher Vijay had to stop to think about what angle she wanted students to address the AIDS Assignment from.

In addition, it provoked Vijay to acknowledge that: a) the voice of teacher authority can be corrosive; and b) that she might be over-exercising her power. This is an important reflection, especially in a feminist class that seeks to engender enabling, creative and constructive relations among teachers and students in knowledge production. It illustrates that power is not the imposition of one will on another, it circulates rather than being possessed by the most obvious bearers of authority. This is further illustrated when students exercise power over each other.

2. *students act as accessory to the teacher's authority*: given the prevailing problem of absenteeism that both Thembi and Vijay contend with in their undergraduate classes, in yet another exchange from Vijay's lecture we notice that some students wield power not through being confrontational with the teacher, but by becoming an a*ccessory* to the teacher's authority. This is evident in the following two extracts:

Vijay: … Thembi, you were not here, are you aware that you had to do a question?
Thembi (Black female)**:** No.
Vijay: *(Vijay asks other students in the class, whether they have a question for the AIDS Assignment).* Thulani?
Thulani (Black male)**:** No.
Buyee (Black female)**:** But Vijay, they knew about the question a long time ago. *(Vijay laughs).* I don't think students have an excuse for not bringing in an assignment question, because I was also absent but I have brought a question. (Lecture Observation).

……..

Vijay: But let's talk about your homework. Did you do it?
Vasie: No.
Vijay: But you were not here last week.

Buyee (Black female)**:** But Vijay we knew about it. This was given to you ages ago, and you were supposed to have photocopied the chapter. (Lecture Observation).

Vijay seems to be more accommodating of students, Vasie and Thulani, who have arrived in class without an AIDS Assignment question, attributing their lack of preparedness to their absenteeism. However, student Buyee is not as accommodating or sympathetic. She points out: *But Vijay, they knew about the question a long time ago … But Vijay we knew about it. This was given to you ages ago.* We note that on two separate occasions, student Buyee acts as an accessory to the teacher's authority. Out of a sense of mounting frustration with the lack of commitment from fellow students, she assumes 'teacherly' authority and reprimands defaulting students who arrive unprepared at lectures by pointing out that students really have no excuse for not doing homework that they were given *ages ago.* Student Buyee's interjections of annoyance show that pedagogy, as the enactment of power relations, is fluid and relational. It confirms that power differentials do not just define teacher-student relations, but also student-student relations. (See section titled: *Resistance to and normalisation of pedagogic technique: the case of collaborative work,* later in this chapter for extended discussion on this issue).

In yet another instance of students becoming accessories to teacher authority, we note the female students in Vijay's class demonstrate their power to challenge a fellow male student who articulates a point of view that discriminates against women.

Nathi (Black male)**:** What about returning to cultural practices for girls to protect them and keep their virginity? (*somebody chuckles*).
Vijay: And men?
Nathi: The idea is that if women abstain from sex and keep their virginity, you'll be safe if you marry her.
Devi (Indian female)**:** Will she be safe if she has sex with you? *(class laughs).*
Nathi: The thing is you will marry her …
Vijay: So you yourself will be a virgin?
Nathi: No, no, that I can't guarantee … *(laughter and general protest from the class about double standards).* I know, but for women it's different. They have to keep their virginity. Men should have a choice …
Thandi (Black female)**:** You don't think that men should stay virgins?
Nathi: If I want to stay a virgin then, I mean, it's my choice.
Thandi: Then why are you just saying women?
Devi: Then it should be her choice as well.
Nathi: Ja, it is her choice, but I was only making a point … you don't have to bite my head off. *(class laughs).* (Lecture Observation).

In a class designed to interrogate and subvert sexist and misogynist attitudes, Vijay finds that she can safely rely on the female students to challenge an 'offending' male student. In her interview she commented on the above student-teacher-student exchange as follows:

> **Vijay:** Like the student who was saying that for men it's different. It is obviously a thing that I will deal with. But I had enough sense as a teacher then, to know like, hang on Vijay, there are women in this class who can handle this, and sure enough they did and they did it powerfully. I don't think I would have done a job as well as they did and what is more they were speaking to him as peers, and not as the *Power*, whom he can forget about as soon as he is gone. These are women who are his age, very typical of his social circle. Sometimes it is those voices that count and my own silence that adds to it. (Interview).

Vijay draws attention to the horizontal and vertical dimensions of power differentials. By pointing out that the female students who challenge offending student Nathi, are of his age, social circle, and are also his peers, she distinguishes between the hierarchical *Power,* (in reference to the teacher), and the horizontal power of the female students. She realises that hierarchical teacher power is sometimes likely to be ineffective, while the power of one's peers to challenge and convict may be taken more seriously. Her teacher discretion to exercise her power of silence enabled the female students to respond to the ideologically offending male student.

Giving credence to both Foucault's (1980), and Gore's (2002), conceptualisation about the nature of power, we note from the above series of extracts that students are not mere objects to be acted upon, they possess agentic power and potential to challenge the teacher and fellow students alike. Corroborating this conception of power, in the post lecture interview, Vijay comments on the above exchanges and identifies the various axes of power that operate in the classroom. These include power differentials between teacher and students, students and students, both male and female, the power to reprimand, critically reflect, affirm, and repent and the power of silence.

Central to acknowledging the fluidity and multi-dimensionality of power, its enabling and corrosive potential, is the need to engage Vijay's suggestion that we constantly reflect on the way all those involved in the pedagogic encounter engage power, and question its constitution and the intentions of its use. That the feminist classroom cannot be rid of power brings us to the recognition that pedagogy involves the enactment of power relations. It further confirms Mercer's (1997), contention that: 'we are all in power, like fish in water, and we swim at different levels: sometimes we are sharks and at other times sardine'.

Bodies are the objects of pedagogical power relations

Foucault (1980:39), argues that power operates through bodies, that is, power takes the form of actions upon actions. He contends that disciplinary power functions at the level of the body. He writes:

> In thinking of the mechanisms of power, I am thinking rather of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their action and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives.

Foucault's reconceptualisation of disciplinary power recognises its repercussions and reverberations from the macro realm of structures and ideologies to the micro level of bodies, a material and physical site at which the enactment of power relations is observable. Student and teacher subjectivities are clearly implicated in the enactment of power on bodies. One of the central tenets of critical feminist pedagogy has been its insistence on challenging the mind/body split. For hooks (1994:193), this pertains not only to connecting knowledge to experience, or theory to practice, but to the way it is taught or embodied by the teacher. She talks about ways in which we are taught to ignore the teacher's body, a device Waldby (1995), calls `the fiction of the disembodied scholar' whose authority lies in being seen only as `a properly trained mind, unlocated in the specific historical experience and social position of a sexed, classed or racially marked body'.

Following these conceptions of power technologies on bodies, Gore (2002), proposes that this has direct implications for the construction of teacher and student subjectivities. Power relations are configured by variables such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. all of which are not enacted or produced in identical ways in classrooms (they constitute differences that make a difference). She further suggests that the institutional sanctioning of power gives a particularly corporeal character (that which concerns the material or physical) to the exercise of power in educational institutions. Viewing bodies as material and physical sites, proposes a need to see teachers and students not as generic individuals, but as people who have differential capacities to enact definitions of power based on their place in the hierarchies of the social world. This precipitates a need to examine the differences and similarities that teachers and students experience in the classroom as a result of skin colour, age, gender, race, language, economic status, personal experiences, etc.

Like the teachers in Ropers-Huilman's (1997), study some of the participants in my study also talked about the ways in which their authority is valorized, compromised or challenged as a result of factors linked to their age, gender and/or race, dress style,

professional background, etc. In the following discussion I examine these variables of teacher identity with a focus on:

a) *Pedagogic Power Relations defined by Age, Race and Gender:* Commencing with an analysis of Phumzile's autobiographical reflections of how perceptions and experiences of her race, age and gender shape her teacher identity, I proceed to examine how Vijay and Carol also construct their teacher identities in relation to these same variables. The discussion is framed so as to highlight the similarities and difference these women educators experience in relation to contextual and ideological specificities. Intrinsic to the discussion is the argument that while female teachers' professional expertise, and professionalism are generally undermined within educational domains, the degree of undermining is further exacerbated when the female educator hails from a disenfranchised race group (as is attested to by the experiences of Phumzile and Vijay), and is significantly reduced if the women belong to a privileged race group (read White), as in the case of Carol.

b) *Dress sense, physical and mental wellness, and disaffected student bodies.* Other factors that shape power differentials in the professional and pedagogic encounters of the feminist teacher are her *dress sense, her physical and mental wellness,* and *disaffected student bodies.* In considering each of these variables, I argue that first, the female teacher appropriates a dress style that is not just consistent with her identity, but also her perception of its imagined impact on interpersonal professional power relations. Second, teacher fatigue, stress and strain take their toll on her energy levels and affect her ability and availability to respond to students' needs. In this regard, her physical and mental wellness play a vital role in shaping teacher-student power interpersonal relations. Third, I briefly examine how the teacher enacts her pedagogic authority in relation to disaffected students' bodies that frequently absent themselves from class. Taking the view that physical student presence and participation is crucial to meaningful student-centred pedagogy, absenteeism and unpunctuality activate teacher power performances as ways to regulate their attendance.

c) *Women's Bodies are the Objects of Gendered Academic Citizenship:* I identify for more elaborate discussion the gendered academic citizenship status of female educators. I argue that the power status of the woman educator is linked to patriarchal conceptions of the disembodied female in the market economy. The discussion focuses on:

(i) the institutional barriers impacting women's academic citizenship status, and

(ii) women educators' responses to institutional barriers.

a) Pedagogic Power Relations defined by Age, Race and Gender

In exploring the politics of *bodies as objects of pedagogical power relations,* the following extracts from Phumzile's autobiographical essay, encapsulate corporeal issues central to the discussion on feminist teacher identity, and its impact on teacher-student relations. Phumzile addresses aspects of her personal and professional identity that specifically pertain to her individuation as a Black educator working at the University of Free State, a predominantly White student and staff institution. In addition, she refers to age and gender as variables that are drawn upon in attempts to undermine her female teacher power. She writes:

> **Phumzile:** I soon discovered that in my literature classes race and gender were swear words. My first lecture provoked protests from a rightwing student organisation. Although I received support from members of my department, the then Dean chose to side with the protesting students.
>
> … This has been one of a series of incidents, which were overtly racist, and sexist directed at me since I started teaching at the university. As a recent audit of the Black staff of the Faculty of Humanities revealed, I am not alone in experiencing an assortment of tactics accompanied by (often stated) scepticism about our ability to function as credible professionals.
>
> … The dominant image of a knowledgeable person on any subject (read expert) is male, white, older. That I am Black, female, younger has three discernible simultaneous effects: For many of my (white) students, maybe less so now than when I arrived here in 1997 at 24 years of age, by their own admission I am a very rare example of a Black woman they have encountered in a position outside of (potential) servitude to them. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraphs 25, 26 & 33).

First, the undermining tactics associated with gender discrimination, is well documented as it relates to scepticism regarding the female teacher's professional status. Traditionally, professorial authority and knowledge have been linked to the broader patriarchal authority wielded in institutions of higher education, founded on what Phumzile describes as: *The dominant image of a knowledgeable person on any subject (read expert) is male, white, older.* Within this tradition of patriarchal society, merely being female has sufficed as justification for being conferred inferior professional status. That Phumzile is female, Black, and younger has three discernible identity markings that destabilise the hegemony and trouble student and staff expectations of traditional conceptions of figures in authority. I do not entertain expansive discussion here on the inferior socialisation of women educators within the domain of educational sites, since I devote substantial attention to this issue under the headings: *nurturance versus authority,* and *Women's Bodies are the Objects of Gendered Academic Citizenship*. In these sections I explore the scepticism and low professional expectancy associated with female educators. However, for the purposes of

exploring the proposition, bodies are the objects of pedagogical relations; the ensuing discussion examines the issues of race and age as identity markers, which impact the enactment of teacher identity, in different university contexts.

Ropers-Huilman (1997), points out that there is the belief that if students know teachers' ages and professional backgrounds well enough they would be willing to grant them a measure of authority based on those presumed experiences. Thus, the tendency to equate age with maturity, experience and a wealth of professional expertise is a prevalent, though erroneous perception that Phumzile has to endure. Having to negotiate her gender and age identity markings in a learning environment comprised predominantly of White students, Phumzile admits to making strategic decisions as to how she enacts her pedagogic role. In the light of having experienced racial and sexist disparagement, the need to assert her teacher authority is crucial in order to counter the *scepticism* about her *ability to function as a credible professional.* She is aware that in this particular teaching space, to stage democratic technologies of teacher and student as joint learners runs the risk of it being construed as a tactical manoeuvre on her part to mask her lack of knowledge in the field of study. Simply put, students and staff who believe that her being young, female and Black is an embodiment of innate ignorance and cognitive deficit are likely to see her efforts at drawing on their experiential epistemology as a way to mask her lack of sacred knowledge. Thus, choosing to foreground her teacher authority via an active demonstration of 'expert/official' knowledge, Phumzile writes:

> **Phumzile:** This has had several challenges for the ways in which I have chosen to participate in the lecturing space.
>
> … Robin Powers suggests that the servant-leadership ethic is an example of feminist and anti-racist epistemology.
>
> … The non-hierarchical classroom model is contradictory and counterproductive. It is difficult to maintain responsible and efficient co-ordination when an organisation is truly non-hierarchical. It is also misleading to think that classrooms can ever be truly non-hierarchical for learners are not educators within the classroom context. While their multiple literacies are not called into doubt, it is clear that the area they chose to register for a course in is not one they identify as within the ambit of their expertise. By contrast, the lecturer has herself undergone extensive training in precisely the field she offers the course in. Thus the choice of lecturer is not arbitrary and the systems of knowledge present in the lecture room are not interchangeable. A commitment to equity need not be so idealistic as to deny that difference has currency and that hierarchy is not always bad. In a lecture situation it is true that I know more about literary critical analysis than my students do. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraphs 26, 27 & 31).

The crucial points that emerge from the extract relate first, to the hierarchical nature of the university, which in attempting to fulfil its roles and responsibilities, and pursue efficient co-ordination and organisation can prove undemocratic. Thus, in the first instance, hierarchal relations play themselves out at the macro level of the University of Free State. Second, in negotiating the challenges of lecturing at the University of the Free State, Phumzile finds it useful to also retain educator authority at the micro level of the classroom. She does so as part of her educative and pedagogic mandate because she maintains that: *In a lecture situation it is true that I know more about literary critical analysis than my students do.* She argues that students register for courses of study because they identify these as areas in which they need to expand their knowledge. As a way of exposing students to wider knowledge in their chosen field of study, as a qualified educator who has undergone extensive training, she is comparatively more knowledgeable in the chosen field of study. Thus, her craft and disciplinary knowledge imbue her with more insights into the discipline, by virtue of her specialised educative and pedagogic expertise.

In addition, given that the feminist critique of teacher authoritarianism emanated from a disenchantment with class and gender supremacy wielded by predominantly elite White men, the call for sharing/divesting academic authority is not applicable or appropriate to Phumzile as a Black female. She is aware that in a climate of overt and atmospheric racial and gender undermining, her real claim to pedagogic authority is vested in her academic expertise. Thus, while recognising the strategic value of equity, Phumzile rejects the fantasy of non-hierarchical egalitarianism, and does not yield her teacher authority indiscriminately. The very present and conspicuous reality of being a young, Black woman who constitutes a racial minority in a largely White student classroom has tempered her blanket adoption of the feminist and anti-racist model of establishing non-hierarchical pedagogic relations with her students. Phumzile's sentiments resonate with the following extract in which Dorsey (2002: 207), also reflects on her personal experiences regarding professional and racial disparagement:

> My authority in the classroom is rooted neither in my class, nor my gender or my race. Indeed, in the eyes of most students and faculty at predominantly white institutions, my authority is tied specifically to my body of knowledge as marked by the professional qualification. I reject, therefore, the assumption that the professor's voice should be used sparingly in the feminist classroom on the grounds that to set aside my professorial status is most often to rein-scribe traditional class (upper middle over working class/poor), sex (male over female), and race (white over black) dynamics. I have found it difficult to use a democratic approach to my teaching precisely because of student scepticism and the resistance rooted in their assumptions. My task as a feminist teacher is to challenge students to become conscious of position and privilege and to denaturalise social structures of power in the process of

> discussing and analysing information … Ideally the challenges, shifts in consciousness and greater knowledge will contribute to the process of social change. My place at the front of the classroom and in authority goes a long way toward beginning that process.

Thus, like Dorsey, Phumzile is aware that when her body is associated with identity diminishing stereotypes, her 'true' claim to authority is tied to the body of expertise/ specialised knowledge that she has acquired through extensive training. This implies that her appointment as lecturer is not arbitrary, but is based on her academic credentials that have qualified her for the post.

Phumzile is also intent on challenging images of Black women and their traditional association with servitude. Thus, another reason Phumzile forwards for not relinquishing teacher authority is linked to dismantling the White leader-Black servant hierarchical binary that prevails in wider social configurations of power relations. In this regard, she writes:

> **Phumzile:** Clearly, my new terrain demanded radically different forms of insurgency.
>
> … When I, as a Black woman lecturer, walk into a classroom composed of mainly white students who are not much younger than I am, what meanings stem from my use of servant-leadership paradigms? If, indeed, '[t]eaching is a performative act … meant to serve as a catalyst that calls everyone to become active participants in learning', what participation am I enabling?
>
> … Servant-leadership then does not challenge their thinking in any way if their expectation is that as a Black woman servitude is my role. Forms of service can be read as submission especially when they are seen as natural. It is therefore to be expected that learners who respond to me as though I ought to mother them would do so even more were I to participate in this paradigm. I would be challenging none of their preconceived ideas, conscious or otherwise. I would indeed be reinforcing racist and patriarchal ideas about the appropriate behaviour and station of a Black woman in South Africa.
>
> … In a situation like the university I am attached to, where undermining activity stems from colleagues and students with equal frequency, aspects of the hierarchy remain useful. When the Black women learners in my class see me as a Black woman in power who chooses to play it down, gives it away and is complicit in her own silencing, they are not empowered. My lack of assertiveness would neither affirm white women or Black male students nor force them to question their own sexism and racism. If my teaching evokes in some of my rightwing male and female students a violent reaction because it symbolises a threat to all they hold dear, I choose to measure that as a form of success. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraphs 30, 34 & 36).

Phumzile points out: *For many of my (white) students, by their own admission, I am a very rare example of a Black woman they have encountered in a position outside of (potential) servitude to them.* Phumzile is perceptive that her identity as a Black woman frames her

students' perception of her professorial authority. Thus, she attempts to subvert the pervasive images associated with the construct of Black womanhood/mothering and its conflation with servitude. Enacting a servant-leader ethic, as espoused to within feminist and anti racist discourses, is inappropriate, counterproductive and contradictory because it does not challenge students' preconceived ideas, conscious or otherwise, regarding racist and patriarchal ideas about the appropriate behaviour and station of a Black woman in South Africa. In her book *Black Feminist Thought: knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment,* Hill Collins (1990), includes a chapter titled: *Mammies, Matriarchs and Other Controlling Images*, in which she also deconstructs the hegemony of the process of objectifying Black women. Echoing sentiments similar to Phumzile, Hill Collins writes:

> Created to justify the economic exploitation of house slaves and sustained to explain Black women's long-standing restriction to domestic service, the mammy image represents the normative yardstick used to evaluate all Black women's behaviour … Even though she may be well loved and may wield considerable authority in her white 'family', the mammy still knows her place as obedient servant. She accepts her subordination.

As a way to both short circuit this reductive and dominant image of Black women, and to enact the institutional authority that is expected of her, Phumzile opts to perform her feminist educator authority in a way that is cognisant of contextual and ideological contingencies. She writes: *This has had several challenges for the ways in which I have chosen to participate in the lecturing space. Clearly, my new terrain demanded radically different forms of insurgency. In a situation like the university I am attached to, where undermining activity stems from colleagues and students with equal frequency, aspects of the hierarchy remain useful.* Opting to employ aspects of teacher hierarchy, Phumzile subverts both traditional patriarchal expectations, and feminist sensibilities, as they relate to Black racial submission and feminist power sharing, respectively. Through this enactment of power she strives to portray a positive, confident role model for both Black and White female students, alike. In so doing, she demonstrates that power does not necessarily have to be manipulated for negative effects.

The issues of race, gender, and physical presence as expressed in Phumzile's extracts are also echoed in the following series of extracts from Vijay's interviews. Like Phumzile, Vijay is aware that her race, gender and age as identity markers, do not immediately signal her as an embodiment of authority, unless she indicates/performs her power in a tangible way that students are familiar with. Jones (1993:237), describes tangible, recognisable forms of authority as follows:

> The canonical literature on authority, presents leaders as those whom we recognise as having authority to act because they exhibit certain marks or signs of leadership. These may be certain personal characteristics, expert knowledge, the occupation of certain offices or roles, or some combination of all these.

The issues raised in Jones' quote echoes Vijay's comments on how conceptions of her identity are shaped both by herself and her students, and how these in turn impact pedagogical relations. She reflected on this as follows:

> **Vijay:** … I find that the signifier Indian upon an individual in this country [South Africa] is narrowing and diminishing and in many ways do not carry the strengths that I think are part of identity. It is minority. It is less than. It's insular, separate. I wouldn't want that to inform my teacher identity. I wouldn't want my students to construct that for me. I would find that disconcerting, although they do, because racial identity is right there. I like them to think: she is an Indian-but. Like, she is a women-but. She is a Black person-but she is still on time. She is efficient. She does her work. She is reliable. She is honest (of course that is deeply tongue in cheek). (Interview).

In a country wracked by parochial racial and ethnic fragmentation, Vijay is aware of the identity diminishing stereotypes that circulate even within the classroom. As a South African Indian, who constitutes a minority within a predominantly Black South Africa, Vijay admits to not wanting her 'Indian' identity to inform the way students relate to her. While Phumzile, who belongs to a Black majority asserts her Black identity by challenging stereotypes that associate Black women with servitude. Vijay chooses to refuse her 'Indian' categorisation, and to instead identify with the Black majority. In so doing, she privileges her national, rather than her third-generation-diasporic-root-identity. However, her identification with the South African Black majority does not redeem her from having to navigate the negative stereotypes that generally plague Black identity. In trying to understand the racial stereotypes that Vijay experiences, we can return to what Phumzile (as a young, Black woman) elucidated in her autobiographical extract. Phumzile identified undermining tactics that express, for example, scepticism about Black academics' ability to function as credible professionals, and expectations for Black women to perform roles of servitude, etc. In playful, yet nonetheless, telling statements, (a case of many-a truth being told in a jest), Vijay expresses sentiments similar to that of Phumzile. Vijay explains: *I like them to think: she is an Indian-but. Like, she is a women-but. She is a Black person but she is still on time. She is efficient. She does her work. She is reliable. She is honest.* In contravention of the staid expectations for her as a Black/Indian female to perform her public roles at substandard level, Vijay wants to enact her persona in accordance with her own standards of excellence, even though this may be

deemed an extraordinary feat in the estimation of those who equate her 'dark skin' with an overt sign of inefficiency, ineptitude, and professional mediocrity. In doing so, Vijay demonstrates that she has been able to transcend inhibiting and discriminatory social hurdles to actualise her potential.

In choosing to subvert and downplay her 'Indian' identity, Vijay teaching a university class comprising predominantly Indian and African students (See Chapter 3: *Profile of Research Participants)*, comments on the way in which she embraces and/or veers away from her racial identity. The fluidity of her racial identity seems to be manipulated more for epistemological than interactional and interpersonal purposes. Vijay says:

> **Vijay:** I'm very definitely aware of myself as Indian, but not Indian. Being an Indian doesn't mean that I can't talk about this. In fact, I might be able to show you how you can find one way of talking about it. I think of what is most appropriate, and when I find it then I do it.
>
> The identity thing was something very weird for the students. They had to write about it, think about it. They could see that I was coming from somewhere quite different. They were actually nervous when I used the word *charro* in class. I made them go and look at words like *coolie* and *kaffir* and it really helped the class grow in a few days. (Interview).

Implicit in what Vijay is saying is that she is able to fluctuate between racial categories, and in so doing de-essentialises identity normativity, thereby exemplifying the non-unitariness of identity. While she generally refuses her Indian identity, there are instances when she strategically foregrounds it for pedagogical purposes, like using it for concept deconstruction. In this regard, she is, for example, able to name and talk about racial pejoratives, (like *charro* and *coolie* in reference to South African Indians), in a way that perhaps a non-'Indian' educator might be reluctant to discuss, for fear of being construed as racist. Vijay feels comfortable critiquing, discussing and addressing issues that may be regarded 'Indian-specific'. However, because she identifies herself, in the first instance as Black and then as an Indian, as is suggested in the statement, *I'm very definitely aware of myself as Indian, but not Indian,* this ontological-in-betweeness, or 'racial cross-dressing' engenders a sense of alienation among some of her Indian students, who feel that she pays more attention to the African students. This emerges in the following extract:

> **Vijay:** The situation in class is that no one is actually saying to me, 'Now how dare you do that?' Except that as you picked up, Juliet, some of the Indian students feel a bit alienated … I must actually find a way of investigating that … what I could do is raise it with the African students and say, 'How do you feel about having this Indian lecturer?' And then ask the Indian students, 'Do you think that I have

been neglecting your interests, in order to play up to the African students?' Ask them the question, and then let them deal with it. They can do it in writing. (Interview).

Vijay was unaware that some Indian students felt that she paid more attention to the Black students in class, until I overheard a group of Indian students discuss this during one of my lecture observations, and raised it with Vijay during the interview. It appears that Vijay's refusal to promote racial narcissism, racial favouritism, or ethnocentricity, unintentionally engenders a feeling of social distancing from her Indian students. Having brought this sentiment to her attention, Vijay decided that she would enquire of the Indian students whether they felt that she was *neglecting their interests in order to play up to the African students.* Perhaps, there might have been an expectation among the Indian students for their 'Indian' lecturer to be a safe, and familiar 'space' with whom they could feel close to rather than alienated. This is an issue that Phumzile also raises. Phumzile too, is conscious that her status as lecturer at a predominantly White institution, often sets her apart as a social refuge for Black students who have been given epistemological access to predominantly White tertiary institutions, but who remain socially and contextually dislocated and dispossessed.[6] Phumzile is cautious not to differentiate on the basis of race, in the way she relates to her students by endeavouring to be a confident role model to both Black and White female students, alike.

From the preceding discussion, we note that both Vijay and Phumzile express the view that their classroom authority is rendered suspect because of pervasive societal presumptions, assumptions, and expectations of them as women (and young, Black women at that). Both of them have no qualms about assuming and asserting educator authority. There appears to be a concurrence in Phumziles and Vijay's understanding of the politics of feminist teacher authority. Phumzile says: *It is also misleading to think that classrooms can ever be truly non-hierarchical … that hierarchy is not always bad; aspects of the hierarchy remain useful.* Echoing similar sentiments, Vijay admits: *I like having authority in the class, but authoritarian, I would have problems with that.*

For Phumzile, in addition to being assertive, confident and enacting her teacher authority in a way that overtly demonstrates her pedagogic and educative expertise, Vijay too comments on the usefulness of tangibly enacting feminist teacher authority in the class. She says:

[6] See: Horton 1985. "Black Education at Oberlin: A Controversial Commitment." *Journal of Negro Education,* 54(4). pp. 477-499.

Vijay: I told you about that doctoral student who was trying to take advantage of me because of my gender. I just blasted that class. I just let them have it, probably I was too hard on them, when I think back on it, but it was the only way I could reassert my authority.
Juliet (Researcher)**:** It would be interesting to see how your dealing with authority has evolved …
Vijay: That must have been a turning point. I seem to remember thinking and talking about it, but this is a long time ago. I remember saying to people that when I go into the class I make it very clear who is in charge. At the beginning I go in tough, and then I gradually ease up and then I allow power. But let someone get slightly out of line, I sort them out there and then. I'm probably coming on very strong, but I need to because not only am I a darkie, I'm a woman, and I'm young. Most of these students look at me and they don't know me from a bar of soap. They don't know what chances they can take with me. I think that when students first meet me, I am really tough, formidable, I'm pushing, I'm loud, I'm clear, responding to everything. I can crack jokes at them. It's all hearty and buoyant. I was actually saying something to you yesterday, about how I am actually shy. My work has taught me to be a public person, and I love the teaching for that. (Interview).

Vijay reiterates how identity body markers related to race *(not only am I a darkie)*; gender *(I'm a woman);* and age *(and I'm young)* surface as variables that frame the authority embodied in the teacher. Significant in Vijay's extract is the notion that ways of performing authority are not static, but evolutionary. This is evident in her reflection: … *when I go into the class I make it very clear who is in charge. At the* ***beginning*** *I go in tough, and then I* ***gradually*** *ease up and then I allow power.* In addition, we see Vijay's demonstration of power manifest in tangible, and audible ways, when she says: *I just blasted that class … I am really tough, formidable, I'm pushing, I'm loud, I'm clear, responding to everything.* Both her attitudinal and behavioural postures confirm Jones' (1993:237), observation that:

> Physiognomy, voice, and physical stature have been among the personal marks believed to signify one's being an authority. We speak, for instance, of a commanding presence, of authoritative voices.

Vijay is conscious that she is deliberately 'performing' the personae of someone in authority, in that while *coming on strong*, and wanting to transmit the message about who really is in charge, she is simultaneously firm, but friendly. Thus, her power performance is interspersed with jokes, heartiness and buoyancy. The important point that emerges is that she is aware of how her power enactment as a teacher who is *loud, formidable,* and *tough* is inconsistent with her 'authentic' self, which she describes as *shy.* Essentially, she is making the point that she stages an authoritative pedagogic teacher performance in response to students who do not immediately equate her young, Black female body with authority.

Both Phumziles and Vijay's understandings of the fluidity of power and identity seem to resonate with reconceptualised notions of feminist teacher authority as espoused by Ellsworth (1992), Gunter (1995), and Gore (2002). Their struggles to create a basis for authority when, because of their age, gender and/or race, students are hesitant to grant it, confirms the need to reconsider the notion that institutional power sufficiently compensates for the lack of power or authority that is ascribed to the female body, (more especially, it would seem, a young, Black female body). Such reconsideration is of paramount importance since students' understandings of what it means to be gendered, invariably override the presumed authority granted to female educators in tertiary teaching positions.

While the foregoing discussion explored the experiences of Phumzile and Vijay, two young, Black females, whose identity markings do not immediately set them apart as the embodiment of power, the following discussion turns the speculum on Carol, a middle-aged, White, female educator who teaches at the University of the Western Cape, which comprises a predominantly Black student and staff population. Like Phumziles and Vijay's negotiation of their racial teacher identities, Carol as a White, female educator is also aware of the politics of her skin, and its impact on her teacher identity. Her racial self-awareness is an heartening departure from findings in Frankenberg's (2000), study: *White Women, Race Matters: the social construction of Whiteness,* in which she noted that when White women look at racism they tend to view it as an issue that people of colour face and have to struggle with, but not as an issue that generally involves or implicates them. According to Frankenberg, viewing racism in this way:

> … has serious consequences for how White women look at racism, and for how antiracist work might be framed. Within this view, White women can see antiracist work as an act of compassion for an 'other', an optional, extra project, but not one intimately and organically linked to our own lives. Racism can in short, be conceived as something external to us rather than as a system that shapes our daily experiences and sense of self. Clearly, White feminist women accounting for their experience were missing its racialness and were not seeing what was going on around them: in other words, they lacked an awareness of how their positions in society were constructed in relation to those of women and men of colour.

In contrast to Frankenberg's observations, regarding the White women in her sample who externalised or missed the implications of their racial positionality, Carol is aware that being a White female educator teaching at a predominantly Black institution has significant implications. This is evident in the following extracts:

> **Carol:** Bossy, which I am at times. … A prudish White, middle-class woman trying to tell them how to live their lives and what to think. That's what I wouldn't like. And I'm very conscious of it because all my students are Black. I sometimes think if I had grown up under Apartheid I would be very resentful.
>
> … In a way it comes back to race but I have found it enormously enriching working at UWC because it's taken me out of a White world that's not only privileged, but it's also rather fearful of anything that's different. When I first went to teach at UWC people were saying, "Won't you get stabbed?" There are still the occasional throwing of bricks, and so on. But also when there were the disruptions on campus people always thought that we were afraid of our students and UWC's had a very bad press … even now if you interact largely with White people there's so much fear, a feeling of things going to pieces. But when you work with young Black people you know their aspirations and their dreams and I really like my students. They're just really nice people. But the rigidities of Apartheid, if you've grown up in this country, are very powerful and I've felt this has been an enormously enriching thing for me to do. Plus the encounter with literature from the rest of Africa, which I wouldn't have had at either of the local universities, and also the opportunities to teach more freely. (Interview).

Thus, unlike Phumzile and Vijay who don the trappings of overt teacher authority, Carol is cautious about demonstrating overt teacher authority by being *bossy, prudish,* and exercising social class and race supremacy. In the above extract, as well as in her autobiographical essay, Carol confides that for someone who considered herself privileged and superior, she is humbled by what her students have to teach her about cultural, linguistic and racial diversity. She writes that teaching at UWC, a previously disadvantaged tertiary institution that comprises predominantly non-English, Black and disprivileged students has been enormously enriching in that it has sensitised her to the nuances and complexities of diversity as they relate to the varieties of Englishes, sexualities, cultural and religious affiliations, etc. In addition, it has made her aware of her White privilege, and unlike Phumzile and Vijay who name the factors that render their professional status and credibility suspect, Carol does not describe in detail the specifics of White privilege that make her want to downplay her classroom authority. However, the legacy of Apartheid that ensured White preferential treatment in terms of socio-economic, political, cultural and linguistic privileges offer some insight into what frames Carol's teacher identity as a White South African. In addition, it is possible to draw on McIntosh (1997), who as a White women herself, employs the *baggage* metaphor for discussing White privilege as an important social construct that frame power relationships both within and outside of educational settings. McIntosh enumerates the following three examples of White privilege:

- she can be fairly sure of having her voice heard in a group in which she is the only member of her race;

- she is never asked to speak for all the people of her race group; and
- if she has low credibility as a leader, she can be sure that her race is not the problem.

It is very likely that these, among other unnamed privileges, make Carol particularly aware that she might be construed by her all Black students as: *A prudish white, middle-class woman trying to tell them how to live their lives and what to think.* In addition to her race supremacy, Carol is also aware that her middle-class status may presumably afford her more deference from her students.

Furthermore, while Vijay chooses to distance herself from an Indian identity, because it carries the baggage of being*, narrowing and diminishing … minority … less than … insular, separate*, in her essay, Carol traces the evolutionary trajectory of her identity construction, which she believes has been enriched through her first-hand experience and interaction with Black students. This exposure and interaction with Black students has made her critical of the tendencies to associate Blacks with violence and destruction, which has fuelled fear among fellow White South Africans. Thus, Carol distances herself from the prevailing conception among White South Africans who hold stereotypical views about Blacks. She is aware that the rigidities and injustices of Apartheid could justifiably make her students *resentful* towards her if they perceive her as an embodiment of racial oppression.

Another important issue for consideration relates to Carol's attempts to inculcate in her students national values of democracy, equality and citizenship. These are regarded as important for nation building, and are in accordance with the egalitarian ideals shaping South African society. However, a tension arises between that of her White teacher identity and the identities of her Black students. The politics of a White educator, teaching a predominantly Black student population, creates epistemic dissonance, which Carol reflects on as follows:

> **Carol:** English has, partly by virtue of the extent of the British imperium, become a world language. I have found myself **struggling**, in the days of late-apartheid, with ideas articulated by ardent 'black' students to the effect that English is the language of liberation. As a teacher of English, I see it as part of my business to counter such contemporary forms of imperialism, by encouraging students to read texts more critically. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 32). (Emphasis added).

Carol says that as a teacher she regards it her moral obligation to alert students to the un-innocence and non-neutrality of English in order to equip them to be responsible, well informed citizens who participate meaningfully in a democratic society. But, her objectives do not go unquestioned. Although there is widespread belief that English is a useful tool to facilitate modernization, Carol who subscribes to theories of critical language awareness, is

sensitive that inequality and exploitation are generally not regarded as a consequence of the spread of English. Critics of modernization theory (Tollefson 1991), argue that under-development in some societies is a result of development in others, that is, differences in development emanate from relationships of inequality and exploitation. For Carol, whose first language and mother tongue is English, her attempts to divest English of its colonial legacy and expose it as an un-innocent, value-laden language of imperialism come into tension with the visions of economic and social liberation that some of her students believe access to English holds. The complexity and battle to transform such ideologies is evident in her declaration: *I have found myself struggling, in the days of late-apartheid, with ideas articulated by ardent 'black' students to the effect that English is the language of liberation.* In recent times, the political correctness associated with the celebration of multilingualism has stirred a growing body of Black scholars who are suspicious of educators' (like Carol's) altered ideologies about interrogating the status of English, especially in a global environment where admittance to, and participation therein demand proficiency in English.[7] Lyons (1981 in Harrison & Marbach 1994:47), points out that linguists and educationists carry particular social, ideological, cultural and geographical backgrounds. Who teaches what to whom? Why? and How? are curricular decisions fraught with political allegiances that confirm the non-neutrality of language pedagogy. Carol's sensitivity to her Black students' quest for 'liberation' does not readily correlate with her critique of the English language. Instead, based on the legacy of her kin and skin her pedagogic intentions to expose the exploitative and un-innocent propensity of the English language are rendered suspect. Hence, she struggles with alerting her Black students to the Janus-faced nature of the English language, in its propensity to be simultaneously exploitative and liberatory. Often, as supported by the experiences of the other four participants in this study, this gives rise to pedagogic performative anxiety as it relates to issues of epistemic privilege and paternalism. Thus, Carol is not alone in her epistemic struggle against oppression. In a similar vein, Phumzile also writes: *I soon discovered that in my literature classes race and gender were swear words. My first lecture provoked protests from a rightwing student organisation.* Here, we see that as a Black educator, Phumzile has had to deal with public protest for teaching against racial and gender discrimination.

An interesting trajectory to the race, gender and age question is the way in which Phumzile, Vijay and Carol perceive of their own racial, gender and age identities, and how this affects their teaching practices and relations with students. From their accounts we see that teachers often problematize the intersections and interactions between their identities

[7] See: *Oppressing The Oppressed Through Language Liberation: repositioning English for meaningful education* (Cele 2000), and Carrim (2001), *Language, Social Inclusion and the Social Construction of Discrimination.*

with a view to creating educational environments conducive to educational goals. As a result their perceptions of their own identities, as well as their understandings of students' perceptions impact on the learning environment and pedagogic content. These identities are always fluctuating and contextually specific, as is evident in the way Phumzile changed her personal and democratic pedagogic performance when she relocated from the University of Cape Town and Cape Technikon to the University of Free State. Phumzile writes: *Whereas at UCT and Cape Technikon students were exposed to a range of teaching styles as a matter of course, where initiative was encouraged, the University of Free State worked on a different rationale.* Here, Phumzile writes: *my new terrain demanded radically different forms of insurgency. … In a situation like the institution I am attached to, where undermining activity stems from colleagues and students with equal frequency, aspects of the hierarchy remain useful.* Carol too, had to perform her identity differently when she relocated from the historically White universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch to a predominantly Black UWC. In her interview, Carol compared her teaching experiences at different universities in South Africa, reflecting that at an English language university (e.g. the University of Cape Town), ideas are generally debated very passionately, whereas at the University of Stellenbosch, for example, ideas were not easily debated. She attributed this to students' socialisation at school, which emphasised reliance on what the authority endorsed as correct. This continued within the more authoritarian structure at Stellenbosch, where students were likely to become quite dismayed or threatened if they were asked to critically debate knowledge systems. She noted that similar tendencies prevail at UWC, where students are generally very deferential to their lecturers. Thus, rather than exploit the deferential nature of her students at UWC, Carol is sensitive not to be *bossy,* and *prudish* by dictating to students how to live their lives or telling them what to think.

From the preceding discussion, we note that race, gender, age, professional experience and background contribute towards teachers establishing classroom authority. This confirms Ropers-Huilman's (1997), observation that teachers anticipate and respond to students' expectations of their identities in relation to their ethnicities, appearances, professional backgrounds, ages, genders, etc. Teachers participate in constructing their own identities, and so do others, as they bring socially constructed expectations and assumptions about a feminist teacher's multiple identities into classroom discourses. These expectations and assumptions either imbue the female teacher's body with power and authority or detract power and authority away from her. In responding to the constructions of her embodiment, the teacher either acts out overt power performances, as in the case of Phumzile and Vijay (who as young, Black females emphasize their pedagogic and educative authority as a way of subverting negative racial, age and gender stereotypes), or the teacher participates in

power diminishing technologies as in the case of Carol (who as a middle-age, White, female is aware that her predominantly Black students may perceive her as powerful based on historical associations of her race, and age identity markers).

Other personal identity markers unrelated to female teachers' collective public categories of race, gender and age also configure and define power relations. Variables such as dress sense, the status of their health, absent and present student bodies also frame pedagogic and professional relations. It is to these issues that the ensuing discussion turns.

b) Dress, physical and mental wellness, disaffected student bodies

Further understanding the body as an object of power relations draws our attention to other important variables that imbue or diminish the power vested in the teacher's body. These include, for example, *dress, physical and mental wellness,* and *disaffected student bodies.*

First in relation to *dress,* we see from Jennifers and Carol's essays that teachers' appearance and choice of dress affect their ability to establish authority and interpersonal relations within the wider university context. Tseëlon (1995), argues that identity is realised through the presentation of many selves, and clothes are a vital expression of this self-realisation. Guy & Banim (2000), contend that through clothes people attempt to negotiate a satisfactory synthesis between body and identity. To this end, the body is constantly re-clothed and re-fashioned in accordance with changing arrangements of the self. Craik (1994), appropriates Bourdieu's concept of habitus to illustrate the fluidity of self-presentation and the role clothes play in realizing the diverse possibilities of habitus. In this regard, Jennifer and Carol see themselves as actively engaging with their clothes to create images that are consistent with aspects of their identity. For example, Carol writes:

> **Carol:** I have found that in senior committees, meetings, the Senate Appointments Committee, say, that other members might take their bearings from me (often, one of only two women in the room) if a woman is being interviewed for a post. There are conditions, though, for such respect: I behave courteously and dress with a certain degree of 'professional' style; I try to convey the fact that I take men colleagues on trust, as human beings, and that I neither dislike nor fear men, unless they do me or others harm. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 31).

By appearing appropriately dressed for senior committee meetings Carol's professional dress style correlates with the formal nature of the situation where appearing respectful is a key element of her professional identity. Thus, through her dress sense and courteous interpersonal relations Carol is able to project a favourable image of herself, and command the respect of her colleagues. (In feedback from the respondent validation process, Carol

clarified that she strategically adopted a formal dress code for senior committee meetings, but dressed more informally for lectures and tutorials).

Commenting on the role of dress sense at her place of work, Jennifer writes:

> **Jennifer:** Likewise, I am aware of the complications in the workplace around gender divisions, where women are expected to play certain roles and/or to commodify their bodies by dressing and presenting themselves in certain male-determined ways … I both choose and like to unsettle gender expectations in my dress and presentation of myself. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraphs 18 & 22).

We see that Jennifer appropriates clothes as a performance to displeasure the male gaze by not commodifying her body *by dressing and presenting* herself *in certain male-determined ways*. She alludes to her conscious effort to refute male validation of her dress sense in her declaration: *I both choose and like to unsettle gender expectations in my dress and presentation of myself*.

Considering both Carols and Jennifer's comments about their dress sense confirms Young's (1994), contention that clothes go beyond the reproduction of capitalism, because wearers use their clothes in a variety of ways from pleasure and gratification, to compliance and contextual appropriacy, to acts of subversion and resistance. From Carol's comments we note that her dress sense is consistent with achieving contextual appropriacy, while Jennifer's dress sense is consistent with resistance and subversion. Although Jennifer and Carol are conscious of their dress style and preference, they use it to achieve different ends. This aligns with Cooley's (1902), notion of the 'looking glass self,' where it is the imagined impact on others that is important. Although, both Carol and Jennifer comment on the impact their dress sense has on collegial interpersonal relations, it may be surmised that it also impacts their power relations with their students. This is attested to in Ropers-Huilman's (1997:337), study in which she reported:

> In some cases, teachers' identities were constructed in ways that helped to establish classroom authority. Among the teachers with whom I spoke, authority was closely linked to appearance or style of presentation … . Several teachers said that they consciously constructed their appearance and style of presentation to help establish and maintain their authority. One teacher shared her realization that power can reside in appearance and clothing. She said, 'Wearing a jacket makes a difference and gives me authority'.

Second, Carol reflects on how *personal physical and mental wellness* impact pedagogic power relations. Carol reminds us of the toll a demanding academic career can have on the teacher's body. Referring specifically to her personal struggle with sickness, she draws attention to the stresses and strains that the teacher's body and mind experience. Her

comments acknowledge the frailty of the human body, which succumbs to pain, and endures the very real feelings of impatience and irritability. She says:

> **Carol:** When you're battling with not feeling well all the time you can get a little bit irritable but I think on the whole I am patient, I'm quite nice! … as I grow more tired through the term I become aware of myself battling away instead of helping the students. (Interview).

What is evident in Carol's extract is that when the body battles against sickness, and occupational stress and strain, it impacts on how much teachers can give off themselves, and this affects interpersonal relations. It is possible that if students are unaware that the teacher is battling sickness and fatigue, teacher irritability, or her inability to be as helpful as she would like to be may be misconstrued by students as unproductive power performances. Concurring with the possibility for this to occur, Valle (2002:170), writes:

> … when I am unable to attend to my students' needs, they are quick to criticize me and label me as *creda* (uppity). In their minds, my image shifts from the 'all forgiving nurturing mother' to the heartless 'bearded mother' who exercises power over her students.

Aware that when her low energy levels and ill health may be misread, Carol draws attention to her generally good naturedness, when she says: *but I think on the whole I am patient, I'm quite nice!*

Third, while much of the preceding discussion has focused on the teacher's body, it is not just teacher's raced, gendered, languaged, dressed, aged or able-bodiedness that impact pedagogic relations. The teacher has to deal with students' bodies as well. Quite often the teacher has to deal with absent student bodies, that is, she has to deal with students who do not show a commitment or responsibility to the course, and are prone to absenteeism. This highlights another way in which present and absent bodies activate power relations. The substance of this comes through as a refrain in Thembis and Vijay's lectures in relation to student unpunctuality and absenteeism.

Vijay and Thembi show that they have a concern for disaffected students, whose bodies hardly ever appear inside the classroom. Through varying techniques they try to regulate student bodies by insisting on regular lecture attendance and punctuality. These techniques include:

- Teacher reprimanding students: *Next time do come on time. You are already 20 minutes late. There won't be any excuses. One is supposed to attend.*
- teacher sarcasm: *Congratulations. You managed to come today; … Considering*

that you rarely grace us with your presence, maybe you can help us Bubawa by trying to establish your power.

- teacher threatening to punish:*You are missing a lot of lectures and you know that you are getting a mark for your class performance. So when you are absent you are already getting a zero, and then when you arrive unprepared, how does that contribute to your class performance?* Perhaps the most telling exercise of teacher power is evident when Vijay turns to credentialing as a mechanism to regulate lecture attendance (student physical presence in the classroom), and participation in the learning process. By linking physical presence with assessment, Vijay hopes that this would sufficiently motivate students into improving their attendance and participation in lectures. This once again highlights the weight credentialing plays in maintaining pedagogic power relations.

In considering feminist teachers' authority and bodies as objects of pedagogical power relations, it is important to note that teacher-student interactions are not simply verbal. The body provides a materiality, which influences the ethos of teacher/student relationships. An important disclaimer to my study is that it relied heavily on transcript texts rather than analysis of video material. A semiotic analysis of video sequences would have provided a rich source to explore how authority is mediated and maintained through gesture, posture, facial expression, proximity and touch; forms of regulation not obvious from textual transcriptions.

Finally, our bodies as raced, gendered, aged, languaged, clothed, present or absent affect how we write them into our stories and acknowledge them. These diverse variables inevitably affect interpersonal relations between teachers and students, and among students, and the way we work with knowledge and the possibilities for teaching. Bartlett (1998), notes that as with any feminist practice, our bodies can be regarded both as narrative strategy and as lived practice through which we read (and write) our texts, our courses, our students and ourselves. In view of the corporeal nature of the teacher's body, Broughton & Potts (2001:374), contend that:

> … [the female teacher's body] could and sometimes does include aspects of her status in the classroom by virtue of, or in spite of, class, 'race', physical ability, educational privilege, age, etc. But it might on occasions also involve much more: her intellectual convictions and political ideals, her material conditions and the constraints they place on both the resources at her disposal and herself as a resource, all aspects of her embodiedness (ill? tired? pregnant? sexually desirous? ageing?), her emotional economy and the scope it has, or doesn't have, in caring for students individually and collectively, inside the classroom and beyond.

The preceding discussion has explored the many ways in which the female teacher's body can no longer be viewed as the disembodied scholar fractured from the workings of her mind.

The multi-dimensionality of the female teacher's body is central to configuring pedagogic power relations.

In the following section, I return for a more elaborate examination of how educators' gendered bodies impact their academic citizenship status. The discussion commences with an identification of the institutional barriers women have to negotiate in academia, and the strategies they employ to negotiate these.

c) Women's Bodies are the objects of Gendered Academic Citizenship

If there is anywhere women professionals should be successful it is in universities, as teaching is seen as women's forte and universities as meritocratic institutions. However, Limerick (1991), describes teaching, a profession in which women have been traditionally well represented, as a 'woman's job but a man's career'. Katila & Merilainen (1999:166), argue that women are often positioned in the contradictory place of being simultaneously present and absent in academia. Davies (1993), notes how difficult it is for women to come to terms with the 'equality mystique' in higher education institutions, which generally purport to be liberal and progressive. Brooks (1997:1), also identifies a contradiction between the liberal ideology and egalitarian aims of the academy and the reality of competitive careers in male-dominated hierarchies, which lead to endemic sexism and racism in defence of male privilege. These sentiments do not just articulate the experiences of women academics in the US and UK. Luke (2001), confirms that the issue of women academics in higher education does not constitute a research priority, this despite the fact that men predominate women 5:1 at middle management level, and about 20:1 at senior management level globally. In South Africa, a national audit conducted by the Centre for Science Development (CSD) in 1997 aimed at ascertaining the research and teaching status of women in academia, attested to similar experiences faced by South African women academics. Among the recommendations emerging from the audit was the need to review institutional policies, and focus on networking and support.

Against this backdrop various factors that continue to shape women's gendered identity construction, the participants in my study almost organically reflected on institutional factors that enabled or disabled their participation in academic life. Drawing on these reflections, the ensuing discussion explores the notion of academic citizenship as it relates to the status and practice of the five women educators. The discussion focuses on:

(i) *the institutional barriers impacting women's academic citizenship status*. It draws on the British sociologist T.H. Marshall's tripartite conceptualization of citizenship, viz. civic citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship as a framework to explore the

constituent factors comprising an individual's citizenship status and membership in society. The discussion adapts these macro notions of citizenship to examine women's academic citizenship within the micro context of universities, and

(ii) it explores the*women educators' responses to institutional barriers*, as they attempt to negotiate the tightrope of rights and justice, on the one hand, and the morality of ethics and care, on the other.

(i) The Institutional Barriers Impacting Women's Academic Citizenship Status

Perhaps one of the most striking features that emerged from my participants' essays and interviews is their commitment to preparing students for full and meaning participation in a democratic society. Their preoccupation with full and meaningful citizenship within the macro context of South African society prompted me to pay special attention to the status of their gendered citizenship within academia.

In examining the citizenship status of women academics, I found Marshall's (1950:10-11), tripartite categorization of citizenship insightful and useful as a framework to explore the gendered citizenship of women within the micro-context of the academic community. Situating his categorization within most modern accounts of citizenship, Marshall's exposition distinguishes among three elements of viz. civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship. He explicates these elements of citizenship as follows:

> The **civil element** is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom-liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice. The last is of a different order from the others, because it is the right to defend and assert all one's rights on terms of equality with others and by due process of law … By the **political element** I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as elector of the member of such a body … By the **social element** I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society.

The Civic Element

For many disenfranchised South African women the equally crucial struggle against gender discrimination was eclipsed by the overwhelming pursuit for racial emancipation. With the delegislation of Apartheid, South African democracy was ushered in by a plethora of social reform policy documents promising to redress the inequities entrenched by the Apartheid legacy. Feminists in search of a democracy that acknowledges and promotes women's civic

membership and status have welcomed this emancipatory move. Much of the euphoria in this regard emanates from statements in policy documents that pledge a commitment towards a unitary, non-racist, and non-sexist citizenship resonant with the prevailing national vision to bring about social and economic transformation and lay the foundations for democratisation. Some of the enabling legislation in this regard include, inter alia:

- the **South African Constitution** of 1996 which aims to engender a non-racial, non-sexist, non-discriminatory society where all people can recognise and promote unity and peace in diversity.
- the **Labour Relations Act** of 1995 which outlines the main types of disputes that could be considered discriminatory, viz.: unfair discrimination against an employee on any arbitrary ground, including, but not limited to race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language, marital status or family responsibility, and
- the **Employment Equity Act 55** of 1998 which provides for the elimination of unfair discrimination of any kind in hiring, promoting, training, pay, benefits and retrenchment.

The State has also introduced supporting institutions to deal with issues of diversity and the enforcement of human rights. These include the Constitutional Court, the Human Rights Commission (HRC), and the Commission for Gender Equity. The Commission for Gender Equity, in particular, is intended to protect people (more especially women) who have suffered gender discrimination.

While these legislation and supporting institutions serve to protect the rights of the South African public at large, within the higher education system several complementary mechanisms in the form of equity, restructuring and transformation plans, which have a strong redress disposition, have also been introduced to implement, monitor and promote legislation. Furthermore, the mission and vision statements of most institutions of higher education in South Africa articulate the broad tenets of equality and redress, as they relate both to gender and race.

Yuval-Davis (1997), argues that citizenship rights are anchored in both the social and the political domains. However, in the absence of ‘enabling’ social conditions, political rights remain vacuous. At the same time, citizenship rights without obligations also construct people as passive and dependent. The most important duty of citizens is, therefore, to exercise their political rights and to participate in the determination of their collectivities’, states’, and societies’ trajectories. Enslin (2000:299), also cautions that: ‘while it is important

to acknowledge that a Constitution does not describe what is, there are dangers in constitutions and policy documents that are contradicted by actual conditions and practices'. It is this cautionary observation that has prompted a more critical examination of the political and social citizenship status of women in academia. In this regard Oldfield (1990), differentiates between citizenship as a *status* (which prioritises the rights of an individual citizen), and citizenship as a *practice* (which encompasses the interests of the wider society). Thus, in the light of the broad provisions made to protect the civic rights of South Africans within the macro context of the nation state and within micro organisations, such as institutions of higher learning, Marshall's tripartite conceptualisation of citizenship, (civic, political and social) is helpful in analysing the progress in the acquisition of civic rights of women within academia. Allied to the acquisition of civic rights is its fortification by political citizenship rights.

The Political Element

In Held's (1987), view:

> Politics is about power; that is about the *capacity* of social agents, agencies and institutions to maintain or transform their environment, social or physical … It is expressed in all the activities of cooperation, negotiation and struggle over the use and distribution of resources. It is involved in all the relations, institutions and structures, which are implicated in the activities of production and reproduction in the life of societies.

In concurring with Held, Dietz (1987), advocates:

> … a vision of citizenship that is expressly political and, more exactly, participatory and democratic in which politics involves the collective and participatory engagement of citizens in the determination of the affairs of their community, and in which we conceive of ourselves as 'speakers of words and doers of deeds mutually participating in the public realm. … only when active political participation is valued as an expression of citizenship in contrast to the politically barren construction of the citizen as a bearer of rights alone, that feminists will be able to claim a truly liberatory politics of their own.

Political citizenship as an extension of civic citizenship that ensures women the right to participate in the exercise of political power is now formally achieved for all adult South Africans both within the nation state and institutions of higher education. However, the issue of women's citizenship within academia, by and large is still treated in purely quantitative terms, relating to their presence or absence in the citizen rank, rather than as a qualitative one concerning the very nature of citizenship. Empirical evidence emerging from this study

confirms that the official status of women in South African academia ranges from being heads of department, to senior lecturers, to serving on programme co-ordinating and other committees. However, despite their access to realms of power, the familiar patriarchal hallmarks of devaluation and condescension persist. In addition, to the civic and political dimensions of citizenship, the social element is of equal importance.

The Social Element

Lister (1997:168-196), poses a series of questions in relation to the social dimension of citizenship. She asks: Who is a social citizen? In other words, are women's claims to social citizenship rights best articulated in the language of equality with men around the 'male model' of citizen-the worker, or in the language of difference, around the 'female model' of citizen-the-carer? Or is it possible to transcend the policy dilemma through a model of citizen the worker-carer, which embraces both women and men? Is the aim to change the nature of social citizenship rights so that earning is no longer privileged over caring in the allocation of these rights? Or is it to improve women's access to, and position in the labour market so that they can compete on equal terms with men and thereby gain the same employment-linked social citizenship rights? Lister advocates a social policy approach that promotes women's independence in the context of relationships of interdependence: that combines the ethics of care and justice; and that promotes both women's equality and difference while acknowledging the diversity of their concerns. She stresses the significance, both historically and currently, of social citizenship not only as the locus of important rights but also as an arena for women's citizenship as practice. In this regard, Gould (1988), makes the case for a conception of positive freedom as self-development, requiring not only the absence of external constraint but also the availability of social and material conditions necessary for the achievement of purposes or plans.

Galloway (1993:4), notes that the women's movement has sought recognition for the right of women to be the subject, not the object of their own lives, as other liberation movements have sought rights for the poor and disposed, for Black people, for those defined from outside because of their nationality, political or religious beliefs. Despite this, for many women worldwide, life has been, and remains a liberation struggle on many interrelated fronts, objectified as they are on the basis of gender, race and class. It is within this socio-political discursive space that the barriers impacting the female educators in my study become most evident.

A decade down the line, the barriers identified by the UDUSA and University of Cape Town research papers (See Budlender 1994), reverberate in the following excerpts from the

participants' autobiographical essays and interviews. They tell, with unrelenting familiarity; the same story regarding the second-class academic citizenship status of women.

In the following discussion I examine the gendered civic, political and social status of the women educators in my study, as a way of illustrating that their bodies are not just the objects of pedagogic power relations, but also the object of professional and citizenship relations.

From Policies and Principles to Socio-Political Practice: women's experiences of second-class citizenship

In reviewing the features expressed in notions of **civic** citizenship, the following key principles emerge:

(i) freedom of speech
(ii) assertion of one's rights in terms of equality

(i) In the following extract, Jennifer reflects on how female educators come to be treated as disembodied scholars through an infringement of their right to the freedom of speech.

> **Jennifer:** I am aware of the complications in the workplace around gender divisions … where men have the right to speak in meetings and to make decisions about work to be done; and so on. As a professional woman, I am typecast in many subtle ways by the expectations of my colleagues and I often feel very constrained by these. The academic institution is notoriously conservative, with most full professorships still being occupied by men, while women are entrenched in middle-management positions with little or no promotion prospects. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 18).

Jennifer captures a recurrent theme in the participants' narratives. She highlights the infringement that women academics experience regarding their fundamental right to the *freedom to speech*. Both the unwritten entailment and assumed entitlement most male colleagues regard as their citizenship privilege result in their dominating meetings, *where men have the right to speak in meetings and to make decisions about work to be done* and generally to treat with contempt as trivial and infantile contributions women colleagues make. This perpetuates the phenomenon commonly referred to as 'male deafness', which turns a deaf ear or shouts down women's contributions in meetings, only to be regarded as *avant garde* when the same point is repeated or re-articulated by a male colleague. Jennifer points to the state of affairs that prevails in the institutional hierarchy, where the female body, in spite of its physical presence, is symbolically excluded and where decisions are taken by

men in what has often been described as the 'old boys' club'. This results in the female body becoming the alienated body of the market economy, and is attenuated in institutional contexts that subdue/silence women's voices. As Jennifer points out, she feels constrained by the expectation to participate in a process of ventriloquism and impersonation, because men deem it their right to speak in meetings and to make decisions about work to be done. The implications are that the female educator is expected to be an implementer of male decision-making and job delegation, thus reducing her presence to a receptacle and/or conduit for the expression of male power and directorship.

Also emerging from the study are two issues that are associated with the infringement on women's right to the freedom of speech in academia. The first, relates to a combination of the gendered, class and race based socialization that women have received. Carol writes: *I have identified factors concerning class and gender that undermined my confidence*, while Thembi recalls: *I withdrew into my self and became the 'silent' one thereby confirming the multiple misconceptions about the inferiority and incapability of Blacks.* Both Carol and Thembi's accounts testify to the debilitating psycho-social surrender of silence they succumbed to by virtue of the delegitimated self-concept engendered by their socialization. Having internalised the fiction that devalues their existential validity, these women withdrew voluntarily into a web of self-silencing and censorship.

On the other hand, attempts by some women to rehabilitate their self-concept and find their voice draw attention to the backlash that this is likely to incur. Herein lies the second infringement on women's freedom to the right to speech. This is captured in Carol's observation: *other women colleagues, too, who might resent your outspokenness and independence of mind, as a feminist, will undermine you, usually in allegiance with dominant males so as to gain their favour*. Implicit in their resentment is their disapproval of women who defy their patriarchally prescribed role as submissive, unassuming, silent and obedient. Women who are outspoken and exercise the independence of their minds may find themselves falling out of favour with fellow females who ascribe virtue to women's silence, and regard outspokenness and independence of mind as *unfeminine*.

(ii) Allied to the infringement of the freedom of speech is the *assertion of one's rights in terms of equality*. While, within South African circles, it has become more commonplace to talk about gender equity rather than gender equality (See Gender Equity in Education: Report of the Gender Equity Task Team:1997), essentially, this citizenship right within academia is severely compromised by a web of inter-related factors which encompass quantitative as well as qualitative issues. The CSD 1997 Women in Research Audit reveals that there is an acute under-representation of women in senior academic positions. Carol confirms that: *One only has to look at the figures of women employed in senior academic positions to see that*

something is still seriously wrong when it comes to fostering the career of women, especially Black women. It is primarily at this level that policy-making decisions occur. Jennifer reports that the institution she teaches at: *is full of male professors and women don't get promoted, unless they stay, play the game advance themselves and behave ambitiously.* The numerical under-representation of women at this level (See Cooper & Subotzky 2001: 244-245), consequently curtails their decision-making powers, because as Jennifer notes: *men have the right to speak in meetings and to make decisions about work to be done.* Once again, drawing on Marshall's conceptualisation of citizenship, it becomes clear how a key principle to enjoying full political citizenship, which is predicated on collective, participatory and democratic engagement of citizens in determining community affairs, is violated within the academic community. Porter (1991:22), maintains that 'practices like co-operative activity, joint decision-making and mutuality create certain ways of living and develop specific virtues appropriate to the mutual realisation of moral identities'.

In reviewing the features expressed in notions of **political** citizenship, the following key principles emerged:

(i) cooperation, and negotiation over the distribution of resources; involvement in the activities of production and reproduction

(ii) collective, participatory and democratic engagement of citizens in effecting social transformation.

(i) In considering the political citizenship rights regarding the *cooperation, and negotiation over the distribution of resources; and the activities of production and reproduction,* the poor numerical representation of women at decision-making levels, may be drawn upon to explain the continued second-class citizenship status of women in academia. This also has implications for the co-operation, and negotiation over the distribution of resources; and the activities of production and reproduction. In this regard, Carol describes the role and function of the majority of the women in academia as follows:

> **Carol:** Women … **work harder** at proving themselves, often ending up doing much of the '**donkey' work**, and retarding their careers. Women's tendency to pay attention to students … means they are not promoted as quickly … Women's and Gender Studies Centre has struggled to continue at times, for lack of institutional support (funding for academic and administrative staff, mostly). Academics who, like me, teach courses in this centre do so by taking on teaching over and above their departmental workload. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 29).

Jennifer describes herself as:

> **Jennifer:** … a disillusioned academic. The trouble with being an academic at Unisa is that I'm not an educator. I'm an administrator. The educational side of it gets fitted in, in the little gaps between my administrative duties, and I'm very frustrated-extremely frustrated. I don't want to spend my time on files and pieces of paper and meetings. I want to spend my time on teaching my students what I consider valuable. (Interview).

Carols and Jennifer's views echo the findings of both the CSD Women in Research Audit, and the UDASA Report which show that most teaching and administrative work is done by women. In the light of evidence emerging from the data, perhaps the most blatant disparity in the distribution of resources is the investment of most women academic's time in the labour intensive execution of teaching and administrative tasks that are not imbued with high premium status. Lister (1997:201), notes that:

> … time is a resource for citizenship and one which is generally highly skewed in favour of men. Citizenship politics is therefore in part about the politics of time.

It is not surprising that preoccupied with teaching and administrative duties means that for the most part women academics located in entry level academic posts compete on an unequal basis with their male counterparts. The constant struggle of having to prove themselves as better than the men in order to be treated with parity, is perhaps best seen in reported levels of low research output figures among women academics. Research output associated with the generation of academic publications is the activity that earns academic credibility, visibility and attracts funding. In contrast a preoccupation with 'donkey work' often done with no prospect of extra remuneration testifies to the uneven and unfair distribution of time and money resources within academia.

(ii) Coupled to the cooperation, negotiation over the distribution of resources, and the activities of production and reproduction are two additional issues, viz. *collective, participatory and democratic engagement of citizens in effecting social transformation.* The first relates to access to information, and the second to teaching as an activity of production and reproduction. First, the non-communication of information regarding access to research opportunities and funding, together with experiences of isolation and a lack of mentorship signal the tragic social fragmentation that most women in academia experience (See also Mavin & Bryans 2002). Carol writes:

Carol: I would have benefited in the years that followed from **mentoring**, by way of **encouragement and information**, much useful information, for instance, such as how to apply for research funding, has come to me years after I would first have found it useful … (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 27). (Emphasis added).

……..

Vijay (laments)**:** I'm sad that I wasn't in a department where I could belong more and where I could give and take more. It would be nice, looking back on 17-18 years of work to have had a more equal and sharing relationship with colleagues. I wish I could have trusted people. I wish I could have had mentors. But I found that once I started to go to conferences, and that too I didn't even know I could go to conferences, I didn't know the mechanism. And you don't feel that you can. (Interview).

These excerpts confirm that the non-communication of information counterposes a commitment to a 'dialogic', 'deliberative', or 'communicative' democracy, and appropriates the *knowledge is power* slogan in a divisive and hierarchical manner. It undermines the notion of a communicative ethic, which emphasises the crucial role of free and open public communication and deliberation between citizens as the basis of democratic political legitimation, as described by Habermas (in Lister 1997:82).

Proceeding from the arrangement that sees women academics carry the bulk of teaching duties, one would assume that it is within this realm that women educators would enjoy the greatest degree of freedom. It may be assumed that while labour and time intensive teaching and administrative duties impinge on women academic's research and publication production, their teaching activities would provide them with a space to challenge and transform dominant regimes of knowledge. This challenge and transformation of knowledge systems would in fact allow women educators to recast themselves as producers of knowledge, rather than as mere conduits for reproducing raced, sexed and classed discriminatory epistemologies. This can be deduced from Jennifer's summation of her professional and pedagogic power: *My power to change anything is limited to curriculum revision and to teaching my students.* It is in fact within the context of classrooms that teachers wield the greatest doses of power. However, their power does not go unchallenged or uncontested, either by students or management, as supported by the following series of comments:

Vijay: In the old days, I focussed on media. That was me just retrieving my section on Journalism which had been shut down, because it was considered 'too political''. How was it too political, when what I was doing was the political economy of the media? … The Head of Department said,'Well try not to teach so politically.' (Interview).

Jennifer: We have a section on transgression that is extremely controversial. That section deals with poetry written by gay men. It is very explicit-could be called pornographic from a certain point of view. It has poetry on rape and it is sexually explicit poetry. A number of conservative students in lectures complain that they don't wish to be exposed to this kind of trash, or sickness or deviancy … That section is now optional … (Interview).

Phumzile: I soon discovered that in my literature classes race and gender were swear words. My first lecture provoked protests from a rightwing student organisation. Although I received support from members of my department, the then Dean chose to side with the protesting students. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 25).

The incidents described in the excerpts highlight institutional preference for these women educators to confine their scholarship to cultural and epistemic reproduction of hegemonic scripts, rather than challenge and produce radical epistemologies. It may be seen as yet another mode to infringe on their freedom of speech and their power to engage in decision-making. This in turn thwarts their potential to enact the civic mandate to *transform society*, because of institutional preferences to support epistemic paternalism and parochialism.

In reviewing the features expressed in the notions of **social** citizenship, the following key principle emerged:

(i) *enabling social and material conditions* that promote an ethics of justice and care. The most problematic aspects of citizenship rights for those marginalized as a result of race, ethnicity and gender relate to their social rights and to the notion of multiculturalism. Arguments forwarded by Jayasuriya (1990), and Parekh (1990), suggest that the homogenous community of Marshall (1950), needs to be transformed so as to take into account potential conflicts of interest among the different groupings of citizens, and the special provisions given to members of groupings defined as ethnically disenfranchised. This relates to policies of affirmative action aimed at group rather than individual rights. In countries, which officially adopted multiculturalist policies, such as Canada, Britain and the USA, it has recently been accepted that in order to overcome the practical effects of racism, rather than just its ideology, collective provisions and affirmative action, based on group membership are the only effective measures to be taken. Similar policies have been constructed in pluralist states, such as India and South Africa, the effects of which are evident in Jennifers and Phumzile's accounts.

In this regard, while my participants' narrative excerpts highlight some of the barriers inhibiting socio-political transformation and restructuring within institutions of higher learning, it also draws attention to another area of importance within the South African academic landscape, viz. the agenda to transform the demographic population of the academic

community. Jennifer's take on the issue captures the nature of this process of transformation and restructuring. As a White, female academic, she writes:

> **Jennifer:** I'm a member of the Implement Equity Forum, and they conducted great numbers of statistical surveys and found that because of the Department of Labour's imperative we must make our department more equitable, and it found that the top positions were held by White men, and the middle positions were held by White women, and the non-White members of staff are all in lower positions … In the climate of government demands for employment equity in terms of race, I am unlikely to be promoted to a position where I have any more power in policy-making than at present. This means I shall probably remain in a middle-management role for the foreseeable future … (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 24).

Jennifer's situation presents a different angle on the *glass ceiling-brick wall* metaphors that have come to describe the barriers to upward career mobility that women experience. Social engineering policies that seek to re-distribute employment opportunities, mean that White women, in particular, face a double set of boundaries by first, having to negotiate admission to a male dominated employment site, and second competing with affirmative action policies that work in the favour of Black males and females. While this is currently the theoretical blueprint for social engineering within the South African academic community, Phumzile a young, Black female academic is totally disillusioned by the overt and covert incidences of institutional racism she continues to experience. Her argument is: *I refuse to be a token representative of Blacks, just so that the UFS can boast that its affirmative action programme is alive and well, while blatant racism and sexism are construed as normal.*

(ii) Women Educators' Responses to Institutional Barriers

The barriers impacting the five women educators echo sentiments and experiences that have become quite commonplace both within national and international academic communities. If anything their narratives confirm that barriers to women's full and meaningful participation continue to be hindered by various socio-political dynamics that assume familiar, but overt and insidious guises. It also confirms that positive social change is an onerous and painfully slow process. In the following discussion, I identify the strategies and stances that the participants adopt in an attempt to negotiate the barriers they confront. Proceeding from the premise that to pathologise women as helpless victims within academic structures that procedurally and administratively remain the domain of male domination would be to discount the agentic power that has seen women claim a legitimate place within academia. Central to

this accomplishment has been their ability to firstly, unhinge power from the debilitating misconception that it is organically destructive, and secondly, to challenge the orthodoxy that women should aspire to the virtue of selflessness and subordination.

Firstly, in accepting the relativity and creativity of power, the strategies that women have adopted to confront the barriers testify to the individual's agentic potential to re-script power dynamics and relations in the labour market. This gives credence to Giddens' (1991), conceptualisation that agency embodies a transformative capacity, which has been vital in the development of women's academic citizenship. Giddens identifies two notions of power: the hierarchical, which describes the ability of a group/individual to exert their/her will over others, and the generative, which is about self-articulation. He argues that people can be at the same time both the subordinate objects of hierarchical power relations and subjects who are agents in their own lives, capable of exercising power in the generative sense. Secondly, this capability to exercise power in the generative sense parallels Gilligan's (1982), postulation that morality of action can be assessed in terms of personal and calculated consequences, not on the basis of appearance or others' impressions. Gilligan maintains that morality of action:

> … encompasses the desire to be 'good' both by being responsible to others and by adopting a self-responsibility, which ensures one is honest to oneself. Within this transition, a rejection of female self-abnegation coincides with an injunction against hurting that is elevated to a moral principle, and is based on the moral equality of self and other.

Gilligan's views parallels Porter's (1991), observation that at the heart of feminist epistemology and ontology is a conception of *self-other relationship*, which is in contradistinction to a *self-other abstraction.* Porter's notion of human interdependence based on an understanding of *self-in-relations* is encapsulated in the defining principle identified for experiencing full civic, political and social citizenship, that is, the existence of *enabling social and material conditions that promote an ethics of justice and care.* In recognising the importance for the existence of such a social environment, Lister (1997), advocates a social policy approach that promotes women's independence in the context of relationships of interdependence. Such an approach combines an ethics of care and justice; promotes women's equality and difference while acknowledging their diverse concerns. It is precisely the absence of social and material conditions that contribute to what Gilligan (1982), identified as two human psychological problems-*oppression* (the problem that arises out of the denial of equality), and *abandonment* (the problem that arises out of a break of attachment or connection). Gilligan acknowledges:

> … When women feel excluded from direct participation in society, they see themselves as subject to a consensus or judgement made and enforced by the men on whose protection and support they depend and by whose names they are known … The conflict between self and other thus constitutes the central moral problem for women … The conflict is between compassion and autonomy, between virtue and power.

In responding to inhibiting work conditions, the women in my study subscribe to an ethic of care that deviates from the linear stage maturation model forwarded by Gilligan. Showing a clear preoccupation with self-care and self-protection, the women display random permutations of First Stage egocentrism, Second Stage *Other* regarding, and Third Stage balance between self and *Others*. This is more consistent with understanding the concrete and detailed knowledge of situations and the implications these have for social relationships. In addition, their responses confirm Puka's contention (in Tronto 1993), that:

> Care is not a general course of moral development, but a set of coping strategies for dealing with sexist oppression, in particular … Foremost, it seeks to preserve care's strength and the strengths of women's development.

While the five participants in the study share similar institutional barriers to enjoying full and meaningful academic citizenship, their responses to the institutional barriers vary significantly. They include:

- *Systematic Incursions/Insurgencies:* this response is marked by a fierce determination to confront and challenge expectancy bias based on stereotypical attitudes and behaviours that stubbornly construct women as deficit. Thembi embarked on a concerted effort to prove, both to herself and others, that she had an inalienable right to substantive citizenship. The following excerpt from her autobiographical essay demonstrates this:

> **Thembi:** I immediately resolved in my mind that if a man sitting on the department chair thinks he is there because he is any better than a female colleague, then I should de-stabilize what he thinks is a fixed position. I should show him that he is in that position simply because we cannot all be Head at the same time; that he is chair not because the rest of the staff, especially women, are incapable. My resolve was to unseat him … when the time came, I gladly took over as the next and first woman chair in that department. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 22).

- *Strategic Compliance:* Carol resorted to strategic compliance with the unwritten norms and expectations of 'feminine codes of conduct'. This was evident in an apparent alignment with procedural knowledge regarding social expectations of women's behaviour, but with the intention of cordially, subtly and through subversion delegitimating misogynist behaviour, sexism and atmospheric sexual harassment. In this regard she writes:

> **Carol:** While I have worked very hard and have given service freely in many aspects of university life, I believe I have benefited from **a kind of deference** that many men give to women. I have found that in meetings, other members might take their bearings from me (often, one of only two women in the room. There are conditions, though, for such respect: I behave courteously and dress with a certain degree of 'professional' style; I try to convey the fact that I take men colleagues on trust, as human beings, and that I neither dislike nor fear men, unless they do me or others harm. When men colleagues have raised doubts and fears they have concerned with feminism, I try to show that I understand their reservations and to discuss the matter unaggressively, through presenting feminist viewpoints. Again, as a 'white' person, I have had to do my best not to project arrogance and moral grandstanding. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 31).

In comments from the respondent validation process, Carol clarified that she learnt that confrontational behaviour did not always work and at times resulted in her being 'punished', in various ways, by male colleagues. Hence, she adopted a less abrasive stance. She recalls that when she left UWC, two Black women colleagues (who now occupy important positions in prominent institutions) told her that because she had spoken out in senate and faculty meetings, she had served as a role model to them.

- *Selective Collegiality and Cloistered Scholarship:* Jennifer and Vijay opted for selective collegiality and 'cloistered' scholarship as a strategy to stake a territorial and patented claim over areas of teaching and learning they specialised in. In this way they formed a protective guard against barriers that impacted on their pedagogic decisions. Aware of the social fragmentation that this was likely to engender, they felt that this was strategic in channelling energy in a productive way, and securing personal academic survival. This Stage One egocentrism advanced in Gilligan's theory of moral development is evident in their following extracts:

> **Jennifer:** It depends on who one is working with. After 14 years of working at Unisa I have learnt to stay out of the way of troublemakers. There are some people that I refuse to work with because they are obstructionists, and difficult, and they throw obstacles in your way. (Interview).
>
> …….

> **Vijay:** There are all these other people wanting to audition for the *Language and Gender Course*. Well, not only audition, but come and claim a bit of it. I was quite aghast, when someone was bidding to teach the *Language and Gender Course*. That person didn't have the first understanding of gender and was, collegially violating all kinds of tenets that inform any knowledge of gender … I don't know why I think that I must stand gate at that, but somehow I have that kind of assumption. (Interview).

- *Flights to Fantasy:* Apart from engaging in selective collegiality, another response Jennifer displayed towards institutional barriers was, sometimes, settling for a resigned frustration at the status quo. She sought solace and fulfilment in researching science fiction literature, which for her entertained the prospect of a more equitable society. In this regard she writes:

> **Jennifer:** My ideas have also been strongly influenced by feminist science fiction. I am an idealist who believes that human beings could, if they chose, take apart the structures of our society and 're-mould them closer to the heart's desire' and science fiction satisfies my need for change, speculation and a different mode of existence. It is the only literary genre where existing configurations relating to power, gender, desire, sexuality and reproduction can be re-imagined and re-envisioned in a different, more satisfactory way while questioning the received order … (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 17).

- *Contemplating a Flight to Freedom:* Having struggled against other tiers of discrimination on the basis of race and age, Phumzile was weary and worn and contemplated migrating to contexts where she could put her energies to better use. In this regard she says:

> **Phumzile:** I refuse to be a token representative of Blacks just so that the UFS can boast that its affirmative action programme is alive and well, while blatant racism and sexism are construed as normal. I have seriously considered resigning my post to work in an environment where I don't have to swim against the tide. (Interview).

In identifying and responding to the barriers impacting women in academia the foregoing discussion on bodies as objects of gendered academic citizenship and professional relations alerts us that the rhetoric of social justice in policy documents is insufficient to engender the tenets of democracy. They succeed only in confirming citizenship as status rather than citizenship as practice. Realising meaningful academic citizenship for women resides in employment contexts that recognise and validate women's ways of being and knowing; contexts that encourage and privilege social justice over discriminatory practices. Failure to do so is certain to dilute and divide the impact academia can make in a post Apartheid society attempting to emerge from the shackles of racism, sexism, classism and other

disenfranchising mechanisms of surveillance and control. The realisation of full socio-political academic citizenship is likely to remain an elusive ideal under such conditions.

In reviewing the preceding discussion, the significant point that emerges is that bodies are indeed the objects of pedagogical and professional relations. Observable identity markers like, age, race, gender, dress sense, etc. are tangible factors that play themselves out on the physical and material site of the body, and are implicated in the enactment of power on the body. Thus, attempts to divest the feminist classroom of power differentials may require ignoring the individual subjectivities that emerge by virtue of differences in both teachers and students' physical materialities, which would certainly not be a wise way to proceed. A more feasible and desirable feminist pedagogic project would acknowledge that raced, sexed, gendered, languaged bodies occupy different positionalities within the social hierarchy. Such acknowledgement should inform working towards ensuring that pedagogic and academic professional power relations at the level of mind and bodies are configured and negotiated constructively and sensitively.

Furthermore, it is significant that irrespective of the impact her body has on interpersonal relations, the feminist teachers in my study invariably linked their power to their educative and pedagogic authority, which is intrinsic to their professional mandate as educators in academia. It is in the light of this that Gore's (2002), proposition that the kind of knowledge produced in pedagogy interacts with the site and the power employed therein, become significant. In further arguing that power is inescapable in the feminist class, and as such should be acknowledged and employed constructively, in the next section, I examine how feminist educators assume and exercise their educative and pedagogic authority in their classes.

The kind of knowledge produced in pedagogy interacts with its site

As institutions of learning, universities are by definition sites established to fulfil specified roles and functions. Debates between modern and postmodern conceptions regarding the identity, roles and functions of universities have become associated with fostering teaching, learning and research (Smith & Webster 1997; Perumal *et al.* 2000). Within the South African university landscape, as is generally the case elsewhere, universities publish mission and vision statements that encapsulate what they regard as worthwhile educative and pedagogic goals to pursue in order to remain relevant both locally and internationally. Gore's (2002) proposition for developing a theory of power in pedagogy, gains credence in that the kind of knowledge produced within universities interacts with the site and the techniques of

power employed there. Given that feminist teachers are located within universities means that this circumscribes boundaries and makes explicit institutional expectations regarding the norms, and practices they have to conform to as part of their contractual obligation to the university. In doing so, they in turn service the university's contractual obligation to its students and broader society.

A cursory overview of the various mission, vision statements and goals of the five universities at which the participants in my study are located, (See Chapter 3: Section 1: *Partial Institutional Sketch*), reveals that these universities broadly, and cumulatively fulfil educative and pedagogic roles and functions related to knowledge, skills, values and attitude development.[8] Through their contractual obligations to the university, feminist educators as employees, also become accountable for fulfilling these roles and functions. It is at this juncture that the ideals of feminist pedagogy, with its emphasis on classroom environments that are, and non-hierarchical have proven to be somewhat problematic. Eagleton (1998), admits that as a feminist teacher she has to hold in tension the power dynamics that are at play between teachers and taught, generally, and between the teaching situation and the institution itself. She further points out that, despite genuine efforts on her part, she is aware that the feminist classroom is an unequal place, and in some instances, it can be exploitative because the feminist teacher has a number of awkward institutional roles to fulfill. Eagleton (ibid), is not alone in this realization. Her experiences are supported by current feminist pedagogical work that problematizes power relations between teachers over students. A more nuanced understanding regarding the problematic of power relations emerges from Castells' (1997:6-7), contention that for a given individual there may be a plurality of identities, which become sources of stress and contradiction in both self-representation and

---

[8] **Pedagogic Role**

- designing curricula, syllabi and research programmes appropriate to the social context, and the professional, and vocational needs of the country;
- providing relevant, mixed mode academic tuition through a variety of technologies.

(See: http://www.udw.ac.za; http://www.unisa.ac.za; http://www.uovs.ac.za; http://www.uwc.ac.za).

Educative Role

Knowledge

- creation, integration, application and transmission of knowledge;
- commitment to excellence in teaching, learning, relevant research and community service, by producing knowledge in partnership with government, and industry.

Skills (cognitive and affective)

- developing critical and analytical thought; promoting academic freedom and independent scholarship within a context of social responsibility;
- cultivating an environment conducive to academic creativity;
- promoting the social and personal well being of staff and students.

Values & Attitudes

- nurturing cultural, intercultural and spiritual understanding and tolerance in a demographically diverse South Africa,
- taking pride in ourselves and in our past, and building independent nationhood;
- building an equitable, dynamic and democratic society, as a way of redressing historical imbalances of race, class, gender and other forms of social disadvantage.

social action. This is because identity must be distinguished from what sociologists have traditionally called roles and role-sets. Roles are defined by norms structured by social institutions. Their relative weight in influencing people's behaviour depends upon negotiations and arrangements between individuals and these social organs. Identities, on the other hand, are sources of meaning for the actors themselves, and are constructed through a process of individuation. Identities can originate from dominant institutions; however, they become identities, only when and if social actors internalise them, and construct their meaning around this internalisation. Identities organise the meaning while roles organise the functions.

With a clearer distinction between roles and identities, and acknowledging that negotiating power differentials in the feminist class is inescapable, in the following discussion I explore the view that the feminist teacher may attempt to mask her authority, but the very mandate of her profession comes with various roles and responsibilities that she has to fulfill. For the purposes of illustrating that the teaching-learning encounter is not void of power performances, I will confine my discussion to the educative and pedagogic authority that all teachers, feminist teachers included, enact. I explore some of the implications of Gore's (2002), proposition that the kind of knowledge produced in pedagogy interacts with the site and the power employed there. For theoretical support I draw on Shalem's (1999), essay, in which she critiques performative pedagogy, as advocated by feminists like Orner, Miller, and Ellsworth, who posit that given its contingent nature it cannot be planned and developed in advance. Shalem argues that this conceptualisation of pedagogy denies teacher authority in at least two significant ways. First, this authority is the 'constitutive good of the practice of teaching, and should be clearly acknowledged and examined'. Second, it depreciates the actual authority that the teacher has in planning and developing knowledge for the student. In urging for more robust understanding of feminist teacher authority, as articulated by Eagleton (1998); Gunter (1995); and Gore (2002); Shalem (ibid.), too argues that teacher authority permeates teaching and learning discourses. She differentiates between the *pedagogical* and *educative authority* of the teacher. She elaborates that while *pedagogical authority* refers to the teacher's conceptualisation and execution (planning and implementation) of epistemological labour to induct students into a working relation with the curriculum, *educative authority* refers to the ability of the teacher to confront hegemonic narratives with the intention of effecting a conceptual shift in students' belief systems. Rather than erase teacher authority, she contends that these two variants of teacher authority foreground the enormous importance of the authority of the feminist teacher in the classroom.

Shalem's critique lends credence to Gore's (2002), proposition that the kind of

knowledge produced in pedagogy interacts with its site and the techniques of power employed there. This implies that the conceptual and ideological perspectives enshrined in the goals, aims, mission, and vision of both the feminist educator, and the university within which she performs her pedagogy, shape the corpus of knowledge produced within this site.

To illustrate both Shalem's (1999), and Gore's (2002), contention regarding the inescapable authority that the feminist teacher wields, in the ensuing discussion I provide textual evidence from the various data sources in my study to confirm that despite the egalitarian ideals of feminist pedagogies, feminist teachers do enact educative and pedagogic authority. I argue that given the almost exclusive focus of current scholarship on student-centred pedagogies, the educative and pedagogic authority of the teacher to facilitate effective learning is being disenfranchised. The intention is not to argue against student-centred pedagogies and the validation of students' experiential epistemologies, instead, I urge an acknowledgement of the important role teachers play in working both behind the scenes and as co-actors in staging the pedagogic encounter. In the same vein that there is widespread acknowledgement that students do not enter the class as *tabula rasa*, the feminist teacher also does not enter the class without epistemologies of personal experience, or an educative and pedagogic agenda. She is written over with values, attitudes, instructional, regulatory and disciplinary knowledges, which she holds out to students for critical engagement. In following this line of thinking, I argue that despite the ideals of rendering the feminist teacher a co-learner with her students, she nonetheless, does assume and exercise educative and pedagogic authority in order to choreograph meaningful learning experiences, and conceptual ascendancy/maturation/progression, through the teaching of socially uplifting knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. In this regard, I argue that:

- The feminist teacher wields pedagogic authority by planning and executing learning activities through the use of appropriate teaching methodologies. Here, I identify an assortment of teaching methodologies, which include the *demonstrator approach*, *facilitator approach*, and *formal authority approach,* which were discernible in the lectures I observed for this study. These approaches exemplify the pedagogic authority and epistemological labour of the feminist teacher as she attempts to bring students into a working relationship with the curriculum. However, an important disclaimer in examining these approaches is that they are not intended to associate or define any of the participants exclusively with a particular teaching style. The discussion is cognisant of the fact that feminist teachers are likely to employ various teaching styles dependent on what is most efficient and appropriate for socialising students into critical and meaningful engagements with the learning material. In

addition, the features of the various teaching approaches are not mutually exclusive; they share points of similarity.

- The educative authority of the feminist teacher is evident in the values she attempts to socialise students into. She does this by getting students to understand the social conditions under which messages are constructed. Hence, her educative authority is grounded in her ability to influence the belief and the perception of students, and to alter their ways of being and knowing in accordance with new normative ideals based on feminist and critical language (re)visions of social justice.

Pedagogic Authority of the Feminist Teacher

The first significant role that the feminist teacher plays is linked to her pedagogic authority. This aspect of teacher labour entails content selection, activity and knowledge sequencing, pacing and assessment of the learning process, as well as remediation and intervention strategies. These activities constitute the pedagogic authority of the teacher (a dimension of educators' labour often mapped on the blind spots of the teaching topography). Walkerdine (1984), argues that since the 1960s teaching as the transmission of knowledge was rendered invisible in pedagogic theory, and was replaced by a theory of practice focused on learning rather than teaching. This dominant focus on learning generally reduces the teacher's role to simply providing a 'learning environment' and then monitoring individual student's development. Virtually little, if any recognition is given to the research, pedagogic planning, and preparation that constitute staging conducive student-centred classrooms. These important pedagogic acts have, nonetheless, become either masked or silent within feminist pedagogy. Shalem (1999), argues that pedagogy requires epistemological labour, and without this labour the significance of the learning event could easily be lost. She writes (ibid.:69-70):

> … pedagogy structures and organizes a selected set of texts and designs a pedagogical path that is marked and developed in ways that attempt to bring about an intelligible narrative … The essential point about this path is that it is conditioned upon the constitutive tension that structures the pedagogical encounter-that in order to deconstruct a piece of tradition, in order to create a place for the vital powers of the learners and to honour the contingencies and situatedness of the learning context, the teacher has to stage that tradition for the learner, and to plan and develop knowledge for the learner. Planning and developing knowledge for the learner is the process of design, a design of a learning environment that often remains hidden and unspoken but that creates meaningful events in the classroom.

More recent debates in feminist discourses are beginning to recognise the pedagogic authority of the teacher in the conceptualisation and staging of the learning encounter. While this does not suggest a return to teacher dominated-content-driven curricula, it is urging the recognition of the teacher's pedagogic discretion in content selection, progression and sequencing, ensuring conceptual coherence, and the assessment of knowledge. The success of feminist pedagogies, like other pedagogies, depends on the quality and the qualifications of teachers; their content knowledge, their facility with different teaching methods, and their access to learning materials.

Acknowledging this important dimension of (feminist) teacher labour, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at Indiana State University differentiates among *a demonstrator approach*, *facilitator approach*, a *formal authority approach,* and a *delegator approach*[9]. I briefly examine the features of the *demonstrator, facilitator*, and *formal authority* approaches to teaching, with a view to illustrating that the feminist teacher performs pedagogic authority in the class in order to service the educative goals identified for the courses she teaches.

Demonstrator Approach

According to the CTL at Indiana State University, the demonstrator approach to pedagogic pathing focuses on performance of an academic procedure. Lessons are normally organized according to steps and a set of procedures students are expected to master. The teacher-demonstrator defines the necessary steps and procedures to accomplish tasks, and the standards to be achieved to indicate whether students have mastered the process. She then develops situations in which students can perform these steps, and observes their results. The teacher-demonstrator may demonstrate the procedures and the students would practice them, or apply some combination thereof. Lessons generally include an introductory overview and a summary review. The emphasis shifts from 'knowing about' (content coverage) to being 'able to do' (i.e. thoughtful application of content, for example, employing critical thinking skills for linguistic critique). This does not imply that educators employing a demonstrator approach are not concerned with content coverage. They acknowledge that

[9] This pedagogic approach is based on the belief that it is insufficient to teach only content, procedures, or skills. Rather, the purpose of education is to enhance the holistic development of the individual through knowledge, practice, and skills, which imbibe a vision of human potential and some ideas about factors that inhibit its development. The teacher must assess the current beliefs and abilities of students and arrange experiences that allow them to become more fully human through the use of disciplinary knowledge and skills (for example, the development of communication skills, analysis, problem solving, valuing in decision-making, social interaction, taking global perspectives, effective citizenship, and aesthetic responsiveness). See:http://web.indstate.edu/ctl/styles/id4.html, for extended discussion.

skilled performance includes basic knowledge of terms, concepts, principles and theories. Rather, they assume that these skills would be better learned when integrated into the steps of a task. (http://www.indstate.edu/ctl/styles/id3.html).

Practical Criticism is a compulsory section in the exam for undergraduate English courses at the University of Botswana. From the lectures that I observed for this study, I identified teacher pedagogic authority in the processes and procedures that Thembi and team teacher Molly employed in inducting students into the mechanics of Practical Criticism. (See Chapter 3, Section 3: *Overview of Course Taught, Classroom Activities and Reflections).* They employed a demonstrator pedagogic approach for teaching the exercise on Practical Criticism, which comprised the following features:

a) *teachers offer an introductory overview and a summary review:* Thembi provided an overview of what the session would involve, viz. that students would be working on an exercise on Practical Criticism. Students were told that the exercise was extracted from a previous year's exam paper. Thembi outlined the procedures and processes of responding to an exercise on Practical Criticism. In her introductory overview, she commented:

> **Thembi:** In Practical Criticism we give you a passage from either the literary or theoretical texts. It is almost like a comprehension exercise, because there are questions that ask you to look specifically at the language to see whether when you read you take things literally, whether you can read the passage critically in context and try and understand the tone, the attitude, figurative language, irony, and artistic devices in the text. Are the authors contrasting something, etc? I'm going to circulate this passage by John Stuart Mill for us to read and discuss. This essay: *The Subjection of Women* adds to his philosophy about relationships between males and females. It is important to look at how he builds his arguments, logically. … Going back to John Stuart Mill remember that we wrote those points you made on the board. I hope you are keeping those notes because the observations came from you, and it was important that you captured those points on what John Stuart Mill's position is.
> … This exercise on Practical Criticism serves at least three purposes:
> 1. you are reading John Stuart Mill's philosophy/ideology;
> 2. you are reading it as an exercise on Practical Criticism; and
> 3. you are learning how Mill develops his argument, which you could use to possibly emulate how to develop an argument in your own writing. (Lecture Observation).

In keeping with the principles of the demonstrator pedagogic approach, we note that Thembi tells students what to expect from an exercise on Practical Criticism, viz. that it is based on literary or theoretical texts that have been prescribed for the course. She alerts them to literary/artistic devices they need to be sensitive to when reading (e.g. the writer's tone, attitude, etc.). Apart from it being an exercise to demonstrate and practice how to work with

Practical Criticism, she points out that, it is also intended to acquaint them with Mill's position on gender relations. Furthermore, how Mill structures his essay and presents his arguments may provide an exemplar for students to model in writing their own academic essays. Although she does not review the contents of their previous lectures on Mill's theories (which is a recommendation when employing the demonstrator approach), Thembi does, however, remind students that they should refer to the notes/observations they had compiled on Mill's theoretical position on gender relations.

b) Another important pedagogic step in using the demonstrator approach is that the teacher *defines the steps and procedures for engaging the task:* Being a demonstration lecture on Practical Criticism, Thembi outlines the important steps students need to follow in order to perform the exercise successfully. She advises:

> **Thembi:** These are hints on how to respond to a section on Practical Criticism. Know that you'll have to read the passage once, twice, thrice before you attempt any response. I am quite sure that after one reading it might be difficult for you to say exactly what the passage is about. But to free yourself from that you need to read and re-read and re-read the passage.
>
> Since the questions at the back actually refer us to those lines, we will continue to read the lines that the questions are referring to. The more you read them the more you begin to understand. But remember that you cannot understand those lines if you take them out of context. That is why it is important to read the question in reference to the text. (Lecture Observation).

Thembi impresses upon students the need to read the passage several times in order to absorb its substance. She then proceeds to explain how to read the question in context by referring to its specific location within the passage, since failure to do so may result in misunderstanding the message. Here, Thembi draws from her previous pedagogic experience to identify areas likely to present students with problems, should they not follow the recommended procedures when working on an exercise on Practical Criticism.

c) Given that when employing the demonstrator approach the emphasis *shifts from 'knowing about' to being 'able to do,'* Thembi's abstract discussion about procedures to be followed is supplemented with a practical demonstration that moves the students from knowing about procedures to actually performing them. Thus, Thembi proceeds to work with Question A from the exercise, as follows:

> **Thembi:** Question A says: 'Mill suggests that (and I quote) in lines 9-10, you refer to line 9-10 it says: **"What is now called the nature of woman is an eminently artificial thing." Do you agree or disagree? Why?'** But before you do, you need to go back to contextualise that line in the passage. (*Thembi reads from the passage)*: *Standing on the ground of common sense and the constitution of*

the human mind, I deny that anyone knows or can know the nature of the two sexes as long as they have only been seen in their present relation to one another. If men had ever been found in society without women, or women without men, or if there had been a society of men and women in which women were not under the control of the men, something might have been positively known about the mental and moral differences which may be inherent in the nature of each. What is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing, the result of forced repression in some directions and natural stimulation in others. (*Thembi returns to the questions):* Now the question says: **What is now called the nature of woman is an eminently artificial thing. Do you agree? Why?** It is not enough to say, "No, I agree." I mean at 4th year you should know that whatever statement you make, you follow it up with justification, with elaboration. So that **'Why?'** actually means that you have to elaborate. I have made a suggestion that you recall your own experience and tell me what you think. *(long silence).*

Molly: Is it a problem of vocabulary perhaps? Do you understand what is meant by artificial? *(class laughs). "What is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing."* Do you know what *eminently* means? I can see you know the meaning of *artificial*. (Lecture Observation).

In the excerpt, Thembi and team teacher Molly, demonstrate to students how they should read the question by referring to the lines the question is directing them to. By reading the sentences preceding and following the specified lines 9-10, they illustrate what it means to read in context. Thembi then proceeds to demonstrate how the various segments of the question need to be identified in order to provide a full response, and not just focus on a segment of the question. She points out to students that this process requires explaining the claim in the question, locating oneself in response to the claim, by for example, drawing on personal experience, and finally elaborating/substantiating why one subscribes to such a viewpoint. Following this line of pedagogic demonstration, Thembi and Molly work through all the questions on Practical Criticism with the students, demonstrating the processes and procedures that need to be followed in order to complete the task successfully/masterfully. In doing so, they exercise their pedagogic expertise by demonstrating to student how to negotiate reading and responding relevantly to the question in its entirety.

d)Educators employing a demonstrator approach are equally concerned with content coverage, as they are with skilled performance. In this regard, *skilled performance requires drawing on one's basic knowledge of terms, concepts, principles, or theories*: In earlier lectures Thembi and team teacher Molly, had explored the theories and ideological standpoints of various theorists, viz. Ruskin, Rousseau, de Beauvoir, and John Stuart Mill. The latter theorist's essay: *The Subjection of Women* was being subject to practical criticism in the lecture under discussion. Thus, Thembi pointed out:

Thembi: Remember again that this is a debate. You have to look at this within the context of a debate. People are debating; there are people who are taking positions here-the Ruskins, the Rousseaus, the Mills, and the de Beauvoirs. But in this case Mill has an audience, he is addressing those who claim that women are naturally what they are, or are naturally what society dictates they should be. In other words, he is addressing this question of nature. Somebody talked about the nature/nurture controversy ...

…….

Thembi: The second question refers to the statement: What is now called the nature of a woman is an eminently artificial thing. The question asks: **Could this statement be part of the nature/nurture controversy? Explain what this controversy is and justify your position.** This question requires you to be quite comfortable with the concepts that we have gone through, and we believe now that you know what the nature/nurture controversy is. We began to talk about nature and nurture in relation to gender and sex. So could this be a nature/nurture controversy?

Molly: Keep in mind that a controversy has two sides. One side says this, and the other side says that.

Thembi: In other words, we need to point out the controversy, explain the controversy, and articulate where the controversy lies.

Molly: Which side says what, and which side do you agree with?

Thembi: The operative word here is controversy.

Molly: The one side of the controversy is nature, the other side is nurture. So, how is the controversy expressed? (Lecture Observation).

One of the recommendations for employing a demonstrator pedagogic approach requires having theoretical/conceptual knowledge. Thembi and Molly direct students to the knowledge they would have garnered in their previous lectures. They direct students to the debates that have framed the discussion on gender relations. They emphasise that different theorists forward different views on the question of gender relations. These debates are embodied in the nature/nurture controversy. In order to respond to the question, students would have to identify the controversy, explain the nature/nurture controversy, locate their ideological positionality within the debate, and provide substantiation for their standpoint. Once again, the teachers demonstrate their pedagogic knowledge of relevant theories forwarded by various gender theorists, and also how to follow key procedures in responding to an exercise on Practical Criticism, viz. that students need to identify the constituent parts of the question, and respond to it in relation to their own theoretical knowledge.

e) Finally, the pedagogic authority of the feminist educator emerges when team teacher, Molly *defines the standard, which would indicate mastery of procedures*: Defining the

standard of what constitutes mastery is tied to the issue of assessment. This is evident in the following exchange between student Luke, and team teacher Molly:

> **Luke:** I think this can fit under the nature/nurture controversy. As you said, this thing has two sides - the nature side says that the roles that are performed by these different sexes-males and females-are determined by their physical or sexual appearance or differences, while the nurture side says, those roles have been determined by socialization. We as people are taught to accept these roles. I support the side of the nurture controversy, which says, the things we see are because of the way we were brought up, and taught to accept things.
> **Molly:** Wonderful! Now that's right! There you go! You'll get your full 10 marks. (Lecture Observation).

Student Luke responded to all the constituent parts of the question. He demonstrated that he had grasped the requirements and mechanics of the procedures for responding to a question on Practical Criticism. Team teacher Molly is visibly impressed, and tells him that his response will earn him full marks-thus confirming that in terms of her 'teacherly' expectations he had convincingly demonstrated mastery insofar as answering that particular question.

We see Thembi and Molly demonstrate their shared pedagogic expertise of the relevant steps and procedures to be employed when working on an exercise on Practical Criticism. They do not just provide abstract procedures for engaging the task, but carefully and sequentially socialise students into the tradition and requirements of the task by guiding them through the most systematic way to work through the exercise on Practical Criticism. In doing so, they bring students into a working relation with the curriculum.

Facilitator Approach

According to the CTL at Indiana State University, a *facilitator pedagogic approach* focuses on learning processes. Debates, discussions, games, presentations, projects, etc. are but some of the activities that lend themselves to teaching through a facilitator approach. In this approach the teacher-facilitator chooses to value the development of learning skills as equally important as the content. This is based on the assumption that a student who learns how to learn a subject is far more competent than someone who repeats facts or theories verbatim. Thus, the goal of the approach is to learn how to use the content in a problem-solving way. The teacher-facilitator also teaches students how to locate material as part of learning to think and problem-solve in the field.

Students perform both theoretical and practical steps. The teacher-facilitator develops the course around the phases students go through in learning the subject, and selects activities appropriate to each segment of the learning cycle. In employing the facilitator approach, the teacher-facilitator normally begins the lesson by leading students through an assessment of particular characteristics (their needs, interests, prior knowledge, etc.), and a reflection on how these relate to studying the subject matter. The lesson then moves to the explanation and practice of specific skills. Students are evaluated by their ability to complete tasks or projects. Lessons generally, conclude with a reflection on how well students can apply these skills. (http://www.indstate.edu/ctl/styles/id4.html).

I spent a month observing lectures in Vijay's classes where a teaching style consonant with a facilitator approach was discernible. *(*See Chapter 3, Section 3: *Overview of Course Taught, Classroom Activities and Reflections).* In employing a facilitator pedagogic approach, the following principles were evident:

a) *assessment and reflection of students' needs, interests and prior knowledge in relation to the subject matter being studied.* Vijay told students that the development of research skills was a component of the *Language and Power Course*, as such, the class would, through the process of interviews, complete an AIDS Assignment that required them to conduct ethnographic research. In order to assess students' needs, interest and knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS and the AIDS Assignment, Vijay engaged students in a whole class discussion, the substance of which is encapsulated in the following extract:

> **Vijay:** Why is this question important to you? … the whole point about the AIDS Assignment is that it refers to your needs, as intellectuals, and as members of society … you were interested in how it affects young people … the question is about reflecting …
> …The first part of the question is what intellectuals can do in order to make the public aware about AIDS. First find out what the general public knows, and find out what can be done to improve the situation … What is it we know about AIDS that other people may not know? Let's query it amongst ourselves. Let's take a few minutes for us to share a small point with each other. (Lecture Observation).

Vijay explains to students the relevance of the AIDS Assignment to their social responsibility as intellectuals, and the need for them to take an interest in civic issues. Through reflecting on the AIDS pandemic and its impact on young people, she impresses upon students the role they can play in educating themselves and the general public about the AIDS pandemic.

Vijay was also cognisant that in order for students to conduct interviews for the assignment they would have to be socialised into the methodological mechanics and moves of the research process. Thus, Vijay made the pedagogic decision to introduce students to

the procedures they would have to apply and the technical considerations they would have to attend to when conducting interviews. This is evident in her comments:

> **Vijay:** Have you interviewed people and recorded your interviews? … There is the technical side to it in addition to your real learning … I would like you to practice your interview technique. We need to focus on the interview process-part of that you will do through practicing and through reflecting about your practice. (Lecture Observation).

b) teacher stages practice sessions for student to develop specific skills as interviewers on the field: In order for students to practice and test their competencies before entering the research field, Vijay planned micro activities through which they could develop interviewing skills by engaging in simulated interviews. Vijay advises:

> **Vijay:** … when you are interviewing people you really have to listen very carefully … The important thing is to practice. … one of the skills that you need to develop in order to do your assignment is to hear what people are saying about AIDS. So we need to construct a question that is going to accommodate that business of listening … It's something that we can practice more. Let's see how developed your listening skills are. Maybe let's test it. Speak to each other … Ask one question each, and write down the answer. Change sides … if you have finished, share your notes with the person you have been interviewing, and let them respond to it. (Lecture Observation).

Since students were going to conduct interviews, they needed to be skilled listeners and note-takers. Thus, Vijay choreographed simulated interview sessions in which students could practice posing interview questions and compile field notes.

Other important research skills that students needed to practice related to the research design process. In this regard, Vijay addressed questions of:

- research sample selection:

> **Vijay:** We are back to the question of representivity. What is representative? Who are you going to choose? How many men and women, or issues of class. You might want to take that into account when selecting the people. (Lecture Observation).

- negotiating time and entry into the research field:

> **Vijay:** Are you going to tell the person who you are? Are you going to introduce yourself? How are you going to establish your relationship? Tell us how you are going to do it? Come on, show us how you do it.
>
> …….

Who is it that you are interviewing and where will the interview be conducted? How long did the interview take? (Lecture Observation).

- formulating the research question:

Vijay: You need to really understand your questions and you need to be able to simplify your questions when your interviewee doesn't understand what you're talking about. So lay out your questions, work out what a simplified version is, and tomorrow you'll be doing bigger interviews with each other. (Lecture Observation).

Apart from advising students to frame their interview questions in a language that respondents would be able to comprehend, given the stigmatisation that surrounds the AIDS pandemic, Vijay cautioned students that they would need to be sensitive and diplomatic in the way they phrased questions. In this regard, she engaged students in another simulated exercise, which required them to: 'practice on each other, ask each other a sensitive question and see if your partner is able to tell you'.

- writing the research report:

Vijay: I'd like you to figure out how to record data, how to write a bibliography. (Lecture Observation).

By engaging students in these processes, we see Vijay demonstrating her pedagogic authority as she socialises them into the tradition of conducting research, and the important ethical and methodological considerations students would have to attend to. In this regard, she told students: *we must make sure that you are in the best position you can be for your real work when you go out into the field*.

c) Part of the pedagogic features of employing a facilitator approach recommends that the teacher-facilitator teach students how to locate material. Apart from being skilled in the processes of designing the research interview questionnaire, making decisions about sample selection, conducting the interview and recording interviewee responses, it was equally important for students to be equipped with information about the AIDS pandemic. In this regard, in addition to students being asked to share their knowledge about AIDS with each other in class, Vijay also directed them to resources where they were likely to find information on AIDS. This is evident in the following extract:

Vijay: So if you can find books on HIV/AIDS start collecting information and anything that will be relevant to your study … if you find newspaper articles cut them out and keep them. … I got these notes on HIV/AIDS off the Internet-a Canadian, a US govt. website, as well as The African Development Forum website. … I saw an advert, which said that Dr. Eve from Metro and East Coast Radios was going to be on campus. She will give information on AIDS. (Lecture Observation).

To this end, Vijay also distributed information she had downloaded from the Internet related to AIDS. She exercised her pedagogic authority by providing students with relevant material as well as teaching them how to locate relevant material.

d) *reflection and assessment:* When adopting a facilitator pedagogic approach, lessons generally conclude with a reflection on students' competence in applying the skills they have practiced. Students are evaluated by their ability to complete tasks or projects. The process of reflection, assessment and evaluation is a task that invariably points to the pedagogic authority of the teacher. Apart from Vijay engaging students in informal peer assessment, from the following series of extracts we note that throughout the simulated practice sessions, she also made repeated references to the continuous and formative assessment that would form their final mark. In this regard, she said:

> **Vijay:** You are going to get part marks in this assignment for the various stages and it will be an accumulative mark, and it will be added to your final mark. I would like you to hand in drafts along the line, so you'll understand what the connection is between writing and re-writing. … So that's the beginning, because the AIDS Assignment in some ways is going to capture what we can't do in the test. We can keep correcting your work, you can improve on it. (Lecture Observation).

From examining the features consistent with a facilitator approach, the pedagogic expertise and authority of the teacher is clearly evident in the way Vijay plans and stages the various processes and practice sessions students have to engage in as preparation for the AIDS Assignment. Drawing on her craft knowledge of the processes and procedures of conducting ethnographic research through interviews, she was able to anticipate contingencies that students were likely to encounter. Through this authority Vijay socialises her students into the necessary traditions, knowledge, skills and values they would require in order to engage in informed learning. The teacher-facilitator approach illustrates that teacher facilitation does not/should not translate into the abdication of pedagogic duty or authority. Although the approach emphasises student-centred pedagogy, students are not left to their own devices. The teacher-facilitator's role is essential in sequencing activities, distributing students into working groups, and helping them develop and test their skills and competencies for problem-solving activities both in the class, and on the research field.

Formal Authority Approach

The formal authority approach translates roughly to conceptions of a lecture. The word 'lecture' is derived from the Latin word *legere*, and means 'to read'. According to Gleitman (2000), lectures may be defined as a period of more or less uninterrupted talk from a teacher.

It is a period of 'output' by the teacher; but a period of 'input', 'reception' or 'perception' by the audience. Lectures provide a way to transmit overviews/summarizations of course material, draw together diverse elements, and show connections between concepts. (http://ctl.unc.edu/fyc6.html).

According to Haring-Smith (2000), a lecture should consist of a conversation among the text, the teacher, and/or the student. However, we may distinguish between dialogic and didactic lectures. The dialogic lecture is preceded by gathering the student's words, ideas and interpretations primarily through discussions and reports. The didactic lecture tells students what will be covered, covers the content, and then reviews what was covered. (http://web.indstate.edu/ctl/styles/rhythm4.html). To illustrate the pedagogic authority and epistemological labour that the feminist teacher performs, I examine the formal authority dialogic and didactic lecture approaches that were discernible in Jennifer and Phumzile's classes, respectively.

Formal Authority: Dialogic Lecture Approach

In the formal authority dialogic approach to teaching the teacher begins the planning process by choosing the goals of the course. These are broad statements that provide a framework for a more detailed range of objectives. This is supported by the careful selection and definition of theories, principles, concepts, or terms that students need to learn in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the course. Taking into consideration the need for sequencing and progression, appropriate activities are structured for each part of the lecture, so that they provide a conceptual scaffold for the work the teachers and students do together. The dialogic lecture invites students' ideas and interpretations through discussions. The activities accommodate learning differences (e.g. the incorporation of visuals, question sessions, and reflective activities, all of which form part of the pedagogic sequence). Another important feature of this approach is that lectures are based on timeframes within which to cover objectives. The lecture generally concludes with a review of the main points, and out of class assignments are considered part of the instructional unit. (http://web.indstate.edu/ctl/styles/id2.html).

By and large, Jennifer and her team teachers' day-long lecture tended towards the *formal authority dialogic approach*. The teaching team engaged in several pedagogic moves that endowed the English 111 Honours seminar on *Contemporary Women's Writing* with educative and pedagogic significance, and coherence. *(*See Chapter 3, Section 3: *Overview of Course Taught, Classroom Activities and Reflections).* These pedagogic moves included:

a) *time-tabling the three seminar sessions:* Perhaps the most striking feature of the lecture was Jennifer's structuring, managing and utilisation of time. The lecture was punctuated with Jennifer's framing it according to three macro time segments, i.e. Seminar One was devoted to the topic: *Deconstructing Gender*, which was followed by a tea break. Seminar Two was devoted to the topic: *Heterosexuality and its Alternatives*, and Session Three was a continuation of the discussions from Session Two. The following excerpts track these temporal markers:

Jennifer: Would you please take five minutes to write down, in at the most three sentences, your gender position.
… We have up until 11 o' clock to discuss the topic … I think that we should stop there for a bit and just talk a little about dress.
… Let us start with Seminar 2.
Lisa (team teacher)**:** If you don't mind we just stop the conversation and talk for a while based on some of the theory.
… Can I continue with some theories?

These temporal markers highlight the way Jennifer and the team teachers used their pedagogic discretion to introduce, halt or continue discussion, introduce teacher input, screen movie excerpts, etc. These temporal markers were employed to highlight, foreground, and draw attention to important points in the discussions. In addition, the time segments signalled pedagogic rhythms, i.e. the movement from personal teacher and student disclosures and anecdotes, to theoretical inputs, to reflections and summations.
b) *individual student activities, whole class dialogues, and teachers' theoretical inputs* all converged to support the course objectives, viz. Deconstructing Gender. The structuring and management of the sessions seem to have been tailored to allow for conceptual progression. The lecture commenced with engaging students in a 5-minute personal writing exercise to elicit their current conceptions of sex and gender. They were then asked to share their written responses with the class. This exteriorising of students' familiar knowledge was used to highlight the complexities of gender constructions. In addition, while having students share their written responses with the class may well be viewed as a strategy to break the ice among students and teachers, who given the nature of distance education, would probably not have had face-to-face contact with each other, Jennifer carefully turned it into a meaningful event. Rather than just being an exercise in socialising with each other, it was employed to socialise students into the debates and complexities of gender discourses. Thus, Jennifer used the 'ice-breaker talk' to harness the dialogue and turn it into a scaffold

for the discussion on deconstructing gender. After the students had engaged in the personal writing exercise and shared their responses with the class, Jennifer staged the following encapsulation:

> **Jennifer:** I think what this discussion has highlighted for me, I don't know about you, gender is not about a polar system. Everybody positions him/herself very differently in relation to the gender system. Let's go on to talk about why we think gender needs to be deconstructed? What we mean by deconstructing gender and how one goes about it? … I'll just hand over to you, Lisa. (Lecture Observation).

Wanting to ensure that the class discussion did not circulate exclusively within a mode of experiential and horizontal epistemology, team teacher, Lisa requested:

> **Lisa** (team teacher)**:** If you don't mind we just stop the conversation and talk for a while based on some of the theory. Freud said, 'When you meet a human being the first distinction you make is male/female. …. Now Irigiray takes that up in her chapter: *This Sex, Which is Not One*. She says, 'What do I mean by masquerade? ... (Lecture Observation).

From the events and discussions that framed the lecture, a triple conceptual ascendancy is discernible. First, Jennifer got students to describe their sex and gender orientation in the written exercise, and public sharing thereof. Second, drawing from students' personal descriptions, team teacher Lisa provided a theoretical input that pointed to the hierarchies prevalent in binaries. She set the pedagogic stage for exploring binaries, e.g. male/female, sun/moon, active/passive, etc. and the privileging of the first term in these binaries. Having exposed the hierarchical and discriminatory logic inherent in these binaries, team teacher, John, in a third step, proceeded to unsettle the binary by posing the question: *what happens when you disturb those binaries? You disturb the Man/Woman binary it becomes a Man/Man binary or a Woman/Woman binary.* Through this line of theoretical input, the teachers attempted to trace a conceptual trajectory that ordered the levels and fields of knowledge for the students. In doing so, they attempted to move students from the familiar, to the unfamiliar, and then to the subversive. In provoking the students to deeper levels of conceptual analysis, the teachers monitored and transitioned them from one level to a more radical one. In moving students through these conceptual hoops the teachers' epistemological labour, pedagogic authority, and theoretical expertise are clearly evident.

In addition, by introducing students to various gender psychoanalytical theorists, like Freud and Irigiray, team teacher Lisa, situated teacher-student dialogue within the framework of other debates on the issue. In doing so, the ambit of the debate was no longer dyadic

(teacher-student/student-student dialogue), but students were inducted into the wider community of gender discourse, thus expanding the voices in the debate and showing the diversity and complexity of positionalities and interpretation on the subject. In doing so, team teacher Lisa exposed students to the canonical theorist Freud, and having set up his theory, she then demonstrated the mechanics of deconstruction by referring to Irigiray's subversive theorising against Freud's analysis of women's psychology by exposing the shortcomings/ blind spots in his theory. This was consistent with the stated objective of the session: *Deconstructing Gender*.

In the same way that the literary texts and theorists were selected to service the objectives of the course, the most effective visuals were also selected and sequenced to achieve the same goals. In this regard, the teachers chose excerpts from the movies: *Boys Don't Cry, Shakespeare in Love,* and *All About My Mother.* The purpose of each of the movie excerpts screened, and the sequence of the screening aimed to illustrate how popular media engages gender construction, values, beliefs and attitudes. The sequencing and screening of the movie excerpts were also meant to bring the visual texts into juxtaposition with each other. Through a process of intertextual comparison and critique students were encouraged to read the similarities and differences among the movie excerpts. For example, Lisa said:

> **Lisa** (team teacher)**:** I wanted to see *Boys Don't Cry* the unveiling there with the unveiling in *Shakespeare in Love*, because of the viewers' different reactions. *Shakespeare in Love* is Hollywoodised, romanticised, safe-you can laugh-she is unravelling herself-that's fine. *Boys Don't Cry*, was so painful to observe. … (Lecture Observation).

The teacher's pedagogic authority is again evident in the discursive features she employed to draw students' attention to a common act in both the excerpts (viz. the unveiling/disrobing of the characters in the two movies). Lisa then proceeded to decode the differences in the manner of the unveiling (one is romantic, safe and self induced, the other is violent, painful and forced), she also pointed to the differences in the cinematographic genres *(Shakespeare in Love is Hollywoodised … Boys Don't Cry, is not).* Then rather than remain in a mode of classroom comparative analysis, she proposed to students: *It would be interesting to theorise the nature of the viewers' reaction.* Implied, therein, is a suggestion for students to engage in theorising viewer response to the excerpts: a suggestion that moves students from their personal interpretations and theorisings to recruiting other perspectives and positionalities on the subject.

c) In keeping with the formal authority dialogic lecture approach, Jennifer concluded the session with *reflections and summaries.* This is evident in the following extract:

> **Jennifer:** We've done Seminars1 and 2. Seminar 3 is open to you, and we've seen a bit of film. We've spent such a long time on Gender Theory because it underpins this course, and also the course on Gender Identity, not only because it is our passion, but also because it provides a conceptual foundation and these issues run deep into the texts and we want you to focus on that as a unifying theme in the course. (Lecture Observation).

From the day-long seminar we see that the sessions are punctuated with clear evidence of the teachers' pedagogic authority. These include teachers pre-planning the trajectory the lecture would take in its design and implementation. From planning of the individual student writing session, to whole-class discussions, to team teachers making theoretical inputs, to Jennifer capturing salient points, and summarising student and teacher inputs, and screening selected excerpts from several pre-selected movies, all these processes show that successful and meaningful learning pivot on the pedagogic authority and epistemological labour of the teacher. Apart from highlighting, their sensitivity and discretion in reading when and how to sequence teaching and learning activities, they also point to teacher skill in juxtaposing student personal narratives (from their writing exercise), with popular narratives (movie excerpts), with the narratives of grand theory (Freud and Irigiray's theories on gender and psychoanalysis).

Formal Authority: Didactic Lecture/Critical Rhetoric Approach

The didactic lecture approach draws extensively on teacher input, that is, student input does not necessarily form the centre of the pedagogic encounter. In this regard, the didactic lecture shares features with critical rhetoric. Critical rhetoric may be conceived of as a way to develop students' critical consciousness without prioritizing student-centred dialogue. A teacher who practices didactic lecture/critical rhetoric becomes what Foucault (1980), calls a 'specific intellectual,' who through her/his performance offers a sensible critique/reading of the discourse/text. The pedagogical function of the didactic lecture/ critical rhetoric acts as a 'model' of critical thinking. It creates conditions for students to reflect on the teacher's critique, and thereafter engage their own critical reading. Thus, the didactic lecture/critical rhetoric approach either translates course material into a new language or provides outside material that contextualises the text. It moves between abstract and concrete textual knowledge by presenting an idea, and then exemplifying it (Haring-Smith 2000).

Phumzile offered me the opportunity to attend several of her lectures. In most of her lectures she engaged students in small group discussion and whole class report back sessions. The pedagogic rhythms in these lectures saw her largely assuming the role of teacher-facilitator. The two sessions that I observed for the English 225 Course in Literature, however, were presented largely through the didactic lecture/critical rhetoric mode. (See Chapter 3, Section 3: *Overview of Course Taught, Classroom Activities and Reflections*).

Phumzile had scheduled a series of lectures on Desai's novel, *Journey to Ithaca,* which was the prescribed text for the course. However, through references to other texts, for example, *Passage to India* that also deal with travel to the East, (notably India), Phumzile compared and contrasted representations of Europe's *Other* in English literature.

In an attempt to demonstrate that the pedagogic authority of the teacher is central to staging meaningful learning, in the following discussion I highlight key features, as identified by Haring-Smith (2000), and Glenn (2002), of the didactic lecture/critical rhetoric as a pedagogic technique, and argue that Phumzile's disciplinary knowledge and teacher discretion in selecting textual material, designing their sequencing, and presentation constitute the pedagogic authority of the (feminist) teacher. The following features of formal didactic pedagogic authority were evident in her lectures:

a) *teacher provides a summary and a contextual overview:* In her lecture on *Journey to Ithaca,* Phumzile summarised what had already been addressed in previous sessions in the lecture series. She recapped as follows:

> **Phumzile:** Last week I suggested that the novel, *Journey to Ithaca,* lent itself to an intertextual reading. We looked at other narratives that were embedded in the text and how this influences our reading. We also looked at Greek mythology, specifically the references to Ithaca and how that adds to our making sense of Desai's *Journey to Ithaca*.
>
> … We paid considerable attention in past classes to the implications of difference in the novel, and the multiple ways in which the motif of travel is used by Desai to different ends. When we are confronted with a text, which emphasises pilgrimage/travel/journey we have certain expectations. We anticipate personal transformation in the traveller's life …
>
> ……..
>
> … So next week when we speak specifically about the mother's journey we will talk about how it interacts with Sophie's. However, I want you to have watched *Passage to India* by then. (Lecture Observation).

The pedagogic moves evident in the extract show Phumzile summarising salient issues that were addressed in previous lectures. These saw her bringing students' attention to the following key points for consideration, viz.:

- that *Journey to Ithaca* lends itself to inter-textual reading, both in terms of the micro narratives that are interweaved within it, and in relation to other travel novels, for example, *Passage to India,* which explores European travellers journeys to the East.
- although the novel is located within the geographical and historical construct of India, the title embodies a reference to Ithaca, which is derived from Greek mythology. Phumzile, thus, decoded the reference to Greek mythology in relation to its relevance to *Journey to Ithaca*.
- Phumzile socialised students into the general characteristics/traditions that define travel as a narrative motif. She explained that it created certain expectations in the reader, viz. the process of journeying is symbolic of an altered consciousness in the traveller.

Having recapped points from the previous lecture, and continuing the exploration of inter-textuality, Phumzile provided comparative contextual backgrounds to the novels, *Passage to India* and *Journey to Ithaca*. She contrasted the different historical periods that these respective novels were set in, and pointed out that:

Phumzile: Although the novels challenge similar notions, they are set in very different times and therefore have significant differences. The most obvious differences between the two novels are spatial and temporal. We know Foster's novel, *Passage to India* is set in the 1920s, and Desai's novel, *Journey to Ithaca* is set in the 1960s. In both novels the protagonists who travel to India discover the differences in their expectations only once they are there. Just like any other location, India is experienced in a variety of ways by the travellers. (Lecture Observation).

By highlighting the temporal and spatial differences in the two novels, Phumzile alerted students that although both authors explore similar themes within the same geographical location there are likely to be differences in the experiences of the travellers by virtue of the historical changes that would have impacted India. In addition, these experiences may challenge preconceived ideas that the European traveller may have assimilated from existing representations of India.

b) Other important features of the didactic lecture include the *teacher making connections between diverse elements and concepts through intertextual conversations.* This is done in an attempt to develop students' critical consciousness. Phumzile performed her pedagogic authority and literary critical expertise by suggesting multiple analytical strands through which to engage the text. Identifying the theme of appearance versus reality, Phumzile suggested

that by shifting one's gaze, *Journey to Ithaca* could be read as comprising several micro narratives. She pointed out that:

> **Phumzile:** … the intertextual reading of Desai's text seems to support the reading that Mathau is the spiritual pilgrim. Today I'd like to argue something different. Today I'd like to argue that the journey is in fact Sophie's. And I'll spend some time talking about how it is possible to see the protagonist, as Sophie and not Mathau, since the most significant moments in the novel are filtered through Sophie's consciousness. An examination of the structure and the narratorial techniques used in the text provide useful clues on who is indeed the protagonist. (Lecture Observation).

Having explored in previous lectures that the protagonist in the novel is Mathau, in this lecture, Phumzile disrupts this reading by suggesting that Sophie is in fact the protagonist. To illustrate the theme of appearance versus reality, and having identified a new protagonist, Phumzile extends students' gaze to reading the text not as detailing a single pilgrimage, but actually several micro journeys. In this regard, she says:

> **Phumzile:** Closer attention to Desai's novel reveals that the novel is essentially about 2 journeys. The first half is Sophie's journey; the second half is the mother's journey. Within these 2 larger journeys are enmeshed much smaller pilgrimages which we talked about in the past. (Lecture Observation).

From the extracts there emerges a pedagogic pattern characterised by introducing students into a particular reading of the text, and having outlined a credible reading of the plotline, Phumzile then proceeds to disrupt the reading by introducing a different gaze. An important point to note is that she does not explore the substance of these new analytical markers, for example, in suggesting that Sophie is actually the 'real' protagonist or that the pilgrimage is about multiple journeys, etc. Instead, she merely presents these thematic emplotments as alternative routes for reading/engaging the text. In this way she highlights intra-textual connections among the characters and their positionalities within *Journey to Ithaca.* In order to service her other pedagogic goal of seeing *Journey to Ithaca* as being in conversation with other travel narratives, for example, *Passage to India,* she holds out for inter-textual comparative analysis the similarities and differences between these two novels. This is evident in the following extract:

> **Phumzile:** … think about the relationship that scholars discuss between *Journey to Ithaca* and *Passage to India*. So I will talk a bit about some of the similarities I thought might come up in the discussion. Foster and Desai choose to explore these themes in slightly different ways. For Forster it becomes more useful, to move from the individual relationship to generalise about possible

relationships, between the English in India and the Indians. Desai's text is more concerned with the relationships between English literature and the idea of India.

The title *Passage to India* and the title *Journey to Ithaca* suggest that both novels are about the process, the journey/the passage. Their characters' arrival is arbitrary. Both novels at the end suggest the possibility of starting another journey and perhaps it is a journey that only takes place in the readers' minds. (Lecture Observation).

Phumzile's comparative analysis refers students to commentaries advanced by other literary scholars regarding the connection between the two novels, under discussion. The central point being that although both Desai and Forster explore similar issues, they do so from different perspectives.

In her didactic lecture series, Phumzile's epistemological labour included among other things: providing a historical and geographical background to the two texts *Journey to Ithaca* and *Passage to India*. She explained the reference and relevance of Greek mythology in *Journey to* Ithaca. She highlighted the features of travel narratives. She identified different protagonists that emerge by paying attention to narratorial manipulation and structural outline of the text. She suggested alternative reading routes through inter- and intra-textual analysis. Phumzile's pedagogic pathing serviced her objective, which aimed at developing critical thinking in her students by deconstructing surface meanings in the text. Having equipped students with a rich tapestry of conceptual and contextual signifiers, that suggest a framework for engaging the texts, students could now read/re-read the text bearing these points in mind. They could proceed to investigate the validity of Phumzile's postulations, analytical markers, and explore multiple reading routes.

Finally, in the light of the significant and necessary educative and pedagogic labour that feminist educators perform in the classroom, it is perhaps useful to reiterate Phumzile's critique of feminist scholarship that subscribe to truly non-hierarchical classrooms. While the notion of pedagogic egalitarianism is certainly noble, Phumzile contends that:

Phumzile: It is … misleading to think that classrooms can ever be truly non-hierarchical for learners are not educators within the classroom context. While their multiple literacies are not called into doubt, it is clear that the area they chose to register for a course in is not one they identify as within the ambit of their expertise. By contrast, the lecturer has herself undergone extensive training in precisely the field she offers the course in. Thus the choice of lecturer is not arbitrary and the systems of knowledge present in the lecture room are not interchangeable. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 31).

The significance of Phumzile's comments are confirmed when seen in the light of the various teaching approaches that feminist teachers employ in their attempts to socialise students into an intelligible working relationship with the curriculum. Thus, whether the feminist teacher

employs a demonstrator, facilitator or formal authority approach, (all of which are not mutually exclusive) the pedagogic rhythms require that she exercise her pedagogic authority and perform epistemological labour in staging meaningful teaching/learning processes. The interconnectivity and mutuality of these various teaching approaches illustrate that her pedagogic authority and expertise pervade:

- Content Selection: identifying goals and materials and deciding on instructional approaches,
- Presentation/Reception: in which teachers and students cover course material in a systematic way,
- Application: getting students to practice and apply their knowledge, and
- Reflection/Summation: evaluating and assessing students' work. (This may involve deciding on the most appropriate assessment instruments to be used, which may include permutations of peer, formal, informal, continuous and summative assessment).

Educative Authority of the Feminist Teacher

The second significant role that the feminist teacher performs is linked to her educative authority. Feminist pedagogy is best understood as a political standpoint and personal practice that seeks to transform relations of domination and oppression. Thus, the feminist educators in this study enter their classrooms with transformative educative agendas. They subscribe to various goals, objectives, ideals, vision, outcomes, and missions that are meant to service anti discriminatory language and gender practices, and entrench these as a new social normative. Shalem (1999), asserts that the teacher's agenda to make students suspicious of the dominant discourses and eventually alter their perceptions is a manifestation of the teacher's educative authority. In this regard, she writes (ibid: 58-59):

> … to be a feminist pedagogue is to have a project that embodies a commitment to a set of educational beliefs and goals. Feminist pedagogues draw this set of educational beliefs from the feminist epistemological critique of what they refer to as the "masculinist culture" of representing truth and coherence. These ideas have implications for the educative authority of the teacher in that to see oneself in terms of altering perceptions of history and reality must mean that the feminist educator is guided and informed by some kind of conception of the good. Throughout her activities, the feminist teacher is committed to getting learners to understand the social conditions under which a message is constructed. Hence, the educative authority of the teacher is grounded in her ability to influence the belief and the perception of the learner, to alter them in line with these new normative ideals. This could mean for

> example, convincing learners to take a stand against their own history of oppression, against false ideas of what it means to be a woman in their societies, against prevailing interpretations of particular historical texts. In this way, the educative authority of the feminist teacher does position her as an authority in and of a dialogical relation with the learners.

In examining the plan of the feminist teacher there emerges a four step educative agenda that s/he adopts in order to socialise students into identifying with feminist (re)visions of a just society. This four-step agenda may in some instances be presented in a linear manner, in others as an iterative process; they do however, service the educative goal of personal and social transformation. Given that the educators in my study are involved in teaching English from a feminist perspective, their transformative agenda is framed within two discourses, viz.

- the discourse of feminist and gender studies, and
- the discourse of critical multilingual studies.

In keeping with the transformative educative agenda, the feminist teacher draws on her authority to first, narrate/describe the status quo in relation to both language and gender discrimination. She does this by laying bare the patriarchal foundations that have prescribed a minoritising view of female social roles, responsibilities, attitudes and values about themselves. For example, Jennifer and Thembi write:

Jennifer: … there is a long literary tradition of representing masculinity as prototypically human. There is also an extensive legacy of fiction representing marriage and union between men and women as the highest fulfilment for both sexes. … the ways in which women have been and still are used as exchange objects between men … constructed in accordance with patriarchal power structures. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 20).

……

Thembi: It was that time of the year when students' performance was being discussed, and the Head of Department who was a man would describe the low performers (both male and female) as getting "ladylike scores". …it became quite obvious to me that … women are not regarded so highly after all. They continue to be associated with non-performance.

… In my culture, at funerals, women and men get different signals about what is expected of them. When there aren't enough chairs … men sit on chairs, and women sit on the floor. … In all these roles women are expected to be cooperative, to ensure the smooth running of the programme. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraphs 21 & 22).

Jennifers and Thembi's statements describe the oppressive gender status quo. These are examples they are likely to use to acquaint students to prevailing patriarchal practices, what may be called the hegemonic blueprint of patriarchal discourses.

In addition, as teachers of English in multilingual contexts, they also endeavour to lay bare the colonial imperialism of the English language, which devalues 'minority' languages, and its speakers. In reference to linguistic imperialism Vijay and Carol point out:

> **Carol:** In 1974 still affected by the values of childhood and school education, I saw English language and literature as superior to others, and desired to acquire adeptness in speaking and writing standard British English. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 22).
>
> ……..
>
> **Vijay:** the apartheid [state] attempt to divide and rule the oppressed majority through entrenching language differences … that serviced ethnic chauvinism. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 26).

In combination, patriarchal language and gender practices result in phallogocentrism, which is an embodiment of discriminatory linguistic practices, against females, and minoritised *Other*. By identifying the organs and agents of patriarchal propaganda (family, school, literature, etc.), the feminist teacher of English, proceeds to link the disprivileged status of females, and minoritised *Other* to their inferior socio-linguistic socialisation, and conditioning, which result in entrenching their devaluation as neutral, normal, natural and as an innocent state of affairs. Exposure to the inherited tradition is evident in, for example, Carol's reference to *values of childhood and school education* transmitted via family and teachers, which have contributed to perpetuating oppressive gender and linguistic practices.

Having narrated the social status quo, which masquerades as innocent, normal and natural, the feminist teacher then embarks on the second step in the educative agenda. She highlights the injustices and inequalities that characterise the status quo. This is evident in the following series of extracts:

> **Carol:** … While much has still to be done regarding the oppressions of racism and classism in this country, most remains to be done regarding the abuse of women and children. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 22).
>
> **Jennifer:** … but this masks many of the ways in which women have been and still are used as exchange objects between men ...
>
> … I try to explain to my students that gender identities and gender roles are never given or inborn, but instead are constructed in accordance with patriarchal power structures. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraphs 22 & 23).

The feminist teacher then highlights the discriminatory practices through consciousness raising mechanisms, for example, pointing to the abuse of women and children; the patriarchal practice of using women as exchange objects between men; associating females with non-performance; and expecting them to be co-operative. This leads to the third step in the educative line of action, which is to seek ways to intervene. Making incursions by subverting social injustice requires an urgent and mobilised effort consistent with the seriousness of the need for corrective action. Thus, these educators propose a counter hegemonic agenda. This is evident in the following extracts, which comprise an armoury of rhetorical devices framed in a language of insurgency:

Jennifer: … I believe that this myth needs to be thoroughly **investigated, overthrown and replaced**;
… teaching students **suspicion** of gender that they encounter in literature.
Thembi: … study and consider how these could be **subverted** … consider the extent to which the authors themselves are **interrogating or subverting** the issues.
Carol: … I see it as part of my business to **counter** such contemporary forms of imperialism.

The palpable aura of militancy and urgency in the words and phrases (*overthrown, replaced, subverted, counter*), embody a powerful oppositional corrective discourse that manifests the educative authority of the feminist teacher. They provide an inroad for the fourth educative move in which the feminist teacher outlines the project of deconstructing oppressive hegemonic social ideologies and practices. She shares her transformative social vision, by conscientising students to alternative ways of being in the world. The project of positive social transformation is evident in the following extracts:

Carol: … ideally, you have also suggested a way in which they might in the future reform that world.
… In the meantime, tertiary education has a vital role to play in enlarging the perceptions and the understanding of those who will move into influential positions in policy-making in government, education, the media, and in business.
… English studies as it has developed in many South African English departments, so as to incorporate a critique and to include cultural and media studies, promises to keep pace with the changes required to equip young South Africans to become effective and responsible citizens.
… a means of empowering students, so that they 'read' their world in a more informed way, and so that they more readily have access to a wide range of careers. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraphs 22 & 25).

…….

Jennifer: Once students have developed a critical attitude towards received ideas about gender in writing, they can begin to encounter alternative depictions and perhaps write their own creative pieces. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 22).

……..

Vijay: Social sensitivity is a big issue for me. I'm always concerned at how insensitive and inconsiderate intellectuals are. Unfortunately, a university education confers certain class status and the benefit of that is supposed to make one very powerful and very arrogant. The sensitivity I'm trying to inculcate is to each other.

… In my experience multilingualism is an expression of a democratic ethos and represents anti-racist struggle for linguistic equity. (Interview & Autobiographical Essay: paragraph 26).

Carol says that tertiary education has a vital role to play in enlarging perceptions and the understanding of those who will move into influential positions. By attempting to move students to an ideological place of *critical awareness, sensitivity, alertness*, feminist teachers, Carol and Jennifer, hope that students would *begin to encounter alternative depictions and perhaps write their own creative pieces* as a way of *buttressing power interests of race, class and gender.*

In summarising the four-step educative transformation plan, what we notice is that having narrated the tenets of patriarchal ideology, the feminist teacher proceeds to expose the oppressive regimes of patriarchal domination. Through this consciousness-raising critique, she hopes that students would be sufficiently challenged to identify and agitate for broader social transformation, an alternative social vision of reconceived political, psychological, social empowerment and emancipation. In accordance with her project identity (See Chapter 5: *Movement Three: theorising and teaching emancipation*), she strives to effect a change not just in ideological terms, but through real intervention/activism in poverty eradication, HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, race, class, gender, linguistic equality, etc. The overarching goal, as articulated by Vijay, is to inculcate in students an ideal of justice, care, fairness and respect for others springing from the recognition of oppression, by responding to these inequalities.

Evidence that the feminist teacher has the educative power and authority to effect a conceptual shift in students' ways of knowing and being in the world, is manifest in the following extract from Jennifer's interview.

Jennifer: The strength of the course is its subversive potential. Many students of this course have told us that this course has changed their lives; changed the way they have thought about themselves. It has made them reflect about their own positions as wives, mothers, etc. That's the best thing about the course. We want to make it as subversive as possible. (Interview).

By bringing students to an understanding of their social location *as wives, mothers, etc.* and by altering their beliefs and perceptions through changing *their lives;* and *[changing] the way they [think] about themselves,* feminist educators provoke a conceptual shift in students about the way they read themselves in relation to hegemonic discriminatory discourses. Declarations by students of changed lives, changed understanding about their social positionalities, and changed thinking, suggest that by assuming and exercising her educative authority the feminist teacher can successfully alter students' perceptions in accordance with a new normative ideal, based on linguistic and gender justice.

From the preceding discussion, what becomes evident is that there is a need to unmask and acknowledge the educative authority and agenda of feminist teachers. Culley (in Laditka 1990), offers an important perspective for all teachers, regarding our responsibility to share with students the energy of our commitments. Culley writes:

> No, we don't want a return to the kind of authority that makes students passive and dependent; there is just no place for tyranny in our classrooms. Our challenge is to continue to nurture our students toward their own authority, an authority we might hope to sensitize with care, while at the same time finding a place in our classrooms for our own knowledge and experience. We all recognize teaching as a complex and ambiguous activity. But one certainty stands clear: the demands and responsibilities of literacy are too great for teachers to abdicate their proper roles as acting subjects in our society.

Culley's view finds support in Friedman's (1985), observation that feminist teachers in our eagerness to be non-hierarchical and supportive instead of tyrannical and ruthlessly critical have sometimes participated in the patriarchal denial of the mind to women, and often deny ourselves the authority that we seek to nurture in our students.

The educative goals that the feminist teacher strives to achieve through enacting her educative authority may be summarised in Cohee *et al's*. (1998:6), observation that an important tripartite tenet in feminist pedagogy is oriented toward social transformation, consciousness-raising, and social activism. In other words, the educative authority of the teacher is linked to the tenets of feminist pedagogies, which outline specific aims for personal and social transformation through radical education. Several of them, in turn, resonate with the educative and pedagogic roles that are encapsulated in the vision, mission and goals of the university sites the feminist educators teach at. The educative role of the university is linked to its power to foster the creation, application and transmission of knowledge. It does this by promoting the development of critical and analytical thinking in its students so that they can participate responsibly in an equitable, dynamic and democratic society. Its educative role is serviced through the pedagogic considerations its academic staff take in designing curricula and research programmes that are relevant and effective. This illustrates

how the kind of knowledge produced interacts with the university site and the kind of educative and pedagogic power it possesses.

Pedagogy proceeds via a limited set of specific techniques of power

Yet another important dimension to recognising the feminist teacher's authority as power is connected to Gore's (2002), proposition that pedagogy proceeds via a limited set of specific techniques. Gore maintains that the power relations of pedagogical interaction will not be overcome by simply adopting different classroom practices, such as the use of dialogic student-centred approaches, journals, portfolios, role-playing, group-work or other pedagogical strategies. Given that there is a limited set of techniques through which pedagogy can occur, educators might instead concentrate on what kinds of pedagogical and ideological normalisations they are enacting in their classrooms. Arranging students in circles, imploring all students to have a voice, engaging in dialogue, etc. may be as repressive as traditional forms of pedagogy. A more significant deliberation should focus on how pedagogic techniques are employed and with what effects, and not whether or not they are. Gore suggests that if pedagogy proceeds via the enactment of specific techniques these regulate the parameters within which feminist teachers can succeed in divesting their classrooms of the effects of power.

In the classroom teachers influence who is accorded the right to speak and the roles they may take as observing, seeing, listening, or questioning subjects. By manipulating the enunciative field that determines the discursive formulations possible in the class, Laditka (1990:4), highlights three characteristics in Foucault's (1972), General Grammar to illustrate how teachers consciously influence students. These include regulating and normalising:

- the domain of validity, which determines according to what criteria one may discuss the truth or falsehood of a proposition;
- the domain of normativity, which determines according to what criteria one may exclude certain statements as being irrelevant, inessential and/or marginal to the discourse, and
- the domain of actuality, which comprises acquired solutions, defining present problems, situating concepts and affirmations that have fallen into disuse.

Through these domains teachers perform varying degrees of micro-power techniques via both regulative and instructional discourses. Gore (2002), identifies these micro-power techniques, as including, inter alia: surveillance, regulation, normalisation, exclusion, distribution, classification, individualisation, and totalisation. (See Chapter 1, section titled:

Feminist Pedagogy: a counter hegemonic discourse for more elaboration on micro-power techniques). If these micro-power techniques are inextricable to pedagogy, and surface in varying guises throughout the pedagogic process, they require teachers to assume leadership and authority in the performance of their institutional duties. Thus, there seems to be a more pragmatic need to be sensitive to *how* power and authority are addressed in the feminist class. This is especially so, given that a principal aim of feminist pedagogies is the creation of conditions within which students are able to develop a critical and analytical consciousness. The pedagogical process of developing critical consciousness involves showing students how to recognize and evaluate structures of power. Even though the specific means of doing so vary among teachers, affording a privileged status to student-centred dialogue is a familiar theme in feminist pedagogical discourses. Student-centred critical and analytical dialogue is cited as essential in facilitating the development of critical feminist consciousness.

While acknowledging the value of critical consciousness-raising, and dialogic interaction in student-centred classes, an equal acknowledgement of the unique contingencies of institutional, socio-political, personal differences, preferences for certain learning styles, and ideological affiliations also need be considered. This is especially so when dealing with courses (such as feminist discourses) that work to change consciousness, which may not necessarily be experienced immediately as fun, positive or safe. Distinctive contexts and contingencies possess their own promise and potential for the enactment of specific techniques of pedagogic power. Finke (1993), reflects on the teacher-student dyad and claims that, 'teaching is a practice which, proceeds not progressively through time, but through resistance, regressions, leaps, breakthroughs, discontinuities, and deferred action'. Gore (2002), contends that where there is an emphasis on the formation of radical understandings, normalisation will be a dominant technique, and there is likely to be some resistance by students. Foucault (1980), also cautions that radical educators may experience resistance to the techniques and knowledge that they seek to promote.

In confirming Foucault's (1980), contention, Willis (1977), and Giroux (1983), posit that the concept of resistance emphasizes human agency, in the sense that individuals are not simply acted upon by social structures, but actively subvert and struggle against imposed social meanings and forms of socialization to create meanings of their own. It is within this struggle for agency that the complex pattern of student resistance is produced. Students might resist participating in pedagogical techniques avidly espoused within feminist discourses (for example, participating in group, paired or collaborative work), and/or they might resist the ideological pressure to adopt a feminist or radical perspective, or a particular angle on a debate. Layder (1993:64), distinguishes among five types of student resistance.

The typology comprises two types of ideological dissent, viz.: a) collective and individual); and b) non-cooperation, escape/avoidance, and concealment.

In the ensuing discussion I also contend that irrespective of the pedagogic techniques employed (group work, paired work, whole class teaching, etc.), the centrality of dialogue is pervasive. I argue that despite the attempts of the feminist teachers in my study, to foster egalitarian pedagogies based on recognition of difference and critical dialogue, this did not eradicate the need for teacher discretion and teacher direction, which eventuated invariably, in students submitting to the teachers' educative and pedagogic authority. I draw on select extracts/episodes from my lecture observations to argue that despite features of student-centred pedagogy prevailing in most of the lectures I observed, when there was an emphasis on the formation of radical understanding students offered resistance to pedagogic and educative normalisations. In this regard, I examine:

- *student resistance to pedagogic technique and engaging course content*. Through illustrative examples, I first examine student resistance to engaging in group/collaborative work or course content. I track teacher's counter resistance as they justify the normalisation of pedagogic technique and content in the cause of servicing the pedagogic ideals and objectives of the course. Second, I examine episodes of students' silence and non-participation as forms of resistance. In these instances, I explore how the teachers negotiate such resistance by exercising their power of silence, thereby 'forcing' students into participation, or how the teachers link participation with assessment, and in so doing normalise the pedagogic technique of dialogic participation.
- *student resistance to ideologies in course content:* In this discussion I turn the focus away from students resisting to engage the course content, to students resisting/challenging ideologies expressed in the course content, that is, students resistance to feminist and radical ideological perspectives. Here, I identify four postures of resistance, viz. *denial, discounting, distancing* or expressing *dismay* over social oppression. I explore how the feminist teachers attempt to entrench a new normative by exercising their educative authority to conscientise and make students suspicious of hegemonic narratives of domination and oppression. In doing so, they attempt to effect a conceptual shift in students' ideologies as a way to provoke them to confront and subvert social injustices.

Resistance to and normalisation of pedagogic technique and content: the case of collaborative work

MacGregor (1991:1-4), notes that there have always been social dimensions to the learning process, but only recently have specially designed collaborative learning experiences been regarded as an innovative alternative to the lecture-centred and teacher-as-single-authority approaches typical of most university classrooms. With increasing frequency students are working with each other (in paired work, group work, whole class discussions, etc.). During a lecture, students might be asked to turn to a neighbour to formulate responses, draw connections to other material, raise questions, or solve problems. Given that many minds are grappling with the material at once, the mutual enterprise is believed to generate a unique intellectual and social synergy. What is essential to collaborative work, though, is positive interdependence among students, an outcome to which everyone contributes, and a sense of commitment and responsibility to the group's preparation, the learning process and product. While collaborative learning is an effective enterprise for realising dialogic processes, teaching and learning in this mode come with high expectations about student participation. Given that collaboration requires substantial role shifts for students, it is not unusual to encounter student resistance to group work. As they move into collaborative learning settings, students grapple with several shifts.[10] According to MacGregor (1991:2-3), this includes, inter alia, the transition:

- from listener, observer, and note-taker to active problem-solver, contributor and discussant;
- from low or moderate expectations of preparation for class to high ones;
- from a private presence in the classroom (and few or no risks therein) to a public one, with many risks;
- from attendance dictated by personal choice to meeting community expectations;
- from competition with peers to collaborative work with them;
- from responsibilities and self-definition associated with learning independently to

[10] In *Knowledge and Reasoning in College: gender-related patterns in students' intellectual development* Magolda (1992 in Campbell 2002), describes a continuum of four socially constructed, somewhat fluid developmental patterns of student knowing in college: *absolute knowing*, in which knowledge is certain and obtained only from experts; *transitional knowing,* in which discrepancies among authorities are viewed as a result of answers being unknown; *independent knowing*, in which authorities are no longer the only source of knowledge and there is an emerging ability to create one's own perspectives; and *contextual knowing*, where learning changes from thinking independently to thinking through problems and integrating and applying knowledge in context. In each of these patterns students expect different learning experiences, and evaluative approaches, moving from demonstration of content mastery to a two-way process of interaction. She maintains that most junior undergraduates fall into the absolute knowing pattern, where they expect to listen and record in class rather than interact with the instructor, see their peers as sources of support or as partners in argument, but not as valid sources of knowledge, appeal to authority to resolve differences in knowledge claims, and value instructor-driven evaluation that lets them demonstrate mastery. By contrast, contextual knowers expect instructors to foster equitable learning environments that promote critical thinking and application of knowledge in a context and value evaluation as a process in which students and instructor work together toward a goal and measure progress together. These patterns are usually not evident until the senior undergraduate and graduate years.

those associated with learning inter-dependently; and

- from seeing teachers and texts as the sole sources of authority and knowledge, to seeing peers, oneself, and the thinking of the community as additional and important sources of authority and knowledge.

The transitions that MacGregor identifies for the success of collaborative work impact strongly on individual personality, and preferences in relation to the collective good of learning. While philosophies associated with radical pedagogies are vocal on the recognition of difference and diversity, more debate is required in the crucial area of pedagogic normalisation and regulation that invariably result in tendencies that bring students to conformity and consensus. In the following discussion, I examine a few episodes of student resistance and teacher normalisation techniques. The first relates to student resistance and dissatisfaction with participating in group work. The second relates to a student's request to engage the leaning content from a different angle.

- *Student resistance to engaging in group/collaborative work:* Vijay had made the pedagogical decision to engage students in various micro collaborative activities for the AIDS Assignment. In the following extract from her lecture, we note that this is met with resistance from some students, both in relation to pedagogic technique and content:

Buyee (Black female)**:** We have done stuff on AIDS so many times.
Vijay: We're doing too much?
Buyee: Lots. I have done this so many times that I wish I could run away from it.
Vijay: The whole point of this particular choice is that I thought it was a very important thing, and that's the angle we're coming from. In terms of your interviews, and I'm still keen on the interviews and how you are going to choose your interviewees. How you are going to select the questions. That's what we are going to be involved in today. The question has not been set. The question must be created in class.

…….

In one group I hear students speaking in isiZulu. One student says: 'Everyday it's AIDS, AIDS, AIDS'.

…….

Vasie (Indian female)**:** Therefore, I told you that I wanted to do the assignment from a different angle, from the point of view of the dissidents.
Vijay: But you also understand that I'm trying to create conditions where students can dialogue with each other. I'm trying to enable you to talk to other people in the class.
Buyee: We are just saying maybe there are different ways of going about this, and we don't do the same thing, we would be able to cover more things. *(Two students sitting in front of me agree that that's a good idea).*

Vijay: That's a nice proposal, but how tenable is it? Remember I talked to you about this a little while back. Let's figure out what it is we are doing because I have already set the exam question.
Buyee: Are we going to write about AIDS in the exam?
Vijay: Not necessarily, but you are going to do an angle on the issue. And you will get choices. I've found that getting the class to work on a particular topic, for example, in the past I've done topics on the African Renaissance, means that you all talk to each other about problems, and I've found that it works very well because everybody is dealing with the same kind of issue. Because you are all doing different interviews, you are all doing different angles on the topic, but you are able to talk to each other and it becomes collective work, which is something I'm not sure you generally get a chance to do. Buyee have you had a chance to work collectively with a group?
Buyee: Too much.
Vijay: Too much. Everyone is pushing collective work.
Buyee: Especially in the Education Department.
Vijay: Why is collective work so important?
Buyee: They say that it is important because you get to share ideas, learn from each other, you practice different skills: listening skills, and communication skills, and you are able to understand each other.
Vijay: Is it working, or are you being forced to?
Buyee: I think, you already know that you are not living alone, you have to handle different people and all those things, and I've been having problems with this.
Vijay: Let's see how developed your skills are. Maybe let's test it. Prepare to back down on some of the whole communal learning ethic as long as you can prove to me that you have great listening skills. Something I'm not convinced about from the classroom so far. Remember how many times I've said, you are not listening to any of the stuff in class? (Lecture Observation).

We note that first, student Buyee expresses her dissatisfaction about engaging in group work for the AIDS Assignment. Given that one of the limitations of this study is that students do not form a principal unit of analysis, we can only surmise that apart from Buyee feeling that she had had *[t]oo much* of collective work, that collaborative work was going into 'overdrive', some of her reservations for engaging in group work may be related to issues MacGregor's (1991:1-4), identified regarding students grappling with collaborative work. Drawing from other episodes during the lecture observations, Buyee, in particular is noted to have assumed the role of accessory to teacher authority. On two separate occasions she reprimands students for arriving in class without doing their homework. On these occasions she chides:

Buyee (Black female)**:** But Vijay, they knew about the question a long time ago. *(Vijay laughs).* I don't think students have an excuse for not bringing in an assignment question, because I was also absent but I have brought a question. (Lecture Observation).

……..

Buyee (Black female)**:** But Vijay we knew about it. This was given to you ages ago, and you were supposed to have photocopied the chapter. (Lecture Observation).

In the light of these two instances, it may be safe to surmise that Buyee's dissatisfaction with engaging in collaborative work supports MacGregor's contention that collaborative work requires students to transition: a) from low or moderate expectations of preparation for class to high ones; b) from attendance dictated by personal choice to meeting community expectations; and c) from responsibilities and self-definition associated with learning independently to those associated with learning inter-dependently. The success of collaborative work thus, pivots on all participants assuming responsibility for the process and product of learning. It seems that Buyee's experiences with fellow students sabotaging the expectations of communities of collaborative practice has left her disillusioned with the social or intellectual benefits of this pedagogic technique. From the extract, we note that teacher decision regarding the technique via which pedagogy would proceed prevails above the student's dissatisfaction with engaging in group work. Vijay comments that a change in pedagogic technique would be considered on the following proviso: *Prepare to back down on some of the whole communal learning ethic as long as you can prove to me that you have great listening skills. Something I'm not convinced about from the classroom so far. Remember how many times I've said, you are not listening to any of the stuff in class?*

In elaborating student resistance to collaborative learning, Reynolds & Trehan (2001), argue that differences in students' personal preference to learning modes is an issue that needs to be considered. They contend that student-centred pedagogies bring to the surface affinities, antipathies, preferences for learning methods, as well as the different values and beliefs, which underpin them. In addition, cognizance must be given to collaborative groups developing perspectives of working with process and task, and patterns of power dynamics as they relate to race, gender, sexualities, and ideological positionalities within group formations. Reynolds & Trehan (ibid.), deconstruct the notion of collaborative learning to reveal its more problematic aspects: pressures to conform; and the assimilation or denial of divergent beliefs and practices.

- *Student resistance to engaging in pedagogic content:* Apart from student resistance to pedagogic technique (viz. group work), we also note students resisting engaging pedagogic content. Students Buyee and Vasie inform Vijay that they have done a lot of work on AIDS. Thus, student Vasie requests to engage the AIDS Assignment from the point of view of the dissidents, rather than in relation to AIDS awareness and prevention. However, this request is also absorbed into the need for students to work on a common topic to

facilitate group dialogue, and enhance interpersonal social skills (such as listening, speaking, etc.).

The tension emerging from the Buyee-Vijay-Vasie exchange embodies two key features associated with collaborative work. This relates to MacGregor's (1991:2-3), postulation that collaborative work is reputed to generate a unique intellectual and social synergy. The students complaining that they have done such a lot of work on the topic probably signals that they perceive that they have exhausted engaging the topic from the angle Vijay is proposing (a kind of intellectual saturation). However, Vijay tries to explain the nuances of difference that would emanate from working on a common topic. She says: *I've found that it works very well because everybody is dealing with the same kind of issue. Because you are all doing different interviews, you are all doing different angles on the topic, but you are able to talk to each other and it becomes collective work.* Not resolving the debate on the intellectual dimension of engaging the AIDS Assignment collaboratively, Vijay turns the discussion to the social skills that accrue from engaging collaborative work. She points out: *But you also understand that I'm trying to create conditions where students can dialogue with each other. I'm trying to enable you to talk to other people in the class … [it] means that you can talk to each other about different problems.* To which a diplomatic Buyee responds: *I think, you already know that you are not living alone, you have to handle different people and all those things, and I've been having problems with this.*

Notwithstanding Buyees and Vasie's request for different pedagogic technique and content, Vijay's concern with the ethic of communal learning, and for interpersonal communicative skills development wins over student Buyee's reluctance to engage in collaborative learning, and over Vasie's request to work on the AIDS question from the point of view of the dissidents. The technique of normalization and regulation that Vijay employs in getting students work on the same topic relates to the educative and pedagogic goals she had outlined for the AIDS research project.

First, the educative goal is tied to the development of affective and cognitive skills related to a value system of communal teaching and learning. Second, Vijay outlines the pedagogic goal as follows: *I'm still keen on the interviews and how you are going to choose your interviewees. How you are going to select the questions.* Vijay's pedagogic goals are related to educating student on research methodology (sample selection-how students are going to choose their interviewees, and research instrument development-how students are going to select the questions for the interviews). Third, the need for normalization is further linked to the balance of power in assessment. That Vijay turns to the pre-set exam question as a mechanism to exercise regulation and normalization reinforces both the institutional and pedagogic power vested in the teacher. This is evident in her comment: *Let's figure out what*

it is we are doing because I have already set the exam question. This returns us to the recurring contradiction in feminist pedagogical discourses regarding sharing power with students, on the one hand, and holding onto the reins of assessment and credentialing authority, on the other.

From the extract we note that several micro-power dynamics feature in the Vijay-Vasie-Buyee exchange. These include teacher *regulation* and *normalisation* in which Vijay subjects both Buyee and Vasie to restrictions and conformity regarding pedagogic technique and assignment topic. The regulation and normalisations, in turn spill into *distribution* of students into groups or pairs for the different group work activities (for example, simulated interviews that students engaged in as practice for when they would eventually go out to do field work). This generated a totalising effect, which entailed specifying a collective will to conform to the teacher's pedagogic discretion, direction and choreography. All these micro-power techniques determined what would be permitted and *excluded* in the classroom in terms of pedagogic content and technique. Cumulatively these power techniques trace the limits of what would/would not constitute the domains of validity and normativity, that is, what differences would be included and what excluded as pedagogically relevant.

Aware that she has wielded considerable teacherly power in normalising and defining the parametres of pedagogic technique and content, perhaps the most insightful analysis of the Vasie-Buyee-Vijay interchange comes from Vijay herself. As a critically reflective practitioner, Vijay reflects on and dissects the anatomy of the regulatory and normalising instructional performances she enacted. In the post lecture interview, she succinctly comments on the incident as follows:

> **Vijay:** Yesterday I had to tell them you couldn't go there with the assignment because I've already set the exams. I was saying, ' But Vijay, of all the stupid reasons you have to have for constraining students this is the one you have to have?' All the right wing, Fascist things you can do to students, and in a class where we are explicitly saying we are anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-classist, anti-authoritarian. Because we are locked into an exam system-there are deadlines, there are processes and systems-we get bureaucratised. Some of the violence is bureaucratic. I suppose it is my own challenge to figure out how to get around this. That is something that I need to give attention to. (Interview).

Vijay refers specifically to the fact that feminist discourses align themselves with anti hierarchical value systems. Vijay recognises the disjuncture between espoused theory and theory in use. That she had to resort to boundary marking practices in terms of how and where students could 'go with the assignment', she is aware that this *constrained* them,

especially in the light of her opening statements in the lecture, in which she told them: *The question has not been set. The question must be created in class.* Although Vijay grapples with how to downplay teacher power in the feminist class, Gore's (2002), postulation is sobering in her reminder that the kind of knowledge produced in pedagogy interacts with the site and the constituent power employed there. The nature and purpose of universities as knowledge producing, knowledge dispensing, and knowledge credentialing agencies, suggest that there are functions that they need to fulfil which are consonant with their identities. This circumscribes the extent that feminist teachers can divest their classes of power. This is borne out by Vijay when she says: *we are locked into an exam system-there are deadlines, there are processes and systems-we get bureaucratised. Some of the violence is bureaucratic.* Thus, although Vijay identifies getting around the violence of the bureaucracy as a project she needs to attend to, there are evidently limits to what may be achieved in this regard. It is these processes and knowledge systems that sometimes make pedagogic and educative normalisation unavoidable.

- *Student silence and non-participation as resistance:* In the Vijay-Vasie-Buyee exchange we noticed teacher justification/motivation for the merits of dialogue in student-centred pedagogy. In the following collage of extracts from Vijay and Thembi's lectures, we notice teachers having to negotiate student silence. Given that student-centred classrooms pivot on student interaction and dialogic participation, silence may be interpreted as a possible display of 'passive resistance', as may be the case in the following excerpts:

Vijay: Do you want to respond to what Buyee has had to say? Surely I don't need to pounce, this is your assignment. (*long pause).* Should I declare a one-minute prayer silence? *(long silence*). No one wants to respond? *(long pause).* You can even ask her a question if you want. *(long pause).* Can't clap with one hand. *(long pause).* So must I handle it?
Buyee (Black female)**:** I'm worried that Sibongele refers to the AIDS issue as a problem. I'm wondering whether it is the right word. According to my understanding it is more than a problem, because my definition of a problem is when you make attempts to solve a problem it can be solved.
Vijay: Anyone wants to respond directly to what Buyee has said? *(long pause).* Shall we just accept what she has said? Come on I'm trying to get a reaction out of you. Hello, is anyone out there? *(still no response. Long silence).* Sibongele is actually suggesting giving you a lot of work when you do your assignment. You are not just going to go there and do research, you are going to have to go there and educate them. Are you consenting to that? You want to explain that to us Sibongele?
Sibongele (Black female)**:** Whatever we find out try and put it in a way that they can understand, make them relate it to their daily lives even if they are not directly affected.
Vijay: And must we do the education? Can we just do the research and run away?

Sibongele: We can find out what they know, and find out what their fears are … We are finding out but we are also giving something back. So we can also be empowered. (Lecture Observation).

We note attempts by the teacher to coax students into participating in classroom dialogue. We see Vijay encouraging students to take ownership of the discussion, when she says: *this is your assignment.* However, in the period of prolonged silence, she is aware of the power she could exercise by singling individual students to respond, but chooses to exercise her power of restraint by not *pouncing* on them. The word pounce carries with it the image of springing or swooping as a way of capturing one's prey, and if Vijay were to pounce on students that would translate into forcing them to participate, something hardly consistent with willing student participation. In encouraging students to participate, Vijay is in effect attempting to engage students in what would be regarded as a normative pre-requisite for dialogic student-centred learning, and the necessity for the physical and vocal presence of the dialogic community, hence her question: *Hello, is anyone out there?* This teacher-student 'exchange' illustrates the tension between democratic forms of education and the latent tendency to teacher hierarchy by highlighting the dilemma for teachers to resolve the contradiction between dialogic student-centred methodologies and the authority vested in their role. Even in restraining her power, Vijay draws attention to her latent potential to exercise power. In not being phased by the awkward silences that peppered this exchange, Vijay's deliberate silence let students know that she was not going to contribute to the discussion, and it was their imperative to move the discussion forward. Vijay's 'silence' activated at least two normalizing pre-requisites that MacGregor (1991:1-4), identified for collaborative work, viz. students transitioning: a) from listener, observer, and note-taker to active problem-solver, contributor and discussant; and b) from being a private presence in the classroom (with a few or no accompanying risks) to a public presence with potential risks. In reflecting on the silence and long process that marked the negotiation of the AIDS Assignment topic, Vijay in her interview commented as follows:

Vijay: The process of setting up this question was long but very rewarding … I was very pleased with them, and I found that it was a function of my shutting up. Once I was not prepared to fill in the silences they opened up and a lot of people participated, and had very germane contributions to make. (Interview).

The following instance of student non-participation was evident in Thembi's class:

Thembi: Just a minute, that's another stereotype?

Gladys (Black female)**:** Yes.

Thembi: Okay. Were you going to come up with another stereotype, or is it a follow up?

Petrus (Black male)**:** What she said.

Thembi: No, she hasn't said anything yet. *(laughter).*

Petrus: But she was about to say that. *(laughter).*

Thembi: I can't believe this. So thank you very much.

…….

Thembi: And can you imagine allowing this many minutes to pass in an exam, because I can tell you I set this for a fourth year exam. Can you imagine how much time you're losing? … This is a discussion please, nobody is testing you. Say a word, somebody will add or modify, but say something. Remember that this same week you're going to sit for a test of this kind. Please exercise your minds a little, and be free to do so. (Lecture Observation).

From the extract two important points emerge. The first relates to the nature of student resistance to dialogic participation. Student Petrus, displays a nonchalance and lethargy towards meaningful participation, by electing not to expand the discussion, or make a contribution. Instead, he defers to a 'comment' supposedly made by another student, even though her response was in relation to something else. As such he contravenes a normalizing pre-requisite for collaborative work that of transitioning from listener, observer, and note-taker to active problem-solver, contributor and discussant.

In dealing with student silence and non-participation, Thembi resorts to the familiar pedagogic mechanism of reminding students of the need for effective time utilization, which is an important factor in the examination. Again the tension between democratic forms of education and the latent tendency to hierarchy; and the dilemma for teachers to resolve the contradiction between dialogic student-centred methodologies and the authority vested in their pedagogic role resurfaces. Students are encouraged to feel free to exercise their minds, but if they do not do so spontaneously and expeditiously, they are reminded that they would be unlikely to successfully negotiate the time and cognitive demands of a test or exam.

Once again, given that one of the limitations of this study is that students do not form a unit of analysis, we can only surmise as to the underlying reasons for student resistance in incidents of non-participation. In the absence of student explanation for the long and awkward silences that punctuated the two extracts under consideration, generally a significant source for understanding student non-participation may be linked to student competency and fluency in the English language. Research conducted by Diaz-Rico & Weed (1995:40-41), suggest that in attempting to understand and bridge the gap between culture and language, several theories and models have been developed to address the social and individual factors involved in English second language learning and acquisition, which subsequently affect student confidence to participate in classroom dialogue.[11] It seems that

[11] Phumzile, and Vijay offer possible explanations for students' non-participation. Phumzile theorises that sometimes students require permission to speak, and this may be attributed to a dynamic of respect linked to one's home socialisation, or a residue

in order to bridge the gap between language policies, socio-linguistic theories, and educational practice, all of which implicate teacher authority and student agency what is required is a more holistic conceptualisation of English second language teaching and learning that would take into consideration both individual student variables as well as variables located within the macro socio-historical and political structures of society.

In the preceding discussion I have explored various instances of student resistance to the pedagogic technique of collaborative work, dialogic participation and engaging with course content. I examined how these postures of resistance are met with counter resistance by the feminist teacher in order to ensure that the pedagogic and educative ideals of the course are not compromised. In the following discussion I examine student resistance to feminist and radical ideologies, which seek to engender new normative ideals of tolerance, respect, and social justice.

Resistance to feminist and radical ideologies and normalisation via educative ideals

Confirming Foucault's postulation regarding student resistance to normalisation techniques, we notice that in addition to students offering resistance to the assignment topic, and the pedagogic technique, in the following extracts from the various participants' lectures we encounter student resistances in various other guises. Rakow (1991), posits that when feminist lecturers provide occasions for students to question their own complacency, they face student resistance to the liberatory, radical and transformative nature of the course material. Titus (2000), found that the thinking of students who resist feminism and radical ideologies reflect four postures, that is, they *deny*, *discount*, *distance*, and/or express *dismay* concerning women's inequality, and other injustices in a patriarchal society. Drawing on the

---

from certain traditional school practices where one of the rules, is that students are not supposed to speak unless they are allowed to. Phumzile also attributes student non-participation to the possibility that they may find the classroom atmosphere tense, the topic under discussion serious, or because certain issues need a specific and specialised register in which to dialogue. She suggests, however that if the teacher succeeds in relaxing the tension, students might be more willing to say what they are thinking. They may even be willing to ask questions, because most students are of the belief that it is inappropriate to ask questions. Another perception that prevails among certain students is the belief that the classroom is an inappropriate space within which to challenge the teacher because of the traditional teacher-student hierarchy. Thus, even when a student may be of the opinion that the teacher is 'speaking rubbish', the student will not challenge the teacher, purely on the basis of the teacher's status. Vijay suggests that student non-participation may be linked to student personality, and a lack of scholarly commitment. She notes that, invariably the shiest students are the ones who don't attend lectures, or arrive at lectures unprepared, and hence do not participate in classroom discussions. Phumzile advises trying to discern the line between students feeling silenced, students feeling like they don't have the right to talk, and students choosing not to talk. For example, Phumzile notes that Afrikaner White male students, at the University of Free State, sometimes subscribe to the maxim: You don't talk in the class because you defer to the teacher; while by virtue of living in a patriarchal world, both Black and White female students, on the other hand, have been socialised into believing that their contributions are unimportant, and therefore do not participate in class discussions. Commenting specifically about female students non-participation, Phumzile admits to consciously trying to get her female students to talk. Being acutely aware of their silences, she notes that Black male and female students do not generally participate in classroom dialogue, however, when they are asked specifically they may have quite a bit to say. Phumzile says that she tries to probe sensitively, especially around certain topics students simply cannot not have an opinion on. She has noticed that in mixed grouping some Black and White female students do not talk. This may require changing the groups around. However, while in some instances, changing group permutations may be productive, the ideal is not to put people into zones where they're only going to talk there and not elsewhere.

four postures that Titus has identified, I explore student resistance as a basis for, rather than a barrier to learning.

Denial and Discounting

According to Titus (2000), researchers concur that the strongest denial of women's reality within patriarchy comes from males who feel they are being cast into the role of exploiters and blamed for what they take to be women's mythical oppression. When students are faced with values and beliefs that call into question their ideological frameworks, they *deny* that women constitute an oppressed group, regardless of the structural barriers they might experience to their own success, (the latter being the case, especially among female students). Some students may dismiss the significance of gender or absolve themselves of any responsibility to agitate for gender equality, and shift blame onto some unchangeable factor. This might actually be employed as an avoidance mechanism from examining their lives more closely.

An allied posture that students adopt is the tendency to *discount* the authenticity of 'allegations' of female oppression. Taking the view that feminist theory is based on opinion rather than fact they see a feminist as someone having a personal vendetta against patriarchy. Given that people who have a personal interest in something are considered incapable of objectivity, they conclude that feminist teachers are biased rather than credible. This is further exacerbated since the feminist teacher is likely to be intolerant of sexist and misogynist attitudes, racist beliefs, etc. Any empirical general statement about an entire group is taken by students as couched in stereotypes. They see feminists as seeing sexism everywhere and exaggerating the reality of inequality. Vuyo's comments in the extract from Thembi's lecture illustrate features of student resistance in the form of *denying* and *discounting* women's oppression in patriarchal societies.

Vuyo (Black male)**:** I don't think the women were denied any chance. There is a problem with women. They have a serious problem. They lack the initiative to stand up, but they want to laugh and like to support their men properly. *(class laughs)* . You know, it's part of their nature. And apparently their male counterparts are working day and night, actually inculcating a spirit of believing in themselves. They're not going to take up the initiative and the courage. Why are they like that? … They lack the initiative. *(class laughs).* I will give them the liberal politics in Botswana, and the freedom that we have. They deny themselves the chance. I'm describing the status quo, there are very few people who have actually displayed the courage and the zeal to go forward in so far as challenging the male is concerned. Why is it like that? Women instead of thinking about living, they think about the niceties of life. They enjoy singing, cheering, voting, partying. *(class laughs).*

Thembi: Okay, it's your observation; you're looking at the status quo. Fine. But our business here as students of literature is to interrogate the status quo, to question what is happening and try and trace this to its roots. To try and understand why it is so. Hence, it keeps on saying, " What are these the result of? These are the results of something."

Vuyo: But I think that what you are doing is the other side of finding the answer. I believe that somebody else may have better answers than that which we have in feminism somewhere else. This is another issue and way of explaining it, and it cannot be taken without an influence and a meticulous interrogation because some other schools of thought are meant to give us an answer as to why the situation is the way it is. I understand that we actually have to study these things with caution because if we are not careful we are going to be programmed feminists and then we won't be able to address another view somewhere else.

Jake (Black male)**:** I hear my colleague, but there are socialising processes.

Thembi: Ja. That's a very important point, which is part of our cultural belief that we have to explore. (Lecture Observation).

We note that Vuyo's response is an embodiment of the classic denial and discounting postures that have come to characterize resistance to feminist critiques of patriarchy. Vuyo comments: *I don't think the women were denied any chance. There is a problem with women. They have a serious problem. They lack the initiative to stand up, but they want to laugh and like to support their men properly.* Blaming the victim is an established phenomenon, alluded to in, for example, de Beauvoir's (1953), metaphoric articulation of the problem: 'they clip her wings and then complain she cannot fly'. Vuyo's intolerance, annoyance, and perplexity emerge in his repeated question: *Why are they like that? … Why is it like that?* Vuyo's response in blaming women for lacking agentic potential is met with the suggestion from Thembi that he interrogate the status quo. Perhaps in doing so, he would be conscientised to the causal relationship between structural inequalities, and the generally inferior psychological and cultural socialization of females. Women and girls have to unlearn their devaluation in order to become agents of personal and social transformation. Vuyo's non-recognition of the underlying barriers to female actualization leads him to discount the existence of women's oppression, and to attribute it to their personal choice. Perhaps his more 'privileged' male status makes him incredulous about the authenticity of women's social oppression. Further, in citing the more liberal politics of Botswana, he does not recognise the disjuncture between the symbolic and functional nuances of democracy. (See earlier discussion in this chapter, titled: *Women's Gendered Academic Citizenship* for more elaborate discussion of this issue).

Second, Vuyo makes sweeping generalizations about women and their failure to act for themselves. Compounded in his belittling male gaze of women, he also externalizes his belief that women are associated primarily with infantile trivia. He says: *Women instead of*

thinking about living, they think about the niceties of life. They enjoy singing, cheering, voting, partying. They want to laugh and support their men properly. Inherent in his utterance, is the image of women as lacking the capacity, will and zeal to engage more important social responsibilities, like assuming leadership. Instead, they gravitate naturally towards supporting and supportive roles, while their male counterparts work tirelessly, apparently around the clock (*night and day*), to motivate them to aspire to greater pursuits. Even though women might participate in voting, an activity that requires the power to make a personal and political decision, the fact that it is embedded among such frivolities as *singing, cheering, partying* is perhaps meant to demonstrate that women lack the perception to distinguish this as an important, and serious activity, which should in fact not be a 'laughing matter'. Vuyo's conception of women finds ample support in thinkers such as linguist, Jespersen (in Cameron 1990), who in castigating women's communication patterns, wrote:

> … women … are conservative, timorous, overly polite and delicate, trivial in their subject matter, and given to simple, repetitive or incomplete/illogical sentence structures, softly spoken and soft in the head.

Against this reductive perceptual backdrop, Vuyo finally, shares his scepticism as to whether feminism is the most appropriate discourse to interrogate patriarchy. Suggesting that there might be a flaw in drawing on a feminist critique of patriarchy, he cautions that feminist theorising may well be operating as just another regime of truth. He maintains that one should be careful not to become *programmed feminists*. Judging from his comments, it would appear kosher to operate as a programmed sexist and misogynist, rather than a programmed feminist.

In Thembi's response to Vuyo features associated with the educative authority of the feminist teacher become apparent. Vuyo's resistance to the ideological intent of feminist theorizing is met with educative normalization techniques from Thembi. Firstly, Thembi alerts Vuyo to the patriarchal foundations that circumscribe a minoritising view of females. Thus, she urges Vuyo: *try and trace this* (the status quo of inferior female socialisation) *to its roots … To try and understand why it is so. Hence it keeps on saying, " What are these the result of? These are the result of something."* Here, we note several features consonant with the educative authority and agenda of the feminist project emerging. Student Vuyo has described the status quo of women, their demeanour and disposition within patriarchy. Teacher Thembi urges him to examine the status quo by tracing it to its roots (they are a result of something, she tells him). The regulative/normalising technique is consonant with Foucault's (1972), domain of actuality, which entails defining the problem. Thembi's next normalization technique relates to deconstructing the status quo thus, moving Vuyo (and the

other students) to critical consciousness and counter hegemonic thinking. Thembi, tries to socialize Vuyo into the discourse of deconstruction when she responds: *Fine. But our business here as students of literature is to interrogate the status quo, to question what is happening … Are these the results of something?"* Cumulatively her response to Vuyo correlates with the normative educative outcomes she has identified for the *Writings in Africa Course*, which Thembi outlined as follows:

> **Thembi:** I think the objectives are twofold. One is to make students **sensitive** and **conscious** to what they read and to the world around them. Just to develop a critical consciousness. The other one is to encourage this same student to **examine** the dominant representations of gender in African Literature that they study and **consider** how these could be **subverted**–or even the extent to which authors themselves are interrogating or **subverting** the issues that they are dealing with. (Interview).

Based on the above objectives the discernible technique of normalization offered to the student's ideological resistance is associated with first, making Vuyo sensitive and critically consciousness to the Word *(what they read)* and the World; second encouraging Vuyo to examine the status quo, and third subverting the discriminatory status quo by considering an ideological/conceptual shift. The teacher's educative authority aims at altering the student's perception, and effecting a conceptual shift in his belief and value system. In so doing, Thembi attempts to reconstitute a new normative based on a just social order.

Mphele, another male student in Thembi's class offers a similar line of argument to Vuyo. He enquires:

> **Mphele** (Black male)**:** I just wanted to know. I think Christianity is very fine. Christianity because it tells you that men were created in the image of God and why do we have to question the original?
> **Thembi:** Ja, it's good to question that because again if you read the Bible as literature, which allows you to go into all of that, and you see a lot of references and so forth. … look at it as literature in fact it is literature. (Lecture Observation).

Inherent in Mphele's question is the need to know why are we not accepting of the status quo? Appealing to God, a higher power, and all the attendant attributes vested in deity, it seems audacious to subtend hierarchical power relations and structures. Suggesting a stance counter to the educative goals of creating critical thinking individuals who would challenge and change oppressive social relations, Mphele prefers to subscribe to the belief that our way of being in the world is natural and divinely ordained. Thembi's response to Mphele, while not as elaborate as that she offered Vuyo, nonetheless embodies the same

message. She contends that if Mphele classifies the Bible within the literary genre, which she points out it is, then the Bible, like all other literature (for example, African Literature) needs to be interrogated, questioned, and subverted. Its claims and value system in general, but particularly in relation to dominant gender representations need to be subjected to the same processes of critique which is the normative characteristic of developing critical consciousness.

Finally, Sipho's comment that women are not refined, receives the following crisp response from Thembi:

> **Thembi:** Please just repeat your question and then I'll take it down. Or make a statement.
> **Sipho** (Black male)**:** I'm saying from the feminist group, I'm oppressed, and she is saying, I am more refined.
> **Thembi:** You're oppressed and more refined than …?
> **Sipho:** … than the previously created character, because when we look at women they are not refined.
> **Thembi:** His belief is that this was created.
> **Sipho:** Because when we look at women they are not refined. *(laughter)*
> **Thembi:** Once more, please read the concept of the *Other* in the Simone de Beauvoir extract from, *The Second Sex*. These concepts are going to be questions that we are going to explore in regard to gender relations. … men define women not in herself but as relative to him. de Beauvoir says: '… women on the whole today are inferior to men, that is, their situation affords them fewer possibilities'. The question is should that state of affairs continue? We have to understand how she develops the concept of the *Other*. (Lecture Observation).

Rather than entertain extended discussion, Thembi refers Sipho to the concept of *Othering* as elucidated in the extract from de Beauvoir's text: *The Second Sex,* which has been prescribed for class reading. de Beauvoir's thesis of the *Other* explores women's inferior and denigrated status in patriarchal society. In referring Sipho to the article, the educative intention would be that he would examine, interrogate, scrutinise his assessment of women's lack of refinement in relation to an alternative feminist ideological normative.

Thembi's responses to Sipho, Vuyo and Mphele aim to resocialise students into a normalisation of critical consciousness in general, and critical gender consciousness, in particular. Thus, in responding to the students' resistance to feminist ideologies, Thembi suggests a new normative as embodied in the educative goals of the course which attempts to socialise students into gender equality, thus altering their perceptions and effecting a conceptual shift about gender relations. It is also embodied in the prescribed course readings, for example, de Beauvoir's extract from: *The Second Sex*, John Stuart Mill's essay:

The Subjection of Women, etc. which have been specifically selected to support, elaborate and elucidate this new normative. Here, we note that the feminist teacher's educative ideals and authority are bolstered by the texts that she has prescribed for the course. These texts serve to provide theoretical and ideological support for the conceptual shifts she attempts to effect in her students so that they would be sufficiently inspired/moved to confront and subvert discriminatory social practices.

We note, however, that Thembi's responses to the resisting students are done in a subtle, almost hands-off kind of way. This may be attributed to the lesson she reflects on learning awhile back when one of her students interpreted her enthusiasm and passion for gender equity as a 'brainwashing' exercise.

While Vuyo and Mphele's responses shed some light from a male perspective on the postures of denial and discounting of the existence of women's oppression, in the following extract from Jennifer's lecture, team teacher Lisa, attempts to elicit a response from Portia as to the possible cultural impediments that she as a Black female experiences. Lisa's attempt to secure a counter response from Portia is framed against Meshack, a Black male student's response, who described his positionality in society as *right*; making him feel *comfortable*, and giving him *a sense of power.* Positing that cultural impediments and imprisonment attack women, but empowers men, Lisa looks to Portia to confirm or disconfirm her postulation.

Jennifer: And where do you situate yourself ?

Meshack (Black male)**:** Well, I think that I am very male-sexually and I think that I am very male gender-wise. Well actually, it places me in a right position in my society. It makes me feel comfortable. I feel myself. I feel like I am fulfilling my duties-that's where I belong.

Lisa (team teacher)**:** How far do you think that is attached to your cultural affiliations and the way you were brought up culturally? Do you have a strong cultural bond?

Meshack: Yes, it gives me power-a sense of power …

Lisa: *(referring to Portia-Black female).* Now you answer, I want you to answer, if you don't mind … I have experienced this-with a sense of cultural impediment, and it attacks women but it empowers men within the cultural framework? Do you feel that, or am I wrong? (*Silence).* Do you know what I'm talking about? Do you feel imprisoned at any time by the way you are brought up in your cultural environment?

Portia (Black female)**:** (*silence)* Sometimes. *(hesitantly).* Not always.

Alison (White female)**:** I must say, as a woman, I don't think that it is ever that easy, even at the most basic level. If you want to buy a car, I am very, very conscious that as a woman I am trivialised in many, many ways. It is a perception that when I am driving a car I'm stupid. *(general consensus from class)* … but I'm very, very conscious that I am a woman. It is an uphill battle much of the way … I am conscious of that and it makes me very, very angry.

Lisa: And yet you contribute to it, don't you?

Alison: I do. I do. I do. I do. And I'm conscious of that as well.
Jennifer: And also it makes the relationship easier to play the role rather than to stand up and deliver a lecture on women's identity and women's competence to some guy who is treating you stupid.
Alison: … because he is treating me stupid it doesn't really matter. (Lecture Observation).

Portia's initial silence, followed by her hesitant response that she only feels disempowered *sometimes*, *not always,* is of course open to multiple interpretations. Felman (1982), argues that student ignorance may in fact be an active dynamic of negation, an active refusal of information. This ignorance is a kind of repression that can be understood on both an individual and cultural level. Thus, Smith (2003), cautions that even if a teacher manages to communicate that s/he is a safe audience for the student, the possibility of being expected to discuss personal experience or provide more information, could be uncomfortable for the student who is being vague or minimally participatory as a survival strategy. The student may in fact identify herself with the dominant culture for good reason, or it may be a survival technique. We can surmise that being the only Black female student in the class, Portia may well have felt exposed, her possible disenfranchisement by race, gender and language, in a predominantly White, female, English speaking class may have caused her to be vague or minimally participatory as a survival strategy, or copying mechanism.

The other likely possibility is that female students often resist feminist theorising if they feel characterized as victims. Manicom (1992), cautions that when female students reject feminist analysis this has variously been labeled false consciousness or resistance, and has often been conceptualized as a flaw in the student herself. Given that Lisa is uncertain whether Portia knows what she is talking about, suggests that Portia, may possibly not have begun to interpret her cultural socialization as an *impediment* or oppressive but accepts it as normal and natural. It is possible that for her, as was the case with Carol and Thembi, (See Chapter 5: *Identity as Ideology: trajectories of coming to feminist consciousness*), the development of a feminist consciousness may only come much later, and may follow a 'pattern of change' feminist consciousness trajectory.

Earlier discussions (See section titled: *Pedagogy as the enactment of power relations)* revealed that in some instances students become accessories to the teacher's authority. In the extract under consideration, we see that student Alison assumes the role of accessory to teacher authority, by drawing on her own experience to identify, and name patriarchal impediments. Wary that Portia's hesitant response, and episodes of silence regarding the cultural impediments women experience may be read as a rare or mythical phenomenon, Alison, a middle-aged, White student points to the pervasiveness of female denigration in patriarchal society. Irrespective of race, she points out that women are

trivialised and made to feel stupid, thus making participation in patriarchal society *an uphill battle much of the way,* and never *that easy.*

In examining Portia's response to Lisa's question alongside Alison's, we note that although both students seemingly respond differently to patriarchal oppression, there is nonetheless an underlying similarity. It appears that Portia may occasionally perceive herself as a victim of patriarchal cultural impediment, and is thus, not overtly suspicious of the status quo. Alison, however, is incensed by the status quo, but opts for being consciously complicit, and strategically compliant in playing the patriarchal female devaluation game. Feminist discourses aim at making critical gender consciousness and resistance thereof normative. However, student Alison and feminist educator Jennifer, indicate that normative knowledge/ consciousness of gender discrimination does not necessarily eventuate in overt resistance politics. Alison admits to contributing to patriarchal complicity, because as Jennifer elaborates *it makes the relationship easier to play the role rather than to stand up and deliver a lecture on women's identity and women's competence.*

In understanding why women become self-consciously contradictory by being complicit in patriarchal postures, Hogeland (1994), in her article, *Fear of Feminism: why young women get the willies,* suggests that to understand what women fear when they fear feminism it is necessary to make a distinction between gender consciousness and feminist consciousness. The difference resides in the connection between gender and politics. Feminism politicises gender consciousness, by locating it in a systematic analysis of histories and structures of domination and privilege. According to Hogeland (ibid.), fear of feminism, then, is not a fear of gender, but rather a fear of politics, which may be understood as a fear of living in consequences of reprisals. She writes:

> Feminism requires an expansion of self, an expansion of empathy, interest, intelligence, cultures, ethnicities, sexual identities, othernesses. It is easier to rest in gender consciousness, in one's own difference than to undertake the personal and political analysis required to trace out one's own position in multiple and overlapping systems of domination. To stand opposed to your culture, to be critical of institutions, behaviours, discourses, when it is clearly not in your immediate interest asks a lot of women. Of course women are afraid of feminism-shouldn't they be?

Examining the note on which the Lisa-Portia-Alison-Jennifer exchange ends, the following discernible features that correlate with the normative educative goals that Jennifer identified for the course become evident.

Jennifer: Students need to reflect critically, they need to isolate and identify issues in literature, and they need to be able to think about those issues in the context of other discourses … not only theory,

but ideas that are circulating in society at the time … force them if necessary to make connections between the literature they are reading and society, issues, philosophy, other disciplines. So to also think wider. (Interview).

Feminist teachers, Jennifer and Lisa, through their leading questions have managed to elicit confirmation from Alison that women's oppression in society as a result of cultural impediments is not mythical. They have done so through the normative educative goal of making *connections between the literature [students] are reading and society.* In a course designed to examine gendered representations in contemporary women's literature, student Alison is able to draw on personal experience, for example, the perceived stupidity associated with women and driving a car. The educative agenda of naming the status quo of female oppression, examining the status quo and subverting it, is evident in the discussion. The exception being that rather than subversion/resistance assuming an overt form, it assumes a subtle compliance. Essentially, student Alison shows that she has been socialised into the normative ideal of gender consciousness. She appears to be on the same ideological wavelength as her feminist teachers; she however, opts to enact her resistance through strategic compliance. Perhaps, because as Hogeland (1994), points out, 'to stand opposed to your culture, to be critical of institutions, behaviours, discourses, when it is clearly not in your immediate interest asks a lot of women'.

Distancing

According to Titus (2000), assuming distance as a resistance posture occurs when female students express concerns with excluding men when discussions and pedagogic content focus upon women. Statements that men are victims just the same as women, serve as a dis-stancing mechanism, indicating that as females they do not necessarily associate themselves with a critique of patriarchy. Women students feel advantaged relative to other times of their lives, while the male students feel disadvantaged. The following extract from Jennifer's lecture helps to illustrate this point:

Pauline (White female)**:** But John how do you feel in all this? We sometime emasculate you. It's an awful word, but …
John (team teacher)**:** No …
Pauline: We are looking at all this gender as if it is women who are threatened, but what about men?
Lisa (team teacher)**:** Gender has become a synonym for women's issues.
Pauline: Yes.
John: That's true …

Pauline: That is why I asked the question: do you have a struggle maintaining your masculinity? I think that men do.

Jennifer: There are novels, particularly *The Long View* and *The Magic Toyshop* that say, it is not all that nice falling in love with somebody of the opposite sex all the time because what happens is that you get married and end up bare foot and pregnant in the kitchen. I know that that is a terrible oversimplification …

Pauline: Or the man ends up being trapped by all the children. We always look at it from a woman's point of view. There are lots of men who have also been trapped …

John: Yes, yes.

Jennifer: Or the man gets trapped into doing all the fixing around the house …

Pauline: It seems men today-more than in my generation-feel that they deserve their independence. Guys getting married today feel worried about being trapped with children.

Alison: In other words, it is about the gender separation, and the roles. Women are to stay at home and look after the children and this frees the man financially …

Pauline: I'm not talking about financial freedom …

Jennifer: You mean physical freedom-give him more time to do his own thing. That relates to another of those oppositions, which is very traditional in Gender Theory-that is the Public/Private dichotomy. The male domain is that of the public - public achievement, public dealings with the world, going out and becoming successful in the corporate world, and being a leader of nations … whereas the private domain has always been that of women. You just have to read Virginia Woolf's essay, *The Angel in the House,* or you just have to watch yourself at home picking up and cleaning to see how pervasive that still is. (Lecture Observation).

A dis-stancing resistance posture to feminist theorizing is evident in student Pauline's concern that there is a tendency to look, *at all this gender as if it is women who are threatened, but what about men? … do you have a struggle maintaining your masculinity* - she enquires of John. Pauline's empathising with John lends credence to Titus' observation that female students sometimes play a care taking role, becoming protective of the feelings and emotional well-being of their male colleagues in order to maintain harmonious relationships. Team teachers John, Jennifer and Lisa do not negate what student Pauline is saying, as there is a measure of validity in her observation that men may feel *trapped* by children, *fixing around the house,* etc. However, in line with the educative goals of the course, Jennifer normalizes and legitimizes the critique against patriarchal gendering of roles and responsibilities. Jennifer points out that traditional and current practices locate women within the private domain of housekeeping drudgery, while men occupy public offices that generally give them financial, temporal, and spatial/physical freedom (*give him more time to do his own thing, (by) going out and becoming successful in the corporate world, and being a leader of nations*). Jennifer draws on techniques of normalization by referring to the educative goal of the course, which she defined as follows: *Students need to reflect critically,*

they need to isolate and identify issues in literature, and they need to be able to think about those issues in the context of other discourses … not only theory, but ideas that are circulating in society at the time. Jennifer achieves this by referring Pauline to Gender Theory, which confronts the public/private dichotomisation of male and female social positionality. The repertoire of literary texts *(The Long View* and *The Magic Toyshop)* and gender theories that Jennifer selected and prescribed for the course also serve to regulate and normalize the domain of validity, which could guide according to what criteria Pauline may discuss the truth or falsehood of a proposition; and the domain of normativity which determines according to what criteria Pauline may exclude certain statements as being irrelevant, counter and/or marginal to the anti discriminatory gender discourse. In the same way that Thembi refers students to de Beauvoir's theorising about the *Other*, Jennifer summarises the crux of the debate in Gender Theory, by exposing students to the discriminatory status quo that associates women with the private and men with the public domain. In so doing, she articulates a new normative for conceiving of gender relations and positionality.[12] Furthermore, by referring to the literary texts: *The Long View* and *The Magic Toyshop*, which suggest alternatives to heterosexual relationships, Jennifer alludes to the objectives of the course which is concerned with deconstructing gender. In addition, her reference to Virginia Woolf's essay: *The Angel in the House* becomes an exemplification of the taken-for-grantedness and normalcy of gendered dichotomies. This pervasive stereotypical gendered social arrangement invariably shortchanges and circumscribes women's public and career opportunities, and may be equally restrictive for those men who might be attracted or predisposed to domesticity.

Dismay

Inasmuch as the postures of resistance play themselves out through denial, discounting and distancing technologies, some students are not resistant to feminism as a normalizing ideology in the conventional sense; instead, they express being puzzled, confused,

[12] Phumzile, also addresses the victimisation of Black male identity in the feminist class. However, she is of the opinion that: … everybody's identity is gendered and we often talk about women as gendered, and how patriarchal relations play themselves out on female subjects and we don't talk much about how it plays itself out on male subjects, regardless of race. Part of the process is interrogating how they're still implicated in power relations, what though differently. Just because you're oppressed doesn't mean you're not oppressive. The fact that there are specific stereotypes about Black masculinity, about Black men as violent, the ravenous Black phallus, obviously that needs attention and I think it is getting attention (in some circles more than others). But it is often used as an excuse to avoid dealing with how Black men themselves are patriarchal. We still live in a patriarchal society where in terms of theorising Black masculinity critically we either have these emasculated men, and that's bad, because White capitalists, heterosexists, patriarchy emasculates them, and then to rescue them from this you need to be complicit in patriarchal relations because it almost always implies that's the remedy. (Interview). While acknowledging the dehumanisation Black men have endured at the hands of the other oppressive aspects of patriarchy, Phumzile's view on distancing as a resistance posture echoes Freire's (1968), conceptualisation of oppression. Freire contends that those oppressed are not necessarily passive victims, in different contexts, and in different configurations, the oppressed can also become potential oppressors.

overwhelmed, unsettled, and sometimes depressed by a sense of fatalism. In these cases students admit to feeling virtually 'paralyzed' by the enormity of the task for social transformation and the perceived impossibility of creating a more humane, just and pain-free society. Many students expect a single definitive solution-the product of an easy recipe for action. Often they believe that the answers to their questions reside in their teacher and, that she is choosing to withhold it from them.

In the following extract from Vijay's lecture, there are hints of Rani feeling overwhelmed as to how to go about researching the AIDS Assignment, while simultaneously educating her interviewees:

Vijay: You're very sure that all the people you know are aware about AIDS? … So how can you ask questions that enable you to make people consider those measures? What are those situations that get in the way of knowledge, where knowledge is no longer empowering? What are the situations that you are referring to?
Rani (Indian female)**:** The question that we are asking will most probably be about how does one get AIDS? We don't want to go out there and tell people that AIDS is bad. We just want to find out how do we think AIDS affects everybody. We are not there to … I don't know what you want …
Vijay: … let's work a way out …
Rani: Ja, I don't think you want us to go out there and try to prevent AIDS as such …
Vijay: … but you don't feel strong enough to be able to do education and training? Where's the gap, and how can we fill the gap?
Rani: And how are we going to educate them?
Buyee (Black female)**:** I think it would be a good idea if you start educating yourself about AIDS … It's not like you are going to go there and start being a Sister and show charts. Whatever you know about AIDS, the basic things that you know, you will share. Ask as many questions, and answer as many from what you know. There are many misconceptions about AIDS, and you can try and clarify these.
Rani: So Vijay, what is it that you want from us?
Vijay: No, that's what we are trying to work out. We need to figure it out. Let's address the question, what is it that we know about AIDS that other people may not know. Let's query it amongst ourselves. What's the most important point each of us knows about AIDS? (Lecture Observation).

Comments like, *I don't know what you want … How are we going to educate them?* -suggest a sense of being uncertain and overwhelmed. In diagnosing the student's sense of dismay, Vijay perceives that Rani probably feels ill equipped in terms of her knowledge base to negotiate the demands of the AIDS Assignment interview process, evident in Rani's query/ statement: *We just want to find out how do we think AIDS affects everybody. We are not there to … I don't know what you want …* On this level, Rani is seeking clarification on the scope of the AIDS Assignment topic. On another level, her sense of being overwhelmed is

related to her role of researcher and the AIDS preventative, intervention role she feels the research project will expect her to play. Hence, her query: *Ja, I don't think you want us to go out there and try to prevent AIDS as such …* More importantly, implied in Rani's query is her sensitivity to the magnitude of the AIDS pandemic, and the stigma and silences that render it a highly personalized matter to engage. Fellow student Buyee, suggests that commencing with self education, and recognizing that the AIDS Assignment is likely to be a reciprocal learning process may help alleviate the stress of dismay and feeling of being overwhelmed. Buyee's suggestion resonates with Titus' (2000), recommendation that when students feel overwhelmed and dismayed teachers (and student accessories to teacher authority) may help them acquire a sense of the possibilities for positive social transformation. Vijay's response to Rani may be traced to the educative goals that she outlined for the *Language and Power Course.* Vijay's stated educative agenda was to impress upon students their role as intellectuals in society. In the interview she commented on this as follows:

> **Vijay:** For me the intellectual has a far more important role in our society. I have always been very annoyed by this whole dilettantish aspect of intellectuals who live on the fringe and are really weird and wonderful. We are publicly funded and for me that defines everything … It ties our work with the notion of a whole civic responsibility. There is enough room for existential angst in those crises. (Interview).

Thus, in responding to Rani's sense of being overwhelmed by the enormity of the AIDS issue, Vijay perceives: *but you don't feel strong enough to be able to do education and training? Where's the gap, and how can we fill the gap? … what is it that we know about AIDS that other people may not know?* It is in these statements that the normalisation occurs, which is linked to the educative goal of educating her students, who in turn as intellectuals have a civic responsibility to wider society to conscientize/educate others who may be lacking in knowledge. Thus, rather than be paralysed by existential angst, and the magnanimity of social crises students are encouraged to embrace the normalising educative goal and locate themselves in community social movements that harness the power of collective action as an avenue for change.

In the preceding discussion, I examined four postures of resistance students offer to feminist ideological course content. In the ensuing discussion, I examine ideological tensions that emerge when students in the dialogue process express insensitive views that run counter to the radical educative goals of the course. When course content brings into question students' seemingly comfortable acceptance of culturally sanctioned assumptions that justify inequality and social oppression, students feel their taken-for-granted identification

with the existing social order is being confronted. In such instances, while protests could be interpreted as barriers or resistance, their opposition is not a refusal to engage in the content of the course so much as it is a challenge to that content. For example, in the following extract from Jennifer's lecture, student Joan expresses herself in a less than sensitive way, when she advances the 'Trauma Theory' regarding the 'abnormality' of homosexuality.

Joan (White female)**:** The way I see it is as though there are two types of gays. The one I would say is a gene that probably one is born with and the other is acquired, for example, the rugby player-something goes wrong-probably at puberty. I would say that there is definitely two types of gays.
Jennifer: Listen to what you are saying-something goes wrong … (*John laughs. Jennifer appears unhappy with the way the student has expressed herself).*
Joan: I have a friend who was straight and she had a boyfriend who let her down very, very badly. She went out for a while and ended up in a gay relationship, and as far as I know that's where she's been. But before that time she was perfectly normal. *(class laughs*). It's called the Trauma Theory of the origin of gayness.
Jennifer: The man traumatised her to such an extent that she became gay, whereas in the novel-the girl right from the beginning didn't feel as if she was a girl. She was climbing trees and doing all kind of things … Is it essential to feel like a girl to be heterosexual? For example, if you go into a gay relationship do you not necessarily feel like a female?
Joan: She was a female in every way. She did everything that an adult female would do-had children-but from a trauma …
Jennifer: I think that it would be interesting for you to look at why you think that. It is my belief that our society likes people to be straight, and likes two people of the opposite sex to be married, for a number of reasons: people like to reproduce. The whole heterosexual system serves the interest of the man, at the expense of women. Women are not given the choice when they are incarcerated in marriage. They are not given a choice as to whether they want to be the cooks, the nurturers, the mothers, etc. Being a mother is not a natural role. It is something that you have to learn, and not all women like it, and not all women want to be the main children caregiver with all the repercussions that has.
Joan: That doesn't make a woman lesbian. I think we are now talking about sexual preference.
John (team teacher)**:** I have a problem with the preference bit. I think sexual preference is a very problematic term. It suggests that you choose, and I think that with gay people it is not a choice. Do you think that someone would choose to be gay when they are persecuted, and marginalized? I think that it is part of the pathologisation of gay people-they choose to be abhorrent, deviant, weird, freakish. If you think about it logically, you would hardly choose to be part of an oppressed minority. You would much rather have a socially mandated position.
Jennifer: What goes along with that is the pathology of AIDS. AIDS is only something gay men get and it is their fault, never mind the fact that well over 50% of HIV/AIDS positive people in sub-Saharan Africa are women. (Lecture Observation).

Jennifer responds to student Joan's remarks with an urge for her to **look** *at why she thinks that* and **listen** *to what she is saying*. She suggests that the student pause to be more sensitive to what she is saying and to think about the basis for her ideological perspective. Both Jennifer and John point out the stereotyping that has resulted in the pathologisation of homosexuality, and the attendant misconceptions and generalisations that have been perpetuated, for example, the association of gay men with AIDS. Jennifer's call for the student to look and listen to what she is saying is essentially a call for her to examine her use of language and how it shapes her ideological perspective. This is especially important given that our ways of talking about things reveal attitudes and assumptions that testify to the deep-rootedness of sexism, homophobia, linguicism, etc. Jennifer, as a teacher of the English language, confirms Voloshinov's (1973:10), observation that:

> In actuality, we never say or hear words, we say and hear what is true or false, good or bad, important or unimportant, pleasant or unpleasant. … Words are always filled with content and meaning drawn from behaviour or ideology. That is the way we understand words, and we can respond only to words that engage us behaviourally or ideologically.

If students hold ignorant, bigoted views about any group of people and if feminist teachers want those students to learn to become more accepting of the different ways of being in the world, then teachers must encounter those students' resistance. It is more likely that feminist teachers will encounter resistance as they decentre hegemonic ideologies, and normalise anti racist, anti homophobic, anti classist ideologies. If in the name of encouraging dialogic student-centred pedagogies, insensitive speech is allowed to operate as one viable opinion, it becomes just one more instance of patriarchal subordination and persecution. It results in championing not only the best but also the worst of the prevailing ideology that grounds a world of racism, misogyny, cultural bias, violence, and a host of other evils.

It is in the light of Joan's insensitivity that Laditka's (1990:3), enquiry becomes pertinent. Laditka asks: 'Is it really desirable to vanish one's teaching authority in dialogue that never leads to judgment but only to a continued cycle of questions and comments?' Evidently not so, as both Jennifer and John attempt to make Joan aware of her insensitive use of language about gays, while also suggesting that she examine the cultural ideologies that have shaped her thinking.

While in the above extract we see teachers challenging the student, in the following extract from Vijay's lecture, we see female students confronting the sexist comments made by Nathi, a fellow student:

Nathi (Black male)**:** What about returning to cultural practices for girls to protect them and keep your virginity? (*somebody chuckles*).
Vijay: And men?
Nathi: *(laughs)*. For men, it's like …
Vijay: So men can go and kill themselves? *(class laughs).*
Nathi: No, it's not like that, but if a women …
Vijay: Do you care about men … use a condom?
Nathi: The idea is that if women abstain from sex and keep their virginity, you'll be safe if you marry her.
Devi (Indian female)**:** Will she be safe if she has sex with you? *(class laughs).*
Nathi: The thing is you will marry her …
Vijay: So you yourself will be a virgin?
Nathi: No, no, that I can't guarantee … *(general protest from class about double standards, and laughter).* I know, but for women it's different. They have to keep their virginity. Men should have a choice …
Thandi (Black female)**:** You don't think that men should stay virgins?
Nathi: If I want to stay a virgin then I mean it's my choice.
Thandi: Then why are you just saying women?
Devi: Then it should be her choice as well.
Nathi: Ja, it is her choice, but I was only making a point …you don't have to bite my head off. *(class laughs).*
Vijay: Sorry, there's no need to, what?
Devi: Bite his head off. *(class laughs. Vijay moves onto the next student).*
Pinky: The same thing they said.
Vijay: Come on, there must be so many other ideas. (Lecture Observation).

The double standards oozing from Nathi's comments, is met with the contempt and challenge that it deserved. In this student-student exchange, we notice a regulation of the enunciative domains of validity, which regulates the criteria by which one may discuss the truth or falsehood of a proposition; and the domain of normativity, which requires the criteria by which one may exclude certain statements as being antithetical to the discourse. A defensive, Nathi indicates that he was only making a point, but evidently his point of view, like Joan's in the previous extract, run against the educative norms and values of the feminist classroom. Hence, both are subject to regulative and normalising mechanisms.

In commenting on this exchange in the post lecture interview, Vijay confirms that it is something that she would have addressed, but exercised her teacher discretion by devolving authority to the female students to handle it. Rather than applauding Nathi for participating in

classroom dialogue, he comes under attack for his sexist views, and has to request not to have his head bitten off. Razak (1998), reminds us that:

> … there are penalties to choosing the wrong voice at the wrong time, for telling an inappropriate tale.

The message transmitted via these dialogic regulatory technologies requires that those who speak should be able and willing to clearly and as fully as possible articulate the reasoning behind their statements by supporting their arguments with evidence drawn from the course materials, making their case from reason, and be willing to carry their remarks through to their logical conclusions. Students should not be accustomed to being rewarded simply for speaking. While feminist educators support students developing their power to construct their own understandings of themselves and the world, given the educative authority they are mandated with, certainly means that they would want students to come to view the world in a way that includes fighting inequalities, oppression and prejudices in line with the normative ideal of engendering social justice.

Synthesis

First, in considering the proposition that pedagogy proceeds via a limited set of specific techniques of power, the preceding discussion focused on the dynamics of dialogic student-centred pedagogies for engaging feminist and radical ideological perspectives. In considering dialogic, student-centred pedagogical practices the pedagogic labour of covering, explicating and relating curricula shifts from resting almost entirely with the teacher to a shared enterprise. This shift also poses interesting questions. Authority and expertise, power and control continue to remain highly intertwined matters for the teacher, because they all resurface for examination and redefinition in the collaborative classroom. MacGregor (1991:4), observes that:

> As students together begin assuming more responsibility for their learning, and as classroom time is more taken up with conversational inquiry, the teacher begins to sense subtle but powerful shifts in her role, which is not so much a relinquishment of control so much as sharing it in new ways. The lines of authority are not so much blurred as they are reshaped.

Second, in reflecting on the various postures of resistance to pedagogical technique and issues in the course content, two important points emerge. The first relates to the contradiction that sexist, racist, homophobic utterances are unwelcome in the feminist class,

yet when they are made, they offer a valuable platform to confront and critique prejudicial ideologies. These productive, teachable moments come at the expense of students who are prepared to expose themselves in a public forum, and risk coming under criticism for doing so. The second point, relates to the laughter that is generally generated when students like Joan and Nathi air their jaundiced views. Laughter as a dialogic, communicative strategy is an interesting response. While it may be open to various interpretations, it may well be read as shock at the audacity, and/or parochial worldview of the student voicing such undesirable ideologies in a class designed to subvert such thinking by urging a new normativity based on tolerance of diversity, difference and social justice. It could very well be read as an expression of support of a perspective that certain students also subscribe to, but lack the courage to make public.

Third, educators must examine whether they impose their own critique of culture on their students, leading those students to resist what they experience as oppression. In this regard, Lindquist (1994), points out that:

> … we are caught in a contradiction if we applaud and encourage student resistance when it is a challenge to the dominant culture and is compatible with the politics of the educator, but treat resistance as something to be 'ignored or overcome' when feminist teachers experience it.

Student questions are legitimate ones, as Thembi recalls from a personal experience:

> **Thembi:** First, my students should understand the real impact of gender in their own personal lives. And to do so they have to understand that it is culture that defines and constructs the roles for mother, father, wife, husband, daughter, son, working woman, working man, female leader, male leader. It is important however that students themselves assess their own culture rather than let the lecturer do it for them, so that the lecturer is not accused of imposing his/her own ideological and political beliefs on 'innocent minds.' I insist on this type of approach because … I remember one student having commented on my teaching of gender issues as "Brainwashing." I immediately guessed that because I often feel very passionate about 'gender injustice,' I probably did not give students a chance to participate equally in this construction of knowledge. … I have since … insisted on 'collective construction of knowledge' to break free from the monopoly of 'knowledge production' held in my hands as the lecturer. (Autobiographical Essay: paragraphs 27 & 28).

Ropers-Huilman (1997), suggests that we must accept student resistance as an integral part of learning and as feminist teachers learn from the questions it poses, the tensions it supports, and the alternatives it suggests for crafting new classroom cultures. In this regard, Jones (1993:145), suggests that:

> A more fruitful, more humane practice of authority will follow the cues offered by the return to a consideration of authority as the relationship that founds the meaningfulness of a political community not in terms of command-obedience structures of imposed interpretations, but by weaving stories together that invite dialogue across our differences.

'O Gorman (1978), ponders whether as teachers we have the right to raise the consciousness of students? She extends her question to ask whether teachers as agents of consciousness-raising, have the right to manipulate others' ideological perspectives? This is a vital question, one especially to be addressed in the debate as to whether classrooms are value free, or designed to manipulate students with particular ideological ends in mind? Smith (2003), in describing the pedagogical enactments of bell hooks, notes that in spite of hooks encouraging student-centred classrooms, and regards every class member's contribution as important, she does not, however, relinquish her teacherly authority, neither does she necessarily think every student has something valuable to say. Some students may be calcified in a kind of mono-vision that is racist, sexist, while also harbouring other prejudicial ideologies. Rather than valuing student utterances as worthwhile in themselves, hooks values them as entry points for raising students' consciousness, employing them as markers to critique, analyze, and resist prejudicial ideologies. Conceiving that her job as an educator is to provide a worldview that opposes racism and sexism, hooks describes her teaching style as 'confrontational'. Unlike some feminist pedagogical models that suggest students best come to voice in an atmosphere of safety, hooks encourages students to work at coming to voice in an atmosphere where they may be afraid or see themselves at risk. Thus, according to Smith (2003), hooks' classrooms are not devoid of conflict.

Fourth, it is in this light that hooks' pedagogic stance provokes an interrogation of what we mean when we talk about making feminist classrooms egalitarian. Even though feminist classes may appear homogenous and free from power differences, they are implicated in the structures and prejudices of the outside world. Students are of different genders, sexualities, ethnicities, colour, etc. The various postures of resistance that students enact suggest that if feminist teachers work to create counter-hegemonic teaching, they must also be conscious of their own gendered, classed, and raced subjectivities as they confirm or challenge the lived experiences of their students. This does not mean avoiding or denying conflict, but legitimating this polyphony of voices and making both our oppression and our power conscious in the discourse of the classroom. Our jobs as teachers should include active resistance to students' active resistance, which, while it does not require the assumption of a traditional teaching position does draw a purely student-centred pedagogy into question.