

Chapter Seven

Endnotes: Enacting Feminisms in Academia

insights, hindsights, oversights

Introduction

In understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical to know about the personal and professional nuances of teachers' lives. Goodson & Hargreaves (1995), contend that our paucity of knowledge in this area is a manifest indictment of our sociological imagination. In response to the paucity, distant, divorced and disengaged nature of many of our studies of teachers, there has been a move towards embracing the teacher practitioner as an important entity for sociological investigation. This study has attempted to contribute to this move by engaging five Southern African feminist lecturers of English in a critical reflection of their practice, and in so doing, to also add their under-represented voices to the feminist conversation. Drawing on (auto)biographical narratives the study identified social variables that shape the participants' identities, which in turn informs their language teaching philosophies and pedagogies. By examining the theoretical and ideological stances of these educators in relation to their enactment of feminist tenets in multilingual classrooms, the study endeavoured to attain deeper understandings of feminist theorising and its implications for teaching in demographically diverse language classrooms. The study explored the empirical dimensions of recurrent themes in feminist debates viz. teacher positionality, teacher authority, teacher and student personal epistemologies as a valid source of knowledge, and the politics of difference and dialogue. By extension, it endeavoured to enhance concept clarification, concept recontextualisation, concept redefinition, and concept elaboration as a way to confront the critique that feminist discourses are coached in theoretical abstraction (See Tong 1989).

Although, according to Noblit & Hare (1988), qualitative research reports do not easily lend themselves to synthesis, they do, however, contend that some form of synthesis is essential to enhance the practical value of qualitative research, and facilitate a fuller understanding of phenomena, contexts and cultures under investigation. Thus, in this concluding chapter, I revisit for the purposes of reflective synthesis, salient insights that emerged from the study. The chapter is presented in two sections. Section 1, titled: *Theoretical Reflective Synthesis: insights, hindsights, oversights* synthesises what emerged in relation to the key theoretical lines of argument that were identified for investigation. Section 2, titled: *Methodological Reflective Synthesis: talking back to the researcher* presents

the participants' comments in relation to verifying the analysis chapters, and their reflections on the personal and professional value participation in the study had for them.

Section 1: Theoretical Reflective Synthesis: insights hindsights, oversights

According to Goodson (1997), (auto)biographical studies of teachers ensure that their backgrounds and experiences count as important in understanding their personal and pedagogic philosophies. Goodson contends that a biographical approach sensitises us to the relationships between the everyday realities of teaching in relation to teachers' ages, social status, family backgrounds, ideologies, affinities, etc. Thus, who teaches what, why and how are critical questions to be explored in attempting to understand the relationship between teachers' latent identities and their pedagogic and academic identities. As a way of exploring the impact the participants' backgrounds have on their teacher identities, in Chapter 4, I presented a cursory analysis of each participant's public collective narratives. The chapter focused on family influences, and experiences from childhood and early adulthood to explore the impact culture, language, sexual orientation, religion, nationality and politics have had on individual participant's identity formation. The chapter also presented a cross-analysis of these variables with the intention of exploring the potential a retrospective gaze of the participants' formative identity conceptions could have in terms of first, how they frame interpersonal relations with students and colleagues, and second, issues of potential pedagogic significance (e.g. nationality and citizenship; multiculturalism and multilingualism; gender and sexualities) which they could, and often do explore with their students.

In reviewing the insights that emerged from this chapter, we found that Carol and Thembi acted in relation to legitimising gender, race, religious, political, etc. identities which, conformed to the authoritative norm, while Jennifer, Vijay and Phumzile challenged or resisted prescribed social scripts from an early age. Another key impulse that emerged from the descriptive commentary and cross-analysis supported the contention that narratives embed identities in time and space frameworks, thus a core conception of identity should include dimensions of time and space relationality so that identity can be understood as a *conceptual narrativity*. Temporal and spatial variables shape the political and contextual contingency of identities, and also provide organizing themes for personal and professional narratives. In this regard, for example, the legacies of colonialism and post colonialism; apartheid and post apartheid served as useful tropes for the participants in framing and reflecting on the temporal and contextual situatedness of their varying personal experiences of privilege and disprivilege; dominance and domination; enfranchisement and disenfranchisement. This was especially so in relation to how they reflected on their

changing identity constructions in terms of nationality, ethnicity, race, class, language, religious, etc. positionalities. From the participants' retrospective gaze and critique of their personal and the broader social ideologies prevalent during their childhood and early adulthood, we note that they experienced, in varying degrees, permutations of cultural identification, dis-identification, schizo-identification; feelings of strong We and weak We political, social and sexual orientations; and tensions between group charisma and group shame. Contextualising their identities socially, historically and ideologically provided a more nuanced understanding of the psycho-social tensions the women experienced. In the first instance living in patriarchal societies imposed its own set of gendered prescriptions and restrictions on them. In the second, instance, when gender was coupled with the politics of race, the combination produced a different set of dynamics. For example, for the White women, Apartheid conferred upon them a supremacy that reduced the dynamics of oppression in comparison to those participants who were both women and Black. Within the experiential universe of the Black women, the intensity of oppression was, however, not universal. For example, for South African born Phumzile concessionary Apartheid policies saw her growing up in a multiracial, more economically privileged environment that disconnected her from fellow Black South Africans. Botswana born Thembi, for whom racial discrimination was not an issue, admits to enjoying the privileges of belonging to an ethnic and linguistic majority.

Tracking the trajectories of the participants' changing identities over time and space provided a backdrop against which to surmise why in their teaching space they privilege certain curricula choices and exercise epistemic paternalism over others, and opt for epistemic dissonance in yet other instances. A retrospective gaze of the participants' backgrounds also provided a historical context against which to understand why and how they negotiate pedagogic relations in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, etc. in the ways that they do.

The significance of engaging in a retrospective gaze of the participants' backgrounds in terms of their various positionalities is encapsulated in Hall's (1988:29), contention that:

All groups require a narrative that recognises, that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position. However, rather than searching for the origins of our identities as historical agents in struggle, we need to focus more on what we can achieve together. We need also to remember that the narratives we tell and retell in our classrooms are both reflective and constitutive of who we are and what we will become.

While an exploration of the participants' backgrounds enhances our appreciation of the contiguous variables that shape individual identities, in crystallising the insights from an exploration of the participants' reflections of their childhood and early adulthood, I concur with Eagleton (1991:210), who suggests that there is no internal relation between particular socio-economic conditions, and specific kinds of political, cultural or ideological positions. McLaren (1993:214), too argues that material location by, for example, class or race does not necessarily furnish an individual with an appropriate set of political beliefs or desires. Eagleton and McLaren do, however, posit that there exist connections between forms of social consciousness and material conditions to the extent that some narratives are motivated by experiences of class, race, ethnicity and gender. This suggests that race, class and gender identity markers may reinforce certain subjectivities so that there exist generic as well as idiosyncratic relationships between identities and social determinants.

The discussion in Chapter 4 forwarded the view that in as much as social actors situate themselves in terms of ethnicity, class, gender, etc. they also refuse to be confined to those locations or be expected to endorse value systems, rituals, *morés* associated with those positionalities, especially if such practices are discriminatory. For example, while Vijay appreciated the educational benefits that obtained from belonging to the middle class, she was critical to the point of feeling ashamed about the 'arrogance and stupidity' generally associated with middle class disposition.

In Chapter 5 titled: *Identity as Ideology: Trajectories of Feminist Identity Construction*, I continued the focus on the participants' formative socialisation; however, I assumed a sharper gaze on the trajectories of their feminist ideological development. I explored the cluster of experiences that led the five participants to identify themselves as feminists, by examining whether there are experiences that contribute to the development of a feminist consciousness. Discussion in this chapter was framed in relation to Hart's (1991), description of three movements of coming to feminist consciousness. In the discussion, I distanced myself from the notion that coming to feminist consciousness presupposes a unitariness/singleness of mindset, or that it is characterised by a linear trajectory. A summary of the features of the three movements of coming to feminist consciousness yielded the following insights: Movement One showed that through an introspective gaze participants reported sensing and experiencing the dailiness of patriarchy. They wrestled with the psychological and existential tensions in their performance of public and private female roles, responsibilities and behaviours, which elevated and validated maleness above femaleness. Movement Two saw a transitioning from an inward gaze to an outward gaze during which the participants transitioned from having gender consciousness to coming to feminist consciousness. In addition, the women began to view their oppression not as a

unique, private experience, but as pervasive and public. Movement Three tracked the participants' enactment of a transformed identity in which they adopted *project identities* which manifested in their teaching and theorising about personal and social emancipation.

The three movements of the participants' coming to feminist consciousness and their responses to their gendered, racial, class, etc. social scripts may be understood in the light of Bourdieu's (in Connolly 1997:71), concept of *habitus*. According to Bourdieu the *habitus* refers to the way we have developed and internalised ways of approaching, thinking about and acting upon our social world. Over time we come successively to learn from, and incorporate the lessons of our lived experiences, which guide our future actions and behaviour and dispose us to thinking in certain ways. Bourdieu argues that as our experiences become consolidated and reinforced, the *habitus* becomes more durable and internalised and we *habitualise* the way we think and behave.

Proceeding from this conception of *habitus* an exploration of the participants' trajectories of gender, race, class, ethnic, etc. consciousness, however, did not suggest that *habitus* predestines human beings as automatums of social determinism. Such a conceptualisation of *habitus* leaves no room for human agency, which enables social actors to make sense of the contingent, complex and contradictory nature of their multiple identities. Human beings' agentic potential to resist and rescript their social conditioning necessitates understanding the relationship between the *habitus* and Bourdieu's other concepts of *capital* (which comprises scarce economic, cultural, social and symbolic goods and resources), and *field* which may be understood as an arena of contesting stratified forces where skirmishes over limited capital resources occur. Bourdieu (in Connolly 1997:73), explains the relationship between *habitus*, *capital* and *field* as follows:

The relation between *habitus* and field operates in two ways. On one side, it is a relation of *conditioning*: the field structures the *habitus* ... On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or cognitive construction: *habitus* contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and with value, in which it is worth investing one's energy.

Understanding the interrelated constellation of *habitus*, *capital* and *field*, for some participants leads to their recognition of the stratification of identity positionalities. For example, Carol reflects on how her early socialisation attempted to engender in her race (White) and ethnic (English) supremacy. However, rather than consolidate (habitualise) her early socialisation, on becoming conscientized to its discriminatory and cruel edge, she distanced herself from its value system. For some of the other participants who had recognised gender based discrimination early in their lives, this helped them draw parallels to other forms of oppression, (class, language, sexuality, ethnicity, etc.) and also resist them. In

the light of this conceptualisation of *habitus* the trajectories of the participants' altered consciousness testifies to their choice to transcend the 'accident of birth' in relation to gender, race, class, etc. It demonstrates that only when the concept of *habitus* is contextualised in relation to the concepts of economic, cultural, social and symbolic *capital* and *field* (e.g. socio-political contexts) does the contingent, fluid, and reflexive nature of identity become apparent. The self becomes a reflexive project in which identity construction may entail displacements of identification, knowing and being in relation to race, class, gender, etc. through processes of deconstruction, decentering, revisionist readings, and an anti-assimilationist politics of the hegemonic status quo.

As individuals learn about the implications and consequences of their identity markers consciousness raising events/episodes may motivate them to align themselves with particular struggles. This is suggested in Bourdieu's quote: '*habitus* contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and with value, in which it is worth investing one's energy'. Thus, individuals may begin investing their energies in purposeful, value-laden, meaningful projects. Alignment and participation in such projects is consistent with the view that to be a human being is to know both what one is doing and why one is doing it. Hence, we note that for the participants in my study, Movement Two politicised discriminatory gender, class, race, etc. differentiated behaviour, and was characterised by their subscription to ideological, theoretical and methodological positions that advocate social justice, consistent with the redress agenda of feminist politics.

The participants' transition from gender consciousness to feminist consciousness correlates with McAdams' (1990), differentiation between episodes of *change* and episodes of *continuity*. In coming to feminist consciousness those participants who subscribed to the authoritative norm as far as gender scripts were concerned began to adopt resistance identities. Thus, episodes of *change* marked turning points in their ideological and identificatory histories and conditioning. Thembis and Carol's recollections of coming to feminist consciousness proved consistent with episodes of *change*, and entry into a new *habitus*. Episodes of *continuity*, on the other hand, detail subscription to a particular value or value system. For Phumzile, Jennifer and Vijay coming to feminist consciousness correlates with episodes of *continuity*, in that they maintain that they have always been feminists and continue to subscribe to value systems that are resistant to discriminatory gender and other social injustices.

From the discussion in Chapter 5, we note that irrespective of the variation in the trajectories of the participants' coming to feminist consciousness, rather than consolidate negative conditioning about their gender scripts, the women learn to *rehabilitate* positive conceptions of themselves. Having identified with feminist sensibilities, some participants

assume, while others consolidate, their resistance identities. In this regard, their resistance identities are bolstered by the influences of people, places and publications. Their resistance identities are further strengthened when they form strategic and principled coalitions with other social actors, with whom they agitate not just for personal, but also for broader social emancipation.

Mennells' (1994:176-177), metaphor of the *filo pastry of identity* highlights the participants' social interconnectivity, which when politicised, has the prospect of evolving into *project identities*. *Project identities* engender a narrative imagination, which enables critical linkages to be made between one's own stories and the stories of cultural *Others*. *Project identities* are created out of empathy for others by means of a passionate connection through difference. *Project identities* are characterised by resistance postures, and the ability to disinvest in absolutizing tendencies of a racist, classist, patriarchal world that founds itself on the notion of a fixed, essentialist identity. Thus, we see that rather than habitualise negative scripts about their personal subjectivities and the subjectivities of disenfranchised *Others* the participants internalise a new anti discriminatory social *habitus*. They rename, reconstruct and compose positive social scripts rather than appropriate negative subjectivities associated with signifiers of deficit, omission, and erasure. Kovel (in McLaren 1993:223), captures the essence of *project identities* in his proclamation:

I am a subject, not merely an object; I am not a Cartesian subject, whose subjectivity is pure inwardness, but rather an expressive subject, a transformative subject; I am a subject, therefore, who needs to project my being into the world, and transform the world as an expression of my being; and finally, I will appropriate my being rather than have it appropriated.

As expressive subjects, one way in which the participants in my study project their being upon the world is through their theorising and teaching. This is linked to their *project identities*, which are consolidated in Movement Three of their coming to feminist consciousness, and in which they enact a transformed identity. This means that for these women exposure to feminism impacts both their personal and professional identities. The connection between the participants' transformed identities and their teaching and theorising suggests that the narratives they live by are not only evident in the way they reflect upon and analyse their past, present, and future, but are ingrained in the very theoretical formulations, paradigms, and principles that constitute their models for such reflection, analysis and activism. Furthermore, the theories that they read and espouse, as well as their personal theorising and teachings, tell a story about social life and their attitudes towards it.

Given that the participants espouse and teach postcolonial, deconstructionist and poststructural theories – all of which advocate and seek to habitualise new normative ideals that configure experience and investment in narratives of emancipation, the narrative intentionality of these radical and critical theories correlates with their personal convictions and beliefs. Apart from informing their identities as ideology, it also draws attention to the way their convictional identities influence the theories and texts they include in their curricula programmes. Thus, as teachers who teach English from a feminist perspective, they employ their teaching space to conscientize their students to the dehumanising effects of discriminatory gender and socio-linguistic practices. In so doing, they attempt to teach students that language and gender are not neutral, or value-free phenomena, but powerful conduits for the transmission of cultural values and attitudes. As socio-cultural constructs, discriminatory linguistic and gender practices can be deconstructed and reconstructed to institute new normative ideals that engender a just social order. Ideally, their students would also be convicted to develop project identities aimed at agitating for personal and social transformation.

Chapter 6, titled: *Exploring the Complexities of Feminist Teacher Identities* identified for more detailed investigation the professional and academic personae of the feminist teacher. Important questions that surfaced early in the study in relation to the theorising and teaching from a feminist perspective included: What makes this or that teaching practice feminist? Is it the content alone, the pedagogy, or an amalgamation of both? Maher & Tetreault (1994), also posed similar questions when they enquired whether a feminist teacher is naturally democratic, co-operative and concerned with connections and relationships, rather than authoritarian, competitive and rational. Are women's ways of learning affective rather than rational? If we cannot make such dichotomies, they argued, what does constitute a feminist teaching practice? Is it determined by the curriculum, by the classroom environment and practice, or both? While Chapter Six did not set out to specifically respond to these questions, they are nonetheless, addressed discursively through an examination of recurrent themes in feminist pedagogy. These themes converge around different conceptions of feminist teacher authority, viz. *nurturance versus authority, authority as authorship and authority as power*.

First, the strong sense emerging from an exploration of *nurturance versus authority* is the participants' unanimous efforts to unhinge the female teacher from association with care-giver and intellectualised mammy, while simultaneously ensuring that she is not read as distant, superior and disconnected, bearded mother. To this end, the participants display features of what Eagleton (1998), alludes to when she proposes the notion of 'impersonality'. Eagleton suggests that 'impersonality' may serve as a strategic interpersonal pedagogic

relational practice, which combines an ethic of care and connectedness while maintaining a critical distance that encourages students to come into their own intellectual and emotional maturity and independence. The participants in my study give substance to the notion of 'impersonality', in their attempts to enact female teacher personae that favour a *recontextualised* and *reconceptualised* notion of female and feminist educators.

A *recontextualised* notion of the female teacher involves engendering interpersonal relations that are appropriate for university age students. This suggests that the understanding of being a nurturing teacher needs to be expanded in a university context so that the nurturing female educator is recognised as one who creates a supportive, non-threatening and encouraging environment that is discursive, and sufficiently challenging to risk a pedagogical 'politics of disappointment' (Jones cited in Lather 1998). Such a self consciously contradictory pedagogy is sensitive to interpersonal ideological differences, but is courageous enough to generate disconfirmation and unease, when, for example, students enact/express prejudiced worldviews.

A *reconceptualised* notion of the female teacher expands on the recontextualised notion of the female educator. It suggests recognising the woman teacher as female but non-maternal. It conceives of the female teacher as supportive, committed to improving students' academic prowess, and promoting independent, and critical thinking. It, however, cautions against her being misconstrued as an unscholarly, emotional safety net. It urges that the female teacher not be stereotypically read as better suited to nursing students' emotional casualties, since such conceptions mask her scholarly and academic competencies and astuteness. Thus, rather than become repressed into teacher-mother/intellectualized mammy figures, the participants in my study urge a recontextualised and reconceptualised understanding of the female teacher; an understanding that foregrounds their capability of offering critical intellectual nurturance.

Recontextualised and reconceptualised understandings of the female teacher correlate with the processes of transference and counter-transference that Franks (1995), refers to. The notion of transference and counter-transference, encapsulates the oscillation between proximity and retreat (the push-pull contradiction) that is often present in the feminist classroom.

The second critical point that emerged from an examination of *nurturance versus authority* is related to the participants directing their pedagogic energies towards reading the texts of educational experience and practice as semiotic as well as symbolic systems. This translates to conceiving of curriculum as a project of *transcendence*, which suggests that while both teachers and students are immersed in biology and ideology they are also able to transcend biology and ideology. Thus, rather than enact their female teacher identity in

relation to reductive and repressive expectations that associate their female bodies with ideological reproductive mother-teachers (consonant with spoon feeding/banking education), within their practical teaching spaces, the participants enact transformative/transcendent pedagogies. In so doing, they refuse to be conduits for the reproduction of discriminatory knowledge systems. Their teaching and theorising propose political and epistemological educative and pedagogic agendas, which aim at developing in their students' resistance, project identities that subvert and sabotage socially unjust practices.

The significance of assuming a *project identity* that conceives of curriculum as a project of transcendence also becomes manifest when *authority as authorship* is understood as the mutual sharing of teacher-student personal experiences in relation to broader public and academic discourses. We note that, as a way of promoting *authority as authorship*, the participants encourage their students to find, fashion and make audible their own voices, as well as the voices of marginalized *Other*. *Authority as authorship*, thus serves as an organising trope for activating: (i) *authorship as invention* (through engaging students in autobiographical writing exercises); (ii) *authorship as experiential and theoretical praxis* (encouraging students to juxtapose personal and social experiences with theoretical insight); and (iii) *authorship as positionality* (encouraging students to critique and deconstruct texts and theories).

The three-fold purpose emanating from these variations in authorial stance are intended to service the objectives of: first, compelling 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, attempting to move students from vague feelings about an issue or concept to thinking and reflecting about them critically. Third, seeking to engender 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. These objectives cumulatively aim at engaging students in boundary crossing, translation, analysis and synthesis of different sources of information. However, while recognising the potential pedagogic value of teacher and student personal narratives, the discussion in this section, cautions that a preoccupation exclusively with the horizontal nature of personal epistemology may hinder conceptual coherence; progression of knowledge formation and acquisition; as well as critical and analytical maturation. In this regard, *authority as authorship* encapsulates features of what McLaren (1993:221), refers to as 'critical narratology'. Critical narratology may be interpreted as a defamiliarizing strategy that seeks to move students and teachers away from rehearsing narratives that circulate exclusively within the realm of the horizontal and familiar to a place where exteriorising personal narratives constitutes a first step towards understanding its relevance and

relationship to *Others*. Conceiving of *authority as authorship* in this way frames it in a Self-*Other* dialectic, and foregrounds the following two points:

First, *authority as authorship* becomes a reflexive conversation with one's plural selves and heterogeneous *Others*. As such, reflexive conversations have the potential to contest and rupture the narrative structure of dominant social texts. It signals a border crossing, in the sense that the border crossed is both Self and *Other*. Through practicing, *authority as authorship*, teachers and students learn to re-present themselves through a form of border writing/dialogue in which the narratives they construct for themselves in relation to the *Other* are deterritorialised politically, culturally, and linguistically. The effect is that the meaning-tropes through which subjectivity becomes constructed circulate neither as a practice of narcissism, nor does it seek to dominate the *Other*. Such a conception of *authority as authorship*, urges teachers and students to explore and develop insurgent/counter narratives that deconstruct and reconstruct narratives of Self and *Other* more responsibly. Thus, for example, by activating *authorship as invention*, *authorship as positionality*, and by striving towards *authority as experiential and theoretical praxis* we note that the feminist educators in my study attempt to cultivate in their students a language of narrative refusal/resistance and delegitimation of social scripts that sow seeds of discrimination. Engaging students in critical deconstructionist exercises (e.g. Thembi's exercise on Practical Criticism and Jennifer's day-long seminar on Deconstructing Gender), underscore the importance of inviting students to contest essentialist identities inscribed and legitimated within patriarchy.

Second, and by extension, while teachers encourage their students to critique identity diminishing grand narratives and reclaim and script marginalized narratives students are also cautioned against romanticising their own cultural scripts and those of marginalized *Other*. The development of their insurgent imagination aims, ideally, at skilling students to assume the role of metacultural mediators who are critical of their own assumptions as well as those of others, so as not to re-contain/reinstantiate oppression in their authorial stances.

Discussion around the theme *authority as power* was framed in relation to Gore's (2002), proposition for developing a theory of power in pedagogy, which confronts the notion that the feminist teacher and her classroom can be void of power relations.

An examination of the proposition that *pedagogy is the enactment of power relations* reconfirmed that power is fluid and circulatory, and those who exercise power neither possess, nor embody it. Although debates in feminist pedagogy generally isolate for discussion the notion of power and authority in relation to the feminist teacher, the gaze in this discussion shifted to an analysis of students and their vertical and horizontal power performances. Teacher-student and student-student interchanges, in my study, illustrated

that students are not powerless and subservient victims in the class; they also exert power. Sometimes they are courageous enough to confront the teacher's script (a vertical challenge of power), at other times they assume the role of accessory to the teacher's authority and reprimand and challenge fellow students (a horizontal challenge of power). The discussion illustrated that the intersection of students and teachers' multiple identities yield fluid and fluctuating relationships within feminist teaching practices and discourses.

Allied to conceiving of pedagogy as an enactment of power relations, an exploration of the proposition *bodies are the objects of power relations* prompted a closer analysis of how teachers' race, gender, age, dress, well-being, etc. frame academic and pedagogic relations.

First, going into the classroom, the teacher's body is marked, and the identity from which she is seen to speak is 'read off' her body. When she speaks she may be read as 'speaking as' woman, as teacher, as young/old, as middle class, as Black/White. The weight of each of these markings vary depending upon the students and colleagues who read her, how they interpret her authority or lack thereof, how she has been constituted by and inserted into the discursive norms of academia, etc. It is this reading, which takes place in silence that essentialises her, unless she finds ways to interrupt, deconstruct or minimise identity-essentialising expectations.

Against the backdrop of early feminist theorising that advocated redefining pedagogic power differentials which would render feminist classrooms egalitarian, the discussion showed that when circumstances, contexts, colleagues and students attempt to divest the female teacher of power, she may actively engage in power performances that subvert the Freirean (1968), ideal of being both teacher-student. On these occasions she realizes that by disinvesting in the notion of the professor or academic, she is actually masking her educative and pedagogic power, and may actually be impersonating some other unrecognizable character in the educational drama. This is particularly evident in the way Phumzile and Vijay (two young, Black females) enact their teacher personae in overtly powerful and authoritative ways, so that race, age and gender diminishing stereotypes do not sabotage the educative and pedagogic mandate they have committed themselves to. The point is that their varying enactments of power are not always for strictly pedagogical reasons, because more often than not material sites, conditions and interpersonal relations, rather than strictly feminist, anti racist ideological considerations may demand pedagogic performances that make aspects of the hierarchy useful for them. Conversely, circumstances, contexts, colleagues and students may direct teacher discretion towards downplaying female teacher authority. This is particularly evident in the way Carol performs her professional and pedagogic identities. Carol is conscious that as a middle aged, White

female, the legacy of her race, class, language and age sometimes act as technologies that can alienate her from her predominantly Black students. Essentially, these teachers either call attention to, or lessen the effects of their identity difference depending on reactions they anticipate and experience with their students and colleagues in the particular contexts they find themselves. There is a tendency when working with teachers' narratives to focus on their teaching content, while contexts, which influence their personal and pedagogic identities, receive short shrift in studies. Thus, the discussion flagged the importance of recognising the context in which teachers ply their trade.

The variations in the participants' pedagogic identities resonate with Anzaldúa's (1990:xxiii), observation that our voices and identities are sometimes framed out of a discourse of choice. Teachers choose with which voice to speak (the voice of the Black/White professor); the first person, third person; and in which language (Black English, isiZulu, academese, vernacular, formal). When brought into teaching/learning situations, the varying accents teachers place on their identities reasserts the non-essentiality and provisionality of their subject positions. It highlights the particular and contextually embodied expressions of teachers' insertion into interpersonal relations, and challenges them to examine their own claims to centrality and marginality. This contributes to distributing teacher power and authority to a variety of identity positions not all of which are ultimately and timelessly manifested in the institutionally-sanctioned position of 'teacher.'

Second, given women's key role in servicing national educational systems and their identification with issues of citizenship, the participants' reflections on their academic citizenship signalled the need to examine the ways in which women educators are positioned in relation to citizenship. Women educators find themselves, on the one hand, positioned as the key agents in the project of preparing society's future citizens while, on the other hand, they are often denied political agency. In considering how the female teacher's gendered status impacts her academic citizenship, the discussion in this section, supports Ashenden's (1997:43), observation that in the recent history of western societies two major forms of patriarchal relations are discernible: viz. public and private. Private patriarchy is based on the exclusion of women from areas of social life, with individual men appropriating the labour of individual women in the home. Public patriarchy is a form of domination which does not exclude women from public life, but which subordinates them within it. Public forms of patriarchy, where women constitutionally have equal political, civil, and social rights, but face continued inequality emerged in the participants' testimonies. They reported that the intensification of teaching and administrative labour invariably sees them being the recipients of unequal time and financial resources. In addition, given that teaching and administration work reduce research and publications output, such labour is stigmatised with lower

academic status and does not carry income-attracting potential. When these factors are coupled with the numeric minority of women in academia, this perpetuates gender stratification, where women are included, and then subordinated.

In identifying the barriers that militate against their enjoying full academic citizenship, the participants also reflected on the resistance strategies they employ to negotiate the professional hurdles they encounter. Ranging from strategic compliance to contrived collegiality; from cloistered and territorial scholarship to contemplating relocating to different academic institutions, and indulging in flights of fantasy to escape the feelings of alienation, the sense that emerged is that women navigate a difficult course between complacency and cynicism. On the one hand, to discount cynically the extent of change is to underestimate the achievements women, as academic citizens, have brought about in the face of many odds. Adopting such a stance would reinforce the image of women as passive victims, rather than active agents of change, and would contribute to a culture of defeatism. On the other hand, complacency about women's position today denies the extent to which many women in academia are still relegated to inferior citizenship status. The delicate balance between complacency and cynicism hinges in part on the question of power: power as self-realisation, which casts women as active academic citizens to power as domination, which marginalizes and subordinates them to second-class academic citizenship.

The proposition that *the kind of knowledge produced in pedagogy interacts with the site and the power employed there* supports the view that curriculum content selection, teaching and assessment are value-laden acts that operate within historically constructed relations and sites of power. Notwithstanding the fact that the participants in my study subscribe to egalitarian ideals and social relations predisposed to emancipatory forms of power, they also recognize the dual nature of tertiary institutions, both as agents that reinforce the educational function of the university as a bureaucratic apparatus, and as organs of possible social transformation. The discussion on this proposition foregrounds two key points.

First, in terms of the work feminist teachers do, it is important to stress that subscription to a feminist agenda does not in itself alter the processes of classroom teaching. This cultural dimension of labour - what McLaren (1993), refers to as the 'ethnification of labour' - shapes individuals in a way characteristic for the particular labour situation. What emerges is that despite the expectation for feminist teachers to be democratic, students still have to be taught, enthused and 'disciplined', curricula 'covered' and examinations worked towards. It is against this backdrop that the feminist teacher's educative and pedagogic authority as power becomes apparent. Thus, the bureaucratic imperatives of the educational site at which she is employed, and her contractual obligations,

for the most part, suggest that a feminist agenda may change the goals of classroom teaching rather than the process. Irrespective of the variation in the teaching style the feminist teacher employs (be it a facilitator, delegator, demonstrator, lecture approach, etc.), it is transformation of the underlying pedagogic and educative objective that transforms the teaching activity.

In writing specifically about feminist social vision, Jones (1993:244), suggests that we consider the prospect of *norms of presence and purpose*, which could render the interests of marginalized *Other* politically salient and visible. Norms of *presence and purpose* depend upon a theory of community for clarifying what our relations and responsibilities to one another are. When appropriated specifically for the domain of pedagogic content and interpersonal relations, *presence* alludes to both the mental presence (critical consciousness associated with the mind), and the physical presence (associated with the body) of teachers and students. *Purpose*, on the other hand, relates to the narrative intentionality of teaching and learning, viz. teachers' endeavours to effect conceptual shifts in their students. The realisation and materialisation of the norms of pedagogic *presence and purpose* supports understanding the feminist teacher's pedagogic and educative authority not as a practice that abandon rules, rights or normalisations. It is not ruleless, but is linked to a social vision (*purpose*) that detaches itself from private moorings. This was evident in several instances when, for example, the attempted to regulate student attendance through reprimands and threats. Jointly, the *norms of presence and purpose* resonate with the intellectual and social synergy associated with collaborative learning (See Laditka 1990).

The second point that emerged from considering the proposition that *the kind of knowledge produced in pedagogy interacts with the site and the power employed there* is related to curricula content. The insight that emerges is that subscription to feminist pedagogy *per se* does not necessarily require that gender be the most important or exclusive topic for discussion. For example, Vijay and Phumzile's lectures, dealt with HIV/AIDS and postcolonial issues, respectively, which did not have an exclusive gender focus. However, the objective of consciousness raising so as to improve the lives of men and women, by dismantling the interlocking oppressions of race, class, gender, ethnic, etc. lend themselves for exploration via various routes/topical discussions. These issues explicitly or implicitly encompass power differentials and the potential to engender repressive and oppressive behaviour in interpersonal relations. Hence, Coffey & Delamont's (2000:68), view that feminist pedagogy is ultimately a practical decision about where to direct one's limited energies and powers in the effort to create a more liveable world, is pertinent. The need to harness limited resources in order to move the vision for social justice forward effectively and

expeditiously is also articulated by Cohee *et al.* (1998:7), who describe feminist pedagogy as:

... a move beyond analysis of abstracts and the frustrations of feminist teaching and feminist administering to proposing detailed strategies and resources for raising students' (and teachers') consciousness about gender, race, class and sexuality; for transforming larger institutional environments to make them more equitable, democratic places for the collective construction of knowledge.

An exploration of Gore's (2002), proposition that *pedagogy proceeds via a limited set of specific techniques* confirms that pedagogical power relations will not be overcome by simply adopting different classroom practices such as dialogic, student-centred approaches. Gore recommends that it might be more useful to analyse the kind of pedagogical strategies and ideological normalisations teachers enact in their classrooms. In considering the way feminist pedagogical sensibilities impact knowledge systems, the discussion highlighted that teachers privilege certain epistemological and ideological stances, and disprivilege others. It also confirms Shalem's (1999), depiction of the feminist teacher as someone who has a project that embodies a commitment to a set of educational beliefs and goals. The feminist pedagogical project is predicated on a curriculum based on the values of social justice, equity and development; relevance, critical thinking and problem solving. Hence, the feminist teacher educates with the objective of effecting conceptual shifts in her students in accordance with feminist sensibilities. To this end she delineates both a pedagogic and educative path along which her students travel. The educational enterprise for the feminist teacher is linked to her *project identity*. In considering the kinds of normalisations teachers enact, two important points emerge. The first refers us back to discussion on *authority as authorship* and the discussion on the normalisation of grammatically coherent language usage for assessment purposes. The second relates to the normalisation of feminist and radical ideologies.

First, according to Carter (1994), a quick glance at the history of English language teaching philosophies and methodologies shows that it has been preoccupied with grammatical correctness based on normative standards. This has discouraged language variability, in favour of linguistic purity. It has encouraged the memorisation of grammatical rules, and persisted in the prescription of select texts that celebrate classical Western traditions. Agnihotri (1995:4-5), observes that sociological positivism, psychological behaviourism, and linguistic structuralism all demanded that oral fluency, accuracy, and a native-like control of the language be learnt. Within these language teaching and learning paradigms, students are increasingly viewed as empty receptacles who can be programmed

by the environment to learn the appropriate linguistic codes. Language is construed as a set of structures and the learning process as largely linear and additive. Given that the participants in my study are respectful of multilingualism and critical language awareness discourses, they recognise the shortcomings of language teaching that is preoccupied exclusively with grammatical rules.

While recognising the socio-political constructedness of language, and the necessity for critical language awareness, the participants nonetheless attach varying degrees of importance to the adherence to grammatical rules and language conventions. Jennifer, Phumzile and Thembi recognise the role adherence to grammatical rules play in effective communication. Although Carol and Vijay appear to be more accommodating of deviation from grammatical conventions, they too have an underlying concern with engendering as normative the logical and clear use of the English language for effective and meaningful communication. In this way the participants locate themselves at different points on the continuum of normative English language usage.

Second, although the participants distance themselves from demanding that students conform to their personal ideologies, (for example, Thembi is conscious not to be construed as someone who brainwashes her students, and Carol is cautious that she may be construed as a prudish, White woman who tells her students what to do and how to think), the moral and ethical intentionality tied to their pedagogic and educative objectives, however aim at provoking students to interrogate the implications of their learning for their own lives and those of others. Thus, there emerges a sense that to teach responsibly, translates to having an interest as individuals in the social reality outside of their immediate classrooms.

However, teaching is a complex and ambiguous activity, hence defining the place for ideologies in classrooms is a subject fraught with ambiguity. This holds true for the project of conscientizing and socialising students into feminist and social justice sensibilities. From the discussion we note that when teachers attempt to engender a new (radical) pedagogic or ideological normative this is met with pockets of resistance from students over pedagogic technique or engagement with course content; some students resist feminist and radical ideologies that propose new normative ideals; still others adopt silence and non-participation resistance technologies. Their resistance assumes various guises, viz. *discounting*, *denying*, *distancing*, and expressing *dismay* about the prevalence of patriarchal and allied social injustices. These are manifested through permutations of collective and individual resistance, non-cooperation, escape/avoidance, and/or concealment. Given that feminist teachers endeavour to contain and eventually eradicate narrative discourses that engender social injustice, when students reject/challenge feminist or other radical analyses of social

phenomena this has generally been labeled false consciousness, and has often been attributed to flaws in the students.

There are four significant points that emerge from an analysis of student resistance. First, teachers use different kinds of narratives to tell different kinds of stories. They also sanction certain narratives and discount others for ideological and political reasons. Thus, there emerges a 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 pedagogic 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.

Second, there is the need not to distort the nature of differences in an educational setting by oversimplifying them. For example, student Joan's Trauma Theory about gays was expressed in an insensitive way, and student Nathi, advocated two separate standards of sexual morality—one, which sanctioned male promiscuity and the other, which expected female sexual purity. However, it is important to note, that for each of us, voice and identity are multiple constructions, and the idea of each person having a (single) voice and identity is a fallacy. This suggests also recognizing the potentially evolutionary and multiple voices of students in general, and those who utter discriminatory viewpoints, in particular. Thus, although some students may voice/express discriminatory views, it is possible that with changes in time and context, such students may re-evaluate their prejudiced worldviews and align themselves with anti-discriminatory discourses.

Third, because feminist pedagogy embodies the object of effecting ideological and convictional changes in students, it may be regarded as a conversionist discourse. Diawara (1994:217), notes that irrespective of whether conversionist discourses are motivated by religion, science or politics, they tend to underestimate culture or liken it to pathology. Conversionists, whether they are politicians, religious leaders or teacher activists, tend to blame the culture of the people they are trying to convert. They expect people to come to a revolutionary consciousness, or a spiritual awakening, and walk out of their culture in order to change the world. Conversionist discourses invariably address epistemological crises, which emanate from the unproblematic expectation that coming into consciousness from a state of 'cultural innocence' will automatically result in the acquisition of and identification with new knowledge.

Fourth, this returns us to Pitt's (1997), argument that identity does not precede identification; rather identification informs identity formation. Feminist pedagogies, for example, invite students to identify with their teachers and with the images of marginalized *Other* (women, the economically disenfranchised, etc.), who populate the texts of feminist

knowledge. These textualised characters portray narratives of oppression, and counter narratives of resistance. Pitt (1997:131), suggests that the shortcoming of this approach to learning resides in its assumption that:

- (a) the identificatory processes it entails will be unproblematic for the student,
- (b) the student is rationally in charge of how knowledge will affect him/her, and
- (c) identification proceeds from, and results in the affirmation of identity.

According to Laplanche & Pontalis (in Pitt 1997), precisely the opposite is true. They refer to Freud's work where the concept of identification reverses the relationship between identity and identification and suggests that:

- a) identification precedes identity; and
- b) identification constitutes the grounds of possibility for the emergence of identity.

Engagement with feminist textual knowledge and feminist pedagogical and methodological practices instantiates something that is in excess of how social actors learn their place in the world. What becomes central are the dynamics by which feminism becomes the grounds of possibility for the fashioning of a new identification, and a new sense of self and agency. The pedagogical practices and epistemologies set the terms by which student may engage the question, 'Can I recognise myself in this course?' The reply to this question cannot be adequately supplied by attempts to acknowledge social differences through textual representational inclusivity. What is generally forgotten is that encounters between the self and textual representation cannot be reduced to scenes of recognition. Rather such encounters set in motion psychic dynamics of identification, which are an ambivalent process of recognizing and recovering from the loss of the illusion that the self is a ready-made subject.

In Section 1 of this chapter I presented a synthesis of commentaries on the intersection among teacher personal and professional subjectivities and the way these structure our theoretical approaches to the various themes that framed the study. The special focus has been on the feminist educator's participation in pedagogic projects, which aim at redefining epistemology and interpersonal practices. Investigation around this was informed by and engaged the politics of difference, debates on teacher authority, teacher and student personal epistemology as valid knowledge forms. There are however, other allied narratives that still need to be investigated. Some of these include inter alia:

- issues of difference have been central to the theoretical debates around subjectivity.

My study has drawn on Hart's (1991), framework to track trajectories of coming to feminist consciousness. Another area of potentially valuable study is: how are racialised subjects formed? The question of racialisation of subjectivity/development of racial identity has not

received much attention within feminist theory, which has been preoccupied primarily with the status of 'sexual difference' in identity formation. Work has yet to be undertaken on the subject of how the racialised Other is constituted in the psychic domain. How is post-colonial gendered and racialised subjectivity to be analysed? Does the privileging of 'sexual difference' and early childhood in psychoanalysis limit its explanatory value in helping understand the psychic dimensions of social phenomena such as racism?

- the participants in my study referred to their inclusion of texts by marginalized *Other* in the curriculum. Such textual inclusions contribute significantly to redistributing the narrative field, and to redefining conceptualisations about the form, function and status of texts. The disenfranchised (which include women and postcolonial writers) appear to have a voice, and with this new-found voice come a new series of concerns. For example, there is a need to be attentive to the seductive absorption of subjugated voices in classrooms of higher education where their texts form part of the prescribed curricula, and appear to be more welcome than the marginalized students themselves. Thus, an important area for further research is how are marginalized *Other* treated in the classroom? Inclusion of curricula content and texts of the marginalized might give the illusion of change. This strategy of symbolic inclusion masks how the everyday institutional policies and arrangements that suppress and exclude marginalized students as a collective remain virtually untouched. This refers to the critique that marginalized *Others* are given epistemological access, but are embattled by the dynamics of social access in institutions of higher education.

- my study has focussed on the teacher as a primary unit of analysis. Drawing on reflections of her family background and other identity influencing contiguous variables has been insightful in gaining a more nuanced understanding of her ideological stances. While students' classroom participation added invaluable insights in furthering understanding of teachers' pedagogic perspectives and performances, my study did not produce indepth data on students' backgrounds and ideologies and how this informs their engagement with knowledge systems and interpersonal relations. While it has become fashionable to discuss difference among students, there remains a dearth of studies that provide concrete examples of individuals who actually occupy different locations within structures, sharing ideas with one another, mapping out terrains of commonality, connection and shared concerns. Studying students' interpersonal dialogic relations gestures towards one way we can begin as teachers and critical thinkers to cross boundaries that may or may not be erected by race, gender, class, etc.

- Bourne's (2001), observation that there has been a proliferation of research into theories of learning (in the form of student-centred pedagogy) with an apparent decline into investigating theories of teaching returns us to an important area of study. The argument is

not to agitate for authoritarian teaching styles consonant with a banking regime of teaching, but to understand teachers' pedagogic and educative authority and the way they stage learning experiences for their students. The importance of such studies for the South African educational context is paramount given that the legacy of Apartheid has yielded a large cohort of teachers who are un/under qualified, and an equally large body of students who have received substandard education, and who also require socialisation into a culture of learning.

- to achieve the democratic tenet of multilingualism, as envisaged in the South African Constitution (1996), institutions of higher learning are required to develop their own language policies. This requirement is set against the backdrop that to date English and Afrikaans have been the dominant languages of instruction in most South African tertiary institutions, with some universities following a straight for English medium of instruction, others a straight for Afrikaans medium of instruction, and a few offering instruction in dual media. Since African languages have historically been used predominantly for personal, and informal use, tertiary institutions are being challenged to develop the more widespread use of African languages as media of instruction. Tracking the developments of this policy in terms of its implementation in English language classrooms, specifically, and within the broader fabric of universities offers scope for groundbreaking research opportunities, and has the potential to yield insightful findings to direct future educational language policies and pedagogies.

- Theobald (1999 in Weiler & Middleton), critiques the current vogue of representing and researching women teachers who reflect on their profession as a fulfilment of their 'life calling' or linked to personal emancipation. She suggests that there is a need to research those women who became teachers by default (that is those who did not want to become teachers, but did/do so reproachfully). This implies that the questions we ask teachers and the stories we tell about them can no longer co-exist unexamined beside a grand narrative of personal emancipation. Perhaps, we need to risk asking what happens if we admit into the ambit of social enquiry the narratives of women and men who do not/did not wish to be teachers? Would this not release us to unearth a different history of teachers and teaching?

Finally, if storytelling is central to the conduct of life, and if story telling is the medium through which we construct as well as understand our personal and professional lives, then it matters how stories of teaching are told, which stories are told, and who gets to tell them.

Section 2: Methodological Reflective Synthesis: talking back to the researcher

Guided by the principles of qualitative feminist research methodologies, in this study, I attempted, as far as was possible, to democratise the research process through the establishment of dialogic relations between the participants and myself. To remain true to the spirit of rendering the research process mutually consultative and collaborative, earlier on in the study I had returned the lecture and interview transcripts to the participants for them to check the accuracy of the data representation. In the final stage of the research, I returned the analysis chapters for review and verification, and to solicit their comments about how they had experienced the research process. This is consistent with Measor & Sikes' (1992: 217), suggestion that respondent validation form a crucial feature of data representation and interpretation, especially in qualitative type research, which is purportedly more subjective, partial, and dynamic in its interpretational nature. They contend that the respondent validation process often helps to verify whether the researcher has misunderstood and/or misrepresented the respondents, and it gives the participants an opportunity to correct erroneously interpreted data. Measor & Sikes (1992:212); and Lieblich *et al.* (1998), also caution that the accuracy and consistency of the stories people tell, and the nature of the researcher's interpretation are two issues commonly addressed in discussions on qualitative research methodologies. The significance of these discussions for my research is linked to the autobiographical and biographical accounts, which comprised two important data sources for the study. Methodologically and ethically these data sources constituted a mutually shared knowledge, rooted in the intersubjectivity of the five research participants and myself, and the intertextuality of their autobiographies and biographies. In this regard, I anticipated that the resultant fusion of subjectivity and textuality could raise tensions both for the correlation and consistency between researcher-researched authorial voices. Thus, as a way of addressing misinterpretations and interpretational variance I elected to return the analysed text to the participants for respondent validation.

Hammersley & Atkinson (1979), propose two very general criteria in terms of verifying the authenticity of a narrative study. The first criterion asks how truthful, plausible, and credible an account is, and the second criterion-related to the value of the study, asks whether an account is important and contributes to the field, previous findings, methods, theory, or social policy? As a way of testing my study against these two criteria, in a Respondent Validation Letter (See Annexure G), which comprised two sections, I sought:

- a) *Respondent Verification on the Data Representation and Interpretation* (i.e. I requested participants to verify my representational and interpretational analysis, and thus affirm/disaffirm the validity of the study), and

- b) *Respondent Comments on the Personal and Professional Value of the Study* (i.e. I requested participants' comments on their impressions and experiences, as a way of ascertaining whether any personal or professional value accrued to them by virtue of their participation in the study).

a) *Respondent Verification on the Data Representation and Interpretation*

I received e-mail correspondence from Carol, Phumzile and Jennifer, and had telephone discussions with Thembi and Vijay in response to the statement: Confirm that I have not misunderstood or misrepresented you in my analytical representation and interpretation. I would appreciate if you would kindly identify and correct instances where I may have interpreted the data erroneously. (See Annexure G).

The participants generally expressed appreciation for engaging them in the respondent validation process. Carol, Phumzile and Thembi identified a few instances in the text where they felt my analysis was inconsistent with their narrative intentionality. They offered suggestions on how to rephrase the text so that it would capture their experiences/ comments more accurately. In what follows, I present the 3 key steps that I employed in the process of each textual modification. In Step One, I present my initial analytical commentary. In Step Two, I reproduce sample excerpts from participants' e-mail and telephone correspondence to illustrate the nature and range of their interpretational variance/refutation. In Step Three, I present the rephrased/revised excerpt as it currently appears within analysis chapters 4, 5 & 6. Broadly, the refutational analysis comprised the following representational and interpretational variances:

- **factual inaccuracies** (Phumzile)

Step One: In the first instance I had written:

Her father marvelled at her pronunciation of isiXhosa words as she read to him from the Sunday newspaper, and her mother engendered in her a love for reading by buying her books from the Lovedale university bookstore.

Step Two: In the respondent validation process, Phumzile corrected the above statements as follows:

p. 24: the newspaper was in English, not in isiXhosa.

Lovedale Bookshop was not then, or since, the University bookstore. It was the historic Lovedale Press & Lovedale College's bookshop.

Step Three: In accordance with Phumzile's comments, I merely corrected the erroneous information as follows:

Her father marvelled at her pronunciation of English words as she read to him from the Sunday newspaper, and her mother engendered in her a love for reading by buying her books from the Lovedale Press and College bookstore. (Revised version).

- **variances in language/expression and its impact on participants' images (Carol)**

Step One: In the first instance I had written:

Carol indulges in demeaning over-generalizations ...

Step Two: Carol suggested that I rephrase my commentary as follows:

Ch. 4. p. 8. I'd prefer if you used the past tense and also use a more neutral verb, e.g. Carol "was taught demeaning over-generalisations" or "Carol would use demeaning ...". (By the way, the verb concord in the third line previous to this one should read "were" not "was". And I hope you don't mind my pointing out other instances of concord errors (agreement between verb and subject); it's the English lecturer in me!)

Step Three: In cases where the participants drew my attention to my poor use of language that affected portrayal of them, I merely appropriated the suggestions they offered for rephrasing, as follows:

Carol was taught demeaning over-generalizations and negative stereotyping of other European nations' values (or lack thereof) ... (Revised version).

- **Clarification and elaboration of participants' ideological stance (Carol)**

Step One: In the first instance, I had written:

First, in Carol's extract, the influence of Nature is implied in the sentence fragment: *women's tendency to pay attention to student's needs*; the words *women's tendency* connoting an apparently natural predisposition, a general course, a propensity, and inclination for women to attend to student' needs.

Step Two: Carol clarified her statement as follows:

p. 6. 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, that 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) is in fact not an accurate representation of them.

Step Three: In response to Carol's comments, I rephrased my commentary, as follows, to reflect 'more accurately' Carol's ideological stance:

First, although Carol disassociates herself from, and is highly averse to arguments that support women's instinctual or maternal nature, 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 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 are likely to foster the expectation that women educators will respond to students' needs as a natural consequence of their essentially organic and 'true' natures. (Revised Version).

- **Correcting interpretational inferences (Phumzile)**

Step One: In the first instance I had written:

Vijay, Phumsile and Jennifer's mothers, while conforming to the norms of wifedom and motherhood, pursued traditionally female dominated careers (Jennifer's mother was a librarian at a primary school ..., Vijay's mother was a schoolteacher ... and Phumsile's mother was a registered nurse).

Step Two: Phumzile responded as follows:

I have not anywhere in my essay suggested that my mother was "conforming to the norms of wifedom and motherhood" and that her life career was linked to this. There is a whole other narrative absent here, which I deliberately left out because it was not my place to comment on her decisions ... These other narratives, which, in all fairness you have no access to because I said I would not discuss them, would make it very difficult to think of her as "conforming to the norms of wifedom and motherhood". I think I am careful to neither position her as the predictable female figure completely complicit with patriarchal inscription nor as the radical feminist icon, and this is conscious.

Step Three: In instances where my inference from the general tenor of women's lives within patriarchal society was challenged, I merely deleted the sentence fragment. In response to Phumzile's comments, I amended the text as follows:

Vijay, Phumsile and Jennifer's mothers, ~~while conforming to the norms of wifedom and motherhood,~~ pursued traditionally female dominated careers (Jennifer's mother was a librarian at a primary school ..., Vijay's mother was a schoolteacher ... and Phumsile's mother was a registered nurse). (Revised Version).

- **providing additional information for clarification (Carol)**

Step One: In the first instance I had written:

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 delegitimizing misogynist behaviour, sexism and atmospheric sexual harassment.

Step Two: Carol responded as follows:

... I'd learnt that confrontational behaviour did not always work and had at times led to my being 'punished' by male colleagues in various ways, hence my adopting a less abrasive stance. In fact, though, I was told, when I left UWC by two women colleagues who both now occupy important positions (one at UWC, the other in the Gauteng legislature) that because I'd spoken up at, say,

faculty or senate meetings and was a woman, I'd been a role model for them. You can imagine how touched I was by such generosity, as these were black women colleagues.

Step Three: Sometimes, during the respondent validation process participants provided additional information, especially about the context of their actions. This emerges in Carol's response. In such instances, I treated the additional information as yet another source of data and insight, and merely added the information for clarification purposes to the analytical commentary, as follows:

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' by male colleagues in various ways. 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. (Revised Version).

- **Participants rephrase statements to clarify their narrative intentionality (Thembi)**

Step One: In the first instance, I had written:

Twice in the extract Thembi uses the word *mere* in relation to her and her mother's accomplishments. The word *mere* suggesting that the women's accomplishments are diminished in comparison to that of the men in her life. Also her mother's compilation of a cookbook, which provided samples of 'Daily Menu', seems not to carry the same status as that of her father's publications. ... A possible explanation for the devaluing of female gendering may be traced to the limited scope scripted in the life expectations and aspirations of young girls in patriarchal society.

Steps Two & Three: In a telephone discussion, Thembi suggested that I rephrase the commentary to capture prevailing societal practices that devalue women's status and accomplishments. She explained that she intended the repetition of the word *mere* to be read sarcastically to mock society's devaluation of women. It was not intended to be read as her devaluation of her or her mother's accomplishments. The commentary was thus, revised to read as follow:

Twice in the above extract Thembi uses the word *mere* in relation to her and her mother's accomplishments. This may be read as Thembi's attempt to highlight the prevailing discriminatory social practices that invariably diminish women's accomplishments. Thus, for example her mother's unpublished compilation of a cookbook, which provided samples of 'Daily Menu', seems not to carry the same social status as that of her father's publications. A possible explanation for the devaluing of female gendering may be traced to the limited scope scripted in the life expectations and aspirations of young girls, in patriarchal society ... (Revised Version).

The above instances of interpretation variance/refutational analysis highlight a few significant points in relation to first, variation between author intentionality and reader response to texts,

and the importance for the negotiation of textual meaning; second, researcher-researched relations; and third, the nature of autobiographical accounts.

First, Hammersley & Atkinson (1979), observe that qualitative accounts are typically written in such a way as to suggest that they simply reflect how the world is. The kind of work that goes into the construction of the text is suppressed from the finished account. They draw attention to a mounting body of theory, informed by principles of reflexivity, that highlight both the ethical and methodological failures involved in not recognising the manipulative dynamics of constructing the research report. This academic process of 'noise reduction', generally suppresses aspects representing the individuality of researcher-researched cognition, experience and interpretation. Thomas (1995), too differentiates between the empirical text (the tendentious text which is made available for public consumption), and the liminal text (which is the edited, silent text that falls through the cracks and crevices of author censorship and selectivity).

Apart from other invisible editorial changes that the text had undergone during its construction, the modification that resulted directly out of the respondent validation process highlights its evolutionary nature. In addition, by providing samples of the way the research report was modified to accommodate variance in researcher-researched data interpretation, variances in language expression, clarification of narrative intentionality, statements and experiences, my intention was to show that the construction of the text is based on sometimes necessary modification reached through the negotiation of meaning. The process also makes visible the range of sensitivities of the researcher and the researched.

Second, the respondent validation process also captures the power dynamics of researcher-researched relationships. At critical points in the study the participants were offered opportunities to challenge and/or confirm my representation and analytical accounts. Such a practice is consistent with a feminist research perspective (Acker, Barry & Esseveld 1991), which reminds us that research participants are not necessarily passive victims at the mercy of unscrupulous researchers. Depending on the kind of researcher-researched relations forged, participants wield power over many aspects of the research process. For example, the participants, in my study were invited to contribute to how they preferred having their experiences documented. The subject-subject research relations that I attempted to forge with them illustrates one way of mediating hierarchical research relations, which generally reduce participants to data generating entities.

Third, the respondent validation process reconfirms the claim that autobiography is necessarily a selection, an ordering, a shaping; a complex interplay between the present self, and the self recalled at various stages of personal history. In this regard, we note instances where participants suggested rephrasing statements they had made in their original

submissions. Lapses in time and space, and the opportunity to have a second look at their autobiographical pieces illustrate their narrative silences, omissions, etc. and also that the way they had expressed themselves affected what I as the researcher emphasised or de-emphasised in my analysis. In addition, given that the various data sources in themselves (re)present, a small segment of the participants' lives, as the researcher I was not fully conversant with the broader experiences and actions of the participants, and could only base my analysis on information that emerged during the data gathering process.

Finally, with the exception of the interpretational variances presented in the above discussion, the participants verified the authenticity of the data representation and interpretation. In this regard, the respondent validation process also served a self-recognition effect, confirming consistency and correlation between researcher-researched authorial voices and the mutuality between subjectivities and textualities. In terms of Hammersley & Atkinson's (1979), criterion regarding how truthful, plausible, and credible an account is, the high level of reciprocal interpretational consistency between the participants' authorial voices and mine attests to the truthfulness, plausibility and accountability of the study.

b) Value of the Study for the Participants

In Section B of the Respondent Validation Letter (See Annexure G and H), I requested that participants comment on their experiences of participating in the study. I presented them with the following series of questions:

B. I would appreciate if you would comment in a few lines on the following:

- What are your impressions of the research process? Did you find it democratic/ undemocratic?
- What were the positive aspects of participating in this study?
- What were the negative aspects of participating in this study?
- Any other comments that you would like to make.

The participants' reflections on participating in the research, foreground the following features pertaining to the personal, academic and professional value the study had for them, and potentially for the wider education community. These include its:

- *relational value* which proposes a more sophisticated understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Without necessarily seeking praxis (See Preamble), in this study I had set out to explore how, if at all, the feminist educator's interpretation and enactment of her personal world-view informs her language teaching, in terms of what, how and why she teaches what she does. I was aware of the disjuncture that often emerges from the gap

between espoused theories and theories-in-use. As such the study was not in search of praxis. It was thus, interesting to note the participants' comments about both the methodological and theoretical praxis (relational value) that characterized the study. I read from their comments an identification of varieties of theoretical and methodological relationalities.

First, Phumzile observes that: *The variety of forms of knowledge (teaching observation, interviews, essay) gathered by Juliet was broad and therefore likely to uncover more of the nuances of the intersections between feminist teaching theory and praxis.* Her reference to the various data sources (*teaching observation, interviews, essay*) essentially testifies to the value triangulation as a research practice has in unearthing and synthesising data. Phumzile suggests that from a methodological perspective, the application of the suite of data sources yielded a synergetic and illuminative praxis among the research methods. By constantly drawing from the various data sources I was able to stage a conversation among them. This contributed to enhancing the relational value of the study, thus promoting a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of theorising and teaching from a feminist perspective.

The second variety of praxis that Phumzile mentions emerges in her reference to the *intersections between feminist teaching theory and praxis*. This refers to the relation between received theories on feminist pedagogy (drawing from existing theoretical knowledge forms), and teachers' pedagogical interpretation and enactment thereof (teaching methods that contribute towards feminist knowledge construction and deconstruction in the classroom).

Cumulatively, her perception of the relational value of the study at a methodological and theoretical level is captured in her comment: *The study was methodologically innovative, and genuinely grappled with mutual interdependence of praxis and knowledge production.*

A third variant of relational value surfaces in Jennifer's comment: *Your exploration of different features of individual autobiographies is very detailed and I particularly like the way you link them to theoretical texts and viewpoints.* Jennifer draws attention to the link between received theories (*theoretical texts*), participants' personal theories (*viewpoints*), and the data (*individual autobiographies*). I interpret this as a reference to the **theory-theory/theory-data interplay** - a feature of grounded theory that I adopted as an analytical device to compare and contrast the participants' espoused feminist and pedagogical theories with their theories-in-use. In employing the theory-data interplay as an analytical technique, my intention was to create a dialectic referential circle among the participants' views and the body of received literature. In order to achieve this, I drew on my pre-understanding of concepts, which I had assembled into a theoretical toolkit (See Chapter 1), and then employed them as sensitising agents against which to analyse participants' views. In this regard, the relational value of the study emerges on three levels. First, in the utility existing theory has in informing data

analysis, second, the power of data to challenge existing theory, and third, how personal theories can either legitimise or delegitimise received theories, and in so doing, contribute to theory elaboration, recontextualisation, and reconceptualisation.

The fourth variant of praxis (relational value) - that of **data-data interplay** emerges from Thembi's comments: *I am impressed by the way you brought the different participants' situations and personal experiences together; the manner in which you identified our common beliefs and positions and analysed the full range of details; and how you still isolated, in a very critical way, the differences between the participants' sensibilities.* The data-data interplay facilitated comparing and contrasting participants' views, experiences, and contextual differences, as portrayed in the essays, interviews, and lecture observations. This helped to highlight differentiation within the research sample, while also showing their interconnectivity by virtue of teaching English from a feminist perspective. Comparing and contrasting participants' views and experiences created for Thembi a sense of belonging to a community. This is encapsulated in her comment: *... your comparison and contrast approach has made me feel very close to the other participants even though I have never met them before,* and alludes to the dialectic referential circle forged from the particularities and generalities of their project identities.

Cumulatively, the respondents' comments suggest that the relational value of the study emerged through methodological and theoretical praxis. Methodologically, this was achieved through staging a conversation among the various data sources. Theoretically, through permutations of theory-theory interplay, theory-data interplay and data-data interplay, the study created a dialectic referential circle to enhance multi-perspectival analysis and inter-relational understanding of the feminist teacher's epistemological stances and her epistemological labour.

- The *auto-reflexive value* of the study refers to evidence that participating in the study impacted positively on the participants' personal and/or professional lives. In this regard, the respondents report that participating in the study prompted them to reflect critically on the nuances of the theoretical and practical dimensions of their teaching and theorising. Confirming that auto-reflexivity combines cognitive and affective dimensions, Phumzile comments that participation in the study: *forced me to **think** through my praxis more consistently/explicitly.* For Vijay, it offered her the opportunity: *to **reflect** on the events that transpired in [her] lectures.* For Carol, it afforded the chance: *to **summarise** not only [her] personal growth as a feminist and as a South African citizen, but also to relate these to [her] teaching practices as a feminist. I'd never had the opportunity to **think** consciously about the connections between the two, and to articulate these.*

The affective dimension of auto-reflexivity is captured in Carol's declaration that the research process was **exciting**. Being able to reflect and make connections among her multiple identities (i.e. her personal identity, her professional teacher identity, and her national identity), and its evolution (*growth*) appears to constitute a critical episode for Carol. Thembi, echoes sentiments similar to Carol's, when she writes: *Participating in this study has not only been **an exciting moment** in my life but has also been a **fulfilling exercise** as you made me **appreciate the value** of my own life story.* We see Carol, and Thembi reflect on their participation in the research process in terms of its impact on their personal identities and self-awareness. Jennifer's response: *It gave me a **feeling** of contributing to the broadening of knowledge, and especially in the sphere of feminist education, which I **value very highly*** also captures the affective impact participation in the study has had on her. She, like Carol also frames it in terms of her feminist teacher project identity. There emerges a sense of her offering/contributing her personal text towards feminist and educational epistemology. The debate on personal experience constituting a valid source of knowledge is reiterated in Carol's comment: *It is seldom that anyone asks you to articulate practical aspects of your teaching within a multi-cultural environment, yet you know that what you've observed and learnt could be useful to someone else.*

- The *catalytic value* of the study refers to the demonstration of some form of resultant action. The catalytic value represents the degree to which the research process re-orientes, focuses and energises participants towards transformative action. This emerges in Thembi's comments: *I never imagined that what I had perceived as an uneventful life story, such as mine, could in fact form part of an important study such as yours. ... I am now prepared to write about [it] in more detail.* For Thembi the study has been validating and has brought her to a personal appreciation of her life, as well as its audience worthiness.

The participants' comments in the above discussion, in many respects meet the criteria Hammersley & Atkinson's (1979), identified regarding the value of the study. In varying degrees the participants refer to its contribution to the field of feminist theoretical and methodological praxis (relational value), as well as to its auto-reflexive and catalytic value.

Researcher Reflections

Other significant comments that the participants made regarding their impressions of the research process related to the value of having forged warm, empathetic, respectful, trusting, transparent and sensitive interpersonal relations. As a researcher, I was constantly guided

by the imperative to remain honest, open and sensitive to my participants. Aware that their participation in my study was at my request, and would eventually further my academic goals and interests, I endeavoured not to hurt, embarrass or violate them either in my representation or analytical commentaries. Thus, there were instances when I deliberately toned down critical/cutting analysis, given that the rationale for the study was not to be judgemental or condemnatory, but to acquire a deeper understanding of the nuances of feminist pedagogical practice. That the study, had in large measure achieved this, is attested to in the following comments from Carol, Thembi and Jennifer, who wrote:

Carol: [your work] has been done with great thoughtfulness and care, with regard both to argumentation and presentation.

.....

Thembi: I am grateful to you for allowing us time to check whether or not you have misrepresented us. This indeed is a sign of transparency and your openness has helped promote respect and build trust between the interviewer and the interviewee.

.....

Jennifer: [I] would like to express my admiration for the sensitivity with which you treated, not only my autobiographical sketch, but also those of other participants in the study.

While attempting to be sensitive to my participants, I had also to deal with my own sensitivities, and personality traits. There are a few lessons that I had to learn to negotiate during the research process. First, in as much as my study sought to understand the interconnectivity between the participants' personal backgrounds and their pedagogical practices, when I encountered gaps in their personal disclosures, I did not probe the silences. This derives directly from the fact that while I do have a genuine interest in people, I am uncomfortable delving into individual's personal issues. Thus, I read into participants' narrative silences a desire to keep certain experiences out of the glare of the researcher's data repertoire. Aware that sometimes narrative silences are a way of protecting individual's sensitivities, I focussed on narrative pedagogic experiences that would elucidate the aims and achieve the rationale of the study.

Second, because all the women in the study enjoy acclaimed academic profiles, I was painfully uncomfortable about infringing/imposing upon their time and labour intensive work schedules. For example, Phumzile comments: *participants had to spend great amounts and lengths of time on the project ... This was both rewarding and could be frustrating because of the demands it placed on time allocation ... parts of it have been strenuous*. Thembi, also laments: *if I had enough time I would not be as brief as now*. Carol too apologised for being brief in her comments as she was still battling illness. Coming to terms with the exacting

work schedules of my participants, while balancing the projected timelines for my study also found me frustrated, anxious and despondent at times as I awaited participants' contributions and responses. In addition, my personal commitment to producing research that would be as comprehensive as possible, without compromising methodological and ethical attention to research procedure inevitably proved a time consuming exercise.

Third, many participants commented on the uniqueness of the research project. Carol described it as *fresh, thoughtful, and valuable*. Phumzile acclaimed it as *methodologically innovative*, and Thembi in the interview described it as *very, very interesting and quite unique. ... it was something that I'd never heard anybody say she or he was doing. If it's happening in education, in your field, definitely in my discipline, it's something that I haven't quite been exposed to*. I read into their statements a confirmation of the scarcity of this type of research being conducted. The uniqueness of the methodology meant that from my readings, I did not find a ready model on which to draw from. Wanting to assemble a collage of data sources, but not having definitive details of how, when and what I would use from the data pool during the research report writing stage, justifies Jennifer's comment: *I found your approach to the research democratic, on the whole, with one reservation, namely that I did not see how the data you collected on me, my autobiography and teaching practices, was to fit into the global scheme of your thesis*. How the fragments from various data sources would be used, started to take shape as I began to categorise and analyse the data. It was at this stage that I began to tune into the conversation among the suite of data sources. Perhaps, in this regard, I fit the profile of Lieblich *et al*'s. (1998:10), caricature that narrative research is more suited to scholars who are, to a certain degree, comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity.

Engaging in this research project has been an extremely rich and rewarding experience for me. I have often felt deeply honoured to have had the opportunity of being granted access into the lives, homes and classrooms of five highly intelligent women who are passionate and committed to being agents of pedagogic and social change. The variety in the theoretical and practical realities of enacting feminist and socio linguistic sensibilities in demographically diverse educational contexts has been intriguing.

Finally, while democratic research strategies, subvert traditional hierarchical researcher-researched relations, Lather (1991), cautions that it is not always that emancipatory intentions guarantee emancipatory outcomes. Lather also raises a series of interesting and important questions, not just for feminists, but also for all involved in research and teaching. She asks, for example, how do we explain the lives of others without violating their reality? How can those for whom theory is supposed to be emancipatory, participate in its construction and validation? Can this be done without doing violence to the happiness of

those who, retrospectively, might have preferred to remain 'unfree'? These are some of the issues that I constantly had to engage during the course of the study. Thus, it is heartening to receive validation and commendation about the democratic and transparent manner in which I attempted to conduct the research.

Narrative Synthesis

A tidy ending would deny the partiality, incompleteness, and occasional incoherence, which is the fabric of teachers' lives and work. Thus, rather than offer a conclusion to this study, I refer to Goodson & Hargreaves' (1995), identification of the kinds of stories teachers tell, as a way of synthesising this narrative study.

The investigation into the lives of the five feminist educator protagonists in my study confirms that socio-cultural contexts provide specific types of plots for adoption by its members in their configuration of self. Although the content of each teacher's life is unique, it can portray romantic, tragic, heroic, and ironic emplotments consistent with the conventions of narrative genres. In this regard, the salient philosophies, events and nuclear episodes that the participants presented about their personal and professional lives reveal that their meta-narratives about teaching and learning resonate with the central tenets that frame the grand narratives of feminist pedagogy and multilingualism. Their teaching ideologies and practices embody the vision of social transformation, consciousness-raising, the promotion of the co-existence of the world of the classroom with that of wider society, sensitivity to race, class, gender, language and other issues related to identity politics. Embedded in their pedagogic narratives are romantic, heroic, tragic, and ironic thematic plotlines.

Teaching as a quest for human fulfilment is implicated in matters of identity creation and in understanding teaching as romantic. Such pedagogic narratives draw attention to the aesthetic aspects involved in acting on the idea of teaching as a moral craft. The romantic form centres on caring, connectedness, and community in a morally laden world of love, hope, interpersonal engagement and social responsibility. Within these stories we see high agency and high communion protagonists who fit the image of teacher as healer, counsellor and humanist. There are several events in both the participants' personal and professional narratives that foreground their disposition for caring and community connection. On a personal level we see, for example, Carol engaging in relief work among flood victims, Vijay agitating for the unionisation of the university's cleaning staff, etc. On a professional level the participants realise that it is their task to be more than language teachers, hence their decision to teach pedagogic content connected to the realities of their students. For example, Vijay engaged her students in an HIV/AIDS Assignment that would capture the voices of

marginalized *Other*, Jennifer explored with her students the social prejudice often levelled against those living through alternative sexualities, etc. These teachers not only afford their students the opportunity to respond to social texts that reflect many of the concerns in their own lives, but they also create conditions for a critical literacy where the world and the Word can coexist. They champion situationally transcendent pedagogies critical of the status quo and oriented towards its transformation, as opposed to situationally congruent pedagogies that perpetuate discriminatory hegemonies.

Interwoven into their allegories of teaching as romance are heroic stories. These are narratives detailing their defiance over bureaucracy, racial, gender, etc. disenfranchisement. They are stories of the triumph of the human spirit. The heroism in the participants' narratives is evident, for example, in the strategies they employ against institutional barriers that attempt to relegate them to second-class citizenship.

Interspersed in their heroic stories of triumphing over political, social and education bureaucracies, there are occasions when such struggles take their toll on the human spirit. Herein, lie the tragic stories, which speak of the marginalisation they experience both on a personal and professional level. In this regard, the participants reflect on the isolation and alienation they endure from the administration as well as from fellow colleagues because of their radical ideological and pedagogical stances, as well as their race, and gender identity.

Their ironic and paradoxical stories emerge when it appears that they are pursuing a project of pedagogic progressivism and enlightenment but in the reality of their classrooms, technologies of control, surveillance, regulation, normalisation, lack of choice are to be found. Under such circumstances we find images of the teacher suspended between good and evil, caught between the guilt of helping to maintain the existing conditions of educational bureaucracy, while simultaneously speaking against it. This surfaced, for example, during the negotiation of the HIV/AIDS Assignment in Vijay's class, when some students requested to work on the topic from a different angle using a different pedagogic strategy. Vijay, apart from motivating that students should work on the same topic to facilitate dialogue, also counterposed student resistance by informing them that the exam question had already been set. The combination of reasons Vijay offered students for conforming to teacher pedagogic and epistemological discretion is ironic in that it contradicted the apparent autonomy students believed they had, when Vijay told them that the assignment topic had not been set, it was their work and they should formulate their own assignment question. Later Vijay's reflection on her normalisation of pedagogic content and strategy shows how in many respects teachers can become complicit in the bureaucratic violence of examinations, administration deadlines and processes which grease the wheels of educational systems. Entwined in this ironic narrative is also a paradoxical narrative. Paradoxical narratives, which are by nature

self consciously contradictory, illustrate that Vijay is simultaneously critical of yet compliant with the bureaucratic violence of examinations. Ironic and paradoxical stories confirm that a convenient parallel between consciousness and activity is premised on an assumption that attaining praxis is an unproblematic pedagogic pursuit. In other instances, the participants' narratives show how deeply ironic and paradoxical the quest for teacher identity is in a society saturated with the contradictions of bureaucratic obligations, which are further complicated by race, class, gender, etc. variables.

The amalgam of romantic, heroic, tragic, ironic and paradoxical stories captures the broad landscape of experiences that teachers constantly negotiate. Their varying degrees of success and failure, joy and sadness are tied to balancing their ideologies of care and social responsibility, on the one hand, and their ideologies of justice and individual rights, on the other.

The implications of the participants' pedagogic experiences are that the scenes being enacted daily on the smaller stage of their classrooms are being simultaneously played out with a different cast of characters on the larger educational stage, globally. The microcosm of their pedagogic and academic narratives help to evoke other pedagogic worlds where the differences between them and pedagogic *Other*, and between here and there are differences more in degree than in kind. Thus, their tales of teaching as romance, heroism, tragedy and irony offer a recognisable plotline into which many teachers can write their own contextually unique stories. The diversity of teachers and students' contextual diversities mean that studying pedagogic narratives is a continuous process of discovery.

In this study, I have indulged a narcissistic narrative in that the teachers' voices that I have represented are voices in which I see images of myself, women educators with whom I share pedagogical and ideological similarities. The narrative gaps and interpretational silences in my study suggest that other narratives await telling, among them counter-narcissistic stories.

In as much as I have partially told the stories of the five feminist educators in an attempt to draw teachers' worlds, words and work out of obscurity, their stories resist narrative closure, for as Steedman (1987:22) reminds us:

Visions change, once any story is told; ways of seeing are altered. The point of the story is to present itself momentarily as complete, so that it can be said, it does for now; it is an account that will last for a while. Its point is briefly to make an audience connive in the telling, so that they may say: yes, that's how it was; or, that's how it might have been. ... Once a story is told, it ceases to be a story. It becomes a piece of history, an interpretive device. In this sense, a story works, works for us, when its rationale is comprehended, and its historical significance grasped.