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PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION

Special Issue:
Gender in Education
Guest Editor:
AnnMarie Wolpe

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A Feminist Critique. **R**obert Morrell,
Masculinity and the White Boys' Boarding
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"And Women, Too, Will Play Their Part": The
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– Differentiating Pupils in Mathematics
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Gender-sensitive and Feminist Adult Educators
in South Africa: An Emerging Curriculum.
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Education, Gender and Access.

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Guest Editor's Introduction

ANNMARIE WOLPE

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It was with considerable pleasure that I received the invitation to be guest editor of this special edition of *Perspectives*. It was with trepidation, though, that I accepted. I had been back in South Africa only a little over a year after a life-time in exile. While I have worked quite extensively in the area of sociology of education with particular reference to gender differences, my knowledge of the work being conducted here was at that time limited. Given the focus of this issue, however, it was impossible to resist. Being guest editor has been made easy. Due process and the appointment of external referees were handled by Shirley Pendlebury, Lesley Hudson and the *Perspectives* Editorial Committee, simplifying my task.

It is indeed encouraging that this, the first occasion on which *Perspectives* has decided in advance to call for papers, should be a special issue on gender. The papers cover a range of topics relevant to gender in the broadest educational sense.

For those who are uninitiated, the term 'gender' generates some confusion, even though the concept of 'gender equality' has entered everyday political rhetoric. Feminist analyses have clarified the difference between gender and sex, the former referring to social constructions and the latter to biology. Masculinity and femininity, gender appropriate behaviour, and all that is associated with these facets of life are argued to be constructed under specific social conditions. Feminist discourse has examined the restricting effects that definitions of masculinity and femininity play in the lives of men and women.¹

Feminist discourse goes well beyond these issues and feminist debate is now entering its third decade in the Western World. It "challenges the status quo and interrogates the status of knowledge".² Its influence has been wide-spread not only in terms of intellectual contributions but also in policy formation. Yet in South Africa feminist debate is very much on the periphery and there is wide spread antagonism towards feminism, despite its broad concern with eradicating women's subordination.

The disparate nature of feminist theories tends to be ignored in South Africa and instead there is a tendency to conflate all Western feminist discourse under one pejorative label, details of which are discussed below.

Furthermore, in the past, attempts to address gender subordination were seen as diversionary to the main struggle against apartheid.³ This was the case in spite of the fact that during the 1980s "women generally participated with men in civic struggles, and not in exclusively women's struggle",⁴ as well as in the underground

movement. At that time women's participation in meetings was apparently curtailed. I have been told that at certain meetings held at Crossroads ten years ago women were required to kneel before being allowed to make any contribution even though they were the ones who suffered the daily rounds of police violence and brutality. This obviously is an extreme example and more direct than the more covert forms in which women are effectively silenced, such as interrupting them when talking, or ignoring what they have to say, and so on. Women's level of involvement and the manner in which they were treated by their male colleagues varied, but reflected the "patriarchal and unegalitarian ideologies" present throughout South African society in the various communities. Seekings refers to the marginalisation of the Women's Committee in Crossroads and its replacement by a "male-dominated bureaucratic elite".⁵ Even in youth organisations where they were active there was only very limited involvement of women at leadership level. Nor did the new morality generated by the People's Courts extend to gender inequalities.

While the extent of male domination and the hegemony of the associated ideologies has yet to be fully established, its existence amongst all groups in South Africa is without doubt. It applies to all facets of life from the private sphere of the family to the public sphere of civil society and the labour force. Yet presently the rhetoric on gender inequalities is becoming commonplace and is voiced in organisations like the ANC and COSATU, former strongholds of male domination. COSATU has spelt out the need to overcome gender inequalities amongst the labour force and the ANC is now calling for thirty per cent of nominations for public office to be women.

How these recommendations are to be implemented is by no means clear. Nor is it clear how they will address the overall subordination of women in all spheres of our society. In the case of COSATU the policy may be seen to be directed towards the already existing labour force which is in employment but fails to make policies for the alarming number of people in the ranks of the unemployed. COSATU policies, driven by the demand for prioritising the creation of a technically skilled population, will inevitably favour a labour elite. Although COSATU does lay claim to a general reconstruction policy, it is unlikely that the unemployed, including women, will benefit from their schema. As for the ANC policy, it is by no means sure that having women representatives in the political arena will ensure a 'gender-neutral' politics.

What constitutes 'gender-neutral' politics is a complex matter. Enslin's paper examines the intersection of particular aspects of the nation with gender subordination. National identity and nation building are likely to be high on the agenda in the near future, given the move towards a democratic South Africa. In her thought-provoking (and probably controversial) article, Enslin questions whether the concept of nation accommodates what she terms women's values. Her starting point is the "genderedness of our practices and institutions and the gender-inflected discourses we use to describe them". Nationhood, she says, embodies masculine

values which are associated with "death, violence, competition, selfishness, a repression of the body, sexuality, and affectivity".⁶ As such nationhood must exclude women's values. Women's values and their perspectives appear to be taken for granted and embody what she says has been historically defined as being "dependent, emotional, intuitive, nurturing, compassionate, caring, relational, deferent and submissive". Many of these traits, which appear to be the opposite of men's, are associated with women's role in the private sphere of the family.

Irrespective of the differences between the Afrikaner's and liberation struggle's notion of motherhood, Enslin claims that "the metaphor of the mother in both portrays her as a political subject rather than a political agent". The situation here would be the same as in other parts of the world. The way to include women would be through the application of the notion of democratic citizenship as defined by Mouffe.⁷ Employing what appears to be a Foucauldian type of analysis and drawing on Mouffe, Enslin argues that there is a need to construct a political identity which recognises the plurality of roles of the individual agent "who occupies subjective positions within a variety of discursive formations".

Although she talks of plurality of roles, such an analysis runs the risk of ascribing to each gender an homogeneity which does not acknowledge the heterogeneity of each gendered group and the differences generated by class membership. Secondly, although Enslin is wary of an essentialism, it could be argued that she falls into the very trap she sets out to avoid. In classifying male and female values and ascribing them to each group as she does, is she not attributing an essential nature to each group? Even without questioning the essential character of male and female values, it is difficult to envisage what the processes would be which would result in a democratic citizenship. The argument presumably would be that it is in the nature of the discourses that these are both constructed and, presumably the non democratic elements can be deconstructed. If, however, one accepts that the process of constructing masculinity and femininity results in deep-seated and internalised modes of behaviour, then their effective removal must be extremely difficult.

A different view of the construction of masculinity and male power in South Africa is provided by Morrell's paper. He sets out to account for the genesis of masculine power through the form of the construction of masculinity in South Africa. He examines historically some Natal midlands' secondary schools whose pupils included the sons of prominent and prosperous families. Employing both documentary evidence and interviews with former pupils, he describes in fascinating detail the history of what he terms the muscular form of masculinity generated by the schools. Systems of corporal punishment, prefects, and Spartan living conditions all contributed to the form of masculinity characteristic of these schools. Nor did the boys on the whole question the application of corporal punishment. Their own system of initiation, fagging and bullying – all of which were endorsed and accepted by headmasters and teachers alike – "had the effect of

creating sameness and outlawing differences". Deviation from the norm was punished and Morrell cites the case of one boy who drowned after being hurled into a river in Wellington boots. His crime was being homosexual, raising an interesting point of difference with British public schools where homosexuality is prevalent.

Morrell's argument is derived from his view of socialization and child rearing. He says that violence and aggression amongst men are rooted in the treatment they receive in early childhood. Even if he is correct, this can only be part of the story. His argument generates two main questions. The first is related to the complex process involved in the construction of gender identities. Could early socialization of a particular order provide the sufficient conditions for the construction of an individual's identity? What of the cultural conditions, internal and external to family formations, which also play a part in this process? What is the role of religion in this process? The Adam and Eve story is just one example of the construction of gender identities, a complex process as recent literature has indicated.

The second question Morrell raises relates to power relations. Those who wield power in the state apparatus may predominantly be men (although there are some notable exceptions, like Mrs. Thatcher in the past). But can their positions be entirely accounted for in terms of their aggressive masculine traits? Power structures and the form they take, as other articles in this issue indicate, are also complex and cannot be accounted for in terms of the actors themselves.

The influence of Foucault is present in another contribution. The paper by McLennan examines the effect of the concept of egalitarianism in the context of social relations of power and domination. In addition she considers how "localised systems and mechanisms" effectively subjugate people. Drawing on Foucault's use of the normalisation process, she says that discourses of "truth" are "exercised on the body and identity of individuals". Her main argument is that the notion of egalitarianism effectively excludes women, and prolongs their relegation to the realm of the private. We "need to develop a concept of equality which accomodates difference".

In an extremely interesting and tightly packed argument, she establishes a link between Foucault's notion of power with Walzer's⁸ theory of complex equality. The latter's point, she says, is that "the experience of domination is always mediated by some set of social goods", an example of which is wealth and control over other goods such as education. But as women's subordination is not predicated on the power of wealth but on other complex factors, as feminist analyses have been at pains to demonstrate, it is not clear how the "mediation of social goods would apply to women's subordination".

Eliminating this form of domination, according to Walzer, involves developing a "set of social relations" which would make it impossible to perpetuate. To do so involves "shared understandings within a society [which] are fundamentally egalitarian". This appears a circuitous argument. Inequalities can be eliminated if understandings become shared. But what happens to the pre-existing relations of

power and domination? Are these reformed through these understandings? It is hard to imagine that those who hold power would willingly relinquish that power through a change in shared understandings. Changes occur through political struggle as is so evident in South Africa.

In applying her argument to South Africa Mc Lellan says that the concept of equal education, whether used by NEPI or the ERS, employs the notion of "the generalised other" which effectively inhibits the "emergence of particular voices and experiences" and thus effectively excludes women, perpetuating their relation to the sphere of the domestic.

The application of these concepts to the South African context is interesting. Mc Lennan argues that "In order to educate for equality, we need not only a commitment to finding equal distributive mechanisms, but also a commitment to finding ways of reducing the impact of different roles and environments in adult life". The very roles and environments differ markedly both in terms of gender, race and class in South Africa and it requires more than a commitment to egalitarianism to deal constructively with these. Given that the different roles and environments are so starkly disparate in South Africa this argument raises a number of questions. One of these is how can the impact of different roles and environments be reduced? Discourse analysis does not lend itself easily to the resolution of practical problems.

There is no consensus amongst feminist analysts as to how to account for gender differences. As already stated, there are a number of disparate theoretical accounts – liberal, marxist, radical, socialist, culturalist, psychoanalytical and post structuralist. But this wide range is, unfortunately, not given due recognition in South Africa. There is a tendency, particularly amongst activist and 'grassroots' women, to label simplistically all Western and, indeed, South African feminists, in a pejorative fashion as white and bourgeois, whose contributions are inapplicable to South African conditions. One of the major foci of criticism is linked to what is seen to be a form of racism present amongst Western feminists. Trying to tackle the effects of a racist state is not straightforward and raises in academia a number of problems including, amongst other things, how to overcome the dearth of trained African social science researchers, and how to give due recognition to the cultural differences and histories that exist within the different communities.

The emphasis on racism was apparent at the first national conference on "Women and Gender in Southern Africa" organised by the Gender Research Group at the University of Natal in 1991. Amongst other things the women were criticised for the academic tone of the conference and the dominance by white women.⁹ Letlaka-Rennert¹⁰ raised these and other issues in her comments on the conference. She also expressed her concern that black women who were the subject of research were not present at the conference.

This introduces what amounts to a highly sensitive area of discourse. In their interesting article on teaching research methods to their social work students Bozalek and Sunde highlight the complexity of conducting research given ethnic,

class and gender differences. The research act is not straightforward and teaching research methods is no easy task.

Bozalek and Sunde emphasise the need to validate students' experiences and they locate these within a conceptual framework. It is significant, however, that they have found that many of their students are unable to conceptualise their research projects in accordance with these guidelines which stress the intersection between race, class and gender. What this demonstrates is the need for students to have adequate analytical tools to make sense of these experiences. And this is a point which is often overlooked by those who emphasise the role of experience. Women simply do not experience aspects of their subordination in an uniform manner. Their construction of reality is mediated by cultural and other factors. For some what they experience is not regarded as oppressive, but rather as normal and unquestionable.

In addition, the privileging of experience can result in a form of exclusivity. Some could argue that only black women can conduct research on black women and so on. The authors say they do, in the course of their lectures, problematise who can legitimately conduct research. Unfortunately they do not provide an answer to the question of whether white middle class women can "enter into an egalitarian research relationship with a black working class women, or even to gather valid data".

Perhaps it is worth noting that the concept which defines the specificity of women through experience has been employed by many feminists in different forms over the past three decades and has been the source of quite a deal of controversy.¹¹ A different perspective on this has been advanced by Sandra Harding in a recent article. She says that the privileging of experience has limiting effects and may lead to parochialism. There are two positions to be avoided:

One is the conventional Western tendency to start thought from 'the view from nowhere', to perform what Donna Haraway has called 'the God trick'. This tendency, which might be called transcendental or a historical foundationalism, leads to parochialism because it can never recognise the possible greater legitimacy of views that claim to be historically situated but contradict the speaker's. The other is the tendency, in reaction to this historicism, to insist that the spontaneous consciousness of individual experience provides a uniquely legitimating criterion for identifying preferable or less false beliefs. This can be thought of as an experiential foundation – which obviously leads to parochialism.¹²

The privileging of experience is apparent in Sebakwane's article on educational management in Lebowa secondary schools. She begins by arguing that "black females' views should be central to providing an alternate understanding of the impact of class, race and gender oppression on black women's careers' under apartheid". Sebakwane's ability to speak Pedi was an obvious advantage, but it could be argued that the feminist insight to which she made reference played an equally important, if not more important role in the gathering of data. Unfortunately her aim is not realised as it was not clear how the women's views provided an "alternate understanding". None the less, her research uncovered some fascinating data such as a sharp division between younger and older women teachers which had

an impact on their potential career development; how women themselves must accept some level of responsibility in their own failure to take up management positions; and the strength of prevailing cultural traditions. There is material for further exploration, particularly the fascinating exception to the norm in Lebowa of a female principal in the largest urban school.

The notion that white researchers are incapable of conducting adequate research on black women, by virtue of the fact that they are white and either construct the world "from the implicit assumption of the west" or serve the force of colonialism, or both cannot be sustained. This argument takes several forms. For example, Mohanty in a *Feminist Review* article¹³ argues that:

there are five specific ways in which 'women' as a category of analysis is used in western feminist discourse on women in the third world to construct 'third-world women' as a homogeneous 'powerless' group often located as implicit *victims* of particular cultural and socio-economic systems.¹⁴

She reduces all Western feminist discourse to a single common strand in spite of her earlier recognition that

Clearly western feminist discourse and political practice is neither singular nor homogeneous in its goals, interests or analyses.¹⁵

Western feminists have acknowledged the ethnocentrism of their work in the past, and their failure to deal with problems associated with women in minorities. Many have set about addressing this lacuna. The overall criticism that Western feminists have constructed 'third world women' as victim also implies an uniformity amongst them. Like any other group, women working on third world issues reflect different theoretical perspectives – diverse and often conflictual in terms of their goals, ideologies, and agendas.

Ensor's article deals with a white researcher working amongst black girls and is the only paper which directly addresses an aspect of classroom interaction. Arising from teaching in an U.K. school with African-Caribbean pupils, she investigated how girls' resistance differed from that of boys', highlighting the intersection of ethnicity and gender and contradictory processes in learning situations. She linked this to the way in which the teachers constructed profiles of what constituted "good" pupils but which did not take account of the girls' resistance and accommodation.

Confirming what other researchers have found, Ensor demonstrates how African-Caribbean girls' form of resistance is very different to that of their peer group. Although subjected to male peer pressure and conforming to the anti-school culture, the girls maintained control over their work through studying at home rather than within the classroom situation, an example of resistance within accommodation.

In relation to levels of African-Caribbean school attainment in mathematics, Ensor concludes that it is not attitudes that need to be altered, but rather the need to confront the existence of racism and other forms of inequality in the classroom.

This, she argues, counters the process of "homogenising" the pupils as is common in mathematics education research and in many of the intervention programmes resulting from feminist research. Her work, which is applicable to South Africa, emphasises the need for research on classroom interaction. What still has to be addressed, and what seems to be significantly ignored by educationists in South Africa, is the high level of resistance by apparently a large number of African pupils to schooling. The state of many African schools is appalling. Apart from the obvious problems generated by inadequate funding, it is well known in teacher training departments in colleges and universities that anarchy reigns in many schools, accompanied by low teacher morale.

On the basis of Ensor and other people's work it would be folly to anticipate that adequate financing of African schools will eradicate the present inequities relating to gender and other differences in education. Issues relating to discipline, control, and resistance are only some of the problems that need to be addressed urgently.

Teacher training is obviously a crucial area in the transformation process. It is significant that in the U.K. the Conservative government under the guidance of Sir Keith Joseph successfully removed courses on the Sociology of Education from teacher training programmes because of the 'subversive' elements contained in Sociology. An understanding of socio-economic conditions and a fuller understanding of society, including matters pertaining to women's subordination, should be an integral part of the teacher-training programme.

Teacher-training, particularly for schooling, is an important source in any transformation process. Walter's contribution is on teacher-training, but within the context of feminist popular education amongst adult educationists. She reviews the experience derived from workshops run by CACE (Centre for Continuing and Adult Education) at the University of the Western Cape.

Experience, she says, is an integral part of feminist pedagogy, which is an off-shoot of critical pedagogy. The latter sets out to effect transformation in society without reference to gender subordination. Part of feminist pedagogy includes consciousness-raising of women's subordination, in general and of personal experiences of it. In the course of the workshops run by CACE the consciousness-raising process highlighted the differences between women. Ethnic and other differences including education were examined quite closely in the course of experiential activities and dialogue, discussions on socio economic conditions and analyses of gender relations. But what constituted these differences and how they linked to class differences were, apparently, not addressed.

Walter's message is that adult educationists need to reflect on their own histories in order to act effectively with women so that together they can transform themselves and society. Social transformation is part of many adult educationists' agendas and there seems to be a belief that they can effectively contribute to such transformation. There is a tendency amongst adult educationists to conflate the micro with the macro level. It is at the micro level that they can be effective. The

recipe offered by Walters could well be used by all teachers, not only adult educationists, in raising their levels of consciousness about women's subordination. Apart from the criticisms levelled against the privileging of the notion of experience above, another note of caution needs to be added. The analyses and the understandings obtained over a relatively short period of a few days' workshopping by adult educationists cannot go beyond a superficial level. The area of women's subordination and the processes for redressing this are far more complex than the short period spent in workshopping could lead one to believe.

In another paper on adult education, Wolpe attempts to "insert feminism" into this area utilising Molyneux's¹⁶ concept of practical and strategic interests of women. Wolpe argues that irrespective of the nature of adult education provision in South Africa the specific interests of women are addressed in a limited way. This paper reflects the dearth of empirical data in this area. It is a pity that what she means by equality was not spelt out, particularly in the light of its apparent contrast with that discussed Mc Lellan's analysis.

Adult education is the Cinderella of educational provision yet it could play an important role in redressing some of the inequities in our society. However, even if adult education is given full recognition, Wolpe argues that unless women's interests are specifically addressed they may be by-passed in the future.

The final paper in this collection also deals with adult education. Budlender's report on a survey of the need for adult education in South Africa provides a range of practical data relevant to future policy on adult education provision. She points to the common problems men and women have, as well as the distinctive needs of women, not least of which is related to women's domestic labour. She found that the "most consistent differences between men and women... were in respect of areas of study and work. As for choices, women's horizons were limited in contrast to men's". Her paper also indicates the need for more research and this is particularly obvious in the area of schooling.

When discussing African schools, Budlender makes a doubtful assumption that because they were co-educational there would be "fewer differences in opportunity and experience" between the genders. This is yet another aspect of schooling processes which urgently needs to be examined. Data from the U.K. and America have clearly demonstrated the range of factors which inhibit the progress of girls and there is every indication that should girls wish to pursue traditionally male oriented subjects they are more likely to succeed in a girls' only school.

The articles collected in this issue of the journal raise a wide range of matters pertinent to women's subordination and, in this respect, represent an unique contribution to the field of educational analysis. With a view to advancing the debate on gender and education, I have considered some of the more controversial points raised in the varied and interesting articles in this volume.

One area of controversy is the influence of post structuralist analysis, directly and indirectly, in several articles. This kind of work alerts one to the multiplicity of roles

of individuals. Related to post-structural theory is the privileging of the experience of individuals. I indicated some of the problems associated with this and have argued that perspectives which suggest that particular experiences and values define women, themselves constitute a reductionism and essentialism. Nevertheless, what constitutes experience, and the analytical value that can be placed on it, will be debated extensively both by feminists and educationists.

What I have not dealt with so far is the striking absence of the role of People's Education, the drift towards technical competencies, and the absence of class analysis. The concept of People's Education has virtually disappeared from the discourses on formal education. Only in Walter's paper on adult education does a concept of critical pedagogy, associated with People's Education, still have a place.

The notion of People's Education has been succeeded by an emphasis on technical training, particularly in schooling, which is seen both as a prerequisite for the country's economy and a means of redressing some of the existing inequities. When these discussions move into the area of policy, it becomes obvious that the student population is conceived as differentiated largely on ethnic grounds. No reference is made to gender or class differences or the configuration of gender, class and race determinants on individuals. It is interesting that none of the articles submitted for publication have dealt with the interface between gender, education, the labour market and the informal economy or on what effect the technicist focus will have on women, particularly the unemployed illiterate women. This clearly is an area that requires urgent investigation.

The terms 'race' and 'gender' are almost obligatory now in any policy document concerned with the redress of educational and employment inequities, but the term 'class' has, like People's Education, disappeared from educational discourse. I would argue that class analysis needs to be reinstated. There are significant class differences in all sectors of South African society and a marked increase in the size of the African middle class. It is this latter sector of the population which is likely to benefit the most from any affirmative action programme. This raises an immediate question of whether and how an African middle class women will benefit on the one hand, and what will happen to the unemployed illiterate, working class women in the future, on the other.

These problems and the questions raised above indicate the extent of research required if gender, class and racial disparities are to be adequately addressed in the future.

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2. *Ibid.*, xvi.

3. This point is discussed in my article, "Inserting Feminism into Adult Education", in this issue of the journal.
4. J. Seekings, "Gender Ideology and Township politics" *Agenda*, 10, 1991, 86.
5. *Ibid.*
6. In this description, Enslin quotes from I. Young, "Humanism, Gynocentricism and Feminist Politics" in *Throwing Like a Girl and other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1990).
7. C. Mouffe, "Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics" in J. Butler & J. Scott (eds.), *Feminists Theorize the Political* (New York, Routledge, 1992).
8. M. Welzer, *Spheres of Justice* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1983).
9. S. Bazilli, writing in *Agenda*, 9, 1991, under the heading Debate reviews some of the problems and lessons gained from that conference. She concludes her article by drawing attention to two critical points. The first is the need to recognise the heterogeneity of women in terms of race, class and gender, The second point is the need to work regionally.
10. K. Letlaka-Rennert, "Impressions: Conference on 'women and gender in Southern Africa'", *Agenda*, 9, 1991.
11. This issue was critically addressed by A. Kuhn and A. Wolpe, *An Introduction to Feminism and Materialism* first published in 1978.
12. S. Harding, "Reinventing Ourselves as Other: More New Agents of History and Knowledge" in L. Kauffman (ed.), *ibid.*
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Education for Nation-building: A Feminist Critique

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It has been proposed that a process of education for nation-building should be followed in South Africa. This paper argues that the logic of nationhood is in serious tension with the cause of establishing a non-sexist democracy. Drawing on contemporary feminist political philosophy and analyses of the 'mother of the nation' in South Africa, it is argued that nation-building will undermine the emergence of a democratic gender politics. The logic of nationhood imposes a universalist ontology and male-centred values on our public philosophy, excluding women's values and perspectives. Instead of nation-building, a concept of education for democratic citizenship is proposed.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of the nation has been invoked in the discourses of both apartheid and the liberation struggle against it. The architects of apartheid described their policy as one of creating separate states for the different 'nations' or ethnic groups in South Africa. The liberation struggle in its turn (and like other liberation movements) has described its goal as 'national liberation'. As majority rule in a unified state approaches at last, South African society poses an unusual contemporary example of the problem of the relationship between state and nation.¹ It is a widely held assumption that nations, which are characterised by some degree of ethnic homogeneity or perhaps a shared language or history, should be congruent with states – as seen in the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. But in South Africa it is commonly assumed that the establishment of the post-apartheid state will have to be accompanied by the emergence, from ethnic and linguistic diversity as well as historical division and conflict, of a South African nation. In response to the systematic fragmentation pursued by the apartheid state, it is claimed, there will have to be a policy of nation-building.

As South Africa addresses the task of transforming a divided and profoundly unequal educational system, nation-building is proposed by some as a strategy for creating unity from diversity. In their treatment of the problem of reconciling cultural diversity with national unity, by encouraging interaction and the development of a common culture committed to the general welfare as well as a sense of nationalism, Zanele Mkwana² and Michael Cross² declare their support for a process of education for nation-building. This will contribute to national reconciliation, and will require the development of national identity, national sentiment and national unity.

Neil McGurk³ observes that the idea of the nation has played a fundamental role as a unifying symbol in the struggle for national liberation. For him, from the

ideological struggle against apartheid has emerged "a mosaic of meanings that must eventually grow into an organic whole of national identity as we begin to resolve the contradictions and alienations of our apartheid society".⁴ He urges, through education, the removal of domination and the reconstitution of white South Africa by an exercise in nation-building, which he describes in psycho-spiritual terms:

The moral imperative for us as we face our national future prophetically is the radical acceptance into single nationhood at these psychological and religious realms of experience of our largely numerically superior black compatriots.

I take it that these calls for education for nation-building comprise two related features. The first is a call for a change of ontology: we need to transform our conception of our selves so that we see ourselves and each other as belonging to one nation, which is fundamental to our identity. The second is a moral call: for our identity as members of the nation to acquire a moral authority in terms of which our ties of loyalty to the nation will influence in a fundamental way our behaviour towards one another and the character of our politics.

Arguments for nation-building are routinely if not ritualistically accompanied by declarations of support for the principles of democracy, non-racialism and non-sexism, which have been central to the demands of the democratic movement for the transformation of the political and educational systems in South Africa. In this paper I argue that there is a serious tension between the principles of democracy and non-sexism on the one hand and nation-building, on the other, in both the ontological and moral senses identified above. My claim is that, like other political categories, our concept of 'nation' is an expression of predominantly male experiences and aspirations. In making this claim I plan to bring to bear on South African issues the claim of feminist political philosophy that our political concepts are profoundly distorted by the privileging of male perspectives. In doing this I take issue with the disturbing tendency in current progressive discourse on education and politics in South Africa to pay lip-service to "non-sexism", a term which is used with a superficial grasp of its implications. In this case, 'non-sexism' is invoked in a context where the term 'nation-building' is defended as though it were gender-neutral.

In challenging the view that nation-building is an appropriate goal of political and especially educational reconstruction in South Africa, I will argue not only against what Isaiah Berlin⁶ has described as national sentiment and ideology, but also against what he terms national consciousness, though I suspect that it is often not possible to make a neat distinction between them. I also oppose the view that schools should set out to constitute students' identity by instilling in them such national consciousness.⁷

The undemocratic nature of apartheid politics makes positing the central features of a future democratic polity fairly straightforward. I take the goal of democracy to include the principles of freedom and equality, as well as the extension of civil and political rights including the vote to all adults, and that people should as far as

possible be in control of their lives. Each of these features of democracy – and others one might add – takes on a particular significance when applied to women. As a feature of their oppression as women, women tend to be less free than men, to be unequal to men in various ways, to have greater restrictions imposed on their capacity to exercise their formal civil and political rights, and to be less autonomous and have less control of their lives.⁸

To state the obvious, a commitment to democracy and non-sexism implies a commitment to ensuring that women come to participate fully in democratic procedures and structures, so that they benefit from them as much as men do. For this to be possible it is essential that the theory of politics which underpins the process of democratisation is adequately informed by an understanding of gender and its significance.

In the discussion which follows I will argue that a democratic, non-sexist politics will not be served by nation-building. After showing how the logic of nationhood as a feature of male-centred politics creates a universalist ontology which excludes women, and how the moral authority of 'the nation' reflects masculine values to the exclusion of feminine values, I will examine the concept of the 'mother of the nation' in the South African context as an illustration of this. The paper will then conclude by considering Chantal Mouffe's notion of radical democratic citizenship as a more promising way of envisaging a future democratic gender politics, and education for it, than nation-building.

WOMEN AND THE POLITICS OF NATIONHOOD

The new feminist scholarship which has developed since the 1970s has emphasised the importance of recognising the genderedness of our practices and institutions and the gender-inflected discourses we use to describe them. This emphasis draws on two major related themes of feminist theory – the power that men exercise over women in maintaining their subordination, oppression and exploitation, and the role of the distinction between the public and the private in explaining and challenging this power.

The public sphere, in contrast to the private, domestic sphere for which women are still widely considered to be suited and hence responsible, is constructed "under the assumption of male superiority and dominance".⁹ Our male-fashioned politics is a product of the exclusion of women from the public sphere, from full participation in political debate and decision-making. But the full import of recognising the male-centred quality of our politics should lead not only to the conclusion that women should be included in our political processes in equal numbers to men. We need to press this recognition further and ask: what would a political order not dominated by male institutions and practices be like? The feminist political project requires not merely the extension of participation to women and making public their concerns and needs which were previously silenced

by their relegation to the private sphere, although this is important. It also requires a qualitative change of our political practices and the discourses that inform them, so that they no longer reflect male control and interests.

Feminist scholars have demonstrated that our politics embodies masculine values, which I will discuss shortly. This raises the question of whether our politics should incorporate feminine values or, as some would argue, replace the still dominant masculine values, which are a product of their differing experiences. I am not going to side with those feminists who have supported the latter alternative, but the question does force us to ask which political concepts are capable of accommodating the experiences and needs of women. As Anne Phillips puts it: "gender challenges all our political perspectives, forcing us to examine each position and concept afresh".¹⁰ Indeed, feminists have raised the question of whether democracy itself, as a political system and in the form of democratic theory, has failed to deliver equality for women because it is underpinned by male-centred concepts.¹¹ For the purposes of this paper I shall assume that a feminist democratic politics is both possible and desirable. My argument is that 'nation' and 'nationhood' cannot accommodate feminine values and a feminist democratic politics.

Feminist scholarship¹² has shown how different, gendered qualities are attributed to men and women. Carole Pateman and Mary Lyndon Shanley comment that "arguments about the character and attributes of men and women are fundamental to political theory".¹³ Historically and across not only western societies, men have typically been described – whether in everyday commonsense discourse, political theory or literature – as rational, assertive, independent, aggressive, competitive, hierarchical and controlling beings. Women are commonly viewed as dependent, emotional, intuitive, nurturing, compassionate, caring, relational, deferent and submissive. These qualities in turn have been associated with the public and the private spheres respectively, which are sometimes connected in their turn with culture and nature. Our very notion of what it is to be human is determined by male depictions of humanness, while the association of women with nature has depicted them as less typical of what it is to be human. Lynne Segal comments that:

Women, like black people, ethnic minorities, the disabled and sexual minorities, have always had to grapple with a subjective and collective consciousness which denies to women the most valued characteristics of 'mankind', a 'mankind' which is male, able-bodied, white and heterosexual.¹⁴

Male characteristics, which are associated with the public sphere, provide the categories in terms of which we understand citizenship and the political. So powerful are assumptions about the different characteristics of men and women that the practices which subordinate women, including those which restrict them to the private sphere, are regarded as 'natural' or fixed. Feminist responses to this problem have been varied. One has been to argue that a better society can be created by

promoting those traditionally feminine values which have been devalued by male culture. In advancing this argument Iris Young writes:

The male-dominated activities with the greatest prestige in our society – politics, science, technology, warfare, business – threaten the survival of the planet and the human race. That our society accords these activities the highest value only indicates the deep perversity of patriarchal culture. Masculine values exalt death, violence, competition, selfishness, a repression of the body, sexuality, and affectivity.¹⁵

Carol Gould emphasises, as associated with feminine values,

the concerns with peace, with life, and with the material conditions of human existence....[P]eace and the provision of material sustenance and health care....stand opposed to war and the squandering of material resources.¹⁶

For the purposes of this discussion I shall use Young's terminology and refer to masculine values and feminine values, but with some qualifications. Firstly, I don't assume that all masculine values are simply bad and that all feminine values are simply good. Nor, secondly, can they simplistically be attributed to all men and all women, respectively. Thirdly, the distinction is a product of both an ideology which suggests that men and women ought to demonstrate different characteristics, and the historical constraints of the public-private distinction, in terms of which masculine values are seen as appropriate to the public sphere and feminine values to the private.

The categories of nation and nationhood and the terms in which they are expressed are overwhelmingly male. If nations are held together by common myths and symbols, these are expressions of male exploits, ideals and concerns. The celebration of nationhood by commemorating battles and conquests, the bravery of heroes and the singing of martial anthems illustrates this. Douglas MacArthur exemplified this when he described the American soldier as "furnishing one of the greatest examples of successful patriotism".¹⁷ War and militarism, the capacity to coerce by military means, were central to the development of the modern nation-state. Indeed, in some cases the growth of the nation-state and the development of its military capacity were closely interrelated.¹⁸ Jean Elshtain argues that the national identity which people associate with the United States is historically inseparable from America's involvement in the First World War.¹⁹ Nations commonly celebrate as distinctive of their own nationhood the male and the public; not, for example, the gentleness of the nation's mothers.

It is commonly assumed, nonetheless, that the idea of the nation is an inclusive, gender-neutral one. Marilyn Friedman, in her consideration of the situated self portrayed by the communitarians, argues that the models of community based on nations, as well as neighbourhoods and families, "have harboured social roles and structures which have been highly oppressive for women".²⁰ Quoting the work of Michael Sandel and Alasdair MacIntyre, Friedman finds it remarkable that neither mentions gender as playing a role in the constitution of one's identity.

This problem of apparently inclusive political categories has been illuminated in the work of Iris Young. Young argues that where universality is asserted, even for reasons which might be commendable, the danger for oppressed groups is that the dominant constituents of that universal category will exclude the dominated, perpetuating disadvantage. Young notes that, historically, pressures for a "homogeneous citizenry" have been produced by "the ideal of a common good".²¹

Founded by men, the modern state and its public realm of citizenship paraded as universal values and norms that were derived from specifically masculine experience: militaristic norms of homoerotic camaraderie, respectful competition and bargaining among independent agents, discourse framed in unemotional tones of dispassionate reason.²²

Young argues that where there is a dichotomy between what she calls a public "realm of generality" and a private "realm of particularity" a "logic of exclusion" operates. Young's comments on the idea of universal citizenship illuminate the concept of the nation as a universalizing concept. Universal citizenship expresses a desire for unity which envisages the establishment of a unified public, citizens leaving behind their affiliations to particular groups. But this, far from removing differences, suppresses them by excluding them from the public. The problem for gender politics, in my view, is that the nation excludes the particular perspectives of women.

I will return later to Young's proposal for a politics which avoids the logic of exclusion. Now, before turning to examine the South African case, I need to make some clarificatory remarks in response to a possible objection: that my argument assumes that women are ethically superior.

Although my argument has rested on the observation that different sets of qualities, and related values, can be attributed to men and women, I do not support the view that they are fixed or 'natural' or that men are naturally bad and women naturally good. My argument does not require such essentialism. The point which I have set out to make shares Jean Grimshaw's response to the idea that women are ethically superior to men, which is that:

female life and experience creates the possibility for women more easily than for men of perceiving the dangerous and ruinous and inhuman nature of actions that have led to so much destruction.²³

Women have of course often supported their men in the bold deeds and great causes, but it is arguable that they, more than men, have tended to have a profound scepticism and ambivalence about the sacrifice of human lives and loves and the daily fabric of human life to the causes in the name of which men have fought and despoiled and oppressed others.²⁴

My claim is that masculine values are central to our public philosophy, while feminine values are peripheral. The configuration of militaristic notions of masculinity and nationhood are influential concepts in this public philosophy. The logic of nationhood and its moral authority in traditionally held masculine values are reflected in South Africa, in the concept of the 'mother of the nation'.

MOTHER OF THE NATION

In South Africa, women are accorded a similar political status in the concept of the nation in the languages of both Afrikaner nationalism and that of the liberation struggle against it.

The place of the woman in Afrikaner nationalism is expressed in the idea of the '*volksmoeder*' or 'mother of the nation'. In common with some other male-dominated societies, Afrikaner women have been allocated a role which purports to accord them status and respect while subordinating them to male control. In her account of the concept of the *volksmoeder* and its development, Elsabe Brink shows how this idea established

a clear role model for Afrikaner women. It was a deliberately constructed ideal, [mainly] the work of male cultural entrepreneurs who deliberately promoted a set of images surrounding women; these centred mainly on their nurturing and homemaking roles.²⁵

This image of Afrikaner women was based on popularised accounts of their role in the Great Trek and their suffering in the concentration camps established as part of the scorched earth tactics of the British during the Second Anglo-Boer War. While these accounts stressed the courage and resistance shown by the women, the notion of the *volksmoeder* was incorporated into a nationalism that was male-dominated and emphasised her qualities of self-sacrifice, resilience, suffering, virtue and of nurturing both her own family and the nation itself.

In this way a socially, morally, economically and politically subordinate place was clearly defined for Afrikaner women within society. The *volksmoeder* ideal promoted a dependent position for women, as participants in the lives of their husbands and children rather than active in their own lives. Only within this circumscribed role could women achieve social recognition.²⁶

Elsie Cloete provides a similar account of the ideal of the *volksmoeder* in the rise of Afrikaner nationalism, which she describes as becoming redundant once the *volk* came to power and prosperity in the 1960s. She argues that the confinement of the women of the *volk* during the rise of Afrikaner nationalism in the early decades of the twentieth century saw the subordination of women to the ideal of building up the nation. This was subordination "in the service of the *volk* and the *volk* here is most definitely a masculine phenomenon".²⁷

The themes of nurturing, suffering and courage in the concept of the Afrikaner *volksmoeder* are reflected in the discourse of the national liberation struggle, where the ideal of the 'mother of the nation' appears again, and where it has frequently been argued that the liberation struggle of women must be subordinated to national liberation. This similarity could give pause to activists in the liberation struggle who have been impatient of demands for equality for women, while claiming the moral high ground as defenders of democracy. The implication of casting the woman's role in the liberation struggle as that of the mother is seen in the tendency to

describe male leaders as 'comrade' and women as 'mother'.²⁸ Cheryl Walker comments, revealingly:

In societies in which the boundaries of 'the nation' are most fiercely contested...women are frequently granted [the role of] symbol of the nation or ethnic group. It is a symbolism that has nothing to do with citizenship and everything to do with Woman as Mother: mother of the nation, mother of heroes and martyrs, mother, above all, of sons.... 'Mother of the Nation' often has very little to do with tangible benefits.²⁹

But while there are similarities between the mother of the nation in Afrikaner nationalism and in the nationalism of the liberation struggle – the metaphor of the mother in both portrays her as a political subject rather than a political agent – there are also important differences. Firstly, while Afrikaner nationalism is based on a concept of the nation which is racially exclusive, the nationalism of the African National Congress (ANC), which I take to be the central force in the liberation struggle, is in principle inclusive and non-racial. Secondly: "In the case of Afrikaner nationalism, motherhood is seen as an essentially home-centred, supportive and ultimately passive activity, whereas in the nationalism of the ANC, by contrast, motherhood has assumed a very different character: it is militant, politically focused...."³⁰

Yet although this latter image is that of a woman struggling for change, Walker also raises the problem of the actual role and influence of black women in the liberation movement, noting as others have done their minimal role in negotiations, and in most of the organisations associated with the struggle. And she cautions: "Women's equal participation in state affairs, as citizens rather than reproducers, does not flow inevitably from the triumph of the non-racial, democratic ideal".³¹

There is clearly a sense in which the idea of the mother of the nation recognises the experiences, attributes and concerns of those women who are mothers – though some women are not mothers, and some of them choose not to be mothers. But the ideal of the mother of the nation is an idealised notion which does not accord with the extension of democracy to women. And it is not the only way to conceptualise either mothers or women in relation to the political. Feminist theorists who have been described as 'maternalists',³² have articulated a concept of 'maternal thinking' which portrays women and their political consciousness quite differently.

Maternalist feminist political consciousness takes as its starting point what Sara Ruddick calls maternal practice,³³ which is governed by the demands and values of love and caring. These 'private' virtues are seen as the grounding for the transformation of politics.

For Ruddick, women are "powerless socially – objects rather than agents of wars, economic plans, and political policies".³⁴ A political implication of maternal practice is that mothers should work to bring maternal thought, transformed by feminist politics, into the public realm. By feminist politics she means

the commitment to eliminate all restrictions of power, pleasure, and mastery arising from biological sex as social constructions of gender, so that women will have as much (and as little) control as men over their individual and collective lives.³⁵

The aims of feminist politics include justice, equality with men, and increasing the power and independence of women. There is a necessary link between maternal thinking and peace. Preservative love and military destruction are incompatible.

Similarly, Jean Elshtain proposes a reconstruction of the public sphere which would "affirm the protection of fragile and vulnerable human existence as the basis of a mode of public discourse".³⁶ The politics envisaged by Elshtain aims to create an "ethical polity" which would promote rights and equality and include among its commitments allowing both men and women to participate equally in the public sphere.

When contrasted with maternalist feminism, notions of the mother of the nation can be seen to depict women in a way which, while possibly inspiring within a liberation struggle, is not compatible with a democratic non-sexist politics. Nationalist discourse, including the idea of the mother of the nation, is an example of what Young calls a universalising concept; while apparently according women a place in the nation as a unified public, the concept of the nation both suppresses difference and conceals oppression, heading off demands for equality within a democratic public.

It is important to add that there is a link in South Africa too between the competing conceptions of the nation and concepts of masculinity. The national liberation struggle is commonly depicted in terms of masculine pride and assertiveness.³⁷ Jacklyn Cock comments that not only is the popular image of the nationalist struggle against apartheid typically a masculine one; socialisation of the youth – black and white – is "into a militarist masculinity which is reinforced by a gender defined sense of social solidarity, a brotherhood of combatants".³⁸

Perhaps surprisingly, the essentialising of women as mothers is not exclusive to male nationalists. It should also be noted that the maternalists too can be criticised for essentialising women. And it has correctly been argued in response to the maternalists that the personal power of mothering does not provide an adequate model of public, political power in a democracy.³⁹

In noting the historical similarities between the subordination of women's concerns to a wider national struggle in both Afrikaner and African nationalism, I do not want to suggest that the experience of patriarchy or the concerns of black and white South African women are the same. Afrikaner nationalism contributed to the conditions which have enabled white women to exploit black women. Simplistic and naive claims to sisterhood between all women have been shown to be misguided.⁴⁰ My claim is that creating a democratic political culture requires that we abandon concepts which essentialise women – like mother and sister – as well as those which conceal the particular problems of women by subsuming them within universal categories like that of the nation, which expresses masculine values

and excludes the feminine. In order to pursue this claim further I will conclude by arguing that a concept of 'democratic citizenship' is more appropriate to a 'non-sexist democracy' and to understanding the education appropriate to such a polity than that of nationhood.

DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

I have challenged the project of education for nation-building by arguing that the logic of the nation does not accommodate feminine values or women as political agents. I have argued that this universalising approach is inappropriate to a democratic gender politics, as is essentialism. Should my argument lead me to search for a non-patriarchal notion of nationhood? I do not think so, for the problem is not only that masculine values have so far been central to concepts of nationhood. Crucial to my argument has been the claim that the logic of nationhood, with its universalist assumptions, is a logic of exclusion, which will not be conducive to the growth of a democratic gender politics. How can we redirect the pursuit through education of a democratic, non-sexist politics?

A recent paper by Chantal Mouffe provides an alternative means of conceptualising what she calls radical democratic politics.⁴¹ For Mouffe, deconstructing essentialist identities is a necessary prerequisite for the articulation of feminist politics as part of the project of fostering radical democracy. This politics offers a new vision of citizenship which accommodates a range of social relations and the application to them of the principles of liberty and equality. Instead of positing a social agent as a unified entity, Mouffe urges that we rather envisage this agent as constituted as a plurality who occupies several subject positions within a variety of discursive formations. Building on her earlier work with Laclau, Mouffe suggests that instead of regarding women as subjects with a common essence we should attribute to them the status of family resemblances, reconceptualizing the struggle against subordination differentially "so as to create an equivalent articulation between the demands of women, blacks, workers, gays and others".⁴²

Instead of a notion of universal citizenship, Mouffe proposes a notion of political identity which comprises identification with the principles of liberty and equality. Here citizens enjoy a plurality of particular allegiances but "are bound by their common identification with a set of ethico-political values".⁴³

Mouffe's concept of radical democratic citizenship differs from those feminist positions which essentialise femininity, including Iris Young's "group differentiated citizenship" within a "heterogeneous public".⁴⁴ Here, Young proposes that oppressed groups, like women, the differently abled and Native Americans, are able to publicly present their claims for justice. For Mouffe, Young's conception of the group lapses into essentialism, resting on given identities rather than the constitution of new ones.

For me, Mouffe opens up a most illuminating perspective on the problems raised in this paper. For a future South African democracy, the problem of Young's group differentiated public is that the notion of the group has a past which is too tainted by apartheid to be viable. In group-differentiated politics, black women could be forced to choose between membership of a black oppressed group and women as an oppressed group. Mouffe shifts the focus so that in the constitution of political identity citizenship

is an articulating principle that affects the different subject positions of the social agent while allowing for a plurality of specific allegiances and for the respect of individual liberty.⁴⁸

What Mouffe does for the problem of nation-building in South Africa is to raise the question: why do politics and education have to be constrained by the urge to found them on the assumed need for a common identity, defined as membership of a group, in this case the South African nation? If it is democracy that we seek, why not propose that education should set out to persuade future citizens to embrace the central principles of democracy: freedom, equality, tolerance and constitutionalism? This requires abandoning notions of nationhood which, I have argued, offer an ontology and an accompanying political morality which are incompatible with the goal of a non-sexist democracy. To do this would not be to abandon the pursuit of reconciliation, but to accept that nation-building is not the way to approach it.

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3. N. McGurk, *I Speak as a White: Education, Culture Nation* (Johannesburg: Heinemann, 1990). My argument in this paper endorses McGurk's observation that a masculine ideology underlies racism and that it is often accompanied by militarism (p. 79). But I disagree with his claim that a nation which is founded on "the democratic ideal of Christianity" will reflect "a more feminine psychology of nation", since I question the compatibility of nationhood and feminine values.
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39. For discussion, see M. Dietz, "Context is all: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship" in C. Mouffe (ed.), *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community* (London: Verso, 1992).
40. For three illuminating treatments of 'sisterhood', in America, Britain and South Africa respectively, see: E. Fox-Genovese, *Feminism without Illusions: a Critique of Individualism* (Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), ch. one; Segal, ch. 2; Driver, 91-93 including Driver's footnotes.
41. C. Mouffe, "Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics" in J. Butler & J. Scott (eds.), *Feminists Theorize the Political* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
42. *Ibid.*, 372.
43. *Ibid.*, 378.
44. Young, "Polity and Group Difference", 121.
45. Mouffe, 378.

The 1994 Matthew Goniwe Education Essay Competition

Perspectives in Education has great pleasure in inviting entries to the 1994 Matthew Goniwe South African Education Essay Competition. Inspired by Matthew Goniwe's name – which symbolises educational and political commitment, courage and enlightenment – the competition is intended to stimulate research and writing on education in Southern Africa from a democratic perspective.

This competition is designed to encourage the publication of research and scholarly writing by historically disadvantaged students. The competition is open to students in the following categories:

1. final year undergraduates,
2. post-graduates up to and including Masters level, registered at any teacher's college or education faculty at any South African university.

Prizes will be awarded in each category. Promising essays will receive detailed referees' comments for the benefit of the entrants. Winning essays will be published in *Perspectives in Education*.

Prize details

First prize: R1 000-00

Second prize: R500-00

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Due date for submissions

31 October 1994

Submissions to be sent to

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RULES

1. The Essay Competition will be judged in the two above-mentioned categories.
2. The standing editorial policies of *Perspectives in Education* apply.
3. The essay submitted must be an original piece of work by a single author. All entries must be accompanied by evidence of the entrant's registration for a degree or diploma and a signed declaration that the essay is the entrant's own work.
4. The essay may be conceptual, empirical or both.
5. The length of the essay should not exceed 5 000 (five thousand) words.
6. The referencing format of *Perspectives in Education* must be used (see inside back cover for referencing details).
7. The essay must be related to issues in South African education.
8. An independent panel of judges will adjudicate the essays. The judges' decisions are final. The judges reserve the right not to award a prize in cases where no suitable entries are received.
9. Members of the editorial board, regional and associate editors of *Perspectives in Education* are not eligible.

Masculinity and the White Boys' Boarding Schools of Natal, 1880-1930

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The single-sex boarding schools for boys in Natal were established from the 1860s onward. They provided education at the secondary level for the sons of the colony's white elite. The schooling was modelled on the British public school system. Its curriculum and practices reflected many of the hallmarks of that system including heavy reliance on corporal punishment. The purpose and result of the regime was the production of a rugged, rather than cerebral, masculinity. In explaining the emergence of a particular masculinity in the colony and its education system, this article utilizes the concept of 'defining institution'. The boys' boarding schools developed a reading of masculinity which other schools and social institutions within the colony adopted.

INTRODUCTION

The study of South African history generally, and South African education history specifically, has ignored the gendered question of masculinity.¹ If there is any conscious assumption about male gender identity at all in the literature it is that men will manifest a range of behaviours that can be confirmed on a check list of male role behaviour. These include being tough, independent, strong, heterosexual, and unemotional. The burgeoning literature in gender studies worldwide raises objections to such a (non) treatment of masculinity. Sex role theory has come under fire and historical accounts have emphasized that there is no universal set of male characteristics and values. Increasingly it is acknowledged that masculinity is constructed historically. There is a wide range of opinion as to how this actually takes place, ranging from views which stress the psychological origins of masculinity in early childhood, to those which stress the importance of institutional and cultural pressures. But all tend to agree that gender identity is crucial to understanding human behaviour. Gender is not incidental, to be relegated to a ghetto where scholars, who do not have the capacity to tackle the 'big questions' of class and race, political economy and system change, dabble. Theorists like R.W. Connell argue that gender is absolutely central to an understanding of the past. He argues that historically there have been two social systems which have ordered human relations, creating loci and practices of inequality. One of these systems has centred on modes of production, the other on gender. In terms of this view, patriarchy (the patterns of male governance which secure female subordination) and capitalism exist conterminously. The former is not subordinate to the latter.²

How has masculinity historically been constructed in the South African context? How, and in what institutions, do particular readings of masculinity become hegemonic? In other words, which values associated with masculinity become socially dominant, prescribing certain forms of gendered behaviour and censoring others? This article begins to offer some answers to these questions.

No study has yet established the existence and character of hegemonic masculinity in South Africa, yet comparative studies attest to the existence of hegemonic masculinities. These are never fixed, always fluid, always contested. They are also constituted and constructed historically.³ In this article, an attempt will be made to examine one of the processes whereby hegemonic masculinity came into being in Natal. It will be argued that during the period under discussion, racially exclusive secondary schools became increasingly important. Their importance was not exclusively in the training they provided. They became significant as places where gender, race and class values were created. These were disseminated throughout the colony/province via a variety of institutions and procedures about which, at this point, we only have a vague understanding.⁴

The schools upon which this article focuses are those located in the Natal Midlands.⁵ These were the oldest schools in the colony. They became and remain the elite schools of the area. The school system was slow to develop. In terms of an 1861 law, high schools were established in Pietermaritzburg (1863) and Durban (1866). The state's contribution was for long inadequate to meet settler requirements. Consequently, from the 1870s onward, a number of private schools were founded. These were consciously modelled on the English public schools.

At about the same time as secondary education was being provided to a small number of settler children in Natal, major changes were taking place in European education. Schools were brought into a relationship with one another and with the occupational structures existing at that time in a new, systemic way. In this process (lasting for about half a century from 1870 until the First World War) a system emerged which was tightly and hierarchically structured. Its social effects were to perpetuate social inequalities and class structures. The contradictory and uneven emergence of this system and its effects has been the subject of a sophisticated and convincing analysis.⁶ Surprisingly, that analysis makes no mention of the power of this new education system to entrench and disseminate gender values and relations. In this article it will be seen how, within the emerging system, gender identities and values were generated.

For the purposes of this article it is convenient to identify two ways in which the schools contributed to the gender order. On the one hand, they operated as a network for a settler gentry to dominate the colonial, commercial and agricultural order. Boys from these schools, particularly as time went on, kept in contact with one another, helped one another. They became magistrates, judges, lawyers, businessmen, politicians, ministers of state, colonial and later provincial administrators. In short, they made a major contribution to masculinizing the

colony's structures of power, and in the process, pushed women into the public and political margins.⁷

On the other hand, the schools were the cradles of masculinity. From within these schools emerged social values which were spread by the masters and boys. In this latter sense, the concept of a 'defining institution' developed by Hilary Steedman in the context of the British Public School system is extremely useful.⁸ Steedman argues that the public schools were "*invested with the authority of the state because their former pupils dominated both government and administration*" and that, via indirect control over the curriculum and powerful prescriptions about school organisation and ethos, they were able to "define all other components of the secondary system in their own image".⁹ In Britain the public schools gained their power because of their success in feeding their students into Oxbridge, at a time when university training was beginning to mesh more closely with the occupational order. In Natal, in the period under discussion, university training was not particularly important – the University of Natal was only founded in 1910 – but became increasingly so in the twentieth century. Natal's elite boarding schools were powerful for symbolic rather than functional educational reasons. They were signifiers of settler values. They were bastions of civilization against the imagined threat of octopus-like black barbarity. Being exclusively white, and generally the preserve of children of the settler elites, the schools were symbols of white power. They were also able, in conjunction with other elements of the colonial order, to ensure that positions of power and influence in the colonial order were monopolized by whites.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE NATAL MIDLANDS

In 1879 British and colonial forces defeated the armies of the Zulu royal house. In the process they established settler control more firmly over the region and paved the way for the geographical expansion of the colony and its administrative consolidation. At this time Natal was thriving on its trade with the interior, hugely boosted by the development of the Kimberley diamond mines. This not only strengthened Natal's economy and encouraged immigration, but gave the established settler community reason and resources to concentrate on consolidating their social and educational base.

Education at this time was provided sparingly and unevenly. In the more densely farmed areas (mainly the Natal Midlands) private farm schools functioned to provide elementary education to the children of white farmers. For children either in geographically isolated locations or from families with serious educational aspirations, private tutors provided further education. In the two main towns, government had provided education from as early as 1849. But there was no 'coherent system' of education.¹⁰ In the 1860s and 1870s secondary schools began to develop in response to concern by parents and government.

The development of a schooling system, specifically secondary schooling, was the product of a number of diverse factors. From the government's side, the civilizing mission necessitated the raising of educational standards in the colony. Amongst the settler population, attitudes towards education differed widely. There was no direct link between education and job opportunity at this point, so education's importance lay in other areas. For the Old Natal families, the country gentry, education was becoming an important site of class affiliation. While in 1880 it was still possible to enjoy status on the basis of land ownership and duration of residence in the colony, the increase in white population made it an important class project to erect borders of class exclusivity. Other attributes were consequently added as necessary criteria for admission to the ranks of the gentry. One of the foremost was secondary schooling. The importance of having a secondary schooling and, even more significantly, of the institution at which one obtained such schooling became a virtual *sine qua non* of being gentry.

One cannot simply read off from these governmental and class imperatives the form that secondary schooling came to take in Natal. Yet it was not a coincidence that secondary schooling was initially delivered by schools closely resembling the British public schools, nor that their form and institutions came to define the model on which secondary schools were later developed in Natal.

For Natal's education administrators the English education system was the model. In the towns boys' and girls' model primary schools were established to provide elementary education to the broad bulk of the urban population. While there were some exceptions, these schools essentially served the white population. At the secondary level, conceived by definition as elite (since few children reached this level), the public schools were the source of inspiration. Although the first secondary school – Maritzburg High School (to become Maritzburg College) established in 1863 – had no boarding establishment, its lack of appeal ensured that before long it built boarding houses which served the influential farming constituency of the Midlands as well as local professionals. Boarding schools had been introduced in England to deal with unruliness amongst the school-going children of the aristocracy. This and other features of the reformed public school system (including organised sports, prefects and a classics curriculum) became regarded as sound administrative and procedural features of secondary schools and over time, became valued as crucial in making men out of boys.

Amongst the gentry there was the belief that a 'good' secondary education was essential for boys. If one could afford it, one's children were sent to a public school like Lancing, Haileybury or Uppingham. British education in this period was beginning to open doors into professions hitherto dominated by the aristocracy. The Cardwell reforms in Britain in the 1860s and 1870s ended the practice of purchasing military commissions. This opened up the army as a career opportunity to the new middle class. The same was true for the civil service. To provide the men

of this rising class with the requisite values and ambitions, good secondary schooling became essential. Thus the connection between schooling and a career, hitherto weak, became strong, particularly for ambitious young men. Natal's colonial service was not large but its pay was good and it was far and away the largest employer of the white middle classes. A place within it depended on education or family connections. As time went on these two entrance requirements merged.

Apart from careerist considerations, Natal's gentry had other reasons for becoming interested in promoting education. Secondary schools became important institutions of racial exclusivity.¹¹ As I have indicated, schools also provided an opportunity for the gentry to define criteria of class membership. Those who either saw no reason to send or could not afford to send their sons to the secondary schools placed themselves in an inferior social position in relation to the core of the gentry. But there was also a powerful gender dimension to the increasing interest of the gentry in the secondary schools. There were competing definitions of what it was to be a man. From the gentry's point of view, the crudities of the white working class and the lack of sophistication in African conceptions of manliness made it important to develop a distinctive reading of masculinity. These concerns mirrored changes in the metropole. In the late Victorian period definitions of masculinity changed from emphasising earnestness, selflessness and integrity to stressing Spartan toughness.¹² The change was captured in the expression 'muscular Christianity' – a description which became synonymous with the public schools of this period.¹³ In line with metropolitan trends, the parents of school-going boys in Natal insisted upon or accepted the development of institutions which in turn reflected this gender imperative. The secondary boarding schools became places where boys were toughened into men.

THE SECONDARY BOARDING SCHOOLS OF THE NATAL MIDLANDS

The government's initiative in setting up a secondary school in Pietermaritzburg in 1863 did not meet the needs of the colony's gentry. Maritzburg College took only thirty three pupils and stuttered along with numbers remaining constant until in 1869 the Hermannsburg boarding school (a Mission school in Greytown) was opened. It immediately drew off many of Maritzburg College's pupils, demonstrating the local preference for boarding establishments. In 1872 Hilton College just outside Pietermaritzburg opened as the first private secondary boarding school. By 1875 seventy three pupils had enrolled.¹⁴

Maritzburg College opened for boarders in 1880 but it remained small with only thirty four pupils in that year. Part of the problem lay with the boarding fees, fifty guineas a year, which was well beyond what most farmers at this stage could afford or would pay.¹⁵ This is reflected in the Maritzburg College Register for the 1880s and 1890s. While many boys left school to "go farming" it is clear that at this point,

the school was functioning primarily to service the growing colonial bureaucracy and the professional and commercial classes. While some of the boys entering the professions were from the Midlands, the bulk were from the resident urban population of Pietermaritzburg.¹⁶

The schools considered in this article can, for analytical convenience, be divided into three groups. The two oldest schools, Maritzburg College and Durban High School, resembling English grammar schools, commanded a special and prestigious place in the secondary schooling arena of Natal.¹⁷ A second category consisted of the private schools of Hilton, Michaelhouse and Weenen County College which were modelled on the English public schools. Together these two categories constituted an elite – as Maritzburg College boys made clear. They described "low class fellows ... not attending College, Hilton, Michaelhouse or Durban High School" as "borvers".¹⁸

Hilton College was established in 1872. In the words of its first headmaster, Rev. William Orde Newnham, "his first and greatest desire was that 'Hilton boys' should be synonymous with 'gentlemen' in the very best sense of the term, a boy who was honest and upright and true as steel".¹⁹ And this did not change. In 1892 an Old Boys' Society was established which bought the school in 1903. From henceforth the Society was central to the running of the school and ensured that it retained its character. At the prize-giving in 1897 "the toast of 'The Queen' (was) drunk with loyal enthusiasm", before Old Hiltonian, Dr. A. McKenzie, proposed "Success to Hilton". He then said that "it was good to see that the boys of to-day showed no falling off, either in physique, in learning, in games or in loyalty to the old School, he trusted that Hilton boys would continue to be known by their old high standards of honour". Five years later he repeated the message, attributing "the high qualities shown by Old Hiltonians to the loyalty, manliness, and decision of character inculcated by the two headmasters of Hilton It might be said of Hilton boys that they were honest in their dealings, upright, straightforward, and manly".²⁰

Michaelhouse was started by the Anglican church in Natal in 1896. It was built along lines of Eton and Winchester to "promote the idea of a learning community".²¹ Its headmaster had, initially, to be a man of the Holy Orders. James C. Todd, the first headmaster, believed that classics and maths were essential for "producing men of understanding, thought and culture". He had deep disdain for applied subjects like shorthand and bookkeeping and was deprecating about the manners and demeanour of some of the 'colonial boys'.²²

Weenen County College began in 1902. It was situated in the heart of the Midlands and was geographically the most accessible of the private schools and consequently attracted pupils from all the premier families in the neighbourhood. By 1910 it had a complement of 100 boarders and was playing rugby and cricket against the big four, Maritzburg College, Durban High School, Hilton and Michaelhouse. It was run neither by the Church nor Old Boys and consequently relied heavily on local support. This it received. The local senator, addressing the

prize-giving in 1913 said that "the people of Weenen County felt a kind of proprietary interest in the School." At the end of 1916 it closed as the headmaster's wife died, he fell ill and most of the staff went on active service.²³

Before turning to the third category of school, it should be noted that the elite secondaries in time generated a demand for good primary ('preparatory') feeder schools. These either pre-existed, in the case, for example, of Merchiston in Pietermaritzburg (established in 1892), or were created specially. Cordwalles was set up in 1910 by the Anglican church to send well-prepared boys to Michaelhouse.²⁴ This trend mirrored developments in Britain where primary schools began moving away from 'domestic education' to consciously providing the social and educational prerequisites for entry into the public schools.²⁵ This powerfully reinforced the ability of the elite secondaries to operate as defining institutions.

A third category of secondary institution was the government schools created after Natal had become part of the Union of South Africa. These included Estcourt, Greytown and Ixopo High Schools, established between 1917 and 1919. Although they were not pretentious they followed the pattern set down by the elite secondaries. They adopted the house and prefect system, they competed determinedly in sports. From time to time, under exceptional headmasters, they challenged the preeminence of the elite secondaries in sports or academics. By this time, secondary schooling was recognised as important by the gentry at large. The move to scientific farming spurred farmers to send their sons to agricultural colleges (like Cedara) for which a secondary education was needed. Yet agriculture remained marginal in terms of profit, and many families could not afford to send some or all of their children to the more expensive elite secondaries. This breach was filled by the rural government high schools.²⁶

The government-secondaries were an important locus of education in the Midlands. In some cases they were the result of local lobbying by prominent families, members of Parliament and civil servants (frequently the resident magistrate). The Moors, for example, a powerful family in Estcourt which supplied Natal's last prime minister and a host of influential politicians and farmers, had a hand in the creation of the schools at Estcourt and Mooi River (the Weston Agricultural High School, opened in 1914). These schools were not designed for the gentry. J.W. Moor, a major mover in the establishment of Weston, had in mind a school for "boys of poor parentage who were being set adrift into the world with no proper training or education".²⁷

The establishment of the schools, the subjects they offered, the boys they took in and the identities they assumed, were all subject to struggles. The Natal gentry wished to preserve the distinction of the elite schools and insisted that the classics be retained there and that other schools adopt a curriculum more suited to the specific needs of an agricultural economy. But opinion amongst landowners was not uniform – some preferring the old-style public-school image of a classics-centred

curriculum, while others with a business orientation pushed for the curriculum to reflect these concerns. Over the period under discussion, the elite schools stuck with an academic syllabus (casting aspersions even on such 'applied' subjects as accounting) while the government secondaries and the agricultural schools like Weston diversified.

The status of schools changed over time. It is not the purpose of this paper to periodize this change in any detail but it does need to be stated that a variety of forces were working to produce such change. In Natal itself, the processes of class formation in the countryside impacted on the schools. When secondary schooling was in its infancy it became a way of maintaining a tight link between the old, established families who by and large patronized these institutions. As time went on and rural settlement grew more dense it became necessary for the Old Natal families to admit newcomers into the fold. This occurred via a number of different mechanisms, including admission into the elite secondaries. In addition, the schools' financial need to take in more students diluted parochial exclusivity. The influx of a new class of immigrant (upwardly mobile, single, male public-school products of Britain) meant that the schools began to take in pupils from a wider social pool. In the twentieth century the pool widened even more so that the children of wealthy Transvaal capitalists began to become a major constituency. In this process, the elite secondaries became the defining institutions of Natal schooling.²⁸

The power and influence of the elite schools derived in large measure from the fact that they were boarding schools, generally situated in geographically remote areas. The boys lived with their peers and the school masters for much of the year which was broken up by four holidays, occasional long weekends and an enforced Sunday outing when they were obliged to 'explore' beyond the bounds of the school.²⁹ The parents were at ease with the idea of sending their sons off to school as early as age seven and expected them to be there for up to ten years. In this context, the school became a critically important part of growing up. John Honey, a scholar of the English public schools, notes that a boy's experience here was total and created "an atmosphere of intense communality, capable of generating powerful emotions associated with the school itself".³⁰ Loyalty for the school was built upon loyalty to one's house, to those in authority over one, to one's friends, one's sports team. In this environment loyalty involved putting team before self. Team spirit became an important part of hegemonic masculinity, and was reflected in intense association with masculinist institutions such as military regiments and Old Boys Societies, and loyalty to class and gender sets.³¹

In the boarding houses, the relations of the family were replaced with those of a much larger, hierarchically ordered constituency. It is in this context that masculinity, laid down in the family and the primary schools earlier, was consolidated. Here "the child's relation with the world is mediated most strongly through a small (quasi) family rather than through a small community as a whole. ...

traits associated with the 'opposite' sex are suppressed". At an English public school this was very much the case. Christine Heward reports that the school consciously sought to eliminate "feminine 'weaknesses'" from the boys.³² This existence gives rise, in the absence of a parent figure with whom and to whom intense feelings can be identified and expressed, to feelings of acute powerlessness, deprivation and frustration. These are the conditions in which masculinity, particularly in its violent aspect, are formed. Below we shall examine some of the consequences for the acquisition of masculinity of these particular circumstances. For the moment it will suffice to say that violence between boys, by boys against authority and by authority against boys is a central feature.³³

As has already been indicated, the growth of boarding schools was slow. In the rural areas, schools only began to operate effectively in towns once the railways had linked them to the coast and the interior or, as R.O. Pearse puts it, once "the unsettled life of a frontier town was giving place to a more ordered existence".³⁴ By the turn of the century, demand for schooling exceeded supply. Part of the growth in the school population has to do with simple demographic processes, but another factor was also beginning to play a part. The farming community in Natal was beginning to push up against the natural limits of land holding. The most remote corners of the Midlands, Underberg, were being occupied in the 1890s, but elsewhere families began to realise that large families meant that not all the offspring would be farmers. The whites-only civil service with its preference for educated, Old School products and the ranks of professionals and business people, drove home the message that an education at one of the elite schools was a worthwhile investment. From 1900, therefore, with dips caused by financial downturn and the varying fortunes of the different schools, the number of boarders at the schools in question rose and remained high. Such was the demand that new high schools, with boarding establishment, (the physical extensions of the government secondaries mentioned above) opened at Greytown (1923), Ixopo (1925) and Estcourt (1927).

The masters who taught there

In the previous section we noted the circumstances which gave rise to the elaboration of a secondary education system in the Natal Midlands. In this section we pay attention to the agents who produced the system. The ideals of the English public school system did not automatically take root in Natal. These schools were defining institutions but their influence came to Southern Africa not via curriculum pressure and the need for other schools to copy them in order to achieve social and academic success as was the case in Britain. Rather, it was the products of these schools and the universities they fed, who ensured that public school values spread in Natal's schools.³⁵

From the outset Natal's schools were staffed by men from Britain. There was a chronic shortage of locally trained teachers and it was therefore necessary to obtain teachers from overseas.³⁶ But there were forces at work other than those of necessity. The Council of Education stipulated that headmasters of Durban High School and Maritzburg College should have a degree from an Irish or British University. Michaelhouse had a similar rule and Hilton and Weenen County College seemed to prefer such appointments.³⁷

Maritzburg College's first headmaster (discounting its initial hesitant opening spell before it moved to its present site) was R.D. Clark (1879-1902), a graduate of Edinburgh University and New College, Oxford. Apart from his educational background he was well connected, having married the daughter of a former governor of Madras. His deputy was also an Oxford graduate. His successors, E. Barns and S. Pape were both from public school and London University and Queen's College, Oxford, respectively. At the turn of the century, Maritzburg College began to bring in local products, the most outstanding of which were C.T. Loram (1897) and Alan Paton (later in 1928). Loram, became in the 1920s, an important spokesperson for liberal ideas of segregation. He served on the Phelps-Stokes Commission on African Education as well as the South African Native Affairs Commission. Paton became internationally famous for his novel, *Cry the beloved Country*, but was also important in national educational circles as a result of his work at the Diepkloof reformatory. By the 1920s, Maritzburg College had abandoned the tradition of preferring British graduates and was employing instead proven pedagogues.³⁸

Hilton was much the same. Its first five headmasters, who ruled up to 1930 were all British graduates. The founder, Newnham, graduated at St Johns College, Cambridge. His successor, Henry Ellis, was a Rugby boy and Cambridge graduate. His two assistant masters were from Exeter College, Oxford, and Eton College and Cambridge. Under Ellis (1878-1904), the influential views of Rugby's headmaster, Thomas Arnold, were implemented. Prefects were appointed and given great powers, rugby (the sport) was entrenched, the school's colours, emblem and motto were modelled on those of Rugby and the entire system was "based on authority and tradition".³⁹ William Falcon, (1906-1933) went to a public school and then to St John's, Cambridge. He taught at Charterhouse and was a member of Milner's Kindergarten in 1902. In 1909 the Hilton staff included three teachers from Cambridge, one from Oxford, one from Glasgow University and one from the Royal College of Science, Dublin. Hilton began employing local graduates much later than Maritzburg College.

Michaelhouse, too, had a strong connection with Rugby. Its predecessor, Bishop's College in Pietermaritzburg was headed by C.C. Prichard, curate at Rugby and Oxford graduate. Its first headmaster was a public school boy and Glasgow and Cambridge University graduate. He was followed by Canon E.B. Hugh Jones (1903-10) of Marlborough and Jesus College, Oxford. The following three

headmasters were all public school products (Uppingham, Blundells and Charterhouse) and all were Cambridge graduates. A.W.S. Brown (1910-16) was not unusual in his approach which "unhesitatingly put character before intellect". At Weenen County College, the headmaster, Ernest Thompson, schooled at Haileybury (his brothers went to Marlborough) and graduated at New College, Oxford.⁴⁰

Although headmasters invariably put their stamp upon the schools, they were not alone in doing so.⁴¹ They tended to assemble masters whom they felt could carry out their mission. Many of these teachers, while sound academically, were "tyrannical in the extreme". Alan Paton as a Maritzburg College schoolboy remembers that "he forgot the Latin for 'to carry' and was made (by Sarky or Sucky Sutcliffe, the Latin teacher) to go on all fours and carry books from one side of the classroom to the next". Sutcliffe had a drill sergeant way of teaching and beat boys regularly with a heavy wooden pointer to ensure memory. Pape (1926-1937), headmaster and teacher, ruled with his cane and was regarded by some as a "rude, noisy bully". He saw his task as to instil discipline and resuscitate the school. Boys disliked him for being unfair and "anything but evenhanded in the justice he so liberally meted out". He beat pupils one cut for every punctuation mistake. In other cases he beat boys until an answer to a question in class was forthcoming. He also had the habit of caning an entire class either for good measure or when failing to find the culprit of an offence.⁴² But if there was a teacher who chillingly conjured up the educational spirit that pervaded these schools it was Carpenter, Pape's right hand man. He was not a graduate (which may have accounted for his miserable attitude) but had taught at Michaelhouse before teaching English at Maritzburg College.

A lonely, remote bachelor He struck real terror into the hearts of the College boys and few would dare pass his lair lest an unguarded cough bring forth the rod-bearing master. Carpenter used to hate boys watching him eating and if he detected anyone watching him, summary justice would descend. As a result of this, the boys sitting closest to the High Table used to sit with their faces virtually immersed in their food.⁴³

The boys who went to these schools

Over the half century under discussion, the number of Midland boys at the private and government-grammar schools grew steadily. Efforts by the state to facilitate this included reduced rail fees and the erection of boarding houses.⁴⁴ Nevertheless the process was slow. At Hilton, for example, it was only the sons of the most prosperous families – Raw (Impendhle), McKenzie (Nottingham Road), Foster (Ixopo) – who were sent. By the early twentieth century, however, the membership of the Old Boys Society began to reflect the growth of the pupil pool.⁴⁵

At Maritzburg College, the scholars came mainly from prominent city families. Many of the boys, however, "became merchants or farmers". Apart from the school providing the Midlands with new settlers, it began to take in ever larger numbers of

boarders (many from the Midlands, the major feeder area) – in 1888 twenty four out of ninety six boys were boarders. By 1890 boarder numbers had risen to sixty. Although it became accepted that boys should have some secondary schooling, the sons of farmers frequently exited the system after Standard six, or when family money ran out. Matriculation was not regarded as 'necessary' and when things were tight on the farm, boys were expected to forsake their studies and return home to work.⁴⁶

In the late 1920s, the depression cut the number of boarders in all the schools. As Hattersley explains for Hilton, "boys were drawn from all parts of the countryside and the farming community everywhere was involved in the losses which attended the government's policy of maintenance of the gold standard".⁴⁷

I have argued in this section that the elite secondaries assisted the Natal gentry to construct class and gender identities. It became expected that prominent families would send their sons to one of these schools, and in many instances sons were sent to all three, depending on the financial position of the family.⁴⁸ Yet it should be emphasized that the elite schools acted more to exclude than to include. While the ranks of the gentry were gradually swelled by the products of these schools who remained in Natal, the vast majority of boys remained outside the charmed circle. Black (African and Indian) children were never admitted. The children of the less prosperous (most notably working class white boys) were not admitted either – for these were the days of little financial assistance being offered to attend the elite schools, and where it was offered it was given to the sons of old boys. And yet the restricted admission of boys into the schools did not prevent them exercising great weight on colonial readings of masculinity.

THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY

There are many ways in which one could begin to unravel the construction of masculinity in schools. J.A. Mangan in the context of British public schools, has shown how important the sporting system and the house and prefect systems were.⁴⁹ I shall focus initially on the harsh elements as these were central to the construction of 'muscular Christianity' and were consciously inserted in the system. Teachers believed that it was necessary for boys to be beaten, to undergo hardship, in short, to be toughened.

Punishment

A rare and revealing punishment book will serve to introduce the subject of school punishment. "A Record of Corporal Punishment – College, 1888-1918" included the prefatory note "NB Only abnormal causes of punishment are recorded. Ordinary penalties are too frequent and frivolous to merit record". The book is a horrifying record of brutality. In 1903, for example, 282 strokes were administered, at an

average of 4.47 per punishment. In 1904 the number was up to 6.03 and in 1905, 5.96. In this year, on two occasions a boy received twelve, and on one occasion, ten strokes. For truancy, an unfortunate received fourteen. It is interesting to reflect the concern with exactitude in the punishment book. Connell argues that violence as part of masculinity became rational and scientific in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The punishment book reflects the concern with regulating violence and relating it, scientifically, to a particular offence. Rather like adding a neutralising agent to a dangerous acid, punishment became the exact science of correction.⁵⁰

A breakdown of punishment reveals the mind of the punishment dispensers and gives some idea of the narrow borders within which boys were expected to walk to avoid beating.

Categories of punishment and number of boys punished therefore during the period 1888-1905

1. Lazy, Neglect, Untidy, Careless, Shirking work, Failure, Cut work, Inattention = ninety one;
2. Disobedient, Impertinent, Impudent, Cheek, Disrespectful, Insolence = twenty two;
3. Dishonest, Cheating, Truant, Cribbing = thirty;
4. Thuggish, Disorderly, Riotous, Vandalising, Ink-Slinging, Talking in Exams, Cut Detention, Misconduct, Brawling = 119;
5. Bullying = six.

The above is an incomplete list of corporal punishments meted out by the headmaster and (sometimes) his assistant. Headmasters differed in their attitude to corporal punishment. Clark was considered as "lenient almost to a fault", "although many of his pupils came to know the sting of 'Black Maria' (his cane)". On the other hand, Barns and Pape were severe and beat pupils inexhaustibly.⁵¹

By far the most beatings were delivered by assistant masters and prefects. These not infrequently involved excesses, even by the standards of the time. In the 1890 the following incident occurred at Maritzburg College. The Science master, Mr Greatorex, a man of "fiery temper" lost his temper and beat a boy seated in his class around the head, sending him eventually tumbling to the floor, apparently lifeless. The boy recovered but a scandal developed in the press, causing numbers at the school to fall from 153 to forty two in three years.⁵²

The history of Maritzburg College is replete with tales of quick recourse to the cane and of the undiscerning and unjust nature of punishment. But this is not confined to Maritzburg College. At Hilton in the late 1870s beatings were regular. An old boy remembered that, "Mr Crowe, the senior master, was a very good teacher; but nearly every day some boy would get a sjamboking, or a cut or two".

On one occasion a pupil was beaten two or three times for asking for a new copy book!⁵³

It was not only assistant masters at Maritzburg College who were to blame for the carnage. In 1890 the prefect system was introduced at College to cope with the increased numbers of boarders. Clark, the headmaster, gave the prefects extensive powers including the (illegal) power to inflict corporal punishment without seeking his permission and without recording the infraction. In a subsequent enquiry, the Council of Education concluded that

at times boys have been treated with undue severity, and at other times with too much indulgence, and have been the objects of contemptuous and unbecoming language, on the part of one or more of the Masters. Corporal punishment has been inflicted with too great frequency ... (but) in many instances when deserved was inadequate. ... (The headmaster said) that at least one half to the boys sent to him for corporal punishment were undeserving of it, but that he felt it his duty, in order to uphold the position and authority of the Assistant Masters, to inflict punishment without enquiry.⁵⁴

Corporal punishment in the period under discussion was considered normal and, within limits, essential. Yet research has recently demonstrated that its effects are invariably traumatic, leading in some case to lifelong psychological damage. In schools where beatings were administered frequently and viciously and where there was no space given for the expression of feelings of rage, hurt and humiliation, nor support provided to sufferers, the consequences can scarcely be exaggerated.⁵⁵

Prefects

At Hilton, prefects were introduced by the first headmaster, Newnham. They were given the power to "put any boy 'in bounds'" which was to "make him stand in one spot for as long as they thought was necessary as a punishment". In 1878, the next headmaster extended the prefect system and the power of the prefects closely following the Rugby model. He issued a school Constitution which outlined the tasks of prefects (*praepositors*).

To call the Roll at the hours required by the Headmaster; to punish loiterers and to report absentees. To keep order in the dormitories, at meal times, and at all but school times; To regulate and enforce the playing of all Big-side games; To punish all minor offences with impositions (not to exceed 100 lines of Greek, or 200 lines of Latin, or 300 lines of English); To punish deliberate disobedience to their authority with corporal punishment, to be administered by one *Praepositor* in the presence of at least one other; such punishment not to exceed eight stripes with a light cane or wattle switch Provided that any boy awarded such corporal punishment shall have the right to appeal ... to a court composed of the Head of School and an equal number of *Praepositors* and heads of forms. If such court of appeal shall confirm the original sentence, it shall be carried out publicly before the School assembled.⁵⁶

The prefect system became integral to the running of the school and the powers of the prefects entrenched. A diary of a Hilton pupil in 1913 gives some indication of this.

Quintus (Robinson) (Clearly the nickname of prefect RM) went to get sticks at Henderson's for hidings. He seems fed up but says he has to flog ... we had the kaffirs job of clearing the grounds again today ... I and Muller got two cuts each with a stick about as thick as my wrist we were accused of not working hard enough on the field.⁵⁷

It was the new boy who bore the brunt of the prefect system. He could

not walk across certain lawns. The corridor of the main building and past the studies is out of bounds for him. If he offends against these or other rules, he may be summoned to the prefects' room, and, provided that the sanction of the housemaster has been previously obtained, he may be corrected with a cane.⁵⁸

At Maritzburg College the prefect system likewise entrenched itself, but by the 1920s it had exceeded its usefulness. It was little more than a tyranny of big over small and contributed to a marked decline in the number of boarders.⁵⁹

With respect to punishment and prefects, the country government secondaries were much the same. At Ixopo, for example,

'Boss John' (Mr Robinson, the headmaster) used the cane freely ... How dearly he loved to line us round the room for mental arithmetic at about 2.30 on a summer's afternoon, when all were feeling somewhat drowsy. It was a case of 'quick's the word' for if you missed your answer you got a cut.⁶⁰

The inflicting of corporal punishment with such ease and frequency cannot be explained solely with reference to pervasive British educational models and even less to sadism (though both played some part). Within Natal there were three sources which demanded corporal punishment. The parents, who beat their own children, were a major factor. The state's educational officers were another. In about 1912, an Inspector reported adversely on Ixopo Government school.

Std III appears to need special attention and treatment. This class consists of fourteen pupils, all but three of whom are boys. These boys ... are more interested in their shooting and swimming than in their school work. They are not altogether dull, but they are in need of less gentle treatment than they are receiving at present.

The final and possibly most important opinion of all came from the boys themselves. Many preferred a beating to other non-physical forms of punishment. There was a macho bravado that accompanied beatings. They challenged one another to 'races' to see who would get the most strokes over a stipulated period of time.⁶¹ In a vivid account of the aftermath of a beating at Michaelhouse, some of the schoolboy fascination for and reverence of, the beating is apparent.

After the beating it was the privilege of one's dormitory mates to inspect the damage. I was disappointed that there was not more enthusiasm. 'What, no blood?' said Crowe minor. 'Don't call that much,' said Heathfield. 'Alfie (the teacher) took pity on you, you weed,' jeered Elison, who was measuring my bruises with a ruler. Nevertheless, for the remainder of that day I was a little hero and for ten days after, the discolourations were there for all to inspect in the bath-house.⁶²

Boys also accepted corporal punishment as 'right' and just. An Ixopo pupil remembered, "I am sure we [we]re all the better for it." In an interview, an old boy said that caning didn't bother him – "it purged his guilt". He didn't bear grudges and respected teachers so long as they were fair and just.⁶³

Initiation, fagging and bullying

If the dangers of corporal punishment from teachers and prefects for boys appeared huge, they were nothing compared to what boys, particularly juniors, had to face on a day to day basis.

Initiation awaited all boarding pupils. It was an ordeal, part of the toughening process, part of the assertion of hierarchical power by senior over junior boys but also part of the creation of identity. Tolson's description of these rituals is: "the boy was brutally initiated into a sadistic culture of hearty back-slapping". At Maritzburg College, "O'Grady's Drill" was held. It involved being drilled by a senior boy, and if mistakes were made, having to run the gauntlet of senior boys with knotted towels. Then, at the New Boys' Concert, new boys had to sing a song. If the senior boarders did not like it, the offender had to swallow a desert spoon full of a concoction including mustard, soap and castor oil.⁶⁴

At Hilton, "squeakers" (in the 1880s) and "new poops" (1890s and beyond) were subjected to "semi-barbarous" initiation by the seniors known as "new poop or kid fixing". Specialities were the sailor's toss and merciless ducking in the dam. "Ugly tales have been told about small boys' sufferings down the hole in Devil's Decoy [a particularly deep part of one of the Estate's pools which 'appeared to reach sinister depths' (Hattersley, 60)] now filled in and no longer a torture chamber".⁶⁵

At Michaelhouse things were similar. Ruth Pennington, wife of a Michaelhouse master in the 1920s described initiation of "cacks" as "unbelievably terrible" and "absolutely brutal". New boys had to stand on top of a pile of boxes and recite poetry or sing. If the offering was not appreciated, the boxes would be kicked down. Another form of initiation was the "long-established practice of initiating newcomers by pitting them against physically superior pugilists". And ducking in the big communal bath was common, taken to the extent on occasion of near-drowning.⁶⁶

At times initiation might not be so traumatic an experience. If a boy was physically strong or surrounded by a group of friends from primary school, initiation might be mild. In the government country secondaries, initiation existed but was generally milder in form and less important as a ritual of institutional entry.⁶⁷

Initiation occurred with the blessing of the headmaster and teachers, and naturally with the hearty endorsement of the prefects. As Nuttall puts it for Hilton, "The school's cherished reputation for toughness resulted in many a sensitive youngster suffering agonies of fear at the toughening process". Some steps were

taken to prevent "excesses" and Ellis, the Hilton headmaster used to check, for example, that beatings by prefects at the site of initiation (the dam) were not excessive, but for the most part either a blind eye was turned or initiation was regarded as a healthy and important part of the extra-curricular activities of the school.⁶⁸

Fagging was common at the private schools but less so at Maritzburg College. It is not clear where the term originates, though its misogynistic echoes are unmistakable. It involved junior boys doing chores for older boys in a peculiar mimic of the family situation.⁶⁹ Fagging was part of a broader institutional set of codes, developed by the senior boys and tolerated or underpinned by teachers, which regulated school life beyond the classroom. Apart from the services actually provided by junior boys for senior boys – making their beds, polishing their shoes, buying them tuck and so forth – the extended fagging system had as its rationale the establishment of a hierarchy. The system was structured around length of enrolment in the school. In the first two years at Hilton, you were a 'new poop', subject to the whims of senior boys. Your inferiority would be drummed into you throughout these two years ceaselessly. You were at the mercy of prefects and seniors. You could be caned for not watching 1st XV rugby or for not remembering the names of the cricket or rugby teams.⁷⁰ In boarding houses with tyrannical prefects and seniors you could be summoned and forced to do anything. In houses where paternalism held sway, the service ethic would be imparted – 'new poops', for example, would clean sporting equipment. To remind juniors of their place, on Friday evenings, they would be subjected to "Hot Oven". 'Old Poops' sat on the beds with their legs against the wall while 'new poops' were forced to scuttle beneath, being flayed by the older boys as they went. A further, more regulated, reminder of place came after evening cocoa break when prefects beat offenders for offences such as "walking over the grass".⁷¹

Fagging existed and continued because it was endorsed by teachers, enforced by seniors and accepted by juniors. There were rarely inroads made into it as a system. Occasionally a new headmaster would recognise its dangers and attempt to break or refashion it, via an attack on the power of the prefects. Boys who rebelled did so by fighting their oppressor, but this did not change the system, though it might resolve an individual case of injustice. For the most part, the juniors accepted the authority of the prefects and seniors, and when the system was working well, respected the prefects.⁷²

It is not easy to define bullying in the system described above. On the one hand, bullying – the use of position and power by seniors to coerce juniors – was inscribed within the practice of fagging and was consequently regarded as legitimate. On the other, 'bullying' was often used to refer to actions which reflected inequalities of power (status, seniority and strength), offended a sense of 'fair play' and were thus regarded as illegitimate.

Bullying, like initiation, also had the purpose of creating sameness and outlawing difference. Uniformity was created around house and school identity and around the respect for school sports heroes and love of games. Unquestioning loyalty to the school or house was an expression of uniformity "The institution became more revered than its purpose and the moral imperative to be loyal took on a greater importance than any evaluation of the object of loyalty however sincere. ... Powerful rites of intensification were fostered to this end. These consensual rituals bound together the whole group as a moral community".⁷³ For those who were perceived as weak and different a grim fate was in store. Little is known about the secret lives of anguish in the boarding schools. The development of sexuality, relationships with friends, responses to challenge and humiliation are all difficult to find in the historical record. A project to research these areas is long overdue. There is nevertheless sufficient evidence to show that intolerance of difference (sexual, social, morphological) existed. If one's voice was too high, one's legs too thin, ability at games absent, one became the object of ridicule. In order to avoid constant humiliation, boys fitted in. Difference was suppressed, uniformity championed.⁷⁴

The oppression of junior pupils by seniors and the release of the pack instinct to correct a black sheep were also condoned.⁷⁵ At Maritzburg College, the punishment book records very few cases of action against bullying. On a rare occasion at Hilton, "an overgrown 'new poop' was taught a lesson by two younger boys who happened to be old poops. They beat him up. Ellis [the headmaster] intervened and the Head Boy 'soundly spanked' them".⁷⁶

Bullying was common. Here are a few examples. At Maritzburg College around 1880 a group of boys had, as its 'main delight' "to bully unmercifully a gentle, studious, mother's boy nicknamed 'Bully'. Besides teasing him relentlessly, they were in the habit of jostling the unfortunate 'Bully' into the sluit or seizing his canvas book bag and twisting it until the band around his neck almost strangled him." At Hilton in the 1890s "[a] sadist who ironically called himself 'Gentle Hugh' ... had an evil reputation for cruelty to smaller boys and was remembered by at least one of them as 'a nasty looking specimen whom I feared and despised'". At Michaelhouse "a refined form of sadism was to place bees on the bare stomachs of small boys and rub the stings in". Conformity was a powerful drive in this system. To avoid being bullied required first accepting the rules of the system and one's own place within it, and then endorsing the system. For those who either could not or would not fit, the weight of cruelty was heaviest. A stutterer, for example, would be singled out for harsh treatment – having to stand on a table and tell jokes, much to the delight of the listeners.⁷⁷

For the most part bullying occurred without official intervention or censure. It was the result of many things; the atmosphere of violence engendered by corporal punishment and the power of prefects, (possibly) the broader social context of settler violence in Natal, the large age gap of pupils, from twelve-nineteen and by the drive to violence.⁷⁸ This last point requires elaboration. Michael Kaufman

argues that being a man, being tough and masculine, is valued amongst males, hence opportunities to demonstrate toughness are generally seized. Yet "men are everywhere unsure of their own masculinity and maleness". This can lead to constant demonstrations to prove it and to test it. When such behaviour takes the form of violence it can be seen as an expression of the fragility of masculinity.⁷⁹

Kaufman argues that apart from testing and affirming masculinity, violence and aggression stem from relations of power which were developed in early childhood when fathers humiliated, beat and misunderstood their sons. This produced major anxiety which is "crystallized in an unspoken fear (that)... all other men are my potential humiliators, my enemies, my competitors". Andrew Tolson puts it slightly differently but makes essentially the same point. As a boy

grows up, the ambivalent structure of his masculine identification becomes a quest for resolution, and a boy develops a compulsive need for recognition and reward. In the culture of masculinity, rewards are always distant, at a premium. They must be fought over, competitively, through a long struggle for supremacy.⁸⁰

For psychological and institutional reasons, the challenge of school was survival.

General living conditions

The boarding establishments were generally devoid of human and material comfort. Virtually all commentators describe conditions as 'spartan'. Until the twentieth century, baths at the private schools were taken in the open, frequently in winter literally necessitating a breaking of the ice. There was no hot water other than that fetched by juniors for the seniors. Bathing was communal. At Michaelhouse, for example, the bathroom consisted of

a large iron tank capable of holding 24 bathers and 'a species of shower bath' – a perforated pipe running round the room; hot water could only be obtained in cans from the kitchen wing.

It was consequently also a place favoured for fagging and bullying. An indication of this is given in the terse statement by Haw and Frame that 'opprobrium' was attached to shirkers of showering. Being isolated, the benefits of modernization came late, Hilton, for example, receiving electricity only in 1926. Dormitories were very sparse containing a bed and a trunk per boy and nothing else. Medical attention was rudimentary. At Maritzburg College it was believed by pupils that all ailments were treated with castor oil, so most bore illness stoically. Testimony to the conditions pertaining at these schools was the catastrophic epidemics which from time to time afflicted them. At Hilton, for example, one boy died and 14% of the school was affected in 1919 by scarlet fever. And in the following year enteric fever took the lives of five boys.⁸¹

Perhaps the source of most discontent amongst school boys was the food. The records of these schools are filled with constant complaints by boys and parents

concerning the quality and amount of food.⁸² The schools generally responded by arguing the benefits of a lean diet – a lean, fit and tough boy. This was not always convincing. Throughout the period, maize porridge and bread were the staple, and meat was rare. Initially sugar was an unexpected and miserly addition to the tea though this improved.

Insofar as the human warmth of the institutions was concerned, this too was ladled out sparingly. It frequently fell to the wives of teachers, particularly of the headmasters, to dispense the necessary. This involved having boys around for tea in the afternoons. Efforts were made to give every boy at the school such an outing each year. Apart from the cakes which were eagerly guzzled these functions served to reduce the emotional barrenness of the schools. Ruth Pennington remembers comforting homesick and miserable boys and sometimes holding their hands when they had received bad news, such as a death in the family. This was all the female company that a boy was likely to receive.⁸³ The schools were very male, as though the physical intrusion of women might have softened the places unduly and prejudiced the toughening programme. At the turn of the century, Michaelhouse had only three women in the school, the wife of a teacher, a matron and a music teacher.⁸⁴

Life at private and government-grammar schools was brutal, hard and unremitting. The nature of punishable offences was trivial, the range of people who could inflict punishment great, the magnitude and type of punishment not always certain but generally severe. It is not surprising that many boys (especially those not good at sports, or who were arty) hated these schools. While some ran away, most knuckled down and accepted the conditions. In the process they made their own contribution to hegemonic masculinity.

CONCLUSION

The impact of the elite schools of Natal on the region's gender relations was great. On one level, the schools were able to contribute to and perpetuate the masculinization of power – feeding their male products into positions of influence and authority in much the same way as public schools in Britain did, and still do. It hardly needs restating that elite schools also reinforced the racially exclusive order. The school was the major institutional pillar of this process of social, political and economic insinuation. This process was assisted by the development of what Steedman calls a cultural style. The markers of this cultural style were not simply an ability to do the job, but "were those qualities and styles of thought traditionally fostered in the schools of the upper classes. This 'cultural style' was elevated to the level of a set of objective criteria to be used in the selection of an elite".⁸⁵ Of course there were other institutions which overlapped and strengthened this process. Prestigious social clubs like Pietermaritzburg's Victoria Club, sports clubs and military affiliations meshed to entrench the power of the Natal gentry.

At a second level the influence of the elite schools was more pervasive. While boys who attended one of the elite schools could claim a particular identity and the privileges which went with it, they would find their gender values comfortably reflected generally amongst white men who were not of the same social rank. Compulsory education for whites between the ages of seven and fourteen was introduced in 1910. Education for this age group became free in 1918.⁸⁶ Where demography allowed (ie in the larger towns) single-sex schools for boys were the norm and these reflected many of the structural and ideological features of the elite schools. By the universalization of schooling for Natal's whites, elite-school gender values were conveyed to the male pupils in the government schools which were emulating the defining institution.

In most of these schools reliance on corporal punishment, competitive sport and the organisation of school life into houses became standard. Boys at school were thrust into a system which was brutal and uncomfortable. Their masculinity came to reflect this experience. There were ameliorating factors specific to the non-elite schools: many boys were not boarders and enjoyed the comforts (emotional and physical) of home life as well as the other social influences from which the boarders at the elite schools were kept. The elite schools remained 'tougher' than the rest, but the gender standard by which masculinity was measured had already been set.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. R. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1987).
3. For example, in New Zealand hegemonic masculinity was contested by different classes and social groups, basically represented as rough single frontiersmen versus settled family men. Though the state preferred the latter and supported stabilisation of society, images of frontier masculinity remained. J. Phillips, "Rugby, War and the Mythology of the New Zealand 'Male'", *The New Zealand Journal of History*, 18, 2 (1984). See also R. Connell, "The Big Picture: Masculinities in Recent World History", *Theory and Society*, forthcoming.
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- (eds.), *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity in the British Isles and Settler Empire* (London: Heineman: forthcoming).
5. It should be noted that this article is part of a broader research project with which I am presently engaged. This project involves an examination of the class and gender dimensions of settler power in the Natal Midlands, focussing specifically on the institutions, practices and procedures which a numerically small class of white landowners used to constitute themselves as a racially-exclusive gentry. The Natal Midlands is defined as the climatically and ecologically distinctive area falling between Greytown, Estcourt, Underberg and Ixopo.
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 8. H. Steedman, "Defining Institutions: The Endowed Grammar Schools and the Systematisation of English Secondary Education" in Muller, Ringer and Simon.
 9. *Ibid.*, 114.
 10. A. Behr and R. Macmillan, *Education in South Africa* (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1971), 129.
 11. See R. Morrell, "Forging a Ruling Class".
 12. J. Mangan and J. Walvin, "Introduction", in J. Mangan and J. Walvin (eds.), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).
 13. J. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); J. Mangan (ed.), *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialisation and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).
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 15. Natal Archive Depot, Archive of the Education Department (ED), 1/1/1/14, 1/1/1, Council of Education Minute Books, 3 June 1880 Ordinary Meeting, p.120.
 16. Maritzburg College Museum, Pietermaritzburg High School and College Register.
 17. P. Randall, *Little England on the Veld: The English Private School System in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1982), 11.
 18. Haw and Frame, 231.
 19. N. Nuttall, *Lift up your Hearts: The Story of Hilton College 1872-1972* (Durban: Hiltonian Society, 1971), 6.
 20. Hilton College Archives, "Old Boys Society, Minutes, Annual Dinner and Meeting, 3 July 1897", *The Hiltonian*, 1 (2, June 1902).
 21. Randall, 19.
 22. A. Barratt, *Michaelhouse 1896-1968* (Pietermaritzburg: Michaelhouse Old Boys Club, 1969), 13, 15.
 23. A. Forsyth Thompson, E. Thompson, *A Short Biography* (n/d), 10; A. 'Zulu' Green, *Old Boy of Maritzburg College*, interview with author, Hilton, 4 March 1992.
 24. Barratt, 49.
 25. J. Honey, "The Sinews of Society: The Public Schools as a 'System'" in MGller, Ringer and Simon, 153.
 26. *Greytown Schools-Skole, 1883-1983* (Greytown, 1983), 13, 43; Ixopo High School, *Looking Down the Years: A History of Ixopo School, 1895-1964* (Ixopo: Ixopo High School, 1965?); R. Pearse, Sable and Murray *The Story of Estcourt High School* (Pietermaritzburg: Natal Witness, 1946); Haw and Frame, 231.

27. *The Harvester Newsletter of Weston Agricultural College*, 1, August 1984. I would like to thank Mrs Moira Tarr for her assistance here.
28. For a powerful parallel study, see J. Daly, "A New Britannia in the Antipodes: Sport, Class and Community in Colonial South Australia", in J. Mangan (ed.), *Pleasure, Profit and Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad 1700-1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1988).
29. Such boarding schools have been described by Andrew Tolson as "an upper middle-class extreme" which transmitted, as a sanctioned part of their experience, a notion of 'manhood', which remained the ideological reference point of the training of 'gentlemen'. A. Tolson, *The Limits of Masculinity* (London: Tavistock, 1977), 34-35.
30. J. Honey, 155.
31. For an elaboration of the development of a team ethic, see R. Morrell, "'Synonymous with Gentlemen'? White Farmers, White Schools and Labour Relations on the farms of the Natal Midlands, c1880-1920" in J. Crush and A. Jeeves (eds.), *Agriculture and Apartheid: South African Agrarian Transformation in Historical Perspective* (forthcoming).
32. M. Kaufman, "The Construction of Masculinity and the Triad of Men's Violence", in M. Kaufman (ed.), *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power, and Change* (Toronto/New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 9; C. Heward, *Making a Man of Him: Parents and Their Sons' Education at an English Public School 1929-50* (London: Routledge, 1988), 193.
33. In another context (migrant hostels) and in a different time (in the age of Apartheid), the effects of single-sex institutional life are examined by M. Ramphela and E. Boonzaier "The position of African Women: Race and Gender in South Africa", in E. Boonzaier and J. Sharp (eds.), *South African Keywords: The Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988)). The violence of the system is pronounced and it is directed not so much at 'the system' as at those (women) defined as being inferior within the system. In the context of this paper, the strict school hierarchy has it that new boys are inferior, and thus the subjects of domination. See the section on bullying below.
34. Pearse, 9.
35. Though this process and its impact have been assessed for much of the Commonwealth and to some extent for South Africa as well, this work has yet to influence the major historical interpretations of South African class formation. J. Mangan (ed.), *Benefit Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 10.
36. ED 1/1/2, Council of Education Minutes, 26 April 1889, p3.
37. ED 1/1/14, 1/1/1 Council of Education Minute Books, January 1878-June 1888, p6; Haw and Frame, 10.
38. Frame and Haw, 85, 156.
39. Nuttall, 15. For the influence of Arnold, Rugby and the British Public schools more generally, see Mangan, *Athleticism*.
40. Barratt, 52.
41. For an examination of the impact of public school headmasters on the ethos of their schools, see Mangan, *Athleticism*.
42. Haw and Frame, 191, 192, 248-250.
43. Maritzburg College Museum, display caption.
44. ED 1/1/1, Council of Education Minute Book, Meeting 7 February 1878, p12.
45. Between 1902 and 1906, the Minutes of the Meetings of the Old Boys Society show that Midland locales were increasingly providing the school with pupils. A full list of all members of OHS in 1901 shows that out of 207 Old Boys, 54 came from the Midlands, and a further 37 from Pietermaritzburg *The Hiltonian*, 1, 1, (September 1901): 28-29. The same is true for Michaelhouse. Sixty seven per cent of boys in 1917 were from Natal and Zululand. Michaelhouse Archive, Report to Synod, July 1917.

46. Daphne (Jane) Pennefather, former teacher, interview with author, Creighton, 18 January 1992. Nevertheless there was a general increase in secondary scholar numbers. In 1921, Maritzburg College peaked at 386. Haw and Frame, 21, 106, 113.
47. A. Hattersley, *Hilton Portrait* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1945), 108.
48. The Moors (Estcourt) and the Nicholsons (Richmond) sent children to all three schools. Ravenor Nicholson, Maritzburg College Old Boy, interview with author, Richmond, 3 March 1992. It became so important to send sons to these schools that in the 1920s some farmers bonded their farms for this purpose. Victor Fly, Hilton College Old Boy, interview with author, Hilton, 25 February 1992.
49. Mangan, *Athleticism*.
50. The Punishment Book is housed at the Maritzburg College Museum. Connell, "The Big Picture".
51. Haw and Frame, 176.
52. *Ibid.*, 121.
53. Reminiscences of Sir Duncan McKenzie, at Hilton in the late 1870s, Nuttall, 176. At Michaelhouse the situation was much the same. Barratt, 40.
54. Haw and Frame, 121-122, 126, 127.
55. Boys were expected to thank their tormentors for their beatings in horrific and not always ironic allusion to the supposed paternal relationship which bound boys to their seniors (masters and prefects). This practice also emphasised the necessity of repressing feeling. T. Holdstock, "Violence in Schools: Discipline", in B. McKendrick and W. Hoffman (eds.), *People and Violence in South Africa* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1990), 347, 352-353. It has been noted that sport was a major outlet for these feelings of violation. See for example, P. White and A. Vagi, "Rugby in the 19th Century British Boarding-School System: A Feminist Psychoanalytic Perspective" in M. Messner and D. Sabo (eds.), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives* (Champaign, Ill: Human Kinetic Books, 1990).
56. Nuttall, 19-20, 176.
57. *Ibid.*, 49-50.
58. Hattersley, 126.
59. Haw and Frame, 236
60. Ixopo High School, 5-6.
61. *Ibid.*, 15, 5-6.
62. V. Stiebel, *South African Childhood* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1968), 189.
63. R. Alcock, Ixopo High School Old Boy, interview with author, Pietermaritzburg, 18 February 1992.
64. Tolson, 34; Haw and Frame, 225.
65. Hattersley, 59; Nuttall, 28-29.
66. Ruth Pennington, wife of Michaelhouse Master, interview with author, Howick, 5 March 1992; Barratt, 55.
67. Nicholson and Alcock Interviews.
68. Haw and Frame, 225; Pennington Interview; Nuttall, 28-29.
69. For interesting parallels, see T. Dunbar Moodie, "Migrancy and Male Sexuality on the South African Gold Mines", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 14, 2 (1988).
70. This practice was also in existence at Maritzburg College where it was a caneable offence not to shout long or loud enough in support of the team. Haw and Frame, 228.
71. Fly interview. Walking 'over the grass' was also a punishable offence at Michaelhouse.
72. Hattersley, 71; Nicholson Interview.
73. Mangan, 143.
74. For the beginnings of such a project, see R. Morrell, "Boys, Gangs and the Making of Masculinity in the Secondary Schools of Natal, 1880-1930", *Men's Studies Review* (Forthcoming).

75. Amongst the boys themselves, there were efforts to bring 'black sheep' into line – a boy who didn't shower properly and was accused of smelling, was, for example, forcibly scrubbed. Such institutionally useful behaviour was supplemented by collective attacks on deviants (never the establishment First team rugby and cricket players). So, for example, boys daring to play soccer were pilloried and even liable to a beating by prefects. (Fly Interview).
76. Hattersley, 47.
77. Haw and Frame, 48-49; Nuttall, 28-29; Barratt, 40; Alcock Interview.
78. At Hilton this was belatedly recognised as a problem when a preparatory school was opened in 1907. "The youngsters only come into contact with the bigger boys at meal times, and then they have their own table ... For boys of such a tender age, arrangements of this kind are of the greatest importance..." *The Hiltonian*, 5, 10 (January 1907): 76.
79. Barratt, 25; Kaufman, 14-15.
80. Kaufman, 17-18; Tolson, 25.
81. Barratt, 18; Hattersley, 58; Haw and Frame, 229.
82. For example, Hilton College Archive, Headmaster's Letter Book, 12 October 1906.
83. Pennington Interview; Barratt, 27.
84. Steedman, 133.
85. Behr and Macmillan, 134, 182.

Call for Papers

Education Systems in Transition

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"And Women, Too, Will Play Their Part": The Relevance of Gender to Equal Education in South Africa

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South Africa needs an egalitarian vision of education which includes all marginalised groups, particularly women. Current conceptions of equal education are insufficient to deal with gender difference and may discriminate against women if translated into policy. In order to expand the debate on equal education, this paper attempts to develop an expanded concept of equal education which includes a principled notion of equity that acknowledges social relations and context. Equal education can then be seen to incorporate a notion of fair distribution and an ethic of responsibility which recognises differences in need. In order to move towards developing a concept of equality flexible enough to deal with the multiple differences which characterise any society, I will analyse the underlying assumptions of two South African policy initiatives. Having revealed the inadequacies of these concepts, I will use a combination of feminist and equality theory to explore firstly, a concept of exclusion, and secondly, an inclusive concept of equality premised on relation.

Womanist...Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female ...¹

INTRODUCTION

Robert Morrell argues convincingly in *Perspectives in Education*² of the need to correct gender bias and eliminate gender discrimination in the South African education system. I wish to extend this argument by suggesting that it is not only research about gender which needs to be done, but conceptual work on the frameworks, understandings and assumptions made about sex equality in education. This is crucially important in the context of the negotiation phase in which South Africa finds itself. Education interest groups are formulating the policies and positions they will take at the negotiating table. Equality is an aim which most groups have in common, but its capacity to challenge relations of class, race or gender domination will be reduced if the notion of equality which they use is limited. It is important to ensure that the conceptual base of calls for equality is as inclusive and just as the aim which is being sought. The argument for the relevance of gender to equal education is one for the acceptance of the principle of inclusiveness. It is not possible to develop a concept of equal education without considering all the groups which have been excluded from the process of educational development.³

I begin my argument by clarifying some of the processes involved in equalising education. Usually, such consideration should be based on the facts about how resources and power are distributed. Since these are well known, on a general level at least, it is not necessary to quote reams of statistics. I am more interested in normative judgements about how a society should distribute resources in the interests of social justice. These are value decisions which will differ because different interest groups make different assumptions about what equality or justice is. It is these value-based criteria which influence policy decisions.

There are three concerns expressed in this regard. The first is that numbers are deceptive. South Africa is different from many developing countries in that there are at least as many, and sometimes more, girls than boys in schools. It would appear then that inequalities in schooling are largely due to race and class rather than gender factors. There is no doubt that South African literature on education and schooling implies that people are excluded from education processes on the grounds of their racial or class positions. With few exceptions, inequality in the schooling system has been analysed in terms of apartheid or capitalist exploitation.⁴ I want specifically to challenge the notion that equality and justice simply involve distributive issues. The distributive paradigm tends to depict justice as the allocation of material goods and social positions, at the expense of considering social relations of power and domination. It is often the unequal distribution of power and opportunity in society which prevents or limits the realisation of equality. This can be seen in the South African context where women have equal access to education but often lack access to suitable employment and positions of power.

The second is that while calls for a new education system incorporate notions of justice in order to redress historical inequalities, they tend, given the obvious imbalances in South African schools, to prioritise racial exclusion, resulting in a focus on quantitative issues when discussing future education systems. The attempt to deal with the complexities of distributive justice leads to the reduction of equal education to notions of schooling which prioritise factors such as the equal or same allocation of resources and access. While this is obviously a concern in the South African context, where financial allocation according to race is so obviously unequal, it confines the concept of equality to empirical and quantitative questions. This may lead to a tendency to overlook gender issues in education. There are however, few explicit theories about what equal education is and should be, and the concept of equal education tends to be assumed rather than discussed. As a result justice is often reduced to a notion of measurable equality as fair distribution. This disguises the extent to which numbers obscure the experience and interpretation of inequality and the social relations of domination on which they are based. These factors are crucially important if gender equality is to be achieved in education.

The third is that if education is about the means through which people acquire the skills, not only for social survival but for participation in the processes and practices which structure daily existence, then access and provision are insufficient

to ensure equality, as it would be difficult to explain why the education system in South Africa discriminates against women. It is also necessary to focus on the qualitative and power aspects of education. Women have been excluded from the development of dominant social theories and understandings which define social institutions. Such exclusion, which is reproduced through social understandings and relations of power and domination, tends to justify an unequal distribution of power and opportunity between men and women. The association of women with a private, domestic space limits their capacity to develop discourses which challenge institutionalised power relations.

I will argue that it is important for our assumptions about justice to include a concept of equality in which freedom of choice is actualised through education and other social institutions. In other words, we need to develop a concept of equality which accommodates difference. This entails a focus on the qualitative aspects of education, those less visible processes which can reinforce or challenge dominant social understandings, structural relationships and life chances. It is only possible to educate for equality if both the distributive and the social aspects of equal education are considered. Equal education policy in South Africa will then need to address two issues simultaneously. The first is the strategic political policy process in which the broader aims of a just education system will be formally established in legislation and departmental edict at all levels of the new system. On this level, women should be accommodated as formal participants in the educational process through equal opportunity or affirmative action policy. The second is the process of institutional change. It is at this level that (usually) dominant social and institutional discourses and understandings replicate unequal gender relations by defining the boundaries of the possible in terms of behaviour, opportunity and access to formal power. This means that the concept of equality will have to be inclusive enough to form a valid value base for the actual inclusion of women in institutional and decision making processes, by expanding or replacing social and institutional understandings.

In other words, the concept of equal education in South Africa needs to be expanded to incorporate a notion of fair distribution (in terms of the formal allocation of resources and access) and an ethic of responsibility which recognises the limits of common institutional knowledge and hence differences in need. In order to move towards developing a concept of equality which can encompass the multiple needs which characterise any society, I will analyse the underlying assumptions of two South African policy initiatives. I will demonstrate a tendency in South Africa to reduce issues of social justice in education to notions of schooling which prioritise factors such as the equal allocation of resources and access. Having revealed the inadequacies of these concepts, I will use a combination of feminist and equality theory to explore firstly, a concept of exclusion, and secondly, an inclusive concept of equality premised on relation. I wish to show that the notion of gender⁵ will inform and expand the concept of equal

education in numerous ways. In order to do this, I will adapt the work Michael Walzer and Amy Gutmann as a means of developing a set of egalitarian principles which could inform future policy initiatives.

SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY INITIATIVES

In current South African debates, questions such as, "Should quantitative factors be the criterion of equality in education?" or "Should we focus on less visible criteria such as the quality of education received?" are continually asked. The first focuses on distributive issues and the second on the extent to which dominant social understandings and ideologies affect the life chances and opportunities of children. In South Africa, this tension is complicated by the issue of sameness and difference, an issue inherent in the concept of equality.

The concept of equality implies commensurability which is accommodated by defining a space in which people can be considered in terms of what is common to them. This provides the basic criterion by which people can be treated in the same way, despite actual differences between them. For example, the use of abstract individual rights theory enables a distinction to be made between the formal humanity in terms of which we are said to be equal and the actual differences and practices which keep us apart. This has served to justify claims that despite differences in wealth, status or sex, people are equal and as citizens should be treated the same.

However, the concept of formal equality contains a paradox as it assumes an abstract norm of commensurability which often ignores the more concrete institutional experience of inequality. For example, the concept of equal rights is limited because it ignores the non-legal (institutional) barriers and relations of domination which restrict choices through self-perpetuating understandings about 'men's' and 'women's' work. This paradox may result in an either/or choice. Either equality means sameness or difference is over-emphasised. Equality as sameness often assumes that equality can only be achieved by eliminating the social, economic and political differences which comprise human society. On the other hand, the tendency to reject any concept of equality, in favour of a principle which prioritises differences in need and focuses on the concrete circumstances of each person is also problematic. While such a notion may well recognise the multiple differences which characterise human society, it surrenders any effective norm of comparison between people. We need both the abstract impartiality of notions of justice and the concrete specificity which tells us whether we are men or women. In other words, we need to develop an inclusive concept of equality which acknowledges the plurality of modes of being human, without endorsing all these pluralities and differences as morally and politically valid. This implies a policy shift in both the formal allocation of social goods and the informal understandings on which these allocations may be based.

A closer consideration of the policy initiatives instituted by the National Party Government outlined in the Education Renewal Strategy (ERS)⁶ and the National Education Co-ordinating Committee outlined in one of the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI)⁷ working documents will enable me to expand on this. I have selected 'older' documents in order to demonstrate the effect of the normative premises of policy proposals on the policy process. These emerged in a particular social, economic and policy context and therefore facilitate effective comparison. Both the ERS and NEPI were an attempt to respond to the crisis in South African education. The aim of the ERS, released in June 1991, was to develop a short and medium term management strategy to address the most pressing problems in education and to make recommendations from an education system perspective which would influence constitutional negotiations. NEPI was established in 1991 to research all aspects of the education system with a view to developing alternative options and policies.

Both the ERS and NEPI attempt to deal with a problem central to the South African situation – difference – that is, the plurality which characterises the South African education system. In order to do this, they tend to view equality as parity between abstractly defined groups. The racial (ERS) or political (NEPI) group becomes the abstract norm against which justice is measured. The notion of justice as a principle in terms of which processes of equalisation can be critically evaluated, is reduced to a quantitative measure. A formal policy of equality is outlined, but at the cost of addressing the informal processes of power embedded in social understandings and institutions. The attempt to achieve a measurable equality disguises the extent to which the content and process of education is itself unjust or facilitates repression.

The ERS states, as a point of departure, that education should be acceptable to the majority, provide equal educational opportunities and equip learners to contribute to economic growth. Although it recommends the removal of race as a consideration in the structure of the new national model of education and argues that "justice in educational opportunities must be ensured",⁸ race is the implicit gauge against which the equalisation of education is measured. Although the concept of equal educational opportunity is never explored, we can only assume that the largely technical measures suggested in the report are an attempt to achieve this. In this context, equity will be achieved when access is opened and the disparities of racial resource allocation are removed. Equity, as the recognition of differences in need and an important criterion of the concept of equal education, is reduced to a quantitative measure and left largely to the devices of the community as the representatives of the diversity within the education system. Justice is perceived as freedom of association within the context of a unitary structure, which will ensure greater equality of expenditure on learners.

The NEPI document deals with the problem of sameness and difference in a different manner. Instead of leaving issues of justice to communities, where they are

effectively depoliticised, the authors of the NEPI document suggest that notions of equality and justice are constructed in political struggle. This occurs in the context of a critical discussion on state strategy. The document suggests that the use of a liberal democratic discourse by the National Government leads to an abstract and apolitical definition of rights in which issues of justice are effectively depoliticised. They argue instead that claims of equality and justice should be rooted in political struggle. This emphasis on political struggle leads to an ambiguous position in which equal education is perceived as the elimination of difference, except where an emphasis on difference can be justified. This will be facilitated by affirmative action through which past inequalities are addressed. Race and gender differences would then be eliminated, but language differences may not be. Equality as sameness is affirmed, but with a fallback clause to deal with multiplicity. This is a recognition of the need to provide a space for plurality in a theory in which relations of identity and sameness seem to predominate.

Although the NEPI document attempts to recognise the specific claims of marginalised groups and the processes through which they are marginalised, their focus on abstract relations of discrimination precludes a review of specific relations of repression within institutions. The association of justice with affirmative action leads to a tendency to abstract from the historical particularity of unequal relations. Affirmative action presupposes not only an abstract norm of commensurability as its focus, but also relations of power. Justice is no longer a principled approach, but the effect of an intervention by a controlling political group. In this way, the aim of equality is subsumed in a power struggle over social meanings or control.

The concept of equal education in these two policy initiatives is reduced to racial parity (ERS) and political control (NEPI), because of a tendency to reduce equality to a notion of measurable equality, that is, distributive issues. This would translate into formal policies advocating the institutionalisation of equal opportunity and affirmative action. However, the aim of equality in education would be compromised because issues would be redefined as wants which can only be delivered by a centralised power. Informal power processes embedded in institutional and organisational processes would continue to replicate and redefine the social understandings which perpetuate inequality around race and gender.

I have suggested that equal education in these policy initiatives is perceived as a commitment to equalise the allocation of resources within formal educational systems. If, however, the concept is to be informed by a notion of equity, as an ethic of responsibility, then it should be understood as a commitment to educate people for equality. This implies the necessity of ensuring that education is seen not only as an instrument of distribution, but as a way of reducing the negative impact of different roles and environments in adult life. This would involve a focus on the specific institutional sites of domination and inequality, such as families and schools, as well as the more universal implications of resource distribution. If these policies are to deal adequately with difference, they need to address not only the

distributive criteria which affect equal education, but the processes in education which reinforce inequalities or affect life chances. However, if equality, as a concept, assumes a notion of sameness, how is it possible to accommodate difference? I will suggest that recent feminist theory, which indirectly addresses the institutional relations of power embedded in social understandings, provides an opportunity to develop an appropriate value base for a more inclusive concept of equal education.

A CONCEPT OF EXCLUSION

Recent feminist theory has focused on the extent to which dominant social theories exclude women's experience. They argue that theories of morality, education and equality tend to reflect the experience of males in the public sphere, while the range of private, domestic activities with which women are often occupied are effectively ignored. For example, Carol Gilligan's research which focuses on moral and psychological development points to the emergence of "a different voice" in the evolution of moral theory.⁹ She suggests that a contrast between male and female voices highlights a distinction between two modes of thought, the result of which is a confrontation between two modes of judging, one associated with masculinity, rationality and the public world of social power, the other associated with femininity, caring and the privacy of domestic interchange.

Seyla Benhabib argues that these two different voices represent the standpoint of the generalised and the concrete other.¹⁰ The voice of the concrete other is excluded from moral and political theory in two ways. Firstly, the caring response is seen to be confined to the realm of private, familial and affective relationships, which are excluded from the context of moral decision-making. In this way, the domestic sphere is placed beyond the reach of justice. Secondly, because women have traditionally occupied the private sphere, they become what men are not – nurturing, dependent and private, as opposed to aggressive, autonomous and public. These dichotomies transform themselves, in theory, so that the public sphere, the sphere of justice and equality, moves into historicity, while the domestic sphere remains atemporal and 'natural'. In the discourse of modern political and moral theory, these dichotomies are reified as being essential to the constitution of the self. This assumption that men and women occupy different spheres in social relations is often translated into theories (such as those outlined above) and into institutions, which utilise the position of the generalised other.

This tendency is implicit within educational theory. Jane Roland Martin reveals, for example, that there is a tendency in educational theory to privilege male experience.¹¹ She argues via an analysis of different conceptions of women's education that the domain of exclusion is defined by the removal of the reproductive processes from conceptions of educational theory. She describes the reproductive processes as a category which includes

not simply conception and birth but the rearing of children to more or less maturity and associated activities such as tending the sick, taking care of family needs, and running a household.¹²

This means that the tasks, functions, institutions and traits of character that are traditionally associated with women are neglected. Instead, education is solely concerned with productive processes (economic, political and cultural activities) and preparation for citizenship.

While the concept of exclusion can be seen as emancipatory, because it both recognises and rejects the inequalities imposed by the assumption of an undifferentiated human nature ('sameness') as the norm, it leads these theorists to affirm 'feminine' traits such as receptivity, relatedness, responsiveness and nurturance. These have been devalued by a dominant social emphasis on autonomy, reason and control. However, a failure to contextualise masculine and feminine identities, leads to a tendency to misinterpret Gilligan's and Martin's work. Firstly, it has the effect of essentialising male and female differences. The identity associated with the concept of femininity, which maps out the domain of exclusion, implies the existence of a feminine essence expressed through nurturing. Such an interpretation potentially leads to a justification of gender relations as they currently exist. Moreover, since they represent difference as essence, they subsume differences within the categories 'male' and 'female', that cut across the more particular race, class and other boundaries which further fragment people's identities. Secondly, this may lead to a focus on the formal political policy process where the generalised other predominates. This will once again exclude the process of institutional change, which is where the voice of the concrete other (which Gilligan and Martin recognise) has the most potential to challenge unequal gender relations.

While the dichotomies in these feminist theories highlight the fact that gender roles are often the effect of the development of separate public and private institutions and the social understandings which justify them, there is a need to understand the practices through which the constructs 'male' and 'female' are established and maintained. The conceptual schemes we use to understand ourselves reflect our participation in a human society. People who live in a gendered world develop ideas and skills accordingly. Michel Foucault argues that subjectivities are produced through relations of power exercised in localised systems and mechanisms, where its effects as forms of subjugation are evidenced.¹³ Such power operates through and on the basis of association with certain discourses of truth, which play a role in the normalisation of the modern individual, and are exercised on the body and the identity of individuals. Individuals, as members of society and social institutions, develop ways of knowing and acting that make sense within the discursive-relational structures of the organisations they live in. This 'sense' is largely interpreted as a natural expression of masculinity and femininity.

Dominant discourses, which are often premised on the notion of the generalised other, tend to define the limits of challenge in social institutions. If social institutions operate through relations of domination and subjugation, it is possible to understand exclusion as a process in which the production of discourse is controlled and redistributed through a number of social procedures, which operate to inhibit the emergence of particular voices and experiences. The association of power with truth means that there are particular social boundaries which people perceive as prohibited. There are therefore certain knowledges and understandings which are effectively subjugated by more dominant social discourse. These dominant social discourses tend to operate at the formal political level of institutional power to limit the boundaries of power allocation. Theories of equal education which utilise the position of the generalised other, that is, formal processes of allocation and distribution, can therefore establish prohibited boundaries beyond which transgression is problematic. This is because the process of institutional change, which facilitates the emergence of alternative discourses and knowledge, is ignored. The formal processes, which emerge as dichotomies of public and private, and justice and care, are the effect of social understandings which have imposed limits on our common understanding. The critical importance of the concept of exclusion is that it assists one to understand the processes through which boundaries are established. However, it is also necessary to find ways of redefining the boundaries in order shift the relations of power and domination which operate.

If we understand the concept of equal education used in the policy initiatives outlined above as utilising the notion of the generalised other, it becomes possible to redefine the boundaries of the possible by utilising the notion of relation which is embedded in the concept of exclusion. If we accept that inequality is largely reproduced by relations of power in institutions and society and operates on the basis of particular sets of values and embedded social knowledge, the challenge to formal equality as sameness can be discovered in the social understandings and experience of the concrete other. This means that the boundaries of concepts of equal education should be expanded to include difference as a substantial part of equality. In this context, relation is the common factor in which people should be considered equals, so that the generalised other is transformed by the experience and vision of the concrete other. Equality can no longer be evaluated in quantitative terms only, since it would be necessary to take note of the nature of relations between people in families, in schools and in social institutions. These relations are mediated by a complex set of both formal and informal social mechanisms which serve to establish boundaries. Context would become increasingly important and would limit the possibility of utilising an abstract other to wash over important differences.

A CONCEPT OF RELATION

Foucault argues that power is always present in human relations which attempt to direct the behaviour of others. These relations, which are always variable, become harmful only when they are set and congealed as a state of domination, which we ordinarily call power.¹⁴ Michael Walzer's theory of complex equality is a step in this direction as his concept of justice is an attempt to challenge forms of domination.¹⁵ He argues that the experience of domination is always mediated by some set of social goods. In most societies, one good (such as wealth) is often dominant and determinative of value in all spheres of distribution. This enables a group to monopolise and command a wide range of other goods (such as education and recognition). However, since neither the monopoly, nor the dominance is ever totally effective, the relationships which contain them are always unstable. Domination is ruled out only if social goods cannot be converted. Since justice is concerned with the meaning of social goods and the relations between people, distributive criteria relate to the social meaning of the good, rather than the good-in-itself. However, such domination is ruled out if particular social goods are distributed for their own distinct and internal reasons.

Walzer suggests then that social equality would be a consequence of a set of social arrangements which make dominance impossible. In order to achieve this, it would be necessary to narrow the range in which any particular good is convertible. Wealth should not be able to buy political power or education, as each of these spheres would have their own separate logic of distribution. This is a pluralistic conception of equality as the reasons, procedures and agents for the distribution social goods will occur separately according to an internal logic. There is therefore no single criteria which can rationalise the distribution of social goods.

This is the viewpoint of the generalised other tempered by a focus on human social relations. It provides a vantage from which to assess the extent to which the generalised other in theories of equality assumes states of domination, such as unequal gender relations. The abstract imposition of a universal identity, which limits the variability of human relations, is undermined. Walzer argues that the concept of complex equality fits a certain conception of how human beings relate to each other.¹⁶ It is therefore only possible to achieve to the extent that the particular shared understandings within a society are fundamentally egalitarian.

The idea that equality should be premised on the shared understandings of a particular society is both liberating and limited. On the one hand, it prioritises relations between people and questions the excluding effects of the generalised other. On the other hand, however, it is on the basis of these shared understandings that separate spheres and the roles ascribed to them have been reproduced. Even when meanings appear to be shared, they are often the effect of states of domination, which render certain groups silent. The potential for resistance is

therefore limited. This is because the process of institutional change is effectively ignored. Susan Moller Okin argues that the notion of 'shared understandings' is incapable of dealing with the effects of social domination on beliefs and understandings.¹⁷ Even if dominance is generally accepted, it is difficult to accept that the hierarchy is rendered just by a lack of dissent. Moreover, for resistance to be effective, reformers must be heard. Those disadvantaged by class, race or gender, often lack the education and the authority to express themselves in ways that would be publicly recognised. Women's voices in particular are marginalised by traditional conceptions of gender.

Despite a failure to recognise the effects of social domination on social understandings, Walzer's concern with the nature of relations between people has radical potential. A focus on the relations which structure the distribution of social goods enables Walzer to develop mechanisms which limit and contain relations of domination. An adherence to Walzer's principle constitutes a challenge to dominant social understandings, as gender relations themselves would have to be just if Walzer's principles are to be followed. The relegation of women to the private sphere, which is often the root of their domination elsewhere, would no longer be possible. In this context, Walzer's independent spheres criterion can successfully oppose pervasive inequality and domination. It would undermine the foundations of gendered institutions, such as the family and schools.

Walzer briefly acknowledges that the gender structure violates his requirements.¹⁸ Gender is a socially pervasive case of dominance which questions many of his assertions. The feminist implications of Walzer's separate spheres criterion suggest that the unequal distribution of rights, benefits, responsibilities and powers within the family and other social institutions is closely related to inequalities in other spheres of social and political life. In his discussion on the 'Women Question' Walzer suggests that the dominance of women has to do less with their familial place than with their exclusion from all other places:

they have been denied the freedom of the city, cut off from distributive processes and social goods outside the sphere of kinship and love.¹⁹

I would argue that this exclusion is an effect of social understandings in many institutions which strongly associates women with a domestic ideology that limits their potential for resistance.

A stress on just relations in the family and social institutions has far-reaching implications in the context of theories of equality. If Walzer's notion of separate spheres and the principles which apply to it, are to be taken seriously, then social institutions will become autonomous if, and only if, the inequalities embedded in these social structures are removed, so that they cannot be translated into a dominance which invades other spheres. This indicates a break with prevailing patterns of behaviour and with widely held social understandings in society about institutions and the implications of sexual difference.

HOW DO WE IMAGINE THIS SOCIETY?

The relegation of women to the private sphere through dominant social understandings places limits on the positions open to women and inhibits the development of discourses of resistance. However, if the pervasive power of shared understandings limits the terms in which our social roles may be constituted, it is necessary to expand these in order to develop a discourse of possibility which challenges socially established boundaries. The boundaries constituted by shared understandings need to be perceived as mutable and variable. This is possible through John Rawls's concept of the original position.²⁰ It is a means through which we can develop a discourse of possibility by questioning the traditions, customs, social understandings and institutions which have constituted our roles and identities.

The original position is an heuristic device which Rawls uses to derive his principled position. People in the original position are rational and disinterested, and a 'veil of ignorance' conceals knowledge of individual attributes and social position.²¹ While there are many objections to Rawls's original position, I am not so much interested in the substance of his argument, as in the potential of the original position, as a concept, to generate a vision of possibility. I am assuming that although people in the original position lack knowledge of their own social roles, they are aware of the relations of inequality and domination within society itself. I am not suggesting that identities or roles precede society, nor that it is possible to start anew. It is precisely for these reasons that I am interested in the capacity of the concept to envision a society in which gender is not seen as an over-riding difference which justifies unequal social relations.

Walzer objects to Rawls's theory because we can never be in the original position, but his notion of shared understandings deprives women of a voice in the construction of social understandings. I think the potential of the original position lies in the fact that people who know nothing about their individual characteristics and social positions have no basis for bargaining in the usual sense. They cannot exchange their social position or attributes for any particular good. I would argue then that the original position prioritises relation. It shows that not knowing where one will be placed in the context of particular social relations makes a difference to one's thinking about how social relations can be justly organised. It fundamentally shifts the informal allocation of power in social institutions by removing any awareness of dominant social understandings. If gender is one of the attributes which fall under the veil of ignorance, then there is a possibility of expanding the boundaries which constitute public policies and institutional processes. It provides a space for imagining boundaries of knowledge which could empower women and marginalised groups by providing access to the institutional processes that define dominant social understandings. The vision which the use of the original position

provides is one in which gender difference ceases to be a factor of significance in structuring access to power and opportunity.

A SOUTH AFRICAN VISION OF EQUAL EDUCATION

A reduced concept of equality may discriminate against women, even if they have the same access to education. Gender inequalities prevalent in family, school and authority structures in South Africa affect the life chances and opportunities of women. Complex social relations are understood in terms of an ideology of domesticity which contributes to the constitution of social roles. These roles often become reified when reinforced in institutions such as the family and school. The assumption that men and women occupy different spheres in social relations is often translated into theories of equality which utilise the position of the generalised other. The terms in which equality and justice are defined then limit the development of discourses of resistance. This exclusion does not affect only women, but all groups which fail to 'fit' a dominant social norm.

Let us consider once again the two policy proposals in terms of this new concept of equality. The ERS perceives equal education as equality of opportunity, which is inherently problematic for women, whose life chances are affected by the way in which school and family structures are constituted. The ERS explicitly recognises the family as a stakeholder in education, but fails to address the extent to which communal and familial structures are themselves unjust. If control of schools and education is decentralised and located within communities, the inherently unequal nature of gender relations may be reproduced.²² Moreover, while equality may be apparent in terms of resource allocation, the specific sites and institutions in which gender roles are constructed will be overlooked. This can only be avoided if the particular sites of domination are considered as an issue of equality.

Although the NEPI document attempts to recognise the specific claims of the concrete other, and the processes through which discourses and identities are constructed, their focus on universal relations of discrimination precludes a review of specific relations of repression. This is evident in NEPI's failure to consider gender as an issue of equality. They recognise that little has been said about women and argue that a combination of the ideological content of the curriculum and subject channelling make the education system inherently gender biased. However, they do not address this in the context of the discussion on the philosophical principles of their research, beyond a passing reference to the need to eliminate gender differences. While they acknowledge the inherent inequality of education in terms of gender, they fail to address it at the conceptual level where principle may inform policy.

A focus on gender and relation therefore reveals that equal education cannot be seen simply in terms of distributive criteria such as access, provision and even opportunity, as schools and education are connected to the institutions, social

relations and understandings which constitute our social roles. Amy Gutmann argues that a principled approach best facilitates public deliberation over what constitutes the best education, in theory and in practice.²³ Although the principles she develops are about democratic education, I believe they have much to offer to the debate about equal education. She argues that democratic education should be consistent with the principles of nonrepression and nondiscrimination. The principle of nonrepression prevents any group from using education to restrict rational reflection on competing conceptions of the good life and the good society. Nondiscrimination, the distributional complement of nonrepression, precludes the exclusion of any educable children from education processes.

The principles of nonrepression and nondiscrimination, reinterpreted in the context of a relational concept of equality, covers two issues of equal education which are crucially important – access and process. The principle of nondiscrimination means equal access must be ensured. This forms part of the political policy process where equal educational access will be established in legislation. The principle of nonrepression takes into consideration the ways in which dominant social understandings may be reproduced through education. For example, the inferior role of women in society is often perpetuated through biased curricula and school authority structures. This means that equal access, on its own, is insufficient to ensure equal education. The concept of equal education also needs to include a principle which prevents the passive domination of any particular group. The principle of nonrepression ensures this as it expands access to competing conceptions about society and social relations. It guarantees the development of a critical understanding of the processes and practices which influence our daily existence. It is therefore one of the institutional conditions which facilitate a redistribution of power and opportunity through the education process.

I have argued that South African theories are inadequate because they reduce equal education to notions of measurable parity and distributive criteria. This ignores the process of institutional change and the effect of social understandings and social relations of power and domination on educational institutions. It is these latter relations which may well thwart the achievement of equality. In order to educate for equality, we need not only a commitment to finding equal distributive mechanisms, but also a commitment to finding ways of reducing the impact of different roles and environments in adult life. In practice, this means considering specific and concrete differences in need, as well as the more universal implications of resource distribution. This can be achieved by adhering to a set of principles which will facilitate the development of equal education policy. A more realistic approach to the issue of equality which recognises the political nature of equality and the social struggle over meanings and values could then be adopted. Such a principled approach could be utilised in appropriate contexts to promote a commitment to a just society free of domination. The following principles could then inform an inclusive policy for equal education:

- * a principle of *nondiscrimination* which emphasises educability. This means that irrelevant criteria such as age, race, class or gender, could not be used to justify the exclusion of people from the education process. In policy terms this means that all state education institutions should be accessible to all children.
- * a principle of *compensation* which would respond to different needs in an unequal manner. This means that those disadvantaged by poor life chances or insufficient resources would not be the victims of formal equal education.
- * a principle of *nonrepression* which ensures that the education process is aimed at developing a critical understanding of the processes and practices which reproduce inequality and domination. Children would need to be made aware of the way in which social understandings, such as those about women, structure their access to power and opportunity in society. The consequences of this in terms of teacher education and curriculum development are enormous but should be considered, particularly in the current context in South Africa where social identities and practices are hardened by conflict.
- * a principle of inclusiveness which secures the participation of all (marginalised or dominated) groups in educational processes, and more importantly, in the development of education policy.

CONCLUSION

Equality need not be perceived as establishing a universal norm to which all groups and individuals should adhere. It can be understood as moving towards a situation in which relations of inequality and dominance are reduced. This can only be achieved if the scope of 'legitimate' choice of social roles is expanded. This means that the concept of equal education should be expanded to include the multiplicity of social relations which schooling reinforces as social fact. The concept of education itself should be informed by the concept of relation. Equality would then imply a consideration not only of distributive processes, which in the South African context are extremely relevant, but of the necessary social conditions to ensure the development of individual capacity. The concept of relation would then affect not only the way in which education as a good is distributed and mediated, but also the way in which it is conceived and understood.

Equality, unless adequately conceptualised, is insufficient to ensure the elimination of gender discrimination. The assumptions we make about educational equality will eventually influence policies which are put forward at the negotiating table. Policies are always rooted in conceptual frameworks and assume certain basic principles and values. If we are concerned to ensure that women cease to become recipients of policies which they have not articulated and which fail to address their needs, it is important not only to organise, but to challenge the assumptions people and organisations make about equality. The conceptual frameworks we use are as

important as the much needed basic research on gender. If equality is conceptualised in a manner which excludes women, the values which egalitarian policies articulate will be reduced.

And if we do not speak to them, there will be no voice reaching their ears or their hearts.²⁴

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Shaking Off the Textbook Paradigm – The Value of Feminist Approaches in the Research Curriculum

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In this paper we look at the usefulness of incorporating research methodology informed by feminist approaches in the social work curriculum. We identify several key issues in this approach: i) the focus of research, ii) the relationship between researcher and researched, iii) reflexivity and iv) ethical and political issues that introduce students to central aspects of the research process. Utilising examples from fourth year students' research projects we show the possibility for students to develop a critical reflexivity in conducting their research and documenting their experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Drawing on the writings of feminist researchers and on the experience of teaching a research course to fourth year Social Work students at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), we will discuss the usefulness of incorporating feminist approaches to research into the social work curriculum in South Africa. We argue that these approaches encourage the development of a particular consciousness on the part of the students that values their own lived experiences. Feminist approaches introduce students to a conceptual framework for interpreting the intersections of race, class and gender in their lives and through the validation of their experiences, gives them the confidence to engage in the research process.

Feminist research has made contributions to the understanding of the research process particularly in the following areas:

- i) the focus of research;
- ii) the relationship between researcher and researched;
- iii) reflexivity i.e. the researcher's reflection upon and critical examination of the research process and his/her own role within that process;
- iv) ethical and political issues in the research process.

Although some of the above issues originated in writings informed by critical theory, we argue that feminist theorists have extended insight into these areas of research. Focusing on the above themes, we will look at the theory taught in the

research course, and then at how the students managed to apply this theory in the process of doing their own research projects. We write from our perspectives and roles within the course, one as course presenter and the other as research project supervisor. As a result of the open admissions policy at the University of the Western Cape, the social work student population consists mainly of black working class students. We will draw on excerpts from six out of the eighty students' research projects to demonstrate how they utilized research methodology informed by feminist principles.

WHAT IS FEMINIST RESEARCH?

One cannot describe feminist research in a monolithic way, as some feminists operate from conventional quantitative positivist paradigms, while others support qualitative interpretive approaches and yet others base their methodology on a critical praxis-oriented paradigm – producing emancipatory knowledge and empowering the researched. However a common theme in feminist researchers' writings is the centrality of the social construction of gender as the focus of inquiry.¹ More recently Black feminist theorists such as Hooks,² Collins,³ and King⁴ have argued for an awareness of the interaction of other forms of oppression such as race and class oppression with gender oppression. We consider this conception particularly relevant to the context in which we teach research, given the fact that the majority of students in the course come from black working class backgrounds.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The Social Work research course at UWC is congruent with dialogic, collaborative approaches in that the students work in small groups and present some of the course material to each other. They have the opportunity to engage in peer learning and evaluation, as well as in larger group discussions. Towards this end, the class is divided into tutorial groups ranging in size from five to ten students. In these groups, facilitated by a research supervisor, students explore each aspect of the research process as they themselves plan and undertake a small research project.

i) The focus of research

In the first tutorial session students often express their anxiety about their ability to undertake a research project. These fears are explored and it usually becomes apparent that much of the students' doubt stems from the dominance of the traditional model which suggests that research is the domain of an educated male elite in South Africa (read white, middle class), skilled in the quantitative methodological approach to research design. This notion is challenged and students

begin to recognize their own potential for undertaking a research project, albeit a small scale one at this stage.

During this beginning phase of research, identified as the 'conceptualisation' process, students begin to explore possible research topics and are encouraged to examine why they choose a particular topic, what their assumptions are, what the link between their own subjective experience and their research topic is and how this will shape their research. The introductory guidelines to the research proposal direct students to examine how their own race, class and gender shape their choice of research topic. During this initial stage, reflexivity is introduced to students as the need to "reflect upon, examine critically, and explore analytically the nature of the research process".⁵ Reflexivity therefore becomes a tool utilized in this process of analysis as is demonstrated by the following excerpts from students' projects:

My reason for undertaking this topic was to try and bring forward the wrongs of the traditional system towards women. As a black woman feminist I want to encourage black women to stand up for their rights even if it means opposing the tradition our ancestors believed in.⁶

My research study focused on the psychological impact of incarceration on women ex-prisoners. By conducting qualitative methods of research with a feminist perspective, I tried to bring to the fore the two-fold oppression that women experience once they have been released from prison, viz. their perceived subordinate role in a patriarchal society and their unfortunate status as ex-prisoners.

I want women to be aware of the issues and not accept just anything because they want to maintain stability in the home, at work and in the society as a whole.⁸

I personally feel that our society tends to forget the contribution made by our elderly in maintaining our society. Therefore we need to remind those in power not to forget them. The elderly are among the most vulnerable group with regard to poverty and are physically unfit to stand up and fight for their rights. By doing this study I hope their needs will reach those in power.⁹

The latter two examples indicate that the students have been able to locate their research within the context of wider struggles in this country. However, many students were not able to conceptualise their projects in the manner described above. We understand this difficulty in the light of students' previous experiences of education which did not encourage critical reflexivity.

Giving a voice

Feminist researchers emphasize the importance of giving a voice to those who have not been visible, that is, women and other oppressed groups. Mies¹⁰ refers to Bertold Brecht's saying "one does not see those who are in the dark".

There is a strong emphasis on the importance of ordinary day-to-day experience as the subject of research study. As Stanley and Wise¹¹ put it

we need to find out what it is we know and what it is we experience. We need to reclaim, name and rename our experiences and our knowledge of the social world we live in and daily construct.

Stanley and Wise point out that most researchers are male, white, heterosexual or middle class. These researchers select what they perceive to be of value for the focus of research, presuming that they are able to understand and represent the experiences of their research 'objects'. Stanley and Wise¹² argue that this claim is false and that in fact the consequences of this are the silencing and distortion of the experiences of oppressed people.

Mies¹³ concurs with this, as she believes that women and other oppressed groups have an "inner view of oppression". She believes that they are therefore better equipped to undertake inquiry through their empathy and ability to identify.

These ideas have particular resonance for our students in that they have experienced multiple forms of oppression in their lives – in terms of 'race', class, cultural imperialism and gender. These readings therefore confirm their experiences and enable them to take what had previously been devalued and construed as unimportant and make it a valid, legitimate focus of inquiry.

The feminist emphasis on the value of the personal experiences of people – the mundane everyday experiences of women in particular, normally hidden and deemed unimportant – are explored and students begin to question preconceived notions of what is of value to the researcher. Glynis Rhodes in her project entitled "Bronwyn's Story: factors that influenced her to commit crime" explores the material and psychological experiences of a young so-called coloured woman.

Her mother was fifteen when she was born. Approximately two months before her birth her father married another woman who was also pregnant by him.

My pa het actually vir haar 'gespoil' (She, the mother was a virgin when she, Bronwyn was conceived (sic)). Sy was vyftien jaar oud toe sy pregnant was met my, toe sy sewe of ag maane was, toe trou hy met iemand anners, so se sy. OK, sy het baie kak gevoel....

-toe het sy maar net so aangesukkel en toe het my ouma my gevang (maternal great grandmother acted as midwife).¹⁴

[My father actually raped her. She was fifteen when she was pregnant with me, when she was seven or eight months he married someone else, according to her. OK, she felt very shit...

-so she just carried on struggling and so my grandmother caught me] [Our translation].

Conceptualizing subjective experience

As a result of exposure to the notion of voice and the importance of personal everyday experiences, students embark on a process of topic selection involving an exploration of who they are as student researchers and how this interacts with their

research. An understanding of themselves as Black South African men and women and as students from particular cultural backgrounds and how these issues interact helps them recognize the impossibility of separating their own identities from their roles as researchers. The students thereby develop a critical awareness of two issues:

- i) that the possibility of doing 'value free', 'objective' research is a myth;
- ii) an individual's race, class, gender, culture and age historically shapes that person's experience and will similarly affect the research process.

Students become aware of the contradictions in mainstream research where a 'subject' becomes an 'object' of research. Through reflexivity they begin to place themselves as 'subjects', for as much consideration as any issue or persons they chose to research. Students therefore begin their 'conceptualization' with a statement of their research topic and situate themselves in the context of their research. The following example demonstrates students' awareness of the interaction of different forms of oppression in shaping women's individual and collective experience.

As a woman from the working class, it is possible for me to relate to working class women's experiences generally in the Western Cape. Because I will be looking at women's experiences from the working class, it is important to keep in mind their historical background of oppression by the apartheid government and by patriarchal society.¹⁵

Choice of methodology

In the lecture course students are introduced to the debate between quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Some feminists have argued that

quantitative research techniques – involving the translation of individual's experience into categories predefined by researchers distort women's experience and result in a silencing of women's own voices. Advocates of qualitative methods have argued that individual women's understandings, emotions and actions in the world must be explored in those women's own terms.¹⁶

More recently other feminists have proposed an inclusive approach to the question of quantitative versus qualitative methodology, by arguing that it is the way in which the methodology is implemented that is critical. In other words, "methods in themselves aren't innately anything", rather the focus should shift to the type of research relationship created and the way in which the respondent's subjective experience is reflected.¹⁷

Students' choice of research methodology reflected this critical awareness of the importance of the research relationship:

Qualitative research methods (however) predominantly influenced my research. Because of the fragility of the women's experiences I could not thrust a cold-blooded questionnaire in front of them, and then expect them to complete it without establishing any meaningful sort of rapport.....

Oakley states that in order to do qualitative research, especially with women who share very personal experiences, the researcher must shake off the 'textbook paradigm' which distances the researcher from respondent. Thus a hierarchical relationship would be replaced by an equal one.¹⁸

I selected a qualitative research methodology using a feminist perspective because I wished to include the women, and make their voices be heard (sic).¹⁹

The research relationship serves as a critical tool for the gathering of information. Students select a range of qualitative methods for gathering data from the use of indepth interviews, life histories and semi-structured questionnaires to the combined use of semi-structured interview schedules and facilitated group discussions.

ii) The relationship between researcher and researched

One of the major contributions feminist literature on research has made to mainstream courses is the detailed examination of the researcher-researched relationship. Whereas the dominant, positivist paradigm of research denies the presence of the personhood of the researcher and the influence that he/she may have on the research process, feminists stress the importance of documenting the effects of the interaction between researcher and researched.

Feminists have specifically emphasized the importance of reciprocity in the relationship. Finch,²⁰ Mies,²¹ Reinhartz²² and Oakley²³ argue for the importance of a non-hierarchical relationship through which trust can be fostered and authentic, as opposed to expected, data can be collected. Both Mies and Reinhartz go as far to say that researchers should make themselves available for interviews with potential respondents to prove their trustworthiness, even after the respondents have agreed to take part in the research project.

Many feminist writers such as Finch,²⁴ Graham²⁵, Mies,²⁶ Oakley²⁷ maintain that one can only do research on people who share certain defining characteristics – one should either share some ideological commitment or else group membership.²⁸ In the lecture sessions students debate whether in fact it is possible or even preferable to match like with like in the interview situation. They are encouraged to ask themselves how their own gender, age, language, culture, beliefs and so forth affect both the interview situation and the validity of their data. We discuss various scenarios in lectures, for example, would it be plausible for a white middle class man or woman to enter into an egalitarian research relationship with a black working class woman, or even to gather valid data. In South Africa it is mostly the former mentioned group who have access to research skills and knowledge and who occupy positions of power in institutions which conduct research.

As a result of exposure to literature on the research relationship, students begin to question the notions of power and hierarchy embedded so implicitly in mainstream research. This process of questioning is taken further when they encounter Finch²⁹ and Oakley³⁰ who also strongly advocate reciprocity in the relationship. Finch and Oakley also suggest that it is easier for a woman researcher to interview a woman respondent. The question which would be raised in discussions with students is whether they perceive race and class to be interchangeable with gender in this context, that is, would it be preferable, for instance, for a Xhosa speaking rural black working class woman to interview a similarly placed person? What attributes or points of identification are the most crucial? In this way, students are introduced to debates on 'standpoint epistemology'³¹ and in particular the implications in the South African context of doing research across 'difference'.

These sorts of readings promote discussions of power within the research relationship in the lectures. Students discuss Ann Oakley's classic account of her experiences of interviewing women on their experiences of pregnancy, birth and motherhood. She describes in detail her problems with the textbook recipes of interviewing skills and shows by giving examples from her own research how absurd it is to conceive of and try to enact the interview as a one way process. She argues that the researcher should invest his/her own identity in the relationship and emphasizes the importance of an attitude of mutual trust.³² In their practice as social workers, students have hitherto not been encouraged to reveal much of their personal identities to clients, and Oakley's arguments for the recognition of personal involvement lead to lively debate in the classroom situation.

In attempting to redress the power imbalances which feminists have identified in the research relationship, various forms of collaborative, participatory or praxis oriented research have been proposed. Mies,³³ in her seven methodological guidelines, advocates participatory or praxis oriented research which should be conducted within a political context. She describes an action research project with a group of academics and battered women in Cologne, Germany, where the research was a reciprocally educative process. The research methods used were empowering and led to consciousness raising, through, for example, the battered womens' sharing of life histories. The research involved the collaboration of the academics and battered women in joint action which led to the women being able to document their own struggles and thereby understand and change their situation.

In redefining the traditional hierarchical research relationship in which the researcher attempts to maintain an 'objective' distance from the researched subjects, feminists call for the need to adopt a non-hierarchical relationship in which the researcher creates an atmosphere of reciprocity and he/she assumes a stance of 'conscious partiality'.³⁴

This theme of data gathering as a two-way process involving reciprocity between researcher and respondents was demonstrated in several of the students' projects:

In the research I involved the women in discussion where I did not force my own ideas on them but let the discussion flow in a two way manner ...³⁵

I brought the tape recorder to them and together we started to discuss because I did not exclude myself from the discussion as I considered myself a 'victim' or 'potential victim'.³⁶

I made it clear to the women that they should feel free to ask me questions at any time.³⁷

The personality of the researcher that is of being tolerant, listening and empathetic played a major role in getting information. The respondents evaluated the researcher as approachable, ready to listen, kind and equal to them....

Woman to woman talk is easier than man to woman. Even in this study women were more open than men. This means gender also played an influence on the nature of the information gathered.³⁸

In this last example the student is making use of the writings of Finch³⁹ and Oakley⁴⁰ who, through their own research experiences, discovered how readily women respondents identify with women researchers and through this relationship of trust reveal intimacies of their lives.

Students also revealed how the issue of power within the research relationship can be affected by factors other than gender within the peculiarities of the South African situation:

My initial contact with the parents was laden with emotions. First, the fact that they were from the Coloured community and Afrikaans speaking too made me uncomfortable. My fear of discrimination and the fact that I was not well conversant in Afrikaans really made me uncomfortable. My fears were soon to be dispelled, I later learnt, as the parents accepted me from the start. Their instant acceptance of me made me wonder whether their social status as working class made them compliant or they identified with me as a woman.⁴¹

At first I thought maybe some schools would have attitudes towards me, since I am the so called 'African' conducting the research in the so called 'Coloured' community. Of course, I came across such things, on one occasion in one school. The teacher was reluctant to complete the questionnaire, asking me as to why I'm focusing on the Coloured population specifically.....I could sense that I was not welcome at that school, but I had to pretend that nothing was happening.⁴²

The above examples are interesting in that they reveal the complexities of the context in which students do their research. In the South African context, it could be the respondents rather than the researcher who wield the power in the relationship as a consequence of their identities.

Reinharz describes the feminist research relationship as one which adopts a "non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian, non-manipulative, humble relation to the 'subject'".⁴³ This approach was reflected in the students' projects:

I feel that the most fundamental aspect of this research was the relationship I had with these women. I have discarded the hierarchical relationship (this is a manipulation tool for those researchers who are afraid to close the distance between them and their respondents, hence 'hygienic research') and adopted a reciprocal one.⁴⁴

Regardless of the topic of their research or the gender of their respondents, students are encouraged to reflect on the power issues inherent in the research relationship. Students are able to make use of reflexivity to understand and account for the influence of these on the research relationship.

Another factor that must have had an influence on the way in which the respondents participated was the status of the researcher. The researcher introduced herself as a social work student but the 'social work' professional term meant more to the respondents than to the 'student'. This means that the respondents were hoping that the researcher will definitely act/respond to their problem as a qualified person.⁴⁵ The presence of the researcher as a social work student raised their hopes.

Research as a consciousness-raising process

An exciting aspect of the teaching experience is the students' growing awareness of the liberatory potential of research practice. As one student wrote in her project:

Thus like Mies (1983), I accept the feminist paradigm, partly because I am a woman and I feel that we and salient issues in our lives have been excluded from regular research and partly because I hope the findings and conclusions of my research will promote the consciousness⁴⁶ on not only future researchers, but also those who are actually being researched.

As noted earlier, several feminist writers, most notably Mies⁴⁷ have argued for the development of a feminist research praxis in which the experiences and political struggles of women are directly linked and articulated. We regard this conceptualisation as problematic, as it emphasises only gender, failing to take cognisance of the intersections of different forms of oppression in women's lives and the historically different meaning attached to gendered identity for women across different racial, cultural and other contexts. Further research is needed in order to accommodate an understanding of this interaction in order to develop an anti-racist and anti-classist, feminist approach to research and political action.

Data analysis

Throughout the research process, students are encouraged to keep a diary and reflect on their own thoughts, ideas and feelings whilst simultaneously recording those expressed by their respondents. A feminist approach to data analysis actively utilizes reflexivity in an attempt to understand the patterns and themes emerging from documented experiences and to critically examine the way in which gender

relations structure these experiences. Students are encouraged to extend this analysis to the South African context, to explore the way in which different systems of power operate and shape individual's subjective and collective identities.

The one woman sells mandrax because her father forces her to do so and her husband abuses mandrax. She is presently on trial for smuggling mandrax and dagga to her husband in Pollsmoor Prison.

The second woman had to ask permission from her husband to be interviewed. He refused permission and denied that she was even in prison, even though her brother told me she was imprisoned because of her husband. The husband bought on her accounts and did not make payments....In this way I want to illustrate that these women's lives were negatively affected by men whom society gave the power to dominate.⁴⁸

The need to understand other systems of power operating in defining women's experience of gender is demonstrated through the example drawn from Bronwyn's experience in prison – as reflected in her life history.

Bronwyn is a single woman who refers to herself as a 'tomboy'. She explained:

... Issie soos ek 'n lesbian issie. Ek dra maar net mans kleren en ek hou vir my different van vrouens."

[It isn't as if I am a lesbian. I just wear men's clothes and keep myself different from women]

She says it is this form of behaviour that saved her in prison because the lesbians could not take advantage of her, they understood the code, according to her.⁴⁹

An understanding of how sexual identity interacts with other power systems operating in the prisons enabled the student to understand the 'multi-layered' nature of this woman's experience.

iii) Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an aspect which is stressed throughout the lectures and tutorials. It involves critical self reflection both of the researcher him/herself and the effect that s/he has on the research process.

Wilkinson⁵⁰ distinguishes between 'personal' and 'functional' reflexivity, although she sees them as closely linked and inseparable.

Personal reflexivity refers to the researcher's own identity. This includes the personal interests and values which are often, either consciously or unconsciously, largely influential in what one chooses as a topic to study (this has long been denied by the positivist paradigm). The students are also encouraged to consider how their personal characteristics such as their age, gender, cultural background, theoretical interests etc influence how they conduct research, what they find and how they interpret what they find. The idea is that students use their diaries throughout the research process to record their feelings and changing perceptions.

Wilkinson's⁵¹ concept of functional reflexivity is concerned with how the choice of research methods and the way data is interpreted is shaped by the researcher's values, life circumstances, structural position in society and ideology. A further question which she asks is to what extent our research, and particularly the methods we use, are influential in creating our concepts and thus constructing our knowledge. Students are encouraged to critically examine the different approaches to research, as many readings throughout the course make reference to the underlying principles upon which the approaches are based. The purpose of exposing students to differing approaches is to lead them to the consciousness that knowledge production and legitimation are historically structured and situated. Another important and contentious issue which students have to consider in their research projects and which has been discussed in the theme of research relationship in our paper, is whether only like can study like. Given the insight gained from black feminist theorists such as Hooks⁵² that systems of gender, race and class oppression operate simultaneously in historically specific ways to shape women's subjective experience, the notion of 'like can study like' raises major research problems, especially in the South African context.⁵³ The particular usefulness of this debate is the feminist insight that the researcher's own political, social and economic position will shape the research and hence questions of research 'bias' in the traditional research paradigms need to be expanded to include recognition of this valuable aspect of data collection.

Similarly, concerns related to testing 'reliability' and 'validity' of data need to be transformed to accommodate the recognition that an individual's experience is shaped by the interaction of a number of systems at any given time. For example, the experience of a group of black women may reflect common themes, however, "these themes will be experienced differently by black women of different classes, ages, regions, and sexual preferences as well as by Black women in different historical settings".⁵⁴

Armed with the only weapon that saw me through this research, and that is my sensitivity towards the needs of people from deprived communities whose fate I also share as a rural community citizen. My humble origin and existence, which I communicated through to my parent subjects, worked to my advantage as I enjoyed a very good rapport with the group, who saw me as one of them.⁵⁵

iv) Ethical and political issues

During the course, various readings are intended to help to sensitize students to issues such as how the research could impact on the lives of those being researched both as individuals and collectively. Will the product of research provide resources or answers to pressing problems? Is the process of research a cathartic experience for the respondents and is this enough? Whose interests are we representing when we interpret the data and write up the findings?

Reinharz⁵⁶ in her experiential analysis encourages a collaborative relationship between researcher and respondents and advocates that in order for collaboration to be possible the research topic be of genuine interest to both parties.

Mies⁵⁷ encourages the development of direct methods of feeding back results to the researched, to prevent research from being used against women. She suggests that findings should be made available in popular, everyday language and should be made available as quickly as possible – before the formal report is written.

One of the main objectives in feminist research is to develop a social science which has an emotional as well as an intellectual commitment in promoting the interests of the people we research.

After exposure to these and other texts on ethics, students are required to review their own research projects with regard to the sort of ethical, political and moral dilemmas in which they find themselves.

In accordance with the feminist assertion that research be conducted in a collaborative way *with* women and for women, students are encouraged to understand the ethical and political implications of their research – not only in terms of how they conducted their research but also in terms of the long term goal of the research. In the South African context it has been largely those working within an alternative adult literacy tradition who have argued for the need for research to be a participatory process. They have commented on the importance of "improving the social conditions of the oppressed and a commitment to a research and education process which involves the active participation of local people".⁵⁸ Several of the students cited time limitations as a factor that prevented them from undertaking a research project that enabled them to really engage in a project that responded to a need identified by either the oppressed or those working with an oppressed group. However, while recognising these limitations, students attempted to ensure that the process of the research, through the medium of the relationship, was an empowering one and in this way accommodated the ethical question relating to the benefits of the research for those involved.

CONCLUSION

From our experience of teaching and supervising the research course it is our belief that the majority of students struggle to understand the process of knowledge production and hence are unable to challenge the way in which their own experiences are invalidated through this process.

We argue for the usefulness of the contributions which feminists have made both epistemologically in terms of how knowledge is conceived and legitimated and also methodologically with its emphasis on the research process.

We have tried to show that through incorporating these insights gained from feminist methodology into the curriculum, students are exposed to a conceptual

framework that enables them to understand how power operates in the process of knowledge production.

We recognise the limitations of introducing this approach in the fourth year of study and we advocate that teachers assist students in voicing their own experiences early on in the social work curriculum so that they develop the confidence to become active participants in the construction of knowledge.

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Gender Relations in Lebowa Secondary Schools

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This paper employs a range of theoretical perspectives, particularly feminist theory and methodology in order to explore the experiences of black women teachers in the urban and rural secondary schools of Lebowa. Whilst concerned to give voice to women's concerns, it is hoped that I will find unity and diversity in their experiences. The analysis focuses on women teachers' career perceptions and the forms of discrimination which occur. The paper also looks at the ways in which gender divisions, hierarchies and cultural sectors can serve as a unifying force within the teaching profession.

INTRODUCTION

The views of black¹ women teachers have been rarely considered in the literature. What research in Western countries has shown, however, is that one cannot understand teachers' work and lives without reference to gender.² Yet, as MacFadden,³ a Swazi sociologist and feminist has remarked, "gender issues have not yet received the kind of attention they deserve in the course of the South African struggle". It is extraordinary how little we know about gender relations under apartheid and the way it has shaped domestic and public lives of women, particularly in bantustans. Kuzwayo's *Call Me Woman*⁴ stands out as an exceptional autobiographical study precisely because it illuminates what it feels like to be a black woman living under apartheid. Such autobiographies are valuable because they give us some insight into the complex cultural and political processes which have shaped women's lives in South Africa.

Recent studies on the patterns of women's work can in South Africa also provide insight into the relationship between 'race', class and gender. Cock's⁵ study, for example, uses sociological theory to understand the significance of domestic service as one of the largest employment sectors for black women workers. Bozzoli's⁶ study uses oral history to examine structural forces which have shaped, amongst other things, the work and community experiences of Bafokeng women, the impact of gender on their lives and the forms of consciousness they express in their life histories. These two studies indicate that gender, 'race', and class are intertwined and therefore need to be analysed as integrated structures and discourses. Black feminists in Britain describe the nature of the task most cogently:

We believe that sexual politics under patriarchy is as pervasive in Black women's lives as are the politics of class and 'race'. We also find it difficult to separate 'race' and class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously.⁷

There are few studies on black women in the teaching profession in South Africa, and none that are written from the perspective of the 'oppressed'. The scanty literature that is available on black women teachers has been written from a white perspective.⁸ In my view, the domination of research activity in the field of education by ethnocentric theories formulated by white academics – primarily at the levels of research problem formulation, conceptualisation, and reporting – has resulted in a situation whereby western research experiences have been universalized. This has undermined the specific experiences of African researchers. It is my contention therefore that black female's views should be central to providing an alternate understanding of the impact of class, 'race' and gender oppression on black women's careers under apartheid. Collins,⁹ a black Afro-American feminist, contends that as an oppressed group, our concrete historical experiences provide us with a unique worldview of black womanhood unavailable to others. Furthermore, being black and female may put us in a unique position to 'see' our common oppression differently than it is for those who live outside the structures of apartheid. It is therefore our primary responsibility as black women, to define our own reality in our own terms because we are the only group under apartheid who have a unique experience of class, 'race' and gender oppression.¹⁰ Audre Lord points out that "it is axiomatic that if we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we well be defined by others – for their use and to our detriment".¹¹

This paper represents an attempt to fill a gap in our knowledge concerning the impact of apartheid and patriarchal relations on black women teachers' careers, especially those in Lebowa.

Like black men, black women's lives in South Africa are deeply affected by racial segregation. However, as far as women are concerned, they are also oppressed by the impact of patriarchy. As Carby, argues: "We struggle with black men against racism, while we also struggle against black men about sexism".¹²

The paper will use black women teachers' views in Lebowa urban and rural secondary schools in order to examine the relationship between traditional patriarchal culture and patriarchal relations in Bantu Education and the ways in which these structures and values have been experienced by women teachers. Against this background, the paper focuses on how gender can serve as a unifying force by looking at how it impacts upon women teachers' lives at work. I argue that, on the one hand, being black and female may expose black women to certain common experiences; while, on the other hand, women teachers' work lives are characterized by conflict and gender divisions. One source of these divisions lies in the discrimination that many women experience in the construction of their careers and articulation of their views. However, in spite of these divisions, as well as the endemic conflict underlying male/female relations, the paper will show how gender-based networks and cultures (as one of the legacies of a pre-capitalist Pedi¹³ culture) provide a resource to women teachers by reinforcing their solidarity and

their class consciousness. The impact of these divisions on the fight for professionalism,¹⁴ as well as mobilising around women's issues in the region by teachers, will be discussed.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

a) The sample of women and schools

The research on which this paper is based was conducted in 1989-1990 in Lebowa secondary schools and involved four male managers, eleven education officials¹⁵ and sixty women teachers (thirty in urban and thirty in rural areas). These sixty teachers included four female principals and ten Heads of Departments (H.O.D's). In order to ensure the representation of certain categories of women teachers in my sample, the criteria employed in each school of selecting women teachers were subject specialisation and length of teaching experience.¹⁶

Unlike most Western countries where women constitute a significant proportion of the teaching force, the statistics of women teachers in Lebowa secondary schools reveal that women constitute a minority of the secondary teaching force. In 1990, there were approximately 3 130 females compared with 5 440 male teachers in secondary teaching in Lebowa.¹⁷ This phenomenon is not peculiar to Lebowa, for recent research indicates that in a number of neighbouring countries in Southern Africa such as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, there are few women in the secondary sector; male teachers outnumber women secondary teachers, although more women are to be found in the secondary than in tertiary or higher education.¹⁸ Fewer women are thus found in leadership positions such as principal or inspector. Indeed the majority of women teachers in the sample did not hold any responsible positions in schools. 76.7% were class teachers/assistant teachers, with greater representation of such teachers in urban than rural schools (13:10). Most of my sample of female heads of departments came from rural schools (70%), and three out of four of the female principals were in rural schools. The interviews with female senior managers therefore may well reflect the longstanding history of rural rather than urban education, whereas the interviews from classroom teachers, being more equally divided, are likely to reflect both rural and urban patterns.

A list of Quarterly Returns containing information about individual schools and teachers was secured from the circuit office, and out of fifteen circuits in Lebowa, three were eventually chosen. The list of Quarterly Returns contained a range of information including the names of the schools and the teachers, the posts held by each teacher, their age and qualifications¹⁹ and the size of each school. All in all, only eight schools were surveyed. Unfortunately due to my difficulties in gaining access to schools, the research cannot claim to be strictly representative of the situation in all Lebowa schools. Nevertheless, it raises issues that I believe may

well be typical of most schools in that locality. The schools cover a wide range of catchment areas, with five rural and three urban schools.

b) Interviewing

The approach taken in this study was to discover *from* the teachers themselves how they experienced their careers, their work and the conditions of their lives. Studies by Nias²⁰ in the U.K. indicate how important it is that teachers' voices should be heard. As Casey in the U.S.A notes:

The social relations of research are transformed when teachers are presented as subjects in their own right, not as mere objects of research. Teachers can be seen as authors of their own lives, and in their roles as educators, as co-authors of their students' lives as well.²¹

Notwithstanding the above view by Casey, my interpretations of the experiences reported in the interviews remain those of an outsider.

Each of the sixty women teachers was interviewed once. Follow-up interviews were also conducted with rural women teachers because they were the first that I interviewed and here I was able to discuss issues that were inadequately covered in the first interview. It was felt that sensitive issues relating to, for example, cultural traditions should be reserved for a later stage when good rapport was established. The interview phase commenced in October 1989 and was completed in April 1990. Observations were also conducted in staffrooms but due to lack of time, these could not be extended into the classrooms and meetings.

Although the paper employs a range of theoretical perspectives, it relies heavily on the insights of feminist²² theory and methodology in the attempt to explore the work lives of women teachers. Since South African research as well as research in other African countries is scarce, the paper places women's lives within the wider perspective of teaching in other parts of the world (particularly Britain). In this way it is hoped to tease out those features of oppression which occur because of international patriarchal capitalism, and those that are peculiar to South African black Pedi women teachers.

Knowledge is power.²³ Feminists argue that researchers are in a position of relative power because they have access to knowledge, particularly about the research topic under investigation.²⁴ To take advantage of this power is to abuse the respondents' willingness to co-operate. Research in apartheid South Africa has too often been conducted on what Reinharz²⁵ calls a rape model:

conducted on a rape model: the researchers take, hit and run. They intrude into their subjects' privacy, disrupt their perceptions, utilize false pretenses, manipulate the relationship, and give little or nothing in return.²⁶ When the needs of the researchers are satisfied, they break off contact with the subject.

Rex bears testimony to the effects of doing research in South Africa: "while Afrikaans universities excluded the black academic from research altogether, the

English-speaking universities used him [sic] in a subordinate role to collect data on projects conceived by his masters".²⁷ In contrast, I tried to be sensitive to these issues by trying to establish a relationship of trust with my interviewees. In other words, I tried to achieve a "non-hierarchical relationship, non-authoritarian, non-manipulative relationship to the subject".²⁸ This was very important if I wanted to challenge and confront interpretations otherwise regarded as 'normal'. I found during and after the research that researchers previously indifferent to the project became interested once the interviews had started.

A number of factors limited access to teachers and the types of empirical data I could collect. For instance, the political climate in South Africa impacted on the research. Even though I had established rapport with informants, the political environment under which the research was conducted must have limited to a certain degree how much information I could elicit. On the whole, the level of co-operation or non-co-operation by women was probably influenced by their age, familiarity with the researcher, the sensitivity of the data being collected, and rural backgrounds. Arrangements were made to interview teachers in their work environment during their free time, during lunch breaks and after school. This made it easier to reach teachers, especially in rural areas where there were no street addresses.

Interviews were limited to a maximum of ninety minutes. The questions were asked in English and respondents were given the chance to respond either in English or Sepedi (Northern Sotho), thus allowing respondents the full range of expression and nuance of their native language in reflecting on their life experiences. My procedure here stemmed from my endorsement of Humboldt's view that "Language is the external manifestation, as it were, of the spirit of a nation. Its language is its spirit and its spirit is language...".²⁹ A few teachers who responded in English seemed to be more comfortable in Sepedi when dealing with questions of a more personal and sensitive nature. They were able to switch over from English when the situation demanded.

Yet despite such care, difficulties arose over the language of interviewing. Translating the tapes into English from Sepedi proved not only time-consuming but very difficult. A completely "faithful translation is an impossibility", according to German Romantic thought.³⁰ This is because there are

...concepts, and grammatical peculiarities ... which are woven so indissolubly into the individuality of their language that they can neither be held by a thread of inner perception as hovering above all languages, nor translated from one language to another.³¹

Debates about feminist methodology had already sensitised me to the power relations inherent in research; interviewing as a collaborative process between women; the ethical dilemmas that one encounters as a woman during the process of researching other women and the implications of being a female researcher in male dominated institutions. However, space constraints makes comprehensive evaluation of these issues impossible.³²

Collins³³ argues that black feminist thought cannot challenge 'race', gender and class oppression without empowering women. Implicit in the aims of my research was the need to provide black women in South Africa with knowledge of how our subordination in a racist and patriarchal society is not a 'natural' order of things. Articulating our subordination under apartheid in social terms implies that these working conditions could be changed by women. Therefore the types of questions I asked women such as: Have you ever experienced discrimination in your career as a teacher, addressed dimensions of female subordination that the women who participated in the study might have taken for granted. Such questions asked them to address sexual subordination in the teaching profession and in the community generally. Furthermore, my research retains the possibility of empowering women teachers as teachers by rendering knowledge constructed by those in power as problematic. For instance, the questions I asked Geography teachers drew attention to the political content of the subject, especially because Geography is concerned with the distribution of resources. In addition to the points mentioned above, this research was meant to give the *powerless* a voice, to have a share in the research. Knowledge is a research product; this research created an opportunity for women to forge a sociology *for* women, which articulates women's experiences of their lives, rather than produces data for oneself as a researcher.³⁴

Having discussed field-work methodology, I now turn to the primary purpose of this paper, viz., to discuss factors that divide and unite women teachers as women, paying attention to staff divisions and cultures. The main emphasis of the analysis is upon vertical relationships between teachers and their senior colleagues, as well as horizontal relationships between individuals and groups within the staff of the school, i.e. the network of social relations.³⁵ This network of social relations will be discussed within the context of 'informal' relations of the staffroom. As Ball notes: "The social relations of the staffroom are often a near direct reflection of the micro-political structure of the institution".³⁶

STAFF DIVISIONS AND CULTURES

Hierarchical divisions within the education system are clearly marked by gender. Given the way power is distributed in relation to seniority, it is men who dominate the educational bureaucracy in the Lebowa Ministry of Education. In 1990, the top eight positions in the Education Department, from the Minister of Education to Directors, were occupied by men.³⁷ Furthermore, inspectors of schools, as well as subject advisors in the three circuits in which the study was conducted, were in the main men. Supervisory work in secondary schools is shared between the principal, his/her deputies and heads of departments (H.O.D's) in larger schools, whereas in smaller schools, because of size, this responsibility is divided between the principal and H.O.D's. The principals wield considerable power over the lives of teachers and children in schools.

A culture of dominance and subordination characterizes most of the secondary teaching I observed. There were also tensions between 'progressive' and more traditional/conservative men and women teachers and administrators, both within schools and amongst different schools and departments. Often this reflected wider differences of educational philosophy and political struggle within schools. The relations between teachers and principals in most schools tended to resemble the classic industrial-relations (worker versus management) form.

Notwithstanding the somewhat poor professional-collegiate working relationship between staff and principals in some schools, most women teachers I interviewed listed the principal as the first person they consulted if they had problems related to their teaching. A few women listed teaching colleagues as the source of contact when in difficulty. Significantly, a tiny minority listed the head of department as a point of contact and support.

Despite such a male dominated hierarchy and the tendency of most women teachers to find themselves in similar low status positions, female teachers' culture is not a homogenous one in which there is uniformity of values, beliefs, orientations, and practices. Women teachers in my research sample were divided from each other by geography (urban and rural), qualifications, salary, position, experience, membership of teacher organisations, social and cultural background, marital status, subject matter and involvement in social and political issues.

Secondary teaching is characterised not only by a culture of dominance and subordination, but also by a gendered division of labour which, I would argue, is closely connected with the sexual division of labour in society generally. The analysis of my interviews reveals a preponderance of female teachers in 'feminine' and 'soft' subjects such as languages (English, Afrikaans, Sepedi), humanities (Geography, History, Guidance, Biblical Studies). No marked differences between urban and rural women teachers were discernible in the pattern of subject specialisations. Not surprisingly women teachers seemed to be over-represented in Biology and under-represented in 'hard', 'prestigious' subjects such as Physics and Mathematics, as well as commercial subjects such as Accountancy, Business Economics and Economics. Moreover the subjects in which the women predominated were generally held in low regard. These patterns were found amongst the sample of sixty women teachers interviewed in the eight schools I visited.

Discussions with teachers suggested that female teachers were assigned non-teaching responsibilities that were subordinate to men. Though it is difficult to show statistically the representation of women in such roles (due to the fact that teachers were a small minority), on the whole, women dominated the ranks of class teachers as well as those staff allocated to cleaning duties, school treasurer and membership of disciplinary committees. Women were also most likely to be held responsible for serving coffee for the staff, entertaining visitors and members of condolence committees. Only three women out of sixty teachers in the sample

featured in the major administrative tasks as time-tabling. Furthermore, female teachers also predominated in extra-mural activities such as netball (thirty), athletics (fourteen) and religious activities such as Student Christian Movement (ten) (SCM) and music (eight), and were less well represented in debates (two), baseball (one), and chess (one). This sexual division of labour does not always remain constant. In one urban school, for example, a female History teacher was chair of the Sports Committee simply because male teachers in her school were not interested in taking the lead.³⁸

Teachers' social practises are deeply gendered. During field-work I noted that men tended to sit in a one group and women in another in the staffroom. However, Mpudu, the youngest teacher in one of the rural school, occasionally crossed the "great divide" by establishing a professional relationship with male teachers. She said: "Men are not fond of petty squabbles. Sometimes if you confide in women, they reveal your secrets to other colleagues. But I find that if I confide in a man, he keeps that to himself". However, she found it difficult to maintain her professional relationship with a male colleague as other teachers tended to frown on it; it was presumed that she was having a love affair if she spent time with a male friend in school.

If there is a staffroom, then it is likely to be a place of retreat, a place to which teachers retire at break-time, a place where coffee and tea are made, a place for jokes and conversations, and a place for cultural activities.³⁹ With the exception of three small rural schools which had a shortage of accommodation, teachers were usually spread across the classrooms and in such instances staff-rooms served a variety of purposes. For instance, they served as a needlework centre, an office, a laboratory etc. On the whole, "it is a territory of the classroom teacher and a critical area in which confidences are exchanged, tension is released and the staff culture of the school develops."⁴⁰

In spite of the odd clash of individual personalities, women teachers seemed to form staffroom support networks which reflected the collective culture prevailing amongst African people. In one urban school women came together to share family problems and strategies on how to upgrade their qualifications. Other activities included (*megodishano*) savings groups, rotating-credit groups to which a number of women contribute every month to augment their salaries. Predominantly female support networks included cooking clubs, condolence clubs in the event of a teacher's death, and different sorts of *megodishano* clubs in which women buy each other kitchen utensils on a rota basis. These *megodishano* savings groups cut across the urban-rural divide, age, and gender divisions. In another urban school women teachers had a birthday organisation in which they contributed R30 towards each other's birthday (and men were usually invited as 'guests'). Other activities also brought women together such as playing netball, and catering for school competitions and sports competitions.

Interviews with women teachers revealed that there were social and generational cultures to which teachers belong. The fewer the shared understandings and more distant the cultures to which teachers belonged, the greater the likelihood of conflict.

One set of generational differences is reflected in teachers' views of the nature and status of the teaching profession. Black women in professions such as teaching are part of an elite group as they are regarded as successful women in a male-dominated labour market. They thus set a role model for the coming generation of teacher to emulate. Notwithstanding the latter fact, the overwhelming majority of women teachers in my sample were of the opinion that the social status of teachers generally has tended to go down relative to other occupations in the modern sector of the economy. Older teachers were more conscious of their identity as an elite group relative to the young ones and expressed resentment at the fact that teaching was dominated by a crop of young teachers. Sewela, an urban teacher remarked:

Eh...a teacher was highly respected in the past...if a teacher came to my home, I would disappear immediately.

Nowadays the status of teaching is declining because the newly appointed, young male teachers tend to have love affairs with schoolgirls. (Translated)(Mosima, rural)

In the olden days when you were a teacher, you were treated like a king or queen but not these days. (Makede, principal, rural)

It was said that although these young teachers filled a vital need, their presence in large numbers tended to lower the status of secondary teaching. The older teachers tended to use the term 'professionalism' to dissociate themselves from the more radical younger teachers. A distinguishing feature of older women teachers was the ideology of altruism which they claimed to uphold. They said that teacher training had failed to imbue this ideology in the younger teachers; instead they were entering into the teaching profession solely for its economic rewards. Young teachers were also seen to be lacking in commitment and dedication to their work and were often less concerned with providing the best possible service to their students. They further conceded that the respect in the African culture which is shown by social distance is seen as lacking between young teachers and pupils. Consequently, "pupils lack respect for adults, and respect is part and parcel of African culture; adopting other people's cultures won't help us" (Popi, urban). Young male teachers were reported to have a tendency for late-coming to school, disclosing exam question papers to pupils, drinking with pupils at shebeens.

Young female teachers grouped themselves into generational cliques in order to protect themselves from disputes with older 'traditional' teachers. Conflicts arose most often over teaching methods and types of relationships with pupils; and older teachers were concerned about young teachers' lack of commitment and dedication to teaching. Furthermore, conflict was ascribed to the stereotypical view that

"women are fond of gossip"! Among women, 'gossip' was sometimes a source not just of division, but of serious antagonism. More than half of the sample of rural and urban teachers mentioned the fact that women teachers were fond of gossip. Refilwe, a young rural teacher said laughingly: "Gossip is the motto of women". Such divisions have encouraged women like Kenosi (65 years old) to "go it alone" in the Home Economics centre where she spent a lot of her time. Mokgadi (59 years, rural), the eldest in her school, was exasperated by the ongoing 'gossip' permeating women's lives and consequently gave herself the responsibility of resolving friction amongst rival women's groups. This conflict amongst teachers has the tendency to diminish their collective capacities to operate.

The largest urban school is unique in the sample in that it was characterized by harmony amongst staff-members and had fewer divisions amongst women. Its atmosphere was far more conducive to productivity. This was attributed to the considerable leadership qualities exhibited by the principal, regarded by most teachers as an 'iron lady' (disciplinarian⁴¹). In general, women teachers at this school viewed themselves as being part of 'one, big family'. In almost every case, the teachers I interviewed in all the eight schools linked disputes and problems to the organisational culture and educational ethos of the school, particularly in so far as it was shaped by the principal.

Group culture and divisions, such as those discussed above, seem to provide us with one dimension of how women teachers work 'as women'. By looking at the gender culture of schooling, we can extend the analysis to establish how gender unifies women in terms of their exclusion from scarce resources such as promotions as well as how they sometimes collude in their own oppression, by focusing on how they view their occupational status within secondary teaching and the patterns of discrimination which may account for such status.

SEX DISCRIMINATION

When asked to consider why there were few women at the top in management positions, the opinions of women teachers varied. Some felt that women had low self-esteem and therefore did not apply: others that women were being discriminated against:

Eh...I think it's this issue of having no confidence in women. Or maybe we have pre-conceived ideas that they are going to select men. (Mmakete, urban).

...By virtue of being women people think there are certain jobs which we can't do...Maybe they think we are incompetent, emotional, whatever the case may be. (Mosima, urban)

The overwhelming majority of the sixty women teachers attributed this to the prevailing cultural traditions that assume leadership is a male prerogative. They were aware of the dominant ideology that the cultural definition of a woman's place is in the home. Though women's importance in wage employment was being

increasingly recognized, their subordination to men at work and dependence on them in the family were seen to be appropriate – a combination, perhaps, of both apartheid and Pedi culture. Therefore within paid employment they were perceived as being suited to jobs that reflected the caring traditional roles women fulfilled in the home.⁴² Here, for example, is a comment by Lerato (urban): "I think it is a general belief that women cannot be leaders. Also blacks have a belief that a woman's place is in the home".

The perceptions of some teachers were that the patriarchal definition of a man as the "head" of the household (*monna ke hlogo ya lapa*) – derived perhaps from Pedi customs – should extend into public life. Like teachers in Britain, the ideological view that the women's place is in the home was "backed by structural relations: those within the family ensure that women accord priority to family responsibilities; and those within the labour market ensure that they remain subordinate to men within the occupational hierarchy".⁴³ Other women, however, were critical of the Pedi language and culture, and saw particular patriarchal and gender relations within the Pedi household as representative of chauvinist and sexist nature of the society generally. The following quote from a rural teacher represents the views of many women: "I think there's an idiomatic expression endorsed in our culture that a woman is not supposed to be a leader (*tša etwa ke tshadi pele di wela leopeng*)".

The reflection of male domination within secondary schools was a common theme, characterized in a comment of an urban teacher:

It's just that they despise us, there's a tendency of looking down upon women...Sometimes they feel there's no need for us to work. Some men cannot take orders from women, it's in their nature. They have superiority complex. They say, because I am a man, I am the head, I am the Alpha and Omega. My word is always final. And they are always like that, they won't change. (Reneilwe, urban).

Another explanation put forward for the under-representation of women in senior positions is the under-development of women's education. Interestingly, socio-cultural factors such as the operation of traditional initiation ceremonies that hamper female education in rural areas and the low level of interest in girls' education by parents, were seen as obstacles rather than race legislation per se. Furthermore, marriage and child-rearing, the future destinies for many women teachers, were seen as necessarily leading to a career-break and thus having an impact on promotion prospects.

Myths, stereotypes and prejudices relating to the abilities and attitudes of women to which both men and women subscribe, were also seen by women teachers as obstacles to increasing the representation of women in management positions. Smit, who conducted a survey of female managers in South Africa, points out that:

...many women have to a certain degree internalised the attitudes and role expectations about women, that they have learnt to fit neatly into the stereotypes. This can be a major handicap in the development of their individual personalities, their abilities and career potential.⁴⁴

A rural ex-primary teacher illustrates this process:

I think it's o.k. if women are staffed in primary schools because children still need motherly love at that stage...when I taught Sub. A some children would come and sit on my lap. Sometimes they wanted to sleep...senior positions need an impartial person, a straightforward person. (Translated)

A few women teachers seemed to ascribe masculine virtues to posts of responsibility in schools, or to attribute the under-representation of women in management positions to the lack of "manly" characteristics. One teacher, for example, spoke of a woman's sense of inadequacy:

Maybe they've realised that women are oppressive, so they don't give them higher positions.

Question: "What about men, are they not oppressive as well?"

They are but they don't show it. Men have what we call partial administration. Women are straight-forward but very difficult to deal with. (Nkwesheng, urban)

Women are not stronger than men, so they can't be leaders. (Tsitsi, urban).

A number of variables were identified by women teachers which may impede their promotion into senior management positions. These variables indicate that women saw themselves as their own worst enemies in so far as promotional prospects were concerned, as the following quotes show:

I think women are afraid to teach in high schools because they think boys are more problematic. (Mahlako, urban)

I think women have got an inferiority complex. They have no self-confidence (*ke gore ba inyatsa, ga ba itshepe*). (Mankopodi, rural) (Translated)

Women it seems, contribute to their own subordination. This concurs with Byrne's⁴⁵ view that by not applying for senior posts for which they have qualified, women in the UK tend to "create self-barriers consciously". Therefore, when women teachers act in support of the inherent domesticity of women, they undermine their own status as professionals.

There was also an awareness that nepotism was practised in as far as promotions are concerned; teachers with the right family ties in the government, inspectorate or school committees were able to influence their own horizontal or vertical movements within teaching. A similar finding was reported by Davies⁴⁶ study of secondary teachers in Botswana.

Despite such evidence that gender was clearly a factor in whether women were promoted or not, most of the women managers I interviewed, quite vehemently, denied that discrimination was a problem. They felt their own promotion was solely due to their personal qualities and therefore assumed that the main obstacles to other women's advancement to management positions were their lack of

qualifications and women's lack of ambition. A study by Ball⁴⁷ in the U.K. gives similar results.

Female teachers were also aware that they were being discriminated against on the basis of their role as child-bearers. The issue of maternity leave remains a bone of contention amongst many women teachers who were aware that the conditions of service for black female teachers in South Africa vary. Of particular concern was the fact that education officials did not make available information regarding conditions of service, benefits and rights in as far as leave for confinements was concerned. Women are only allowed three months' leave for confinement – a provision that was considered inadequate by women teachers. The motivation to return to work was more likely to be financial necessity than the desire to engage in work itself. Not surprisingly, women teachers reported that their health often broke down after returning from such a short maternity leave.

A few women teachers also acknowledged discrimination being practised against their colleagues. My interviews revealed the following complaints: favouritism towards some teachers, assistant teachers are not accorded the same treatment by H.O.D's as other departmental colleagues; afternoon study periods for which women do not receive equal pay with men; women felt they were held more accountable than men on matters such as coming in late and absenteeism from school; female teachers were given housewife-type chores like cleaning the school surroundings, irrespective of their status at school. Other criticisms were that women were blocked by principals from pursuing studies and from taking promotion in other schools. In comparison with men, women teachers were being allocated senior classes, yet men earned between wages than women. Many teachers also complained about unfair allocation of subjects and resources for various subjects. Refilwe, an urban middle-aged teacher, summed it up:

Male teachers are not oppressed by principals, they do as they please. Unlike we women, they are able to hit back if they feel they have been unfairly treated. Women are always ready to receive orders from principals and hence we're given more work than men...if a man is chosen as chairman for condolences, we do the spade-work, if there's sports competition, we do the catering, take care of visitors, maintain discipline. Most of male teachers are drunkards, they drink with students. Also when we undertake school trips, female teachers have to make sure that all children are in the bus before we leave for home, because all male teachers are drunk by then.

Further evidence from interviewees reveals that some women experience forms of sexual harassment⁴⁸ at work. This seemed to be most common where men were in positions of authority over women, and had influence over their job prospects. In this sense sexual harassment can be seen as a reflection of a male-dominated society in that it reflects men exercising power over women. However, this definition does not exclude the fact that men could exercise power over other men, and women over women. Women who refuse to acquiesce to male demands suffer serious reprisals. For instance, two women in their mid-40's reported that they were

transferred from their previous schools to the largest urban school in the sample as a result of reporting sexual harassment.

CONCLUSION

This paper has identified those factors that unite as well as divide women teachers. Secondary teaching has been shown to be characterized by hierarchical divisions, generational cultures, and a gendered division of labour which distinguish one group of women teachers from another. In the main, teachers were divided by factors such as geography, age and gender. Conflict seemed to characterize staffroom culture and 'gossip' was seen by women as a serious source of antagonism. Gossip "fosters antagonism, accusation, insult, exaggeration, and indignation".⁴⁹

Nevertheless, women teachers also seemed to find ways of overcoming such divisions and working together. They set up staffroom support networks such as *megodishano* and condolence clubs which cut across gender, age and the urban-rural divide. The spirit of collectivism characteristic of African people appeared to provide a resource of women teachers to cope with conditions of poverty and exploitation in Lebowa secondary schools. Such a culture of collectivism, rather than individualism, characterized staffroom culture in the Lebowa schools I studied.

Another unifying force has been the impact of gender upon women teachers' lives at work. The paper has shown how women teachers are 'being acted upon' by gendered structures and their sustaining ideologies. Women are struggling within the confines of the traditional patriarchal culture of the Pedi and the patriarchal relations built into Bantu Education. There are also tensions between these different forms of patriarchal relations. Despite the fact that teaching is important for social mobility, women teachers are aware that the cultural traditions, stereotypes and prejudices operate against them as women.

There is also evidence to suggest that women collude in their own oppression and that they 'create self-barriers'. Furthermore, a factor which contributes in part to the continuation of discrimination against women teachers is to be found in the attitudes of some female managers who are "successful" in their careers and saw no evidence of discrimination against their colleagues. As in Ball's⁵⁰ study, "they quote their own experiences as proof of the career possibilities available to women, if only they persevere".

Women teachers also seemed particularly aware of their unequal pay and conditions of service compared to their male colleagues. Despite the claim by the Department of Education and Training (DET) that it had implemented a policy to eradicate wage disparities between men and women and between teachers in different racial classifications, such inequalities still exist in the profession. In theory there may be equality in as far as salaries are concerned, but in practice

inequalities in terms of salaries reflect the fact that women teachers are underqualified.

In conclusion, the divisions such as age and geography found in the study need to be looked at very critically, for they prevent the build-up permanent groupings of organized labour which might challenge government policy and promote better education within the region. Furthermore, management positions also entrench existing power and gender divisions in schools as teachers have to struggle for scarce resources such as promotion.

Despite these divisions, black women could reappraise their position and exploit the strong culture of collectivism by using it as a mobilising force to obtain equal rights and opportunities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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9. P. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York, London, Routledge, 1990).
10. This view does not preclude the participation of other researchers. However, researchers in South Africa should address the power dimension and the history of colonization, class, 'race', ethnicity, gender issues etc. should be central in addressing these power relations both at theoretical and practical levels.
11. Collins, 26.
12. Carby, 213.

13. The name Pedi/Bapedi is commonly used for the tribes in Lebowa. But in reality Lebowa consists of a number of tribes, including some Ndebeles and Swazi tribes which are not related to each other and have no common history.
14. Professionalism "is a complex concept, involving contradictions and group and historically specific meanings...At times, professionalism figures as a means of resistance or a means of control or both". See J. Ozga, and M. Lawn, "The Educational Worker? A Re-Assessment of Teachers" in L. Barton & S. Walker (eds.), *Schools, Teachers and Teaching* (Lewes, The Falmer Press), 47.
15. 6 circuit education officials, 4 education policy officials, and 1 acting Secretary of Education. Statistics was obtained from the Lebowa Ministry of Education.
16. The criteria were modified to include age, women with children versus single women, length of teaching experience.
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18. See L. Davies, *Equity and Efficiency? School Management in an International Context* (London, The Falmer Press, 1990), 62.
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39. See A. Pollard, *The Social World of the Primary School* (Holt: Rinehart and Winston, 1985).
40. *Ibid.*
41. However, her discipline had collapsed after Mandela was released from jail.
42. See S. Cunnison, "Woman's Place is in the Home: A Major Cultural Theme in Girls' Learning and Women's Teaching", *Journal of Education Policy*, 3, 2: 123-135.
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44. G. Smit, "Development of the Managerial Potential of South African Women", (Unpublished M.B.L thesis, UNISA, 1978), 58.
45. E. Byrne, *Women and Education* (London, Tavistock Publications, 1978).
46. L. Davies, *Equity and Efficiency? School Management in an international Context* (London: The Falmer Press, 1990), ix.
47. Ball.
48. There is no clear-cut definition of what sexual harassment means. "Sexual harassment is any sexual advance, gesture or remark which causes the subject to feel pressured, intimidated or uncomfortable in any way". *The Star*, April 24, 1990.
49. Ball, 218. However, gossip can have positive effects. For instance, it could be used positively by women as a front to organize around social issues of common interest.
50. Ball, 204.

Boundaries at the Centre – Differentiating Pupils in Mathematics Classrooms

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This paper describes a small-scale study conducted in a London comprehensive secondary school, which focused on black girls studying mathematics. The author, as teacher-researcher, was concerned to explore forms of resistance to schooling on the part of African-Caribbean girls, and the impact of these upon the way in which the girls approached the learning of mathematics. The research points to a dissonance between teachers' constructions of 'good student' and the manner in which racism, and responses to it, position black girls within schools and within society. The study is used to critique existing literature in the field of 'girls and mathematics' and 'ethnicity and mathematics'. In addition, it is used to suggest that research in mathematics education (as possibly in other fields of education), by marginalising the study of social inequality, fails to recognise important barriers to achievement in mathematics. Although the study was conducted in the United Kingdom, the issues raised have relevance for research and practice in South Africa.¹

.... the boundaries that are created.....are at the centre of culture, not its edges.²

[Racism] institutes, declares, writes, inscribes, prescribes. A system of marks, it outlines space in order to assign forced residence or to close off borders.³

We claim that knowledges and apparatuses define femininity as a perpetual exclusion from the qualities necessary to produce the rational subject, the rational man⁴

INTRODUCTION

At a recent conference held in South Africa on research in mathematics and science education, of some forty papers presented, only a small number touched in any significant way upon the issue of social inequality. Not one, in my view, foregrounded the issue, or attempted to grapple with how social difference might be produced or reproduced in mathematics classrooms. In pointing to this, I do not mean to disparage in any way the contributions made at this conference. My intention is simply to illustrate a point, namely, that in much research in mathematics education, both in South Africa and internationally, the issue of social inequality appears to be relegated to the 'edges' of research activity, to be considered only by those with a specific interest in the area.

One of the consequences of this marginalising of difference, I would argue, is that the 'student' who forms the basis of our enquiry becomes reified; while we might investigate cognitive thinking skills, problem solving, the social construction of meaning, and so forth, we often do so without asking the question Edwards poses, in a different context, and with somewhat different intent – "who are the

learners?"⁵ As he suggests, the answer to this is not a simple empirical one, but a political act, reflecting political assumptions. For me, the issue is bound up with further questions, namely: in what manner are our classrooms intersected by boundaries of social class, gender, colour and language; in what ways do the social spaces thus marked out, delimit possibilities for pupils as students of mathematics; and how do issues such as these impact on research and classroom practice, in terms of the questions we ask, the manner in which we set about addressing them, and the interventions we might propose?

In this paper I want to illustrate some of the implications of this reification of students by looking at research on 'Girls and Mathematics' and 'Ethnicity and Mathematics', and refracting some of the issues raised through a small-scale study⁶ I conducted while a teacher in an inner London comprehensive secondary school; a study which focused upon black⁷ girls studying mathematics. What I learned from the study was that in focusing upon either 'girls', or 'ethnic minorities', studying mathematics, the question of 'who are the learners' is posed in particular ways – either girls are seen as forming an homogeneous group, or ethnic minorities are. When one refocuses the boundaries, by considering, for example, black girls, the implications for classroom practice are in many respects different. While the study was conducted in Britain, I think it raises issues of relevance for research and practice in South Africa.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The motivation for the study derived from my observations as a teacher in a school located in one of the most economically deprived boroughs in the United Kingdom. The majority of pupils enrolled there were of African-Caribbean parentage; the largest single subset were African-Caribbean girls.

As a new teacher, both to the school and to British schooling, I was struck immediately by the fact that African-Caribbean pupils in particular seemed to be engaged in specific forms of resistance which, while commonly identified by staff, were rarely explained in these terms. Staffroom discussion centred frequently on problems of classroom management, lack of discipline on the part of students, poor motivation, complaints of confrontational behaviour towards teachers, the bunking of lessons, truancy, failure to do work, and so forth. Complaints centred in the main around pupils of African-Caribbean parentage, particularly boys. The position of black girls appeared more ambivalent – they seemed to work harder, but at the same time frequently found themselves in trouble with teachers. They often played a dominant role in classroom interaction, claiming more attention than boys, and certainly challenging conventional accounts of girls in classrooms, as both marginalised and silent.

Teachers tended to explain the poor conduct of these pupils in terms of their social background; the attitudes of their parents towards education, the absence of a

culture of reading in the home, the lack of parental discipline, poverty, and so forth. While a small number of staff read this behaviour in terms of resistance to schooling, the issue was not, in the time I spent at the school, placed openly on the agenda for the staff as a whole for discussion.

Yet it seemed to me that African-Caribbean pupils were engaged in gender-differentiated forms of resistance. My particular interest was in the position of girls, and the impact of these forms of resistance on the way they approached the learning of mathematics. I was concerned to find some explanation for why, in a school of 950, of which over half were of African-Caribbean parentage, and of which African-Caribbean girls again formed the majority, *only three of the latter were entered for the GSCE Higher Grade mathematics examination paper in 1991.*

Mathematics is, and was at that time, a compulsory subject for all pupils at all levels in the school. The SMP 11-16 mathematics scheme was followed, in terms of which pupils were taught in 'mixed ability' classes for the first two years of secondary schooling, and then streamed, or tracked, from the beginning of the third year into one of four 'sets'. To be entered for the Higher Grade mathematics examination paper meant that a pupil had to be in the 'top' set, and had to have satisfied his/her teacher that success on this paper was likely. In 1991, at the time of my study, black pupils predominated in the lower sets, and as indicated above, only three African-Caribbean girls were deemed sufficiently competent to be entered for the Higher Grade paper. This, it seemed to me, warranted closer scrutiny.

Literature in the field

In order to address these concerns, I began to read in the areas of 'Girls and Mathematics' and 'Ethnicity and Mathematics'. The more I read, the more aware I became of how inappropriate to my own situation these research endeavours were. The American literature in both areas falls largely within the tradition described by Bishop as that of the 'Empirical Scientist'.⁸ Much of this work is concerned with underperformance – measuring and attempting to explain the relative underperformance of girls with respect to boys, and of 'ethnic' minorities with respect to white Americans, their relatively low enrolment in higher level mathematics degrees and their underrepresentation in the "high status" professions in science and engineering.⁹

This research tends to follow a similar pattern; difference in achievement is either observed or measured, hypotheses are generated to explain why, and it is left to the power of statistical analysis to adjudicate on the extent of this difference.¹⁰ As Fennema herself notes:

Much of the work [on sex-related differences in mathematics] has been in an atheoretical mode with questions arising from observed differences as well as intuitive beliefs.¹¹

While this research undoubtedly highlights an important problem, it does not, in my view, provide an adequate explanation. Explanation for relative underperformance of girls is offered in terms of teachers' classroom interaction with pupils and the marginalising of girls, a lack of confidence and independence on the part of girls, their failure to engage in problem solving, their lack of achievement motivation, the attitudes of their parents, and so forth.¹²

Within the area of 'Ethnicity and Mathematics', explanations, if offered at all, are similarly cast in terms of socio-economic background, previous mathematics courses studied, absence of role models, lack of parental interest, inadequate career counselling, the inability to see the relevance of mathematics in their lives, a view of mathematics as a white male domain and so on.¹³

In relation to most of the work, both on 'Girls and Mathematics' and 'Ethnicity and Mathematics', neither the issues of *sexism* nor *racism*, it seemed to me, were being problematised. What, for example, is meant by 'ethnic minority'? Are we not constructing difference in a particular way, leading perhaps too easily from observed differences in colour, religion, language and birthplace to immutable and essential differences in culture and outlook? As Walden and Walkerdine comment in relation to much of the research on girls and mathematics, a comment which would apply in much the same way to work on 'ethnicity' and mathematics, the approach

has tended to produce a set of fixed and immutable ... differences, or basic characteristics, which are then reified and built into the methodology as taken-for-granted categories.¹⁴

Walkerdine's own work provides an important shift in the way in which gender and mathematics might be investigated, and while her work has profoundly shaped my own,¹⁵ I found her conclusions were not readily generalisable to the situation in which I was working.

Walkerdine

Walkerdine brings the social to the forefront of her study, raising the issue of how mathematical knowledge and practices contribute to the construction of gender identities. Behaviour in classrooms, Walkerdine argues, tends to be read in gender-specific ways, which is productive of the categories of 'achievement' and 'failure'. Within junior and secondary school classrooms, certain behaviours are taken to connote 'real understanding' or propositional knowledge of mathematics – activity, rule-breaking, divergence, being articulate. 'Rote learning', on the other hand, which is linked to procedural knowledge, is seen to be evidenced by passivity, obedience and rule-following. These constructions of 'success' and 'failure' resonate with gender differentiation; with what it means to be 'male' or 'female'. Naughtiness in boys, the breaking of discipline rules, is read as evidence of a willingness to break set and be divergent, whereas hard work and good behaviour

on the part of girls is read as passivity and rule-following. Failure in girls is more likely to be attributed to innate lack; whereas boys are more likely, in spite of low attainment levels, to be seen to have innate natural ability.

Pupils are thus *constructed* as good and poor at mathematics, and Walkerdine and others point to the difficulty many girls have in moving to a 'masculine' positioning with respect to academic performance, and a 'feminine' one in other contexts. Girls are thus trapped in a double-bind – no matter how hard they work and achieve, they are seen as not demonstrating 'real understanding'. When they do challenge the authority of the teacher, this is read as unco-operative behaviour, rather than as breaking set.

Walkerdine uses this argument to explain why girls in the secondary school of her study were entered by teachers in such large numbers for the Certificate in Secondary Education (CSE), rather than the more 'prestigious' Ordinary Level (O Level) mathematics examination, *in spite of higher average grades than boys in the pre-final trial mathematics examination*.

While Walkerdine's work provided a theoretical beginning for me to investigate the issue of black girls and mathematics, her work proved inappropriate in a number of ways. Underlying her theorising are the twin categories of 'masculine' and 'feminine'. These are not fully explored, but masculinity appears to connote aggression, assertiveness and independence, whereas femininity connotes nurturing and passivity. Yet, as Phoenix¹⁶ observes these notions can too easily be benchmarked against white middle class norms.

We might well ask whether black boys who break set are viewed as demonstrating natural flair. Is breaking set in fact defined in the same way for black and white boys? Do the assumptions about the natural ability of boys apply equally to white and black boys? Do black girls, particularly African-Caribbean girls, conform easily to this stereotype of nurturing, passive femininity?

Walkerdine concedes that the gendered dichotomy she refers to is not so clearly supported when social class is taken into account. She draws a contrast, for example, between working class girls in a state school, and middle class girls in a private one. She comments:

While almost all teachers in working-class schools also described high-achieving girls as hard-working, most of them viewed it as a positive phenomenon – in other words, it did not have the pejorative connotations it carried for teachers in middle class schools.¹⁷

This rider points to the fact that Walkerdine's conclusions do not apply to all girls. They certainly did not seem to apply in any easily transferrable way to my own situation. We might indeed transpose Edwards' question further to ask "who are the girls?"

Racism in Education

Literature on racism in education, particularly the work of Mac an Ghaill,¹⁸ Fuller¹⁹ and Wright,²⁰ provided themes of relevance to my own study.

Mac an Ghaill's research considers Asian and African-Caribbean boys, and African-Caribbean girls, in the context of schooling. For these boys and girls, racism overshadowed all other social determinants of their lives. The school thus denoted, for those he interviewed, yet another institutional arrangement of coercion and control, caught up in racist practices which excluded and denigrated them.

For African-Caribbean boys, *resistance* to schooling took the form of late arrival in lessons, interrupting teachers, talking, causing arguments, doing very little work and sometimes sleeping in class. They rejected the process of streaming in operation in the school, and 'high ability' pupils often had themselves demoted to resist the creation of an elite amongst themselves. To succeed meant to identify with the ethos of the school, and the dominant culture it represented.

The African-Caribbean girls interviewed by Mac an Ghaill shared the anti-school position of the boys, but differed from them in their response. They were, he argues, *anti-school but pro-education*. Their anti-school stance was reflected in their late arrival for lessons, late completion of homework, refusal to participate in group discussions and talking in class. Their presence was seen as a threat to classroom management. Teachers interviewed about them complained of them 'ganging' together in groups and "not communicating with them in the manner that high-achieving students normally did".²¹

On the other hand, they had a good attendance record, worked consistently hard, completed homework and appeared bright. Education was important to them; they valued academic qualifications, not only as providing a more neutral evaluation of themselves and a confirmation of their own sense of worth, but as a means to escape drudgery and the low-level jobs which characterise so much traditional black female working-class employment.

Their response to schooling is thus described by Mac an Ghaill as *resistance within accommodation*. They did not identify with the school, yet did not openly resist it. They described the difficulties this gave rise to in terms of peer group pressure, of being isolated by those who took an anti-school stance, "'cos they sort of associated getting on in school with what white people did and if you got on in school, you must be a choc-ice".²² *Accommodation* to the ethos of the school was not a feasible option for them.

Mac an Ghaill's observations are echoed in the work of Fuller²³ and Wright²⁴ and resonated with my own observations as a teacher. The question for me was how these patterns of resistance wove themselves into mathematics classrooms, and impacted on the possibilities for black female pupils as students of school mathematics.

THE STUDY

The substantive part of the study involved a discussion with a group of five girls, all of African-Caribbean parentage, in their third year of schooling. The five girls were selected on the basis of one from each set, plus an additional "top set" girl from a class I taught. This girl displayed a particularly keen interest in the research project, and I believed she could play a key role in holding the group together over the six weeks of interviews and discussions. As a smaller, but no less significant aspect of the study, a discussion was held with staff members of the mathematics department in the school, to generate profiles of 'good' and 'poor' students.

The girls were asked to draft a questionnaire which they would implement to gauge the attitudes of their peers to mathematics. The questionnaire was chosen as a means of generating 'student talk' around a specific task which pupils were engaged in together. The conversations of the girls while drafting the questionnaire, and afterwards when evaluating the results amongst themselves, were recorded, transcribed and formed the basis of analysis. The results of the questionnaire itself were not subjected to analysis.

The questionnaire is interesting in that while it asks the obvious questions about liking/disliking mathematics and the teacher, it attempts also to tease out practices from which the girls subsequently deduced attitudes – such as whether pupils preferred to work at home or at school, from the board or from books, whether they asked for help or just skipped questions they found difficult, and whether they preferred to sit alone or with friends.

Mathematics and classrooms

In a report-back session, in which the girls shared with me the results of their survey, they stressed the *importance of mathematics* for their future careers – as a "proper qualification", "to get a better job in the future", "for any kind of job" because they "don't want to be conned out in life..you know, when you go shopping you have to get change", to "make sure your money's OK in the bank". Mathematics, together with English, was considered the most important subject they studied at school, even though they queried the relevance of some of the things they learned.

Having asserted this, however, they made apparently contradictory claims about the importance of the *classroom* in learning mathematics. For them, and many of the respondents to their questionnaire, working at home was preferred to working at school.

P.E. I mean if you see work taking place at home, I mean, what's the classroom really for then?

M. I don't know...I think there's too um

N. Too much people in one class

M. The atmosphere, the noise

N. level

M. Can't concentrate properly. I suppose I do, like more work at home than at school

N. I dunno what the classroom's for, I dunno... Maybe, some place where all the friends can gather (laughs) and have a chat..cos that's how most people use it though

P.E. What?

N. Place to talk

P.E. As a place to talk?

N. Where they can meet up with friends that ain't in their class and talk...that's what I think.. I think so anyway. And another reason why, is because the teacher's in the classroom and the things they don't get at home they come to school and do it... and then leave it and go back home and do another set of questions, and when they don't understand it, they come back again! (laughs)

P.E. It sounds like a vicious circle to me.. come to the classroom to talk to your friends, which means it is noisy and you can't work, so you go home and work (everyone laughs) and then come in with your problems the next day and carry on making a noise.

N. That's right.

This conversation highlights the significance of *peer pressure* within the classroom; in spite of the importance of learning mathematics, the classroom is viewed primarily as a place to socialise. This is underscored in another conversation, during which the girls shared responses to the question relating to whether pupils preferred sitting alone or with friends in the classroom.

N. No.. it [sitting alone in class] would be boring and you'd be sitting there in the corner doing your work and you'd look up and see your friends chatting to their friends and getting, you know...but I know how I used to feel when the teacher made me sit by myself..I didn't like it.

P.E. But what happens if everyone sat by themselves?

M. It would be like we was writing a test

N. people..there would be screaming across the classroom.

The girls linked their preference for working at home with a preference for *working from books rather than 'from the board'* – this gave them greater control over the pace of their learning and enabled them to socialise in the classroom and work at home. This 'double act' was carried out in relation to mathematics but no other school subject because of its importance.

Teachers, school and education

Statements about teachers suggest an ambivalence – while the girls distanced themselves from those of their peers who failed to attach importance to education, ‘not giving teachers a chance’, being ‘out of order and rude’, doing no work, showing off and wanting to be accepted by an influential peer group, failing to do work at home and bunking lessons, they did not reveal an uncritical acceptance of the teachers or the school. They described themselves explicitly as *in-between*. As two of the girls, Natalie and Marie, remarked:

N. Myself, I dunno, I class myself as like *in-between*

M. Yes, in-between... I could be like that if I wanted to but if I was like that I wouldn't get on with my education

N. exactly

M. I would be stealing

On the issue of adherence to the ethos of the school they remained silent, except for one brief interchange in which I asked them what they thought of a comment made by a fourth year black girl, in a different context, that teachers in the school had low expectations of black pupils, and that if black pupils did achieve, they were regarded by their peers as ‘bounty bars’.

N. (laughing very loudly, and with some discomfort)

Oh sugaries...(inaudible)

N.a coconut

M. What does that mean?

N. I won't say, cos it's recorded (laughter)

What the foregoing suggested to me was that while the girls valued mathematics, *peer pressure significantly determined acceptable conduct for a black pupil within the school*, and this made it difficult for them to pursue their studies single-mindedly both at home and at school. To be seen to work hard and succeed would invite the appellation of ‘bounty bar’ or ‘coconut’; a pressure which the girls were not prepared to discuss with me in a recorded conversation.

Teacher expectations

In addition to the discussions with the girls, I wanted to develop a profile of what might be considered by the mathematics department to be a ‘good’ or ‘poor’ student. Like Walkerdine,²⁵ I was interested in how ‘success’ and ‘failure’ might

be constructed. Colleagues were asked to list the characteristics of two students whom they would consider 'good' and 'poor' at mathematics. The students could be any two whom they might have taught at some time in their careers. Members of the department indicated that they would differentiate between students who might be gifted mathematically, and good students, who might not be thus gifted but who were capable of obtaining good grades at GCSE examinations.

Good students were defined as: having insight, being capable of original thought, requiring directing rather than teaching, displaying confidence and an approach to investigations which took them 'outside' the question given, being attentive, interested, enthusiastic and stimulated, having a 'feel' for the subject, working hard and systematically alone, mastering new ideas quickly, being able to apply knowledge in different situations, presenting work well, displaying an enquiring mind and posing questions, and analysing answers. Teachers conceded that the students they had chosen to focus on had never been students at the school, and most used 'he' to refer to the students in question.

Poor students, who could be identified within the school, were defined as: being unable to settle in class, unable to see the obvious incorrectness of answers, lacking in interest, presenting work poorly, being unable to follow a particular line of thought, having difficulties in understanding basic number concepts, being lazy, disruptive, and lacking in confidence.

DISCUSSION

Teachers in the school shared common expectations of good students and what constituted 'success' in mathematics. *Yet teacher meanings about what it is to be a good student, it could be argued, resonate with student meanings about what it is to be a 'bounty bar'.* This suggests a certain delimitation of the possible for black girls as students of mathematics. The study points, I believe, to the difficulty most black girls, and black boys have, in succeeding without a tremendous sense of loss.

For many black girls (and perhaps many black boys), positions of resistance, or resistance within accommodation, may be the only ones available, resulting in a dissonance between what it is possible for black girls to be as students of mathematics, and what teachers regard as good students. This suggests a whole area of conflict between the parameters set out by teachers, and those placed upon black youth, as a result of their positioning in the social domain and within school. My study focused on a small group of third year girls, yet it points towards an explanation of the low rate of entry of black girls in the Higher Grade mathematics paper.

While the study itself has clear limitations, it does suggest a more fruitful line of enquiry than one which begins with underperformance, attempts to seek out those 'essential qualities' which might mark the girls out as 'African-Caribbean', and from these derive explanations for differences in achievement. This point deserves

elaboration. While I have attempted to map three possible positions for the girls as students of mathematics, my own observation of classrooms and discussion with colleagues indicated that these positions were not inhabited in any uniformly consistent way. Perhaps one of the effects of my own role as teacher-researcher²⁶ was to position the girls in a particular way, so that the 'in-between' view became more regularly asserted in discussions. In classrooms, they moved on occasion to positions of resistance; one of the participants in the research, considered by teachers and pupils alike as the brightest in the third year, was suspended from the school during the course of the study.

Hollway makes the point in relation to her own PhD study that difference is constitutive of gender, and selecting a sample for research purposes requires cognisance of this; being "faced with differences, concepts are generated which describe those differences which can then be applied to other phenomena".²⁷ I am aware that a weakness of my own research is that the sample comprised only black girls. A more rigorous account would require a wider sampling, which enabled an exploration of how social class, gender and racism might articulate. This remains an important area of research.

CONCLUSION

I suggested at the start of my paper that posing the question 'who are the learners?' and problematising the construction of social difference have important implications not only for research but also for classroom practice. One of the consequences of 'homogenising' students in the way in which much mathematics education research does, is that strategies which are indicated by the research are often inappropriate. Strategies suggested by those engaged in research into girls and mathematics, for example, point to various intervention programmes intended to reach teachers, parents and counsellors²⁸ or to change classroom interaction.²⁹ At root, these strategies turn on *changing the attitudes of girls towards mathematics; or of teachers towards girls, rather than confronting the issue of sexism directly*. Walkerdine³⁰ proposes the latter approach, but concretises it in ways which seem to me totally inappropriate for African-Caribbean girls in Britain; she suggests, for example, that girls might begin to calculate the number of times they are excluded from interaction in classrooms, and the number of times they are rewarded for neatness. The barriers confronting the girls of my study, I would argue, were not erected by inappropriate attitudes to mathematics, or by being marginalised by teachers in classroom interaction; they were fundamentally political, relating as they did to issues of sexism and racism.

Intervention programmes suggested for 'ethnic minorities' in the USA tend to follow a format similar to that suggested for 'girls'.³¹ In the UK, however, initiatives have been taken to introduce 'anti-racist mathematics', which involve questioning the Eurocentric notions of mathematics and introducing mathematics

from other cultures into classrooms. Yet as Ernest cautions, much of this is at root "a multi-cultural approach to mathematics which is particularly vigilant on matters of racism"³² – a multiculturalism has been criticised by others precisely for its failure to address the central issue of racism.³³

This suggests that racism, together with other forms of social inequality, needs to be brought to the forefront and discussed explicitly in classrooms; that we need to seek ways, for example, in which mathematics as a research tool can be used to interrogate instances of discrimination on the grounds of colour, gender or social class.³⁴

These issues have important implications for education in South Africa. School mathematics differentiates students, marks boundaries or assigns spaces, ostensibly in terms of 'ability'; in terms of 'success' or 'achievement'. Perhaps we should begin to pose questions such as "How has success in mathematics come to be constructed under apartheid?"; "How does this construction contribute to what it means to be black, working class or female?" How we answer questions such as these must, I think, have profound implications for research and classroom practice; in terms of the questions we ask, the way we set about addressing them, and in the interventions we might suggest.

The title of my paper, drawing on Thornton,³⁵ suggests that boundaries exist at the centre of our classrooms. My argument, particularly here in South Africa, is that we need to name them, that we need to take heed of Edwards' question "who are the learners?", for otherwise we may, through our silence, continue to marginalise those who have in the past, in Derrida's terms, been "assigned forced residence".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This article is based upon a paper presented at Political Dimensions of Mathematics Education (PDME 2): Second International Conference, Broederstroom, April 1993.
2. R. Thornton, "Culture: A Contemporary Definition", in E. Boonzaier & J. Sharp (eds.), *South African Keywords: The Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts* (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1988), 283.
3. J. Derrida, "Racism's Last Word", in H. Gates (ed.), *Race, Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 313.
4. V. Walkerdine *et al*, *Counting Girls Out* (London: Virago, 1989), 205.
5. R. Edwards, "The Politics of Meeting Learner Needs: Power, Subject, Subjection", *Studies in the Education of Adults* 23, 1 (1991): 95.
6. See M. Ensor, "Upsetting the Balance: Black Girls and Mathematics: A Study and Discussion" (M.Sc thesis, Institute of Education, University of London, 1991).

7. In the context of South Africa, I use the term 'black' to distinguish pupils of colour from 'white' pupils. In the context of Britain, I use the terms 'black' and 'African-Caribbean' interchangeably at some points; at others, I use 'African-Caribbean' to distinguish pupils from the New Commonwealth. I trust the context makes the usage clear. I am not claiming these are homogenous groupings, but suggest that colour and birthplace signify in particular ways in the context of Britain. I personally find the appellations problematic, as I do the usage of such terms as 'Coloured', 'Asian', 'African' or 'white' in the context of South Africa. I am aware that simply using the terms implicates one in stamping a certain identity. But as Barzun comments: "It is one of the penalties of toying with the race-notion that even a strong mind trying to repudiate it will find himself (sic) making assumptions and passing judgements on the basis of the theory he declaims". (Barzun, quoted in R. Miles, *Racism* (London: Routledge, 1989)).
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13. See, for example, M. Johnson, "Blacks in Mathematics: A Status Report", *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 15,2 (1984).
14. R. Walden and V. Walkerdine, "Girls and Mathematics: From Primary to Secondary Schooling Bedford Way Paper No. 24 University of London Institute of Education (1988), 20.
15. My study was likewise informed by the work of Dowling and Brown. They, as Walkerdine, are concerned with the social construction of the subject; in Brown's terms, the 'social identities' which mark out what it means to be a teacher, a parent or a pupil, for example, by delimiting that which is sayable and thinkable, from that which is not. It is not possible here to elaborate on the methodological aspects of the study; the present paper has a somewhat different focus. But see, for example, A. Brown, "Participation, Dialogue and the reproduction of social inequalities" in R. Mertens and J. Vass, (ed.), *Partnership in Mathematics: Parents and Schools* (London:Falmer, 1992). Also P. Dowling, "Gender, Class and Subjectivity in Mathematics: A Critique of Humpty Dumpty" *For the Learning of Mathematics* 11,1 (1991).
16. A. Phoenix, "Theories of Gender and Black Families", in G. Weiner and M. Arnot (eds.), *Gender under Scrutiny - New Inquiries in Education* (UK: Hutchinson, 1987).
17. V. Walkerdine *et al*, *Counting Girls Out* (London: Virago, 1989) 98, emphasis added.
18. M. Mac an Ghaill, *Young, Gifted and Black* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988).
19. M. Fuller, "Black Girls in a London Comprehensive School" in R. Deem (ed.), *Schooling for Women's Work* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980).
20. C. Wright, "The Relations Between Teachers and Afro-Caribbean Pupils: Observing Multiracial Classrooms" in G. Weiner and M. Arnot (eds.), (1987) *ibid*.
21. Mac an Ghaill, 27.

22. Mac an Ghaill, 31. The terms 'choc-ice', 'bounty bar' (a confectionary comprising a chocolate covering and coconut centre) and 'coconut' used here and elsewhere in the text appear to refer to being 'black-skinned but white-minded', a 'sell-out' or an 'Uncle Tom'.
23. Fuller, *ibid*.
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25. V. Walkerdine *et al* (1989) *ibid*.
26. My position as a white teacher also, inevitably, shaped discussion and silence during my interaction with the girls. This was possibly mitigated by the fact that I was known to be a South African living in exile, and on "Nelson Mandela's side".
27. W. Hollway, *Subjectivity and Method in Psychology – Gender, Meaning and Science* (London: Sage Publications, 1989), 17.
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32. P. Ernest (ed.), *Mathematics Teaching: The State of the Art* (Basingstoke: Falmer, 1989), 227.
33. R. Willey, *Race, Equality and Schools* (London: Methuen, 1984).
34. See, for example, A. Brown and P. Dowling, "Towards a Critical Alternative to Internationalism and Monoculturalism in Mathematics Education", (Working Paper No. 10, Centre for Multicultural Education, Institute of Education, London, 1989).
35. Thornton, *ibid*.

Training Gender-sensitive and Feminist Adult Educators in South Africa: An Emerging Curriculum

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This paper develops core elements of a curriculum for the training of gender-sensitive and feminist adult educators through the discussion of key themes which emerge from educational workshops first developed by CACE in 1990 and from the literature on feminist pedagogy. The paper begins by discussing briefly the goals of adult education which are concerned with empowerment of women in general and in South Africa in particular. It argues that adult educators who wish to challenge oppressive gender relations will need to become self-conscious actors who reflect on their own privilege and oppression and act, alongside others, to change both themselves and society.

INTRODUCTION

In 1990 the first educational workshops were held in South Africa for the training of gender-sensitive adult educators. These workshops were seminal in that they provided the basis for the publication of a highly successful handbook, *On Our Feet: Taking Steps to Challenge Women's Oppression* by Liz Mackenzie, and an ongoing training project at the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE) which has sought to deepen the gender and anti-racism educational work amongst adult educators. The workshops also provided the start of a network of gender-sensitive adult educators from different regions of the country and a base on which to explore the question of curricula for the training of gender-sensitive and feminist adult educators.¹

This paper elaborates elements of a core curriculum for the training of gender-sensitive and feminist adult educators. It does this through the discussion of key themes which emerge from the workshops and the literature on feminist pedagogy. It begins by discussing briefly the goals of adult education which are concerned with empowerment of women in general and in South Africa in particular.

ADULT EDUCATION AND THE QUEST FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN²

Women in many societies lack institutional and decision-making power. They are seen as inferior to men because of their sex. Gender ideologies promote and reinforce patriarchy, which can be defined as "the social organisation of the family, the community, and the state, in such a way that male power is reinforced and perpetuated".³

The two main pillars of patriarchy are: first, the sexual division of labour that allocates men and women to different occupations and thus to different levels of prestige and reward; secondly, the control of women's sexuality by men which seriously constrains women's space and physical mobility and shapes conceptions of what 'women' should be. These two pillars of patriarchy function in a mutually supportive manner, one justifying the other, making the combination seem totally natural, and rendering the questioning of either of them a formidable task, since economic benefits and deeply internalised norms of reality are then at stake. While the particular ways in which the division of labour and sexuality control manifest themselves are influenced in important ways by social class, technological levels of development and religio-cultural norms, these connections represent the fundamental linkages in women's subordination in most societies.

In South Africa adult education intended to 'empower' women needs to challenge these two pillars of patriarchal ideology. It needs to contribute to meaningful changes in the condition and position of women.⁴ Fortunately more and more South African women realise that for any real change to come about in the position of women, women need to attain real power as part of a process of economic, political and cultural transformation. Women need to gain access to and participate in decision-making structures at all levels in society. As Manzini⁵ argues, the mobilisation of women and men to struggle for social justice for women, as part of the political processes to attain social justice for all South Africans, is a vital aspect of changing the position and condition of women. It is for this reason that for the first time in the history of South Africa a broad coalition of women from diverse political and cultural backgrounds have come together to draw up a Women's Charter to be inserted into the national constitution-making processes.

Adult education that is concerned with the empowerment of women cannot stand apart from these developments. It needs to be an integral part of the political processes where specific women's political, economic and social demands are constantly asserted so that women might attain real power at the national, regional and local levels. However, as argued above, it is also not enough to focus on constitutional power. At the family and community levels critical adult educational work needs to be done. To enable adult educators to undertake the daunting tasks of helping to confront women's subordination on the multiple levels, their training becomes an important issue. I now turn to this aspect.

KEY THEMES TO CONSIDER IN TRAINING GENDER-SENSITIVE AND FEMINIST ADULT EDUCATORS

The key themes considered in this section arise both out of the educational workshops and from the literature on feminist pedagogy. I will begin by giving a pen sketch of the workshops and then will address the themes individually.

*Gender and adult education workshops**"On our feet: Taking steps to challenge women's oppression"⁶*

A first attempt by the CACE was made to develop and run educational workshops to train feminist adult educators when a series of two workshops was presented in October and December 1990. The workshops were of five and three days duration and their aim was "to develop educational tools for gender analysis within community and worker organisations" for use by South African adult educators. The workshops were part of an ongoing action research process in CACE which aimed to develop relevant theory and practice with and for adult educators.

The workshops were attended by thirty-nine women from various parts of the country. The participants were working as educators in various sectors i.e. within nonformal education organisations, political organisations, church-linked organisations, sports bodies, cultural organisations, trade unions, youth organisations, women's organisations, universities, and health projects. The participants ranged in age from twenty four to sixty years old. There were 72% black and 28% white participants. Their education levels ranged from ten years of schooling to post-graduate degrees. The majority were from urban areas with a few working in rural areas.

Workshop processes

The first workshop began with the building of trust amongst the participants so that we could feel that the workshop was a relatively safe space for us to reflect, talk, analyse, and play. Very soon the workshop moved to a focus on personal experiences through an 'object story telling' exercise where household objects were used to spark off focused, specific memories of being subordinated as women. For example, one woman picked up a coat-hanger. She recalled, "It was when I was 16 years old. A boy said, 'You think too much of yourself.' He clubbed me. He ripped my clothes. And then he left". Another woman picked up a tea cup and she said, "My mother had come to tea. She looked so disappointed in me – how could I sit there and accept a cup of tea from my husband?"

This exercise ignited very deep feelings and graphically demonstrated the subjective and objective realities of subordination amongst all the women across colour, age, social class and religio-cultural traditions. It provided the basis for analysing commonalities of experiences and for starting to question and identify the underlying reasons as to why women are oppressed in these various ways.

On the second day, the focus was on differences amongst the women. As the facilitators said:

We assume that we cannot challenge gender subordination without acknowledging our difference of colour, sexual preference, class, cultural practices and the complexity of the interrelationships between these social categories. The most useful way of exploring gender is by recognising these interconnections and learning how to identify them. Difference is seen as positive and there can be unity in diversity.

In order to investigate differences and to problematise understanding of the intersection of colour, class and gender, an experiential exercise of 'human sculpturing' was developed after participants had listed their questions about the intersections of the various social categories. Each person had an opportunity to recreate a 'moment of subordination' and to analyse that experience.

Some of the situations that were sculpted included women taking their wedding vows in different cultural settings; a young, unmarried, pregnant muslim woman being counselled by an older muslim woman medical doctor; sexual harrasment and assault on public transport; and being silenced in meetings. The exercise provided a rich tapestry of experiences in which the complexities of subordination were identified and explored. A theoretical framework for an analysis of gender subordination then began to be constructed both out of the experiences and with the input from the facilitators.

The workshop shifted from a focus on personal experiences to an analysis of gender relations within organisations. A fictitious case study of a small literacy non-governmental organisation (NGO) situated in Khayalitsha was used to explore questions about gender relations in organisations. Using both the personal and organisational analyses, a symbolic 'gender tree' was developed which provided theoretical tools for analysis of gender relations. These were then applied to organisational case studies.

The next phase of the workshop was an analysis of the socioeconomic and political contexts within which gender relations exist and in which spaces needed to be identified where gender relations could effectively be challenged. Participants creatively designed the context by building collages and sculptures out of paper, flowers, sticks and anything else they could find to represent the social forces at play. This formed the basis for the planning by participants of strategic interventions within their own contexts for individual and group action. Examples of the strategic interventions that were developed included formative thinking around the founding of a workers' college for Cape Town, actions by the ANC Women's League to impact the male-dominated ANC and specific actions to change gender relations within certain NGOs, universities, and families.

The last major exercise before the close of the first workshop involved practising specific assertive behaviours. In particular, participants practised what to do and say when they were confronted on their return to work with dismissive and derisive comments from certain colleagues about being 'bra burning feminists' and the like.

At the end of the first five-day workshop the women undertook to implement their strategic interventions in their families and organisations and to return two months later to participate in the second three-day workshop.

The second workshop focused specifically on developing gender-sensitive educational skills and practices amongst participants. It presented opportunities for design and facilitation of mini-workshops which promoted gender awareness. Prior to skills training, participants concentrated on the social construction of knowledge by analysing the history and the meaning of feminism, and particularly 'African feminism'.⁸ This was done in order to sensitise educators to the ways in which women's subordination and their resistance to it are constructed by others. Participants offered a wide range of meanings which 'feminist' has for different men and women and analysed why these understandings have developed. Examples of these divergent understandings were: "Some say a feminist is a woman with loose morals because she is often single and doesn't need a man." "She is not 'well-cooked' – not a whole woman." "She is someone who works for a culture of caring." "She has success in a man's world because she is being like a man." "She is someone who has concern for human rights."

In the last stage of the workshop there were 'visioning' activities in which participants created an alternative vision for society where oppressive gender relations had been overcome.

In summary, during the workshops there was constant shifting between personal, organisational, and socio-political experiences and analyses. There was constant shifting between intellectual activity, emotional expression, including the space to have fun, and the need to strategise to change the situations within which participants lived and worked. There were processes of consciousness-raising, theoretical analysis and practical skills training. Participants were engaging at one moment as women, as black or white women, as rural or urban women, as older or younger women, and as educators – as educators with or without much experience and educators working in very different contexts. The design and the facilitation of the workshops strove to accommodate the moving in and out of all the above dimensions ending with plans to continue to build solidarity amongst gendersensitive and feminist adult educators in South Africa.

Key themes

With hindsight it is clear that the approaches used in the workshops resonated strongly with those described in the literature on feminist pedagogy, including feminist popular education. The particular themes that are debated within literature on feminist pedagogy and which have relevance for this discussion are: consciousness-raising and the use of experience as a basis for validating how women see their lives and for social analysis; the acknowledgment of differences in the design and facilitation of educational workshops and the dealing in particular

with racism; social activism; and the position of the educator. In this next section I will explore these themes, but will first give background from the literature on feminist pedagogy.

Feminist pedagogy

Feminist pedagogy is a part of and an elaboration of critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy in general is concerned with transforming the position of the oppressed. Feminist pedagogy deepens and extends this with a particular focus on improving the position of women. It has developed as a critique of critical pedagogy which has in the past largely ignored gender as a key social category.⁹ The theoretical discussions in English of feminist pedagogy seem to have emanated mainly in conjunction with the growth of Women's Studies courses at colleges and universities in North America and Western Europe. This limits much of the discussion to pedagogy within formal educational institutions with students who are enrolled in formal degree programmes. It also constrains feminist pedagogy as it has to deal with the contradictions and difficulties that working in formal institutions yield.¹⁰ In Latin America, the Phillipines, the Carribean and elsewhere there is apparently vibrant dialogue around feminist popular education.¹¹ An additional source of debate is coming from the 'gender trainers' who are working in the area of gender and development (GAD).¹²

Defining what feminist pedagogy is in practice is not easy. Weiler states that it is easier to describe the various methods used than to give a coherent definition. Briskin¹³ argues that feminist pedagogy speaks to the gendered character of the classroom and to the curriculum. It is about teaching from a feminist perspective. She argues that it is more than 'good teaching' but is concerned with contributing to changing the subordinate position of women. Others¹⁴ agree that the key intention of feminist pedagogy is the goal of providing learners with the skills to continue political work as feminists. Feminist pedagogy across all the political perspectives that is, radical, socialist, marxist, liberal and post-modern, echoes the struggles of its origins and it retains a vision of social activism. It reflects usually this critical, oppositional, and activist stance.

Consciousness-raising

A fundamental aspect of consciousness-raising is the reliance on experience and feeling. During the 1960s and 1970s with the growth of the women's movements around the world, the focus on examining women's own experiences came from a profound distrust of accepted authority and truth. With the need to challenge the patriarchal structures, which had defined commonsense, women had nowhere to turn except to themselves. Another aspect of consciousness-raising was a common sharing of experience in a collective, 'leaderless' group.¹⁵ This sharing was similar

to testifying in the black church in the USA and depended on openness and trust. The assumption underlying this sharing of stories was the existence of commonality amongst women.

In Latin America, the conscientization process has usually begun with the 'cotidiano' or 'daily lived experience'. As Doerge¹⁶ elaborates, the 'cotidiano' is a key site from which to begin, as it is the most immediate experience and most known. It includes all aspects of life – domestic, work, community, organisations – and "by focusing on social relations in the 'cotidiano' all contradictions in society can be made evident".

Consciousness-raising has also been closely linked to political action. It has been seen as both a method for arriving at truth and a means for action and organising. What was original in consciousness-raising was its emphasis on experience and feeling as the guide to theoretical understanding, an approach that reflected the realities of women's socially defined subjectivities and the conditions of their lives. At some stages the consciousness-raising groups in certain contexts lost their political perspectives and at time tended towards a focus on the personal/individual to the detriment of political activism.

Weiler points to the problems with the use of experience and emotions as a source of knowledge. There is a contradiction, on the one hand claiming that experience and emotions are sources for knowledge and on the other saying that they are manipulated and shaped by dominant discourses. Feminist theorists and consciousness-raising groups have asserted the social construction of feelings and their manipulation by the dominant culture. At the same time they look to feelings as a source of truth. Weiler quotes Lorde who argues that analysis and rationality are important but questions the depth of critical understanding of those forces that shape our lives. She makes the assumption that human beings have the capacity to feel and know and can engage in self-critique, people are not shaped by dominant discourse completely. Lorde insists that we have the capacity to challenge our own ways of feeling and knowing – when tied to a recognition of positionality, this validation of feeling can be used to develop powerful sources of politically focused feminist education (and action).

Many feminist adult or popular educators in Latin America would in all likelihood agree with Lorde. They work actively to integrate the emotions, the intellect, the body and the spirit in order to deepen consciousness, rebuild the self-esteem of the individual women, and to build solidarity amongst them. Body consciousness, spiritual connectedness, and the acknowledgement of the importance of emotions are all seen as integral to the conscientization process, states Doerge. In the USA, Fisher¹⁷ points out the importance of emotional expression in building a sense of community amongst learners, which in many instances provides the basis for feminist pedagogy. Melamed¹⁷ writes about the importance of reclaiming playfulness as a contribution to serious learning by women. Clearly, there are many

feminist educators who argue for the importance of emotions and feelings in the pedagogical process.

In the CACE workshops participants' experiences as explored through the 'object story telling' and the 'human sculpturing' provided very important reference points. They provided the bases for the introduction of theoretical frameworks, for the identification of commonalities and differences amongst the women, and for building solidarity. Experiences, as interpreted by participants, also provided the base from which strategic plans were developed. The sharing of very personal experiences and feelings about themselves in an atmosphere of mutual trust provided a rich source of material which was drawn on throughout. It helped to build a sense of a learning community and through the sharing of the experiences there was an acknowledgement by the group of differences. The process placed 'difference' firmly on the agenda, while also in a profound way demonstrated a degree of common experience across colour, culture, age, political ideologies.

The question of difference

Black women,¹⁹ post-modernist feminist theorists²⁰ and critical third world feminists²¹ converge in their critique of the concept of a universal women's experience. While the idea of a unitary and universal category of women has been critiqued for its racist assumptions, it has also been challenged by recent analyses of feminist theorists influenced by postmodernism, who point to the social construction of subjectivity and who emphasise the 'unstable' nature of self. They argue that if we view individual selves as being constructed and negotiated, then we can begin to consider what those forces are in which individuals shape themselves and by which they are shaped. The category of 'women' itself is challenged as it is seen more and more as a part of a symbolic system of ideology. Critical third world feminists, in addition, note the imperialist assumptions behind the notion of universal women's experiences. These analyses support challenges to assumptions of an essential and universal nature of women and women's experience. Black women, lesbians and women from the third world have grounded their theories on experiences – their analyses of their experiences reveal not only sexism, but racism, homophobia, class oppression and imperialism.

The investigation of the experiences of women leads to a knowledge of the world that both acknowledges differences and points to the need for an integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The turning to experience thus reveals not a universal and common women's essence, but rather deep divisions in what different women have experienced, and the kinds of knowledge they discover when they examine their own experience. To recognise the reality of tensions and differences does not mean abandonment of goals of social justice and empowerment of all women, but it does make clear the need to recognise contingent and situated claims and to

acknowledge our own histories and selves in the process. As Hooks²² argues, "we need to work collectively to confront difference, to expand our awareness of sex, race, and class (author's insertion-and imperialism) as interlocking systems of domination, of the way we reinforce and perpetuate these structures" and it is through this that "we will learn the true meaning of solidarity". She argues that we need a new commitment to a "rigorous process of education for critical consciousness". Hooks' view is similar to others involved in feminist pedagogy. We still look to consciousness-raising as a key element in the educational process, but we look to it with a more developed theory of pedagogy and an acute consciousness of difference.

An additional methodological approach to the question of difference builds on the need for coalition building where there is a recognition and validation of difference and the need to build coalitions around common goals. As Mbilinyi²³ argues, "coalition and the crossing of (class/gender/race-ethnic/ imperial) borders is necessary to successfully face the growing power of the far right, nationally and globally". But, while accepting this, Mbilinyi and Serote²⁴ agree, there is still sometimes the need for marginalised, and especially black women, to get together to "formulate thought and theory that includes them and their experiences".

In planning the CACE workshops within the context of South Africa which has had both legislated racism and minimal political space to challenge sexism, the organisers felt that they could make few assumptions about the common experiences of women in South Africa. In 1990 there had been very few occasions where women from diverse backgrounds could explore their positions in any depth. The assumption was that there would be many different experiences. The design of the workshop encouraged the expression of these differences. Various methods were used to encourage space for differences to be heard. For example, at one stage in the second workshop there was a session where working groups were based on racial classifications. That is, there was a 'white', 'coloured' and 'black' group. This was done with the consent of participants and as a way of acknowledging that there may be differences and commonalities based on experiences linked to racial classification. Other differences, relating to age, politics, and educational levels did surface at different times and in different ways. Exploring difference in any depth clearly takes time and in the workshops time was very limited.

The position of the educator

The recognition that people are shaped by their own experiences of class, colour, gender, imperialism, and the like, has powerful implications for pedagogy, in that it emphasises the need to make conscious the subject positions not only of learners but also of educators. Feminist theorists in particular argue that it is essential to recognise that we cannot live as human subjects without in some sense taking on a

history. The recognition of our own histories makes it necessary to articulate our own subjectivities and our own interests as we try to interpret and critique the social world, acknowledging the power and privilege of who we are. This will vary for educators in different circumstances, for example, those who have the power and authority to grade learners in formal programmes will clearly be in a different position to educators in nonformal settings where grading is not an issue.

As Weiler states, the writings of feminists point to the need to articulate and claim a particular historical and social identity and to build coalitions from a recognition of the partial knowledges of our own constructed identities. Educators and learners need to recognise and actively acknowledge differences while building solidarity in the quest for the empowerment of all women. Educators then are involved in a particular form of Freirian dialogue with learners, recognising differences and commonalities of experience and knowledge at different points. As Doerge states:

My role, as for any feminist popular educator working across difference, is to listen to women of other positions in the world, reflect upon our own privilege and oppression, and act, with these women, so as to transform myself and society.²⁵

In educational programmes, one important way of taking into account differences amongst the learners and the educators/facilitators is to ensure that the group of facilitators is representative of social differences. While this strategy has the danger of essentialising social categories, it can be argued that in the South African context it still has validity.

Social activism

By addressing women's oppression, feminist pedagogy assumes that the *status quo* must change. While in both Freire's work and literature on feminist pedagogy political activism is assumed, there is little discussion of what this might entail or what theories of social transformation underlie particular social actions. This neglect is tackled by certain popular educators in Latin America and Canada.²⁶ It is also partially confronted by some of the gender trainers who seem primarily concerned with achieving gender equity within organisations, projects and programmes.²⁷

The meaning of social activism for feminist pedagogy clearly is shaped by the specific context within which it occurs. In many situations, particularly where social activism takes place within formal educational institutions, the learners are all participating as individuals. Social activism is therefore limited in most cases to the development of critical consciousness amongst the individuals and their personal/individual interpretations of what they have experienced. In nonformal educational settings, particularly when participants are from political, cultural, worker or other social organisations, the curriculum can include space for detailed

planning and strategising of collective social actions. In certain situations the differences between education and social activism will be blurred.

During the CACE workshops there were sessions which involved planning for personal, organisational and broader social change. Personal change strategies included the practising of assertive behaviours at work and in the family. Organisational change strategies were developed through organisational analyses of what was needed to challenge women's subordination. On a broader level networking and the building of solidarity amongst participants occurred and was discussed as conscious strategies towards building capacities of gender-sensitive and feminist adult educators in the field.

HOW DO WE TRAIN ADULT EDUCATORS TO CHALLENGE THE SUBORDINATE POSITION OF WOMEN? AN EMERGING CURRICULUM

Based on critical reflection of the CACE workshops and from reflecting on feminist pedagogy more broadly, I identify the following issues for consideration when constructing a curriculum to train gender-sensitive and feminist adult educators. The list is only partial as it is based largely on experience of training women only. It is as yet unclear what may be required for the training of men. This lack of experience and theorisation is a very major limitation of this paper. It is impossible to know at this stage which of the issues below will be of central concern in training men. The importance of training men to challenge unequal gender relations cannot be overemphasized but I am unaware of literature that explores this issue in any detail.

Another limitation of this exercise is that it is being proposed in a vacuum. In constructing a curriculum the material conditions are key to giving it its shape. For example, the length of the course, the formal or nonformal institutional context, the profile of the participants etc. will determine what is possible. Nevertheless, I would argue that the issues discussed below will need to be considered regardless of the context. Clearly the specific situation will mould how the issues are interpreted and addressed.

Consciousness-raising and personal development

It has been argued above that there needs to be a high level of self-consciousness amongst educators to be able to deal with the content and the practice of gender oppression. Educators need to be able to locate and identify themselves within their own subjectivities. With the interconnections between various social categories educators need critical self-knowledge – they need to 'paint themselves into the picture' to be able to deal with legitimate questions from learners about who they are in relation to learners and their issues.²⁸ Educators need to go through processes

of consciousness-raising which enable them to confront their own experiences and understanding of gender relations, race relations, and other oppressive relations.

Skills to help others deal with experiences of oppressive gender, race and other relations

In order to be able to assist others identify and work through their experiences and understandings, educators have to develop facilitation skills which help learners probe and analyse their experiences. One of the key enabling components is for educators to have grappled with the issues themselves in a self-conscious way. In training adult educators there is a tension between the educators dealing with their own personal issues and their being trained to help others deal with their own issues. It is useful to recognise the difference between these two necessary aspects and to be conscious of when one or the other is being done. There can be slippage between the two which can cause confusion.

Feminist pedagogy and other feminist theories

Educators need to be introduced to critical pedagogy and to feminist pedagogy in particular. They need to be able to locate themselves within and engage the various educational debates.

In addition, in order to assist learners make sense of experiences and to deepen their understandings of gender oppression, educators need theoretical frameworks which can help them unpick the commonsense of gender ideologies. It is crucial in the planning of strategic interventions whether in programmes, organisations or families, to have a theoretical understanding which can ensure that actions are developed to confront the fundamental issues which give men power over women. It is not enough to tackle only the condition of women but also their position. In order to do this it would be important to understand the issues concerning 'the two pillars of patriarchy' ie control of women's sexuality and the sexual division of labour. With the new international division of labour which highlights the interconnections globally between women workers, educators need to have an international perspective and analysis.²⁹ Educators also need to be able to deal with issues relating to gender on both theoretical and practical levels.

While there are several competing feminist theories, a working knowledge of the different positions is important. A working knowledge of the theories underlying WID and GAD is very useful particularly for planning social actions.

Social transformation

The need for action to change the position of women is integral to educational programmes which challenge gender subordination. 'Action' refers both to theoretical analytical work and practical implementation. Theories of organisational and social change which are based on an understanding of the interconnections between gender, race, class and imperial relations are crucial. Mbilinyi argues, and I would be inclined to agree, that critical third world feminism provides an important theoretical frame.

In programmes, projects, organisations or social movements around the world feminists have developed various strategies. Knowledge of the various practices are important if successful actions are to be designed and implemented. There is a need to deepen collective analysis of feminist organising strategies within the specific contexts in order to enhance understanding of the processes of social transformation and prospects for success.

Deal with difference and build solidarity

As described above there is a need both for acknowledgement of differences amongst learners and educators and acknowledgement of commonalities. The building of solidarity will in most cases be easier for a woman working with other women. But this will not always be the case as other differences such as social class, religio-cultural backgrounds, colour or age may work against this. It is useful for the educator to be able to work with all forms of oppression simultaneously, facilitating the exploration of differences. In South Africa, particularly, educators need to be able to confront racism.

Solidarity is an important dimension as the experience of challenging gender subordination is emotionally charged and risky. Individuals and groups need support to be able to sustain their commitments to change. For most women, in addition to any organisational change required, challenging gender relations will mean attempting to change very personal relationships within their families. This often is traumatic and support networks are important to sustain each other in the process.

Designing educational programmes

The decisions made about a programme's aims, content, and process are extremely important in ensuring that it will be sensitive to gender and other relations. Having pointed to the importance of acknowledging difference and the importance for all participants to feel comfortable to participate, the setting up of the program to instil

confidence is crucial. Without that, as Ellsworth³⁰ says, dialogue across differences will not be possible. Various techniques may have to be adopted to enable women's voices to be heard and so ensure maximum participation.

Facilitation

Finally, facilitators have to be able to work on their feet to deal with emotional responses of various kinds, to integrate experience with theoretical analysis, to weave between intellectual engagement, personal feelings and the need to strategise. They need to help women develop the skills to assert themselves confidently and to challenge oppressive behaviour.

CONCLUSION

This paper argues that adult educators who wish to challenge oppressive gender relations will need to become self-conscious actors who reflect on their own privilege and oppression, and act, alongside others to change both themselves and society.

In order to be able to do this, they need to be given training which takes into account the personal, political and educational dimensions of challenging women's positions and conditions. Gender-sensitive and feminist adult educators require educational skills, theoretical understandings and commitment to social activism if they are to make a difference. A start has been made in South Africa to the development of feminist adult educator training programmes but these still need concerted evaluation and ongoing development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. In this paper I refer to gender-sensitive and feminist educators as there are many women who feel uncomfortable with the label 'feminist.' For many people in South Africa there is an association of feminism with North America and Western Europe. When I am using it, however, it is rather in the way Marie-Angelique Savane refers to it in her paper "Women in Development in Africa : Challenges for the 1990s", presented at the AALAE General Assembly, November 1990. She argues that for African women feminism is a hope as it provides them with the conceptual and methodological tools necessary to understand their position and their role in the economy, to question the laws and taboos that legitimate traditional practices, and to organise to liberate themselves. Feminism therefore is a political commitment to end the oppression of women. It is part of the struggle to end classist and racist oppression. Sexist oppression cannot be separated

from other oppressions any more than a woman can separate out her sex from, for example, her colour and her class. They are all integrated and make up who she is.

2. I purposely use 'quest for empowerment' as Nelly Stromquist does in her paper "Women's literacy and the quest for empowerment" a keynote address to a seminar organised by the Vrouwenberaad Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, the Netherlands, November 1991, as the empowerment of women will mean fundamental transformation of social structures and this is unlikely to be brought about in the near future.
3. N. Stromquist, "Women's literacy and the quest for empowerment" a keynote address to a seminar organised by the Vrouwenberaad Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, the Netherlands, (November 1991), 7.
4. I am using the terms 'condition' and 'position' of women as developed by Young (1988). She argues that by 'condition' is meant the material state in which women find themselves: their poverty, lack of education and training, their excessive work burdens, their lack of access to modern technology, work-related skills etc. By position is meant women's social and economic standing relative to men. The condition of women is the subject of much of the development literature on women and a major part of development concerns centre on finding ways of improving women's condition by targeting ameliorative resources to them rather than by radically changing underlying structures. The emphasis on women's condition has had negative consequences in that it has inhibited a focus on the structural factors which perpetuate women's position. Clearly, both the condition and position of women need to be of concern to adult educators who aim to 'empower' women.
5. M. Manzini "Women and power : Implications for development", a paper presented at a WUS (SA) conference on Utilising Development and Political Process to Entrench the Rights of Women (Johannesburg: 13 - 15 August 1992)
6. One of the outcomes of the workshops has been the production of a Handbook which is entitled *On Our Feet: Taking Steps to Challenge Women's Oppression* by Liz Mackenzie. The account of the workshops in this paper is a personal one. I anticipate that there could be various, differing accounts of the experiences.
7. Workshop notes.
8. Savane (1990).
9. E. Ellsworth "Why Doesn't this Feel Empowering? Working through repressive myths of critical pedagogy" in *Harvard Educational Review*, 59, 3 (August 1989); Weiler (1991).
10. H. Bannerji *et al* *Unsettling Relations: The University as a Site of Feminist Struggle* (Canada: Women's Press 1991)
11. S. Doerge, "Feminist popular education: Transforming the world from where women stand" a working paper (Canada: University of Toronto 1992); M. Fink, "Women and Popular Education in Latin America" in N. Stromquist, *Women and Education in Latin America: Knowledge, Power and Change* (USA: Lynne Reimer Publishers 1992), amongst others, have begun to make the debates in Latin America available to English speakers.
12. Population Council 1991 *Gender Training and Development Planning Learning from Experience* Conference report (May 1991).
13. L. Briskin *Feminist Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning Liberating Feminist Perspectives Series* (Canada: CRIAW 1990).
14. K. Weiler, "Freire and a feminist pedagogy of difference" in *Harvard Educational Review*, 16, 4 (November 1991); Hooks (1988); *Women's Studies Quarterly* 1987.
15. S. Walters, *Education for Democratic Participation* (Bellville: UWC, 1989)
16. Doerge (1992): 9.
17. B. Fisher, "The heart has its reasons: Feelings, Thinking and Community Building in Feminist Education" in *Women's Studies Quarterly* XV, 3 and 4 (Fall/ Winter 1987).

18. L. Melamed, "'Living and learning : The choice to be playful'" in *Women's Education Des Femmes*, 8, 3/4 (Winter 1991).
19. P. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (USA: Unwin Hyman 1990).
20. P. Lather, *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern* (USA: Routledge, 1991).
21. M. Mbilinyi, "An overview of issues in the political economy of adult education in the 1990's", Keynote address at the Workshop on the Political Economy of Adult Education organised by AALAE (Kenya: July 1992).
22. B. Hooks, *Talking Back* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1988), 25..
23. Mbilinyi (1992), 27.
24. P. Serote, "Issues of race and power expressed during gender conferences in South Africa" in *Agenda*, 14, (1992): 24.
25. Doerge (1992), 14.
26. See for example R. Arnold, B. Burke, C. James, M. D'Arcy, B. Thomas, *Educating for Change* (Toronto, Canada: Doris Marshall Institute for Education and Action, 1991).
27. Gender training, it seems is concerned with the implementing of institutional strategies to try to achieve gender equity. There are many different approaches to GT – some are based on notions of rationality ie you need facts and figures to demonstrate that targeting women is more effective in the development process. Others recognise that you have to deal with attitudes and values if you are to change the environment in which people work. This means dealing with people personally.
28. Arnold (1991), 32.
29. M. Hart, *Working and Educating for Life: Feminist and International Perspectives on Adult Education* (USA: Routledge 1992).
30. Ellsworth (1989).

Inserting Feminism into Adult Education

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This article explores the state of adult educational provision in order to determine how women's interests, practical and strategic, inform its practice.¹

...although no one doubts that the destruction of apartheid is an essential component of meaningful change, it has become more difficult to assert with confidence that socialist, or even freedom from white capitalist domination, will automatically bring equality for women.²

Equality is a concept founded by 18th century liberal philosophy. Its ideals have inspired educationists and influenced their policy for generations. The discourse on equality has now entered the South African political arena and equity – as it relates to redress in educational terms – is high on the agenda. Educational provision is under the spotlight because it is seen as a major factor which can contribute effectively to equality between people.

Educational provision spans both formal and nonformal sectors. This paper is concerned with the nonformal sector of Adult Education (AE). It sets out to establish whether, and in what way, AE provision by community organisations and the state caters for women. It will be argued that women's interests are subsumed under the broad goals of AE and only limited provision by community organisations and the state meet women's unacknowledged but nonetheless specific needs. Given the high level of illiteracy, particularly amongst Africans, and the overall gaps generated by a totally inadequate educational system except for whites, AE can play a potentially important role in filling some massive lacunae. Failure to recognise the specific needs of women, however, is likely to result in an inadequate provision and contribute to the perpetuation of women's low status in all aspects of society.

Since AE provision does not enjoy a high status in the educational hierarchy and its history and practices are largely unknown, the article begins with a brief historical note. This is followed by a discussion of women's needs and interests. The third and major section of the article examines AE provision in the compensatory, upgrading and cultural/political spheres with a view to establishing how AE addresses women's practical and strategic interests.

ADULT EDUCATION

AE has a long history in South Africa. Initially, state provision of AE was for whites only. Later state provision was extended to groups other than whites, but only in the army, prisons and other state institutions. Private enterprise has entered the arena of adult education, but only to a limited extent, with particular attention to literacy classes. Women's organisations have for a considerable period provided varying, but limited, forms of AE for their members. On the whole, AE provision for the most deprived sectors of the population was, and still is, left to concerned individuals, non-state funded organisations and religious bodies. The latter is an important but largely unknown element in AE, particularly with reference to African women.

As is well known, in the late 1970s AE took new directions, strongly influenced by the black consciousness movement, the student uprisings and worker resistance to repressive state measures. At a conference of university-based adult educators in 1987 Aitcheson argued that, as a result of social conditions in South Africa, adult educators had become firmly locked in what he describes as a social movement. Adult educators believed

that they were going to train 'leaders' and 'managers' of an alternative education movement/system that would have high impact on adult masses.³

In many instances adult educators did become part of a social movement, working amongst African, Indian and Coloured communities, concerned with opposition to the state in general and the transformation of society. However, class and gender factors were not part of the agenda.

Adult educators are a disparate group of people with no consensus about the specific goals and aims of AE. Their ideologies reflect different political beliefs. The different understandings of the agenda of adult education are derived from the historical development of adult education and located in the social conditions at any one time. The content of AE provision reflects these differences. Literacy classes, for example, may be used to inculcate the dominant values of the ruling class or as part of a liberation movement.⁴ AE provision is wide-ranging, ever changing, responding to transformations in the socio-economic conditions and serving specific sectors of the population, as its history in South Africa reflects.

It is generally recognised that AE occupies a marginal position in the educational world in that it lies outside the 'formal frame' of mainstream education, which includes education for adults in the tertiary sector. Its structures tend to be informal and not necessarily subject to professional and/or state control. Its teaching methods differ considerably from those of the formal system. In spite of similarities with some aspects of the formal education system in regard to the outcome of the training provided, AE training does not have the same status as the formal system. This is largely due to the fact that the bulk of AE training is not certificated.

The 'shopping list' of AE provision is long and covers an extraordinarily wide area and the question how to classify AE provision has exercised the minds of many practitioners. For the purposes of this paper Millar's framework⁵ of "non-formal continuing education" will be employed. The framework demarcates three major areas of AE provision: compensatory, upgrading and cultural/political. This classification was used in the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) document on AE⁶ and will be the basis for examining AE provision for women.

WOMEN'S NEEDS AND INTERESTS

Women, in general, do not enjoy the same privileges as men. Statistical details on women's position world-wide reflects these disparities. Various UNESCO publications have estimated that women work two-thirds of the world's working hours and produce half the world's agricultural production, yet earn one tenth of the world's income. Their role in agricultural production was only acknowledged as late as 1979 at an international conference.⁷ All in all women own one tenth of the world's property. Two thirds of the world's illiterate population are women. Finally women head a third of the world's households. Such global figures are startling.

These differences reflect women's subordination to men in all aspects of their lives – in the private sphere at home and in the public sphere of education, work, and politics. The form subordination takes differs according to class membership, geographical location, cultural factors and so on. However, it does not follow that women recognise or acknowledge that they live under subordinate conditions. For the majority the way they live their lives is 'natural'. The majority of women would not question their traditional role which involves child care and household management and, where applicable, food production or work, of whatever nature, which supports their families.

In spite of all these differences, women participate in the public sphere at times of crisis. For example in World Wars I and II women were active in the labour market in occupations from which they had been previously barred. At the end of hostilities they tended to resume their domestic mode of living. And in revolutionary situations women have participated on equal footing with men. What happens to women during such periods, and in post-revolutionary situations, raises interesting questions. This led Molyneux⁸ to consider the contradictions generated by extraordinary social conditions. In what has been a much quoted and highly influential article, about women's continuing subordination in a post-revolutionary situation in Nicaragua, Molyneux questioned the assumptions

that gender interests are the equivalent of women's interests, that gender is the principal determinant of women's interests, and that women's subjectivity, real or potential, is structured uniquely through gender effects. It is, by extension, also supposed that women have certain common interests by virtue of their gender, and that these interests are primary for women.⁹

Rejecting these assumptions, Molyneux argued that it was not possible to speak about women as an homogenous category because of the multifactorial causes of women's oppression and "the extreme variability of its forms of existence across class and nation". For this reason she rejected the notion of being able to generalize about women's interests. Ethnicity and class positions located women in socially different positions. This important point is particularly relevant here. Women's interests may coincide at certain moments but their differences create different needs. So, for example, the needs of a woman in an isolated rural area must be very different from one inhabiting a shack in a shanty town.

Pursuing a feminist agenda Molyneux distinguished between strategic and practical gender interests. Strategic interests she argued, are, directly related to women's subordination and would "assist in the formulation of strategic objectives to overcome [this] subordination". Here the key word is subordination. Strategic interests are those which correspond to feminists' definition of "real" interests, and would not be recognised as such except by feminists.

In contrast to these strategic interests are "practical gender interests" which are

...usually a response to an immediate perceived need, and they do not generally entail a strategic goal such as women's emancipation or gender equality.¹⁰

So, for example, practical interests could be related to women's domestic duties, and their practical needs necessary to fulfil their duties. The range of practical needs is vast and reflects the different statuses of women. An example of a practical need is knowledge about health care, or how to earn some money if one is a single parent.

Molyneux prioritised women's practical interests. She argued that:

...the formulation of strategic interests can only be effective as a form of intervention when full account is taken of these practical interests. Indeed, it is the politicization of these practical interests and their transformation into strategic interests that women can identify with and support which constitutes a central aspect of feminist political practice.¹¹

But politicization leading to a recognition of strategic interests does not necessarily follow on from practical interests, which very often involve strategies for survival.¹²

Applied to AE provision, the distinction between strategic and practical interests provokes one to question which of women's interests – practical or strategic – are being targetted by AE agencies. As the following discussion will illustrate, AE in the main, is guided by principles which primarily direct its activities to deal with underprivileged people. Insofar as AE provision is related to women's interests specifically, it will be demonstrated that it does tend to meet women's practical interests thereby providing women with strategies to survive their overall harsh living conditions. Providing women with strategies for survival does not necessarily lead to a transformation of their lives through their liberation from subordination. Thus, AE contributes unintentionally to the reinforcement of women's traditional

roles, in that much of what is done is located within those roles. The consequences of all this is not recognised by AE because its goals are informed by the interests of underprivileged people as a whole, without taking account of the specificity of women's interests.

HOW ADULT EDUCATION ADDRESSES WOMEN'S PRACTICAL AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS

How does current AE provision in South Africa meet women's practical and strategic interests? I shall consider this question with respect to each of Millar's three categories of AE: compensatory education, upgrading and cultural/political education.

a) Compensatory education

Compensatory education, according to Millar, refers to various levels of educational attainment in the formal education system, from the acquisition of literacy to university entrance qualification. In South Africa, where educational provision has been abysmal for all but the white population, the need for compensatory education is extensive, particularly amongst Africans where the illiteracy rate is estimated at over 60%, with no marked difference between men and women.

According to Millar, there are two main types of compensatory education – literacy and the equivalent of matriculation. The history of literacy provision has only recently been tackled,¹³ with nothing specific on provision for women. What follows is highly speculative and indicates the urgent need for research.

Literacy classes appear to have been provided initially by two main groups – the Communist Party and liberals. To combat the appalling level of illiteracy in the 1920s and 1930s

...networks of privately established literacy classes and night schools, started in the 1920s and 30s mainly by radical and liberal political groupings, develop[ed] in urban centres and cater[ed] mainly for workers engaged in the broad processes of urbanisation and industrialisation. By 1955 there were about 10,000 African night-school students in the cities of Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Pietermaritzburg.¹⁴

The Communist Party was informed by political strategies – to help combat illiteracy amongst the working class and to recruit literate people to the Communist party; the concern of the liberals was to achieve change through reform. The question of gender did not enter the goals of either group.

These night schools flourished in mainly urban areas throughout the country, barely scratching the surface of the problem. In the Cape, for example, liberals played a leading role, "concentrating on educational advancement on purely academic lines" avoiding "any political context",¹⁵ unlike some of the Communist

Party schools. And it was largely through the work of the S.A. Institute of Race Relations that the first literacy organisation was established.¹⁶

It would appear that night schools were directed to the male worker. Enquiries I have made amongst some old members of the Communist Party are vague with several not recalling whether they had women in their classes, although one man says that he did have mixed groups.

Wilson's comments about the night schools operating in the Cape suggests that the classes were for men:

Migrants who were illiterate and confused in a new urban worker society among speakers of two foreign languages, far from wives and children, and with their few leisure hours spent in the digest of living quarters, found a warm, responsive and creative home in the night schools.

The state finally banned all these schools and it was only after the mid 1970s that the state introduced its own night schools, or supported church-based schools, in an attempt to combat illiteracy and extend adults' level of schooling with matriculation as the goal. So once again non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were allowed to re-enter the field.

To date literacy provision is minimal. It is estimated that fewer than 100,000 adults are learning to become literate. This represents less than 1% of all the estimated 15 million illiterates.¹⁸ The night school movement reaches a relatively small number. The NGOs, while highly innovative, do not seem to have devised a means of overcoming illiteracy to any significant degree. Furthermore some research commissioned by SACHED indicates that people with no schooling seldom, if ever, attend literacy classes. Industry provides some literacy training in predominantly urban areas, probably to equip its own workers to be functionally literate in relation to the needs of the particular enterprise.

There is overall a dearth of information – both historical and contemporary – about literacy training for women. Non-state funded organisations may cater for women and indeed some have now targetted women, but it is not clear how successful these will be.

There are isolated examples in which some aspects of women's interests are taken into account. In the course of visiting several community organisations, I interviewed someone involved in literacy provision for urban and rural women (Coloured and African) in the Western Cape. Her literacy programme was no longer concerned "with traditional methods of learning the alphabet and always sitting down with pencils and paper". Literacy, she said, is "more than just reading and writing. It is a weapon against exploitation and oppression". She cited examples of women domestic servants who were able to talk about the way in which they were treated by their employers, or farm workers whose white employer began to complain when they questioned the amount they received or the deductions she made for goods given to them.

A literacy programme for her had taken on a different meaning from the more formal method of teaching reading and writing. Her conception of the role of literacy training had clearly undergone a change. It was now seen as a tool "against exploitation and oppression", reflecting the influence of Freire. But did this oppression also include women's oppression as women? She did envisage literacy programmes as enabling women to confront some of the problems they experienced as women, although she did not specify which these were. Was it to help women in their strategies for survival thus meeting their practical interests? Was it to help women in their strategic interests? Without further investigation, these questions must remain unanswered.

Such a literacy programme could lead to women's consideration of the overall conditions relating to their subordination, a recognition of their strategic interests. But how such a programme would address women's practical interests has still to be addressed. A coherent policy on literacy provision which aims initially to meet women's practical interests is complex. It is clear that literacy provision is essential in any compensatory educational programme, particularly as the numbers of illiterates amongst African women is high. To begin with, any overall policy would have to take as its starting point the existence of multiple literacies which, as the NEPI Report *Adult Basic Education* refers to the "performance of widely varying personal, social and economic functions".¹⁹ It would also have to take account of widely varying gender differences, a point that the various NEPI groups unfortunately did not address.

A lesson may be learned from community work in India. One project conducted amongst illiterate village women employed as daily labourers did not introduce literacy classes until the women themselves demanded these facilities and this occurred after three years' work amongst the women. In this instance women's practical interests were met initially and only when they themselves expressed their desire to become literate in order to check that the supervisor was not cheating them.²⁰

The second type of compensatory education, according to Millar, is that which approximates the more formal schooling. State supported night-schools provide this, with 67,067 students, catering for all levels, from literacy to Standard ten. Less than a quarter are in literacy classes, and almost 55% from standard eight to standard ten.²¹

From 1939 onwards until the banning of night schools facilities were developed in urban areas to include 'skill development', but these no longer exist.²² Since the reintroduction of night schools, the bulk of the facilities has addressed the last three years of schooling. Obtaining a matriculation exemption constitutes a basis for upgrading for many hundreds of teachers employed by the DET, as Millar pointed out. Although there is no concrete data on the numbers of women who attend night schools, it would appear that women have benefitted from this provision. The information I have is limited to comments made by individual teachers in the

night-school movement. They have said that the majority of their students are women teachers whose aim is to upgrade their level of education in order to qualify for promotion. Research needs to be conducted in this area to determine what women themselves attest as their main need in enhancing their levels of education.

On the basis of the apparent reasons for people to attend night schools, such provision is both compensatory and, in the case of teachers, constitutes a form of upgrading.

To sum up, the provision of compensatory education is mostly located at two ends of the educational pole – combatting illiteracy on the one end and providing classes for people to reach matriculation level at the other end. In the first, the satisfaction of women's interests is limited. The second would seem to enhance women's earning capacity, but does not reach that many people. Overall this sphere of provision needs development.

There is a sector of compensatory education which does not fall within Millar's definition. This comprises primary health care provision, an important area of work conducted by community organisations. Here the provision is largely directed towards women because of their familial roles. Primary health care, amongst other things, involves education on AIDS, child-care, nutritional information, growing vegetables for home consumption. The nature of these provisions, directed directly towards the woman in her role as homemaker whilst meeting a range of women's practical interests, reinforces the traditional feminine role, a point which Molyneux omits in her discussion.

b) Upgrading

Upgrading refers to continuing education that has as its function the development of knowledge and competence that leads to increased effectiveness in specific contexts, usually the work place. Whereas compensatory education is school-related and general, upgrading is work-related and specific. [It is related to] the industrial training effort and has as a major goal the incorporation of black workers at raising levels in the industrial sector.²³

This definition refers to two categories of workers: those already in the labour market and the unemployed. It fails to take account of people engaged in the informal economy, an area in which women, particularly in under-developed or only partly industrialised countries, eke out an existence. AE provision for people in the informal economy will also be discussed in this section.

Upgrading for the formal labour market

Upgrading adults' skills in South Africa has not been regarded as the concern of AE. In the U.K. there is evidence that community organisations initially concerned with provision for community activists now – in response to increasing

unemployment – provide certified courses with qualifications to help trainees in seeking work.²⁴ No doubt the absence of adult educationists from this sphere of work in South Africa is due to their high rate of involvement in the political arena, a point to be discussed later in this paper.

Clearly the revitalisation and development of the economy are essential to transport South Africa into a competitive industrialised state which can compete with newly industrialised countries. This is accepted across all political spectrums. There is also wide agreement that a highly skilled, technologically literate group of workers is necessary for the revitalisation of the economy.

Given the low skill-level of the majority of the work-force, upgrading becomes a matter of urgency. The rhetoric from the ANC and others is directed towards a skills-based form of education, and this is likely to become official state policy after April 1944. The formal state system, the trade union movement, business and commerce have to address upgrading and reskilling, and plan to do so. As Millar²⁵ pointed out in reference to the formal economy, state initiatives were promoted by a concern to 'correct' the deficiencies of the system and to forge a link between both formal and non-formal facilities. This latter initiative arose from a shift in official thinking and the "active partnership between the state and private sector" following the disruption caused by students' and workers' resistance to the apartheid regime. Amongst other things, state initiatives include a literacy programme in the SADF and an educational programme in the Prisons Services.

The gender of the workers is seldom discussed. The urban work-force is spoken about in abstract terms, but analysis shows that the skilled population is defined as male. This is so for many reasons but not least is that associated with ideologies surrounding male and female roles, and what constitutes appropriate male and female labour: men are seen as the family providers and women as the family caretakers, not engaged permanently in the labour market. Women become invisible in the labour force.

COSATU is an exception to this. At its Third Congress in July 1989 the principle of the development of women's leadership within the trade union movement was accepted.²⁶ COSATU's policy now goes beyond that. It plans to upgrade members' qualifications through provision of basic education for all and has extensive goals to effect equity for women workers. According to the NEPI *Human Resources Development, Report*²⁷ COSATU wants

- * women's skills to be recognized and paid for – 'equal wages for skills of equal value';
- * trained for skilled jobs normally performed by men;
- * career paths for areas of traditional women's work;

- * to make it easier for women to receive training – by provision of child-care facilities for all trainees, equal facilities for men and women, and non-sexist documentation.²⁸

All these goals are admirable but would require not only extensive adult education programmes, but also the removal of a number of obstacles, given black women's general position in the labour market. Domestic labour is the major source of work, particularly for African women. Relatively small numbers of women work in production and service industries, earning far less than men. They occupy the lowest paid, lowest skilled, and lowest status jobs in industry. In industry, for example, many women work as cleaners. In many of the jobs they do there is no career path and women are unlikely to benefit from educational programmes, unless they changed the nature of their work.²⁹ Thus any training they may receive will not provide them with access into an hierarchically structured labour force in which the semi-skilled and skilled jobs are men's terrain.

Upgrading the unemployed worker

Upgrading also applies to the unemployed worker. The Department of 'Manpower' spent R93 million in 1991 "mainly on unemployed work seekers". It has and will commission training, and may work together with organisations such as the Western Cape Training Centre which was established in 1986 in terms of the Manpower Training Act No. 56 of 1981. Together they may set out to provide training for workers in such areas as driving, building, mechanical work, food and allied industry (WCTC, 1993). Training is likely to focus on labour intensive schemes for men which will not only provide temporary employment, particularly in black urban areas, but will also train them while on the job. Where training will be made available to women it is likely to be in traditional areas which will not threaten male preserves, such as sewing classes. This training falls under what is known as the informal economy which is briefly considered below.

There are, therefore, two levels of upgrading. One is the reskilling of the already existing labour force, which, given its nature, may not significantly affect women, unless structural changes occur. The other is skilling at the lower levels of the occupational structure, largely amongst the unemployed who have few if any conventional skills relating to the labour force. Here, as pointed out, the labour intensive training is for semi-skilled and unskilled work and will seldom include women.

COSATU's aims have to be viewed against men's organised power. Because of the hierarchically structured labour market, women are unlikely to benefit from upgrading and, ideologically speaking, are unlikely to struggle for a place in that sector of the labour force which is most likely to benefit from upgrading. In spite of equal opportunity programmes over the last twenty years, little progress has been

made in opening up skilled occupations for women in Western European countries. In South Africa there is likely to be a struggle by men to safeguard their skilled jobs once they gain access to them. With the collapse of apartheid, black men, in particular, are striving to acquire skill qualifications in order to join the ranks of the higher paid artisan. Having campaigned for so long to get access to skilled work, is it likely they will allow women into their ranks? This puts into question one of the COSATU goals, namely, for "women [to] train for skilled jobs normally performed by men". Ideologically women are not recognised as an integral part of the labour force. Their major role is seen as homemaker and all that that involves, and women themselves conceptualise their needs in these terms. Men may legitimate their exclusion of women on the grounds of the age old argument that they should earn a "family wage".³⁰ Further there are informal reports that men legitimate the position of women as dependents in the family by invoking ideological arguments about "traditional" family values and or religion to prescribe women's activities.³¹

Additional factors militate against women taking advantage of educational programmes, particularly if they take place outside of working hours. Women's activity in the labour market cannot be divorced from their familial responsibilities. The range of women's responsibilities go way beyond pre-school child-care. They care for dependents, supervise older children and have household labour to perform. Because of their responsibilities at home, the amount of time they can devote to continuing education is limited and their motivation is likely to be low. With the increasing number of households headed by women these elements become even more important.

With more and more women as the main providers for their families and dependents, their need for employment in the urban areas is increasing. Training in the existing labour market for women, therefore, requires more than rhetoric. If it is to succeed some fundamental changes will have to be effected. The task is formidable, but one which needs to be tackled. AE can play an important role in this sphere.

Upgrading or skilling for the informal economy

The discussion so far has not included the informal economy, which Millar's definition excluded and which the NEPI Adult Education Report also overlooked. Yet this "is a critically important source of economic growth and employment for burgeoning Third World populations",³² a phenomenon recognised by the ILO and the World Bank.

Women work extensively in the informal sector. Friedman and Hambridge³³ suggest that it may be seen as preferable to the low wages they would earn elsewhere. Mosdell³⁴ agrees. He argues that women do not have access to skills and capital to progress beyond pavement trading. "Hawking is survival struggle, rather

than capitalist enterprise". Many hawkers chose to trade on the streets as an alternative to low wages as domestic workers.

Training for women for the informal sector tends to be in traditional activities such as sewing, knitting and crocheting classes and it is here that adult educationists have been very successful. Traditional activities are regarded as something women can do easily from their homes, and simultaneously generate some income for themselves and their family.

...The WCTC believes there is opportunity for people to learn the basic of producing high quality ethnic style clothing for sale to the less privileged areas in the Peninsula especially if this clothing is in the colours that are required by the local people.³⁵

Neither of the two relevant NEPI Reports – *Human Resources Development* or *Adult Education* – acknowledged this type of training provided for women even though the Human Resources Development Report referred to different forms of training which have developed in other countries, saying that "informal training must be flexible and of high quality, but also affordable".³⁶

The provision of training for people in the informal sector, given the size and the poverty of urban groups, is particularly important, and more so for women. Income generating work amongst women, if successful, could have the unintended consequences of upsetting the power balance between men and women. Women who earn money may attain a level of independence. But this is unlikely to be the case, as so much of the informal training is in terms of women's 'traditional roles'. There is little danger that in the meeting of women's practical interests, the status quo is not threatened.

Training in the informal sector cannot solve the problem of urban poverty, inadequate housing, primary health care – to mention just a few problems, all of which affect women's every day lives. Unfortunately here is no coherent policy in this regard and the blindness to this particular sector reflects the overall neglect of women's practical needs. This applies to all those who do provide some form of AE, whether the state or non-state funded organisations. Research into the lives of women in urban areas which would begin to detail what constitutes urban women's practical needs could then inform the work of these various agencies.

In conclusion, it is necessary to recognise that the available provisions must correspond with the specific needs of the women in relation to both their practical and strategic interests. Even when provision could lead to upgrading it does so within the constraints of a social formation which perpetuates the overall conditions of women's subordination.

c) Cultural/political

The final category in Millar's classificatory system is the cultural/political, which includes some measures provided by the state.³⁷ Cultural forms of AE include

religious and sporting activities, and some extra-mural work of some universities. Because the cultural and recreational facilities are directed largely towards the middle classes and not the underprivileged people, these aspects of AE will not be considered in this article.

Political AE in South Africa, while addressing community, worker or student needs, had to camouflage these activities because of its oppositional nature. As pointed out above, many adult educationists moved into this area of work largely because of the political agenda. Politically oriented organisations proliferated in the 1980s in spite of massive state repressive measures³⁸ and they played an important part in the struggle against apartheid. It was assumed that the people who worked within these politically oriented community organisations were being groomed for the time when they would take over power within the communities: they were learning how to organise, run committees, engage with bureaucracy on behalf of the community and so on. It was claimed and believed that through their participation in community organisations, individual were being 'empowered', reflecting Freire's influence.

When analysed the term 'empowerment' refers more to individual's conscientization (again drawing on Freire) than to actual seizing power in the sense of gaining control over socio-economic conditions. Empowering may indicate that individuals have gained an understanding of some of the causes of their oppression but this does not provide the necessary conditions for them to seize power and exert control over their lives. Their understanding does not lead them to be in a position to overthrow the state apparatus, or gain control over industry, commerce and all that constitutes the 'social economic forces' of the country. Clearly, in line with AE provision, what constitutes empowerment must be much more limited. Empowerment may be intimately connected with understanding the conditions of oppression and thus an important starting point, but it cannot deliver the means to obtain actual control. This involves a series of complex political actions which are way beyond the scope of AE provision. Lazarus³⁹ makes this point in her discussion of the dynamics of what she regards as dual elements of the concept of empowerment. The first relates to the individual's psychology, and the second to the social factors involved in communal action.

The question is whether community organisations engaged in political AE meet either women's practical or their strategic interests. There is little doubt that at the height of the struggle against the state, and even up to the present, women have participated fully in community organisations. Certainly many women gained in self-confidence (in the psychological sense they were 'empowered') and developed their organising abilities in the process. But which of women's practical or strategic interests were met?

Issues relating to fighting rent increases, absence of community services, absence of transport, and so on, were high on the agenda of community organisations. While these obviously impinged on the lives of women as the

household managers, the problems were subsumed and appropriated under the heading of 'community'. Indeed what comprises the 'community' is taken for granted and it appears as an homogeneous group of people, with a common identity and shared goals. Communities are much more heterogeneous than this.

Although many of the problems dealt with under community have direct relevance to survival strategies for women, the discourse on community problems ignored the direct link with women's lives. This in itself is not surprising, particularly as issues relating to gender differences have been scorned in the political context. They have been defined as an unwelcome import from bourgeois Western feminism with no place in South Africa. It was put very directly in 1989, by 'Clara' from the underground in South Africa:

If we understand that the women question is at this point in time a subordinate, less antagonistic contradiction in South Africa, then we will draw correct conclusions about when and how to organise around women's experiences in the different stages of our revolution. It should be clear that the total emancipation of women is only realisable under a developed socialist economy, and only if, in each stage of our revolution, we organise women to participate fully and raise their demands as part of the people's demands.⁴⁰

Women's concerns had therefore, according to 'Clara', to be postponed to a later date. And this view has not been restricted to the South African Communist Party.

Thus if the political sector of AE provision is examined it becomes obvious that, under the guiding principle of AE as a social movement concerned with redressing the wrongs of the under-privileged people, a number of initiatives have been taken to 'empower' the people. But the actual content of the provisions is unclear and it has yet to be established to what extent the recipients have benefitted. As for women, their actual practical interests do not determine the agenda, although they are likely to benefit from improvements achieved in the name of the 'community'. It is not surprising that in the present discourse on AE provision, this sector, which is furthest removed from economic factors, is considered the least important. This certainly is the case in the final NEPI *Framework Report*,⁴¹ which relegated to the side lines all AE not concerned with skills development.

CONCLUSION

I have argued that, up to very recent times, adult educators in South Africa have treated the people with whom they worked as an homogeneous underprivileged group. Often spurred on by altruistic motives and informed by a political agenda, they have provided a range of educational facilities encompassing very different aspects of people's lives. This was achieved against all forms of repression and, in many instances, required both commitment and courage.

The failure on the part of many adult educationists to recognise the specificity of women's interests, whether practical or strategic, is not surprising given the nature of our society. Apart from rampant male domination, backed up by complex ideological structures, matters pertaining to women have been seen as diversionary,

trivial or unimportant. This article set out to alert adult educationists to the forms of women's subordination and to the particularity of women's needs. If AE fails to take note of the particularity of the needs of different groups of women in accordance with their specific circumstances, then attempts to redress the many inequities generated by apartheid must fail miserably. So, too, must the attempt to revitalise the economy. In the light of these concerns, it is hoped that adult educationists will reconsider the facilities they provide.

Concrete analyses of AE provision are needed if the rather ad hoc practices that have dominated AE in the past are to be succeeded by more coherent programmes which take account of the complex social structures in South Africa. The analysis offered in this article suggests that the imminent changes in South Africa and the focus on a skills-based education system may increase the present marginalisation of AE that deals with matters outside the formal sector. Women stand to lose out even more if this were to happen.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A version of this paper was presented at the University-based Adult Education Conference, held at Stellenbosch, April 1993.
2. I. Berger, *Threads of Solidarity*, (London: James Currey, 1992), 300.
3. J. Aitchison, "Gnosis, Ritual and Faith: Fundamental Issues in the Education and Training of Adult Educators at Universities in South Africa – A Caricature" in C. Millar *et al* (eds.), *Breaking the Formal Frame* (South Africa, Oxford University Press, 1991) 410.
4. As is well known, Freire's work has influenced generations of adult educationists in relation to the potential of AE as source of oppositional community learning. See P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London, Penguin, 1972).
5. C. Millar, "Non-formal Continuing Education in South Africa: An Overview", in C. Millar, *et al* (eds.), *Breaking the Formal Frame* (South Africa, Oxford University Press, 1991).
6. NEPI Report, *Adult Education*, (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1993).
7. Taylor wrote on role of women in the production of food, "it was not until four years into the Decade of Women [1975-1985] – at The Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in 1979 – that the international community began to realise the extent of women's contribution to agriculture". See D. Taylor, "Women, An Analysis", in T. Brekke *et al* (eds.), *Women A World Report* (Oxford, New Internationalist, 1985).
8. M. Molyneux, "Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua", in *Feminist Studies*, 11, 2 (1985).
9. *Ibid.*, 231.
10. *Ibid.*, 233.
11. *Ibid.*, 234.
12. As Sylvia Chant has pointed out, there is a growing body of literature concerned with women and survival in urban areas. "Survival strategies is a term used fairly commonly to describe the basic activities of underprivileged individuals and households (usually the latter) in the process of daily reproduction". She delineates income generation, domestic labour and social reproduction which includes education, health care, housing and so on as of "central importance". See S. Chant, "Reflection on Inter-country Research Project on Women's Survival Strategies in Urban Areas", Paper prepared for meeting of ISSC/UNESCO Informal Working Group on Women's Survival Strategies in Urban Areas, UNESCO, Paris 4th-6th October 1991.

13. French has started this process. See E. French, "Adult Literacy in South Africa: Past to Present", in B. Hutton, (ed.), *Adult Basic Education In South Africa* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1992).
14. C. Millar, *ibid.*, 113.
15. D. Wilson, "The African Adult Education Movement in South Africa", M.A. Thesis for University of Cape Town (1988).
16. See E. French, *ibid.*
17. D. Wilson, *ibid.*, 303.
18. See NEPI, *Adult Basic Education*, (Cape Town, Oxford University, 1992).
19. *Ibid.*, 3.
20. This information was given to me personally in discussions held with Nirmala Nair, a community worker from India now living and working in South Africa.
21. *Ibid.*
22. See A. Bird, "Adult Night School Movements for Blacks on the Witwatersrand 1920-80", in P. Kallway (ed.), *Apartheid and Education* (Johannesburg, Raven Press, 1986).
23. Millar, *ibid.*, 114.
24. See E. Lovett (ed.), *Radical Approaches to Adult Education: A Reader* (London, Routledge, 1988).
25. Millar, *ibid.*
26. See I. Berger, *Threads of Solidarity*, (London, James Currey, 1992).
27. See NEPI, *Human Resources Development* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1993).
28. *Ibid.*, 38
29. See D. Budlender, "Human Resource Development and Gender Affirmative Action", Draft Paper given to NEPI conference, 1992.
30. The 19th century concept of family wage, and one that still exists, has been reviewed extensively and it has been shown that this has never operated as it was meant to do. There were few instances where men's wages have been sufficient to support a wife and family. Yet organised labour has employed this concept in order to justify the exclusion of women from certain jobs, largely because the men were wary of women's potential to undercut their wages. See for example, V. Bechey, *Waged Work* (London: Virago, 1986) and H. Land, "The Family Wage" in *Feminist Review*, 6 (1980).
31. See A. Wolpe, "Education as a Form of Control: What Hope for Women?", draft paper given to the Memorial Colloquium for Ruth First held at the University of Western Cape (August, 1992).
32. See NEPI Report, *Human Resources Development*, *ibid.*, 59.
33. M. Friedman & M. Hambridge, "The Informal Sector, Gender, and Development" in C. Rogerson & E. Preston-Whyte (eds.), *South African Informal Economy* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1991).
34. T. Mosdell, "Power, Patronage and Control: Ambiguities in the Deregulation of Street Trading in Pietermaritzburg" in C. Rogerson & E. Preston-Whyte (eds.), *ibid.*
35. Western Cape Training Centre, Report (Cape Town, 1993) 34.
36. See NEPI, *Human Resources Development*, *ibid.*, 63.
37. Millar, *ibid.*, regarded both the military service programme and the media as forms of adult education through the political agenda they contain. But this, I would argue, is part of the ideological state apparatus and does not fall under the heading of AE. Neither the overall goal of the military nor that of the media is educational in the sense of actively setting out to educate the soldiers or the viewers. To include these sectors of the state would be to extend the concept of education to include all aspects of social interaction. There is no limit then as to what comprises adult education.
38. For a discussion on the causes of this see S. Walters, "Education for Democratic Participation: An Analysis of Self-Education Strategies Within Certain Community Organisations in Cape

Town in the 1980s" (Centre For Adult and Continuing Education, University of Western Cape, 1989). A study of politically oriented community organisations is available in M. Matiwana *et al*, *The Struggle for Democracy* (Centre For Adult and Continuing Education, University of Western Cape, 1989). This surveyed organisations which "have historically been viewed as training grounds for the development of leadership skills" (p.14). To qualify for inclusion in the study, none of the organisations could have received a state subsidy or been concerned solely with leisure or recreational pursuits; they had to provide informal or non-formal education. Education was conceptualised in its broadest sense and included all types, however limited, which could be interpreted as training for democratic leadership and participation: a workshop of a few hours, learning how to run a committee, counselling, legal support for detainees, discussion groups and so on all constituted 'education'.

39. S. Lazarus, 'Empowerment', paper presented to the Education Faculty, University of Western Cape 1990.
40. Clara, from the Underground in South Africa, "Feminism and the Struggle for National Liberation", *The African Communist*, 118, (London, 1989) 40.
41. See NEPI, *Framework Report* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1993).

Adult Education, Gender and Access

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In late 1992 a national survey on the need for adult education in South Africa was conducted. A one-hour questionnaire was administered to a nationally representative sample of 2 000 black South Africans between the ages of sixteen and forty. The survey confirmed that in education the effects of race often overshadow those of gender. However, it also uncovered some important gender differences in the needs and aspirations of men and women. Unless a new system of adult education addresses these issues explicitly, the generally disadvantaged position of women in South African society will be reinforced.

INTRODUCTION

In late 1992 the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) was commissioned by the South African College for Higher Education (Sached) to conduct a national survey on the need for adult education in South Africa. Sached wanted the research to inform their ASECA – A Second Chance for Adults – programme, an initiative which aims to devise a new, national distance education system for adults in South Africa.

A one-hour questionnaire was administered to 2 000 South Africans between the ages of sixteen and forty. 1 700 of the respondents were African and the remaining 300 'coloured' people. The respondents came from all over South Africa, including the TBVC areas.¹ They came from rural areas, small towns, cities and metropolitan areas.² They were chosen in a way which attempted to get as representative a sample of people as possible.

The questionnaire was drawn up in consultation with Sached staff. The construction of the questionnaire was informed by prior exploratory research undertaken by CASE. This included in-depth interviews with employers and educators and ten focus groups with people selected on the basis of age, gender, geographical area and economic status. On the basis of this more qualitative research, survey questions were framed covering childhood and school experiences, other educational experiences after leaving school, the present life circumstances and type of work of respondents, leisure activities and access to reading and other materials, and hopes and future aspirations. Finally, a few questions explored attitudes towards distance education and delivery methods.

CASE has written a comprehensive report on the results of the survey.³ This paper looks at the gender implications of the findings, in particular at questions of access for women. What needs do women have and express in relation to adult

education? What are the obstacles to their obtaining this education? What can they expect to gain by spending time, energy and money on getting education?

A significant feature of the survey results was the relative lack of gender differentiation in many of the answers. In education, as in virtually every other sphere in South Africa, the effects of race often overshadow those of gender. This paper does not contest that fact. Many aspects of the full report point to our apartheid past and its legacy for both women and men.

Nevertheless, gender remains important. Thus this paper tackles aspects of both the absolute position of women, and their situation as compared with that of men. While most South Africans accept the need to remove race discrimination, there is less awareness of the extent of gender discrimination and the need to do something about it. As and when race recedes as an issue, it is very possible that gender will remain.

While the survey looked at both 'coloured' and African respondents, this paper looks only at African women. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the 'coloured' sample was relatively small and dividing it into men and women would have made the subsets smaller. Secondly, while there has been inadequate provision of education for both 'coloured' and African people, provision for Africans has been worse. Thirdly, the host of other apartheid legislation has possibly affected African women even more heavily than men. More African women were prevented from coming into the urban areas. Thus, fewer African women gained jobs in the formal sector. 'Coloured' women, on the other hand, started working in industry fairly early in the century. As much of the need for adult education expressed by survey respondents centred around obtaining work (and thus money), the position of African and 'coloured' women could differ significantly.

The survey focused on African and 'coloured' people as those most educationally disadvantaged under apartheid. Once the gender dimension is introduced, the picture changes somewhat in that gender disparities are greater among the otherwise relatively privileged Indian group than among any of the other three groups. In 1970 girls formed only 43% of Indian secondary school enrolments. This had increased to 49% by 1990,⁴ but many of the women falling into the sixteen to forty age-group covered by the CASE sample would have been at school when the proportions were less favourable. Indian women also have a very different economic or work profile from non-Indian women. So, for example, the 1991 census found only 19% of Indian women to be employed, compared to 28% of 'coloured' women and 31% of white.⁵ While the figure for African women – 17% – is lower than that for Indian, it would be substantially higher were the large numbers of African women engaged in subsistence agriculture regarded as working.

Even within the focus on African women, there is not homogeneity. The survey was based on a random sample of all African women and thus included a full range, from the highly-educated to the illiterate. It includes young women of sixteen, some still attending school, who were born in the post-1976 era, as well as women of

forty who were working adults in 1976. In the analysis below these distinctions, and many others, are not taken into account. They will have to be taken into account in planning an adult education system because the needs and access problems facing the different groups will be very different.

WHO WERE THE RESPONDENTS?

The profile of the sample was slightly different from that of the overall South African population. In the sample there were, as in the overall population, slightly more men (44%) than women (40%) living in metropolitan areas. But the sample differed from the population in that there were also slightly more women than men in the cities and towns (25% women and 20% men) and fewer in homeland areas (21% women and 23% men). The differences between men and women are small in the sample. But in reality, because of influx control, women predominate in homeland areas, while 'white' areas have more men. The effect becomes more marked the more urban the area. In 1990 African men out-numbered African women by 1,3:1 in the 'white' cities and 1,1:1 in the 'white' towns, while there were fewer men than women in non-homeland rural areas. In non-independent homeland areas women outnumbered men by 1,2:1 in both towns and rural areas. In the TBVC areas women outnumbered men by 1,3:1.⁶ There are further differences even within urban areas. Squatter areas usually have more women than men as women who have come to town fairly recently, perhaps after the formal abolition of influx control, stay in these areas. Fewer women stay in the far more scarce formal accommodation, as they face even greater obstacles in gaining access than men.⁷

The type of area has implications for adult education. Rural areas, informal settlements and squatter camps rarely have electricity. Nearly a quarter of the women sampled were living in homeland areas, on 'white' farms or in informal settlements. Informal areas are less likely to have decent and accessible public buildings. Dwellings in informal areas are generally also more overcrowded. These factors are a serious impediment to study. Without electricity, reading and writing are difficult. Without public buildings and with small private dwellings, it is difficult for groups of students to congregate. With overcrowding there is unlikely to be a private place to study. Even where a woman has the energy to study at night, she might be unable to do so because of possible disturbance to other residents. We were surprised to find that nearly half of both the men and women in the survey said they had a private place to study. Perhaps, being used to overcrowded living conditions, the privacy they spoke about was relative.

Table I gives the age breakdown of respondents. Respondents are divided into those still at school and those no longer at school as this obviously affects the responses to many of the questions asked. As is to be expected, the majority of those in school – nearly two-thirds – are under twenty years old. Nevertheless, that still leaves nearly a third of in school respondents who were twenty years or older.

Table 1
Age breakdown of respondents

Age groupings	In school		Out of school	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
16 - 19	64%	64%	8%	7%
20 - 24	31%	28%	26%	27%
25 - 29	3%	4%	21%	24%
30 - 34	1%	2%	20%	21%
35 - 39	0%	2%	18%	16%
40	0%	0%	7%	5%
	100	100%	100%	100%

Slightly more women than men were living with their spouses. (36% of women out of school as opposed to 30% of men) and significantly more with their children (74% women and 53% men, or 65% of women and 45% men when those in school are included). The figures for those with children are particularly high – virtually three-quarters of those out of school. Conversely, more men than women were staying together with parents and siblings or alone. Again this has implications for time and access to studies. Women staying with their husbands and/or children will have many other calls on their time and attention.

31% of the respondents were still at school at the time of the survey. Some questions were obviously inappropriate for the scholars. Where it is not obvious from the context, we will point out when we refer only to non-scholars.

Table 2 shows responses to an enquiry regarding current work situation.

Table 2

	Women	Men
Housewife	18%	2%
Regular employment - full or part time	29%	41%
Irregular employment	1%	5%
Unemployed	51%	51%
Full-time student	1%	2%

Of those who were not in school, a very small proportion of both men and women were full-time students. These would have been mainly students at tertiary institutions. Nearly one-fifth of women were housewives. A further three out of ten

women were in full- or part-time employment, significantly fewer than men. Very few women said they were in irregular employment, that is that they worked whenever they could find a job. Just over half of both the men and women classified themselves as unemployed.

Surprisingly few people – 7% women and 11% of men – said they were self-employed. By definition the informal sector is a hidden one in that it consists of those who are unregistered and ‘unofficial’. It is quite likely that at least some of the respondents were engaged in the informal sector in one way or another and/or at one time or another but did not indicate this. It is also quite likely that the hidden sector included many women. Some women – perhaps helping in their partner’s business, or selling the odd product of their own labour, or working only a few days a week when their other duties allow it – do not see themselves as employed. This is especially so as women are more likely to be employed at the smaller scale end of the informal sector. Others would avoid the possible implications, costs and dangers associated with acknowledging they were engaged in informal sector activity.

For adult education planners these figures have several implications. As regards timing of classes or learning more generally, the fact that many people are not formally employed during the day could mean that they could study at these times rather than at night or over weekends. For some women, in particular, days might appear a safer option than at night. This suggestion must, however, be treated with caution. The lack of formal employment does not by any means imply that people are not busy.

A second implication concerns the need and direction of education. Many of those not formally employed would work if they had the opportunity. An education which addressed their immediate needs for employment and/or income-generating skills and opportunities would almost certainly be more attractive to these people than a less directed one.

EDUCATION AND CURRENT AND FUTURE WORK

The most consistent differences between the men and women in the survey were in respect of areas of study and work. The sample repeatedly, in responses to a range of questions, reproduced the stereotypical division of labour in society.

Slightly fewer women than men had had a regular full-time or part-time job at some stage in their life – 41% women and 46% men. Thus somewhat under half the women had experience of formal work. Table 3 gives details of those who were working at the time of the survey.

Table 3

Current employment of respondents

Occupation	Women	Men
Semi-professional	27%	9%
Clerical/white collar	12%	9%
Technical	1%	4%
Sales	3%	6%
Unskilled/farming	37%	33%
Semi-skilled	11%	17%
Skilled	2%	16%

Women were far more likely than men to be in semi-professional jobs and slightly more likely to be in clerical or white collar jobs, sales and unskilled or farming jobs. These – and in particular the semi-professional nursing and teaching – are well-known female ghettos. Women were far less likely to be skilled or semi-skilled workers and slightly less likely to be technical or sales workers. Unskilled work accounted for nearly four out of every ten women and semi-professional work for another quarter.

Of those unemployed and looking for work, 14% of women were looking for domestic work and 4% for dressmaking. No men were looking for these jobs. Men were more likely to say they were looking for unskilled or 'any type of jobs'.

Table 4 classifies the responses to a question about their idea of an ideal job. The patterns are very similar to those found for the current jobs of employed people above. Women were found to be less likely to choose professional, skilled and technical work and more likely to choose semi-professional, clerical/white collar and semi-skilled.

Table 4

Ideal job of unemployed

Occupation	Women	Men
Semi-professional	37%	18%
Clerical/white collar	11%	7%
Technical	1%	6%
Professional	11%	19%
Semi-skilled	10%	6%
Skilled	9%	20%

All the above reflect general occupational patterns in the South African population. According to the 1991 census, nearly three-quarters of South African women were employed in service, clerical and sales and professional jobs. 48% of women in professional jobs were in education and 23% were nurses. Approximately 95% of domestic workers, 93% of nurses, 64% of clerical workers and 63% of teachers were women.⁸ In 1987, 28% of women employed in factories were in unskilled and 38% in menial jobs, compared to 42% and 5% respectively of men.⁹ Three-quarters of women employed in factories work in clothing and textiles.¹⁰ Clothing and textiles, leather and shoe, food and beverage, non-metal manufacturing, services, sales, clerical, agriculture, nursing and teaching together account for 90% of black women's employment.¹¹

The respondents were not planning to change these patterns. All respondents were asked what the most important skill was that they would still like to learn to enable them to "cope with modern life". The question was open-ended, that is there were no prompts. It is quite possible that men and women would understand "coping with modern life" in different ways. In particular, women might be more inclined to interpret it more broadly to include familial roles. In the survey significantly more women (14% and 12% respectively) than men (1% each) mentioned dress-making and nursing. There was also a female bias, although smaller, in respect of social work, typing and design. Of those who were doing post-school studies at the time of the survey, 15% of the women compared to 8% of men were studying for a diploma. Many of these would have been teaching or nursing diplomas. When respondents were asked about an important goal which they had set themselves for the next two years, a significant number of women said they were planning to train for hospital or nursing work (8%) or to be a qualified dressmaker (7%).

Men, on the other hand, were more likely than women to choose skills such as electrical, engineering, driving, building, repairing cars as well as professions such as law and medicine for further study. Of those studying out of school at the time of the study, 4% of men and no women were studying for a pre-matric diploma. These would most probably have been certificates in practical subjects from technical colleges.

Women's choices were not only stereotypical, but also more limited than men's. Men have – and perceive themselves to have – a greater choice.

Slightly fewer women (35%) than men (39%) said they had received vocational counselling or career guidance at school. Of those who were counselled, 80% of women and 72% of men felt it helped them in choosing the correct subjects. However, 'correct' could have meant those subjects which would prepare them for stereotypical jobs. Truscott writes in her NEPI research report:

Nearly all participants mentioned that the only careers ever mentioned for women [in school vocational counselling – DB] were nursing, teaching and clerical work. One

student said, "Parents and teachers who are still governed by the norms of society encourage their sons to be doctors and their daughters nurses." The same student went on to say that girls are advised against entering the business world as it is "too ruthless – a man's world".¹²

Of those who had previously left a job, retrenchment was the single biggest cause for both sexes, accounting for over a quarter of all respondents. Women (8%) were more likely than men (2%) to have left for family reasons or because they lacked the necessary skills (11% women and 6% men). Men were more likely to have left on account of dismissal (6% women and 11% men), to study (3% women and 7% men), disliking the employer (2% women and 5% men) and retrenchment (26% women and 29% men). There were no gender differences in the percentages giving as reason looking for a better job, moving to another area or starting their own business.

Of those in jobs, just over half of women said their work allowed them to use their talents and abilities (54%) and to do a variety of tasks (53%) and nearly two-thirds said their work allowed them to feel they were doing something really useful. Nevertheless, on all these scores fewer women were positive than men. (The percentages in respect of men were 63%, 62% and 75% respectively.) Women were also less likely than men to feel that their supervisor treated them well (59% women vs 72% men) and that their jobs were secure from retrenchment (30% vs 35%). Thus a substantial number of women, and proportionately more than men, appear to be dissatisfied in their work and unhappy about their treatment by those in authority. However they are less likely than men to leave on this account. This could reflect a lack of confidence in the possibility of finding other or more pleasant work. The fact that virtually two-thirds of working women do not feel secure against retrenchment would bear this out.

Of the unemployed, a markedly smaller percentage of women (57%) and men (73%) said they were actively looking for work. Perhaps they perceived there to be fewer, or less remunerative, job opportunities available. Nevertheless, over half the women were looking for work.

Equal numbers of men and women said that the work they would really like to do differs from their present job. Surprisingly, slightly less than half of those presently working said their ideal job differed from their current one.

Of those who had such an ideal job, the usual gender patterns emerged when these were classified. Table 5 shows that women were less likely than men to choose professional, skilled and technical jobs. They were more likely to choose semi-professional, clerical/white collar and semi-skilled work. Semi-professional work was by far the most popular choice. More than a third of the respondents made this choice.

Table 5

Choice of ideal job

Type of work	Women	Men
Professional	11%	19%
Semi-professional	37%	18%
Skilled	9%	20%
Semi-skilled	10%	6%
Clerical/white collar	11%	7%
Technical	1%	6%

Respondents were prompted as to what special skills they would need for the job. Women were far less likely to say they needed technical skills (5% women and 28% men) or manual skills (7% women and 12% men). They were far more likely to say they needed to be able to deal with people (52% women and 40% men) or give clear written instructions (24% women and 19% men). Over half the women wanted "people's" skills and a quarter communication. These skills reflect gender differences which we see emerging in subject "choices" at the school level. They will no doubt influence the courses of study to which women would be attracted in respect of adult education.

SCHOOL AND FURTHER EDUCATION

Almost all African schools are co-educational. We would thus expect there to be fewer differences in opportunity and experience for African girls and boys than in the non-African groups. In terms of facilities, the questionnaire bore this out. There was little difference in the proportions reporting problems with buildings, equipment, facilities and other resources. Virtually all schools were poorly equipped. Girls were, however, slightly less likely to say they had adequate textbooks (58% girls and 62% boys). The percentages are extremely high for both boys and girls at around six out of every ten pupils, indicating severe inadequacy for the majority. Textbooks are one of the few divisible items where it would be possible to have differential access for girls and boys at the same school. We can only hope that the figures do not reflect discrimination of this sort.

While there were few gender differences in suggestions as to how things could have been improved at school, men were more likely to say schools should be supplied with scientific equipment and/or laboratories, and that more practical and/or technical skills should be taught. These demands again reflect the different subject and vocational patterns.

The questionnaire probed on subject choices at various points. Firstly, all respondents were asked which two subjects they felt were most important (a) to find work (b) to do work competently (c) to cope with life and (d) to earn a high salary. Table 6 below gives the percentage choosing each of the most popular subjects in each category.

Table 6								
<i>Most useful subjects</i>								
	Find work		Competent		Cope life		High wage	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
English	44%	41%	35%	29%	41%	38%	24%	22%
Biology	19%	11%	14%	9%	15%	14%	13%	8%
Maths	39%	40%	27%	30%	19%	22%	38%	40%
Science	20%	4%	21%	16%	14%	16%	26%	30%
History	3%	8%	5%	9%	7%	11%	4%	6%
Geography	3%	5%	2%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Accounts	8%	6%	4%	5%	4%	4%	9%	9%

Many of the respondents concurred as to the importance of English, mathematics and science in all spheres of life. The differences between men and women were small, but each time a similar bias emerged. Women were more likely to choose English and biology as being useful. Men were more likely to choose mathematics, science, history and, to a lesser extent, geography. Women were concerned with subjects which would enable them to deal with (care for) people. Men were concerned with subjects which would enable them to deal with the physical world and the world of power. In practice, because English is compulsory, as many men studied this subject at school as men. Yet, despite the fact that schools were co-educational, men were more likely to have taken mathematics, science and agriculture at matric level. The global patterns for schools, technical colleges, technikons, university and correspondence colleges show that the disparities increase as one advances up the educational ladder.¹³

In response to an open-ended prompt as to the type of education and training which would be useful to them personally, women were more likely than men to mention completing matric, but also the usual diploma or degree (nurses and teachers...) and dressmaking. Men were more likely to mention training of various kinds, especially technical. When asked what subjects they thought adults in general would most want to study, women were more likely than men to choose dressmaking, typing, secretarial skills and childcare while men preferred areas such

as motor mechanics and woodwork. When asked what they thought would be the most important criteria for an adult choosing his/her subjects, women were less likely to choose 'practical' subjects (33% women and 43% men) and more likely to choose subjects related to jobs (47% women and 38% men).

The terminology here is misleading. What we term 'practical' in terms of education for example, woodwork and mechanics, is not necessarily the most 'practical' choice for women in terms of life options. The subject choices of survey respondents were perhaps rational in terms of job prospects. Distressingly, but perhaps realistically, women already out of school were less likely than those still in school to say maths was useful for finding work.

DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED IN FORMAL EDUCATION

The official rate for teenage pregnancy in South Africa outside the TBVC areas is 330 for every 1 000 women younger than nineteen years of age. 11,4% of African births are to women in this age group.¹⁴ 20% of the women and 1% of the men in the Sached survey said that they had experience of pregnancy while at school.¹⁵ A further 22% of girls and 18% of boys experienced health problems and 2% girls sexual harassment. 27% of the girls who fell pregnant said it affected their schoolwork.

Boys, on the other hand, in reporting experiences while at school, were more likely to report having had a need to do part-time work or help in a family business, being involved in political activity or gangs, or suffering corporal punishment.

Table 7 shows, firstly, the percentage of respondents reporting a specific experience and, secondly, the percentage of those who said at least one of the experiences had badly affected their schoolwork who specified this particular experience.

Inability to pay school fees, helping with household chores, health problems, violence and corporal punishment were all experienced by a significant number of respondents during the time they were at school. Most of these factors were also reported to have affected schoolwork in almost all cases where it was experienced. In the case of helping with household chores, however, schoolwork was only affected in just over half the cases.

In all areas except pregnancy, health and sexual harassment – including inability to pay fees, looking after a sibling and helping with household chores – boys who experienced a specific situation were more likely than girls to say that it affected their schoolwork. It is unlikely that boys were expected to do more household chores or childcare than their sisters. One explanation of the figures would be a greater preparedness by women to bear certain burdens without seeing them as interfering with studies. However, although they might be willing to bear the burden, it would impact on the time available for study.

Table 7

Experiences at school and effect on schoolwork

	Experienced		Affects school	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Inability to pay school fees	30%	34%	32%	40%
Looking after siblings	12%	13%	8%	11%
Helping with household chores	25%	25%	13%	15%
Needing to work part-time	8%	15%	5%	10%
Helping out in family business	4%	6%	2%	3%
Death of someone close	24%	25%	25%	27%
Pregnancy	20%	1%	27%	2%
Poor eyesight	11%	10%	11%	10%
Health problems	22%	18%	22%	20%
Violence where lived	19%	20%	20%	22%
Political involvement	4%	9%	3%	8%
Victimised by gangs in school	4%	7%	4%	7%
Being part of gang at school	1%	3%	1%	3%
Corporal punishment	19%	27%	12%	16%
Sexual harassment	2%	0%	1%	0%
Always being tired	9%	10%	9%	9%

Of the 20% of women and men who left school without passing matric, 30% women as against 2% men mentioned pregnancy and 6% women as against 1% men marriage. Of the women who repeated a year at school, 15% said they did so because of pregnancy. In terms of school-going children, these figures highlight the need for life skills education, particularly in the area of sexuality, assertiveness and AIDS. Particularly for younger adults, this could also be an important area for adult education programmes. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to mention shortage of money, political activity and violence as reasons for leaving school without a matric. Similar percentages of men and women said they left in order to work to support siblings or to look after younger siblings.

POSSIBLE FORMS

The educational institutions of the 708 respondents who were still studying reflected global statistics and the same productive-reproductive choices implied in school and career subject patterns. Men predominated at technical and other colleges (8% women vs 24% men) while women were more likely to be studying at night school or by correspondence (70% women vs 48% men). Overall in South Africa 69% of

African students at technical colleges in 1990 were male.¹⁶ The patterns reflect men's predominance in the more highly remunerated 'productive' sectors of the economy and society, and women's predominance in the undervalued reproductive sphere.¹⁷ It could also reflect another aspect of the unequal distribution of reproductive tasks and thus the greater ease with which men can be away from home.

Being an adult student pose problems for both men and women. But each of the different forms of adult education has specific implications for women. Table 8 shows replies to a question asking respondents to indicate their preferred method of instruction. Each respondent was allowed both a first and second choice of method. The table indicates the total number choosing a method as either first or second choice

Table 8

Preferred method of instruction

	Women	Men
Listen to teacher in classroom	58%	54%
Listen to talks on radio	10%	11%
Listen to cassette tapes	9%	13%
Watch television	6%	8%
Read textbooks & lecture notes	29%	24%
Discuss with fellow pupils	20%	28%
Discuss with teachers	20%	29%
Watch demonstrations	7%	8%
Try things out in practice	15%	16%

Both women and men overwhelmingly chose listening to a teacher in a classroom. Women were slightly more keen on this method than men. Most students would thus presumably favour non-distance education. However, if forced to choose distance education, they would prefer a system which includes meetings with teachers or at least with peers. The second most popular method for women was reading textbooks and lecture notes, while men preferred discussions with fellow pupils and teachers.

A major problem with classroom teaching is the time of class. It seems that in general the majority of night school students are women.¹⁸ In the Sached survey night schools were found to be more popular among the women who never attended school than the men (25% vs 9% of those who had tried to learn to read and write). Among those studying to complete matric out of school, women were again more

likely to attend night classes than men. Women were also more likely to have written the JMB examinations than men (22% women and 16% men) and less likely to have written DET (42% women and 47% men), suggesting that more women than men had written matric outside of the ordinary school setting.

Respondents were asked whether specific issues connected with night classes would present a problem. Over four out of ten women were worried about both transport and their own safety getting to and from class. Approximately three out of ten were worried about each of the issues of childminding and their family's safety. A night school programme which does not address any of these issues would be seriously cutting down on the numbers for whom it is accessible and attractive. As shown Table 9, significantly more women than men said childminding, transport, their own safety travelling to and from classes, and their family's safety while they were at classes would be problems.

Table 9

Problems associated with night classes

	Women	Men
Childminding	30%	9%
Transport	43%	29%
Own safety to & from classes	47%	32%
Family's safety while at class	28%	22%

The first three factors are unexpected. The final factor need not necessarily mean that women are more timid. Rather they might be less able to rely on another adult to stand in for them and more likely to be responsible for those in need of care. Above we saw that more women were living with their children than men. This is not surprising, and is also not a new phenomenon. It cannot be explained only by women's tending to marry at a younger age than men. Both the men and women in the survey had overall spent significantly more time during their own childhood with their mother than with their father. They were also more likely to have seen their mothers on a regular basis. A significant number of children had been brought up by grandmothers. Women continue to be the main care-givers.

While women without schooling chose night schools more than men, men (26%) chose literacy classes more than women (39%). The questionnaire did not prompt for reasons. It is likely, however, that it is partly a question of access. Some literacy classes are provided by employers, and in particular big employers. Men are employed in greater numbers by the big employers than women. There are also probably more literacy classes in the metropolitan areas and here, too, men predominate. Schemes which work through employers are obviously cost efficient in many ways. It seems right that employers should contribute towards the

education of their workforce. If, however, this is the only method of provision, there is implicit discrimination against women.

One way of coping with the greater dangers and more inadequate transport of the night, is day-time studies. The women in the survey who were formally employed were, on average, working markedly fewer hours than men each week. The shorter hours would be accounted for by part-time work, by the need of many women to get home to look after children, by less overtime and by the type of sectors and jobs in which many women worked. Normal hours in office-work are usually under forty per week, while maximum normal working hours in the law for factories are still forty six. 47% of men as opposed to only 25% of women said they worked 41 hours or more per week.

Interestingly there was not all that much difference in shifts. More or less equal percentages of men and women did shift work. Slightly more women said they worked only daytime hours (69% women and 65% men) and, correspondingly, slightly fewer (17% women and 20% men) said they did daytime plus overtime. Equal, and small, percentages of men and women said they did casual or seasonal work.

Taken together it might seem that women have more hours available in which to study. This disregards women's unpaid work. The questionnaire did not ask about hours spent on domestic and other chores. Where research has been done overseas on this subject and unpaid work included, women are usually found to spend far more hours working each day than men.¹⁹ It also disregards the fact that women, once again, often cannot leave those for whom they are responsible. Childcare and facilities at the place where study groups meet could provide a partial solution for some women. It is not a large-scale solution for night classes, as women are unlikely to want to take their children out at this stage. There could also be additional transport problems if children have to be brought to classes.

What the time out of formal work does mean is that women are spending more time at home during the day. On the one hand this is time alone and most respondents – and especially women – seemed to prefer studying together with others. Women, even more than men, attached great importance to interactions in study and to being asked questions by a teacher, while men were keener than women on doing assignments at home. On the other hand time at home is time over which the women has slightly more control than she might have in a typical workplace. In practice, of those who were studying at the time of the survey, women were slightly more likely than men to be learning alone rather than with fellow students. A scheme which allows them to use the time when they are at home during the day might appeal to some groups of women.

One possibility is to use the media to which women already have access. Nearly nine out of ten of the survey respondents – both women and men – had access to radios and nearly six out of ten access to television. Fewer people had access to both tape recorders and videos, and women had lesser access than men (43%

women and 51% men for tape and 13% women and 17% men for videos). Women reported that they watched TV slightly more often than men. 57% women as against 49% men said they watched every day. They also listened to the radio more often. 69% women as against 64% men said they listened every day.

While there was no difference between men and women in respect of most types of radio programmes, women were appreciably keener on serials (24% women and 17% men) and religious programmes (12% women and 6% men), while men preferred sport (3% women and 11% men) and music (52% women and 61% men). With TV programmes, the significant differences were in respect of serials (23% women and 12% men) and sport (3% women and 20% men).

The differences could have a lot to do with the timing of programmes. Serials and religious programmes are often shown during the day and sport at night and over weekends. It is quite possible that where a man and woman have access to the same radio or television, the power relations between them and the fact that the apparatus has more likely been bought with money he earned, could mean that the man has a greater say over the programme chosen. Broadcasting adult education programmes during the day might be of greater benefit to many women who want to study.

Unlike television and radio, women spent less time reading than men. It is possible to watch tv or listen to the radio while doing other jobs – while washing up, ironing, looking after children. One needs to sit down to read and this is often not easy for women. Approximately half of all respondents did not have a library near them. Women were also slightly less likely to have a library near them than men (54% women and 50% men). Because women overall were working less outside the home, their general movement patterns and access to facilities were less. Of those who did have a library nearby, women were less likely than men to use the facilities (33% women and 42% men). Part of the reason could be women's restricted time and/or desire to read. Another part could be restricted mobility as men often have greater access to transport and are generally more mobile.

Women read magazines (19% women and 10% men) and the bible (11% women and 7% men) more often than men, while men preferred newspapers (48% women and 62% men). Women were also more likely than men to buy magazines themselves (39% women and 33% men), while men were more likely to buy newspapers (32% women and 46% men). Newspapers, magazines and the bible, together with study material (12-15%) were the most popular overall, and much more popular than novels (4%) or non-fiction (under 1%). Overall newspapers were the most popular reading material for both women and men. Generally both men and women were choosing material which consists of short pieces rather than sustained reading. This could imply both difficulty in reading longer pieces and short, broken periods of time. This would need to be taken into account in designing adult education material. The choice of reading material is, however, also a

reflection of the much lower cost of newspapers and magazines when compared to books.

Almost half both men and women were prepared to spend less time listening to the radio in order to be able to study. Women were slightly more prepared than men to do so. Over a third of both men and women were prepared to spend less time watching television and just under a third prepared to spend less time reading. Reading was the single activity where more people were unprepared to cut back than those who were.

In terms of other activities which they would be prepared to spend less time on in order to study, women were more likely than men to mention household tasks (17% women and 10% men), childminding (10% vs 5%), relaxing with family (25% vs 17%). 17% of women (2% of men) were prepared to spend ten hours or more less per week on childminding and 23% (10% men) were prepared to spend ten hours or more less per week on housework. It is not clear whether it would actually be possible for them to spend this much less time on these essential tasks, whether there would be anybody to stand in for them, and what prevents them from doing less at present. 30% of women (19% men) were prepared to spend ten hours or more less per week on socialising with the family. There were no types of activity on which men professed themselves significantly more willing than women to give up time.

The survey also asked what activities respondents would have to cut down on to learn to do their ideal job well. Women tended to mention time with family (26% vs 19%) and were less likely than men to mention sport (8% vs 19%). The questionnaire did not ask here about housework or childminding.

Men tended to say they spend a slightly larger number of hours studying during the week than women, while women spent slightly longer over weekends. It is possible that over weekends some male partners relieved women of some of the otherwise unending tasks involved in childcare. Overall the differences were small.

WHO BENEFITS?

Education can benefit the individual and this must be a prime motivation if the person is to devote the necessary time, energy and expense. But education can also benefit the wider society. Research in other countries has suggested that providing income to women has a greater potential to spread benefits than providing the same income to men.²⁰ There were some suggestions in the survey that the same applies to education.

At present women are using their education to help their children. When we asked who mostly helps their children with homework, slightly more women than men said they do so themselves or that nobody helps. On the other hand, far fewer

women said another adult or older child helped – 28% women as against 37% men. These answers correlate with the greater number of women living with their children.

Women's desire for further education seem more firmly fixed on practical and economic needs. When asked what sort of qualification they would like, women were less likely than men to choose qualifications which would enable them to study further (32% women vs 38%) and more likely to choose skills which would help them get a job (33% vs 27%). Of those who were studying at present, women were more likely to mention getting a better job (51% vs 45%) and finding employment (21% vs 18%), while men spoke of going to university (20% women vs 27% men), doing the type of work they wanted to do (26% vs 31%) and self-improvement (21% vs 26%). Similarly, when the three-quarters of respondents who said a certificate was important were asked why they felt this, women were more likely to say the certificate would improve job prospects (40% vs 35%). Significantly more women than men said that their employers had asked for a school, matric, training certificate or diploma when they applied for a job. More women than men also said that what they had learnt at school had helped them to do the work they were doing, to do it well and to communicate with both fellow workers and supervisors. Education is thus perceived by many women in a very practical light.

PRACTICAL AND STRATEGIC GENDER INTERESTS

Many analyses of women's position refer to Molyneux's paper²¹ where she makes the distinction between women's practical and strategic interests. Briefly, practical interests are those which address the immediate and day-to-day concerns of women. Strategic interests are those which address the more structural conditions of women's subordinate position in society. While some actions address both levels simultaneously, many address some of the practical concerns while leaving the underlying position intact.

Unsurprisingly, most responses to the survey reflected practical concerns. These are where women feel the immediate pinch. While sewing lessons are unlikely to address women's subordinate position, they could help the individual woman to sew for herself, her family or for sale to others, to do so at home, on a relatively inexpensive machine and if need be without electricity and in between looking after children, the elderly, the sick and disabled and performing other household chores.

Women in the survey were more likely than men to say they had left a job because of lack of adequate skills, training and education. Correspondingly, 60% of women, as opposed to 53% men, felt they could improve their work prospects through further education and training. 37% of unemployed women as opposed to 30% men felt that they were not finding work because they did not have the

necessary qualifications, education and/or training. All these percentages are also large in absolute terms.

An adult education syllabus will have to take into consideration conflicting needs. On the one hand, it could provide what women are asking for – the skills and knowledges that will enable them to earn money and generally cope more effectively in the restricted avenues currently available to them. On the other hand, it could be trying to change these patterns so that women can move into sectors and areas which are more highly valued and better paid. If the latter is chosen, the difficulties will need to be squarely faced. Firstly, this is not the first choice of most women. A strong motivation is essential for effective study in adult education and going against the first choice could jeopardise chances of success. Secondly, many of the skills which women currently lack are difficult to teach through distance education. Technical education requires tools, machinery and equipment which are expensive and usually far away from many of the women distance education will be trying to reach. Thirdly, providers must be confident that women with 'unusual' skills and knowledge will be able to find jobs. Ghettoisation is not only a question of lack of skills and lack of imagination on the part of women learners and workers. It is also a result of stereotyping, glass ceilings and more on the part of employers and society more widely.

At the same time adult education might be able to go some way towards recognising and valuing the skills women do have. Many in the training field have begun talking about recognition of prior learning. In the factories this means acknowledging what workers have learnt by "sitting by Nellie". In access to educational institutions, it is linked to easy transferability. Recognition of prior learning means not insisting on paper certificates when the person can display evidence of having picked up the necessary entrance knowledge and skills in some other context. Work by Astrid von Kotze suggests that women in domestic work are often more competent in English and Afrikaans than unskilled male workers in the factory. Domestic workers interact daily on a one-to-one basis with employers who do not speak African languages. The factory workers' interaction is largely with fellow workers who speak their own language.²² Similarly, most women have real skills in cooking, household care, childcare and sewing without having received formal training.

These skills help people to cope with day to day life. They also add to the efficiency with which people do their jobs, although the workers themselves do not always acknowledge all the skills they actually have and use in their jobs and lives. There were more women than men in the survey who said they did not need literacy or a primary school education for their jobs. These were probably women doing menial and 'unskilled' jobs. However language proficiency and numeracy, for example, allow a domestic worker to take messages, read recipes, communicate more easily with the employer and his/her family. Certificates or some other form

of acknowledgment of this could help the individual woman get a better job, and could also begin to make the point that these are real skills.

WHO WILL PAY?

The school fees of virtually all children are paid by their parents. Unlike in many other countries, African women have, if anything, been overrepresented at the secondary school level in South Africa. In 1990 women accounted for 55% of all African secondary students.²³ The survey figures support the female bias. A larger percentage of out-of-school women than men said they had attended high school (63% vs 55%). When those who had not finished matric but had studied further were asked about the source of funds, women were much more likely than men (59% vs 32%) to mention parents. It thus appears that parents are as prepared to pay for their daughters' education as for their sons'. Some suggest that the custom of lobola encourages the education of girls in that the value of an educated woman is greater on marriage and the family is therefore investing in the future.

At the adult education level, however, most women will no longer be in their family of origin. The lobola incentive will no longer hold. In married couples the man will often be earning more and, even where this is not the case, will often have more control than the woman over the often meagre resources of the household. Because they are less likely to be employed, women are at the outset disadvantaged in respect of education and training provided and/or funded by employers. There is a further disadvantage even for those who are employed. Of those who felt that further study would enhance work prospects, significantly fewer women than men (43% vs 54%) felt that their employer would be prepared to pay for it.

CONCLUSION

The Sached study showed that though there are strong similarities between the needs of men and women in relation to adult education, there are also important differences. Some of these came out in the study. There are others which will need further research and discussion with the women concerned. A quantitative survey of this nature can only provide pointers. It cannot provide deep insight into the views and realities of potential and existing adult learners.

The research showed clearly that many women are strongly motivated to get further education. It also showed clearly that they face real obstacles. Significantly more women than men said they experienced problems with their studies – 64% as against 51%. They also mentioned a wider range of problems than men. Problems mentioned by men were mainly financial, difficulty in understanding, lack of time and shortage of teachers. Only 38% of men said that their problem was not one of the above, as against 62% of women. The named difficulties need to be addressed. The as yet unknown and unnamed difficulties must be both discovered and tackled.

The research showed that for the majority of women the desire for education is strongly linked to economic needs. Women perceive themselves to be disadvantaged by their lack of access to education, and perceive education as providing access to greater economic well-being. An explicit link between education and economic practicalities was noticeably stronger for the women in the survey than the men. This factor will provide a strong motivation for women to embark on educational courses. It also means that the courses themselves must open up fairly direct economic opportunities.

The research revealed that in adult education, as in other educational areas and the work situation, women both perceive and experience their options as being much more restricted than those of men. Many of the restrictions are concrete, and many relate to the social roles which women are expected to perform in our society, or the specific dangers to which they are subjected. In this paper, however, we also suggest that there are ways in which the situation of women can be accommodated. Day-time courses, use of the media, provision of childcare, are some of these avenues.

The more material restrictions on women are reinforced at the ideological and psychological level. An innovative adult education programme cannot solve all the practical issues in the wider society. It can, however, attempt to address the practical issues which concern the studies more narrowly. And it can attempt, in the form and content of its education, to address some of the ways in which women and those they live with limit themselves.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The TBVC are Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, the four 'homelands' which are nominally independent from South Africa. The people living in these area are excluded from most official statistics for the country.
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4. K. Truscott, "Gender in Education" (National Education Policy Investigation, Working Paper, 1992), 10.
5. Central Statistical Services, *Report No. 03-01-01. Population Census 1991: Summarised Results After Adjustment for Undercount* (1991).
6. D. Budlender, *Women and the Economy* (Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 1991a), 5.
7. *Ibid.*, 6; A. Todes and N. Walker, "Women and Housing Policy: Analysing the Past, Debating the Future", (Paper prepared for Conference on Women & Gender in Southern Africa, Durban, 1991).
8. M. Maconachie, "Patterns of Women's Employment in the 1991 Census", *Agenda*, 18 (1993): 43.
9. Budlender, *op. cit.*, 16.
10. Truscott, *op. cit.*, 12.
11. *Ibid.*, 13.
12. *Ibid.*, 42-43.

13. D. Budlender, *Human Resource Development and Gender Affirmative Action* (Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 1992), 14.
14. Truscott, *op. cit.*, 13.
15. The boys obviously experienced the pregnancy somewhat indirectly!
16. Department of National Education, NATED 02-214 (90/08) quoted in Commission of the European Communities. *Towards a United Technical and Vocational Education and Training Sector*. (1992), 4, 42.
17. See D. Budlender, "Defining Women out of Development", (Economic Trends Working Paper No 2, Cape Town, 1991b) for a fuller discussion.
18. AnnMarie Wolpe, personal communication, as regards the Western Cape.
19. S. Lewenhak, *The Revaluation of Women's Work* (Earthscan, London, 1992), 64 and elsewhere.
20. E. Kennedy and P. Peters, "Household Food Security and Child Nutrition: The Interaction of Income and Gender of Household Head" in *World Development*, 20, 8 (1992): 1077-1085.
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23. Truscott, *op. cit.*, 10.

Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa 1900-1983

Belinda Bozzoli with M. Nkotshe, Ravan Press, Johannesburg (1991), ISBN 0869754173, 292 pages.

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Women of Phokeng, despite the authors' claims for modesty, is a study which sets out to fulfil a number of ambitious aims ranging from a presentation of the life stories of a group of black South African women, by focussing on the broad processes and events that shaped their lives as women, to the more theoretical aims of defending a particular kind of oral history writing against the excesses of more positivistic sociological theory and method. It also presents an alternative way of engaging with the structure-agency debate. It is a book which succeeds admirably in most of these aims although, as can be expected (and here the claims for modesty have to be taken seriously), it does leave certain questions in the reader's mind.

Women of Phokeng is structured around a 'genealogy' of the lives of twenty-two women, born between approximately 1900 and 1914. Each of the chapters of the book deals with a specific phase in the lives of these women: their childhood years as daughters of relatively well-off peasant farmers, their schooling and religious experiences, the period of initial migrancy to the city, courtship and marriage, motherhood and the construction of households in townships, experiences of violence and persecution, defiance and finally their return to Phokeng as grandmothers and pensioners. The book thus spans a wide variety of issues and covers the period from 1900 to 1983. As is to be expected, much attention is given to the political and economic processes at work during these decades. Each chapter, and phase of life, is carefully contextualised in order to place the deeply personal accounts provided by the women within these wider processes.

However, it is made clear that this is "not a study of broad patterns of political and social power, where experience is merely illustrative of wider points; of how interviews can help us understand 'what really happened'".¹ At no point is the text presented as a search for the 'real' past. Rather, it is argued that it is not certain "whether the stories ... constitute 'actual' history, or some myth of historical origin"² and that the approach taken in the text consciously diverts from attempts, dominant in Southern African studies, to subsume oral history into traditional ways of formulating historical generalisations.³ This is not to say that the text does not engage in interpretation and historical contextualisation. It does, but in a manner which emphasizes the narrative structure and discursive constitution of history,

without engaging in judgements as to what may count as 'real history'. This is most clearly seen in the fact that the struggles around the constitution of history and identity is given a central role in the text. Early on it is stated that *Women of Phokeng* should be read as "an exploration of one of the more intimate private domains within which power is fought over, and consciousness born".⁴ This introductory comment takes us to the heart of the text: the attempt to delineate a domain of life which is not reducible to structural patterns and in which the dignity of the subject, of those passed over by history, can be asserted.

At this point, it is important to draw attention to the role given to Mmantho Nkotsoe, a researcher engaged by the Oral Documentation Project. Her role can be taken as exemplary of the wider aims of this book, namely, to "make a small contribution towards creating that most elusive of all things – a humane and democratic society, in which all are respected for who and what they are, and in which 'liberation' refers to the freeing of subjectivity as much as to the altering of structure",⁵ *albeit* exercised in the domain of the politics of research and writing. The full, and one might say, essential contribution made to the research by Nkotsoe is acknowledged, not only in the Introduction to the study where her sensitive interviewing and contextual knowledge as a "girl from Mabeskraal" (a village near Phokeng) is set out in detail, but also in the authorial assistance attributed to her on the cover of the text. This acknowledgement acts as a powerful intervention in the domain of research politics. Indeed, there is an acute awareness, here as elsewhere in the text, of the need to make explicit the conditions under which research is done.⁶

The most obvious example with which to contrast this gesture is, of course, *Poppie Nongena*: 'authored' by Elsa Joubert. The resonances, in their difference, are uncanny. Both books attempt to chronicle the life experiences of black South African women, set within the framework of the "inequality and structured brutality" characteristic of segregation and later of apartheid. Both Bozzoli and Joubert had to rely heavily on the cooperation of black South African women to gain the information needed for the respective texts. But only one, Bozzoli, acknowledges this essential contribution in full.⁷ This recognition is crucial, for it raises the issue of collaborative, democratic research and writing in a society in transition:

students of South Africa society await the day when a new generation of fluent Bantu-speaking sociologists emerges, able to convey to the English-speaking (*sic*) world what insights they gain from the analysis of the words of ordinary speakers of their own tongue.⁸

Substantively, this study stands as a corrective to the dearth of materials available on the experiences of women in South African politics. This is perhaps at its clearest, as is pointed out in the text, in the case of studies of migrancy, focussing mainly on the experience of male workers subjected to it. The depiction of the experiences of migrants *qua* women is of interest in itself, for it highlights the

intensely personal motivations of the decisions to move to 'the city'. The account serves to emphasize the status of women as actors, as subjects capable of deciding and directing their own future, intending to escape, or at least to limit, the expectations of the patriarchal order. Contrary to the dominant understanding of the causes of migrancy, the case of Phokeng offers an interesting antidote to overtly economic theses asserting a simple picture of economic decline leading to the need for more migrancy.⁹ Bozzoli focusses on the complex interaction between the tribal and capitalist economies and social orders, and stresses, in the case of the female migrants, the link between migration and the need – perceived by the women – to accumulate "informal dowries" in the form of furniture, which was a sign of a greater female assertiveness and power. This theme is taken further in the discussion of the aims of their engagement in domestic work and their development of life-strategies, where the construction of households, are of prime importance, reinforcing the crucial role of women's self-definition. Furthermore, Bozzoli's discussion of the paternalism of the domestic work situation is particularly important, for it also overturns commonplace depictions of domestic work as the "ultimate experience of the colonised",¹⁰ emphasising the ambiguities and complexities of their perceptions of domestic work. While these women are by no means unaware of the limitations posed by their position as domestic workers, they do not see themselves as victims of a system they are unable to affect and change. To the contrary, they imbue their situation with cultural meaning, they actively forge networks of support ('home girl' networks), and foster their own conceptions of social division.

In all of this, Bozzoli portrays the women as seeming to vacillate between conformism to traditional patterns and the creation of forms of resistance and renewal. This, she rightly argues, is not a weakness of interpretation, an inability to decide between the importance of structure and agency, but rather an effect of an approach which takes seriously the complexity and ambiguity of the movement between (structural) forms of subjectivisation and the opening of spaces of action and decision. It is this refusal of the two extremes, of 'victimisation' on the one hand, or the 'romanticisation' of the political correctness of the consciousness of the oppressed on the other, that is the greatest strength of Bozzoli's account. Put differently, in the rejection of an 'either-or' model of research (focussing either on structural determination or on agency) a space is opened up where the experiences of women may be taken seriously without neglecting the situatedness of these experiences in the wider political and economic conditions prevailing in South Africa of the twentieth century.

This, moreover, leads Bozzoli to problematize the category of gender as capable of standing on its own.¹¹ Avoiding the pitfalls of making abstract, universal and ahistorical claims concerning women in general, Bozzoli shows how the constitution of identities, in this case gendered identities, are deeply related to the articulation of regional, class and ethnic forms of identification, and cannot be

understood in isolation from them. Indeed, one of the most illuminating aspects of the study concerns the articulation of "the Bafokeng way"/ "Tswananness" with a certain perception of the self, and exclusion of the other. This occurs with reference to the women's perception of themselves as women: the notion of the "respectable women", for example, is intimately related to the fact that they came from Phokeng.¹² But this identification not only serves to constitute the identity of the self. The Bafokeng way also serves as a means to distance and dissociate the self from "Xhosas, Ndebeles, Amampondo"¹³ and so on. Bozzoli also stresses the fact that these categories, like those of 'whiteness' and 'class' operate as empty signifiers "that needed to be filled by a typification with some historical and cultural resonance".¹⁴ None of these categories are given, and cannot be assumed by the researcher to have an *a priori* positive content. Indeed, it becomes clear from Bozzoli's account (although she does not put the point this strongly) that the self is formed through the externalisation of an other, and is not given in an ahistorical manner. Thus, the centrality given to the narratives of the Phokeng women, not only facilitates a deeper understanding to the processes through which they constitute their own reality, but also serves to show the mechanisms through which the self is brought into being.

In her Introduction, Bozzoli states that the study seeks to reveal "the patterns of interplay between the inconsistent and fragmented aspects of identity, the myriad of building blocks out of which a particular individual is constructed".¹⁵ In this, the study succeeds admirably. As I have shown above, the text abounds with rich examples of the complexities and ambiguities of the processes of identity formation, traced out over the lifetime of twenty-two women. However, it is simultaneously argued that this does not necessarily amount to a subscription to the view of a "decentered subjectivity".¹⁶ Bozzoli contrasts a "decentered subjectivity" with the strangely incoherent conception of the self as an "interplay between the self and its multiple constituents" which may be historically examined and which involves "processes of social interaction and ideological creativity".¹⁷ It has to be pointed out that the former view, which coincides with her earlier depiction of the "inconsistent and fragmented aspects of identity", by no means excludes minute historical research. To the contrary, on my understanding, it is premised precisely on a weakening of the dualism between 'structure' and 'agency', showing the agent's emergence in the places where the structure fails to fulfil its function as structure. To this extent, the notion of a decentered subjectivity emerges precisely at the point in which it is recognised that strictly structuralist conceptions fail to account for identity formation, and fail necessarily.¹⁸ This recognition of the necessary failure of the structure in the process of suturing identity does not lead to a rejection of historical contextualization and investigation of the ideological nature of all discursive formations.

While Bozzoli seems to accept this much, her study, in places, remains ambiguous as to the precise relation between structure and agency, and this may

perhaps be ascribed to the absence of a theorisation of dislocation in the text. While Bozzoli goes to great lengths to distance herself from structuralist and deterministic approaches, at certain moments in her account of the genealogies of the Phokeng women, one is left wondering just how much space for choice there really is left for these women? It is, for example, argued in the concluding chapter to the book that the study sought to "point to the sources of each element and type of social identity displayed by the women, and to show that these are shaped historically, *within the limits set by the material world*, and are not arbitrary".¹⁹ What is meant by the "limits of the material world" is never adequately clarified. If it is taken to indicate the necessary situatedness and therefore, limitedness, of all forms of identity formation, it is an uncontentious statement. However, the reader is left with the impression that something more is at stake here. The final footnote of the text may throw some further light on this question. Here Bozzoli argues against a naive and untheorized uncovering of the words and experiences of women, prevalent in non-African feminist studies in the discipline of sociology.²⁰ One cannot but agree with this. However, this decontextual approach is contrasted with one which would not display such a detachment from "any political economy". The exact status of political economy and its relation to "structures" are, once again, left unclear. Perhaps the problem can be approached from a different angle. Bozzoli argues that a contextualisation of the formation of identity has been effected through a tracing out of the sources of each element:

each fragment is an inherent tradition which was once derived from a particular past situation, socially created, and yet brought into idiosyncratic and individual expression by its incarnation in the character, the 'self' of each particular woman.²¹

This complex statement has to be disaggregated if the problem is to be addressed adequately. Two issues are at stake here. Firstly, if all elements of possible identification are to be traced out to their historical sources or origins, then the problem of the space for decision or agency, remains. As Bozzoli argues elsewhere:

It appears that each woman views herself as a decision-making existential being, who has pursued a strategy of her own. The strategy is *not* an independent one, but is linked to and dependent upon the possibilities open to the woman, which is provided by the material world in which she has lived.²²

On this argument, all the possible life-choices and strategies open to women would be given, albeit historically. How far this account of the availability of the elements of identification breaks with a structuralist approach is questionable. Moreover, it seems that this account, despite the proclaimed intentions of the author, leaves little scope for autonomous or un(der)determined choices. The subject who chooses is "free" to choose only between, or from, available determined structures. Secondly, this problem is not solved by addition of the rider that choices are the result of "idiosyncratic individual characters". It is here that we need to return to Bozzoli's

incoherent account of subjectivity, and the absence of a notion of dislocation in its theorisation. As pointed out earlier, Bozzoli holds that the self, although constituted by a multiplicity of fragments, is not "decentered" but the result of an "interplay between the self and its multiple constituents".²³ This "self", which remains in addition to the "multiple constituents", is reduced to the idiosyncracies of "individual character". Here, two incompatible accounts of subjectivity are fused. On the one hand, there is an attempt to break with structuralist approaches by focussing on the plurality of fragments involved in the historical constitution of the subject, while on the other, a residual (liberal) conception of the self over and above these fragments are adhered to. And choice or consciousness is the result of the latter.

As argued above, the former is inadequate to address the problem of choice for it is ultimately reduced to given structural possibilities. The latter is also inadequate for it falls back into a conception of a given self. There is, however, implicit in Bozzoli's historical narrative a set of pointers which may be deepened and more explicitly theorised in order to overcome the problem of conceptualising the space for agency, or subjectivity in the strong sense of the term. It could be argued that the whole contextualisation of the narratives depicting the life-strategies of the women of Phokeng and, emerging from that, the possibility for choice, point towards the need for a theorisation of dislocation. Throughout the text, Bozzoli focusses on the impact of changing circumstances on the choices of the women. A prime example of this can be found in what Bozzoli describes as the pivotal chapter of the book, Chapter 4. Here, an account is given of a "generalised sense of a loss of control" related to the rapid Christianisation and relatively extensive education of the women, which in turn, is intimately connected to the wider processes of peasantisation and proletarianisation to which the population of Phokeng were subjected.²⁴ All of these processes together serve to subvert the old patriarchal order and the "chiefly mode of production". And it is precisely in this moment of dislocation, of a "loss of control", that the space for decision is opened up. "Consciousness" and agency appear precisely at the point where the structure fails in its function of subjectivisation of the individual, and is not simply to be reduced to individual idiosyncracies.

Once the notion of dislocation is given the proper and explicit centrality which it deserves in this text, it becomes possible to theorise fully the place of decision. Such a theoretical approach would, presumably, not leave the presentation of the substantive materials unaltered. It is obviously far beyond the scope of a review to outline the manner in which the presentation of the narratives would have to be rethought. Suffice it to say that once the notion of dislocation is introduced, it would no longer be possible to read off the life-strategies of the women of Phokeng from the available "structures". If a dislocation of the old order has occurred, and strategies are found to re-suture identity, there is no guarantee that the narratives or discourses providing the means of this restructuring would follow logically or

necessarily from a given and delimitable context. Quite the contrary. And it is precisely as a result of this space of undecidability that the moment of agency can emerge.

As I have argued, this account may be said to be implicit but inadequately theorised in the text. There are moments where it seems that Bozzoli's narrative strains in that direction. In conclusion, therefore, I would like to focus on two such related moments: the entry of the women into the city and their return to Phokeng. In both cases, the notion of a Bafokeng way (or a conception of Tswananess) is crucial to the formation of identity. During their second return to the city, it is clear that Tswananess is increasingly contrasted both to other 'ethnic' groups and to racial categorisations. What becomes clear, specifically in Chapter 7, is the fact that the centrality of self-identification via the externalisation of an other is closely linked to the perception of "threats", whether they take the form of "black gangsters from Lesotho" or of "white policeman from Pretoria".²⁵ Under these conditions of threatened identity, there is an attempt to (re)constitute the self by distinguishing it from an inferior or disliked other. The important point here is not that the existence of a strong Bafokeng identity prior to their entry into the city had determined this response before its very occurrence. Even though it may be argued that Bafokeng identity was an available element (or even structure), there is nothing in this element that determines its articulation in a particular fashion. Such articulation is wholly contextual, as is evident from the different ways in which the women's Tswananess is conceived: sometimes as merely different from other ethnic groups, other times as distinctly superior; at some points as one more element amongst others; at others as a central element threatened by other ways of life. Its availability for articulation is also evident in the account offered in the penultimate chapter, where the focus falls on the exclusion of outsiders as a result of a strengthened discourse of ethnic exclusiveness. Once again, such a heightened sense of ethnic identification, and its more aggressive articulations, may be linked to the changes and dislocations occurring with Phokeng's incorporation into Bophutatswana, the power struggles over mining revenue, and so forth. It is important here to avoid falling into the trap of a teleological determination of identity. "Phokeng identity" does not run its single, determined course throughout history, as the reader may perhaps be excused for thinking.²⁶ The avoidance of such a teleological determination of history and identity through the introduction of a conception of dislocation, and the concomitant clearing of a space for a strong conception of agency, are both necessary if one is to create the theoretical opening for an oral history which is capable of giving voice to those silenced by more traditional histories.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. B. Bozzoli with M. Nkotsoe, *Women of Phokeng. Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991), 3.

2. *Ibid.*, 29.
3. *Ibid.*, 245.
4. *Ibid.*, 3.
5. *Ibid.*, 15.
6. Bozzoli and Nkotsoe, for example, stress that the women interviewed were told, from the start, that their interviews would be published in book form and would be available for scrutiny by a wide academic and lay audience.
7. *Poppie Nongena* is presented on the title and copyright pages as a fictional work authored by Joubert. Only in a prefatory note is Nongena's crucial role noted. For an excellent discussion of the politics in and around the publication of *Poppie Nongena* see A. McClintock, "'The Very House of Difference': Race, Gender, and the Politics of South African Women's Narrative in *Poppie Nongena*" in D. LaCapra, (ed.), *The Bounds of Race* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).
8. *Ibid.*, 12. This gesture, moreover, problematises the category of authorship as such. Although this issue is not taken up in the text, the multiplicity of 'authors' involved in the preparation of this text – not only Bozzoli and Nkotsoe, but also the twenty-two women telling their stories – subverts one of the categories which have been central not only to the retention of authority in the academic and literary world, but also to the very project of Western metaphysics as such.
9. *Ibid.*, 82.
10. *Ibid.*, 104.
11. *Ibid.*, 241.
12. See the account of Nthana Mokale offered in Chapter 7. *Ibid.*, 147-8.
13. *Ibid.*, 148.
14. *Ibid.*, 149.
15. *Ibid.*, 12.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. For a fuller discussion of the notion of dislocation utilised here, and its relation to the theorisation of subjectivity, see E. Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (London: Verso 1991).
19. *Ibid.*, 241. Emphasis added.
20. *Ibid.*, 274.
21. *Ibid.*, 241.
22. *Ibid.*, 236. Emphasis added.
23. *Ibid.*, 12.
24. *Ibid.*, 89. It has to be pointed out here that the exact status of terms such as 'proletarianisation' and 'peasantisation', to name only two, is unclear in the text. These terms are used, illegitimately, both as descriptive and as analytical tools.
25. *Ibid.*, 150.
26. Given that the text both starts and concludes with an emphasis on the particular strength of the notion of Bafokeng identity, found in its myths of origin as well as in present day Phokeng, the reader may easily draw this conclusion.

Nokukhanya: Mother of Light

By Peter Rule with Marilyn Aitken and Jenny Van Dyk, The Grail, Braamfontein (1993), ISBN 0 62017 259 2, 180 pages.

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"The most beautiful part of this book is that it is Mama Nokukhanya herself speaking, telling us what her life was like," poet and performance artist Gcina Mhlophe enthuses in the Foreword to this biography. Mhlophe's observation is only partly true. We do hear Nokukhanya's voice often with its meditative, stoical, wry intonations. It is not a bit like the voice of Phyllis Ntantala in her recently published autobiography which tumbles out with warm rushes of emotion shot through with occasional bitterness, anger and rueful memories of how in her youth she behaved less than honourably, nearly choosing passion over sensible matrimony.¹ Ntantala's final lament is that too many people are interested in her only as AC Jordan's widow and not in her own intellectual achievements. Nokukhanya never gave in to passion, chose her marriage partner, Albert Luthuli, with the same good, practical sense she was later to apply in running her farm and never quarrelled with him in forty years of marriage unless it was over precautions he refused to take for his own safety. There is no hint that she regretted or resented being cast either as his wife or as the widow who has survived him for close on three decades.

Nokukhanya, unlike Ntantala, has not chosen to tell her own story and we do not know about her motives for allowing it to be told by others. The biographers – of whom there are many, but we catch a glimpse of them only in a cluster of names in the preface – have presented Nokukhanya as symbolic of all the unrecognised black women of South Africa who have "worked in the background," as one of Nokukhanya's daughters puts it.² In many ways it is a praiseworthy objective and Nokukhanya a successful icon. Her life story encapsulates experiences common to the majority of women in South Africa, including lengthy separation from their spouses, gruelling physical labour combined with caring for a large number of children, and political harassment. Nokukhanya's powers of endurance, her success at surviving the rigours of poverty as well as the persecution of the apartheid state and her undiminished love for her famous husband make her both ordinary enough for the representative purposes of the biographers, and extraordinary enough for the subject of a compelling story.

Nokukhanya is beautifully crafted, leading the readers on through an interrogative colloquial style, much like the one that Ntantala employs in her autobiography. It is conversational, quite didactic, but generally inviting. Except for

the occasional lapse into 'easy English', the style helps to sustain the reader's illusion of being party to a long, collective family reminiscence. Other voices besides Nokukhanya's break in, principally recalling Nokukhanya as mother and sometimes using the interviews as a kind of expiation for infantile resentment and later guilt. But, although the biographers and interviewers are asking the questions that prompt these kinds of responses from the family, they themselves are absent; they conceal themselves behind the text. To have them suddenly intruding into a fond memory or a whimsical reflection on the nature of heaven, pointing out inconsistencies or probing old wounds, would probably destroy the flow of the story and would certainly seem offensive. The inclusion of historical documents, especially the contemporary description of Adams College (then the Amanzimtoti Institute) in the 1920s, records from the inquest into Luthuli's death and extracts from Nokukhanya's diaries, open the text up a bit more to the readers' scrutiny. But this task is best accomplished by the photographs which are interspersed with the text, and it is here that the reader is likely to sense some omissions. In her youth, Nokukhanya's eyes seem fixed elsewhere and her smile appears guarded, vaguely troubled; as a middle aged housewife she is shown dusting the brim of Luthuli's hat as he sets off on one of his innumerable travels, anxious that he should go into the world impeccably turned out. Luthuli's warm smile is being communicated to one of his daughters who stands beside her mother. In another photograph, she is looking out at the camera, again slightly apprehensively, while her husband is gazing down tenderly at the infant astride one of his legs. It is only in some of the portraits of her as an old woman that Nokukhanya's face seems suddenly relaxed and released from its lifetime of punishing labour and serving others. The old woman of the cover and frontispiece pictures is reconciled to the hardships life has dished out to her and is the one we hear wittily imagining that there is work waiting to be done even in heaven. But it is about the young woman that we long to know more.

Nokukhanya seems to tell us so much about herself but we learn nothing about how she felt after her struggle to get an education and about her brilliance at the Inanda Seminary and then at Adams College. She viewed all this struggle with humility calling it her "small education".³ Her promising career as a teacher came to an end because of the restrictions on married women teachers once she moved to Groutville in Natal at the end of the 1920s, to live as Luthuli's wife. She swiftly became a highly competent farmer, capable mother of seven, efficient postmistress and linchpin of various community organisations and again we wonder how she survived and what regrets, if any, she felt as she left her intellectual life behind – its remnants surfacing only in the diaries. The extracts reproduced are mostly rather bland accounts of daily life and the planting of crops, with one small but suggestive extract from the Swaziland period of her life about a nightmare.

The necessary historical contextualisation is provided fluently and unobtrusively, but again after 1948 and especially at the time of the infamous Treason Trial of the

1950s, readers will want to know more about Nokukhanya's political ideas. According to her, she often advised Luthuli on his speeches as President-General of the ANC and she laughingly recalls that in the early 1950s the ANC 'lived in her house'. What points did she debate with Luthuli? What snippets of conversation did she hear as she moved around her house making up the beds and serving meals to prominent members of the ANC? Are these questions and those about the unfulfilled intellectual and professional promise of the young Nokukhanya unanswerable – lost in sixty years of unexercised memory or suppressed by an old woman making peace with the past? Here it would be useful to know what questions were asked, over how many interviews, when and by whom. Here the historian's insatiable craving for footnotes remains frustratingly unappeased.

It is a charming, well written story that stays with one afterwards. A tribute to what the authors call 'hidden leadership' is probably necessary. There are no Nobel prizes for women who bring up a dozen children and at the same time act as the principal breadwinner and are central to the whole community's well being. But there is some danger in idealising such a remarkable exemplar of the good wife who has "always been too busy making the best of hard times to cry about her misfortunes".⁴

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2. *Nokukhanya*, 102.
3. *Ibid.*, 41.
4. *Ibid.*, 10.

Inventing Knowledge: Contests in Curriculum Construction

Nick Taylor (ed.), Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town (1993), ISBN 0 63601 6765, 342 pages.

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I must begin this review in what may seem an odd manner. But, since all readings are 'positioned', are connected to who the reader is (and is not), it is important that I lay out some of the grounds for my assessment of *Inventing Knowledge*. First, I am not South African. This seemingly simple statement brings with it a wealth of implications. It means that no matter how politically committed I am to democratic struggles within and around education, I must read this volume through particular – 'outsider' – eyes. Yet, second, as someone who is deeply committed politically and educationally, who has worked in a number of nations on these issues, and who is also the father of an African-American child, the construction of an education that deals seriously with the realities of multiple forms of domination constantly drives me to think through theories, policies and practices that might bring about a more democratic reality. Also, while I am appreciative of it, I have some major conceptual and political worries about what I take to be a too rapid and acritical movement toward post-modern theory(ies) in critical educational studies.¹ Finally, I *do* think theory counts, though primarily when it is organically connected to larger social movements aimed at widespread social and educational transformation.

All of this leads me to ask certain questions about any book I read and review. Does it take the inherently political nature of curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation as seriously as they deserve to be taken? Is it reflexive about its own underlying conceptual apparatus? Does it employ this apparatus in ways that illuminate the realities – the limitations and possibilities – of a more critical and emancipatory education? Does it do all this in a style that doesn't mystify, that doesn't substitute trendy neologisms that establish a social relationship between author and reader in which the reader has to do all the work? And, finally, is it indeed linked to these larger movements?

Now no book is perfect and I do not mean to establish a reified rating scale in which books are scored in the same way that people evaluate, say, swimming or gymnastics competitions. Rather, while not the only things we might ask, these are among the most important questions we should raise about volumes of this type. By and large, *Inventing Knowledge* fares well under this scrutiny. It too is not 'perfect', but it is clearly a valuable collection, one that deserves a wide readership.

Let me point to some of its strongest attributes first. I shall then suggest a number of areas that could have been given somewhat more attention, as well as a caution or two.

With a volume this diverse and this size, it is difficult to deal with each individual contribution, though if space permitted I would have many comments, some of them critical but the majority very positive. The book does a fine job of bringing together some of the most interesting critical work in critical curriculum studies and applying it to the context of South Africa and its neighbouring states. It does this in a way that does not neglect the specificities of policy issues concerning curriculum development and assessment, though the latter area might have had additional theoretical and political discussions of the issues surrounding who assessment serves, the legitimization needs of the state, the social definition of needs and so forth. This is even more important if one is interested – as I believe we must be – in the gendered and racial, as well as class, structuring of the state.² The discussions of the state in colonial and post-colonial contexts in this regard are articulate and useful, as are many of the more general chapters on how we might think about curriculum policy and practice.

Nick Taylor has clearly worked hard as editor, especially in having each chapter become more 'intertextual', that is, having the various authors refer back to each others' work. This is actually rare in volumes of this type and is a welcome change. Also, his own introductory chapter is nicely crafted and raises an array of crucial curriculum questions. It neither simplifies their complexity nor makes them seem only technical. The issues he raises are, of course, not limited to the South African context and I plan to suggest to my own graduate students here that they read this chapter to get a clear sense of much of the terrain of critical curriculum studies.

I do not say this lightly. It is not to minimize the importance of the educational/conceptual/political labours of South African scholars to say that not every book written for a specific country's audience has implications for the debates, in, say, the United States. (In much the same way, a large portion of the volumes written about the United States and British contexts would prove to be limited in helping one better understand the situation in South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.) The fact that a number of the individual chapters in *Inventing Knowledge* do help American readers reflect on their own experiences documents the need for continued interaction among those committed to democratic education in different nations. It also points to a significant political criticism concerning 'our' assumptions about where 'real' knowledge comes from. Too often 'centre-periphery' relations (these terms are themselves more than a little problematic) determine what knowledge is given high status. Thus, theories and analyses developed in the United States or Britain or France somehow count more than those that arise out of the conditions elsewhere. This is not only an ideologically dangerous assumption, but it also prevents those of us who arrogate the 'centre' to themselves from learning significant things from other nations.

Thus, one of the most valuable attributes of this book for the non-South African reader is its ability to stimulate these reflections.

As I noted, however, even with all its many strengths, *Inventing Knowledge* does have some silences. For example, more could have been said about the realities of the daily lives of teachers – about their labour process, the impact of the fiscal crisis and the continuing political struggles and their various contradictory race, gender, and class identities. As Kathleen Casey shows in her insightful new volume about the lives of politically active women teachers, *I Answer with My Life*,³ the voices of activist teachers and community members are important places to start in developing critical understandings of the politics of education. They collectively also offer a different beginning point for the generation of theories that are critical of the race, gender and class relations that structure education. There were also a surprising lack of detailed discussion of students in the book, and of the importance of the relationship between official knowledge and popular culture.⁴ This is odd since thousands of school age youth in South Africa are simply not in school due to insurgent movements, resistance, economic circumstances, the policies of the racial state,⁵ and so on. Further, most of the direct focus on curriculum as subject matter dealt with, say, history, mathematics and vocational education. The implications of these discussions for the considerably wider universe of possible areas remains a bit too muted, as is what all this means to the crucial question of curriculum *form*. As Taylor notes in his introduction, this is where the work of Basil Bernstein – when made less class reductionist – can be extremely helpful.⁶ While no book can be all things to all people, and *Inventing Knowledge* does do so many things well, greater inclusion of discussion of these and related issues would have given it added strength.

Of course, drawing on the work of Casey, Bernstein, or others is not a simple task of reading them and then pulling insights out of them to fit one's own conditions and realities. There are a few dangers here besides the 'centre-periphery' issue I raised earlier. Since many essays in the book draw their conceptual resources from a selection of work from North America and the United Kingdom, they risk pulling these resources out of the context of debate that they have generated. Thus, for instance, much of the material on postmodernism (though *not* all, I hasten to add) in education has been met with a good deal of criticism for its wild overstatements, its tacit replacement of one grand narrative with another, its conceptual confusion, its cynical depoliticization under the guise of seeing the political everywhere, and its evacuation of class and economy as if simply because class and economic relations were supposedly used to explain everything at a prior time (this is in fact quite a false reading of the neo-marxist and feminist/socialist traditions where were considerably more flexible and subtle) they can now be safely ignored. When one adds to this the stylistic arrogance of some postmodernists, who write as if the struggle to connect with multiple audiences and to at least try to clear was an egregious sin, it makes one hesitate.

Do not misinterpret me. We all have some very important things to learn from the best of postmodern thought. Yet, educational theory has a lamentable tradition of constantly and relatively acritically moving from theory to theory, as if rapid discursive movement was a full substitute for that combination of committed conception and action (forgive the false dichotomy) that we rightly call praxis.

In the context of the larger book, these points are relatively minor. *Inventing Knowledge* shows the care that Nick Taylor and his colleagues have invested in it. For those with little background in critical curriculum studies, it is a good introduction. For those who come to it already immersed in the debates about what schools do, who benefits from the ways schools are currently organized, how we are to understand this, and what we can do about it, there is more than enough to make one take these issues seriously in the South African (and larger) context. Like myself, the reader may not always agree with everything she or he finds here or with the ways in which it is understood, but the ultimate test of a good book is that it continues the dialogue over the questions with which I began this review. *Inventing Knowledge* certainly does this and this makes it a valuable addition to a growing corpus of critical work on education.

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3. K. Casey, *I Answer with my Life* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993).
4. Apple, 1993.
5. M. Omi and H. Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (New York and London: Routledge, 1986).
6. B. Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control Volume 4* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977); B. Bernstein, *The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse* (New York and London, Routledge, 1990); Apple, 1992.

Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945

Cherry Walker (ed.), David Philip, Cape Town (1990)

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Although this excellent collection was published a number of years ago and has been reviewed in prominent historical journals, it seemed appropriate to bring it the attention of South African educators that may have overlooked it. This book is a major contribution to the scholarly literature on women's education (in the broadest sense) in the sub-continent, from the pre-colonial period to the Second World War. Although the focus of the most of chapters is not on women's education *per se*, but on the role of gender in shaping women's experiences, because of women's positions as early childhood educators and as professional teachers, education inevitably features prominently in women's histories. The tone of the volume is set by Jeff Guy's provocative chapter on gender oppression in pre-capitalist societies. Although not all scholars agree with his particular conception of women's spheres in African societies prior to colonial conquest, his work is an important addition to the theoretical debate. Of more direct interest to educators are the chapters written by Jacklyn Cock, Debbie Gaitskell, Heather Hughes and Linda Chisholm. The debate that Cock initiated in *Maids and Madams* about domestic service and education for domesticity is treated in subtle manner in her contribution and Gaitskell's chapter on Christianity and domesticity. I was particularly taken by Heather Hughes' excellent study of Inanda Seminary. Hughes' research on the changing nature of this "leading" mission school highlights the influence of class formation on gender construction in industrializing South Africa. Chisholm's elegant chapter on industrial schools and reformatories for girls points to the state's role in the regulation of sexual identity. Her research disaggregates the racial construction of gender in these institutions, deviance amongst white girls was associated with sexual transgressions, while black girls and boys were mainly institutionalised for offences against property. For these chapters alone, not to mention the stunning analysis of the writings of Rider Haggard by Anne McClintock, this book is a worthy addition to your book shelves.

A TRIBUTE TO KATE TRUSCOTT

On the 19th July 1993 Kate Truscott lost her courageous battle against cancer. She will be remembered by many people for many reasons. In this special issue of Perspectives in Education it is fitting that we remember Kate for her work on gender and education in South Africa. In 1992 she was employed as the principal researcher for the NEPI (National Education Policy Initiative) Gender Committee. The importance her research report is evident in the many citations in articles published in this issue of Perspectives. We join Piyushi Kotecha, convenor of the NEPI Gender Committee, in paying tribute to Kate Truscott.

My first encounter with Kate will remain with me forever. Preceded by an impressive CV, she came into my office to be interviewed for the post of researcher for the NEPI Gender Committee. I was devastated when she told me that, although she wanted the job very much, she would have to go into hospital for chemo-therapy in the middle of the six-month block we had to complete the research.

In that first meeting Kate struck me as a person of great honesty and strength. She said she could do the job and I believed her – I wanted to believe her. At the same time I knew that I might be putting the project in jeopardy. Her drive, her enthusiasm, and the evidence of her previous research papers all convinced me to take the risk.

Kate was bold and comprehensive in her approach to research. What impressed me most was her wide-ranging knowledge, not only of gender and education but also of labour matters, economics and social issues at large. She could interweave the complex strands of a research issue and make a coherent story from them. She believed in consultation in the genuine sense, listening carefully to other viewpoints, responding generously to criticism, and always taking her findings back for comment by her co-workers. She had a wonderful ability to talk and work with people with very different political standpoints to hers.

When Kate began her research for the NEPI Gender Group, little had been published on gender and education in South Africa. Her comprehensive research report was a landmark in a largely unexplored field.

Kate's energy, conviction and insight will live on in her publications and in the memories of her friends and colleagues. I feel privileged to have worked with her.

Piyushi Kotecha

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- Published government reports:**
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AnnMarie Wolpe

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