

Title:

Dreaming the Future / Making Voice / Making Choice:
ADVOCACY FOR A MULTIPLICATIVE PRAXIS IN ADULT
EDUCATION THROUGH AN ACTION RESEARCH
PROJECT THAT DESIGNS THE FUTURE.

Name:

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts University of
Witswatersrand in fulfilment for the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts in English Education.

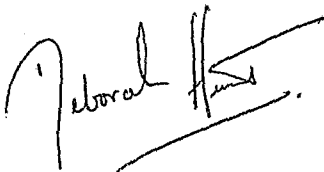
Johannesburg/ Gauteng,
1998.

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Declaration:

I declare that the contents of this dissertation are original except where due references have been made. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in English Education in the University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg/Gauteng. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deborah Hunt', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Deborah Hunt

To the Level 4/4a adult learners of
Maryvale College.

Without your candid enthusiasm this
research paper would not have been
written.

Mom and Dad,
thank you for your
encouraging support
and for always being
there.

N.F. you are remembered.
R.M. your strong example remains.

P.N.,

S.V.,

H.J.,

F.N.,

K.A.L.F. ...

thank you for
listening, believing and coffee.

**“to describe a situation so truthfully... that the
reader {or in this case, the community} can no longer
evade it.’ ”**

**- Carol Schneider (1997:19), quoting
Nadine Gordimer and Checkhov, to
sketch a writing agenda for both educator
and artist.**

Abstract.

Through Action Research it is the aim of this researcher to explore three broad critically inter-related questions in relation to the field of adult education in South Africa today and my own work with learners in an English Level 4/4a Language classroom. The questions are the following:

- Given that we are presently living in a world of vastly accelerated change, what are the policies, practices and needs of adult learners that must be taken into consideration and/or promoted if adult education provisioning in the South African context is to be successful in general, and if it is to be enabling for learners, more specifically, in the English 'second' language classroom?
- Secondly, given the historical imbalances of the past, are the needs of blackwomen, as members of the adult learner field, being adequately addressed by policies and practices in adult education provisioning as it is being provided by the State and/or other service providers at present?
- If not, what considerations and recontextualisations will promote critically social transformative action that is geared towards gender equity and provision in both official policy documents and local practices? Might these recontextualisation processes critically engage with questions around: changing technologies,

differential power relations (female/male) and unbalanced structural relations in social institutions (race/gender), usefully? What do critical race feminists say and what can we learn from them as we attempt to put into place an enabling legislative framework for the adult education field, possibly before 1999 elections?

It is a tenet of this research that the field of adult education cannot be examined in isolation to other fields in the South African context. It is for this reason, that recent policy documents from the department of Adult Education and Training (AET Directorate:1997a and 1997b) are set against other contractual frames of reference such as the Constitution (Act 108:1996) and the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997), for example, to elicit trends, gaps, ideological contradictions, convergences and positive gains so that the project of transformation might be taken further.

Texts by learners are taken in this research as 'discourse articulations' through which I consider seriously the above and the meanings made by learners in needs analysis interviews, questionnaires, class discussions, writing sessions and in a classroom newspaper production and design process known as the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* (See Appendix One). Learners' work as 'cognitive action and hard work' (Kress:1997, xxi),

provides valuable insights that can, I believe, inform usefully new formulations for future provisioning in adult education that are more complex and closely tuned to adult learners' own 'lived' realities and needs, than those being presently circulated in the field by 'experts'.

The year of 1998, sees public adult learning centres in a state of crisis. On the programmed day of opening at the beginning of the year, all centres in Gauteng province were temporarily closed down by the State because of 'budget constraints'. This happened in other provinces as well, so that the new learning year of previously attending adult learners at public learning centres was disrupted. Though centres were later re-opened in March, the disruption to the learning year has had negative continuing effects for both adult learners and adult education practitioners. As a result, many have left centres entirely, while those who still are present question what may be salvaged of a thwarted year.

Originally as a practitioner/researcher, I planned to draw closely on my experiences with learners in the making of the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* (1997), to forward recommendations for curricular practice in the adult education 'second' language classroom. The value of the communicative processes that went into the making of the newspaper with learners still stands, while 'this moment' in adult education urges for research support that is less nuclear and more broadly enabling when budgets

threaten to cut provision entirely and contractual frames of reference fail to provide protection for adult learners and educators, so that they are inhibited from fully enjoying what is their right. The *Simunye Adult Newspaper* (1997)(See Appendix One) is then always at the centre of this research, though not always fully in view. It is the backdrop to all that has gone before the 'present moment' and to all that I say now in making a case for the adult education learner. Indeed, my learners make their own case in their own words through the newspaper project, so that this research paper is as 'supporting act' to what they say. What learners *don't say* in the newspaper is that they are being gravely short-changed by the South African system, yet again.

I draw then on non-reductive sociological accounts to situate this present moment in wider global context, as it is aligned to an instrumentalist rationality that reifies relations (and humans) in favour of power and money. This is what is happening in the field of adult education at present. Adult learners and their needs are held at bay, so as not to 'distort' or 'tax' budget allocations that are increasingly smaller. I show then that two of the most serious flaws in adult education at present are to do with questions of conceptualisation and political will. Changing these means that enabling future projects - like the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* that recontextualise the possible to promote *real learning change* to occur *in* learners-in-need-of-access -won't be aborted stillborn.

"All of us with multiple consciousness must help society address the needs of those multiply burdened first. Restructuring and remaking the world, where necessary, will affect those who are singularly disadvantaged as well. By designing programs that operate on multiple levels of consciousness and address multiple levels of need, we will *all* be able to reach our true potential to the benefit of ourselves, our families, our profession, our country, and the world" (Wing:1997a, 32-3)(*emphasis unchanged*).

"We, as black women, can no longer afford to think of ourselves or let the law think of us as merely the sum of separate parts that can be added together or subtracted from, until a white male or female stands before you. The actuality of our layered experience is *multiplicative*. Multiply each of my parts together, $1 \times 1 \times 1 \times 1 \times 1$, and you have *one* indivisible being. If you divide one of these parts from one you still have *one*" (Ibid., 31)(*emphasis unchanged*).

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D Hunt

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms.

[ABET]	-	Adult Basic Education and Training.
[AET]	-	Adult Education and Training.
[APL]	-	Active Prior Learning (<i>my coinage</i>).
[ARF]	-	Andragogic Recontextualisation Field (<i>my coinage</i>).
[AUEALC]	-	Appointment of Unemployed Educators at Adult Learning Centres (<i>my coinage</i>).
[C.A.]	-	Communicative Action.
[CDA]	-	Critical Discourse Analysis.
[CLA]	-	Critical Language Awareness.
[CRF]	-	Critical Race Feminism.
[GEAR]	-	Growth Employment and Re-distribution.
[GDE]	-	Gauteng Department of Education.
[GRF]	-	Gynaegogic Recontextualisation Field (<i>my coinage</i>).
[IMF]	-	International Monetary Fund.
[ISA's]	-	Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser).
[NLS]	-	New Literacy Studies.
[NQF]	-	National Qualifications Framework.
[O.B.E.]	-	Outcomes-Based Education.
[ORF]	-	Official Recontextualisation Field (Bernstein).
[PALC]	-	Public Adult Learning Centre.
[PRF]	-	Pedagogic Recontextualisation Field (Bernstein).
[RPL]	-	Recognition of Prior Learning.
[S.A.]	-	Strategic Action.
[SACABE]	-	South African Council for Adult Basic Education.
[SAQA]	-	South African Qualifications Act.
[TRC]	-	Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
[U.N.]	-	United Nations.

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INTRODUCTION.

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1-23.

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A Communicative Discourse.

From the outset I wish to establish both the tone of my own practice from within the classroom, as an educator/practitioner, and that of my writing as a practitioner/researcher. In both roles, I rely on a **communicative discourse** which seeks to empower the voices of learners through active and constructive listening and dialogue. This is a process which, in following from bell hooks, is aimed at 'using information from the margin to transform thinking about the whole' (hooks:1994, 78). It promotes reflection, insight, co-operative action and responsibility, wherein, I too, am situated as agentive and engaged learner/participant, and am not constructed as a pre-supposedly detached and neutral observer.

Lani Guinier, an African-American law professor, quotes Iris M. Young who in an unpublished paper for the American Political Science Association in September of 1990 provides a useful working definition for a communicative model of democracy. As starting premise, this model:

"rejects a disciplined, unemotional style of expression, which often operates to exclude, silence, and disadvantage members of some groups; communicative style does not require emotional detachment or rigid argumentation but employs a broader conception of permissible forms of discourse, including personal narrative" (Guinier:1997, 80).

In line with this communicative discourse model, I do not propose my own research as definitive. It is rather an articulation of co-operative and individual understandings arrived at through a class dialogue that invites and is open to further review and further dialogue.

Communicative dialogue: in the classroom; in interviews with learners; in questionnaires completed by learners and in the newspaper project of learners themselves (See Appendix One), is made possible by this researcher in her commitment to processes where the horizontalisation of power relations is key to the collection of data and work with learners, As much as possible then, I collect data from and work with learners as a 'friend' rather than as an 'expert' (See Young *et al*, 1980: 87, and quoted below in the section on the newspaper design project and process I conducted with adult learners)(See also the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* on page two of Appendix One, where learners give a positive valuation of their experiences of horizontalisation processes as they were consciously created in the classroom. They express a sense of empowerment because of them and the feeling that they may expand on their learning for the benefit of others, not just for themselves, in their social networks, at home and/or in the workplace, beyond the bounds of the classroom).

In its openness to a plurality of meanings, this dialoguing process is then, in the adult education classroom, an act of resistance against the

narrowing force of the instrumentalist rationality that has presently colonised much of the education sector at both a macro and micro level in South Africa and abroad, where U.N.-type developmentalist models hold sway (See Street (1984) where he discusses in detail how these models are themselves 'part of the problem' (Street:1984, 227).

This instrumentalist rationality, in its link to performance of an economic kind, overarchingly determines educative form, content and practice and validates achievement by its own code. The terms of this code, which narrows education to function, is particularly insidious in its implications for the adult education sector as a whole and for black women within this sector. Their agentic voices are left primarily unheard, un-addressed and in the margins, and, by corollary, are constructed as deficit in relation to the normative model operative. Processes of exclusion and obfuscating effacement are at work in the policy documents of the normative model presently being circulated in the South African context.

A prime focus of this research is then on these contradictions in relation to black women whose learner needs will not and are not being met by the prescriptive documents that pertain to the Official Re-contextualisation Field (ORF/Bernstein) of the South African State.

In Bernstein's terms, these documents, recently codified and published by the South African government and the Education Ministry, pertain to the 'bureaucratic official view' in education towards practice, delivery and accreditation. In this view, a set of pre-given outcomes is made to frame the entire educative enterprise, which is doubly subsumed and burdened by a market-driven and nationalist discourse that leaves real flesh and blood actors 'out in the cold', while it claims to do the opposite.

That this should be the case now is curious, as prior to South Africa's first 'free and fair' general election in 1994, steps were taken to ensure that this did not happen. In a post conference document on National Adult Basic Education in South Africa, entitled: *Coming in from the Cold: Putting Adult Basic Education on the National Agenda* (South African Committee for Adult Basic Education (SACABE): 1994), the Persepolis Declaration of 1975 was highlighted as being key in extending conceptualisations about what adult education needed to do for learners. Conference participants, adopting this declaration in spirit and in letter, made it clear that if adult education provision were to redress the social and educational imbalances entrenched by apartheid, provision had to go beyond offering only 'functional literacy' opportunities for learners.

The Term: "Literacy".

Importantly, the term 'literacy' was redefined by this declaration and two gains were made. An emphasis was placed on the full person(/learner)

and secondly, the need to develop the critical consciousness of learners, on an on-going basis, was promoted as being integral to any transformative practice that would ultimately extend beyond the borders of the classroom for the benefit of learners.

The 1975 Persepolis declaration, as it is reiterated by the South African Committee for Adult Basic Education (SACABE), defines literacy as an entrenched right in stating that it is:

“... not just the process of learning the skills of reading and writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of people and their full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates the conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of the society in which people live, and of its aims; it also stimulates initiatives and their participation in the creation of projects capable of acting upon the world, of transforming it, and defining the aims of an authentic human development. It should open the way to the mastery of techniques and human actions. Literacy is not an end in itself. It is a fundamental right.” (South African Committee for Adult Basic Education (SACABE): 1994, 50).

This definition clearly owes much to the progressive work of Paulo Freire. It does, nonetheless, make ‘grand claims’ for literacy which suggest that

critical consciousness would not be possible without literacy. I will return shortly to critiques made of just such claims, so that what I propose should be carried forward from the above definition for the purpose of reading this research, is the stressing of learning as both critical social process and as a 'fundamental right' for adult learners.

A final yet no less important point to note of the above is that given the gender-ed and race-d construction of power relations in the South African context particularly, 'literacy' *per se* is not the only right that must be seriously considered in terms of equity redress and adult education provisioning.

Paradigm Challenge: Literacy, Gendered Difference and Power in the Workplace.

Diana Gibson (Gibson:1996) in her ethnographic study of three farms in the Western Cape shows how power and literacy inter-related in differential ways to often legitimate gendered discourses in the workplace. On the one hand, the male farm workers in the study were able to challenge a negative construction of themselves. This negative construction assumed 'schooled' literacy as a 'common-sense' (Gramsci:1971) social necessity. These male workers without schooled literacy then, and despite their labelling as 'illiterate', were able to, for example, 'read' complex diagrams and install irrigation systems, build

wagons and participate in other tasks which were identified on the farms as being 'manly'.

In terms of 'farm' knowledge and the consequently accorded status or capital (Bourdieu:1991) that this knowledge legitimated, gender was "the primary criterion for employment, power, or training" (Gibson:1996, 63) and not 'schooled' literacy.

The women, on the other hand, on these same three farms practiced forms of 'schooled' literacy that were not legitimated by the male 'work literacy' model and ethic. With the male model as the normative one operating on the Cape farms, Gibson's study shows how black farm women's literacy practices were relegated to the private domain and how they "did not automatically empower in the workplace" (Gibson:1996, 64).

Gibson's study is particularly important in showing then that black women, despite having 'accessed' 'schooled' literacy are neither able to use it in their jobs, nor are they afforded any status or recognition because of it. Their differential treatment because of gender, indicates that there are other more important social markers 'at play' which serve to exclude and efface them in real social contexts. These markers go beyond traditional binaries between 'schooled' literacy and 'illiteracy' and indicate rather a complex of social variables as they are related to power.

The claims for literacy then, as a totalising discourse in adult education particularly, obfuscates these variables and pre-supposes, as Foucault (1981) does, a *false equality* between agents (Muller and Taylor:1995, 224).

Literacy campaigns often assume this false equality between agents as if 'empowerment' were simply a question of provisioning, and as if all were free on an equal basis, within society, to access this provisioning once offered. MacCannell and MacCannell (1993), while expanding on Foucault, explain what this means. They say the following of Foucault's definition and usage around the notion of power:

"Throughout Foucault's work, power is distinguished from force. Power is the realm of freedom, the field of possibilities no one owns: 'Power is exercised by free subjects only over free subjects and only insofar as they are free' (MacCannell and MacCannell:1993, 224).

For the purposes of this research paper, it will be noted here that the assumption of a 'free' equality between agents is a premature and dangerous one. I regard that power is exercised in the present South African context over Subjects who are *not* entirely free. Indeed, a concern of this research document is that some Subjects, particularly those 'with power and capital', are 'more free' than others to control and delimit

others' lives. This is particularly true of those making postulations without a longitudinal basis - as longitudinal studies are not considered 'cost effective' - about adult learners in the field of education. These postulations, oscillating between extremes, frequently suggest that learners' delimitation in society is either the consequence of a 'neutral', 'free-falling', 'agentless' 'destiny' or the fault of learners themselves without access and/or 'literacy' and/or any other such marker of success and separation, as the case may be.

Gee (1990) notes that these social access markers are 'trivial', *in and of themselves*, in that those in power can just as easily 'change' these signposts of separation and difference when it is feared that they have been accessed by 'too many' and that the privileged position and capital status of 'experts', for example, is threatened (Gee:1990, 149).

Symbolic Violence and Critical Emancipative Practice.

Johan Muller and Nick Taylor in their work: 'Knowledge, the School Curriculum and Everyday Life' (Muller and Taylor:1995, 203-29), follow on from the terms of Bourdieu in delimiting that "the main factors of differentiation, of discrimination and of distortion" are what constitute symbolic violence (Muller and Taylor:1995, 222), but that a form of double violence is operative when these factors are maintained by our unconscious consent. They go on to say that:

“Symbolic violence is therefore that surplus power which affects our destinies all the more powerfully because it has slipped off the horizon of consciousness, and therefore cannot be opposed or otherwise dealt with” (Muller and Taylor:1995, 205).

This double symbolic violence is what an emancipative practice within education seeks to minimize and transform. It accepts that, in the present social formation in which we live, symbolic violence and power, as the legitimating force that excludes or includes by conventions (Bourdieu:1991), is unavoidable. Symbolic violence can only be endlessly forced into retreat by struggles for greater inclusion and participation, and the practice of raising-to-consciousness the hidden power-differentials at work in the social domain.

In light of the Gibson ethnography mentioned above, central issues to confront within a critical educative enterprise for adults are the exclusionary boundaries and definitions (which in Bernstein's terms are called 'insulation maintainers') that make for strong classifications and the construction of both esoteric and 'gender-ed' 'workplace' knowledges that work as forms of hegemony (Gramsci:1971) and means of exclusion.

Labels of 'literate' and 'illiterate' are part of this esoteric knowledge construction base and as such are a means of policing boundaries in much the same way as a 'potentate' does (Said:1996, 227). The esoteric

sets itself up, at a distance, from the everyday knowledge of the world that real agents in the world do have. These impermeable, mono-directional, 'potentate boundaries', legitimate esoteric knowledge for example, as 'neutral, natural and beneficial' (See Pennycook (1994) who uses these same terms to question claims for 'English as an International language' (Pennycook:1994). Pennycook establishes in his work that the English language, *in and of itself*, as we have already seen with claims made for 'literacy' as they are challenged by the male workers in the Gibson study (1996), has nothing inherent within it to legitimate it over and above other languages. Its 'domination' in respect of other languages does, however, have everything to do with the means and media of power and money. Through these, English is taken as the language of business, while French, for example, is taken as the language of diplomacy).

To address the problematic of knowledge being 'set at a remove', Young *et al.*, (1993); Giroux and McLaren (1994); Gloria Anzaldua (1987); Said (1996) and others, call for 'border crossings' which would make for a greater 'connectivity' and accountability between specialist domains and the everyday world. This call offers exciting possibilities within classroom contexts for cultural and/or 'crude' knowledge(s) to be included in curricula (where I place media knowledge and cultural 'skills', as they are negotiated by learners from networks of the new information society,

as key to this inclusion, particularly within a language communication class). These crossings, however, seem to 'solve' or account for only one aspect of the Gibson study: that of the effacement of the male workers' practices as legitimate forms of knowledge. What of the female workers and their 'lived' differential of power, or the lack thereof? What of their effacement?

As a starting point for both women and men, Giddens (1992) has the following to say on differential power and how acts of consciousness, within or without the classroom, in public and/or private forums, can keep symbolic violence at bay:

"Differential power, which is sedimented in social life, is likely to stay unchanged if individuals refuse reflectively to examine their own conduct at its implicit justifications... Such rules, however unsophisticated they may seem, if successfully applied help prise the individual's actions away from an unconsciously organised power game" (Giddens:1992,193).

In this undertaking, Lev Vygotsky's 'autonomous' model of the word in his *Thought and Language* (1986) needs to be re-visited. He claims that:

"Consciousness is reflected in a word as the sun in a drop of water. A word relates to consciousness as a living cell relates to a whole organism, as an atom relates to the universe. A word is a microcosm of human consciousness" (Vygotsky:1986, 256).

Clearly words are not enough, when they may be used to either mask power differentials or lay them bare. How they are used by agents and institutions then, is *of the essence* rather than what they are presumed to be *in and of themselves*.

An Autonomous Model of Literacy.

Literacy 'myths', though unsubstantiated by research, still abound. Gee (1990), in his work: *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*, makes an inventory of the claims for literacy. Here, literacy is understood as having a capital 'L' at its beginning and a single 'y' at its end. He says the following of its presumed outcomes and consequences:

"The 'literacy myth' is seen to have produced claims that literacy leads to, or is correlated with, logical and analytical modes of thought; general and abstract use of language; critical and rational thought; a sceptical questioning attitude; a distinction between myth and history; the recognition of the importance of time and space; complex and modern governments; political democracy and

greater social equity; economic development; wealth and productivity; political stability; urbanisation; lower birth rates; people who are achievement oriented, productive, cosmopolitan, politically aware, more globally (nationally and internationally) and less locally oriented, who have more liberal and humane social attitudes, are less likely to commit a crime; and more likely to take the rights and duties of citizenship seriously" (Gee: 1990, 32).

I include this inventory as it aptly demonstrates how understandings of literacy are over-determined and underpinned by a universalistic discourse that posits as starting point: literacy as the 'good'. The presumed 'evolutionary' consequences of literacy are uni-directional, unquestioned, favourable towards and emanating from a western-type rationality.

Brian Street (1995) does much to displace this ethnocentric model of literacy through an 'Ideological model of literacy' which establishes, at its outset, the premise that:

"Competing models and assumptions about reading and writing processes... are always embedded in power relations" (Street: 1995, 133).

I shall return to Street's contributions shortly, in relation to the New Literacy Studies (NLS), as they are pertinent to my own study in providing useful conceptual tools for **praxis** (See Freire: 1972a, 50) within the (adult education) classroom.

The Ideological Model of Literacy.

Street's Ideological model of literacy does much to explain our earlier problematic in relation to the Gibson study (1996) on three Cape farms. Through it, we are able to see how literacies as 'social practice' (Street: 1984, 1) embed power differentials within particular contexts.

The notion of 'context', in this case and for the purposes of this research, is understood in terms of a conceptually broader and higher level of abstraction than that of traditional linguistics, where Malowinski's functional and pragmatic 'context of situation', or utterance, (See Halliday and Hasan:1989) has been particularly difficult to dislodge.

Street quotes the contributions of Bledsoe and Robey for their work with the Mende in Sierra Leone in 1986, where they equate context with the "broader features of social and cultural life ... institutional control and definitions of hierarchies of power" (Street:1995, 171). He quotes them further as saying:

"In itself writing does not mechanically produce social results. The cultural context greatly influences the social role of writing, both as a mode of communication and as a type of knowledge. By treating literacy as a resource in this way, moreover, we de-emphasize the dichotomy of speech versus writing ... We view the two modes as more similar than different in their sociological impact ... (and so much of the discussion) could apply to oral competence as well" (Ibid., 171).

Bledsoe and Robey's words are useful as they point towards a conceptualisation of classroom practice within an Ideological model of literacy. Here, they typify literacy as a resource for communication and as 'a type of knowledge' not unlike speech. Their emphasis on the similarities of both speech and writing is important as it suggests a 'mixing' of both modes of communication (speech and writing) in the classroom, rather than promoting the elevation of one, at the expense of the other.

This equal mixing of 'modes' is, however, perhaps more the exception than the rule for practice in many educational contexts where 'hierarchies of power' (Ibid.,) are reinforced. It will be seen, when I discuss some of the significant statements that learners make in preliminary needs analysis interviews that I conduct with them, that

Bledsoe and Robey's words are pertinent for the South African context as well.

The Need for a Critical Social Practice which Promotes the Traveler, the Potentate NOT!

Needs analysis interview number five is particularly important in this regard (See the needs analysis section below under the following title: 'Gynaegogy Needs: A Brief Look at What Learners Said'). In this interview, Martha Maselwane (*not her real name*) indicates that when she attended primary school, the 'written word', as a scant resource in the classroom, was taken not only as a 'mode of communication' and/or 'type of knowledge' (in Bledsoe and Robey's terms above), but also as a type of power and means of exclusion. Those to whom the 'written word' was *not* given were marginalised in the class, in relation to those to whom it was distributed by the prefect, acting on the instructions given through the 'legitimated' authority of the teacher as she embodied it within this institutional site of learning.

Here, the teacher acted in the role of 'potentate' that Said so rejects as a form of travesty in the 'quest for knowledge and freedom' (Said:1996, 228). Rather than 'mixing' modes, this 'potentate educator' reproduced a hierarchy where the 'written' was placed above the 'spoken', as if the two

were mutually exclusive. Additionally, the 'written word' was used to promote a negative social practice of 'discipline and punish' (Foucault:1979).

A second point to note of Bledsoe and Robey's statements above is, then, that they are in direct opposition to the autonomous model of literacy, which privileges literacy alone. This privileging, as elicited above from the South African example, is a frequent feature of circumscribed classroom practice. Indeed, the autonomous model itself is reliant on the 'myth of a great divide' between literacy and orality.

This myth functions as a western-centric insulation maintainer (Bernstein:1975), legitimating the dominance claims of a presumed 'literate' and 'technological' world over a presumed 'oral' and 'primitive' world, as 'neutral and natural'. While these are 'imagined communities' in Benedict Anderson's terms (Anderson:1983), the persistence of the 'orality and literacy' myth, as propagated by its two main proponents: Ong (Ong:1982) and Goody (Goody:1977), has 'real effects' in the negative labelling and marginalisation of literacy practices that do not conform to this western-type 'technological' model. Against this 'norm', these practices are referred to as 'restricted literacies' (Street:1995, 75). 'Restricted literacies' are considered then as 'less than' and 'not yet there' in relation to a 'western *wedom*' that has 'arrived' in its own estimation (See Hartley (1992) for a discussion on the inter-related

notions of 'wedom' and 'theydom' as they relate to trends in 'Journalism in a Post Truth Society' (Hartley:1992, 206-10)).

The narrowing pressure for homogeneity, within an autonomous model of literacy, is itself restrictive; while yet its centripetal force (Bakhtin:1981) moving towards closure is characterised as its opposite: a 'fullness'. The 'competing discourses' (Lee:1992) of alternative literacy practices, 'outside' this force, are then, constructed as 'deviant', as they do not 'fit' a homogenising model intolerant of plurality.

Re-inscribed and flattened within the autonomous model, negative labels are used defensively to contain these 'competing discourses' within a homogeneous 'bind', since what is 'at stake' are the classification systems of the models themselves, symbolic power and identity. Naming is then a first violence. In this bind, homogeneity constructs 'deviance', rather than accord alternative or opposing practices an(y) equality of participation (Taylor and Muller:1995, 224), despite, or perhaps because of, a widespread 'weakening of traditional insulations' (Ibid., 216) due to new globalisation trends.

I will return shortly to constructions of 'deviance' as they relate to gender, but in relation to this construction, MacCannell and MacCannell (1993) usefully note that: "Among other things in western culture, *all*

women are sexually deviant when examined from the phallic standard" (sic)(MacCannell and MacCannell:1993, 232)(*my emphasis*). And that, from this 'standard' in more extreme cases: "In domestic violence, childhood incest, rape and other hate crimes, the assailant may be motivated to commit the crime for no other reason than to affirm his will to pleasure, to 'have it all', while reducing his victims to less than nothing" (sic)(Ibid., 224). When an assailant does this, MacCannell and MacCannell (1993) note further that the perpetrator of these hate crimes 'clumsily occupys the subject position of a classic capitalist" (Ibid., 224).

Leaving discussions on gender 'aside' momentarily, an important point to carry forward from this section is the notion more generally that homogenising models and practices are founded on varying forms of intolerance. This intolerance, when legitimated by authority, perpetuates forms of hostility, whether they be in relation to terms of reference that are cultural and/or social, and by so doing puts academic and/or educational practices of and for freedom 'at risk'. This is because the 'intellectual discourse' of the 'potentate model', policing boundaries, 'worships at the altar of its own identity', and, in so doing, 'denigrates and diminishes the value of others' (Said:1996, 222).

In Althusser's terms then, the consequence of the 'mirror-gaze' of the 'intellectual potentate', seeing only its own reflection, is that practices

'interpellated' and called into 'play' are only those 'pre-given' by its own 'structure' (See Lapsley and Westlake (1988:14) for a critique on Althusser). The narrowness of such an enterprise, with its focus on 'mastery' (Said:1996, 227) is problematic, particularly if its totalitarian and constricting nature is not recognised. Worse still, is the possibility that this restrictive, narrow, normativeness is not only not seen, but lauded, legitimated and 'enforced' as 'neutral', 'natural' and 'beneficial'.

I will return shortly to a discussion extending this notion when I examine definitions in recent official policy documents in the South African context as they will and do impact on the provisioning of and for adult education. When these definitions operate in the same sterile manner as Said's 'jealous potentate', whole groups of *consequence* (adult learners and more particularly the black female adult learners among them) are marginalised, rather than opportunities made for them towards greater participation and inclusion in transforming present structural relations of power in the South African context.

This research then is one which promotes the practices of the 'traveler' rather than those of the 'potentate' in education. Said (1996) maps a programme of action for this traveler. He says the following:

"The image of traveler depends not on power, but on motion, on a willingness to go into different worlds, use different idioms, and understand a variety of disguises, masks and rhetorics. Travelers must suspend the claim of customary routine in order to live in new rhythms and rituals. Most of all, and *most unlike the potentate* who must guard only one place and defend its frontiers, the traveler *crosses over*, traverses territory, and abandons fixed positions, all the time. To do this with dedication and love as well as a realistic sense of the terrain is, I believe, a kind of academic freedom at its highest, since one of its main features is that you leave authority and dogma to the potentate. You will have other things to think about and enjoy than merely yourself and your domain, and those other things are far more impressive, far more worthy of study and respect than self-adulation and uncritical self-appreciation" (Said:1996, 227-8)(*my emphasis*).

In classroom practice and in this research then, I endorse the traveler consciousness. It is, however, worth noting here that I do not believe that one should simply 'leave authority and dogma to the potentate' as Said says above. In the South African context the 'potentate' is firstly and foremostly the State. Its 'fronterial defense' and 'one' place of 'guard' is seen reflected in its official policy documents and their directives. I will show that these directives are largely invasive, at the same time as they

are normative and ill-conceived to address the *real* needs of both learners and educators in the adult education field. A committed critical social practice that does *not* challenge dogma, as it is imposed, would be to simply leave things as they are.

Jonathan Dollimore as quoted by Stratton (1994) confirms this. He speaks of the political importance at the heart of deconstruction as a critical social act. Drawing on from Derrida, he says the following:

“Jacques Derrida reminds us that binary oppositions are a ‘violent hierarchy’ where one of the two terms forcefully governs the other. A crucial stage in their deconstruction involves an overturning, an inversion ‘which brings low what was high’. The political effect of ignoring this stage, of trying to move beyond the hierarchy into a world quite free of it, is simply to leave it intact in the only world we have.” (Jonathan Dollimore as quoted by Stratton (1994: 174).

So then, in ‘worlds’ (Spivak:1987) of social injustice and the marginalisation of whole groups, education as the practice of freedom cannot afford to leave these worlds unchanged and indeed ‘un-travelled’, not once but on an unrelenting, continual basis in the quest for questioning creativity, voice and resistant subjectivity. Processes of deconstruction in this research are then directed towards these ends.

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The New Literacy Studies: Definitions and Conceptual

Tools.

What has been called the New Literacy Studies (NLS) owes much to the work of Brian Street whose cross-cultural approaches to literacy practices (Street: 1993) do much to de-locate and re-contextualise the autonomous model's ethnocentric claims. This act of re-location places a cross-cultural approach squarely within an ideological frame.

I would like now to briefly discuss some of the conceptual tools and definitions developed by the New Literacy Studies (NLS) as they pertain to understandings within my own research. One of the NLS' most useful starting points is its non-stigmatisation of heterogeneity and the promotion of a merger between disciplines and approaches that allows for fuller accounts on 'theories of power and ideology' (Street:1995, 162).

In line with these accounts, Shirley Bryce Heath (1983), within her ethnographic study: *A Way With Words*, provides a useful 'inroad' and starting point from which to understand what constitutes a literacy event. She defines a 'literacy event' as any occasion around which participants' interpretative processes are engaged and enlisted as a resource, in face to face conversation, over a piece of writing (Shirley Bryce Heath:1983, 200, 386). This definition of literacy is particularly apt in that it does not maintain the traditional 'divide' between the 'oral' and

the 'literate', as it has been rejected above. Importantly, it places an emphasis on the 'mix' between these modes in the social construction of meaning, and therefore, does not elevate one at the expense of the other.

The possibility for co-operative action between participants in a group around a literacy event is a further contribution afforded by Bryce's definition, as it de-emphasises the traditional stress placed on individual achievement. As has already been seen of narrower definitions of literacy, this stress maintains a divide between 'literate' and 'illiterate'.

Tool for Making Meaning / Making Voice: Including the

Lifeworlds of Learners to Create Conditions for

'Interpretative and Communicative Events' and Critical

Social Action.

In my own classroom practice with adult learners, the possibility for co-operative action between participants was usefully carried forward. Indeed, in both classroom discussions and in questionnaires, a part of the data collection for this research paper (Refer to Appendix Two of this research to see the content and design format of the questionnaire I distributed to learners in May and June of 1997), the interpretative resources of learners were enlisted not only around the printed word

and/or the spoken word, but around other 'mediated' forms of communication as well. This practice extended the bounds of the 'mix' promoted by the New Literacy Studies (NLS) above, by bringing into the classroom knowledges of the 'everyday' that learners confronted and negotiated, on an on-going basis outside the classroom, in relation to their life-worlds.

See below where I discuss the notion of the 'lifeworld' in Habermas' terms as it relates to the construction of identity, culture and community. Indeed, in trends which move towards the absence of 'sense' in the late modern world, Habermas identifies three forms of psychosis. The first relates to 'loss of meaning' where old 'cultural rationalities' (Heerden:1994, 320) no longer apply. The second: 'anomie', relates to a sense of lost solidarity with community, and the third consists of a sense of heightened isolation and alienation in individuals which may lead the personality to exhibit psycho-pathologies that have as result the "loss of personal accountability" (Ibid.,).

Bearing these possibilities in mind, I iterate here that I believe that it is important to bring the lifeworld knowledges of learners into the classroom. This is, I believe, important, particularly in the South African context where a 'culture of brutalisation' has most certainly had its 'effects' in relation to all three of these pathologies in real people's lives. I

suggest then that the bringing of the lifeworlds of learners into the classroom - as learners negotiate these worlds in relation to what they know has gone before and the meanings that they have made of these processes - is a radical act, promoting 'healing' and possibly generating new responses and/or actions, as part of an emancipative, critical, social and educative practice, as it attempts to understand firstly how the lifeworld as been 'colonised and impoverished' (Ibid., Heerden on Habermas) and secondly, how this colonisation and impoverishment might be countered. See then my needs analysis interviews with women learners who articulate on their own 'lived life-world experiences' of brutalisation, alienation and 'meaning loss' in the South African context across several social arenas. These social arenas - as elicited by the interviews - relate to education, health, the State, the workplace and domestic violence and/or violence more generally, in the street and/or around places where learners live (See then Davis (1997) on the violence with 'no name' until now, that of: 'sexual street harassment').

While not a comprehensive study, the needs analysis interviews I conducted with learners as a part of this research (See below), are telling in that they take forward and expand on Gibson's study (1996) which brings to consciousness some of the variables of 'lived differentials of power' as they relate to gender in the South African context and the arena of education more particularly.

What learners brought into the classroom was then the foundation or the "stuff" (Gunther Kress (1998), in a seminar at Wits University entitled: "What is Research in English Education?", February 27, 1998) around which 'interpretative and communicative events' were promoted and laid open to challenge, reconstruction and change in an atmosphere of non-stigmatisation and gender sensitivity. Once these conducive conditions were established, a learner could talk validly about the meanings that he or she had made around a soap opera, for example, or indeed, around the video that I made and presented to learners on 'interviewing skills', gender 'norms', societal forms of violence and on concepts to consider of the media - such as 'censorship, newsworthiness and ethics' - before the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* project was begun (See Appendix One for the newspaper. The video entitled: 'On a Taxi' is on file with this researcher).

Fostering Interdependence.

That the traditional stress placed on individual achievement is not a useful one, particularly when dealing with adults, is confirmed by Barton (1991: 10) when he quotes a valuable study by Fingeret (1983) in the United States, which elicits how adults are able to circumvent problems in everyday life, despite not being able to read or write on an individual basis, by establishing social networks of reciprocal exchange within communities. Within these 'resource networks', skills are 'swapped'. Indeed, the ability to 'fix something' might be a less available resource

than either reading or writing, and hence a more highly regarded skill. In this light and with this possibility created, adults do not see themselves as 'functionally disabled' because of a lack of literacy, instead they are afforded an interdependent equality of participation without stigmatisation.

Reder (1985) complements the above findings by dividing the informal acquisition of literacy skills within 'learning networks' (Barton:1991, 10) into three dimensions of engagement. In the first dimension, he characterises a person *directly* decoding a written message as being directly and technologically engaged in a literacy event.

A person who participates in a literacy event, without directly decoding the written message, is said to be 'functionally engaged' (Breier and Prinsloo:1996, 20). 'This participant's interpretative resources, what Fairclough calls a members' resources (MR) (See Fairclough: 1989, 24), are called for by others - or by the demands created by an event - as resources to be made available by the participant towards a collective construction of meaning, in relation to a given, written cultural artefact.

Reder's third dimension is related to a broader consideration of the social meanings, values and roles that are taken on in events, by participants, as they negotiate meaning within particular contexts that are further 'embedded within the logic of everyday life' (Breier and Prinsloo:1996,

21). The attitudes or dispositions socialised within these informal networks have important implications for whether individuals will choose to use *or not use* literacy skills in particular settings. Street adds that: 'Literacy is for any group...what it is in the contexts in which that group experiences it' (Street:1995, 82). Literacy then, cannot be seen apart or extracted from its practice in specific social contexts.

For Street, the term 'literacy practice' encompasses much more than that of the 'literacy event' which is empirical. Street defines term 'literacy practice' as one which allows for greater abstraction in relation to the uses of reading and/or writing, as it refers to both behaviour and the socio-cultural conceptualisations, or the 'folk models' and ideological preconceptions, that underpin use in particular social contexts (Street:1995, 162).

Of use is Street's focus on the social which allows for the contested and multiple nature of literacy practices to come to the fore.

Not just a Question of Literacy: Fostering Communicative Practices.

Literacy practices are, however, but one type of communicative practice, so that the notion of 'literacy practice' must then be situated within a broader understanding of 'communicative practices' that re-locate the

sweeping mythical claims made for one channel or medium of communication, as is done within an autonomous model of literacy. Street extends from Grillo's understanding of 'communicative practices' to say that:

"Communication or language is produced through social activities embedded in institutions or fields that are then implicated in wider political, cultural, economic, social processes and ideologies. These ideologies may be linguistic or otherwise, and, along with these processes, they guide or impact on communicative production" (Street:1995, 163).

This is an important understanding, though I caution against how the above definition might be used uncritically (or unconsciously) to situate 'communicative practice' as wholly determined by, or in an easy relationship with, institutions and the broader processes in which they are situated. The opportunities offered for transforming practice by Bernstein's differentiation between the Official Recontextualisation Field (ORF) and the Pedagogic Recontextualisation Field (PRF) is important in maintaining this distinction. I will return shortly to the relationship between these two fields in my discussion of the non-reductive sociological accounts that I draw from for this study.

A Theory of Communicative Action (C.A).

This distinction is, however, important as it allows me to situate the work of this study within Habermas' 'theory of communicative action' ('C.A.': *my abbreviation*. See my ideological integrated model^(1x2) below, where I situate communicative action, as opposed to 'strategic action' (/Habermas, 'S.A.': *my abbreviation*), as central to a committed, educative practice that is social, emancipative and tolerant of a plurality of meanings). Within this theory, action is finalised towards a collective production process of open communication, which opposes the potentially, subjugative force of institutional distortions and the narrow instrumentalist rationality presently being circulated across fields in the new *cultural economy* (Taylor and Muller:1995, 222) and in the adult education field more particularly, in the present South African transitional climate.

In line with the notion of 'competing discourses' (Lee:1992), Gee (1990) makes a distinction between primary and secondary discourses. The term 'discourse' itself is defined by Gee (1990) as being:

"a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, of feeling, believing, valuing and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group

or 'social network' or to signal...a socially meaningful role"
(Gee:1990, 43).

Within this definition, Gee's emphasis is on the social and on participation within groups. Through this definition, he elevates the possibility that individuals are able to participate meaningfully in groups, through discourse, or in other words, through talk and through voice as it articulates discourse. Gee (1990) suggests that discourse allows for the creation of 'socially meaningful' associations and roles.

This is important as these associations and roles relate to notions of self-esteem and accountability within socio-cultural communities. If harnessed within the classroom, in conditions where notions of mutual respect reign, I believe that this can have positive consequences for adult learners as they articulate and make provisional sense of competing discourses.

I Believe that Discourse Articulations Can Be Therapeutic:

They Can Enhance the Self-Esteem of Learners When

Relations of 'Dependence' are Not Fostered'.

See my earlier discussion above on the three possible consequences or pathologies, as identified by Habermas, that may result, when meaningful social links and points of contact are not or are no longer

made in a world of vastly accelerated change. In this world: the old 'truisms' and 'points of reference' no longer meaningfully apply to new situations and cultural 'demands'. It is a truism, however, that not all individuals respond in the same way to these changes, so that without support networks, I suggest that individuals, unable to 'cope' with these changes, may fall sway to the potentially negative determining effects of the social environment. I suggest then that educative acts need to have as resource, and in the course of practice, the possibility of the 'therapeutic'. See my needs analysis interviews below, where I make the call for this aspect of practice to be developed. It seems valid, as well, based on the findings of these interviews within the field of adult education in Gauteng province, to suggest that, in addition to the development of curricula more suited to adult learners' needs, adult facilitators need training support so as to be able to 'cope' with the psychological demands that learners have in the present South African context, in the absence of 'expert' social workers and counsellors at adult learning centres. Counselling support, while perhaps a welcome and much needed support resource for learners and educators alike, is the exception rather than the norm.

To return now to Gee (1990) and his 'discourse-centred frame' which rejects a focus on the individual alone (Breier and Prinsloo:1996, 22), I suggest that the learning of literacy is always accompanied by the

acquisition of a possibly 'veiled' discourse akin to Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' (I will return shortly to discuss 'habitus' when speaking of Bernstein's notion of field, as the two are mutually supportive).

The 'Thorny' Terrain of Competing Discourses.

In Gee's terms, 'primary discourses' are instantiated by the heterogeneous ways that communities socialise their members, consciously or unconsciously, within the primary institutions of the family or in informal face-to-face communication with intimates.

'Secondary discourses' are the discourses that pertain to institutions like the school or the workplace, where interaction often involves more formal communication with non-intimates. In a centralising state, secondary discourses deliver, by way of institutional procedures and requirements, homogeneous and authoritative versions of literacy that may conflict with the variety of informal allegiances and 'know-how' that members bring with them, as negotiated through their experiences and socialisation in primary discourse settings (Street:1995, 137).

On discourse, Breier and Prinsloo (1996) in their introduction to the work: *The Social Uses of Literacy*, note that the distinction between primary and secondary discourses is somewhat superficial. Discourses often overlap and are influenced, one by the other, through a blurring of

boundaries. A study in Australia is quoted as showing that in workplace settings, there may also be conflict and resistance by workers to official instructions from 'superiors' or experts. This resistance may emanate from or be based on a recognition of the lack of the 'know-how' that 'superiors' have, but that the workers themselves do have through use. Indeed, this seems a particularly apt depiction of adult education practitioners in relation to bureaucratic officialdom in the South African adult education field as well. Muller and Taylor (1995) note that 'in shaping the curriculum, teachers and bureaucrats struggle on unequal terms' and that often "the official ideology is teeth-grittingly reproduced" (Muller and Taylor:1995, 221), but with little benefit to learners.

The 'Know-how' of Adult Educators Needs to be Fostered.

The balance of power and counter-hegemonic responses as they are being directed and examined 'favour' a focus on the State. As a result of this focus, little attention is presently being given to "the executive processes of legislation in the school" site (Ibid.,). That "the contradictions, spaces and tensions" of this site need to be more fully explored (Ibid.,) is taken as given by this researcher. In addition, because of this balance of power and the way in which it is enforced by the State and by its present official alignment devices, I suggest that the 'know-how' of worker/educators is not being heard or being used to inform

policy, usefully, for the benefit of real adult learners. As such, I believe that much is lost when educators' knowledges of adult learner needs are not acknowledged. As a result of this lack of recognition, adult educators are relegated to a 'Cassandra-type' silence by the State. I suggest, then, that the voice(s) of adult educators needs to be fostered to transform official policy, relevantly and critically, on the basis of what educators really do 'know' through practice and contact with learners, rather than basing a recognition of educators on forms of certification which relate retroactively to the previous regime (See the Department of Education's recent *Government Gazette* (1997) on the 'Terms and Conditions of Employment of Educators', Chapter B, Section 2, where this is the most recent 'gain' for educator recognition made by teacher unions (!)).

Breier and Prinsloo (1996) note the consequences of silence. They say that a 'borderland discourse' and its tensions, is not always discernible when workers' resistance is carried through without verbal articulation (Breier and Prinsloo:1996, 22-3) or without being heard. The contrary is however true as well when resistance might be discernible through communicative modalities like the *toyi-toyi* (not always verbal), which uses the body as the medium through which to convey messages of solidarity and/or protest.

A definition of discourse is expanded then to include the potential to employ communicative modalities outside of articulated (vocal) language, so that educators' present frustrations may be seen to be articulated through calls for a nation-wide strike for example. In Foucault's terms: discourse is a thing 'for which and by which there is struggle'. It is a 'power to be seized' (Foucault:1981, 52-3) as knowledge-constitutive interests are at stake when discourses compete. I believe then that all avenues possible should be explored towards the seizing of a discourse that has in sight the delivery of education programmes of value and relevance for the benefit of learners, since we cannot afford otherwise, but particularly when one mode of communication fails towards this end.

It is unfortunate, however, that present threats of industrial action by educators and their unions in June of 1998 are still delimited to the 'school sector', so that grievances in the adult education sector are still largely unheard and/or acknowledged, by both the State and general public.

Power, Discourse and Critical Social Practice.

I extend from Grillo's notion of dominant language (Grillo:1989), to posit a distinction between 'dominant discourses' and 'marginalised discourses'. The power accorded a 'dominant discourse', in one setting, may effectively silence a 'marginalised discourse', while yet it still

competes or is latently present. Though out of sight or 'sound', it is not out of mind. This has been illustrated by the Australian example cited above, where workers' 'primary discourse' is marginalised and silenced while yet resistant. This is the case as well in education where discourse on adult education seems truly a marginalised discourse in the present context, with all eyes focused on youth sector education rather than on both adult and youth sector education as two inter-related unities requiring of re-contextualisations to alleviate a general perception and climate of crisis.

I link then, discourse to subjectivity, where the definition I draw on for subjectivity is defined by Franco Barchiesi as:

"a social process through which a collective and/or individual actor makes sense of a reality in order to articulate (or *not articulate*) a response to a changing environment" (Franco Barchiesi (1998), personal communication, Wits Sociology department, February 10, 1998)(*my emphasis and bracketed addition*)).

While 'voice' may be desirable, 'voicelessness' (ie. lack of vocality), does not, in and of itself, necessarily entail a lack of resistance or subjectivity, it *does* have everything to do with differentials of power at work in

contests between identities (See Spivak (1987) for her work on Subaltern Studies (Spivak:1987)). Educators are then, with adult learners, new 'subalterns' in respect of bureaucrats and policy officials of the State who do not hear them, while yet they are present with valuable contributions to make. The lack of accorded recognition for: their experience and developed-through-use 'know-how'; their often creatively, resistant experimentation, commitment and vision, despite limitations, budget restrictions and uninformed criticisms, is a source of much frustration.

Street's definition of ideology follows on from the above, where ideology is:

"the site of tension between authority and power.. and individual (and/or collective) resistance and creativity on the other...The tension operates through the medium of a variety of cultural practices including...literacy" (Street:1995, 162)(my bracketed addition).

Given the scenario I have outlined above, one sees this tension in relation to adult education particularly, not just in and around literacy practices in education. Street says, however, that in relation to literacy: 'cultural models' need to be complemented by 'ideological' ones, as in all cases "the uses and meanings of literacy entail struggles over particular

identities up against other identities, often imposed ones" (Street:1995, 135).

His understanding of discourse is placed then within a cultural and ideological frame that makes power explicit. He delineates that discourse:

"refers to the complex of conceptions, classifications and language use that characterise a specific sub-set of an ideological formation...(often with) specific reference to a given sub-culture" (Street:1995, 165).

In terms of the implications for classroom practice and educational policy, Street sets an agenda for re-framing literacy as critical social practice (forthcoming work). He says that literacy practices and 'school literacies' have particular ideological histories that must be examined cross-culturally to help learners locate their own literacy practices as Critical Language Awareness (CLA) locates language more generally (See Fairclough (1992)). These histories are "related to the gendered construction of appropriate selves for particular political cultures" (Street:1995, 136).

Following from this, in the South African context particularly, I contend that a critical understanding of the construction of 'gendered appropriate

selves' is not enough. Critical understandings must be broadened to locate and place in perspective the ideological discursive histories of 'racialised, gendered and appropriate selves'.

As with CLA classroom practice, where the practice itself may not always be in direct focus, an understanding of its relevance is always available as an applicable resource. So too with critical understandings of the construction of 'racialised, gendered and appropriate selves', an awareness of the conventions that make for these constructions may not always necessarily be directly in focus, but critical practice must ensure that embodied selves, and power differentials between selves, are not elided from conscious view and/or extracted from *real* socio-cultural contexts, as this tends to promote universalistic claims which may not be valid for other socio-cultural contexts. This is a concept to which I will return shortly in my discussion on race/gender below. Suffice to say that for the time being a point to carry forward from this discussion is that adult learners have needs (and concerns) and engage in socio-cultural practices that are often different from school youth learners, so that a solitary focus on youth sector education is of little value to adult learners. For while, youth education practices and procedures *may* legitimately be directed towards the creation of 'appropriate selves' through the secondary and formative discourses of the institutional site of the classroom, what is appropriate and of use for the youth in

education is not necessarily appropriate for, nor transferable to, an adult learner context.

**Knowledge, Sociology, Everyday Life and the Classroom as
a Site of Struggle.**

Melanie Walker (1991) draws from Freire, in an article entitled "Action Research and Teaching for People's Education", to provide a working definition (as used both by McTaggart in an unpublished paper on Aboriginal education and found in Allman (Allman:1988)) for knowledge as 'tool and process' for critical action. The critical focus is on processing and making sense of a moving and changing material reality. She quotes the following:

"Knowing, whatever its level, is not the act by which a subject, transformed into an object, docilely and passively accepts the contents others give or impose on him or her. Knowledge, on the contrary, necessitates the curious presence of subjects confronted with the world. It requires their transforming action on reality. It demands a constant searching. It implies invention and re-invention... In the learning process the only person who really learns is s/he who appropriates what is learned, who apprehends and thereby reinvents that learning; s/he who is able to apply the appropriated learning to concrete existential situations" (Walker:1991, 163).

Here, learning is seen as change. The re-descriptions that accompany it are only possible once they pass through consciousness. Rather than having pre-determined outcomes and pre-given ways of applying learning 'to concrete existential situations', the possibility of re-invention allows for a plurality of meanings and outcomes that cannot be pre-determined *per se*. Knowledge as process then, invites creative possibilities for the critical practice of education as a practice of and for cultural freedom (Freire:1994b).

Knowles (1990) extends this notion by emphasising that learning is a discovery of the plural and patterns of change:

"From such a point of view, one element can never be like another, and as a consequence, the logic of discovering reality according to the analytical ideal of reducing the many qualitative differences to the one is repudiated. In its place is substituted a search for unity among the many; that is, a pluralistic universe is substituted for a monistic one, and it is the diversity which constitutes the unity... Thus, unity is found in multiplicity, being is found in becoming, and constancy is found in change" (Knowles: 1990, 16).

Closely related to the organismic model above, Aronowitz and Giroux (1986) set an agenda for participants who are meaningfully engaged in critical classroom practice to examine questions to do with how

knowledge is circulated within the social formation and related to power. They relate this to a critical literacy practice that may be harnessed for collective and/or individual social action. They say the following in drawing from a Freirian model:

“Critical literacy means helping students, teachers, and others learn how to read the world and their lives critically and relatedly; it means developing a *deeper understanding* of how knowledge gets produced, sustained and legitimated; and most importantly, it points to forms of social action and collective struggle” (Aronowitz and Giroux:1986, 132) (*my emphasis*).

Above, Giroux and Aronowitz's call is for the development of 'a deeper understanding' (Ibid.,). I find this a useful starting point for developing a praxis of use to adult learners as it highlights that (adult) participants already do have understandings of the social world, before they come to critical literacy forums. However, what is not elicited by these words is that there is not just 'one reading' of the world nor, indeed, 'one world', if we contemplate the new global economy and the 'cultural *particularisms*' (Muller and Taylor:1995, 216) that have arisen because of it.

A focus on transcendental meaning then, has its own politics of effacement and exclusion. I suggest rather a negotiation between the transcendental and the pragmatic in the above model, by underlining

that: the 'forms of social action and struggle' called for here, in the classroom, will emanate from, and be shaped by, agentive, critical readings that account for and engage with changing 'worlds' in contest. In this contest of 'worlds of meaning', Giroux notes elsewhere that late modern society is increasingly governed by pragmatic concerns rather than transcendental ones (Giroux:1988).

Exploring the tensions between the two, the pragmatic and the transcendental, is then crucial as the trend towards the pragmatic, in particular, has potentially negative implications for both classroom practice, as a practice for freedom, and participants' expectations of what education should offer because of the narrowing effect of this practice. Rather than encouraging a critical social practice for freedom, the late modern trend anchors learning to one outcome: that of the acquisition of labour market skills, as they are determined by a free market enterprise that does not guarantee a permanent job. Freire (1972a), in his influential work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, re-aligns this rationality by deconstructing it and by linking critical consciousness and the practice of freedom, in education and in other social domains of activity, to being the 'owner of one's own labour' (Freire:1972a, 150). Until then, freedom is not complete. Whether freedom is *completable* is of course another question not to be explored here.

Non-Reductionist Sociological Perspectives to Guide Formulations on Provision.

To understand how knowledge is circulated, I turn now to discuss a number of useful concepts from both Bourdieu and Bernstein. Both work from a non-reductionist sociological perspective in line with contemporary cultural theory. I will start with Bourdieu as his notion of symbolic power, as mentioned earlier, is particularly pertinent to this study.

For Bourdieu, social life is not determined by one logic, but comes into play within a number of interpenetrating spheres or fields, whose boundaries are neither empirical nor absolute. Each field, structures, contains and legitimates hierarchies of position from which agents contest for the capital that is at stake within that field. Each field legitimates its capital internally, with the State as final authority.

It is worth mentioning here that I think that Bourdieu dilutes the power of the State by constructing it as a meta-field operating between, and in relation, to other fields. Hegemonic theory is less explicit by his account and is in contradiction to what is presently taking place in the South African context.

I prefer then Bernstein, on this front, as he situates the field of the State as a field on its own. I think that conceptualising the power of the State

as an autonomous field, on its own, is apt and useful in the South African context, as the role of the State in education has had particularly strong determining effects and consequences (though not always the *same* 'effects'), from the time of Verwoerd to the present day.

Identifying Habitus/Field Dispositions.

I return briefly, however, to Bourdieu for his notion of habitus as he relates it to field. Field encapsulates social reality as being in things, while habitus places it as being in humans. Social reality, is then a 'double reality' (Muller and Taylor:1995, 204), in both things, as theoretical abstractions, and minds. Social institutions are constituted by habitus/fields.

In considering education practice, and the real flesh and blood participants who come to education sites, I maintain that existing and acquired habitus dispositions need to be acknowledged and identified first, if we are also to acknowledge that power sediments these dispositions differentially.

See my fifth needs analysis interview below with Martha Maselwane. This interview points to how power is institutionalised negatively through the pedagogic voice and actions of the educator in educational contexts, particularly when there is a contestation over scant resources.

The way power is used in these contexts has negative implications then for learning. It is my experience that often when power has been experienced and sedimented through authoritarian practice, adult learners transfer negative learning dispositions and expectations to later learning opportunities in a closed way, because they have been regimented into seeing meaning as 'fixed' and delimited to a 'right and wrong answer'. The 'answers' of classroom learning are then rote-learned for final examinations, unless learners are positively encouraged by educators to re-describe and de-locate potentate conceptualisations of 'knowledge'.

The recognition of prior learning (RPL) is currently a buzz term and concept in recent South African policy documents for education (See particularly the policy documents from the Department of Education to do with the adult education sector (Department of Education:1997a, 114-24) (Department of Education:1997b, 25-6)). However, despite what the term promises in its name, what is recognised and looked for in class situations has less to do with identifying learners' habitus dispositions - where we may understand habitus dispositions as being forms of socialised and internalised knowledge that is acquired relatively unconsciously through the practice of mundane processes, 'prior to', or ongoing with and outside, the formal school setting - and more to do with

legitimizing and finding equatable accreditation means for learner-
`skills', as narrowly defined for and by the workplace.

Identity, Habitus Dispositions and Bodily Selves.

Gunther Kress (Kress:1995), in his work: *Writing the Future: English and the Making of A Culture of Innovation*, draws on Bourdieu's notion of the habitus disposition to stress that reading, as an activity, is not simply the acquisition of 'a skill' (Kress:1995, 83). It goes beyond this and is related to social identity and the acquisition of particular forms of cultural knowledge.

As a form of socialised internalisation, an understanding of habitus is important as it helps to account for how individuals are socialised into being, what I termed earlier: 'racialised and gendered, appropriate bodily selves'. The moulding of 'appropriate' selves, through acquired sets of dispositions, is neither 'just' a racialised process, nor 'just' a gendered process. It is both and ongoing, while individuals inhabit a socialised bodily schemata as if it were both 'natural' and 'neutral' and 'beneficial' (See MacCannell and MacCannell:1993, for a more full critique on forms of gender socialisation and embodiment).

The politics of the body is linked to the construction of identity. In focusing on bodily dispositions, David Buckingham (Buckingham:1994c) draws on the work of Judith Butler to provide a definition for gender:

"Gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (Buckingham:1994c, 200).

By extending the above definition to include race, I find it a valuable one towards gaining 'a grip' on a critical understanding of both race and gender in social context. Indeed, a lack of bodily representations indicates 'psychosis'. Colin MacCabe in the preface to Spivak's work (1987) notes that "all questions of direct access to the body are bracketed for psychoanalysis by the need for the body to be represented or symbolised - indeed, failure of such representation entails psychosis" (MacCabe in Spivak (1987: xiii)). I make then a call for complex notions of intersectionality as they relate to identities. Homi Bhabha in his preface to Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask* (1993), adds similarly that "the very place of identification, caught in the tension of demand and desire, is a space of splitting" that must be accounted for (Homi Bhabha in Fanon (1993: xv)). I will extend the notion of the intersectionality of race and gender when discussing below the 'designated group sections' of official policy documents that form a part of the South African contractual framework as it is being re-defined under our new democracy.

Classes of Knowledge and Consequences for Curricular Practice.

I return now briefly to Bernstein and his division of knowledge into two broad classes: the first being the everyday or the mundane, and the second, the esoteric. Both classes have consequences for curricular practice, though not necessarily to the same degree. Muller and Taylor explain why this may be so in highlighting that:

“(t)he formal education system is the social mechanism *par excellence* for the reproduction of *dominant culture*” (Muller and Taylor:1995, 208)(emphasis unchanged).

Power is then more likely to be attributed to the codification of specialised or formal knowledge because of the relatively recent split between mental and manual workers under late capitalism. A consequence of this split is that knowledge-production and academic discourse are increasingly being commodified and professionalised in ways which sever it from the everyday world of experience.

The Threat of the Marketisation of Educational Provisioning.

Against both the ‘marketisation of public discourse’ and the traditional order of discourse in academies, Fairclough (1995) points to the need for developing a new ‘language’ as a “key element in building resistance to

marketisation without simply falling back on tradition” and old modes of practice (Fairclough:1995, 165)).

In serving its own interests then, the practices of the new knowledge elite marginalise and exclude other members of society and maintain a ‘non-communicative chasm’ (Muller and Taylor:1995, 214) between them.

Besides the academy, the State as well has powerful imperatives to satisfy. In the South African context, it restricts and inhibits the production and articulation of counter-hegemonic discourse by such official ‘alignment devices’ (Ibid., 221) as the final exit examination and supervision by a powerful bureaucracy. Bureaucrats and teachers contest on unequal terms as I have already iterated above, because of these alignment devices and strategies within the field of education and its institutional sites.

In these sites of practice, Melanie Walker (1991) situates the educator within socio-historical context. She underscores the fact that teachers will bring with them habitus dispositions that are largely informed by their earlier school days. The research she cites is to this effect and indicates that this learned behaviour has “the most significant influence on teaching practice”. She suggests that teachers, as ‘products’ of a ‘Bantu’ education system, will have then particular inclinations towards

for example rote-learning and other 'oppressive education relations' (Walker:1991, 158).

I find Walker's account useful, in that it links ideological discursive histories and contexts to habitus, but flawed insofar as it promotes a uni-directional determinism. While it is important to take note of the top down character that constituted official 'oppressive relations' under apartheid, one must also note that these relations had counter-productive effects, where the most sustained image of resistance in the field of education in popular memory is Soweto, 1976.

Habitus Dispositions, Agency and Counter-Hegemonic Responses to Authority.

The 'learned behaviour' that Walker speaks of then, may not just be delimited to one kind of behavioral response, and I think it more useful to re-conceptualise what is learned, with respect to habitus formation, in terms of both continuity (/as reproduction) and change (/as resistance). Even so, even if learning was of an adaptive kind, where for Freire (1972a) 'adaptation is akin to de-humanisation' (Freire: 1972a), I don't believe that such object, as opposed to Subject, dispositions cannot be 'unlearned' or changed. Habitus *per se* must also include then a notion of agency if it is to be harnessed by the 'integrated Subjects' of whom Freire speaks, and, if it is to be used as a tool and a means for action and critical reflection in relation to individual and/or collective identities.

My focus up to now has been largely concerned with how knowledge is legitimated, primarily by the State and official, bureaucratic agents within the field of symbolic control ((Bernstein: 1975)(Bourdieu:1991)), or not legitimated, when counter-hegemonic responses are 'inappropriate' to the codes and demands of authority. I will turn now to a discussion of the domain of everyday life, with the understanding that everyday knowledge is, by and large, filtered out of the domain of formal schooling by strong classificatory codes in the ORF (Official Recontextualisation Field/Bernstein).

Bringing the 'Everyday' into Educational Sites as a Means of Building on Forms of Active Prior Learning (APL).

People make sense of the world and experience within ongoing cultural traditions that find form in a wide variety of institutional sites, which include face to face conversation, the media and/or the home. These are themselves governed by codified conventions and particular organising principles. In Bernstein's terms, these institutional sites, with their 'vast array' of symbolic practices, relate broadly to a 'local' field of learning and reproduction (Muller and Taylor:1995, 210). The relative 'informality' of the everyday world, as opposed to the esoteric, academic one, is however by no means devoid of power. Muller and Taylor stress that this is:

“Quite the contrary. The differences of class, of domination and subordination, of privilege and poverty are more apparent here than anywhere else. This is exemplified by the patterns and practices of material and cultural consumption” (Ibid., 212).

At all social levels and in every institutional site, Featherstone (1991), in his work: *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, identifies the rise of a new class of cultural commentators and insulation maintainers, who serve to control, influence and distort these patterns of cultural consumption.

Wexler (1990), in his work: *Citizenship in the Semiotic Society*, claims that the new ‘underclass’ of (global and local) citizen subjects is at particular ‘risk’ to the sway of these cultural intermediaries. He equates media genres, such as the soap opera with a conceptualisation of oral traditions that pertains to the great mythical ‘divide’ between ‘oral’ and ‘literate’ worlds that I have rejected earlier and re-aligned - as ‘myth’ - under the work of the New Literacy Studies (NLS). Wexler’s division is then binaristic and counter-productive as it constructs the new ‘underclass’ as passive, ‘uncritical’ consumptive readers of media texts, as if they were entirely without agency to make independent meaning constructions of their own in opposition to those suggested by the new class of ‘cultural mediaries’.

Work with my learners towards this research project has shown that while learners may be held 'captive' and caught within a 'thrall' of serial soap opera watching to some degree, their engagement with this genre is by no means passive and unreflective, but more heuristic in relation to the particular kinds of identities that are generated, negotiated and played out daily, on the screen. Learners exhibit, appropriate, make and articulate complex meanings of these ongoing narratives that are, at times, far from the presumed 'one meaning' that cultural intermediaries - those who John Hartley identifies as the new 'symbolic media representatives' (Hartley:1992, 223) - may attempt to anchor and convey.

Wexler (1990) goes on to say that the new privileged class, as opposed to the new 'underclass', is swayed particularly by self-mastery regimes. These regimes pertain to the rise of the new aerobics culture, and are seen as vehicles through which the largely privileged 'other class' is able to negotiate its modern identity needs.

I think that it is worth noting here, that in opposition to Wexler, I call this new privileged class: the 'other class'. This 'other class' pertains to those who do not fall into Wexler's category of 'socially disadvantaged ones' - those he calls the 'underclass'. While it may be argued that my calling this privileged class an 'other' class is simply an inversion, I think that it is useful in displacing the connotations in English associated with 'under' as 'less than' and 'over' or 'top' - the word that privilege implies -

as somehow 'greater than' (See Hilary Janks (1993b) for a discussion on this, in her contributions to a CLA Series for South African schools (Janks:1993b, 12)(Janks and Ivanic:1992, 306-7)).

The name-change I've made above also de-centres the tradition whereby privileged classes are literally taken as the prime focus and the 'standard' by which classes excluded from this categorisation are lexicalised as 'other' (See Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989) for a useful discussion on processes of 'othering' in relation to gender, race and identity (Minh-ha:1989)).

I suggest then that the continued use of these metaphors is unhelpful and counter-productive, as it helps to sustain, naturalise and normalise relations of domination, at the same time that it claims to challenge them. The imperatives of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are clear, as it details naming as a 'first violence' ((Ramazanoglu and Holland:1993)(See, as well, Cate Poynton (1989) for her useful and entertaining discussion on negative gender labels and metaphors (Poynton:1989)). Here too, the 'new language' that Fairclough (1995) calls for, is needed, if we are to challenge and re-vision old conceptualisations and the discursive practices that sustain them, particularly as they relate to the field of education and other fields closely linked to it.

As a final word on Wexler (1990), I suggest as well that his divisions between these two new classes are too hard and fast in slotting agents into one or another category without exception. My work with learners suggests that allegiances formed in relation to identity negotiation are: more complex, so that a member said to be a part of the 'disadvantaged' class that Wexler identifies, may not necessarily 'fall sway' to the mass narratives of soap operas or the summary terms of the cultural mediaries (Featherstone:1991) that delimit the meaning of episodes to a particular perspective, but *may* 'fall sway' to notions and claims particular to the self mastery regimes that he identifies, where meaning is made of these regimes in particular social contexts as Street has said of literacy practices earlier (Street:1995, 82).

This possibility is exemplified by Tina Sithole's article 'Healthy Mind and Body', as it appears in my learners' collaborative newspaper writing and design effort, under the name of: *Simunye Adult News* (See Appendix One, page seven). According to Wexler (1990), Tina would be categorised as a member of the 'underclass'. She does not, however, relate to the mass narratives of soap operas as his categorisation codes would suggest, but, as her article indicates, is rather engaged with the self-mastery regimes that are aerobics inclined.

As an aside, it is perhaps worth noting here, that as a result of the newspaper project itself and Tina's pride in showing others the 'product' which is the result of this work in my Level 4/4A English class at the adult learning site of Maryvale College in 1997: she has been offered a scholarship by a private sponsor to train as an aerobics instructor in Cape Town in 1999. A *direct* consequence of the expression of her desires in writing in the newspaper, is then that she is now closer to actualising a dream she has had for her own future. For myself, as facilitator of the newspaper product's collaborative writing and design processes in class, I find such a result both positive and gratifying.

To return to Wexler (1990) and to understand this example or 'defection', with the example of Tina cited above as it falls 'without' Wexler's easy 1:1 ratio, the work of reproduction theorists is useful, though they tend to use the same 'up/down' paradigmatic mode of language that I have just challenged.

Goodson (1980) gives the reverse of a 'top down' conceptualisation of dominance to account for teachers' conformity, in line with the academy or official bureaucracy in the field of education. He finds that they relinquish the work of curricular design, for example, to academic 'experts', rather than contest it and engage with it themselves, because they 'aspire upwards'. Here, conformity is not by outward dominance alone, but by consent. Status is conferred on these practitioners, in

association with and in exchange for implementing curricula that are designed in 'ivory white towers', whether these towers are those of the State bureaucracy or the academy.

The same may be said then of both learners who leave curricular decisions within the classroom entirely to the educator/facilitator (even when certain decisions made by the educator may be inappropriate for a particular learner audience), and, of the members of the 'disadvantaged class' falling 'sway' to the more 'prestigious' forms of identity negotiation that self-mastery regimes are said to evoke above, as opposed to the mass narratives of the soap opera. In Tina's case, 'aspiration upwards' has reaped her a benefit which will allow her to participate more fully in activities and practices that she both enjoys and has *chosen* and from which, in future, an additional source of income might be drawn.

Uni-Dimensional Categorisations as Unhelpful.

In identifying patterns, rather than making sweeping statements as Wexler does, it is important then, to highlight what meanings are made of particular practices and to examine how participation in these practices is (or is *not*) associated with dominance. I will return to some of these meanings, when I discuss more closely the newspaper project and process, as the germaine seed of this research.

Before continuing, I would like to recap briefly on what I have said above. I have examined, on the one hand, how knowledge boundaries are strictly guarded, maintained and legitimated jointly - though not in the same way - by an esoteric academic field, and the field of the State, with particular attention given to some of the State's restrictive alignment devices as strategies of containment (See Jameson (1981) for a more detailed discussion on 'strategies of containment' (Jameson:1981, 172)). 'Aspiration upwards' often has, as effect, an uncritical reproduction of the ideological positions articulated through the Official Recontextualisation Field (ORF/Bernstein). Such reproduction is symbolically violent when by unconscious consent, but also structurally violent when curricula designs legitimate and maintain exclusionary boundaries that focus on individual achievement, rather than promote greater participation among members. Visions towards greater, more equitable, forms of access for members is kept at bay, because of the sectional interests of the 'experts' - whether they form part of a bureaucratic or esoteric 'knowledge' elite - to keep privilege (/status), dominance (capital) and the power to define with themselves (discourse). Whether from the PRF (Pedagogic Recontextualisation Field/Bernstein) or elsewhere, less instrumentally narrow articulations are predictably dismissed, though they might be constituted by sound practices that are developed through use by - and the intuition of - practitioners *with learners* on the ground, rather than hidden away in 'expert' towers.

CHAPTER TWO.

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'Off-Key' Curricula as Restrictive.

Speaking on the curriculum as an official alignment device, Reid (1993) in his work: *The Insistence of the Letter: Literacy Studies and the Curriculum*, indicates just how 'far away' from everyday life the ORF (Official Recontextualisation Field) codifies practice within the domain of education. He identifies the divide constructed around the notion of either 'passing' or 'failing' as a central axis around which both competence and practice are assessed.

On the other hand, I have indicated that the domain of everyday life is more 'fluid', though no less structured by power (See Carol Boyce Davies (1994) who provides a useful discussion on fluidity as it relates to complex and changing identities in the late modern world (Davies:1994)).

Additionally, unlike the ORF (Official Recontextualisation Field/Bernstein), where there is a predominantly singular focus given to the 'written word', as understood and elevated by the dominance of an ethnocentric and autonomous model of literacy within education and developmental literacy programmes; the domain of everyday life is increasingly *not mediated* by singular attention to the 'written word'. The printed word is but one mode of communication within a social semiotic system of communication and language (See Barthes (1972) for an important preliminary discussion with respect to the mix between the

'word' and the 'visual' as it relates to his notion of anchorage (Barthes:1972)).

Differences in the Domain of the 'Everyday'.

Additionally, the domain of everyday life does not explicitly revolve around a notion of 'passing' or 'failing', but, in terms of habitus formation and the construction of durable dispositions, it does have classificatory codes which revolve around the notion of 'appropriacy' and 'inappropriacy' within particular socio-cultural contexts and institutional sites. The boundaries between what is considered 'appropriate', or not, are perhaps more 'fuzzy' than those of an ORF (Official Recontextualisation Field/Bernstein). These boundaries vary between social settings and are largely dependent on the Tenor variables to do with who is engaged in what action, with whom and for what purpose in discrete historical and social contexts (See Cate Poynton(1989) for a detailed outline of the Tenor variables that come into 'play' within social interactions as they relate particularly to gender differentials (Poynton:1989, 76-86)).

As human beings, we participate in an 'everyday life curriculum' when we reproduce and exhibit particular habitus dispositions as they relate to "a quality of indefinable cultural authority" (Muller and Taylor:1995, 211).

In relation to the domain of everyday life, I have focused briefly above on the media to elicit how understandings of 'cultural authority' are mediated by a new class of cultural commentators and intermediaries who function to align meanings in relation to particular sectional interests and interlocking sets of broader dominant discourses (See Fairclough (1995) for a particularly 'telling' analysis of political television 'debates', as a form of 'mediatised political discourse' and a potentially potent form of hegemonic practice (Fairclough:1995, 167-81)). However, I have also iterated that (adult) learners' negotiation of meaning does not necessarily 'mimic', uncritically, the pre-packaged, mediated meanings made by this new class of cultural commentators, so that I believe that it is important for learning classes using the media, as an integral resource within a language communication curriculum, to bring learners' valid, agentive meanings with respect to 'media events' (I extend Shirley Bryce Heath's notion of a 'literacy event' (Heath:1983, 200, 386)) to the fore.

The Media and the Field of Symbolic Control.

I have already highlighted that Bernstein has a stronger explicit theory of hegemony than Bourdieu, to suggest that his 'version' in dividing society into three main fields is particularly valid for the South African context. In his terms, the media constitutes a sub-set of the field of symbolic control. This division which constructs the field of symbolic control as a discrete field with many sub-fields, is useful as it emphasises the

semiotic side to symbolic power, where 'the power to define' is not delimited to being simply a semantic one.

While fields have relative autonomy, they also 'interlock', so that the field of the State, as a separate field on its own, will have a part to play in relation to the media sub-field. I have categorised this role, as it is played out by the State, as a largely hegemonic one.

It is worth noting here, that, unlike many other countries in the world, television was introduced fairly late to a South African public. Its delay, and subsequent transmission, ... once introduced, ... was under the direct control of the State. Willie Currie and Michael Markovitz (1993) usefully highlight this, in their article focused on: 'The Struggle for a Post-Apartheid Television Culture'.

Currie and Markovitz (1993) note the fact that at the moment that education went 'out', national television came 'in'. They say the following:

"The introduction of television in South Africa coincided with the Soweto uprising in 1976, which also made South Africa a focal point for international news and foreign news crews. The National government had delayed the introduction of television because of its fears that it would allow a high degree of foreign information

and foreign culture into the country, which would destabilise *the core values of apartheid*. Ironically, during the uprising the South African government still had not grasped how powerfully television would reveal its coercive force: the police were delighted to perform in front of the cameras, beating up demonstrators and showing off their power.

The SABC was nevertheless aware of how to structure the news in favour of apartheid” (Currie and Markovitz: 1993, 93-4) (*my emphasis*).

As we may see by the above, within the South African context of State control, racism was institutionalised at all levels and in all fields of society. This is no less true for the sub-field of symbolic control as constituted by the media, where ‘apartheid was *valued* at its core’. Prior to the 1994 South African national election, the National Party government monopolised its control of the media “to promote its policies of apartheid” (Currie and Markovitz:1993, 91) (See also Manoim (1996) for an account of the Mail and Guardian struggle against State censorship in the domain of the print media from 1985 to 1995, where Manoim focuses on the newspaper house’s difficulties, during the infamous declared State of Emergency of 1986, to actualise the core values of responsible journalism under brutally, coercive constraints).

Currie and Markovitz (1993) write from a perspective, before 1994 elections, which is tentatively hopeful of the future. It is unreasonable, however, to expect that democratic elections have simply 'transformed' the ideological institutionalisation of racism in media apparatuses, practices and/or codes (See Hall (1990) cited below) as they have been perpetuated and sustained in the past. (See also Appendix One, page four, the article in the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* to the effect: 'No Apartheid is Not Dead.') This is an important point to note, particularly when bringing the media as a resource into the critical and communicative language classroom for learning purposes.

For, while it may be said that practices are presently being re-negotiated by symbolic mediaries and the like, the power to broadcast and *who* broadcasts, distributes and produces, is still tightly constricted. The difficulty that the 'Natives at Large' group have had in distributing their film version of Njabulo Ndebele's short story: 'Fools', within South Africa, is particularly revealing (the film, while viewed abroad more than a year ago, was released on circuit in South Africa only in May 1998)(See also Karin Barber (1995) on mainstream productions in literature which seem to suggest that by the large gaps in what is published that there are no literary productions outside of what publishing companies like Heinemann 'discover' with their almost exclusive focus on the novel as sole 'publishable' art form, a form itself regarded to be largely 'western'.

What is published is not the all, but only appears as *the all* by a 'default' that is dependent on what the publishing houses *believe* is marketable. Traditional genres that are already 'known' do far better than than less 'known' and/or western ones).

Racist and Sexist Ideologies In Ideological State Apparatuses.

Stuart Hall (1990) has much to say on racist ideologies as they become *sedimented* in Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA's/Althusser). These apparatuses, with their codes and particular 'ways of seeing', institutionalise particular dominant ideologies to do with race, gender and/or nationalisms etc., so that the reproduction of these ideologies is not dependent on individual articulations *per se*, but part of the system (See McClintock (1993) for an examination of a feminised, white nationalism at the root of a South African Christian National, Afrikaaner historiography which leads her to say that 'all nationalisms are gendered' (McClintock:1993)) (See then Fanon (1968) for a 'still valid' discussion on the 'Pitfalls of National Consciousness' in his re-knowned work: *The Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon:1968), from which one could similarly carry forward the point that all nationalisms are racialised as well).

On just this note, Hartley (1992) examines the media, in the Australian context, as a process of ongoing narrativisation which is sexualised, feminised and racialised, in relation to a 'grand' historiographical and

Australian narrative 'unable' to account for the presence of Aboriginal people, as an indigenous 'presence' prior to colonial settlement. This 'grand' Australian narrative constructs and then fixes the year 1788 as 'year zero'. (Hartley:1992, 206).

Hartley delineates then how the media continues to perpetuate and construct a race-bound notion that polices 'what counts' as 'Australian-ness', and what doesn't. What 'doesn't count' is exemplified by what does not appear in the media gaze, except perhaps as stereotypical proto-types or appendages to the valued dominant group. The process of constructing 'Australian-ness', as that which is valued, is then premised on the effacement and exclusion of 'marginal' groups.

In the margins, Hartley shows that Aboriginals are constructed as 'foreign', 'deviant' 'others', while the 'heliotropic' media gaze perpetuates in the 'Australian imagination' the construction of whiteness as 'neutral', 'natural' and 'beneficial' (Hartley:1992) and therefore also as *entitled* to that which Aboriginals are excluded from or denied (*sic*). In much the same way, a 'beneficial', 'imagined' father figure or potentate (See earlier discussion with respect to Said (1996: 227-8)), at the head of patriarchal norms and expectations, functions to de-legitimate women's own autonomy. Women are, by corollary, constructed as 'needing' such a

figure to 'guide' them as the view is that they cannot possibly know their own minds (*sic*)(See MacCannell and MacCannell (1993)).

In relation to an Australian 'imagined community' (Anderson:1983) and race-bound constructs, it may be worth noting here that I take this 'imagination' to be a 'thing with structure', and part of the double reality I spoke of earlier in relation to my discussion on Bourdieu and habitus/field, where the distortion of reality is in: 'both things and minds'. (See Morrison (1993) as well, for a related discussion on 'Whiteness and the Literary Imagination' ⁱ (Morrison:1993))(See Hurston (1986) for an earlier analysis to Morrison's on identity politics, as they pertain to race and American imperialism ⁱⁱ (Hurston:1986, 322-48)).

In the above, as with my discussion on the NLS (New Literacy Studies), I have attempted to sketch some important theoretical frames through which to see the media as an ideologically contested terrain; and to suggest the relevance of these theoretical frames in relation to the South African educational context and the symbolic field of control.

ⁱ (Morrison:1993) In her work, Toni Morrison tracks how Twain, Hemingway and others, in the American context, contribute to an ideological process of narrativisation which is both racial and sexual and related to the construction of a national American identity, most strongly interpellated, and called into 'play', at precise historical moments of 'threat' to this identity.

ⁱⁱ (Hurston:1986, 322-48) Zora Neale Hurston's statements, made prior to the historical moment of Pearl Harbour, 7 December, 1941, are particularly anti-American. As a consequence, her words were censored and not published until now. The fact then remains that it is not that there were not challenges to the 'grand (literary) narrative' of the State(s), as Morrison's work *might* suggest by the absence of a focus on black authors; but that this 'white State narrative' was highly policed, so that pre-eminent authors such as Hurston, who are being re-described presently, were not widely publicised nor disseminated. Indeed, Hurston's last years were spent in poverty and ill-health. She died in 1960 at Port Pierce, Florida.

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I would like to turn now to a discussion of the classroom as an institutional site of struggle, to suggest some of the possibilities of this struggle, as well as some of its constraints.

To do this I will draw on two models which I find particularly useful as 'aids to conceptualisation'. I will present them individually, and then show how I conceive and integrate the two into one model to conceptualise the 'place' of classroom practice for both learning and research. I use then, my integrated model as an ideological one to situate classroom practice in relation to the everyday, the media and the State, within the broader social formation.

Model One (adapted from Denzil Russell (1992)).

I take the following model from Denzil Russell's research document (Russell:1992, 4) on the establishment of informal radio forums as a development initiative towards human resource development in a number of priority areas in the rural sector between 1990 and 1992 in the South African context. His paper is entitled: "Learning to Listen, Listening to Learn: Experiences from a South African Radio Forums Research and Development Project".

I adapt the model below slightly, for my own purposes. I place the term "media", where his model labels this space as "institution building". As

well, to the far left of the model and to the far right, I do not delimit this space as pertaining to one or another phase of the educational process in which myself and learners have been engaged. This is to suggest that the process I have undergone with learners is ongoing and that the model is valid for every stage in the (adult) learning process. In the centre of the model, I change as well the space that he has labelled as "technology" to replace it with the term "actors". I place the participants of this research project as both collective and individual agents for making and negotiating meanings. Actors (learners and facilitators) make and voice meanings in relation to identity, action, learning and change. Actors make meaning in the everyday world and in the classroom, with the classroom being an institutional site of focus for this research. The term "technology", in the adapted model below, is then subsumed under the term: "resources".

Finally, another important change that I make is that I replace addition signs between the terms: "ideology", "actors" and "resources", with multiplication signs. I do this to emphasise the need in the (adult education) classroom for a multiplicative and creative praxis rather than a narrow, mechanistic one (See Adrien Katherine Wing (1997a), quoted below in this research).

The model is then as follows, with these adaptations included:

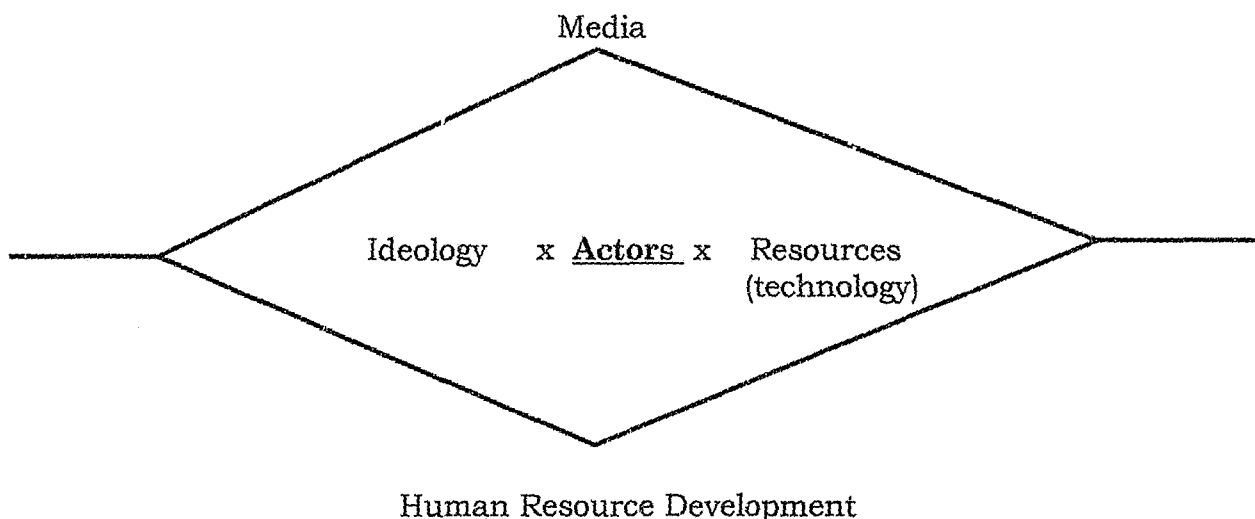


Figure 1: Developmental Model. (Source: Russell:1992, 4).

Model Two (from the CLA paradigm/Fairclough).

Until now, I have not discussed in any great detail the valuable contributions that have been made by Critical Language Awareness (CLA) theorists, practitioners and writers. This is largely because I have taken the value of their work as given. And, while their influence has been implicit throughout this work, I would like to draw now more explicitly from the CLA paradigm by drawing from the work of Norman Fairclough (1989).

The model presented below is as it appears in Fairclough's work: *Language and Power* (Fairclough:1989, 25) without adaptation. This model situates text as discourse and not necessarily as empirically discrete individual moments of written and or spoken articulation.

Discourse is seen rather as a form of social practice, so that this practice must be seen both in terms of the interaction that accompanies the negotiation of meaning through the processes of production and interpretation; and within the broader context of the social formation (See my earlier discussion in relation to the NLS and the ideological model of literacy as developed by Street (1984)).

The CLA model is then as follows:

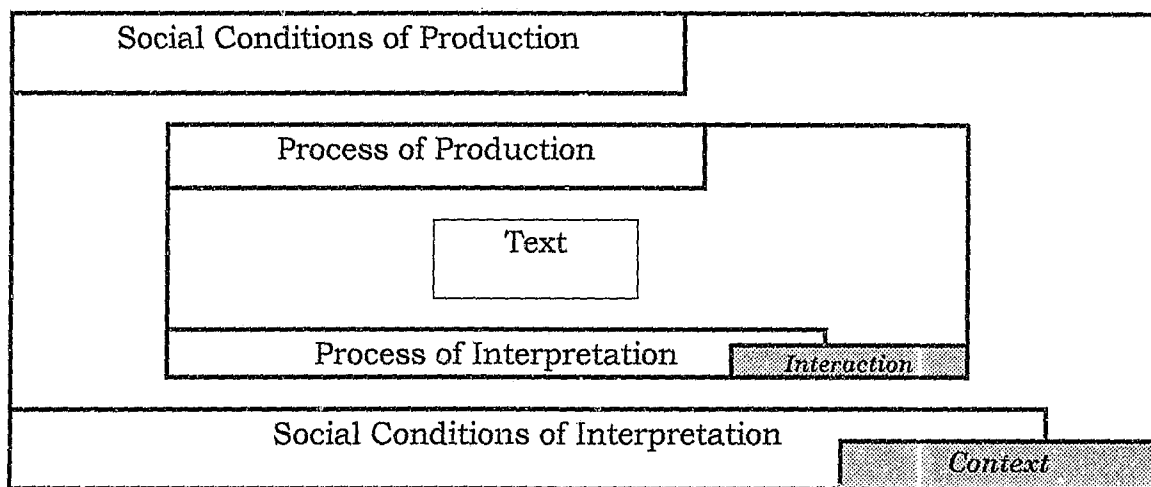


Figure 2: The CLA model where text is seen as discourse. Dynamic meaning making is framed in social context (Source: Fairclough:1989, 25).

An Integrated Ideological Model 1.

My integrated model is focused on the classroom as a site of struggle and creativity. Through educational processes understood through the frame of a theory of communicative action (Habermas), this institutional site has the potential, ideally, to transform and to re-describe, in the PRF ('Pedagogic' Recontextualisation Field/Bernstein), and to re-contextualise, in the ORF (Official Recontextualisation Field/Bernstein), the domain of (adult) education.

Below, I syncretise the two above models to develop an integrated model. This integrated model stresses that a classroom process of dialogic discourse production and interpretation, is situated, critical social practice within the broader social formation. Critical to this model is the notion that classroom practice has much to learn from the 'informal' practices of the everyday.

Indeed, I have found that a relaxing of the traditional formal boundaries of the PRF ('Pedagogic' Recontextualisation Field/Bernstein) which allows for the inclusion of the knowledge of the everyday, is most useful.

Including the 'informal' in the 'formal', also means that, ideally, there should be promoted in classroom practice a greater horizontalisation between participants (where the term 'participant' is meant to include

the facilitator amongst learners here). I find that the traditional and hierarchical roles of practitioner/educator and learner, as receiver rather than as agent, are inhibitive of a dialogic process, rather than enabling.

The proactive approach is, I believe, to establish at the outset of practice that participants are equally valued, in much the same way as the adults in Fingeret's study establish 'interdependent' and enabling social networks to 'get by' in the social world, with or without literacy (Fingeret as cited by Barton (1991) and mentioned earlier in this research).

The valuable example for practice that these social networks provide is that they function without the stigmatising attitude that is all too often a central feature of both PRF's ('Pedagogic Recontextualisation Fields /Bernstein) and ORF's (Official Recontextualisation Fields/Bernstein). I have established earlier that the traditional prescriptions of the education domain, in its focus on individual achievement and its narrow definitions of literacy, are unhelpful at the same time as they are ideologically-loaded and increasingly tied to market labour demands.

In the South African context, these demands are dictated through the government's new macro-economic policy (GEAR), which relates broadly 'in kind' to the structural adjustment programmes of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank. As Freire (1972a), speaking on the perpetuated dependency of the so-called 'third world' by

these monetary 'first world' hegemonic structures (See also Janks and Ivanic (1992: 327), I underline as well **the negative effects that these structures and their policies generate.**

Largely because of these structures and a national government alignment to them, the adult education sector stands to be the hardest hit when cutbacks are made because of 'budget constraints'. The recent unilateral government closure of adult education centres at the beginning of this year is a prime topical issue and a telling case in this respect, as it augurs poorly for the future of adult education initiatives that increasingly have less space to manoeuvre from, while positioned precariously in relation to State sanction and State funding.

My integrated model is then the following, where I draw from Bernstein's division of society into three main fields, where the field of symbolic power has many subfields, while this model focuses primarily on the subfield of the media. It must be noted here that I give particular attention to the sub-field of the media as an important one to consider in relation to the bringing of public domain material into the classroom, as learners, I believe, are more likely to have had some contact with media forms on an on-going basis than they are to have read a book, for example. My 'media habits' questionnaire, as given to learners, confirms this (see Appendix Two).

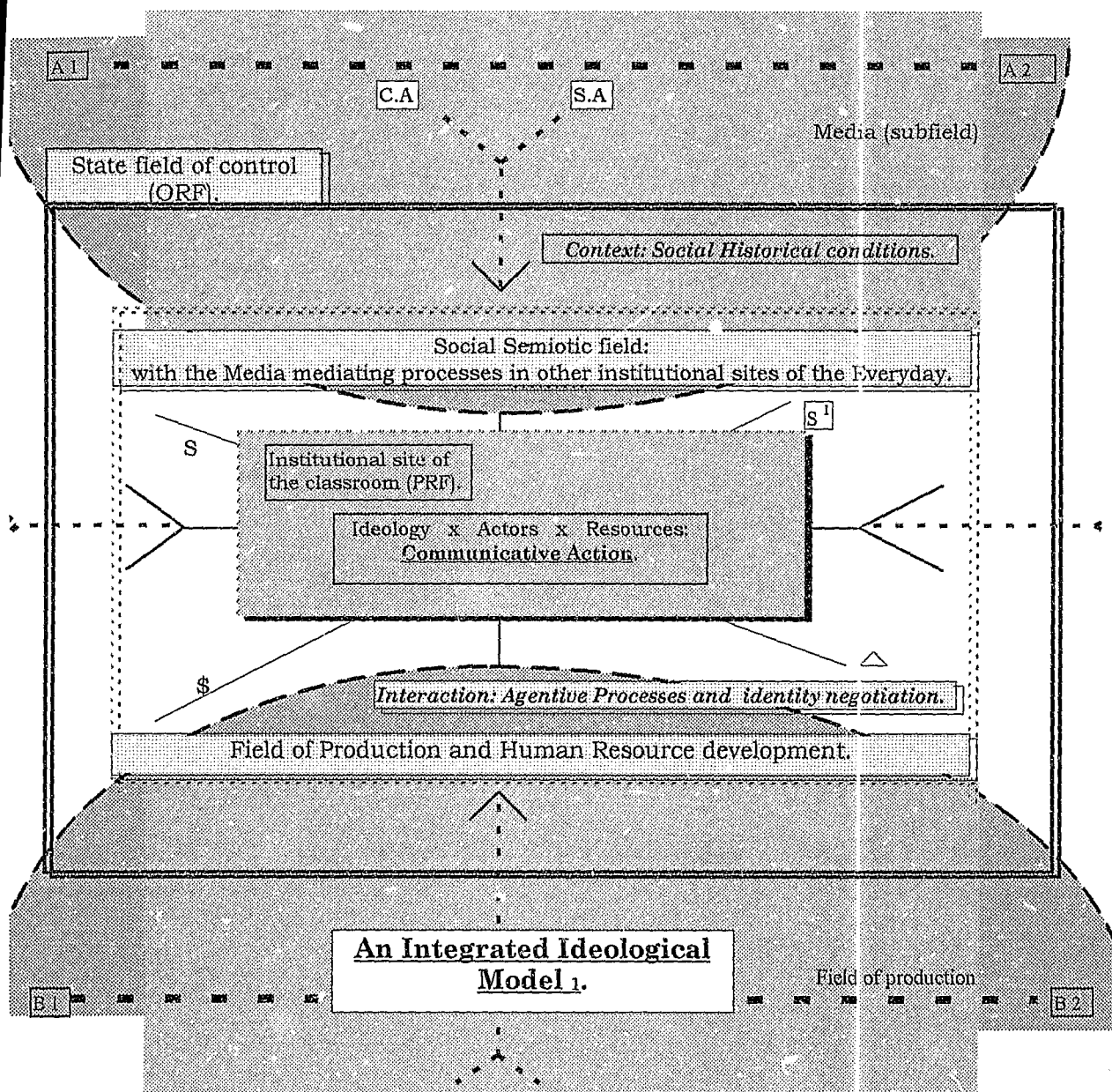


Figure 3: The classroom as an institutional site of struggle and social practice. Communicative-Action-Within offers exciting potentials to re-describe and to re-contextualise practice in critical context, in relation to the ORF and the domain of the everyday, by bringing the 'informal' and the media into the 'formal' PRF.

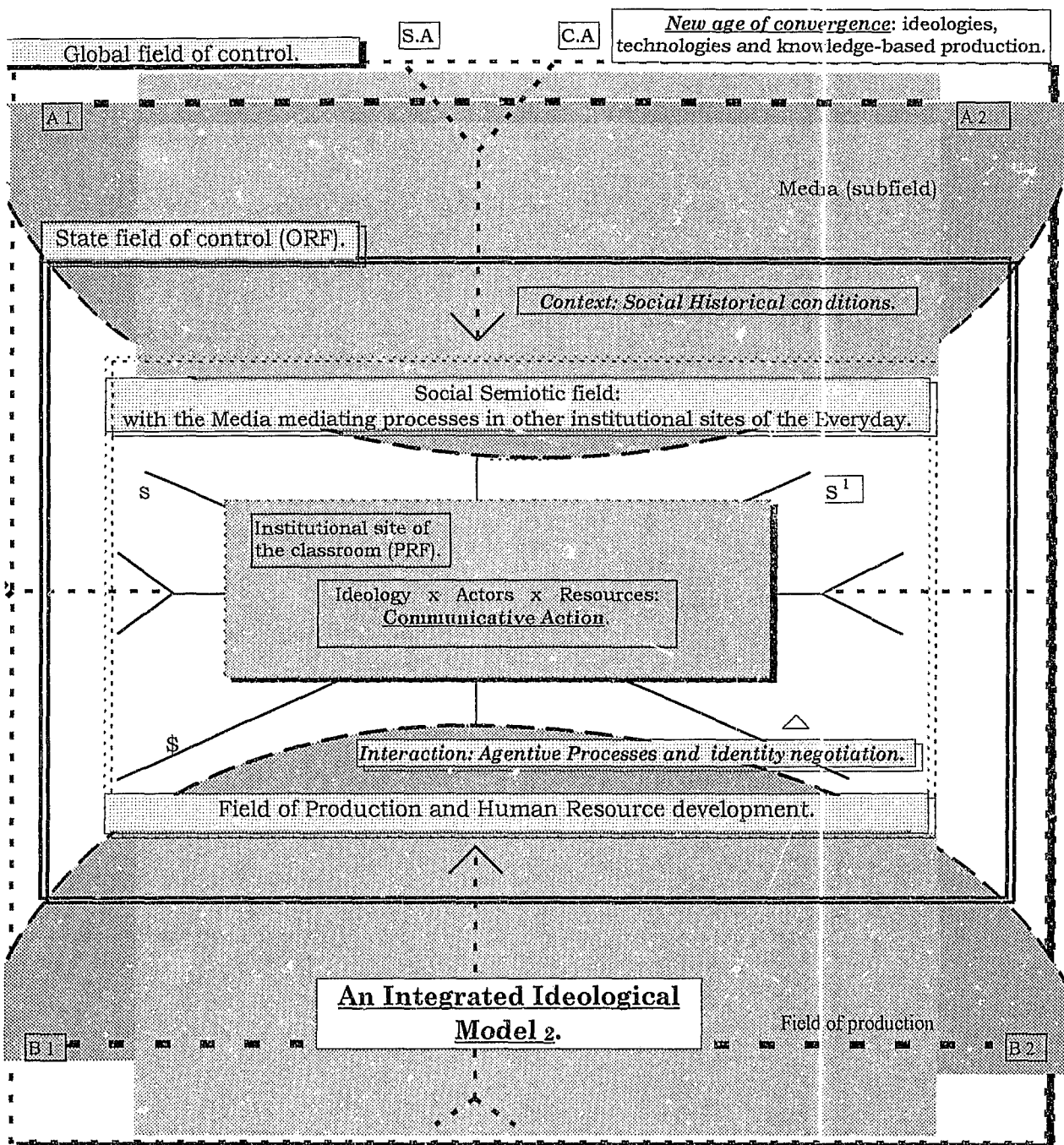


Figure 4. This second integrated ideological model accounts for a global field of control.

Integrated Ideological Model ^(1x2) Design Explanation and Extensions.

Before continuing, I would like to discuss in some detail my integrated ideological model^(1 x 2) as it has embedded within it a number of elements not elicited by the CLA model nor the Developmental model adapted from Denzil Russell (as they have been given above).

My integrated ideological model is then more than the sum total of its parts and needs some explanation, particularly with respect to Habermas' Communicative Rationality theory mentioned only in passing until now.

However, before turning to Habermas' work which integrates action theory to systems theory for a working understanding of late modern society, I would like to begin my discussion on my integrated ideological model ^(1x2) by highlighting that within my model there is some slippage between empirical sites and theoretical fields of power which are non-empirical.

Situated at the centre of my model, identifiable as the shaded centre box with shifting boundaries, is the institutional site of the classroom. As this research is focused on my own classroom work with learners, I have

developed this model with reference to one main empirical site of adult education practice, my own, whereby learners were critically and creatively engaged in an alternative, newspaper production process which I class as a form of Communicative Action (C.A.) rather than as Strategic Action (S.A.), because of the principles of practice it upholds.

In examining, however, the possibility that one PRF (Pedagogic Recontextualisation Field/Bernstein) can re-contextualise the ORF (Official Recontextualisation Field/Bernstein) by its example and adherence to an open-ended and heuristic praxis, it is my contention that this model is a useful one for re-contextualising actions and aims within educative sites across institutions, whether they are State institutions or non-governmental.

The emphasis on Communicative Action (C.A.) is important here, in that this action is in opposition to much adult education praxis, which, as I have indicated above, is reductively tied to one outcome and legitimated by a reifying rationality that constitutes persons as things and/or as deficit beings within a broader innovation and market-led economy that traditional, formal schooling, without re-contextualisation, does not enable learners to access. In Habermas' terms, this one outcome is Strategic Action (S.A.).

Has the Education System Changed For Adult Learners?

In the past in South Africa, the Strategic Action (S.A) that the education system was to enable was the reproduction of a racial and capitalistic order. This ideology was explicit in Verwoerd's speech to the Senate in 1953. I include an extract of this address below, particularly as some of my learners attended what became the 'Bantu' education schools system at this time.

Overtly, the education system was to deny power and knowledge to the black majority, differentiate the labour force and maintain white dominance. In an attempt to discredit and attack the work of less reductive educative institutions that used one, undifferentiated curriculum for learners, regardless of colour, Verwoerd had the following to say:

"Until now *he* (the African) has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled *him* by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze. This attitude is not only *uneconomic*, because money is spent for an education which has *no specific aim*, but it is also dishonest to continue it" (*sic*)(Verwoerd:1954, 24)(*my emphasis*).

Besides the fact that this invidious speech inaugurated and tied the function of the education system to a capitalist and racial order, where black men were constructed as 'cattle', it is worthwhile noting that this racial order is also a gendered order.

A Race-d and Gender-ed Order in the South African Education System.

Adrien Katherine Wing and Eunice P. de Carvalho (1997) have the following to say on the consequences of this order for black women within the South African context:

"The patriarchal nature of both black and white South African culture was reflected in the educational system, and as a result, all South African women suffered. Patriarchy compounded Bantu education in several ways. First, sexism was reflected in the norms created by society, such as the different expectations that parents had for their sons and daughters. Since education was not free for black South Africans under apartheid, black parents were forced to withdraw their children from school at an early age. In light of the economic incentives to educate sons over daughters, black families placed more emphasis on educating male children. As a result,

girls were the first to leave school to help their families" (Wing and Carvalho:1997, 390).

Many of my female learners' life stories confirm this further segregation along gender lines, not only racial lines, where an additional burden for females is that gendered difference is perpetuated and therefore 'lived' within *both* public and private domains in the South African context, while this is not necessarily the 'experience' when questions of marginalisation and exclusion are to do with race alone.

In the above, Wing and Carvalho (1997) highlight that the ideology of gender converged under and across the practices of both primary and secondary discourses. Through this gendered discourse convergence and the hegemony of the State, which additionally relegated black women to rural areas through a system of influx control, black women's opportunities for any prolonged form of formal schooling were tremendously hampered. Formal schooling was more likely to be found in urban areas, but this was where black women were made to be largely invisible (See Monica's story: 'Hungry for A Better Life', Appendix One, page three of the *Simunye Adult Newspaper*).

As earlier in my discussion with reference to Walker's research on teacher behaviour (1991), it is important to note that adult learners who

return to learning later in life in the South African context, are likely to also have both negative experiences of the education system and a set of durable dispositions which have been learned through this experience. Bringing these habitus formations to view is an important first step towards a Communicative Action (C.A.) which strives against alienation and a loss of agency within the context of the institutional site of the adult education classroom.

The Colonisation of the Lifeworld: S.A. vs C.A.

A prime concern of this research is the effect(s) that racist and gendered ideologies have on actors in society in general and in education more particularly, in the present socio-historical context of late capitalism. These effects cut across the three sub-spheres of the social sphere that Habermas identifies as the framework for the reproduction of the lifeworld and the context for communicative action. These three sub-spheres are: 'culture', 'community' and the 'individual' (or 'personality'). These are set in opposition to the social sphere of the system, which is comprised of two sub-spheres. The two sub-systems of the system as a whole are the market economy and the administrative power of the state. Both of these are increasingly controlled by the empirical means and media of power and money (Heerden:1994, 323).

Because of the increasing 'colonisation of the lifeworld' by power and money (Heerden:1994, 323), Habermas identifies that interaction between individuals, particularly when there is conflict and a need for dispute resolution, is no longer resolved by communicative action which uses reason and a discourse ethics to determine 'the force of the better argument' (Muller and Taylor:1995, 223).

Instead, reason is increasingly used instrumentally and action is co-ordinated in terms of strategic action. Instead of recourse to a reflective means of reaching agreement, this purposive and success-oriented action functions to influence, exploit and/or manipulate agents by a reliance on the empirical means of power and money. The distorting effects of these means are institutionalised in the social sub-spheres of the system to the degree that Habermas speaks of the general 'impoverishment of the lifeworld' which is threatened by these developments under late capitalism (Heerden:1994, 320).

Expanding on this continuing project of modernity and late capitalism, Habermas then draws from the work of Lukacs for his definition of the concept of 'reification' and from Max Weber for an analysis of 'rationalisation' as the 'growing autonomy of the sub-systems of the state and economy, whereby the institutionalisation of strategic purposive

action goes hand in hand with the development of capitalist societies' (Heerden:1994, 318).

Reification within this context is the reduction of people to things within institutions and interpersonal relations. The intrinsic value of both people and objects is replaced by an exchange value under capitalism so that capitalists would for example only value workers insofar as they are able to ensure substantial and sustainable profit margins. In his work: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1972a) characterises this relation as sadistic and akin to death, if not outrightly 'necrophilic' in its mechanistic, dehumanised nature and focus (Freire: 1972a, 50-9).

The Transforming Potential of C.A.

Habermas established, however, that rationalisation does not necessarily have only reification as its outcome. He suggests rather that one must conceive both reason and action as being multi-faceted, so that rational ends *can* be chosen and so that action is not simply reduced to the conceptualisation that agents act *only* instrumentally to calculate 'the most efficient means to achieve an arbitrary end', not chosen by themselves but pre-given to them by the system (Heerden:1994, 308).

Habermas' assertion that reason and action are multi-faceted is an important one, particularly for work in educational contexts, as it allows, despite the hegemony of the system, a role for participative action of a more democratic nature. Indeed, his assertion allows for a plurality of pathways and non-pre-given outcomes in the close linking of an agentic use of life-world resources through a communicative rationality.

Of concern, however, is the differentiation of the lifeworld that has taken place through the emergence phase of capitalism, and as a condition of late modernity more generally. Differentiation may be best categorised as the increasing gap between the specialist divisions of culture and the lifeworld(s) of ordinary individuals. The law, science and art become the preserves of experts who guard 'specialised forms of argumentation' that, in the guarding, compound towards the increasing marginalisation, powerlessness and voicelessness 'of the majority of individuals' (Heerden:1994, 319) to argue their own community and personal realities, and to *be heard*, when they are not defined or constituted as being the 'privileged subjects' (Spivak:1987, 143) who carry weight in the new politics of the power and money 'game' that is also a 'game' of race and gender. The differentiation of the cultural sub-sphere of the lifeworld has then particularly negative, totalising effects for those maintained outside the walls of specialist differentiation and access.

I maintain that this differentiation trend is an important consideration in conceptualising what adult education provisioning should offer to learners, so that they are not marginalised further, as low education levels are often used as a means of negative stigmatisation. Adult learners should be encouraged towards greater participation in society by being afforded a provisioning that is not so 'basic' as to have questionable value.

Acknowledgement of this increasing process of global differentiation as it asserts power and serves to marginalise, also then sets an agenda for classroom praxis to develop the communicative competencies of individual and/or collective agents to articulate on and reason against marginalising power differentials and the narrow instrumentalist competencies that are 'required' by, defined and learned through the system at large.

Education As Action for the Further Development of Critically Conscious Minds.

There is a need for this, for Habermas notes that, while the potential for rational action is always present, rational competencies are not necessarily inherently possessed by us. We need rather to actualise our potential for communicative-rationality-competencies *through learning*

processes and acts of consciousness that will help us to understand the lifeworld and to co-ordinate action within it, without the increasing loss of meaning and/or freedom that is the result of reification and other “delinguistified forms of action-coordination in the capitalist economy and the bureaucratic state” (Heerden:1994, 319).

Here, I draw on Heerden’s work on Habermas to understand communicative rationality as being then: ‘modes of behaviour that are expressed through the *learned* dispositions of speaking and acting agents towards action grounded on good reasons’ (Heerden:1994, 311), rather than grounded on the media of money and the reification of persons as objects.

The cultivation of learning processes which are communicative in the classroom is particularly important as, because of differentiation, the site of the classroom is charged with the educative task of social integration and socialisation. Through it, and a communicative praxis within it, are opportunities to be ‘seized’, however minimal and/or ‘micrologically remote’ (Spivak:1987, 150), for the creation and implementation of new attitudes that are both democratic and emancipative.

For, while it may be doubtful that a global change of attitude is possible with the recent collapse of socialism and the general world-wide trend of

the rolling-back of the welfare state to *not* distort the money economy, I find it useful to remember Janks' (1995d) encouraging words in relation to an engaged classroom praxis that is not powerless. She reminds us:

“that small relentless changes can corrode a system, and that structural changes **can** be built on a foundation of local resistances” (Janks:1995d, 130) (emphasis unchanged).

Ideology Convergences and Ethical Implications for Adult Education.

In terms of understanding this system, Maria Mies (1986 and 1994) establishes that patriarchy assumes its most brutal form under capitalism with the feminisation of labour and a colonisation of family time by a worker time that demands total flexibility. I have iterated earlier, however, that the convergence of patriarchy and capitalism must also be seen in terms of racist ideologies within the South African system particularly.

I maintain that the intersectionality and mutual supportiveness of race ideologies and gender ideologies under late capitalism must be examined and challenged more fully in the global context, and more particularly in the South African system which continues to structure and reify

relations along these lines. This is no less true within the education field, where adult education provisioning is still at the 'bottom of the pile' when it comes to resourcing and attempts at re-description, where even re-descriptions are still lamentably inadequate as they are presently being conceptualised and 'developed' further in the ORF (Official Recontextualisation Field/Bernstein). I use the term 'lamentable' and feel it appropriate here when considering the real benefit, *if any*, that recent re-descriptions have had for adult learners. I will return to this discussion shortly.

The Verwoerdian statement cited above is particularly telling as it explicitly links capitalism in the South African context to a racist ideology *and* implicitly links it to a patriarchal order. This patriarchal order is unproblematically taken for granted and elided from view in the non-lexicalisation of 'woman' and the lexicalisation of actors within the South African social formation as *either* 'European' or 'African' 'he's', where too, it is almost a given assumption that 'European' as a constructed category is also constituted of only 'he's' that are defined as 'universal', and therefore, by corollary, as 'natural' 'neutral' 'beneficial' and 'proper' father figures (See MacCannell and MacCannell (1993) for a useful discussion on how patriarchal foundations rest upon and are naturalised by the normative rightness assumption that the patriarchal father figure is a 'beneficial' one)(See also Spivak (1987) for a discussion

which extends the notion that the naming of the 'sign' of 'woman' as having "impropriety as its property" is a function of 'patronymic propering' (Spivak:1987, 91)).

Verwoerd's 'normative rightness claims' (Habermas) to legitimate domination are then buttressed by both racist and sexist ideologies which have and which have had particularly harsh reifying effects and consequent implications for market labour divisions along gender and race lines within the South African social formation and within an education system programmed to promulgate this division uncritically.

In keeping symbolic violence at bay then, it is not merely a question of 'schooled-ness' which sets the agenda for social access (See Stuckey (1991)), but as both the Gibson study and Verwoerdian statement cited above show, is rather a question of a complex of interacting variables based on 'structured difference' (Janks:1995d) in socio-historical context and in the over-arching convergence of both global and local capitalisms more concerned with cost-effectiveness and strategic action, than the *human cost* of the marginalisation of whole groups who are largely sacrificed towards ends that will benefit and buttress the privilege of only a few.

In present discourse, this money and power control is legitimated by a 'trickle-down' theory that presupposes the 'beneficial' 'rightness' of those with closely guarded capital or wealth and/or specialist differentiation, as 'natural', 'neutral' and 'normal', where the exercise of this control is also attributed in its so-called 'neutrality' as *not* having the vested interests of the few at stake. (See Devon Carbado(1997) for his discussion on the strategic 'neutrality' of the individual father figure in the home. He comments that his father's 'neutrality' was made possible by the broader context of culture, so that a legitimisation of the gendered division of labour in the home needed never to be lexicalised. This division was merely part of the everyday en-gendered 'common-sense' expectations that remained beyond question. Much of his focus in his discussion centres then on the kinds of strategic rationalisations that his mother had to make to function in two exploitative worlds, while yet characterising her action as a practice of freedom).

Spivak (1987), in her work: *In Other Worlds*, criticises Julia Kristeva's work 'On Chinese Women' for speaking of the oppression of Chinese women as if it had not changed for millennia. Spivak highlights that Kristeva characterises the 'experience of Chinese women' as a totality running through time as a: seamless, unproblematic and ahistorical continuity. What Kristeva states as 'fact' through changing dynasties is unsupported by archival documentation (Spivak:1987, 137).

In no way then, in quoting Verwoerd's 1953 legitimisation of the then new racist education Act, do I mean to suggest that education in South Africa has not changed or that its imperatives have not changed. Neither do I mean to suggest that Verwoerd's non-consideration and non-lexicalisation of blackwomen as a discrete category spells out that the oppression of blackwomen in the South African context has been the same for all blackwomen, as if the category 'blackwoman' were a sign for a seamless totality of uni-dimensional experience and marginalisation, that cuts unchangingly across a period of time of more than four decades to the present day (See Jennifer Russell (1997) for the compound lexicalisation of 'blackwoman' as one word. It will be noted that I follow suit in this practice as it highlights both multiple identities within a 'oneness' rather than fragments identities mechanistically into separate 'box' categories).

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The Intersectionality of Race and Gender:
Drawing on the Work of Critical Race Feminists to Better
Conceptualise the South African Context and Contractual
Frames of Reference.

In drawing on the work of critical race feminists, theorists and practitioners, I do wish to suggest, however, that recent policy documents do still fail to account for the intersectionality of race and gender as a discrete category. Questions of redress in the 'new dispensation' and the contestation over scant resources, both in and outside the education sector, are still being conceptualised through a mechanistic Newtonian physics-like frame (See Knowles (1990) for a solid justification of the need for conceptualisations and frames of reference that are more complex, inspirational and conducive to learning within innovation-led economies).

What this means is that while certain rights to difference have been lexicalised through a contractualist approach, of which our new Constitution (South African Government:1996, Act 108) is the starting point, there seems to be some confusion between categories. A cause for concern is that this confusion, as it sets the tone for other new policy documents, does not seem to augur well for the entrenchment of rights

for blackwomen *per se*, both in the education sector and outside it in society in general.

I will turn now to a brief discussion on how other countries have - or have not yet - accounted for the intersectionality of race and gender, as their work may point a way forward for South African re-contextualisations aimed at benefiting our society in general and the field of (adult) education more particularly.

The work of Elizabeth M. Iglesias (1997) and Judy Scales-Trent (1997) in the United States is particularly telling. They examine cases where blackwomen have sought recourse through the law under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the National Labour Relations Act (NLRA) for unfair, discriminatory labour practices on grounds of race and gender. Iglesias (1997) particularly, establishes that the practice of the law is structurally violent in the contradictions between what each of these Acts profess to defend and protect.

Both Iglesias and Scales-Trent (1997) find that the mechanistic application of the law, which requires that blackwomen choose either between putting forward a claim on grounds of race **or** on grounds of gender, never both, works entirely to their disadvantage and favours

rather the defendant, be it the State or an institution. The claimant is set at odds in having to choose between either 'collectivist regimes' which impose an identity that is likely to subordinate the woman, or 'individualist regimes' that prevent the woman from forming 'collective alliances' (Iglesias:1997, 328).

Looking Towards an Equal Protection Framework:

Three Options.

Scales-Trent (1997) identifies three possible ways of protecting blackwomen within an 'equal protection framework'. The first is based on a subset theory where blackwomen are to choose between being placed in the 'black group' or in the 'female group', but where curiously the level of protection that is afforded one group is *not the same* as that afforded the other.

The second option is a scrutiny review of blackwomen as a 'discrete and insular' group. Under this option, blackwomen would be assessed on their own merits. Scales-Trent (1997), in examining what the Courts use as criteria for assessing the merits of a group, establishes that there is grounds for blackwomen to seek claims as an 'insular and discrete' group, where on all counts it can be confirmed that: there has been historical prejudice against this group, with the additional criteria that it

is largely a politically powerless one and one defined by the law in terms of 'immutable characteristics'.

The third option is one which I favour with Scales-Trent (1997:311), though she says that:

"Realistically, however, it seems unlikely that the Court will break ground for a group that it barely acknowledges as a separate class. Nonetheless, it is a logical next step for a court *brave enough* to take it" (Scales-Trent:1997, 309-10)(*my emphasis*).

This third option is what she terms as "the 'more than strict scrutiny' theory", where she says that it is a logical extension that if the stigma of race in discrimination cases is call enough for a 'strict scrutiny review', then any additional stigma to this, such as: sex, should "entitle the group to *an even higher level of scrutiny and protection* by the Court" (Scales-Trent:1997, 309)(*my emphasis*). She says that there are a number of ways that the Court could judicially recognise that in all probability blackwoman, as a group identity, is treated detrimentally and that in view of this: "race plus another burden" should require protection through a "strict scrutiny plus more" clause (Scales-Trent:1997, 309).

A final extension to this is that subsets with 'secondary characteristics', such as 'the black aged', are: "in the same analytical position as blackwomen" (Scales-Trent:1997, 310), so that they should be afforded this *same*, 'highest level of protection' because of their status within society. She goes on to say that, other dual, discrete category groups, that Latina and/or Chicana women comprise, for example, should not be denied *either* the equal protection that is being called for by blackwomen *per se* (See Maria Ontiveros' work (1997: 269-77) on how the courts manipulated Rosa Lopez' 'Salvadoran-ness' to her disadvantage in the O.J. Simpson case by not recognising her family naming cultural practices, insofar as they are 'foreign' to an American patriarchal standard. Ontiveros' work can be used then to suggest that Latina and Chicana women, as an 'insular and discrete' group, can challenge discrimination with respect to the same three levels of criteria that Scales-Trent (1997) puts forward for blackwomen).

Scales-Trent (1997) concludes in saying that, as blackwomen have clearly not been protected by the laws in the past, it will only be through the demand for:

"the highest level of scrutiny from the courts that they will receive such protection in the future" (Scales-Trent:1997, 310)(*my emphasis*).

Following on from this, I find that this demand is equally valid in the South African context and more particularly in the adult education field, where I will show that blackwomen are 'barely acknowledged as a separate class' in much the same way as Scales-Trent (1997 cited above) critiques the structural violence of the law in the American context. In this context, she highlights the law's failure to provide equal protection for blackwomen, partly because they are not lexicalised as a 'discrete and insular' group.

MacCannell and MacCannell's words ring true then when, in addition to this, they remind that:

"Violence is another realm where we are reminded of the narrowness of the scope of 'social norms' and social theory by those whom the norms of civil order, of 'civilisation', have dramatically *failed to protect*: abused children, the sexually *deviant*, and women who are kept in their place by physical force" (MacCannell and MacCannell:1993, 206) (*my emphasis*) (It will be remembered that by patriarchal standards or by the 'patronymic propering' that these standards uphold (Spivak: 1987, quoted above), 'deviant' here refers to the category of woman most generally as a matter of course).

**Apparent Marginalisation of Blackwomen (Rural and
Urban Work Sectors):**

Implications for Education and Training.

In the South African context, with the recent unilateral closure of State-aided adult education centres in Gauteng at the beginning of this year (See Gauteng Department of Education (1998) Circular 7 and 13); and then, the further budget reduction in the provincial allocation of funds for keeping adult centres operational by 8 million out of a previous 39 million rands (these figures were obtained from the Forum for the Advancement of Adult Education (FAAE), Fakazani Ngwaba, personal communication, May 7, 1998) in effect from the beginning of the new financial year set at April 1998, it would seem that the South African State does not have the best interests of blackwomen learners at heart, let alone adult learners more generally.

Muller and Taylor (1995:219) establish that the South African State leaves NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) education structures with little if no space to move in to service communities. Given this fact, the closures and budget reductions of State-aided institutions are particularly disturbing moves as it is largely blackwomen who are either unemployed or domestic workers that attend the State-aided programmes. If a blackwoman is either unemployed or a domestic

worker, this job status ensures that *any* education provision will most likely *only* be available for this learner/claimant through State-aided programmes, as NGO's protecting the rights of the adult education sector are virtually non-existent and private programmes would be, in all likelihood, too expensive for the learner. Neither do unions nor does the corporate sector take any particularly pro-active and/or concerned stance towards blackwomen domestic workers or the unemployed, as these groups do not form part of their respective organisations and internal education and training programmes. Indeed, a particularly telling article on the *complete lack* of representation for domestic workers by unions, at the present moment, is found in the Mail and Guardian newspaper, August 29-September 4, 1997, entitled: "Cosatu Dumps Domestic Workers" - Cosatu is the Congress of South African Trade Unions. The fact of this 'union-dumping' is despite demographical analyses which indicate that there is a growing number of domestic workers. Conservative figures for the present number of actual domestic workers in South Africa is variable, but they range from between 1 and 2 million. I cannot find, however, as a further point of potential enquiry, statistics which attempt to correlate these numbers with levels of formal schooling.

Here too, my own research between the months of February and March of 1998 has lead me to visit various factory workplaces on the outskirts

of Johannesburg, near the townships of Thokoza and Vosloorus particularly. What I have found is that there is an anomalous discrepancy in terms of who may qualify at these workplaces for internal education and training programmes during work-time hours. In one particular factory site which I shall not name here, I found that, in the four years that education programmes had been run for workers on site, *not one* female worker had ever been allowed or encouraged to attend these programmes. The term 'learner' at this site was then an exclusive term signifying a 'male-only' privilege and opportunity for advancement, regardless of the fact that many women who worked at this factory site had been 'identified' as being 'illiterate'.

While these programmes continue to provide a service for only male learner/workers at this particular site, the shop-floor steward that I interviewed on this issue claimed that 'it would still be taken up' (Simon Ngobeni (*not his real name*), personal communication, industrial site: supplier for building materials, March 12, 1998). I question the validity of this claim, however, when this particular form of the marginalisation of blackwomen in the factory site has been pending for more than four years, without any substantial indication of *political will* towards change.

The Gibson study (1996) cited earlier, indicates how blackwomen are marginalised in the rural work sector, irregardless of levels of 'schooled

literacy'. My own survey in the urban commercial work sector shows a gender/power correlation that works against blackwomen's interests and denies them the opportunity to attain levels of 'schooled literacy' at the urban work-sites I visited. The majority of men at these sites are, however, afforded enhanced status because of the certification possibilities that are open to them, primarily, it would seem, because of their gender.

Here too, as with the Gibson study (1996), it would seem that even the men's jobs were more technically interesting and specialised than the women's. Male workers might drive or operate machinery at the factory site, while women workers would package factory samples indoors and under the eye of a (male) manager. As I was merely doing an overview to gauge factory conditions, I did not have time to conduct in-depth interviews with women workers to ascertain whether there were differential attitudes to various job descriptions that assumed, for example, that some forms of work on site were the domain of the male workers only, as Gibson had found on the rural work site she visited. Given the gender differentiation that operated at the internal learning facility at the factory site, I do feel however, that such assumptions were more than likely to have been widely held by male workers at the factory site and managers, at the very least.

The only blackmen on a par with the blackwomen at the site mentioned above, were those who were also dually classed as being entirely 'illiterate' and as speakers of 'a certain (marginalised) language'. The reason I was given for these men not being offered any opportunity to do education and training courses on site, as was the case for other male workers, was that:

'A beginner literacy and numeracy programme should not be done in any language other than the 'mother tongue'. A programme designed for 'one (/male) Shangaan' or 'one (/male) Venda speaker' would not be cost-effective. Different language facilitators would have to be called in to do these programmes in different languages' (Patrick Sithole, (*not his real name*) personal communication with the factory language facilitator on site, giving an official company view, March 12, 1998 (*my bracketed additions*). It is worth noting here that I mention neither the real names of interviewees nor the factory site's commercial name to avoid questions of libel. Suffice to say that I believe a recent sociological study done at Wits University on this same industrial site, in lauding this factory as a 'leader in progressive practice' (I?), is all but misguided).

At the time of my visit, the possibility of having to call in additional facilitators, when the education programme at the site was already being

'outsourced' under a new company restructuration plan, was not a 'reduplication' that was considered feasible nor necessary. What was important, in terms of possible future applications for government tenders, was that the company was still able to show that they were engaged in *some form* of human resource development and upliftment. What was not important were the 'details' of who on the site did and did not have access to the programmes being run and on what grounds opportunities for inclusion and participation were offered or denied. By all official accounts, these factory site programmes were a success and in line with the aims of a broader National Reconstruction and Development framework. This is disturbing as the very fact of the marginalisation of blackwomen was effectively marginalised into invisibility by the company's own, official account *and* by the worker union's lack of action.

An important point to carry forward from this discussion is that language at this site is a factor of 'structured difference'. The black men who were dually classed as not speaking the 'more favoured' languages *and* classed as 'illiterate', stood to remain outside the factory hierarchy of worker entitlements, irregardless of their gender, insofar as these entitlements pertained to the education programmes being conducted on the site. Blackwomen, however, irrespective of language, 'illiteracy' or a low level of 'schooled literacy' were barred in general, because of gender and a lack of political will on the part of the company for action that

would entrench and set a committed and responsible standard for gender equity at the workplace through its education and training programmes.

Coupled with the government's present lack of political will towards both the adult education sector in general, and blackwomen of 'a certain class' more specifically, I find the implications of these findings disturbing as they point to a convergence in the marginalisation of blackwomen across several sectors. Following on from the work of Scales-Trent (1997) in the United States, it would seem that blackwomen in South Africa, at the present moment, given the conditions outlined above, merit the protection of 'a strict scrutiny plus more' review and a contractual clause agreement that would protect and benefit them across several sectors through the Constitution. The generalisation of this *same* predicament of the marginalisation of blackwomen across several sectors, however, seems to indicate that any expectation of redress under such a call is 'unrealistic' while yet direly needed, as Scales-Trent (1997) has also suggested is the case in the United States.

South African Constitutional Contradictions.

That the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) adequately accounts for the intersectionality of race and gender and provides

protection on this basis, is not entirely clear, as - with the American case - the levels of 'equal' protection seem to vary across institutions.

I will examine briefly some of the tenets within the Constitution to also set the framework for understanding how blackwomen's rights in the workplace and in sites of learning are or *are not* properly accounted for in the documents that purport to entrench rights to difference. I will do this in much the same way as Scales-Trent (1997) and Iglesias (1997) have done in the United States within a context of similar concern.

As a starting point, Section 9 (1), the equality clause of the Constitution (1996), establishes that everyone has the right to equal benefit and protection under the law. Sub-section (3) and (4), when combined, state that no person (and/or institution) or the State may:

“unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on *one or more grounds*, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth” (Section 9 (3), Act 108:1996)(*my emphasis*).

The recognition that there may be 'one or more grounds' upon which discrimination may occur seems a positive development insofar as it

seems to suggest that a blackwoman, for example, would not have to choose between either belonging to a 'black group' or a 'female group' due to the application of a 'subset theory', as one of the options - notably the less satisfactory of the three - that Scales-Trent (1997) speaks of towards the creation of an equal protection framework that is more just. It does, however, seem to suggest, throughout the spirit and letter of this section of the Constitution (Act 108:1996), that it is possible to conceive of blackwoman as an 'insular and discrete' category group for protection purposes, as this group would have 'one or more grounds' upon which to make a claim and would also be able to fulfil the three-pronged criteria that Scales-Trent (1997) outlines under the second: 'scrutiny review option'.

As well, the possible stigma attached to what Scales-Trent (1997) identifies as 'secondary characteristics' in her references to the American Constitution, such as those of being 'aged' or 'disabled', are also identified in the South African Constitution (Act 108:1996) as indicators sufficient to trigger the right to full protection before the law. This seems a positive move as, in Scales-Trent's terms: there seems to be a heightened recognition of the possibility of need for redress based on a complex of interlocking variables such as 'a burden plus more' (Scales-Trent:1997, 309); and, that there's some leeway in the Constitution (Act 108:1996) for 'a more than strict scrutiny review' option to be triggered.

However, the Bill of Rights' summation table of 'Non-Derogable Rights' indicates a limitation on the extent to which the right to equality is protected under Section 9 (Bill of Rights, Act 108:1996). Rather than acknowledging that discrimination may occur on 'one or more grounds', as quoted from Section 9 (3) above, it says that the extent non-derogable rights are protected with respect to unfair discrimination is:

solely on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or social origin, sex, religion or language" (Act 108:1996. Chapter 2, Bill of Rights)(*my emphasis*).

Through this limitation on the extent of protection for non-derogable rights, the recognition of 'secondary characteristics', identified above, disappears along with the Section 9 (3) phrase that acknowledges the possibility of intersectional complexities between say race and gender in cases of unfair discrimination, and then, which allows for the right to redress on the basis of this intersectionality. It seems then that a blackwoman *would* have to choose between being classed under either a 'race group' or a 'female group', in seeking equal protection before the law, without having the option of 'falling' into a group which is both.

If the American critical race feminism legal case studies are anything to go by, the specification of this limitation in the South African legal

context suggests that: blackwomen may not be recognised on their own merits when positioned as a 'discrete and insular' category group and that this mis-recognition is likely to work to their detriment.

Limitations in the Non-Derogable Rights Table: A Possible Failure to Protect Women Against Violence.

A further cause for concern, insofar as women are concerned in the South African context, is a further limitation which pertains to the security and freedom of the person. Section 12 indicates that everyone has the right:

"to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources" (Section 12 (c) of Act 108 of 1996)(*my emphasis*).

However, at the end of Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights (Act 108: 1996) in the table listing non-derogable rights, the extent to which this right is protected does not include this sub-section, but does include the right to not be tortured (Section 12 (d) of Act 108 of 1996). This is clearly an inclusion which is guaranteed due to a recognition of past State abuses against 'race' in South African prisons under the old regime. The absence of sub-section 12 (c) (given above) in the non-derogable table, however, suggests that past abuses against women, which were 'gender'-inflected

and which subsequently took advantage of women's bodies in the attempt to manipulate them as mothers, for example, were abuses which are still *not* recognised to the same extent, so as to merit inclusion in the non-derogable rights table, as the 'race-torture' clause is. This is despite recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings, which, for one, highlight that these abuses against 'gender' were no less brutal than those against 'race', and that they were indeed sometimes even more so.

Additionally, given the high incidences of rape in the country, where a recent local newspaper has called 'rape the national sport', I find the exclusion of this clause worrying (See Beharie (1998:1) 'Mister Tough has had Enough', where these are the words of Magistrate Joe Ikaneng, *Star* newspaper *Metro* section, February 22, 1998). Already, as the law has been historically applied with respect to rape cases in the South African legal framework, a woman laying a rape charge is already pre-constructed by legal definition as a potential liar (See Maharaj (1998:2) 'Finding Reasons why Domestic Violence is Growing', *Star* newspaper, where the Business Report section contains this article on the overall effect of rape not being a national policing priority, February 10, 1998).

The result of this is that the burden of proof set for the woman is a double one. She must first establish herself as a credible person, before

establishing 'damage' to that person insofar as the 'damage' relates to a case of rape.

It seems then that the patriarchal legacy in both the legal and social system, still offers women little protection. A recent article found in the local *Star* newspaper entitled: 'S.A.'s Grim Record of Femicide Exposed' confirms this (Cathy Powers (1997:12), *Star* newspaper, Johannesburg, November 28, 1997). Sally Shackleton, a member of a local organisation named: People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA), also highlights that in courts: a 'provocation myth' operates to women's detriment, alongside the fact that sentencing is at a judge's discretion, and that therefore, the widespread frequency of rape and violence against women and children in the country is often not taken into cognisance.

Indeed, the High Court correspondent, Cathy Powers (1997), in this same article, suggests that present court trends are traceable back to laws such as the right to "reasonable chastisement", where a husband had the 'right' to hit his wife. Here too, the words of Scales-Trent (1997) ring true for the South African context as well, in that 'the courts were never designed to protect the rights of women, especially not blackwomen' (Scales-Trent:1997, 310).

As with Stuart Hall's analysis of the media in the British context (1990), it can be seen that racist and gender ideologies still have perpetuated and self-sustaining effects within the South African legal context of culture. This legacy, despite the introduction of our newly codified Constitution (Act 108:1996), is within the very fabric of the legal apparatus, present both in its definitions and the ways in which the law is applied. As embedded undercurrent within the legal apparatus, there is rarely an(/y) explicit reference to the patriarchal legacy *per se* (though this is less true of the racist one). This makes the dismantling of the legacy particularly difficult. The fact that the Section 12 right in the Constitution (Act 108:1996) is protected to the extent that 'no-one may be tortured in any way' (Section 12 (d) of Act 108:1996) seems directly attributable to a recognition that the system did protect a violently coercive racist regime in the past (See Don Foster (1987) for a pre-1994 thorough appraisal of the widespread use of 'detention and torture in South Africa', where his work is by this same name (Foster:1987)). However, the silence on gender seems to indicate that the gender ideology, even as it converges with a race ideology, is still very much more intact within the ideological state apparatuses (/ISA's: Althusser) of South African society.

With a view to a freer society and ending the determining effects of this legacy: a critically social education praxis must challenge it ceaselessly.

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Continuity Rather Than Change in Education.

It is not surprising then, that the practices of the past have not only infiltrated the education system, but are still also very much a part of that system. This is so, both for the school youth sector and for the adult education sector. The education system was never designed to cater for the needs or interests of the black majority of people in the country and this is even more so for blackwomen as adult learners.

And, while it does seem that there is a relative amount of concentration being directed to the school youth sector towards making a change, this is not so for the adult education sector, where the total Gauteng education budget allocation for adult education was less than 1% in the last financial year (/1997). A curious figure, given that recent policy documents from the State education department propose a mass literacy campaign that is to reach 2.5 million adults by the year 2001, out of an approximate 9,4 million adults that they label as being 'illiterate', 'under-educated' and/or historically 'under-developed' (See especially the Department of Education's Directorate for Adult Education and Training (AET) (1997a: vi.; x., 172) in its *Multi-Year Implementation Plan*, released in the middle of January of 1998, for a self-adulating, grand narrative of mythic proportions, where it speaks as if it had the resources to meet its 'mass' target for the new millenium when barely coping now).

Before turning to examine the targets that have been set in terms of adult education in the South African context, I would like to firstly link these targets with the broader economic sector, or in Bernstein's terms with the field of production. In doing this, I hope to elicit some of the gaps within present policy, as I have already done with respect to the legal system, albeit provisionally. The brief contextualisation below will focus on the *Employment Equity Bill* of the Department of Labour, issued December 1, 1997.

**State Intervention in the Field of Production Under the
Employment Equity Bill and a Continuity in Predictable
Gaps: Where are the Blackwomen?**

I would like to examine only the section of this Bill which pertains to the 'designated groups' that it identifies and targets for future equity adjustments in the workplace. I believe that for the purposes of this discussion, it is useful to quote this one section in full. It reads as follows:

"The designated groups are *black people, women and people with disabilities*. They are referred to in the Bill as 'persons from the designated groups'. They are the focus of the Bill. A recent survey of affirmative action (September 1997) noted that although African

people represent 76% of South Africa's population, in 1996 they accounted for fewer than 5% of managers across the economy. From 1992 to 1996 the number of black senior managers had increased by only 0,4%.

While women constitute 52% of South Africa's population according to the provisional 1996 census figures, in 1996, they occupied only 12,2% of senior management positions in a sample of companies surveyed by the Breakwater Monitor. The Breakwater Monitor also found that 100% of female senior managers (EU Grade) were white women. There were no *coloured* or *Asian women* at this level. A similar situation was found at middle management grades (DU and DL), whereby 88,7% were white women.

With respect to disability the most recent CSS data (1997) estimate that 5% of the population are disabled, although organisations of people with disabilities suggest that the figure might be much higher. Estimates indicate that one in five people with disabilities is economically active, and only one in 100 has a job on the open labour market. The vast majority of people with disabilities are forced to depend entirely on social pensions and family support, as they do not have employment opportunities" (Department of Labour (1997:12), *Employment Equity Bill*)(*my emphasis added*).

In examining the above, it will be noted that the focus of concern is the ostensible placement of 'designated group' members in senior or middle management positions, while nothing is explicitly said in this particular section on targeting equity at other position levels of employment. The Bill (Department of Labour:1997) establishes at its outset that it seeks to 'redress the imbalances of the past' yet the focus in addressing imbalances seems to have been *narrowed* in this section to *only* the levels where the most capital (Bourdieu) is at stake (Department of Labour, *Employment Equity Bill* (1997: 5)). I find this confusing when, in addition to this, in chapter 3 of the Bill, where the duties of employers are outlined in Section 12 (3), the Bill states explicitly that in implementing employment equity *nothing* in the Bill requires employers to:

"appoint, train or promote a fixed number of people from designated groups" (Section 12 (3) (a), Department of Labour, *Employment Equity Bill* (1997:25)).

It would seem then, that the Bill is class-based. As employers of designated groups are not required to train designated groups towards higher levels of qualification, it appears that only those members from designated groups who *already have* these levels of qualification will stand to gain from the Bill (Department of Labour:1997). For those who

do not have these levels of qualification, the onus in achieving them, insofar as this Bill (Department of Labour:1997) is concerned, is not on the employer and/or seemingly to be found in the worksite *per se*. Here too, then, new legislation does not seem to work in favour of the most marginalised, though *the same cannot be said* for an already existing black elite which is predominantly male and competing for work employment positions that have the most status and capital at stake within the field of production.

'Black People': Dual or Single Category Group?

A further cause for concern, given my analysis above with reference to legal critical race feminists, theorists and practitioners, is the fact that the statistics used to highlight the need of specific designated groups for employment equity are almost entirely uni-dimensional. This is so unless one takes the 'black people' group, or the 'disabled people' group, to be respectively: a dual category group of 'black' + 'people', where the definition of 'black' is mutually identified and supported by also a 'person' designation that is '*gender-less*', and likewise for the 'disabled' + 'people' group (or in the wording order of the Bill (Department of Labour:1997): 'people' *with* 'disabilities', where disabilities, if a sub-set theory option is applied, may be taken as being secondary characteristics to the 'people' designation here. See Halliday (1985) on Theme/Rheme).

Insofar as the Bill (Department of Labour:1997) is concerned, it appears that you are either a member of a 'black people' group, a 'female' group or a 'disabled people' group. Angela P. Harris (1997) in her essay: 'Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory', indicates the all-important signification of the 'and' and the 'comma' as these two introduce difference between groups based on a hierarchy of domination that is identifiable by who is named first.

In the extract above on designated groups, it is the 'black people' group that is identified first, followed by a 'commatised' 'woman' group, which is then both secondary and 'outside' the categorisation of 'black' and 'people'. Taken in its most literal sense a 'woman' is here not necessarily the same as being a member of a 'people' (or person) group. The people group seems then to be inexorably male and black or male and disabled, and not necessarily black and female or female and disabled. Being 'female' is a category on its own.

Essentialisms and Corollary Solipsisms that Don't Add

(/Up)(/Down)(At All).

Angela P. Harris (1997) expresses a sense of frustration and anger at the way that multiple experiences of oppression are reduced to problems of addition or subtraction and she speaks of the effects that this addition or

subtraction has. Subtraction or addition always starts from a standard that is implicitly taken as the norm, as if this 'norm' and/or 'standard' were simply 'neutral', 'natural' and 'beneficial' *in and of itself*.

Harris (1997) convincingly identifies that insofar as 'feminists' like Catherine MacKinnon are concerned, a 'white solipsism' is the universalistic norm, where actions and thought start from the premise that 'whiteness describes the world' (sic)(Harris:1997, 11 and 17 respectively). The term 'black', from this premise, is simply used as an 'intensifier' (Harris:1997, 15), with the effect that all women are considered 'white' first (sic).

Any qualifying statement made from this premise with respect to difference, indicates then 'non-whiteness'. She calls this: "the 'nuance theory' approach to the problem of essentialism" (Harris:1997, 14). She further indicates that this approach also has had dire legal consequences for blackwomen, particularly in cases of rape. She highlights that because of lack of protection before the law, rape was considered to be:

"something that only happened to white women; what happened to black women was simply life" (sic) (Harris:1997, 16).

One may add, that in the South African legal framework, the law has been applied in much the same way and is, or has been, similarly premised.

In an 'essentialist world', Harris (1997) indicates that:

"black women's experience will always be forcibly fragmented before being subjected to analysis, as those who are 'only interested in race' and those who are 'only interested in gender' take their separate slices of our lives" (Harris:1997, 11).

The South African *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997) 'designated groups section', as it is cited above seems then to function entirely in this essentialist and therefore reductionist manner. Here, the operative first solipsism seems to be a black one. This solipsism equates 'blackness' with 'maleness'. And, insofar as 'describing the world' with respect to 'femaleness', the reference point is: 'white women managers' over and above any other 'woman group' (See paragraph two of the designated groups section from the Department of Labour's *Employment Equity Bill* (1997:12), as cited above).

Looking at Women (/All?) in the Employment Equity Bill:
Are All 'Dual Category Groups' of 'Marginalised Women'
Equally Protected in the Bill?

Of the other 'women groups', as they are lexicalised and juxtaposed one against the other in the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997), it seems interesting to note, however 'hair-splitting' the exercise may seem, that the apartheid category of a 'Coloured' group in this section of the Bill (Department of Labour:1997, 12) is presented with a miniscule 'c', while the category 'Asian' begins with a majuscule 'A'. Elsewhere the Bill (Department of Labour:1997) is inconsistent with this practice when the 'Coloured' group is type-faced by a capital letter, on page 7 for example.

It is part of a 'western-English-print norm' that words beginning with capital letters often carry some vestige of importance para-linguistically. Given this, certain differential valuations seem to be operating in the Bill (Department of Labour:1997) through the manner of the juxtaposition highlighted above. Without wishing to labour this point, I hazard that this establishes that the extent of consideration with respect to one or the other 'black' women's group's claim to equity, within the workplace, will *not* be taken as being the same. This may happen, while, with respect to the statistics mentioned above, both of these groups (Asian

women *and* Coloured women) are shown to be on an *equal par* with each other by their complete non-participation and representation at senior management levels. The historically unequal advantage that 'white women' as a monolithic whole have had through the apartheid State's institutionalisation of job reservations for 'whites only' is rightly opposed within this section.

Why then does it seem to be implicitly suggested that, notwithstanding the fact that the result of exclusion has been the same at this level of the management strata in respect of both 'coloured' and 'Asian' female groups, equity redress should be meted out differentially? It seems only logical that if the socio-economic result of the apartheid past has been the *same* for both 'groups', both 'dual category groups' should be entitled to the *same* benefit and extent of protection before the law in terms of employment equity and redress for the imbalances of the past. It will be remembered here that Scales-Trent had the same to say for Chicana and/or Latina women, who merit the highest levels of protection before the law in 'belonging' to dual discrete category groups which have been historically marginalised and negated in the American context (Scales-Trent:1997, 310).

Yet given the stereotypes of the past as they pertain to apartheid State categorisations, I write this as a cautionary provisional note, as I fear

that the professing of 'equal equity' is not enough to ensure that equal equity will be applied equally. I'm aware that in the South African context where mechanistic, single category groups have been the *norm* and institutionalised for so long, the categorisation of 'Coloured', which is constructed as being at the intersectionality of the 'white' race and the 'black' race, has been a category that the system has largely been unable to account for and/or accommodate, except as a category that neither the 'white' group nor the 'black' group fully recognises (See earlier discussion on Aborigines in the Australian context (Hartley:1992, 206) as it helps to situate this scenario as one that is not entirely unique).

Constructed as a category 'outside' both the white group and/or the black group, the 'sub-set theory', mentioned above with respect to the issue of entitlement and equal protection before the law in terms of race, does not seem to apply. 'Coloured' as an apartheid group categorisation has neither been traditionally afforded the identity definition of being 'black *and* coloured' nor that of 'white *and* coloured'. In not being a sub-set of either so-called 'primary' race group category, neither does it have the entitlements of either. Historically, however, given the experience of lack of opportunity and poverty as a result of the apartheid system, the level of poverty of a 'coloured' child might well be on a socio-economic *par* with that of a 'black' child. One may ask then why should entitlements to redress be differential? How poor is poor and should

'race' be the artificial marker of difference between the poor and very poor, when such a marker may be used to justify giving to one group and not another, when what is at stake are: scant resources, structures of domination and privilege with its codes, conventions and insulation maintainers *for a chosen few* on the one hand (/Bernstein, see earlier discussion on mechanisms for the policing of boundaries) and dignity *for all* on the other?

Sadly, humanity in the South African context has almost always been selectively 'applied' and 'available' in a restrictive sense with processes of reification (/Habermas, see discussion above) more the norm than the exception (See also Biko (1978) where he challenges this in his work: *I Write What I Like*, by identifying 'black' as a socio-economic categorisation in the South African context). Subjects are not free subjects in Foucault's terms (See MacCannell and MacCannell:1993, 224). Racist norms are yet ingrained at every level of the South African social formation. It is common that a 'blind eye' is turned to one group for the sole benefit of another, while both groups might be historically *more similar than different* in terms of marginalisation, lack of privilege, access, socio-political and economic disempowerment and/or experiences of discrimination and effacement in structural relations in both private and public social contexts.

Employment Equity Legislation: Entrenching 'Folk'

Stereotypes Uncritically?

That this essentialist stereotyping of the 'Coloured' group, as a group that is 'nowhere' (*sic*), seems widespread, may be elicited from the frequency that I receive statements from adult learners to this very effect. In an account of her life, Dinah Longa (*not her real name*) in a piece entitled: 'My Mirror Me', suddenly 'interrupts' the flow of her narrative on herself to make the following commentary which has a black solipsism at its base. I cite it here by way of giving a 'telling' example for consideration. She says the following:

"you can't change what is created by God. you will be creating something else like Coloureds they do not understand themselves, not knowing which culture to follow" (Dinah Longa (*not her real name*) written narrative communication, Maryvale adult learning centre, satellite of City Deep, Johannesburg, April 8, 1997. Dinah's spelling and punctuation remains unchanged).

Just as the apartheid Christian National government used the Bible to legitimate the State, so too here, a partial God, 'beneficial' for some but not others, is used to explicitly legitimate 'blackness' and to implicitly legitimate 'whiteness', but not 'Coloured-ness'. By this 'folk' perception,

and the construction of a God who is not 'neutral' but 'naturally' partial, it is simply taken as a 'common-sense' assumption that: 'God did not create 'Coloureds' (sic). Given that these articulations are *not unique*, it is clear that a communicative, discourse ethics (Habermas) in the classroom could do much to overturn and work against such interpellations and assumptions as they are reproduced uncritically by individual agents in discourses both primary and secondary (Gee:1990).

Such articulations are worrying generally, but even more so when what is at stake are contestations by 'opposing' groups over increasingly scant resources. In this contest, access is denied those who do not have (yet) margins of surplus power to overcome the load of such rationalisations ⁱⁱⁱ, which when articulated from the standpoint of the dominant (discourse - put crudely - would say: 'if God does not favour *them*, then why should *we*?' (sic) The God of this rationalisation is here constructed as an 'unquestionable God' who supports the dominant discourse, however fallacious and self-absorbed (See my later discussion on Althusser and rejection of the term 'dialectic' as it implies a narrow recognition of *only* Lacanian, mirror-phase, pre-given structures), alongside the equally

ⁱⁱⁱ I draw from Knowles (1990) here and the notion of Margin, where he explains that: "Margin is a function of the relationship of Load to Power. In simplest terms Margin is surplus Power. It is the Power available to a person (or a group) over and beyond that required to handle his (/her) Load" (Knowles:1990, 149)(*my bracketed additions*).

`unquestionable' taken-for-granted-assumption that `Coloured-ness' is a form of culture-less `nothingness' (*sic*).

By such `folk' accounts, the experience of `Coloured-ness' is one that has nothing that is its own. The term `Coloured' is made to signify a group that is habitually taken as having `no discrete culture, values, meanings, traditions, worth and/or contributions to the rest of society' (*sic*). As a group, it cannot `win' by such folk accounts as, when something of value is recognised, that which is recognised is seen to emanate not from the `Coloured' group as a discrete and creative group entity, but from one of the so-called `primary' race group categories (`white' or `black'). In this case, a `sub-set theory' *does apply* momentarily and conveniently only for the purposes of placing credit for an original source elsewhere. This potential, subsidiary status, as a marker of difference *and sameness*, does not, however, allow for any level of real entitlement. For, this appendage `potential' is, in any case, a denied, un-actualised `status', as `everyone *knows*' (*sic*), or is said to know by racist, `folk' accounts.

More worrying still is that these accounts are seemingly supported by the present State, when it appears at face-value in official, contractual documentation that equity may be differentially applied to `coloured women', for example, so that they `lose out' when `set against' another dual category group such as `Asian women', while yet statistics may

show that they are equally deserving of surplus action in their favour at the workplace (See earlier discussion on the designated groups section of the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997, 12)).

**A Way Forward Through A Call for the Need for a
Multiplicative Praxis Based on a Critical Multiple
Consciousness.**

Adrien Katherine Wing (1997a) identifies that in combating essentialist constructions we need to lay claim to the possibilities provided by a sense of multiple consciousness. She sets an agenda which is equally true for the education sector in the South African context by saying the following:

“All of us with multiple consciousness must help society address the needs of those multiply burdened first. Restructuring and remaking the world, where necessary, will affect those who are singularly disadvantaged as well. By designing programs that operate on multiple levels of consciousness and address multiple levels of need, we will *all* be able to reach our true potential to the benefit of ourselves, our families, our profession, our country, and the world” (Wing:1997a, 32-3)(emphasis unchanged).

Attention to these needs is then not simply a matter of individual concern, but rather one where what is at stake is communal survival, social justice and equity for *all*. This is the utopian aim that we must have and attempt to put into practice, both in the South African education system and without it, from the perspective of a vision which is multiply conscious and critically aware.

Wing (1997a) emphasises further how experience is multi-layered and complex. Speaking on how change may be wrought firstly by changes in conceptualisation, she says the following, with reference to the experiences and identities of blackwomen particularly:

"We, as black women, can no longer afford to think of ourselves or let the law think of us as merely the sum of separate parts that can be added together or subtracted from, until a white male or female stands before you. The actuality of our layered experience is *multiplicative*. Multiply each of my parts together, $1 \times 1 \times 1 \times 1 \times 1$, and you have *one* indivisible being. If you divide one of these parts from one you still have *one*" (Wing:1997a, 31)(emphasis unchanged).

The question of interpellation is an important one then, and the division of the category of say 'Coloured' into 'non-white' and/or 'non-black', so

that the 'sub-set theory' does not apply on both counts (See Scales-Trent (1997) earlier discussion) whether the solipsism is a 'white' one or a 'black' one, alongside the fact that it is also not a category taken on its own merits, must be understood as a form of social injustice, where structural and symbolic violence meet to perpetuate systems of domination and marginalisation to the detriment of whole groups and *whole* individuals within the context of the wider societal formation, which is also, as Wing (1997a: 31) says above, detrimentally affected by this exclusion.

Given that experience is multi-layered, it seems that the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997) does not account for any group other than what Wing terms the 'singularly disadvantaged' (Wing:1997a, 31). Neither are there the 'secondary characteristics' identified by Scales-Trent (1997), such as those of the 'black aged' or 'black and speaking a marginalised language'. Of the latter, I have identified through my cursory field survey at urban factories in Johannesburg that discrimination *does* appear to operate in the workplace, when these variables are set up as salient markers of difference that make exclusions 'easy' from the perspective of a dominant discourse that uses the strategically rational criteria of 'cost-effectiveness' to justify exclusions and to buttress normative-rightness claims for a dominant language. It becomes then the 'fault' of the person, him or herself, who has the

characteristics - that is to say who, for example: speaks a marginalised language, is illiterate and/or is also possibly female - that simply do not 'fit' the system *at the time*, rather than the system admitting itself culpable in not doing justice to real flesh and blood humans, with all their complex variations, (gender-)specific needs and languages of communication, whether marginal or dominant (Grillo:1989).

Nonetheless, perhaps the most glaring omission of all in the Department of Labour's Bill of 1997 for employment equity, is: the complete non-lexicalisation of the category of 'blackwoman' in its 'designated groups' section.

Where Are the Blackwomen in the Employment Equity

Bill? (refrain x 2)

In the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997), it is the designated groups section around which the whole document axiates and presses for equity change, yet blackwomen are entirely invisible in this section. 'Asian women', 'coloured women' and 'white women' are lexicalised in this section of the Bill (Department of Labour:1997, 12) blackwomen are not. It is, however, reasonable - in line with a socially-oriented discourse ethics (Häbermas) - to say that given the multi-layered experience(s) of blackwomen in South Africa, their historical and multiple

disadvantage is equatable with neither of these three, dual categorisations of the 'woman' group (See Wing and Carvalho (1997) where historical constraints placed on blackwomen in the South African context are examined in four inter-related social domains: the workplace, education, domestic violence and customary law). Secondly, when it comes to questions on how blackwomen fare in relation to the singularly designated groups under the Bill (Department of Labour:1997) - that is to say the 'singular' designation categories of 'race' or 'woman' alone - they are deserving of a 'more than strict scrutiny review'.

The designated groups section of the Bill (Department of Labour:1997, 12) is itself inconsistent: the first sub-set under the singular designation of 'woman' is a reference to 'white women', where 'white' is taken here as being a 'secondary characteristic' to 'woman', while under the 'black people' group section, 'black' is taken as being a lexicalised, 'primary characteristic'. I have already suggested that the un-lexicalised, primary characteristic of both 'black' and 'people' - in the first paragraph which delineates the boundaries of the 'first' designated group category - is the 'male' sign. I suggest as well that the first reference - in the second paragraph of this same designated groups section - to the sub-set category of 'white woman' sets this category up as a 'norm' and that all other 'dual categorisations' of the 'woman group', set up against this solipsism, become its 'intensifiers' (Harris:1997). I find this problematic.

The *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997, 12) designates three 'primary characteristics' of 'burden': 'black', 'woman' and 'disabled', yet there is no accommodation accounting for 'multiply burdened' groups (Wing:1997a). A member of a 'multiply burdened' group may have all three of these 'primary characteristics' *and* 'secondary characteristics' as part of their identity formation, which may be understood, as Scales-Trent (1997:309) has suggested above, to work, *in all likelihood*, to the detriment of anyone who qualifies under these categorisations in a society that is both dictated to by considerations of Strategic Action (S.A.) and heliotropically geared towards such reifying action as if strategic (cost-)effectiveness were the *only* 'outcome' of value.

Through the multiplicative praxis model that Wing (1997a) provides above: $1 \times 1 \times 1 \times 1 \times 1$, a 'multiply burdened' group member may for example be a disabled blackwoman of a certain age who speaks a certain marginalised language and is 'illiterate' (**/functionally interdependent (I)**). Indeed, in the Constitution (Act 108:1996) 'language' is listed as being a non-derogable right (See chapter 2, and the non-derogable rights table cited above from the Constitution, Act 108:1996). The *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997) seems then unable to cope with considerations of multiplicity, to the degree that I suggest that despite what it proposes to do: its shift towards *real* equity is simply rhetorical.

I believe that *real* equity is only achievable if the vision towards it is based on more heuristic, complex and inclusive considerations. The questions that must be asked are still with respect to who is not being accounted for? Who stands to 'lose out', because of definitions that require a 'fragmentation of the self' into a uni-dimensional accommodation which is ultimately not an accommodation at all by the very nature of the 'totalist regime' (Iglesias:1997) that is 'fragmentation' (Harris:1997)? In other words, the pressing question to be asked here is: who will not benefit because of the contradictions between documents, as these contradictions can be used to the detriment of whole groups both in education and without it? Admittedly, these are all questions which have been raised by the critical race feminist case studies in the United States. I have suggested, however, that these case studies raise valid points of consideration for the South African context, where present new re-descriptions are still inadequate and requiring of critical re-definition within fields and critical re-contextualisation across fields, despite national moves towards transformation in this period of rapid, social transition after the first valid, free and general election of 1994.

Of the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997) itself, I have additional questions. Are there for example also 'tertiary characteristics' which must be accounted for? Where does, for example, 'social origin' 'fit' in the *Employment Equity Bill's* logic (Department of Labour:1997),

when in the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) it is listed as a non-derogable right and therefore, by the terms of this official document account, is a 'primary characteristic' sufficient to trigger the full benefit and protection of the law? How indeed is it defined, might one understand 'social origin' as being a term which recognises and takes into cognisance - for purposes of redress - the historically unbalanced 'rural'/'(peri-/)urban' dichotomy?

However, in asking this question and placing 'social origin' as a potential 'tertiary characteristic' by the non-lexicalised logic of the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997), I am aware that there would be a discrepancy between the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997) and the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), as I have just stated above. For, in the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) under both the equality clause of Section 9 *and* the non-derogable rights table: 'social origin' is a 'primary characteristic' and a non-derogable right sufficient to trigger the 'full' benefit and protection of the law. In the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997) only 'singular burdens' are mentioned. How then, are these contradictions between official contractual documents to be accounted for? What are the implications of this contraction, when, for example, protection is sought before the law in relation to this 'characteristic'? Who will benefit and **who will not**, when it appears that *the most marginalised* are still not favoured?

'Disability', on the other hand, is presented as a 'primary characteristic' under the equality clause of Section 9 in the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) - as is the case in the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997, 12) where it is one of the 'singular burdens' mentioned - but it is *not* listed as being protected before the law as a non-derogable right (See Section 9 (3), and the non-derogable rights table, chapter 2, Act 108 of 1996)). What is the result of these discrepancies and what does it spell for real individuals, I ask tentatively? Or, re-phrased differently: 'how might the 'political powerlessness' of individuals (Scales-Trent:1997) who are autonomous and separate *within* historical groups, be perpetuated because of the glaring gaps between these definitions?'

A further question may be posed that is perhaps more closely linked to the creation of a conducive contractual framework for adult education. Given the stigma often attached to low-levels of 'schooled literacy' (discussed earlier), where does the consideration of this stigmatisation 'fit' into the picture of equity and moves against unfair discrimination, both with respect to the Constitution's equality clause and the 'designated groups' section of the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997)? 'Literacy level' *per se*, is not the same as language(s) spoken. Language is a non-derogable right protected within the Constitution (Act:1996), but education *per se* is not (See chapter 2, Act

Constitution (Act:1996), but education *per se* is not (See chapter 2, Act 108 of 1996).

The 'right to literacy' *per se* (See the Persepolis Declaration of 1975, as cited above from SACABE (South African Committee for Adult Basic Education)(1994:50) where this right is made explicit) is never lexicalised explicitly in the Constitution (Act 108:1996), although it might be argued to be present *implicitly* under the Section 29 (1)(a) right to "a basic education" clause (Act 108 of 1996). If, however, this 'right' is confined to *only* the field of education, and not extended and protected more generally under the Constitution and/or contractual employment equity guidelines, then human resource development linked to literacy 'upliftment' in the workplace will remain unaddressed. My own field work in factories and the Gibson study (1996) on three farms in the Cape indicate that this is a very real danger.

I believe then that official policy documents in the present, South African context cannot afford to leave these issues at an implicit level, as this does little to combat past imbalances and is rather more likely to support their perpetuation under the guise of a 'common-sense' (Gramsci:1971) that is 'known' yet left conveniently unsaid and endlessly deferred.

I turn now to examine more closely the adult education sector in context.

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**Adult Education and Sites of Contestation: Is the 'Right to
Learn' Adequately Entrenched for All Categories of
Learners?**

Notwithstanding that the right to education in South Africa is *not* a non-derogable right, the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) has the following to say on this right:

29. (1) "Everyone has the right-
- (a) to a basic education, including adult
 basic education" (Section 29 (1) (a), Act 108 of
 1996).

Through this, it may be seen that adult education *per se*, is included as a sub-set of the category of 'basic education' which may be taken as referring primarily to the school youth sector within education. Adult education, is then not taken primarily by its own merits, but rather is merely subsidiary to the school youth sector, though the real and historical needs of these two groups may be, and are, indeed very different.

On just this point, Malcolm Knowles' influential work entitled: *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* (Knowles:1990), presents a comprehensive account of the differential needs of adults as compared with youths in education. He opposes traditional 'pedagogy' and myths about adults learning to press for new practices in education under the term: 'Andragogy', or the more 'unheard' of term of: 'Humanagogy'.

In this work, he develops a model of process able to usefully account for the differential, multiplicative and complex needs of adult learners, unlike the more mechanistic approach to adult learning facilitation that is presently the rule rather than the exception. Indeed, one of Knowles' most telling assertions is that 'most of what we know about adults learning is based on children and pigeons'. In other words: 'nothing at all' (Knowles:1990, 70).

Knowles (1990) underscores then that part of the problem in adult education is the very fact that it has been continually 'slotted in' as an extension of youth sector education. This is equally true in the South African context, as the above example from the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) elicits.

Additionally, unlike the case of 'adult education' in Section 29 (1)(a) in the education clause of the Constitution (Act 108:1996), 'further

education' in Section 29 (1)(b) of Act 108 of 1996, is taken on its own merits, as separate and apart from the categorisation of 'basic education'. Clearly, the fact that further education is afforded the status of an 'insular and discrete group' categorisation works to its advantage.

I believe that the differential status that is afforded further education, and not adult education, is reflective of contestations over knowledge-based capital which are at stake in relation to the global trend of differentiation and the increasing specialisation of closely guarded knowledges within a colonised lifeworld (Habermas). As with the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997) it appears that where the most capital is at stake, moves towards transformation are made, but this is not so for forms of capital that have lower prestige status within the same field. This has dire consequences for the most marginalised of groups within these fields, and here my focus is the adult learner, post South Africa's first free and general election in 1994.

A Contestation Over Scant Resources: Adult Education 'at the Whim' of Youth Sector Crises.

I maintain that unless the way these classifications are used is changed, adult education and the learners *within* this sector will not receive the attention that is their due. The present classification systems work to

their disadvantage and resources that should pertain to the provisioning of the adult education sector are often 're-absorbed' back into the school youth sector, when there is, for example, a matriculation pass-rate 'crisis', which curiously enough seems to repeat itself each year.

On one aspect of the 'matriculation crisis', see the recently released Public Protector Special Report (3) on the 'Progress and Integrity of the Senior Certificate Examination-1996', which investigates the issue of final exit examination-paper leakages in 1996. This crisis then also re-occurred in the year of 1997, despite promises made in the report from the Department of Education to the effect that there would not be a leakage repeat (Selby Baqwa, Public Protector of the Republic of South Africa:1996).

Officially, the matriculation level is a level which is classified as being one level beyond that of 'basic education', yet at the beginning of 1998, funds originally ear-marked for adult education were utilised to redress the 'pass-rate crisis' of the previous year to allow for second examination-sittings for youth failure cases. These youth cases were 'carried over' into the new year and supported by the Department, while adult education centres were consequently closed down (David Diale and Jan Botha, Gauteng Department of Education, Adult Basic Education and Training Unit, personal communication, January 17, 1998).

The case at the beginning of this year is a 'telling' one. Particularly when in this same year, the National Directorate for Adult Education and Training (AET)(1997a) rejects the following possibility in its new *Multi-Year Implementation Plan*:

"that funds should be taken from the school sector (read: 'youth school sector') for ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) provisioning" (AET Directorate:1997a, 294, endnote 14)(*my bracketed additions for acronyms*).

The AET Directorate (1997a) then goes on to state explicitly that:

"It must be noted that the government has made a commitment to every individual's right to a **general, basic** education. There are numerous mechanisms that can be put in place for re-allocating finances, taking money from the (youth) schooling sector is **not** one that is proposed in this Plan" (AET Directorate:1997a, 294-5, endnote 14)(*emphasis unchanged, but my bracketed addition*).

The uni-directional nature of this articulation will be noted first. The AET Directorate (1997a) in the above endnote does not 'see fit' to also stress that, when there is need for a re-allocation of finances, they would '**not** propose to take money from the adult education schooling sector' to give

to the youth school sector. Indeed, actions this year in 1998 have been precisely to this effect, so that one may legitimately say that there is both an implicit and, insofar as recent action is concerned, an explicit bias that the adult education sector is continually being set up against. This works primarily to the detriment of the adult learner audience, but then extends to the adult learner facilitator as well.

The contradiction between the AET Directorate's profession of 'a commitment to every individual's right to a basic education' (AET Directorate:1997a, 294-5) and its action, alongside the national, Education Department in general, seems to suggest that this 'commitment' is a rhetorical one and that, by corollary, adult learners are somehow considered as being 'less than' other individuals, particularly when these other individuals come primarily from the youth school sector in South African education. It appears that youth have rights to fuller consideration in times of need (when of course, 'times of need' in South African education are defined as being literally: 'all the time'!) This is supported by Aitchison (1998:16) who - in a forthcoming conference paper entitled: 'Literacy and Adult Basic Education and Training in South Africa: A Quick Survey' - says that presently the whole education system, with the up-coming national teacher strikes in June of 1998, is in a state of: "incipient financial and psychological collapse" (Aitchison:1998, forthcoming)).

The adult education sector has, however, never been a 'wealthy' one *per se*, but far from it, so that recent re-allocations of funds *away from* the adult education sector towards the youth sector may be taken at brute value as a case of: 'taking from the very poor, to give to the poor'. A fundamental difference between these two groups, is that the latter one is a more politically powerful group by virtue of its being within the gaze of societal concern more generally. And, corollary to this fact is that unions as well do not focus on the adult education sector as a rule. Their constituency is comprised largely of school sector educators whose prime focus to date has been centred on the issues of educator re-deployments, remuneration disputes and teacher/pupil class ratios (Muller and Taylor:1995, 221).

Certainly, if a 'discourse ethics' (Habermas) were to be applied here, 'the force of the better argument' should lie with the more 'disadvantaged group' as it pertains to the adult education sector. The operative word here is, however, the word: 'if'.

A pertinent question to ask of the above dispute over scant resources is then that of: 'who are both the potential *and actual* adult learners who may be targeted within the adult education sector?' As an 'aside', it will be noted here that I have italicised the word 'actual', as it is my perception that the bulk of recent policy documents in adult education

are more concerned with the former: with the 'not-yet attending' adult learners than with those 'actual learners' already within the system prior to the year of 1998, as if these numbers were of a negligible amount and value (See AET Directorate:1997a, 77 and 81).

A New Shortened Adult Education Year in 1998.

Indeed, because of the government closure of adult education centres at the beginning of this year, many 'actual learners' have not returned to learning given the now drastically shortened adult learning year to a total of 112 days (See Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)(1998)Circular 13, February 5, 1998). At face value, this figure seems perhaps a reasonable one. However, one must set this against the AET Directorate's own complaint - within its new *Policy Document* (1997b) - which laments that '250 hours of contact time per year for adult learners is not enough' (AET Directorate:1997b, 27).

It must be noted here that '250 hours of contact time' does not correlate with the time spent per year per learning area. The amount of time per learning area is dependent rather on a division of this 'optimum' possibility - however remote this is a possibility now (!) - of 250 hours of contact time per year (AET Directorate:1997b, 27).

In the present scenario for the year of 1998, the now shortened 'optimum' number of 112 days for the official adult education year (See Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)(1998) Circular 13, February 5, 1998), translates into a potential of two hours per evening under the 'night school' system, which has itself been re-termed: the 'Public Adult Learning Centre' (PALC) system, in the new terminology of the AET Directorate's *Multi-Year Implementation Plan* (AET Directorate:1997a, 128). This two-hours-per-evening allocation across learning areas is then multiplicatively equatable with a total of 224 hours per year, as the 'optimum' total amount of contact time 'allowable' in 1998 for learners within the 'public adult learning centre system'.

As 'night schools' operate on the whole from Monday evenings through to Thursday evenings, there is 'opportunity' for adult learners to take a potential load of four learning area courses per year. Some learning area levels, such as level four 'Mathematics', for example, require learners in some public learning centres to attend a total number of four hours per week. This means that learners will attend classes for this learning area two nights a week instead of one. Centres that make this requirement claim that it is necessary for two reasons: because of the difficulties that adult learners encounter within this learning area, and, because of the large numbers of failures that this learning area has generally had in the past.

Rather than ascertaining whether these failures at public learning centres are attributable to lack of resources (both infrastructural and textual), poorly screened facilitators and/or poorly screened learners, it is unfortunately the adult learner who is penalised. How this translates for learners who are then required to attend four hours a week for one learning area, is that: the number of additional learning areas that they may study in one year is further reduced. They may take only two or one other learning course load(s), given the time constraints and the amount of class time made available for adults during the week, irrespective of whether an adult learner might wish to complete courses for other learning areas within the time-frame of the same year.

Nonetheless, if one takes it as given that an adult learner may be taking four subjects in the year of 1998, the total contact time of 224 hours must be divided by four to indicate that for this adult education year: the 'optimum' number of hours per learning area is 56 hours! From this figure, it may be elicited that the 'optimum' total number of classes per learning area this year is 28!

In an attempt to generate preliminary debates, I have already presented these same figures while conducting a platform discussion entitled: 'The Rise and Fall of ABET - Is there a Future, and if so, Where to?' in association with Jonathan van Niekerk of the Adult Education

Department, Wits University, at a conference held by the Forum for the Advancement of Adult Education (FAAE), at the Africa Museum in Johannesburg, March 3, 1998. Unfortunately, while heated debate was generated over just such issues, voiced critique in a unified public media campaign by adult educators and learners did not occur, though this was felt by many at the conference, as the only means through which to 'force' the government's hand towards a policy re-think. At the time, most conference members were reeling in shock over recent government moves, so that a consequent pervasive feeling of demoralisation amongst members was responsible for ineffectual fragmentation and disintegration, rather than swift collective struggle and decisive action to make the plight of adult learners more generally known and more fully understood by the South African public.

An additional consideration in ascertaining just *how much* the options for adult learners are presently being curtailed is that a Monday level four 'second-language' English class, for example, is not repeated for different sets of adult learners requiring this subject towards certification each night of the week. What this can mean is that learners are further restricted from taking the subjects that they may need towards certification. This will certainly be the case if there is a time-table clash at the centre where they are attending classes and the learning area of English, given for example on a Monday night, possibly clashes with

Mathematics on the same night. If this is the case - as it very often is - the learner is forced to choose between one or the other subject area and must postpone completion of the other learning area to the following year. Given this situation, another option for the adult learner could be to seek placement in another adult learning centre for the other days of the week. This may not be an entirely adequate solution for the learner as there may yet be no guarantee of the same problem not re-occurring. Such a solution may also mean an additional transportation expense for the adult learner which he or she might not be able to meet.

Attendance of adult learner classes can become then a long tedious process for the adult learner. If a learner is for example working towards obtaining a matriculation certificate, both internal and external contradictions and constraints in the procedures of adult education can combine to make the experience of learning more stressful than pleasurable for an extended period of time. At the present moment, for example, it is not possible to obtain a matriculation certification within a one-year time frame, as the minimum number of required subjects that must be presented for a matriculation pass is: six, while adult learning centres only cater, on the whole, for a maximum learner-load of four subject areas per year.

Obtaining matriculation certification in one year is only possible for adult learners if they have returned to an adult public learning centre (PALC) simply to 'top up' a partial-success towards a matriculation certification, already achieved through the school youth sector provision in education in a previous year of the adult learner's life-history. This question of matriculation is one that I now momentarily 'put on hold', but will return to shortly.

Implications of the Shortened Year in PALC's for **Educators.**

Given the above figures as they correlate with the amount of contact time with adult learners per subject learning area, it is also interesting to consider how these reductions translate in terms of remuneration pay for adult educators in the 1998 year. For, if an educator is facilitating one learning subject level a week - as this is most often the case within the present 'cost-effective', cut-back process of restrictions and rationalisations - and the pay per hour is R70, then this will correlate with a gross salary of R 3,920 before deductions for the year. If this 'yearly salary' were to be divided by a 12 month period, it would square with a meagre R330 a month before tax deductions, while tax would also 'chew away' a sizeable amount from this given figure!

Indeed, this is the best scenario case. The worst case is with respect to educators who are being paid R33 per hour before deductions. Under the worst scenario case, this pay package equates with a yearly gross salary of R 1,848 for an adult educator before deductions. Divided by a twelve month period this amount yields a monthly salary of R154 before deductions. This sum is equatable with an amount that is approximately a fifth of a monthly 'living wage'!

This is a moot point as the best scenario monthly wage case for adult educators that I cite above is less than half of what is identified by National unions within the country as the monthly 'minimum living wage'. National unions and the Department of Labour define a 'minimum living wage' as being between R700 to R750 a month. What this means then is that adult learners who are employed as domestic workers earn more than their adult education facilitators, unless as a domestic worker they receive 'payment in kind', which Schedule One of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997, Section 4 (1), indicates is: still a form of 'legitimate' payment in South Africa and still in effect from the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1983.

It must be noted, however, that the yearly division of the above salary for adult educators into a monthly wage, is a misleading one. It suggests that adult educators are paid on a monthly basis, after a monthly

rendering of services. This is not the case. With late payment of salaries being the 'norm' rather than the exception, despite this practice's being in contravention of existing labour legislation and contractual principles (See Employment Acts cited above), it is legitimate to say that adult educators often do not receive salaries owed to them until some three months after they have rendered a service at a 'night school' (PALC) site.

If one were to take this year as a case study example, adult educators who provided a service last year, were last paid in November of 1997. As no adult educators, at the time of writing this research paper, have yet been paid this year, those who were in service last year have not received a salary for some seven months now. Those adult educators who 'would have' begun service at the beginning of January this year, are without payment after some five months, so that remuneration of educators and the late payment of their salaries are still valid issues of concern. The continual problems around remuneration indicate to adult educators that they are held in little esteem by the education department for the valuable work they do with adult learners.

It is indeed surprising then that there are still adult educators who work regardless of these irregularities, without pay and without recognition. Even so, these educators' good intentions and commitment towards adult learners at public learning centres, is to the benefit of an education

department that exploits the sensibilities of its employees. Needless to say, the failure to compensate employees timeously is an irregularity which I find to be unacceptable. However, if adult education is to be sustained and it is to succeed in future: this practice must be changed.

Who is to 'Teach' Adult Learners?

An additional consideration, in respect of the above disenfranchisement of educators, is also a subsequent Memorandum to Circular 13 of 1998 (as cited above), which was issued by the Gauteng Department of Education on March 4, 1998. This Memorandum, is unnumbered but entitled: 'Appointment of Unemployed Educators at Adult Learning Centres' (I refer to it then as the AUEALC Memorandum). It stipulates that:

'no-one gainly employed within the youth school sector may work in the adult education sector and that only 'unemployed educators' may be employed in the adult education sector' (Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)(1998) AUEALC Memorandum).

This Memorandum (GDE: 1998, AUEALC) is premised then on the notion that 'unemployed educators' are inherently 'fit', *in and of themselves*, to be employed over and above other employed educators, irregardless of the reasons and/or causes for their 'state of unemployment'. An

educator 'fairly dismissed' with 'good cause' in a previous post, stands to gain by this move, as, should this educator re-appointed, there would be no stipulated need to investigate the extent to which the cause for a previous dismissal might have, or might not have been addressed; nor would there be need to establish, in the interests of the learners, whether the same 'cause' might not simply re-occur by virtue of its not having been previously addressed.

I find then, this blanket induction of 'unemployed educators' into the adult education system a curious one, as it is likely to work to the detriment of the adult learner audience, which should surely be a priority if not *the* priority with respect to adult learner provisioning and facilitation delivery.

Jarvis (1988) and Knowles (1990) agree on the point that adult learner provisioning is - or should be rather - substantially different from that provided for youth sector audiences. The above-mentioned Memorandum (GDE:1998, AUEALC) appears to claim some concern in this respect. By not allowing for the appointment of educators that do teach and are employed in the youth school sector in the day, the underlying assumption is that educators from the youth school sector are likely to uncritically transfer their day practices to the evening adult learner audience. And, while this may be true for *some* educators, this is not

true for *all* educators who may 'double-up' and provide a service as both youth(/`day') educators and as adult(/`night') educators.

Indeed, the possibility that some educators may uncritically transfer practices, must also be put into context. A point to consider is that the matriculation certification examination offered through adult 'public learning centres' is *exactly the same* as that given to youth school sector learners. What this means for the adult learner when responding to examination questions, is that the adult is shuttled into the subject positioning of a youth. Questions for a composition section in an English 'second-language' examination, may require learners to write about a school sports day, or ask learners to expand on their plans for the future 'when they grow up', while they might well be grandmothers or grandfathers at the time of sitting for this matriculation examination at a Public Learning Centre (PALC).

Clearly, these are practices which are insulting to the adult learner. These transference practices from the youth school sector to the adult learning sector do not account for the interests, needs and already 'grown' life experiences of adult learners. However, in this, it is the State that is setting the tone for practices to be transferred from the youth school sector *unchanged* to the adult learning sector, and not the adult educators themselves. This is a point that the AUEALC Memorandum

(GDE:1998) implicitly denies. Indeed, whether adult educators are 'employed' or 'unemployed' is irrelevant to this fact. Unless the uncritical transference of practices from the youth school sector by the ORF (/Bernstein Official Recontextualisation Field) to the adult education sector is challenged, the dignity of the adult learner will continue to be compromised.

From the Youth School Sector to Adult Education: An Uncritical State Transference of Curriculum Guidelines.

If the final exit examination is uncritically transferred to adult education from the youth sector, one is not surprised when with reference to the curriculum itself, one sees a similar transference of practices. The AET Directorate (1997b), in its new *Policy Document*, states that it has adopted 8 learning areas for adult learning curriculum development, out of a set of 12 fields identified in the earlier South African Qualifications Act of 1995 (SAQA)(See AET Directorate:1997b, 21). The Directorate goes on to say that:

"A similar set of eight learning areas has been adopted for school education at Level 1 of NQF (the National Qualifications Framework)" (AET Directorate:1997b, 22)(my emphasis and bracketed addition for the acronym).

What this statement fails to acknowledge is that the 'set of learning areas adopted for the school youth sector' is not only similar to the one adopted for the adult learning sector, but, at present, is *exactly the same*. Categories or fields not covered by the curriculum for adult learning, but present at other higher level bands for Further and Higher education, are to do with the 'Law, Health sciences, social services and computer science' (See AET Directorate: 1997b, 21). In my earlier discussion on Habermas' identification of the colonisation of the lifeworld, these are precisely the domains (with the exception of the autonomous domain of Art, not mentioned at these higher level curriculum bands) which he highlights as being increasingly specialised and closely guarded by 'experts'. However, in light of the global trend of differentiation, an education system said to be concerned with equity and addressing imbalances should be attempting to place learners in good stead with respect to these domains, rather than reproducing and thereby ensuring, in all probability, learners' marginalisation in relation to these domains.

These omitted areas from the adult learner curriculum are areas then that I propose as key for the development of an adult learning curriculum that is less restricted. I believe that an adult education curriculum should be sufficiently theorised and researched beyond that which is designed for the school youth sector. Adults have needs that are more pragmatic, where they need to apply what they learn more immediately

in relation to the world outside of the classroom. In the South African context such an adult education curriculum could be closer to street law and health programmes, for example, where *real* concerns of learners might be addressed through the kind of provisioning that builds on the *real* prior learning of adult learners and which then calls it into play, without the 'everyday' knowledges of the learner being discredited because of their 'non-expert' status in relation to the official view. I believe that less 'puerile' forms of knowledge must be generated and encouraged, in contrast to present curricula which maintain and perpetuate marginalisation across key domains which in relation to global trends are becoming highly differentiated and more exclusive. Not providing a base in computer science for example is to the detriment of the South African adult learner when it is the mental labourer that is being sought out in the job market. Additionally, classes conducted around street law issues could usefully build on promoting adult learners who are more self-sufficient and more fully aware of their legal entitlements, so that when the need arises recourse might be sought by learners themselves (See Bundy (1987) on 'Street Sociology and Pavement Politics', and then see Dowling (1992) for a critique on calls for the greater inclusion of 'public domain material' into learning curricula).

Indeed, my own work with learners as exemplified by the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* project (See Appendix One) follows this line of thinking.

Through this project and the opportunities it makes for voice, learners build on prior learning (PL) and bring to bear their public domain knowledges on a vast array of complex subjects: racism, sexism, health, Aids, crime, and adult education in a meaningful, open way in the classroom. Rather than they being marginalised out of these domains into a state of voicelessness because of the exclusionary trend of differentiation as identified by Habermas, learners acquire a new status as new and valid 'experts' in their own right. Such a project, making the most of process learning, also forges valuable 'inroads' towards equity, while yet encouraging the further problematisation of 'gains' made by learners. Growth is then a continuous quest, rather than a 'once off' 'outcome' achieved, tabulated and neatly forgotten.

In respect of the State transference of curricula, however, an important difference to note is that while the curriculum framework for both the youth school and the adult learning sector are at present the same, the youth school sector does have prescribed textbooks in co-ordination with their curriculum. The adult education sector, on the other hand, is largely without prescribed textbooks that are its own and which cater adequately to the adult learner audience. And, while it may be agreed that textbooks alone do not solve all the problems of adult education provisioning, textbooks are and can still be useful aids to learning and as a point of reference can act as forms of learning area guideline. The lack

of substantial differentiation in *real* terms in both the curriculum and the final exit examination (I posit that the lauded AET Directorate (1997a) *Multi-Year Implementation Plan* does not fulfil my 'real terms' qualification) and the fact that resources (monetary and human) are impossibly scant in the adult learning sector are two topical issues in adult education which 'smack' of structural violence by their very lack and possibly, however unconsciously: ageism and classism in respect of the department's neglect and failure to account to the adult learner audience as an audience that matters and as an audience that is made to feel as such. At present, few adult learners have this perception.

The Need for Resources and Political Will.

Janet Orlek (1993), in her Critical Language Awareness materials book for the youth school sector, highlights 'how Afrikaans became one of the fastest growing languages because resources were poured into its development' (Orlek:1993, 18). By extension, if the adult learning sector is to function to the benefit of adult learners, more financial resources must be poured into its running, management and curricular contents. Rather than 'sacking' adult educators who are also employed in the youth school sector, a more pro-active quality assurance measure would be to ensure that committed educators received adequate training so that they could work with and through adult learners' needs as the starting

point for praxis. By contrast, the current approach is to direct lessons from teacher-created worksheets that are from the perspective of an: 'if I were a horse approach' that has no foundational basis and/or merit (See Street (1995) for a contestation of out-dated anthropological methods as they are also uncritically applied in education). In other words, these are worksheets which are compiled from a position of dominance, at once alienating and out of touch with real learner realities, needs and levels of competency. From this position, the learner is negatively pre-constructed as 'intellectually challenged', so that activities are often too simplistic to be of use in the real world that learners inhabit, engage with and make sense of creatively and critically on a daily basis.

The above-mentioned Memorandum's assumption (GDE:1998, AUEALC) that 'unemployed youth school sector educators' will be less likely, without training, to transfer pedagogic methods wholesale to the andragogic setting, simply by virtue of the fact of their being unemployed, is no quality assurance at all on the government's side and, as pure speculation without a critical examination of its own practices, to ground structural adjustments in the adult education field on such an unscientific assumption is both iniquitous and dishonest professional practice. Additionally, trained practitioners in adult education are yet a rare 'commodity'. And while this is a reality which must be changed if adult learners are to benefit, there is yet little incentive to become an

adult education practitioner given the present problems.

To recap briefly on what I have said thus far, the figures and above considerations around which I have outlined certain contentions, whether from the perspective of the adult learner and/or from that of the adult educator, indicate that the government, thus far, has been shockingly lax and garbled in re-contextualising adequately the adult education field. On the positive side, it has certainly generated much discussion, albeit heated. This discussion is however little more than 'hot air' if it does not lead to beneficial action for both the adult learner and educator alike.

Before continuing and without wishing to labour the point exhaustively, I take the opportunity to submit here, that over and above previously mentioned clauses under the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) in my discussion so far, I wish to add that, insofar as both adult learners *and* adult learner practitioners are concerned, recent actions by the Department of Education have been in contravention of additional learner and educators' rights. I gloss over these other infringements in relation to the Constitution (Act 108:1996), as I think that their mention may be of some use. This is so, particularly as I believe that one must see these actions as being extensions of the constraints and limitations placed on the adult education sector in South Africa in both the recent

past and the present, by the State's alignment to a crippling, macro-economic plan of 'fiscal discipline and reduced social expenditure' known by the name of GEAR (Growth Employment and Re-distribution). Ms Gugu Nxumalo, Director of Adult Education and Training at the National Department of Education, laments a relative state of powerlessness when she says for example that the National annual budget for adult education in 1998 is 68 million rands (Gugu Nxumalo, National Director of Adult Education and Training, personal communication, AETASA 2nd Annual Practitioners' Conference, Cape Town, September 25, 1998). This is a 'drop in the ocean', when one compares this figure with estimates that calculate that the implementation of projects outlined in the Directorate's *Multi-Year Implementation Plan* (AET Directorate:1997a) will require at least 5 billion rands to carry out the targets set for the year 2001. These actions and the contradictory alignment devices used by the State in accordance with this plan, are then to be seen as forms of continuity that have benefited neither the adult learner nor the adult educator to date.

Using the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) then, I list a number of additional contraventions under it for consideration, believing that one might refer to these following sections in the Constitution to lobby support for the adult education sector, as through them it becomes clear that this sector has not been given its due. I highlight broadly the following four Constitutional clauses:

- i) Section 195 (1) of Chapter 10, Act 108, as it relates to Public Administration and democratic principles and values. Section 195 sub-sections (c) and (h) particularly as they stipulate that action should be 'development oriented' and conducted with the intent of 'maximising and managing *well* the human resource potential' of the citizenry;
- ii) Section 10 as it relates to dignity;
- iii) Section 22 as it relates to 'the freedom of trade, occupation and profession of (adult) citizens' (*my bracketed addition*),
and,
- iv) Section 33 (1) as it relates to Just Administrative Action insofar as the provincial government's conduct in dealing with the provision of adult education has been inadequate at the same time as funds have been mismanaged, and salaries have been paid late or not at all for some adult educators.

On this last point, at a recent meeting where concerned educators met with departmental officials to discuss the non-payment of salaries at Maryvale College, September 3, 1998, Gauteng Department of Education officials excused this breach of contract by saying that some salaries of

adult educators had not been paid because clerks working in the department had most probably not yet verified these educators' qualifications. Another 'official' reason given to disgruntled educators was that salary clerks are overloaded. They sometimes break for coffee and then forget which name they were at, so that it is for this reason that some salary cheques have not been processed for some nine months now!

Clearly such departmental ineptitude cannot be excused, yet it is the educators who bear the penalty of these practices. Practitioners, when presenting their grievances as above, are moreover asked to accept 'their' predicament with patience and understanding, as if were entirely normal and acceptable that educators should be hired by the department, for example, without any verification of their qualifications. Meanwhile, those who have been hired continue to work with this verification and their salary payments pending. Many problems could be perhaps alleviated if the Adult Education and Training Department invested in acquiring an efficient data base system, though presumably before this could be possible a change of attitude in making adult education a national priority would also be required. Until then, it appears that the payment of adult educators' salaries for one will remain at the whim of the *same* departmental clerks who do *manage* to pay youth school educators timeously. Perhaps there are not coffee breaks at this time(!).

A cursory look at international undertakings within an enabling and regulatory, contractual framework also supports what I have said above in weighing the South African education department's neglect and mismanagement against the rights entrenched for all citizens by the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996). I am hopeful that the mention of the clauses below from the international frame, as I find them pertinent, will help articulate and construct a discourse ethics based on 'the force of the better argument' (Habermas) to favour a South African adult education sector in urgent need of redress, social justice and rights that take it *on its own merits* rather than as a burden second to youth sector education.

I find then the text of the 'Convention Against Discrimination in Education' (See Brownlie:1992, 318-9) of use. Of particular interest is Article 1, as it relates to discrimination, and under this, sub-articles: (a), (b) and (d). I am aware, however, that given the Limitation clause of Section 36 of our own Constitution (Act 108 of 1996)(See South African Institute of Race Relations:1996/97 Bill of Rights Report, 133-5), this clause of the Constitution will favour the government in most instances. This is so, as the interpretation of this clause stipulates that a 'valid limitation' need no longer be shown as being also a 'necessary' one. So that, for example, an objection to the closure of adult education centres in Gauteng may be countered relatively easily by the department,

without the onus being placed on it to defend such a move against the consideration that a substantial number of actual learners at adult education centres will for example be 'left out in the cold' because of it.

By Definition - Who Are Adult Learners? And, Who

'Benefits' by this Definition?

To continue my discussion, I asked above the question: 'Who are adult learners?' I would like to turn to this consideration, by suggesting that a first response may be elicited from the AET Directorate (1997a) itself, which, within its new National *Multi-Year Implementation Plan*, defines the adult learner as the following:

"adults and out-of-school youth, aged 15 years and older, who have had no or inadequate schooling" (AET Directorate:1997a, 12).

This definition sets the age of an individual entitled to adult learner provision and access *below* the threshold of all other definitions of the adult in the international context, except the biological one (See Knowles (1990) for useful descriptions of 'the adult' with respect to legal, social and psychological definitions (Knowles:1990, 57)). As such, the AET Directorate (1997a) definition favours highly, in a contradictory turn, the 'youth', rather than the 'adult'. Certainly, what a 'youth' and what an 'adult' is, will be shown below as being categories of some dispute.

Looking across official documents in the South African context, one finds that definitions contradict rather than concur in attempting to define what is an adult and what is a youth so that at the end of the day it appears that both category groups are neither 'here' nor 'there'. One category group may be protected under one document, but not another, so that depending on which contractual frame may hold sway in a particular context, the absence of protection under one document may be decisive and therefore less than beneficial for a group unable to achieve both equity and access in the field of education because of a loophole.

In the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), what the term 'youth' means is glossed over alongside the duties of that youthhood. Section 31 (1) identifies that a school youth must attend school compulsorily until 'the last day of school' in the year in which that youth has already turned or will turn fifteen or reach the 'ninth grade' (standard seven). This allowance is valid for whichever of the two criteria comes first, that is to say *before* the matriculation year which is outside the parameters set up by the definition of the term *basic education* (South African Government, Act 84:1996).

By Definition 'Basic Education' Does Not Include a
Matriculation Examination.

The matriculation year is, then, as I have already indicated above, not within the provision of basic education, so that the AET *Multi-Year Implementation Plan* (AET Directorate:1997a), by definition, makes *special* allowance for youth, to receive 'a more than basic education' under the basic provision for adult education. I have already identified that the adult education sector is a highly under-resourced sector within the domain of education generally, and particularly in relation to youth sector education in South Africa. It seems irregular then that a special allowance should be made for the 'youth' through the most under-resourced education sector (adult education), when this *same* allowance is not made explicitly, in similar terms, for the 'youth' to receive a 'more than basic education' under their own school youth sector provisioning *per se*.

Of the two sectors at present, the school youth sector is most likely, theoretically, to be more able to provide for and be able to cope with the demand for matriculation level provisioning. This is so, precisely because of the heightened funding and political will directed towards this sector, outside of and to the detriment of the quality of provision - at the Official Recontextualisation Field (/ORF) level in any case - for adult education.

This sustained political will towards the youth sector in education owes much to the media for the way that this sector is perceived and favoured by the general public, and then the State at the present moment.

A further cause of discontent, under the special provision made for youth, presented as 'honourary adults' above, is that adult education carries with it then, a further stigmatisation (See Cresswell (1998), 'Night Schools in Crisis', in her *Star* article on how 'finger-pointing' is the government's response to expressions of dissatisfaction with respect to the government's lack of provision for adult learners' needs)(See also Williams (1997b) Augustin (1997) and Gilmore (1997) for perspectives on 'the construction of deviance' by the State in respect of blackwomen in the American context, as these considerations are valid here as well). This stigmatisation relates to the 'burden' of high matriculation failure rates, which are, by and large, attributed to adult learning centres.

This negative stigmatisation is possible, insofar as individuals who have already failed the external matriculation examination, are able to come *straight from* a youth school failure into the adult education matriculation exam provisioning without monitoring or a required need to attend adult learning centre classes. It follows then, that as adult learning classes are largely by-passed under this provision, it cannot be said that failure rates are necessarily attributable to poor facilitation

within adult learning centres *per se*. This technicality is however conveniently overlooked so that this is what is most often presented as being the case. Adult learning centres are made then to shoulder a blame not entirely theirs, but attributable rather to factors over which they have little control. Proponents of the sector are themselves recommending criteria that would qualify a centre for funding according to an output formula. Under such a formula, the low numbers of successful learner passes, taken at face value for most learning areas, could disqualify many centres from receiving State funding when it is the system itself that needs to be overhauled *in toto*. Formulaic solutions are likely to disadvantage many centres as they will ignore the particular needs that arise in particular socio-cultural contexts and learner communities.

This is a moot point, as, politicking around the argument of high failure rates is presently being used, by detractors, to have adult education centres and the AET Directorate closed down entirely.

I do not find that this would be an equitable solution to problems within the adult education sector, but fear, given the present lack of close scrutiny in this regard, that this may very well become the case. Should this happen, youths will still be favoured to a large degree through youth sector provisioning, but adults' needs will be endlessly deferred, *ad infinitum*.

At present, there is provision for adults, but this is a provisioning continually under the threat that 'strategic action' (in Habermas' terms) will be taken to eliminate adult education provisioning entirely, as this may be considered the most 'efficient way of dealing with problems that require more resources, time, complex considerations and recontextualisations', than the sector is being granted at present (See above discussion on 'strategic action' and Heerden (1994:308; 315 and 323)).

The argument of those who are opposed to present adult sector (State and/or State-aided) provisioning is that, as the sector is fraught with so many contradictions already, it is 'far too much work to rectify'. Stated more crudely, I have heard the view expressed that: 'Adults will die soon anyway, so why be concerned?' (sic) (Dr Mabandla Mmoleledi (1998)(*not his real name*) personal communication, Johannesburg, August 23, 1997. I do not name my interlocutor by his real name here, for ethical reasons).

Indeed, these expressions add 'fuel to the fire', but again they are not unique. I have on file with me a similar written response from the present Gauteng MEC of Education, Mary Metcalfe, stating, rather blatantly, and to the following effect after I objected to the temporary closure of adult education centres in Gauteng at the beginning of the year: 'that *if* I am so concerned about adult education provision, I should just continue to

work for free' (sic)! (Mary Metcalfe MEC for Education, Gauteng Department of Education, 27 January, 1998, documentation on file with this researcher)(See my earlier concluding remarks in the section entitled: "Implications of the Shortened Year in PALC's for Educators", which demarcate this departmental stance as being exploitative and entirely unsatisfactory).

The Need for A Change of Attitude.

Coming from the Official Recontextualisation Field (/ORF, Bernstein), these are responses which set the tone for adult education and which remain as barriers towards transformation. As critics of Habermas have asked whether a 'global change of attitude' is possible, so too, must this question be asked in relation to the provision for adult education, given the 'present moment' and its difficulties within the South African 'glocal' context.

To understand more fully to what the term 'glocal' refers, see Peter Scott's discussion (1997) on current 'changing-world' considerations, specifically with reference to the field of further education. I maintain that these are important trends that need to be considered as well, with respect to (adult) basic education. As further education is undergoing a redefinition of its 'boundaries', aims and 'outcomes', so too must adult

education account for a vastly changing 'glocalised' world in its provisioning. 'Glocalisation' may be understood in broad terms as being: 'a combination of the local and the global, which is not simply reducible to considerations of changing systems of technology alone'. Other considerations relate to changed perceptions of time, where the future is largely seen as being a 'achronic' extension of the present, for example' (Scott:1997, 11).

Certification for Adults.

A possible solution to the above-mentioned disputes could be proffered under the suggestion that adult learning centres should have an adult matriculation-level examination, as soon as possible. This examination may be presented at a National level, but must stem from thoroughly adequate 'andragogic' recontextualisations (See Bernstein on 'pedagogical re-contextualisations') to meet adult learners' needs and to understand these needs as valid and worthy, *in and of themselves*. These needs and the provisioning that it calls forth cannot be regarded as a perpetual 'add-on' to the youth sector and its needs, as if this kind of provision were also 'what adults *really* do need'. I have suggested already that it is not. Additionally, such a final exit examination should be more in touch with glocal trends (Scott:1997, 11) so that learners find themselves in good stead with changing systems of technology not just brick-laying (!).

This andragogically-based examination - if we are indeed to operate under the assumption that nation-wide examinations are still necessary for purposes of certification - could consider much more closely, for example, processes such as those with which I have been involved to engage learners towards heightened senses of self-direction and communicative social action (See Knowles (1990) on the need for adults to be self-directing (Knowles:1990, 58-9)).

I believe that adult learners' participation in the creation of new curriculum designs for adult learners themselves is integral. My work with learners through the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* project (See Appendix One, particularly the editorial on the first page) shows that learners know what they want and that they want to have a say, not just on material in the classroom, but on community life more broadly. Through the newspaper project, learners engaged in communicative action in the hope of making a positive impact on social domains which were important to them. They did this within the institutional social space of the classroom, whose 'traditional' formal boundaries were pushed by their own positive action and critical discourse articulations.

Before I turn to examine these processes in more detail, I wish to turn firstly to the AET (Adult Education and Training) Directorate's 'designated groups' section (AET Directorate:1997a), as this is an

extension of my earlier discussion above with respect to the inadequacies of the *Employment Equity Bill's* 'designated groups' section (Department of Labour:1997, 12), and my discussion on how the present organisation and provisioning guidelines in adult education favour the youth primarily *before* they favour adults. This is a curious turn as I have iterated that it is adults who have been longer disadvantaged by the system, in the South African context, than the youth *per se*. Some of today's adults who have heeded a call to return to learning now were the youth of 1976.

Definitions Out of Synchronicity: What is a 'Child'?

Present definitions between what is a 'youth' and what is an 'adult' are being axiated around the contestable age of fifteen. A reasonable contestation of this young age might be proffered from the plans to outlaw 'child labour' in the South African context. Outlawing child labour would arguably create different options for 'children' than those presently available and open to abuse. At present the options for a 'youth' are those of ostensibly having to work at fifteen and/or having to attend 'night school' *as an* 'adult'. The early 'cut off date' at age fifteen in youth sector provisioning for education in the South African context (South African Government, Act 84:1996) goes against world trends. A concern is that set against these world trends, the country as a whole will be less competitive than it could be if its potential were maximised.

It is rather a world trend that educational needs require longer periods of training, not shorter ones. I wonder then how a 'life-long learning culture' is to be inculcated by proposed early 'options out' of a 'learning culture' that the Department of Education, in its rhetoric, also proposes should be nurtured and put in place in a co-ordinated way by the citizenry and the State itself. On age definitions in currency, see my discussion above, as well as the Department of Labour's *Employment Equity Bill* (1997). In the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997) under Section 43(1), sub-sections (a) and (b), there is a 'prohibition on child-labour' with the term 'child' being defined as someone who may be fifteen years of age "or older" (*my emphasis*) (For further specifications, see as well Sections 44(1) and (2), *Employment Equity Bill*, Department of Labour: 1997).

It will be noted here, then, that by this definition, someone 'fifteen years or older' is both legally 'not fit' for employment, and is termed as being: neither a 'youth' nor an 'adult' *per se*, but a 'child'. Through this subtle differentiation in the *Employment Equity Bill* (Department of Labour:1997), this definition is contrary to the Department of Education's present definitions as discussed above (South African Government, Act 84:1996 and AET Directorate:1997a, 12), but is more in conformity with International standards. See also then, Brownlie (1992) on the 'Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave trade, and

Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956', Article 1(d), where an eighteen year old may still be considered a 'child' (Brownlie:1992, 59). The 'International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1966', Article 10 (3) (Brownlie:1992, 117); and, the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989', Article 32 *in toto* (Brownlie:1992, 194), follow a similar vein (See also then the Ministry of Welfare (1997), 'White Paper for Social Welfare', Chapter 8, Section 1, sub-sections (34-5) where a consideration of socio-economic variables at multiple levels feed more usefully and holistically into definitions that are more complex and inclusive and which point then to new forms of systemic integration; and, see finally Schneider (1997) on 'hyper-segregation' and the lack of acknowledgement of difference as "a violation of human dignity" (Schneider:1997, 11)).

I do not mean to suggest then that my concern with entrenching rights is only concerned with 'the adult' and not the youth as well. I make many of the above statements in relation to my experiences, between the years of 1990-4, as an educator in the 'Coloured' township of Eldorado Park which is situated geographically next to that of Soweto, while Soweto is the more internationally re-knowned of the two because of the political counter-hegemonic responses of youth in the school protests of 1976 which objected to the compulsory use of Afrikaans in schools. On June 16, 1976, the police, in using coercive force, massacred child protesters.

To speak briefly on the 'less known' of the two townships, I have found that socio-economic conditions within the township of Eldorado Park are poor to the degree that they also impact negatively on education provisioning for the youth in the area. In my experience there as a language practitioner, I had, for example, in my level six classes (grade eight, as this is the first Standard level within secondary high school provisioning in South Africa), learners who were seventeen years of age *and older*.

This 'advanced age' of learners - where 'advanced' must be here understood as referring to an age beyond the age fifteen 'stipulated' in the 1996 South African Schools Act (South African Government, Act 84:1996) - is attributable largely to the negative environmental, socio-economic conditions experienced by the Eldorado Park community, in general.

In addition to high levels of unemployment, poverty, and alcohol abuse, Eldorado Park is a township stigmatised by outside communities because of its reputation for high levels of gangsterism and violence. A result of this stigmatisation is that outside responses to these problems tend to marginalise the whole Eldorado Park community rather than isolate and target the criminal elements within it (See Chris Barron (1994), 'A Child's View of the Daily Horror of Life in Townships', in the

Star Sunday Times, October 16, 1994, where my and my learners' responses to these social ills attempt to show how they impact negatively on the youth within the community as a generation of youth losing hope of finding a place outside of an all-consuming cycle of violence, crime and frustration as it relates to a perception of political powerlessness and historical marginalisation) (See also Wing and Willis (1997) for their work on gangs as it relates to female gangs in the United States, as similar trends are identifiable in Eldorado Park with such female gang groups as the 'Makavela girls' (Wing and Willis:1997, 243-54). It is my perception, however, after having visited the United States in the middle of 1998 and after having 'compared notes' with an MA thesis student, Susan Phillips, who had researched work on gangs in Los Angeles, that levels of violence as experienced and generated by youth gangs in Eldorado Park are far more intense and brutal on an on-going basis than those in the United States. This is despite the fact that some of these gangs initially role-modelled themselves on American examples)(See also the Ministry of Welfare (1997) Section 1, sub-section (69)(m), on its pertinent call for the need 'to reclaim youth from gangs' (Ministry of Welfare:1997)).

Enforcing then a school-leaving age of fifteen, allows for the heightened possibility that 'youths' from the most disadvantaged and marginalised of communities may be 'forced out' of any youth school sector provisioning for education, legitimately, without they ever, for example,

having finished primary school. Given what many youth are up against, the South African Schools Act (South African Government, Act 84:1996) reference to the achievement of a school 'grade nine' - a Standard seven - level of basic education by age fifteen is an 'allowance' that seems to cater for only those learners who live in enabling learning environments already.

Youth Gender Perspective: Seeking Solutions for Young Mothers to be 'Re-absorbed', if possible, into the Youth School Sector as a First Option.

Indeed, given 'high' pregnancy rates reported in late primary and early senior secondary schools (See the Ministry of Welfare's 'White Paper for Social Welfare' (1997) Chapter 8, Section 1, sub-sections: (60-2), (69), and related sections on gender: (69)(h) and (k); Section 2, sub-sections: (83-9), (94), (98), (99); and, Section 3, sub-sections (105) and (114) (Ministry of Welfare:1997)) as they relate to gender and disability, gender equitable allowances must also be made for school 'girls' to return to youth sector learning *if they should so choose* after age fifteen. A good reason for this is that youth sector provisioning is often more readily available in most areas at present than that of the 'night school' or the Public Adult Learning Centre (PALC); and, secondly, young mothers may not wish to be 'split' from their peer group indefinitely at a young age.

To expand here briefly on my former point that State and/or State-aided adult education provisioning is a scarcity in most areas, I am not aware of a 'night school' operative in the Eldorado Park area, for example, and this has been confirmed by communication with the Gauteng Department of Education (Jan Botha, personal communication, Adult Education and Training Unit: Johannesburg, May 12, 1997).

I mention the above to highlight what many youth face, particularly young mothers in disadvantaged communities. In a section on 'Gender Equity' within a research paper focusing on education entitled: 'From Policy to Implementation: Ongoing Challenges and Constraints', Shireen Motala (1997), in collaboration with Linda Chisholm, rings alarm bells and expresses doubts as to whether the new 'Skills Bill' presently being tabled by the Department of Labour will "meet the needs of the most disadvantaged in South African society" (Motala:1997, 14). Both Motala and Chisholm share a sense of concern in this paper when they recognise the Bill's potentially negative implications for 'disadvantaged' youth in the South Africa (Motala:1997, 15, footnote 47).

The most equitable solution for both adults and youth must be sought then, rather than the putting into place a regulatory framework which imposes a hierarchy where one group is considered over and above the other, to the latter's detriment. I urge that the considerations of one

group should not be made in isolation, but that attempts should be made to favour each other group as well insofar as each is requiring of redress. For, as Wing (1997a) has indicated, these are considerations which are inter-related and requiring of 'multiple levels of consciousness to account for multiple levels of need' (Wing:1997a, 32-3). I believe that much could be achieved if rhetoricians advocating the political will of the State were to adopt an attitude and spirit that sought to engage with solutions that were more than 'just adequate', but geared towards more inclusive forms of equity and social transformation. Gender questions are still a concern.

Moves Towards Gender Equity in Adult Education? - What Statistics Say.

It is with respect to the question of gender equity, particularly, that I turn now to examine the AET Directorate's *Multi-Year Implementation Plan* (1997a). In a statistics 'youth' section in the *Plan* (AET Directorate:1997a), related to 'Learner Enrolments and Achievements' in adult education and training programmes in the recent past, a graph disaggregated by sex and age group only, shows that the attendance of women in adult education classes for the age group of 65-plus outnumbered, substantially, that of male members of the same age in Public Learning Centre classes. However, insofar as the age groups of 15 to 19, and 25 to 29 years, respectively, male members far outnumber the

attendance levels of women learners (AET Directorate:1997a, 82). It will be remembered here, that the sign 'woman' here signifies blackwomen learners, though this is not made explicit by the logic of these binaristic, statistical graphs.

**There is A Need to Manage Life-Long Learning Resources
Through A System which Makes these Resources Accessible
to ALL.**

The AET Directorate (1997a) notes firstly that in the category of learner members between the ages of 15 to 24 years, attendance with respect to both sexes is lower than is usual for 'international trends' (AET Directorate:1997, 82).

They give no explanation for this, but I hazard that this is an indicator of a more generalised lack of 'a culture of learning' both in education and without it, where other domains of daily life in South Africa, such as the productive use of 'leisure time' and resources are not accessed or encouraged with a culture of learning in mind. Knowles (1990) highlights that this problem is not entirely unique, but that to combat it there is a 'need for a new way of thinking'. Towards this end, he presents an active model for a 'Lifelong Learning Resources System', and stresses the need for the creation and promotion of 'learning communities' able to access,

cope and make optimum use of available resources within a 'world of vastly accelerated change' (Knowles:1990, 167-78). Clearly, the South African case could benefit if thinking and action were co-ordinated, as Knowles suggests (1990), to promote the accessing of resources and information as a general, life-long learning right within a system and culture geared towards reciprocal and flexible exchange rather than sterile privilege and inaccessible exclusivity or differentiation.

It is a truism that many (human) resources are left 'untapped' within the South African context, and this is partly because the policies of the past have made resources inaccessible to the majority of our population. These statements are supported by the Ministry of Welfare's statements in its recent 'White Paper on Transformation' (Ministry of Welfare:1997), in Chapter 6, sub-section clause (10), where it highlights the 'inappropriacies' of the policies of the past; and its Chapter 4, sub-section clause (7), where it speaks of the 'disparities' created and still existing today because of these policies, which entrenched 'discrimination' on multiple levels (Ministry of Welfare:1997).

The AET Directorate is 'Disturbed'.

After its silence as to why the attendance of male and female learners between the ages of 15 to 24 years at Public Learning Centres does not

conform to world trends, the AET Directorate (1997a) goes on to say that it is: 'disturbed to see the low attendance of young women between the two age category groups of 15 to 19 years and 25 to 29 years respectively', though the previously mentioned statistic informs that women are in low attendance at classes between the ages of 20 to 24 years as well (AET Directorate:1997a, 82). In this case, they do give a reason as to why women are in low attendance at 'night school' classes with respect to the two age group categories of 15 to 19 years and 25 to 29 years, and then they supplement this with a possible, if glib, solution. They say the following:

"This may be associated in the first case with teenage pregnancies and in the second with child rearing. Clearly special attention is needed to make Adult Basic Education and Training provision attractive and accessible to *such* young women" (AET Directorate:1997a, 82)(*my emphasis*).

A first point to note here is of course that as Wing and Carvalho (1997) highlight, past apartheid policies and practices of exclusion have had a long standing and mutually supportive relationship with patriarchal customary law practices. Simply making a basic education and training package 'attractive' to women will neither necessarily change women's opportunities in the structural sense nor will it change the gender-ed and

race-d habitus/dispositions or perceptions of 'appropriacy' or 'inappropriacy' that would or *would not allow* a woman to leave work and/or home environment settings to attend 'night school' classes. On a practical note, one serious flaw or 'unattractive' detail in adult night school provisioning is that there are, for example, no child-care facilities offered for women (- I would like to say 'women and men' here, but no male learner of mine has ever brought his child to class -) who would like to attend adult classes but who have no other family member able (and/or willing (?)) to care for her child(ren) at these times (See Appendix One, page two of the *Simunye Adult Newspaper*, where this problem is highlighted by learners through one of the newspaper pictures and its caption).

Indeed, work-setting practices in the South African context for domestic workers who are potential learners, are particularly inhibitive still, despite the dismantling of apartheid, on paper, since 1994. I am aware, for example, of a privately funded adult learning centre initiative being conducted near Maryvale (the adult learning site where I have been presently working), that starts classes one hour and a half later than Maryvale College, from the time of 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm, to ensure that: 'domestic workers are able to clear the table before they go to class' (!) (*sic*) (Ann Harris, project board member, personal communication, Highlands North, Johannesburg, February 3, 1998). For a female learner

attending classes at this institution, the message is clear. As a 'good' domestic worker, she must quell her thirst to learn: the table must be cleared *first* and the regularity of routine and her place in it maintained. Such an institutional practice and official view seems less than encouraging, particularly when it upholds a less than satisfactory status quo that caters to the convenience of employers with seeming little regard for a domestic worker's advancement in the field of learning.

Given the inconsistency of many of the AET Directorate's statements in its new policy documents (AET Directorate:1997a and 1997b) - where to give an example: they state in the *Plan* (AET Directorate:1997a, 295, endnote 17) that present high levels of 'illiteracy' in the country are due to the 'upsurge' of 'illegal immigrants and migrants from neighbouring countries in Africa' (*sic*); this is said while yet none of their published statistical work shows any disaggregation or comparison between 'local' and 'other' or 'illegal' members' 'literacy levels', so that one becomes curious to know on what basis this seemingly xenophobic statement is made - and given its lack of direction in terms of pressing for *real* structural change, I would not be surprised to find the AET Directorate lauding the Highlands North adult education institutional practice of beginning adult education classes late in the evening as an 'accommodation' that is both 'attractive' for female learners and 'domestic worker friendly'.

I would rather see classes starting earlier, however, so that domestic worker/learners would not be exhausted when they 'sit to learn'. An earlier starting time would also alleviate evening problems of transportation, where the taxis that are commonly referred to as 'black taxis' run less frequently at night for example. Because the fares for these taxis are cheaper than the traditional meter taxis, however, it is this form of transport that most learners will use. Additionally, if classes could end at an earlier time in the evening, the potential danger of violent assault, particularly for women learners returning home after class sessions, would be lessened (See my later reference to a needs analysis interview with Zandile Radebe of the Alexandra women's hostel. In this interview, Zandile drove home the point that attendance at adult education classes in the evenings meant the perverse choice of placing the desire to learn before considerations for her own personal safety (Needs Analysis Interview One: Zandile Radebe, in the section of this research entitled: 'Gynaegogy Needs: A Brief Look at What Learners Said')).

Given its Own Statistics, Does the AET Directorate Target Young Women?

In their designated groups section in the *Plan*, the AET Directorate (1997a:12-3) does not target specifically 'young women', let alone

blackwomen, between the age group ranges mentioned in their statistics section above of women who are between the ages of 15 to 29 years. When women *are* targeted, it is women who are either 'disadvantaged' or with 'special needs', but "*over the age of 30* " (AET Directorate:1997a, 13)(*my emphasis*). Such an artificial demarcation suggests that you cannot be a women under thirty years of age with gender-specific needs in the field of education. I have already examined briefly some of these needs in relation to youth sector provisioning in education, so that my identification of these needs indicates that this is not the case. Gender disparities must be addressed at *all* levels of education and for *all* age level categories of learners.

Instead, however, for these age group categories between the ages of 15 to 29 years, the AET Directorate (1997a) targets two kinds of 'youth' for adult education and training provision: 'disadvantaged youth' and 'youth with special needs'. Of these two 'unsexed' categories, the first relates to:

"Persons between the ages of 15 and 30 years who have been unable to access or complete primary schooling" (AET Directorate:1997a, 13).

A problematic first consequence of this categorisation is that

disadvantaged adult women below the threshold age of thirty become a sub-set of, and secondary to, a youth categorisation that by the function of their incorporation into it will spell that in all likelihood they will not be seen on their own merits (Iglesias:1997, 328). Here, the essentialist world that Harris (1997:11) speaks against is divided between those who are 'only interested in gender and those who are only interested in the youth', where levels of concern are incongruous with 'lived' realities of marginalisation and mechanistically 'staged' with the youth as a focus of 'primary' concern, as if 'womanhood' was incompatible with 'youthhood'.

Additionally, what this designated group identification does not acknowledge, besides the sex of the designated group member (!), is that, in instances of teenage motherhood particularly, it will have been the education system's inequitable gender penalties for teenage motherhood and its age restrictions, still operative today, that are likely to have impacted on the inability of young women, falling within this age group categorisation, to complete levels of schooling from 'primary school' upwards.

If the word 'persons' in the 'disadvantaged youth' group target cited above is to be understood as a veiled and unlexicalised (!) possible targeting of young (black)women particularly, 'motherhood' nonetheless becomes a form of 'disadvantage, deviance and/or disability' by this

definition (See Roberts (1997a) for a contestation of a common negative valuation, as it is frequently and differentially applied to blackmothers in the American context, where I believe her statements carry some validity here as well (Roberts:1997a, 312-16)).

As with social welfare cases in the United States, a consequence of this negative labelling of young (black)motherhood is that it is accompanied by a strategy which places the fault of the system, in marginalising young (black)women particularly, squarely on the shoulders of the 'youth' as if it were *their* 'disadvantage' and as if they had wrought exclusion and marginalisation, *in and of* themselves.

Indeed, in the above AET document (AET Directorate:1997a), women who fall pregnant or rear children before age thirty are referred to as "*such* young women" (AET Directorate:1997a, 82)(*my emphasis*), where 'such' appears to correlate with a valuation of 'inappropriacy' and prohibition. In any case, whichever reading one makes, possible causes of 'disadvantage' are conveniently not examined nor themselves addressed by this first target definition.

It is, however, perhaps the case that the AET Directorate (1997a) means to target teenage mothers *implicitly* (!) under their target group definition of 'youth with special needs'. This group designation, must be

examined briefly as well then. It reads as follows:

“Persons between the ages of 15 and 30 years who have been or are in prison, in places of safety, in shelters, on farms, etc. and who have been unable to access or complete primary schooling” (AET Directorate: 1997a, 13).

Here, if we are to posit that teenage mothers are targeted under the above categorisation, it seems that motherhood is a ‘circumstance’ congruent with ‘imprisonment’ and is still associable with some form of ‘deviance’ and/or crime. Insofar as ‘other’ possible forms of ‘special need’ are concerned, questions of ‘substance abuse’ are not asked, much less answered here, unless this consideration is relatable to the ‘places of safety’ clause above (See Ministry of Welfare (1997), ‘White Paper for Social Welfare’, Chapter 8, Section 1, sub-section clauses (36-7) on ‘youth’ substance abuse (Ministry of Welfare:1997))(See also Roberts (1997b) for a useful discussion on trends in the legal and social rights denial of ‘womanhood’ to women who are addicts, black and mothers, where I do not think the United States is alone in this tendency towards stigmatisation (Roberts:1997b, 127-35))(For related research from the British context, see also Klee (1996) for a discussion on how drug-injecting women are marginalised by their male counterparts under ‘patriarchal norms and expectations’ which are likely to increase their

chances of HIV infection and pregnancy. I add this as a useful descriptor of some pertinent issues to be addressed in relation to gender studies and 'lived' realities in the South African context as well (Klee:1996, 166)).

A brief point to draw out here then is that a 'youth' or young woman may have learning needs as well as psychological and/or physical condition needs where combinations of circumstance relatable to pregnancy, HIV infection and/or substance abuse are more likely than not, given: the 'lived' differential of power women experience under the burden of patriarchal norms and expectations of (in-)appropriacy in relation to *particular* gender-ed and race-d selves and *particular* socio-cultural contexts.

By contrast, the above AET Directorate's definition (AET Directorate:1997a, 13) seems to target *particular areas* where needs *may be found*, but is **silent** on the *particular kinds of needs* that it expects to find, cater for and support. I suggest that a narrow, functional attachment to a 'context of situation', in Malowinski's terms (Halliday and Hasan:1989), is of little use here. I highlight, however, some possible needs for consideration as they may be found in combination rather than in isolation when situated within "wider political, cultural, economic, social processes and ideologies" (Street:1995, 163) in relation to gender and power. The AET Directorate's two definitions devoted to 'the youth in

general' (AET Directorate:1997a, 13) are then not particularly helpful as gender-specific problems and needs are not articulated explicitly nor are they targeted within the field of education and/or the wider processes of the social formation. This has serious implications.

Earlier I said that naming was a first violence, however, if policy planning is to be socially responsible in keeping symbolic and structural violence at bay then the failure to name these needs is itself a form of violence which is likely to result in learners' needs being overlooked and ultimately then inaction stemming from neglect in the Official Recontextualisation Field (/ORF, Bernstein). My concern here is primarily those needs which are gender-specific as they may affect, hinder or reduce optimum possibilities for learning if left unaccounted for and unaddressed. I suggest as well that with particular gender-specific needs there are likely to be complex clusters of variables that must be considered simultaneously instead of by mechanistic fragmentation, in the same way that Wing (1997a:31) speaks of a praxis that is multiplicative to account for *all* variables that form and are shaped by individual and/or collective identities in particular socio-cultural contexts (See also Knowles (1990:16) and then Street (1995:132) who situates these needs within an ideological model. See finally my own integrated ideological model ^(1x2) where the equation: Ideology x Actors x Resources, leaves scope for questions of gender to be explored in class).

The 'places of safety clause' above is (AET Directorate: 1997a, 13), perhaps then more closely linked with the issue of domestic violence and/or child and/or women abuse and/or (s)exploitation as these social problems create and magnify needs that are gender-specific (See Ministry of Welfare (1997), 'White Paper for Social Welfare', Chapter 8, Section 1, sub-section clauses (53)(a-d) (Ministry of Welfare:1997)).

If this is so, then the 'special' provision under this categorisation of targeting by the AET Directorate (1997a: 13) is also dependent on the social welfare system's having identified a certain member's need and then its action in the subsequent placement of the member into a 'place of safety', at a remove from society, or this member's own action in having independently inducted him or herself into a 'place of safety'. However, given the present disproportional availability of and access to such facilities, particularly in communities where socio-economic conditions are poor, this kind of possibility is likely to be a remote one in marginalised areas, where there may yet be most dire need. Earlier I highlighted that this is the case with adult education centres as a scarce resource in many communities, in others: it is not available at all (See also Ministry of Welfare (1997), Chapter 2, sub-section clause (9), in respect of its future plans for implementation and the making of facilities more readily available (Ministry of Welfare:1997)). Such a target then focuses on a 'public' minority (of women (?)) rather than a majority.

This says nothing then of the need to target women who operate despite - to varying and sometimes contradictory degrees - domestic forms of coercive, patriarchal abuse and/or the many daily 'lived' conflicts, smoothed over by consent at an ideological level, in relation to gendered expectations of conformity as these contribute towards women's, mundane and 'common-sense' (Gramsci:1971), on-going socialisation into 'racialised and gendered appropriate selves' in both primary and secondary discourse settings, with the body itself as a site of tension (see my discussion above). This socialisation is one which impacts both negatively on the forms of action that women are 'allowed' to pursue within such normative rightness boundaries and on their own self-concept and confidence to extend beyond these bounds, to challenge them and to break free from them, so that they might engage in other activities, such as: learning outside the home. Learning as an act and as a process transgressing negative gender prohibitions becomes exciting then, when it offers for the (woman/learner new alternatives and a heightened sense of self-fulfilment, independence, balance and surplus power, despite the risk of crossing boundaries and/or because of it.

Indeed, that education should attempt to promote this kind of critical alternative for female learners to *actualise within* themselves seems integral, so that they might be enabled to take control of their own lives more fully if 'trapped' by certain forms of dependency of the mind.

Knowles (1990) cites Carl Rogers who, from work in the fifties with adults in therapy, developed ideas around how 'learning is an internal process dependent on a learner's engagement with and perceptions of the environment' (Knowles:1990, 43). If every male pronoun in Carl Rogers' central premise below were to be substituted with a female one, the following extract could be aptly used to set a critical agenda for gender in (adult) education, where here the emphasis would be to promote learning *against* forms of internalised dependency or, in other words, to: 'unlearn traditional gender norms'. Knowles (1990) quotes Rogers when he says the following of the adult learner:

Clinically I find it to be true that though an individual may remain dependent because **he** has always been so, or may drift into dependence without realising what **he** is doing, or may temporarily wish to be dependent because **his** situation appears desperate. I have yet to find the individual who, when **he** examines **his** situation deeply, and feels that **he** perceives it clearly, deliberately chooses dependence, deliberately chooses to have the integrated direction of **himself** undertaken by another. When all the elements are clearly perceived, the balance seems invariably in the direction of the painful but ultimately rewarding path of self-actualisation and growth" (Rogers as cited by Knowles (1990:42-3))(my emphasis).

This is an important distinction, as given the widespread nature of the violence and abuse against women within South African society (see my discussion above), most women surviving in contexts of abuse are likely to not be in 'places of safety' *per se*, but 'trapped' in a cycle of dependency in the private domain with 'few options out' (See my later needs analysis interview number three with Dorcas Ngwenya (*not her real name*)). Education to unlearn the posture of a gendered habitus/disposition that is dependent would be a valuable part of critical social praxis then, where gender imbalances in both things *and* minds might be challenged proactively (See earlier discussion on habitus/field).

Additionally, I maintain that this reality - the absence of 'places of safety' and a more generalised ineffectiveness in the Official Recontextualisation Field (/ORF, Bernstein) to protect and support women - must be acknowledged and adequately accounted for within target definitions in adult education aimed at redress, if 'special' target provisions are not to by-pass women with 'special needs' in the private domain as well as in the public domain. I believe that the target definitions that aim to promote meaningful structural change must account particularly for those who are most generally and frequently marginalised, on an on-going historical basis, on both 'home' and (rural and/or urban) work fronts. In the South African adult education field, and without it, this will be blackwomen, both young *and* old, with a first step being identification.

Gender Blindspots: Structural Relations, Violence and Learning as an 'At Risk' Option.

Kathleen Rockhill (1994), in her seminal work: 'Gender, Language and the Politics of Literacy', asserts how a failure to identify the *same* problem across domains has negative implications for women, when so isolated by a failure to bring power differentials to view, so that they might be examined and challenged more broadly. Rockhill's study (1994) goes a long way in this regard. She focuses on Latina women in Los Angeles, but her findings are relevant nonetheless to the purposes of this study, as she highlights the existence of an 'empowerment blindspot' of which the same may be said of the South African adult education context as well. In bringing out the ineffectual lacks of the ideology of 'mass adult (il)literacy campaigns', she relates these lags to her work with Latina women. She says the following:

"Conceptions of empowerment, resistance and rights do not capture the way the women we interviewed talk about their longing for literacy; how they think about their lives, what is meaningful to them, or the conflicts they live. These conceptions do not reveal how *power is lived* in the concrete material practices, relationships or dreams of women. Empowerment arguments are directed at participation in the 'public' spheres of national, economic, political

and, to some extent, cultural activities ... *Totally absent* from consideration is empowerment in the so-called *private sphere of the home*, including religious, family, sexual and *male/female relations*" (Rockhill:1994, 240)(*my emphasis*).

It will be seen that this same absence of focus on 'male/female' relations within the private domain as it impacts negatively on women's educational and vocational needs in the South African context, is also not addressed, at least explicitly, by the AET Directorate's designated groups section (AET Directorate:1997a, 13) as already discussed above, though there is need for such a focus.

Rockhill's study (1994), shows how immigrant Hispanic women coming from a machismo culture, are detrimentally marginalised in both the public and private domain by partners and/or husbands who feel threatened, for example, by their desires to learn English, as they feared that their partners would leave them after they had acquired new 'skills' that would make them more self-sufficient in public domain forums (Rockhill:1994, 245). She states how recourse to domestic violence was a means of control that partners habitually used as a coercive, alignment device to prevent women from leaving the home and to restrict them from meeting their desired vocational and educational needs. As Wing and Carvalho (1997) highlight, however, such a 'predicament' is not unique.

Male/Female Relations - Whose Needs are Met?

Indeed, Simon Mokholoane (1997), who wrote the contentious article in my learners' *Simunye Adult newspaper*: 'Trust is Needed' (see Appendix One, page six), expressed similar fears to these, in our class discussions on gender relations. Because of the 'normalisation' of patriarchal practices, it was 'reasonable', for example, that Simon should attend night school classes, but that his wife, who was 'less educated' than he was, should not.

Class talk went a long way to 'de-normalise' normative rightness gender practices so that it must firstly be noted that the title: 'Trust is Needed', is not Simon's own, but arrived at after class discussions on gender relations in learners' 'home' contexts. After diverse perspectives were voiced, where some views were far less tolerant than others, the class collaborated to find a title that sensitively articulated a nuanced and alternative position from the less tolerant one advocated by Simon in the body of his article. In moments of threat, Simon became more adamant to entrench his view, so that the process of seeking a title was one where learners opposed to Simon's view sought to forward a value judgement as well as to bring Simon 'back into the fold' by a compromise that focused on the need for a mutual exchange between partners rather than one which stigmatised Simon alone for a male view that was not uncommon.

Putting aside Simon's own needs for inclusion within a class process, I return to Rockhill's statements (1994) briefly as she makes pertinent observations. The women in the Rockhill study (1994) saw the meeting of their needs as important. Rockhill (1994) herself stresses that the fulfilment of these needs, as they were so desired by the women who were interviewed, should be seen as an integral step towards the development of positive self-concepts in women. However, despite seeing their own needs as important, the risks, as they were calculated by the women who were heavily constrained by patriarchal 'norms', practices and expectations, were taken as being in most cases: too great 'an upheaval' to challenge or overcome (Rockhill:1994, 249).

This is a sobering finding which underlines the fact that women's urgent gender-specific needs are to be found not just *on farms* or *in prisons* or *in places of safety* or *in shelters*, but at the very site of the home. Target definitions need then to consider this if 'ordinary' women's lives are to be changed through opportunities for learning. Additionally, if women's own self-concepts might be buttressed positively by action that goes some way in meeting their needs and if this success might be internalised, changed perceptions in women who had previously 'adopted' a sense of powerlessness might do much to enable them to challenge a race-d and gender-ed order in both the public and private domains in which they live. Harnessing women's 'lived' resistance and building on it to promote

positive self-concepts and confidence through learning will help women to take the risk of challenge to embrace their own dreams for self-actualisation more fully.

The need for change is of course two way. Structural relations, both male/female and across informal and official institutional sites as they negate women's desires and needs, must also be transformed externally *and* in conjunction with what women really do say. Processes of re-contextualisation need to be reciprocal, so that women's needs and desires might be met, fulfilled and supported with a view to creating options of power and freedom for individual and collective female agents.

Women Learners Identify Patriarchal Norms of
'Appropriacy' as Constraints to their Opportunities for
Advancement(s).

On a somewhat different but related note to Simon's, Rebeccah Moku'i, who wrote the article: 'Daughter Helps Family' (See *Simunye Adult newspaper* Appendix One, page five), gives a strong female perspective on gender difficulties that may be encountered with partners. In refusing the construction of woman as appendage, her example is a positive one for other women who are confronted by similar conflicts. In a personal communication which I have loosely transcribed, she said the following:

"When I was working, I buy things for my son's father. I used to buy him shoes and pants, but he wasn't working, no, he was just lazy, but I was happy to do it. He'd just stay at home. ... I was working hard. Then one day he couldn't believe I was buying things with my own money. 'It's my money it not somebody's money' *aiel*! He said it must be because I'm getting money from some other man. 'It must be a man he's giving me money so I can buy all these things for him' ya 'it's not my money' that's what he said 'it's not my money, it somebody else's money' ya he was jealous

I said 'no, it's my money it's not a man's money', but he couldn't believe, so I left him ya I left him I couldn't stand ... I was buying this and this and this I did it because I wanted, ... but he couldn't take it you see that's why I'm not married, even today. Men give you too much troubles" (*my emphasis*) (Rebecca Mohudi: 1997, personal communication, Maryvale adult learning centre, satellite of City Deep adult learning centre, Johannesburg, August 11, 1997. I have deleted a number of unnecessary repetitions from the original articulation, where appropriate this is indicated by three simultaneous dots. The vernacular interjectory sign: '*aiel*', is an expression of censure and discontent, present in English when the rules of 'formal' English are relaxed. It may be seen here that such a relaxing of boundaries was conducive to communicative action).

I suggest that Rebecca's example of strong will and the taking of action, despite 'the risks of upheaval', is more of an exception than the rule for many women. And, while her working was in some ways the 'cause' for her 'break-up' by some accounts, it is also the means through which she was able to leave a relationship that was not amenable to her autonomous sense of self. Not all women who find themselves conflicting with gender stereotypes of 'appropriacy' will have, as was the case with Rebecca, work options immediately open to them. Indeed, when she identifies the fact that she is unmarried and single-parenting a teenage son who sometimes makes her 'so angry', she expresses sentiments of regret and doubt over the 'price' that upheaval has had for her. Adult education programmes then should all the more provide contents and curricula for (female) adult learners that are worth their while and worth also, as in Rebecca's case, the 'price of upheaval'.

Bringing Gender Questions into the Classroom.

To take the question of male/female relations further in the adult learning setting, I adapted Rebecca's statement (1997) above, changed her name to protect her integrity, and then in an in-class writing session asked learners to respond to this statement, and several others collected from learners in the course of my interaction with them. I chose these statements insofar as all of these statements related significantly to

race/gender 'folk' notions and issues in the South African context. Learners were asked for this exercise to express in writing an opinion on each adapted articulation and to support their statements of agreement or disagreement by possibly using examples that drew on their own life experiences or the experiences of others they 'knew of' or knew personally.

Patrick Ntsoane (1997), who wrote the article 'Garden Better Than Mine' (See *Simunye Adult newspaper* Appendix One, page four), responded to Rebeccah's statement as I had adapted it, as if he were speaking to the woman speaker/writer directly. When I collected this in-class writing assignment, I read the following in his answer, where he attacks - for one - her expressed sense of regret at the 'price of upheaval':

"Maybe you just saying so but how we suppose to know you didn't just trap him to answer like that Maybe you make him to answer like that because you want to make excuse to leave I think you just lying anyway but God sees what you do" (Patrick Ntsoane:1997, in class writing session, Maryvale adult learning centre, satellite of City Deep adult learning centre, Johannesburg, September 1, 1997).

Patrick's view is quite telling in that the immediate response given here

to a woman who has left 'her' man is censure and the construction of that woman as someone who is questionable and lacking of integrity by virtue of her pre-supposed 'deviousness'. Patrick's immediate supposition is that the woman to whom he is responding is most probably 'lying' about either her expressed sense of regret for not being married or the fact that there was not another man giving her money. Indeed, underlying Patrick's use of the pronoun 'we' is the 'commonsense' notion that he, as an articulator giving a sentence of condemnation, should feel *secure* in making his pronouncement, as: the position he articulates is 'naturally' a shared one and 'naturally' premised on the assumption that women 'naturally' do lie and are 'devious' and 'underhand' in their relations to men and money *naturally*.

Lydia Maepa (author of the article 'No Freedom for Domestic', Appendix One, page three), in a subsequent class discussion on gender relations and money, stated that 'no woman would stay with a man that doesn't have money' (Lydia Maepa:1997, in class discussion, Maryvale adult learning centre, City Deep satellite, Johannesburg, September 8, 1997).

Adult learners then, whether they are women *or* men, express oftentimes views that are negatively stereotypical, particularly of women, in class discussions on male/female relations. It is important, however, that these essentialist constructions are explored without a negative

stigmatisation of the speaker, if further discussion is to be enhanced and spaces created for the forging and acceptance of new social definitions, outside the 'norm', by learners. Equally important is that communicative action processes place and engage with these negative stereotypes in context, so that facilitators do not mistake them to be self-generated by learners, but see them to be part of the reproduction processes of a wider social framework with its codes, apparatuses and insulation maintainers. Here the media of power and money is seen to distort, to a significant degree, male/female gender relations and perceptions at the most private of levels.

Patriarchy and Authority.

If Patrick Ntsoane had sought above to use 'the higher authority' of the law in his disapprobation, he would not have been 'far off' in relation to the law's negative construction of woman in the South African context, which works to women's disadvantage particularly in cases dealing with rape. In these cases, as I have mentioned above, the State is often a 'secondary abuser' of rape survivors, and this secondary traumatising is equally a fact with respect to its treatment of both women and children (in this regard, see Christina Stuckey's article (1994:10): 'Horror of Child Abuse Revealed', in *the Star* newspaper, November 7, 1994; and, on the same page, Marika Sboros' account (1994:10) on the Courts' inadequate

'handling of children after incest and/or rape'. I thank as well, Professor Nhlanhla Maake, Head of the African Languages Department at Wits, who in personal communication with myself confirms that in townships around Johannesburg on the East Rand such as Vosloorus and Thokoza, blackwomen do not attempt to report rape and/or abuse cases, as it is a 'given' that the police will simply abuse them in return, by 'demanding sexual favours' from them should they go to local police stations to seek help (Maake:1998, personal communication, Department of African Languages, Wits University, March 13, 1998)).

Patrick does, however, refer to the 'higher authority' of the Bible and 'God', where here too biblical terms of reference are relatable to a patriarchal order. This concept is one which will not be explored in any great detail here. For, Rita Schmidt Terezinha (1994), makes just this point, when she explores usefully the literary work of Zora Neale Hurston and focuses on her less well-known work: *Moses the Man on the Mountain*.

In her work, Terezinha (1994) outlines that Hurston directs much attention to a 'Cassandra-type-seer' who is portrayed by the author as a 'blackwoman marginalised by authority'. Hurston brings home the point that as authority in this narrative is vested in a male order with the figure of Moses of Old Testament times as the direct embodiment of that

order, the 'Cassandra' figure on the margins stands a remote chance of getting a fair hearing in this chain of command, as a woman and as a 'dissident' to boot!

Of particular interest in this work is how Hurston is able to make relevant, critical social commentary, by transposing a 'past order' into a 'present' one. She does this by constructing her narrative in American 'Southern Black English'. By using this language strategy, she is able to make a 'veiled' but harsh social critique on times both past and present. Implicitly, the suggestion is that times are presently more continuous than transformed when experiences of marginalisation are gender-specific and the oppression of blackwomen so discursively generalised across discrete social arenas. Here, Hurston's focus is not that this marginalisation is perpetuated by a 'white community' or a 'black community', but that it is perpetuated by both: in the mutually supporting convergence of patriarchal, sexist and racist 'norms' in the hegemonic structures of power and cultural authority that 'delimit', as potentates (Said:1996) do, the boundaries of the possible for 'the ruled'.

Hurston's critique is then valid for the South African context as well, where Patrick Ntsoane's words, as they are cited above, may be taken as being a reproduction, possible through an 'aspiration upwards' (See earlier discussion on Goodson's dominance theory (1980)) and a

symptomatic 'effect' of the desire to be associated with structures of power and authority that are themselves patriarchal.

I suggest that we as practitioners should take such words seriously in class as they express deeply held notions about gender, which by extension, and in more extreme cases, 'exempt' males from blame in situations where violence against women is 'legitimated' by just such assumptions and the all-too-predictable, concomitant negative construction of women as 'liars', 'deviants' and 'child-like' among other things (See Poynton (1989) for an interesting list of invectives compiled from her work in the Australian educational field (Poynton:1989, 26, 54 and 84). At their base, these harmful assumptions claim that women do not know their own minds and that they 'need' to be kept 'in check' for their own 'good' by a male member acting the role of the benevolent and sagacious father figure.

Questioning the myths we live by is one way through which, I believe, we may build the bridge towards a broader and transformed social consciousness that in turn seeks to re-construct the space for transformed structural relations, and more micrologically: transformed male/female relations. The classroom and the possibilities it presents for communicative action along these lines is, then, as Spivak (1987:150) has iterated, an important site of intervention.

A Critical Need to Interrogate Rape-Supportive Elements Through Education.

Diana Scully (1990), in her work: *Understanding Sexual Violence: A Study of Convicted Rapists*, identifies naming practices which belittle women as part of the 'rape-supportive' elements of culture. She says the following on these elements:

"Only profound social change at both the micro *and* macro levels of society is capable of eroding the rape-supportive elements of our culture" (Scully:1990, 166)(*my emphasis*).

Scully's demands for social change are unrelenting. Against these, South Africa fares dismally in not yet enacting this vision holistically. Dealing with these elements then, sets an urgent agenda for the field of education. In this field, this agenda must be co-ordinated and consistently addressed by both the adult education sector *and* by youth sector education. To this end, Official and Pedagogic Recontextualisation Fields (/ORF's, Bernstein) need to support each other mutually. For, our society cannot afford a graded, 'wait for critique approach', when rape-supportive elements are evident at every level and fibre of the social fabric.

On the macro level, the policy documents of both sectors of basic education - and indeed beyond(!) - would do well to explicitly target rape-supportive elements in society by articulating that there is a need to lay these elements open to scrutiny and dialogue through education. Sweeping these elements under the carpet is no solution, particularly when the social ill is so grave. Ideally then, other related sub-fields within the State's control, as Official Recontextualisation Fields (/ORF's, Bernstein), should follow suit in taking pro-active stances that are exemplary, 'gender brave' and in the interests of their respective constituencies.

I have indicated above, in some detail, that the present macro approach within the South African context is, however, an inconsistent one. I have suggested as well that this will impact negatively on whole groups, particularly blackwomen as the intersectionality of race and gender that they find themselves 'at' is not adequately accounted for by the definitions of power, even as they are directed towards 'redress'. Much is left to be done then to re-align the Official Recontextualisation Fields (/ORF's, Bernstein) within the State's control usefully. In this same vein, the agenda that Scully sets above (1990) must also be addressed more profoundly with learners, in the immediate, concrete, micrological realities of *every* classroom. Presently, however, this agenda is sadly not reflected in most educators' class work practices and contents, so that

here too: much is left to be worked through before it becomes as a praxis that is critically informed and committed deeply to social freedom and justice.

In conceptualising this praxis for the classroom, I envision that the practices of real 'flesh and blood' actors and group members, along with the 'everyday racialised and gendered' assumptions that they carry with them and actualise in action and in discourse on a habitual basis, might be - indeed 'must be' - challenged. This is to be done through a praxis which is 'emancipative-oriented', and both anti-sexist and anti-racist. 'Everyday' meanings and practices must be re-negotiated on an on-going basis *as a matter of course*, in much the same way as Janks and Ivanic (Janks and Ivanic: 1992) recommend that Critical Language Awareness (CLA) should be an integral, continued feature to the learning of language. They state that *even if CLA is not the focus*, CLA practice must always be present as a critical, renewable resource that is readily and inexhaustibly available. In this way, CLA practices may be called upon or 're-invented' whenever the need arises (Janks and Ivanic: 1992, 320).

My own work with adult learners throughout the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* production and design process (See Appendix One) has been consistent with this vision for praxis, where I have found such guidelines to be both fruitful and valid.

A Need to Re-Invent Adult Education: Andragogy Meet

'Gynaegogy'.

So too, I suggest that practices particularly in adult education should be not just 'andragogy-based', in theory and practice, but 'gynaegogy-informed' as well, to direct action, in the 'mix' of the differential needs of the adult learner audience/actors, to impact positively on the lives of blackwomen particularly. This is needed, as present policy documents and practices still do 'neglect' blackwomen.

This lack is primarily discernible in a general failure to acknowledge the intersectionality of both race and gender, as an integral part of the 'oneness' of blackwomen. Race and gender is not, *in and of itself*, the only part of blackwomen's experience that is important, nor that this experience is a 'single' experience. It is not. It must rather be considered as a complex of differentially and multi-faceted 'oneness-es' that also have very specific historical commonalities and continuities in the South African context.

Even in the 'present moment', social issues in the South African context have particularly stark racial and sexual dimensions. This is so within the education field and the State's current provisioning in the youth and the adult sector; in the workplace; in questions of reproductive health; in

the media; in current trends with respect to knowledge-production, where large-scale exclusions of whole groups and/or classes of people are the rule rather than the exception; in the home; in legal and customary law practices; in experiences of poverty, (s)exploitation, abuse, (gang) violence and current trends in the practices that spread the Aids virus, where as highlighted above, Aids must be seen as both a gender and race issue as socio-economic conditions and negative sexual mores support its spread. Rural Kwa-Zulu Natal is particularly hard hit by the virus for example. Aids becomes a 'race issue' then because of the disparities created by the apartheid past. The legacy of these disparities, as they are perpetuated in yet insidious and mundane ways by not being addressed and eliminated, enable the attack of the virus and make it to be more likely in some communities than others. Women married to migrant labourers are, for example, an 'at risk' category, due to the high prevalence of the Aids virus among mine workers.

If education programmes are serious in the commitment to recognise the prior learning (RPL) and experience of adults, then praxis must also account for these issues as they are experienced in the real lives of adults, operating on and between multiple levels of experience, consciousness, oppression, creative change and critical resistance. Cursorily, I have attempted to account for some of these multiple levels of consciousness, so that they may be brought from 'the public domain'

into the classroom usefully, proactively and non-reductively (See Gilroy (1990) on the need for a praxis that is 'non-reductive', where many present anti-racist strategies within education reduce black experience as if it were 'simply a response to racism and nothing more' (Gilroy: 1990)).

I suggest that we must seek to eliminate 'the rape-supportive elements' within our society, for one, through a communicative action that seeks to create new links, new meanings, new practices, new visions and indeed 'new people: new men and new women, by being also anti-reification (see my earlier discussion above in relation to how Habermas defines this term). This is an integrally important objective, both within education and without it, not just for women and/or children, but for our society as a whole.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

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Mechanistic Oversimplifications as Counter-Productive.

My stance then, is also in opposition to what recent proposals in the new AET Directorate's *Policy document* (1997b) suggest. Where, for example, in their material development guidelines they ask as criterion if the created materials for adult learners are:

“free of nationalistic, racial, sexual or class bias?” (AET Directorate:1997b, 50).

Where firstly, given the socio-historical nature of *all* documents, as discourse articulations and as cultural artefacts, this seems virtually an impossible requirement. The AET Directorate's own said document (1997b) is itself a 'nationalistic' one, not just in sections, but throughout.

There are additionally other biases that must be considered in our society, as I have suggested above, as they inter-relate with issues of race, gender, class. These biases might be examined usefully through critically developed and appropriate materials that are designed to generate discussion and promote communicative action in the classroom, whether these biases might only be 'blandly' present (Kress:1993, 169) within them or more overtly so.

The multiplicity of these biases are not, however, usefully dealt with by mechanistic approaches that separate race and gender as separate and uni-dimensional categories. This fragmentation does not relate to 'lived realities', particularly those of blackwomen, yet policy documents continue to fragment reality as if reality could be dealt with by a quota system approach that responds simply to 'shadows on the wall' (Plato), but which does nothing to bring *real* power differentials to view so that change might also be structural.

As an example of its mechanistic mindset, I fail to understand then, what is proposed in the Ministry of Education's: 'Call for Comments on the Draft Statement on the Curriculum for Grades 1-9' (Ministry of Education:1997) for example, under the 'specific outcome' of getting learners to 'show critical awareness of language usage' by discussing and analysing: "gender and race contexts" (Range Statement for the senior phase of language study, Ministry of Education:1997, 31). Admittedly, this may be a failing on my part, but I find this statement unfathomable, as I try to ascertain how such a statement is to be interpreted by the average educator.

Patrícia Williams (1997a) speaks of having nightmares in relation to the implications of the media-hype given to a story where a blackmother married to a white Italian male had herself implanted: "with a white

woman's egg to ensure that their offspring would be 'spared the misery of racism'" (Williams:1997a, 157). Williams goes on to add that the woman then had a "healthy boy with fair hair and blue eyes" (Williams:1997a, Ibid.,). On the implications of this genetic means of effacement, in both gender and race terms, she says:

"It is as though some invisible hand were nudging us toward a nice obliging mass suicide, disguised as fear of looking into one another's faces without masks, disguised as fear not of difference but of being not enough 'the same as ...' The body has become a receptacle for the tracks of a *cruel iconography*. We risk a high-tech internalised fascism, where it is difficult to live in a world without a *conformed exterior* and a *submissive will*" (Williams:1997a, 158)(*my emphasis*).

I too get headaches, when I consider the following questions of this particular phrase in the policy document cited above (Ministry of Education:1997, 31). Are learners to speak on, for example, the structural reality of hostels as they are found in the South African context? Are they to determine whether this is a 'race' or a 'gender context'? Is it a 'given' implicit in the guidelines that a discussion on a male hostel would be a 'race context' and that a discussion on a woman's hostel would be a 'gender context'? But then, when is *any* context not

both a race and gender context in any human context? How are northern suburbs in Johannesburg, for example, also not race-d and gender-ed contexts? And, indeed, when has *any* aspect of human history not been within the context of a reality that is both racial and sexual, by virtue of the very nature of human bodies themselves, however much the participant creators of this history, as they 'lived' it, might have been 'unaware' of difference, through perhaps a lack of value attachment (be it positive and/or negative) to such difference?

Perhaps the last question I have asked is the ostensible 'outcome' or 'conclusion' that learners *are* to *reach* under this range statement, but if so, I fail to see how the 'closure' that this question pre-supposes in its answer is to 'generate' further critical discussion. I suggest then that the 'only' outcome it does generate is that the policy guidelines see themselves inadequate and premised on a 'wait for critique' approach (See Street:1995), where even 'critique', as it is to be 'reached' in a serious phase of language study under these guidelines, is no critique at all.

As Cate Poynton says, we 'need to be blowing the whistle all the time' (Poynton:1989, 88), if we really are serious about transformation and education as the practice of freedom. The 'baledeegook' of terms and the (mis-)conceptualised recommendations for practice, as they may be elicited in the above said document, a key one for future curriculum

implementation, make nonsense of transformative objectives, and are, as I have said above, based on an instrumentalist rationality that in presenting a host of re-descriptive (mechanistic) terms is only rhetorically committed to education as change and social practice.

Indeed, we need to consider seriously the statements of both women and men, as men are care-givers and child-raisers as well. Monica Mhlophe, who wrote the article: 'Hungry for a Better Life' (See her article and life narrative in the *Simunye Adult Newspaper*, Appendix One, page three), indicates this, in a discussion on how her husband is closer to her daughter than she is. She highlights that this is because of the long hours she has had to 'put in' as a domestic worker. She said the following to me in a needs analysis interview I conducted with her and audio-recorded at my home:

"You know Debbie, my my husband is so close to our daughter. Weekends he takes her shopping, movies and they can spend the whole day outside. And, you know, if she needs even a panty she won't come to me. She'll ask her daddy 'Daddy, I need a panty or daddy, I need such and such' - or whatever. It's like that, she won't come to me, no, she'll go to daddy first, not me. We're not so close that she can come to me and ask a panty or de or deodorant. She's daddy's girl, but he does it. He he he'll buy her the panty.

When she was a baby he used to put her in the bath and wash her give her bottle. He even ok to change nappies when I was coming late when I was working for Mrs. Lieberthal, so it was like it was like he was the mom not me. You see, at home it's like he's the mom because he always had to took care of her" (Monica Mhlophe:1997, needs analysis interview, Kew, May 20, 1997).

I feel it incumbent upon me here to highlight that Monica's critical and brave contributions in class discussions - where she frequently 'pushed boundaries' to articulate concerns that involved 'taboo' subjects - were crucial to establishing the communicative aims of the newspaper project and were largely responsible, due to the quality of her unrelenting enthusiasm, for the adoption of the project by other adult learners.

As I do not discuss her needs analysis below, it may be useful to outline that in addition to the above, Monica was, in the course of our together interview, concerned about a neighbour who had just died of Aids. Her knowledge as to her neighbour's cause of death, was the result of an 'accident of fate' which burdened her psychologically, at the time, as this cause had not been disclosed to the neighbour's wife. We discussed how she might resolve then: sensitive issues around the right to privacy, while showing support for her neighbour's wife, who was both uncertain

as to the cause of her husband's death and was potentially infected with the Aids virus herself.

As to how Monica did ultimately resolve these concerns, I am not entirely certain. Shortly after she submitted her exemplary article: 'Hungry for a Better Life' (See Appendix One, page three of the *Simunye Adult Newspaper*, 1997), she stopped coming to evening classes. This was because one evening, while she was at classes and her husband was not home, her daughter was terrorised by someone who had banged on all the windows of their home in Alexandra township. The assailant had threatened to break the windows and physically assault Monica's daughter. Fortunately, and to my knowledge, this threat was not carried through. Monica's family, however, feared that this threat was being postponed to a later date.

As a result of this uncertainty and the immediacy of the threat, concerns for her daughter's safety obliged Monica to remain at home evenings. She neither completed her adult learning year at Maryvale College in 1997 (the year of the newspaper project) nor did she return to the centre at the beginning of 1998. Learners of the level four, English-as-a-second-language class compiled the lead section to her life story in her absence. The two captions for the pictures on page three of the *Simunye Adult Newspaper*, which encapture Monica as having been an active and

engaged member of the Maryvale adult learning community, were also written in her absence, as was the caption for her picture on page nine of the newspaper. The sudden disruption to her family's peace of mind was acknowledged, while she was sorely missed in class after this period.

Difference: Seeing, Articulating, Writing, Challenging.

As was the case with Monica Mhlophe, most of the women learners I interviewed for the purposes of this research in ascertaining what was important to them and what change they desired particularly with respect to their attendance at 'night school' classes, never actively wished or sought to become domestic workers. To most, this form of work was simply a 'half-way house' before they got to something better.

It is significant then, that in one of the very first collaborative writing sessions, the following text was produced by a group of four learners: two women and two males. One of the women, Monica Mhlophe, mentioned above, guided the discussion within the group in vernacular. Group members discussed her statements and then began to dictate to her the parameters of the following vignette, as she then made additional comments and began to write it down. This telling vignette took approximately an hour of group work. I faithfully reproduce learners' spelling and punctuation without corrections or structural adjustments.

Draft One of the group-work piece entitled:

Racist

This is a story about a pregnant woman. Who was a domestic worker. It happened one day her madam & master there were not at home, they went out for lunch. While she was working she fell sick. then she decided to go to see a doctor.

When she came back, the boss were there They ask her where she come from. she replied, "I am from there doctor They were very angry, because she went to hospital without prepared supper then it was the racist start. The mr Botha stood up very very angry and asked her who is paying you or me or that bloody doctor of yours. Now I will make things easier for you, and he kick her hard in the groin. She doubled up in pain. At that time, she have miscarriage (Level 4/4A English class, adult learner independent and collaborative group writing piece, Maryvale College, satellite of City Deep, Johannesburg, May 19, 1997).

It was not possible to discuss all the group-work pieces completed in this session, but I collected them and then typed them up for the following week, unchanged but double-spaced, so that these works could be distributed to all class members for feedback-discussion, editing and possible changes in the next class session. Students wrote on the copies.

The following week, collaborative editing with the whole class produced the following text. The first change was the title.

Draft Two of the group-work piece entitled:

Racism

This is the story about a pregnant woman who was a domestic worker. One day her madam and master were not at home. They went out for lunch. While she was working alone in the house, she fell sick. She immediately decided to see a doctor, because the pain was very strong. When she came back from the doctor, the boss was already there. He asked her where she had come from.

She replied, "I am from the doctor."

They were very angry, because she went to the hospital without preparing supper. That is when the racism started. Mr Botha quickly stood up from his chair in the lounge. He was very, very angry. He screamed at her, "Who is paying you, me or that bloody doctor of yours?"

Mpho said nothing. Mr Botha became more angry. He screamed louder, "Now I will make things easier for you," and then he kicked her hard in the groin. She doubled up in pain. At that moment, she

began to have a miscarriage. (Level 4/4A English class, interdependent (facilitator *and* adult learner) collaborative editing and writing session, Maryvale College, satellite of City Deep, Johannesburg, May 26, 1997).

This is of course not simply a story about racism. Brief as it is, it 'captures' many of the complexities of 'lived experiences' of power and conflict in the South African context from the perspective of a politically powerless member, where here the focus is a blackwoman, domestic worker. When I asked learners whether this was a 'true story', they wished not to specify. I changed then my question to ask what it was that had most motivated them to write this particular story.

Monica replied for the group by saying the following:

"Most of the people don't know what is happening to you because when you a a domestic worker, people don't see you in the street. If you a domestic worker you're working inside so people don't know when the racism is happening to you" (Monica Mhlophe, audio-recorded class contribution to a discussion on: 'Racism in the South African Context', Level 4/4A English class, Maryvale College, satellite of City Deep, May 26, 1997).

Here then, the primary motivation for this piece was to inform members of South African society of the difficulties that are, and that may be, encountered by blackwomen who are domestic workers. Learners' concern was focused on the fact that because of the nature of the work, in isolation and behind closed doors, possible rights violations are not only not addressed, but also not known in the present South African context.

If one examines the South African Labour Relations Act, Act 66 of 1995, one finds that learners' concerns are valid. Chapter 3 of this Act, Section 17 (1-2b), indicates that in the domestic sector there are 'restricted rights', which favour the employer rather than the domestic worker and that 'the right of disclosure does not apply' (South African Government, Act 66: 1995, Labour Relations Act, 17(b)).

I highlight this piece of work, before all others, as it was this collaborative narrative piece that set the tone for all the other articles in the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* project in 1997, where here, as in other articles in the newspaper, the foremost motivation of learners was to focus on unjust power differentials and to 'disclose' a system open to abuse. Learners advocated that the stories of many marginalised people are silenced, and/or not heard, and/or not told, so that they believed that they could change a racist and unjust status quo by the

communicative action that made the newspaper project possible. In highlighting stories they knew, both for the general public and for other adult learners at Maryvale College, learners' aims were geared towards full transformation.

Model Within A Model.

Before continuing, I need to return briefly to my ideological integrated model (1x2).

It will be noted here that the following signs in my original, ideological integrated model (1x2) diagram are unaccounted for:

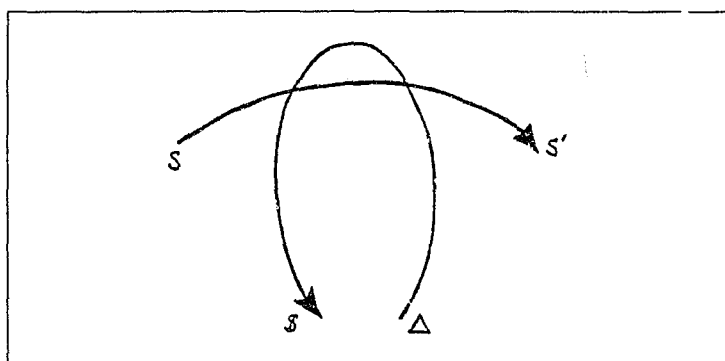


Figure 5: Lacan's model of provisional meaning construction.

I have taken this model from Lapsley's work on 'Film Theory' (1988). In this work, Lapsley (1988) expands on Lacan's theory of meaning which is

represented in this graph as 'the exchange between subject and a set of signifiers' (Lapsley:1988, 37). Vector SS¹ refers to a chain of signifiers and vector Δ refers to how meaning is retroactively constructed by the subject in relation to all that has gone before. The meanings of signifieds: (s), slide continuously under the Signifiers: (S), so that meaning is not fixed. To represent this, Lapsley (1988) explains that Lacan adds a bar which places the Signifier above the signified in the following way: S_s .

I use this model to account for 'classroom talk' as talk that is geared towards the construction of new meanings but which is based on all that has gone before, both in and outside the classroom, in relation to learners' 'lived' 'everyday' experiences and knowledges of power, conflict and change.

According to this Lacanian model, Lapsley (1988) highlights that processes of meaning construction are dynamic. He explains:

"Meaning is always provisional and changes as new elements are added to the signifying chain, with each successive element setting up expectations as to what will follow and retroactively changing the meaning of what precedes it. Thus meaning is produced by the subject in this process of punctuation; but, equally, the subject is produced by the meanings available in the signifying chain, for the

subject is such by virtue of a self-conception that is only available within discourse. *The desire of the subject engenders varying interpretations* of the unfolding text; the text offers in return the condition of subjectivity. For Lacan there is, therefore, an unceasing dialectic of the subject and meaning" (Lapsley:1988, 37-8)(*my emphasis added*).

Indeed, I make a distinction here between the word 'dialectic' and 'dialogic', where I prefer the latter and substitute it into the above quotation. This is to dislodge any association that the former word might have with reference to Althusser, where here my choice is also based on the critique of his notion of 'interpellation'. As Althusser used Lacan's 'mirror phase' to explain how the subject is constituted by ideology, this conceptualisation 'traps' the individual in the mirror-misrecognition of a pre-given structure and subject which is finite. It is on this basis then, that I prefer the word 'dialogic'. I reject the term 'dialectic' for its unimaginative association with the finite. I differ then with Hasan as well, when she says that:

"the moment you have said one word, you have created an environment. The more that is said, the greater the limitations on what can be said relevantly and sensically" (Halliday and Hasan:1989, 115).

I favour rather a more open posture, in focus and thought on language and communication, that is multiplicative rather than reductive, and more centrifugal in force than centripetal (Bakhtin:1981).

The term 'dialogic', on the other hand, is associated with meanings that are open and not pre-given, but in a state of ceaseless provisionality and complexity. In this state of flux actors must find and/or create meanings which are themselves geared towards new meanings.

This to me crystallises what the educative enterprise is all about. It is about Subjects articulating themselves and their world(s), reflectively, through critical discourse and subjectivities that are creative and resistant. Future-gazing dreams for social change and action are based on what learners know, so that they may firstly transform and re-invent what they know without taking it for granted. Learners' confidence and self-esteem needs are met when the 'old' (the known) is seen 'anew' and deep desires (not muted) are seen as valid, motivating forces from which to draw strength and courage so that learning may move towards greater heights of complexity and towards unknowns that are even *less* certain and *safe*, but fully embraced by Subjects who re-invent themselves.

The needs, desires and voices of my adult learners have been at the centre of needs analysis interviews, class discussions, the newspaper

project and this research itself. Communicative action in the classroom has been possible, because processes have been guided by the commitment to have the adult learner and learner interests at the heart of our dialogic interaction together. By recognising the value of their lived experiences and the working interpretations they have already made of these experiences, *and by sharing my own in a reciprocal way*, I believe that learners were encouraged to learn that they were not alone in the drive to understand more fully the changing world around them.

In many ways, I have perhaps learned more from my adult learners than they have learned from me as a facilitator who had many questions and very few answers. At times, this was no doubt a source of frustration for learners, especially at the beginning, when the reverse could have been so much easier and neater(!), however less rewarding. Despite this, once the idea 'stuck' that meaning is provisional and open to multiple interpretations, a further learning culture was promoted and adopted in the classroom, as was an attitude of criticality and creative resistance. This was conducive to the development of adult (female) learner voices that were articulate, strong and at once autonomous and inter-reliant. Indeed, every article in the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* acts as a testimony to this fact, while each also points to the hopeful possibility that praxis will have had *in some way* (not necessarily the *same way* for all learners): positive lasting and enabling effects. It is my hope that exciting, new

Newspaper Design Process and Project.

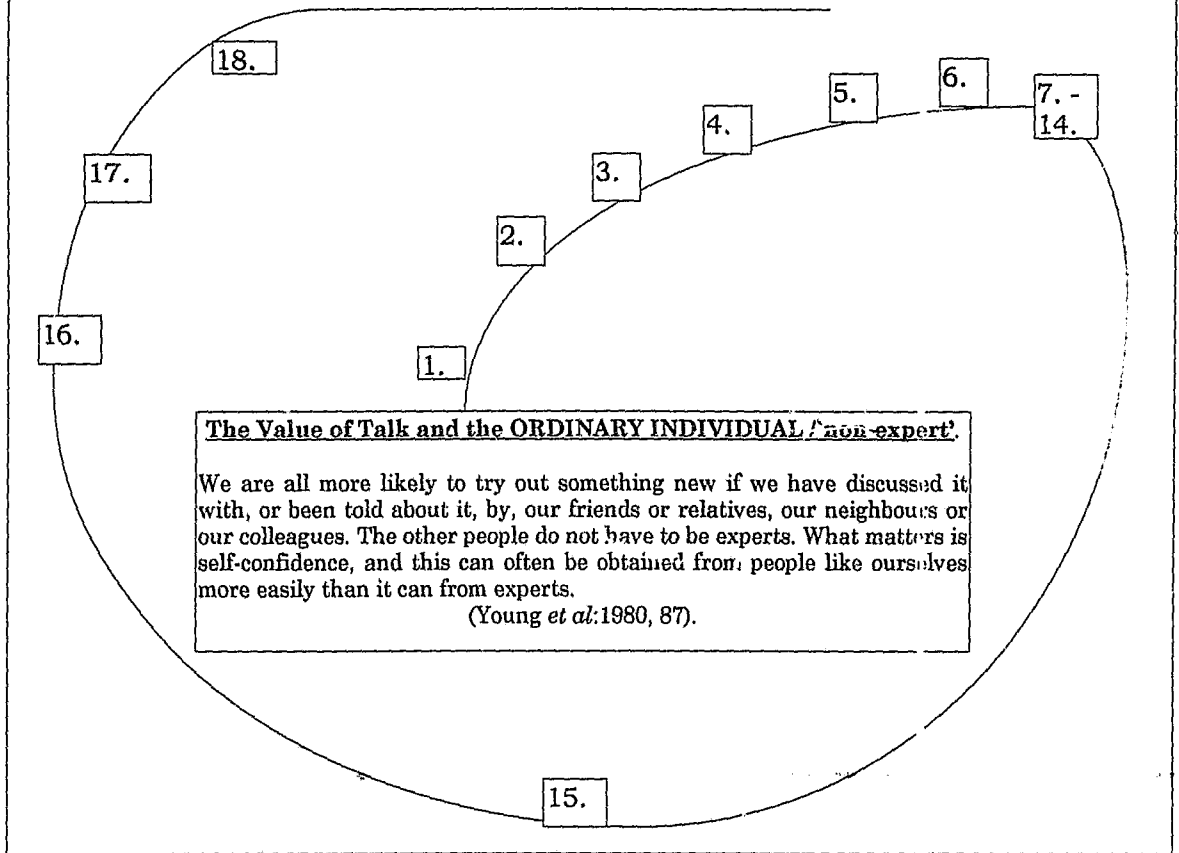


Figure 6. Newspaper Project: Process and Design.
Dialogic Communicative Action at the centre of every phase.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Idea. 2. Video presentation on Interviewing/perspective/by-lines. 3. Examining the Media: gaps in representation. 4. Examining Paralinguistic Features in the Media/techniques. 5. Discussions of Possible Issues to Include. 6. Presenting Writing pieces/individually and collaboratively. 7. Feedback. 8. Working on Leads. 9. Doing an Editorial. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Type-setting. 11. Layout. 12. Workshop at Wits Student/Wits Campus. 13. Computer Techniques and Blurbs. 14. Technical Layout. 15. Funding. 16. Printing and Distribution. 17. Discussions/evaluation/future-gazing. 18. Action in broader community/new awareness. |
|--|--|

habitus/dispositions have been successfully engrained in learners, when, before and after class time with learners, I have picked up on cues that seem to indicate just this.

Rebecah Mohudi, for example, appeared at evening classes several weeks in a row carrying the day's newspaper. On occasion, before class had started, she would open the paper to examine headlines, captions and the overall design layout of the newspaper pages. She did this after class discussions had focused on how newspaper design layouts globally allowed for multiple reading pathways by consumers, while paralinguistic features like bold headlines, colour photographs, space allocations and changes in font size indicated to readers/consumers that a newspaper production unit was highlighting certain stories above others. Reading positions constructed for consumers could be accepted *or rejected*. Indeed, learners were enabled to do the latter. For, in having to go through similar selection processes in the design and layout of *the Simunye Adult Newspaper* itself, learners were usefully empowered through learning the notion that nothing is pre-given or neutral in such a construction process. The process itself had become less opaque, while through it learners were able to make informed choices that gave them a sense of autonomy, pleasure and pride.

Additionally, learners received 'hands-on' experience with computers through the newspaper project and process (See particularly phase number thirteen in the newspaper project and process design cycle diagram above). The inclusion of such a phase to language learning was an important one as it ensured that learning was not only active, with and without the English second language classroom, but purposefully geared towards minimising learners' exclusion and marginalisation from the innovation-led, information technology and knowledge-based revolution that is a global trend.

It is my adamant plea and recommendation that policy guidelines in adult education follow suit and that like practices be adopted for future adult education classes and for language classes, more particularly, as communication *and its skillful presentation* is often key to the success of its reception, because of this self-same information processing trend.

Indeed, I often wonder how successful hand written signs posted on telegraph poles, or on fences by avenue waysides, are, when messages such as: 'painter looking for wark', are mis-spelled and done in pencil, coal or paint, and are poorly legible at a distance with words skewly placed and/or overcrowding each other. The reading of such a message may be at once difficult and a poor advertisement, at risk of being taken as exemplary of a writer/painter's skill, seen as wanting, when a negative

value attachment to a 'failed' presentation will carry the day because it does not conform to technological, computer-generated standards. I call this the 'zero-defect' mentality. And, while I am not an educator who advocates a hierarchy which places conformity to exterior form over substance (what Bernard Selling (1994:71) calls the technical modes of writing that include spelling and punctuation), there is some merit, I believe, in ensuring that learners are able to combine competently and in an informed manner technical modes and paralinguistic design features that are reader/audience friendly. Being able to enhance the messages they wish to convey competitively, may just mean that their livelihood is not held in the balance because of such trivial markers of difference (See earlier discussion on Gee (1990:149)).

That these trivialities are markers now, is, however, a reality that I would rather see educators engage with by bringing such markers to consciousness, than ignore or assume as the 'already known'. I have learned that the traditional 'school-taught' habitus/dispositions of learners, as they have been carried forward into their later years, have poorly disposed learners to be aware of such markers, let alone decipher and reproduce them in their own work. At a very basic level, this means that in daily life in relation to the media, learners are not able to 'access' information in newspapers, for example, because they are unaware of the more subtle design codes and conventions used to transmit meanings.

Such 'taught' dispositions are then, to my mind, exemplary of how education has 'failed' adult learners in the past by not promoting their full participation in daily life, with respect to the media for example. Developing critical competence in engaging with real, social, communicative forms that dominate daily life at present, whether the print media or otherwise, is important for learners as these forms empirically constitute a sub-set of the field of symbolic control (Bernstein). These are not forms that are, however, 'closed books' as it were, and as such they offer exciting, new, opportunities for 'pedagogic' (and/or for 'andragogic', Knowles:1990, 63-4) recontextualisations in the classroom that promise to transform the enterprise of language learning as we know it, usefully and relevantly for the benefit of learners. I believe that educators need to engage then with media forms and the para- and metalinguistic features of texts and language (Fairclough (1989) concurs in this as does Street (1995)), so that we(/they) do not fail the adult learner audience yet again.

Actualising the Dream in Adult Education

To reiterate, as policy makers and as adult education practitioner/researchers, I believe that we cannot delay any longer in doing all that we can to ensure that adult learners receive their due. We must ensure that future and present adult learners are not 'left out in

the cold' as they are being presently by class practices that are teacher-directed in the PRF (/Pedagogic Recontextualisation Field, Bernstein) and by mechanistic policy guidelines that lack the vision to match global trends with real learner needs and desires in the ORF (/Official Recontextualisation Field, Bernstein).

Process.

Above, in my 'Newspaper Design Process and Project' diagram, I delineate the sequence of class and workshop phases that I conducted with learners towards the ends of a completed newspaper product: *the Simunye Adult Newspaper* (See Appendix One) and learners' continued, further engagement and critical social action in negotiating and making meanings, self-reflexively and in relation to lived and mediated realities (process). Sense of all that has gone before was made by learners 'achronically' (Scott:1997, 11) and purposefully.

Phase one is a pivotal moment in the process, as it is here that a conducive environment was established to set the tone for further action with learners. The Young quotation (Young *et al*: 1980, 87) at the centre of my diagram shows how respect for learners' meanings has guided and enabled real learning processes and enhanced (sometimes new) self-esteem levels in learners (when topics were previously unexplored),

through action and talk that has been communicative in the classroom.

In building on the notion of enabling class environments that uphold principles of respect and dignity through learning, Selling (1994) suggests that educators can engender positive attitudes for learners to adopt, when encountering 'learning curve snags', by assisting them in providing feedback that is: "nonjudgmental, noninvasive, corrective and affirming (NJNICA)" (Selling:1994, 61). Such positive feedback helps to establish the educator as one *among colleagues*, with provisional opinions and suggestions herself, rather than definitive, top-down, directives and answers that are 'expert' and alienating. I believe then that in opening the floor for adult learners to articulate *their* 'know-how' and in seeking out *their* opinions, one lays the foundation stones for a successful, dialogic, community-oriented, learning praxis for adult education. 'Talk' and 'non-expert' adult learners with their language (and other) resources are at the centre of this praxis rather than at its margins.

Indeed, Knowles' adult learning 'S-O-R formula' has been developed along these same lines with the learner at the centre of praxis. In his formula, the 'S' stands for a stimulus to a response, the 'O' for the one who is stimulated towards learning change and the 'R' for a response (See Knowles (1990: 146-62 and Appendix B).

An Adult Learning Praxis that 'Holds Water'.

As appropriated for my own work with adult learners: the validity of the Young quotation above and the guidelines that it recommends for agentic, communicative action in the classroom, has stood the test of time and practice (See Young *et al*:1980, 87). This quote is itself aptly articulated from the subject position of a learner. I place this quotation at the centre of my Newspaper Design Project and Process diagram then, for its useful advocacy of processes that are horizontal and learner-gazing.

As Young *et al* (1980) advocate, I have found through the work I conducted with learners that the sharing of, for example, one learner's experience with the rest of the class had a *multiplier effect* on other class members who were then encouraged to contribute or contest (not just in talk but in writing as well) what had already been said. In an environment where horizontal exchange was valued and upheld as 'norm', they did this without feeling the threat of stigmatisation because of their so-called 'non-expert status'.

From one exchange to the next, and at every stage of the process, learners' self-confidence grew in their being able to direct and control a project that was ultimately a success due to their own hard work, enthusiasm and openness to reciprocal exchange. In one way or another,

all learners were functionally engaged (See earlier discussion on Breier and Prinsloo:1996, 20) and responsible for their own learning at every phase of the newspaper project process, though this went 'against the grain' in respect of what learners had previously 'learned' at other educational settings. Through the inculcation of this learning culture of mutual enquiry, learners were enabled to become self-directing, so that a fundamental aim for adult learning was achieved (See Knowles:1990, 31).

In addition to this core aim, Knowles (1990) outlines a methodology for adults' learning which has been faithfully upheld by my own work with learners. Such a methodology offers useful alternatives for practice when set against those often transferred uncritically from the youth school sector. The first cornerstone stressed is that the satisfying of learner needs are appropriate starting points around which to organise activities for adults, as it motivates learners towards further learning. The second is that appropriate units for learning will be 'life-centred', as adults are themselves so oriented. The analysis (I add 'critical' and 'social' as useful qualifiers for the word 'analysis') of life experiences are then, as Knowles says: "one's richest resource for adults' learning" (Knowles:1990, 31). Additionally, Knowles (1990) stresses that any core methodology for adults' education 'must make optimal provision for individual differences that *increase* as adults age'. These differences include: "differences in style, time, place, and pace of learning" among other things (Ibid.,).

Importantly and contrary to conventional views which believe that adults as they age are 'slipping into decline', Knowles (1990) refers to a convincing body of empirical data that draws on longitudinal studies with adults (not pigeons or rats or psychotic subjects!) (Knowles:1990, 70)) to present a more optimistic case. These studies indicate that rather than a decline in intelligence in adult later years, the potential for adults to respond *in depth* to questions of enquiry is heightened while yet their *speed* to respond to activities may be lessened. The latter difference or developmental change is a result of ageing and/or simply the disuse of faculties, so that Knowles advocates (1990) that the 'internalisation of the learner role throughout the adult life span' - where expectations of the self need societal support in this as adults do not often see themselves as learners - can do much to actualise the 'unrealised potential' of the adult 'for continuing learning and inquiry' (Knowles:1990, 154-9). Adults are, in short: worth the effort and capable of so much more than what conventional 'wisdom' tends to grant them.

With a view to this adult learner potential that has been much neglected left unseen or under-estimated, I believe that all adult education provisioning must be directed towards it. Using the metaphor of building a bridge, Knowles (1990) draws on the concept of liberal margins, where engineers will construct a bridge, testing it for its capacity to carry maximum loads and then will budget for even greater stress loads by in-

building "additional units of strength" (Knowles:1990, 150). This is what needs to be done in adult education, but the task is a mammoth one.

For, in South Africa we need to account for: adult learners' potential (as supported by scientific longitudinal studies); their general needs (in the global theoretical sense that Knowles outlines); their specific desires for critical margins of power in the social domains in which they engage (or wish to engage); the objective need for redress in adult education as a result of the apartheid legacy of the past; the more context-specific needs that have sprung from poorly guided, ideological and 'non-neutral', official policy re-descriptions which are, as I have iterated, less transformed than strategically reproductive of an 'old' status quo; and, the special, gender-specific needs of individual learners at the interstices of race and gender, as these learner needs are differential to other learner needs in the historical sense, and particularly much neglected and urgently requiring of equity redress and recognition in the present violent, South African, socio-political context. After considering these factors, we then need to times times, following on from Knowles (1990), to 'build in' margins of safety able to support and manage additional, un- (/and) foreseen loads of stress and demand in a world of vastly accelerated, glocalised, information-technology-led production and change. It is my view that present policy documents in adult education instead of having 'margins of support' are as footpaths muddled by rain.

If we have a commitment to the dream of actualising a transformed adult education system that is in the interests of a transformed society with greater options than those we are reduced to now, we need to account *thickly* for all variables, particularly those which are presently as obstacles to success, and put our resources - whether they are human, monetary and/or life-long learning resource systems at our disposal (See Knowles (1990: 167-77) on the need to create resource management linkages that will be 'learning-community-oriented' to facilitate easy access to (and rapid exchange between) systems and individuals connected in holistic, mutual interaction and states of interconnectedness): 'where our mouths are'.

Research Data Collection: A Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Journey.

To expand briefly on the empirical foundation that supports and makes valid my above plea for an urgently needed 're-think' on the direction in which adult education is headed in South Africa, this research has been focused primarily on work with one, level 4a adult education, English-as-a-'second'-language class (/most adult learners are multi-lingual(!)).

In this class, there were 16 learners who completed the English language programme straight through to the end of the year of 1997 at Maryvale

College, satellite of City Deep, Johannesburg. My learners' impressive work, a culmination of the communicative action class newspaper process, can be examined more closely in *the Simunye Adult Newspaper* (See Appendix One), as solid proof of the class' success and value and as a testimony to the soundness of the theoretical underpinnings which have guided this research and my class praxis with learners. I recommend then that this learner product be seen as a positive example to other adult education classes of equal level and to other educator/practitioners, policy planners and theorists, as it creates the space and ground of reference upon which to understand the adult learner as both capable of and deserving of *real* learning challenges that promote highly complex, agentic and critically self-motivated learners.

Writing to a *real audience* was one of the life-centred challenges adult learners faced when engaging in the newspaper production and design process. Where the works of a few learners do not appear in the *Simunye Adult Newspaper*, this is due to their late submission and/or incompleteness.

Gynaegogy Needs: A Brief Look at What Learners Said.

Data Collection for my research consisted of 8 needs analysis interviews, some of which were begun with learners in the middle end of the year of

1996, when the project idea first began to take shape. As I have already discussed above a needs analysis interview held with Monica Mhlophe at my home, I do not include her interview in this number. These interviews are cross-sectional and longitudinal as they are not with learners who come *only* from the newspaper project design class of 1997. As this section title suggests, all interviewees were female learners whose ages varied between 21 and 65 years of age with a median age of 37.

Needs analysis interviews as I conducted them were largely ethnographic in nature. Learners were free to say what they wanted about their lives, even as this might not have impacted directly on research findings. During my interview-time with learners, I wrote learners' words down as they spoke and as I asked questions in a semi-formal manner. Some interviews were audio-recorded and are on file with this researcher. I have changed the names of interviewees (with the exception of Monica Mhlophe's) to protect their integrity and to respect needs for anonymity.

Needs Analysis Interview One: Zandile Radebe.

One needs analysis interview, with an adult learner named Zandile Radebe (*not her real name*) was of a length of six hours. The interview took place over a period of two Sunday sessions of three hours each. During this interview, I asked questions of the learner about media

habits, living conditions at the Alexandra hostel and more general questions about her life history.

Zandile's interview, as the first interview I conducted, highlighted a need for a gender focus in class work. Some of her statements were seminal for me in that she wanted to see and learn of positive stories of blackwomen particularly. On her living conditions, she described a recent incident where an elderly woman was raped at the Alexandra women's hostel and that hostel conditions in Alexandra township meant that it was dangerous for her to be travelling evenings, Monday through to Thursday, for adult education classes at Maryvale College in Orange Grove, several kilometres outside Alexandra township in suburban Johannesburg. We discussed practical safety measures for herself and planned support strategies for the rape survivor in the hostel community.

Needs Analysis Interview Two: Joyce Mbatha.

A second needs analysis interview of six hours in length, was also covered in two sessions, with Joyce Mbatha (*not her real name*). Joyce recounted how her education had been interrupted, not because of pregnancy, where this was the case for Monica Mhlophe, Jane Montsho and Tina Sithole of the *Simunye Adult newspaper*, but directly because of oppressive action by the South African state police under apartheid rule.

Joyce spoke in profound detail on how when she was 12 years of age she and her brother had travelled with their father to Zimbabwe to visit relations. On return to the South African border her father was shot before her and her brother's eyes by South African state patrol border police. She and her brother were not physically harmed, but were kept in custody in a police cell for two days, until their mother could be traced.

When her mother arrived at the border post, the police refused to give the family the body and buried her father in a makeshift, wooden coffin somewhere in the veld (a South African term for 'flatlands'). Joyce describes how she watched the police bury her shot father in steel handcuffs, as if were a criminal that threatened to still get away, if not bound hand and foot. After this event, she says she didn't go back to school, until recently, because 'things became too difficult at home after that'.

Needs Analysis Interview Three: Dorcas Ngwenya.

A third needs analysis interview of three hours was conducted, in one session, with Dorcas Ngwenya (*not her real name*). Dorcas is a survivor of abuse, but has not been able to leave her husband permanently, as she has returned home twice after trying to leave her partner. Dorcas' attendance at learning classes is positive, as through them she is able to

leave a habitually negative and conflictual home environment to find support from a close female friend who attends 'night school' classes with her.

I myself only discovered that Joyce was a survivor of abuse, when one day she stayed late after class unable to complete an in-class writing assignment. It was then that she explained that this was because she had a bad headache. She took off her 'doek' (head-kerchief; a term borrowed from Afrikaans) to show me her bald scalp which had just been shaved in hospital to stitch a large wound. She said that she didn't know why, but her husband had come home drunk and that he had then broken a bottle over her head.

In the needs analysis interview I had with Joyce she spoke about her life and the difficulties that she has in leaving the cycle of abuse in which she is caught. A difficulty that prevents her from leaving her husband 'for good' is that she has few resources of her own (monetary and familial) to go elsewhere. She says that an additional hindrance to her leaving her partner is that there is no social State support for her to be placed elsewhere with her children.

From my own perspective, as a supportive educator of a learner surviving abuse, I must add as well here how frustrating it is to be an 'observer'.

Needs Analysis Interview Four: Anna Ngwenya.

A fourth needs analysis interview of two hours was held with Anna Ngwenya (*not her real name*) of Tembisa township. Anna, had just spent six months off from work as a domestic worker at the time of our interview together. As her name is not given in the caption, Anna has allowed me to indicate that her picture is given on page four of *the Simunye Adult Newspaper* project accompanying the article which reads: 'Racism Must Stop.' Anna, had gone to Baragwanath Chris Hani memorial hospital in Soweto, six months prior to our interview, to have her womb removed, because it had given her such pain for several years. She was at the time of our interview doing much better physically, but had been unable to sleep adequately for several months because of stress related to financial pressures.

To compound this, a neighbour of hers had been coming to her doorstep several days in a row asking if she had seen his wife. She had said that she had not and that they then had speculated that she had possibly gone to visit her mother, as she sometimes does. This time, however, she had possibly forgotten to give notice of her whereabouts.

Two days prior to our interview, Anna says her neighbour's body was found in the Tembisa veld ('field') near her home and that this had been

the work of a serial killer rapist who had done the same to several other women in the area. Anna said she couldn't sleep and was so disturbed and exhausted from thinking. She couldn't stop thinking she said.

Needs Analysis Interview Five: Martha Maselwane.

A fifth needs analysis interview of two hours was conducted with Martha Maselwane (*not her real name*). In this interview, Martha had much to say on the power of the 'pedagogic voice' (See Street:1995) when she recounted her experiences in a Northern Province primary, rural school. At the school, there were so few books that there were not enough books for every learner and for some subjects, no books at all. Of the textbooks that were available, the 'mistress' would keep them locked in a cupboard during school hours, with the additional proviso that it was **not** permissible for learners to take any of these books home for studying purposes and to then bring them back the next day for others to use.

In certain class sessions, the 'prefect' would distribute these books *only* to learners who only were 'properly' outfitted in full school uniform', so that the textbook became a tool to reward a 'submissive will and conformity to an empty iconography' that examined only exteriors (See my discussion on Williams (1997a: 158) above). Here, the printed word was most literally an exclusive, prestige marker and not a general right.

In this same interview, Martha also recounts how they didn't use pens or pencils in 'those days', but stylus-like pens and inkwells. She says that these ink pens were messy and that they would blot heavily. When they blotted, the teacher told them to wipe the blobs that gathered at the end of the stylus-nib in their hair! A result of this 'literacy practice' was that when they went home their pillows would be full of ink the next morning!

Earlier I highlighted that Street (1995) has said that: 'Literacy is for any group... what it is the contexts in which that group experiences it' (Street:1995, 82), so that one indeed wonders to what degree negative frustrations around this literacy practice were internalised, as it was a practice which was, in a very literal sense, 'carried over' from the formal setting of the classroom to the home. If the pun will be excused, this was a literacy practice that left - in more ways than one - an indelible mark!

Needs Analysis Interviews Six, Seven and Eight.

Needs analysis interviews six seven and eight, were interviews of a half hour duration each. In these interviews, women learners spoke of their aspirations for the future, media habits and family relations. I will not discuss these interviews in any great detail, except to highlight that learners were all doing the English language course in common because they felt that they: 'had to learn to speak English fluently' so that they

could seek better employment. This same desire and perception of English as 'the key' to advancement (See Pennycook:1994) was expressed by other adult learners more generally in class, so that this reading of the world (Aronowitz and Giroux: 1986, 132) was articulated by learners as a motivating force in their having returned to learning and their enrolment in the level 4/4a English language course more particularly (See the editorial, on page one of the *Simunye Adult Newspaper*, Appendix One).

One of the learners interviewed was an unemployed young adult of twenty-one years of age. Speaking of her wishes for the future, she said that she wanted to become a gospel singer 'like Rebecca Malope'. Another interviewee, aged twenty-nine, also a domestic worker, when asked to expand on her expectations of English language learning in the classroom was adamant that she needed to learn past participles to become more fluent in English. She said that we should do many more exercises in class to 'practice' them.

The third interviewee of this group was likewise a domestic worker. She wished to start her own catering business sometime in the near future. To this end, she was taking a home economics class at the 'night school' and was doing extra reading on food preparation. Through her reading (and perhaps through an internalisation of attitudes expressed by peers

or native English speaking 'superiors'), it became apparent in our discussions that this learner had developed a negative concept of her own vernacular language: South Sotho. This seemed clear when she explained that in English the word: 'julienne' meant that carrots were to be (or had already been) cut into long, thin sticks. She said that in her own language: 'one would have to use a whole, long sentence to describe this, whereas in English this meaning could be conveyed in one word!' Basing her perception on this example, the interviewee had developed a concept that English was somehow 'superior' to her own language (See Pennycook (1994) who contests that nothing in English, *in and of itself*, has anything to do with widely held 'common-sense' constructions (Gramsci:1971) that forward English as an 'international language'. It has rather everything to do with ideological contestations over power and cultural capital - dominance by difference! This learner's reproduction is then not a unique one: English classes would do well to interrogate this).

Besides audio-recordings of needs analysis interviews, I also recorded most class and workshop discussions with learners, throughout the newspaper project year, where discussions focused on issues to be explored in the newspaper. Perspectives given on issues were as learners themselves critically saw them. Many class discussions centred as well on the design, planning and the actual 'doing' of the newspaper itself. New understandings were gained through a doing that was collaborative.

Recorded class time equals some hundred and three hours, so that in the broadest sense, I have attempted to raise through this research key issues for consideration in relation to adult learners: their lives, needs, wants, trials and difficulties. Some sessions have been recorded in full and are on file with this researcher. I have mentioned then only a few of the significant statements that have arisen through the communicative action class time spent with learners. Other cues and traces of what transpired in these sessions is evident in the works of learners themselves in the *Simunye Adult Newspaper*, Appendix One.

Results.

Needs analysis interviews raised important issues around: 'pedagogic voice' and authoritarian, classroom procedures and practices (Street:1995); and, attitudes to indigenous African languages marginalised by English. Remembering Goodson's dominance theory (1980) discussed earlier - where uncritical reproduction is dependent on an 'aspiration upwards' by actors - is a strategy which helps to explain further how socio-cultural models, complemented by ideological ones, can converge in discourses that are, as Street (1995) has said, the result of power and "struggles over particular identities up against other identities, often imposed ones" (Street:1995, 135). These 'imposed identities' might themselves be aspired for because of their association

with the dominant. Needs analysis interviews remind us then, that in (adult) education, as elsewhere, 'discourse is a power to be seized' (Foucault:1981, 52-3) as reproduction is often uncritical of these struggles. But that, alternative discourses, articulating a new way of seeing, need to be developed as well.

If we have a socially, responsible commitment to action that is emancipative-oriented and communicative, and are fervent in promoting more fully human and more fully self-actualising Subjects (Freire:1972a)(Knowles:1990, 43), these are issues that will concern us deeply as practitioners, researchers and curriculum facilitators. In confronting the power games that make for unconscious consent (Giddens:1992, 193) and in challenging structural relations that are unequal and unjust, we can, as educators, do much to assume *our own role* in history (See Boomer:1989) to keep symbolic violence at bay (Bourdieu:1991) and to advocate a discourse ethics (Habermas) that has the 'force of the better argument at its heart'. This will be, I believe, reflected in our own work with learners, in much the same way as CLA practice can be used creatively for learning activities and processes in the classroom, as a critical resource rather than as a 'pre-given' product (See earlier discussion on Janks and Ivanic:1992).

Indeed, issues raised by learners in needs analysis interviews, lead me to formulate that in education there is a need for us to seek to audaciously re-invent the world, creatively and resistantly, not just 'read' it (Aronowitz and Giroux: 1986, 132) and leave it as it is.

Knowles (1990), throughout his work: *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*, calls for the development and implementation of a differential psychology for the adult learner. Needs analysis interviews with blackwomen adult learners, indicate that they have complex, situated and pressing needs which are often gender-specific. Delivery in adult education needs then to account for these needs, so that real blackwomen learners are not left 'out in the cold'. Ensuring that: blackwomen learners are able to access surplus power and strength in their own lived experiences and structural relations; and, that they are encouraged to have self-concepts that are positive, resistant, creative and unapologetic, are, I believe, important agendas for adult education in South Africa that will lead, hopefully, to further social action, further articulations, further re-contextualisations and visions, faithful to a praxis that is multiplicative (ixixixix), nolistic, critically engaged and striving to fulfill the revolutionary will to transformation, change and redress.

It is worth noting here that the word: 'Simunye' means we are 'one'. What may be drawn from learners' own newspaper title was that what

was of primary importance for learners in the process in which they negotiated new and/or shared meanings and/or alternative understandings, was a strong and mutual identification with the notion that strength was to be found in a unity that was not 'monistic' (Knowles:1990, 16). Learners who were reluctant to write about their own stories initially, became enthusiastic to do so after it was established that 'everyday knowledges and experiences of learners' were valid forms of experience upon which to base enquiry. Further learning was generated when learners shared experiences and understood that their own life experiences, and the meanings they made of them, were forms of knowledge from which others could learn, relate to, gather strength from, engage with and extend, in using them to direct and inform social change.

In the process of my work with learners, I have collected many of the first drafts that learners wrote as a part of the newspaper process, as well as other types of writing, both before and after the newspaper design process itself. One of the forms of writing that I collected was an evaluation piece which asked learners to voice the key meanings that the newspaper class process had for them. Lydia Maepa, who wrote the work: 'No Freedom For Domestic', found on page three of the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* (See Appendix One), says that the work that she has done through the project is work that she will show to her grandchildren

proudly.

She also says that now, because of the writing process, she is always listening to hear how people talk and what they talk about, even in taxis. This is positive, as for Lydia then, the collaborative, communicative action process has not been a finite one, but rather one that goes on, beyond the bounds of the classroom and the project itself. In this, Lydia looks towards the future and a situated and continuing negotiation of new meanings and new forms of action. Positioned critically, she engages with the notion of seeking out new trends, so that it may be said that Lydia is aware of her own learning as a continuous process. Importantly, she has 'learned' how to learn and how to access resources around her.

Questionnaires.

Finally, prior to the 'newspaper writing process' and the video that I created and presented to learners on interviewing 'skills' - where I conducted an interview also in a taxi by way of example - I distributed to learners a twelve-page questionnaire (Appendix Two) which asked learners to write about their 'reading /media/ social/ work and language habits'. Forty-four questionnaires were distributed and completed after what was several weeks' work for some learners at home. Learners' media habits were elicited as being active, complex and differential.

Questionnaires established that many learners, for example, do avidly watch soap opera programmes such as the 'Bold and the Beautiful'. This programme is commonly referred to as 'the Bold' by learners. It was by watching this programme that Jane Montsho, who wrote the work: 'Aids a Deadly Disease' on page seven of the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* (See Appendix One), developed a positive conceptualisation of the female condom. In a love session, between two personalities on 'the Bold', the male character was not shown to have put on a condom. She wrote that after watching several episodes after this love session, the woman 'never got pregnant'. She delineates that this must have been because the female personality went to the toilet before the love session. Of the meaning she made of this action, she wrote that it was at this time then that the female character must have 'put' a female condom, because 'you know that if you have sex you'll get pregnant' (Jane Montsho, questionnaire, written response and then supporting verbal communication, Maryvale College, June 17, 1997).

This may not have been the meaning that programme producers may have wanted to mediate through their 'soapie', but this is a meaning which Jane then carried forward positively in feeling 'safe' and having the self-confidence to advocate an Aids Awareness campaign through her writing for the benefit of others in the newspaper. Her article is written from an authoritative position, particularly with respect to reminding

readers that female condoms do exist, that they can be found in pharmacies and that they can be inserted up to several hours before sex (See Appendix One, page seven of the *Simunye Adult Newspaper*).

The response from adult learners in the questionnaire to the question at the top of page four (See Appendix Two), which asked them to expand on the issues that they talk about in everyday life with peers, was particularly well answered. As common topics of interest, many of the issues discussed informally with learners' peer group were re-negotiated in subsequent class sessions. These reappear, in new form, in the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* (See Appendix One). Questionnaires elicited that some learners, for example, talk about: Aids; crime; 'why boys are *better* than girls' (sic); what lobola ('bride price') they as parents should set for their daughter, and car hijackings, ...etc.

On the initial questions in the questionnaire (See particularly, page one, Appendix Two) which are to do with 'reading categories' accessed by learners, I must highlight that many of the categories mentioned pertain to the 'traditional school-type genres' that presently form the basis of a western-type system of schooling. Questionnaires elicit that few of my learners have had much contact with these genres outside of their own formal schooling. One learner, when asked about the genre of African literature (not necessarily a transparent category name), writes tellingly:

'maybe I did read this, but maybe I just didn't know the name.'

Critical awareness, where class action and discussion with learners was also focused on discussing the politics of naming and the ethnocentricities that such practices might reflect and promote, has then also been a positive 'outcome' of this research. Indeed, if I had had the opportunity to re-create a new questionnaire design, informed by learner discussions and responses, I would have asked fewer questions on these traditional reading genres, so that learners would not have felt disempowered by a focus that did not coincide with their own reading habits and practices. This was an oversight on my part when I initially designed this questionnaire for learners.

This oversight does, however, underline the point that I have made earlier when saying that 'teacher-directed' learning activities and worksheets are not what adults need. This is especially so when such an approach is from a 'top down' perspective that is inevitably flawed as it negates the validity of learners' own perspectives and social, cultural practices.

Learners De-Normalise Reifying Interpellations.

As I have said above, of particular critical focus in this research and in

class discussions were 'naming practices' that have been 'normalised' in the South African context. These naming practices are important issues, particularly as they may impact negatively on adult learners' self-concept. A domestic worker and/or gardener is sometimes called by employers: a 'girl' or a 'boy', for example, though they be fully-fledged adults. This practice draws on sexist and racist stereotypes. In class with learners, the power differentials 'implicit' in these practices were 'de-normalised' and challenged by class action and dialogue. How much, however, this challenge has been actualised beyond the classroom and beyond the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* in real, daily-life contexts - or not - is not ascertainable here without a study of a more longitudinal nature.

Simon Mokholoane's work: ' 'Kaffir' Fights 'Boer' ', in the *Simunye Adult Newspaper* page five (See Appendix One), is important then as it extends class discussions on negative, racist interpellations and rejects strongly 'old' socio-historical 'expectations' that a black person before a white one should exhibit an attitude of 'adaptive' submissiveness.

Freire's words (as quoted below by bell hooks (1989)) ring true then for the gains made *for*, *by* and *with* the integrated critical subjects who were engaged with me in the dialogic processes of this research:

"Integration results from the capacity to transform .. reality. To the extent that (wo)man loses his (/her) ability to make choices and is subjected to the choices of others, to the extent that his(/her) decisions are no longer his (/her) own because they result from external prescriptions, (s/)he is no longer integrated ..

The integrated person is person as Subject. In contrast, the adaptive person is person as object. .. Adaptation .. is symptomatic of... dehumanisation" (Freire, as quoted by bell hooks (1989: 67) (*my bracketed additions to include female pronouns and referents*).

In a process of critical communicative action in the classroom, learners have then been afforded meaningful opportunities in the creating of Subject constructions that are their own. As part of a broader on-going project to transform social realities, learners in the adult education classroom 'talked back' (hooks:1989) with a sense of their own autonomy; difference and worth, and they rejected objectification. This is an important gain. As Subjects, learners focused usefully on integration, in Freire's terms above, by challenging sexist and racist *norms* in daily life. It is my hope then that this critical social process with learners will have positive lasting effects and that in future, if and when the need arises, they will have the confidence to challenge such interpellations.

(1) Anti-Closure: Emancipatory Action Research

as a Project for Inclusions and Critical

Experimentations.

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Anti-Closure: Emancipatory Action Research as a Project for Inclusions and Critical Experimentations.

"However rigorous and systematic the methods of formal or discursive analysis may be, they cannot abolish the need for a creative construction of meaning, that is, for an interpretative explication of what is represented or what is said" (Thompson:1990a).

This research has been rigorous in considering contact with 44 learners both cross-sectionally and longitudinally. Sixteen of these learners have been engaged in action longitudinally through the project process. Twenty-eight of these learners either contributed through needs' analysis interviews prior to the project's formal beginning, or through writing contributions and/or discourse articulations in other classes.

On action research in general, Grundy (1987) says the following:

"If the project is directed primarily by the skill of the researcher/designer (and) ownership of the guiding idea is not taken up by the actors, the research project will remain in technical mode.." (Grundy:1987).

I have been fortunate as a researcher, as this project was taken up by learners, without whose enthusiasm the project would not have been possible.

Giroux - in his foreword to Freire and Macedo's work: *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* (1987) - says that the possibilities in action research lie with 'evaluation, direction, recognition, and the articulation of purpose' (Giroux in Freire and Macedo:1987, xviii). Respect between all the participants is integral, if 'power is to be reinvented by the process' (Giroux in Freire and Macedo:1987, xix) and he claims that 'learners are empowered in knowing that they are learners' (Giroux in Freire and Macedo:1987, xiv).

I differ with Giroux here, as - in my experience - what has empowered learners through the process in which I was with them engaged was the notion that 'all had something valuable to contribute', and that by making their contributions: all (learners, myself included) might be typified as being 'teachers', giving-and-receiving, rather than as the 'traditional learners', habitually constructed as being simply 'passive receivers' of pre-packaged knowledge handouts (See Freire (1972a) who rejects this as: 'the banking concept in education').

Learners, through this research and class newspaper communicative

action process, were encouraged to critically reflect on and engage in action that was participatory, collaborative and situational. Problems experienced in the real world were considered dialogically for a newspaper project that aimed to re-negotiate meanings that were important to learners and to discover and promote a means towards change and critical social action by the opportunity that the newspaper presented as a tangible, print form that could be shared and distributed to disseminate the provisional meanings that learners had made, to a broader social community outside the classroom.

As actors, learners were able to access technologies not previously available to them. Through a media production process, learners became new 'cultural mediators', when previously they had always been on the receiving end of this process in the broader domain of 'everyday life' and their experiences with the media as a sub-field of the field of symbolic control (Bernstein).

The praxis I have promoted in the adult education classroom has encouraged responsible and purposeful critical social explorations by learners. These explorations have been heuristic to the degree that action within the classroom site has been meaningfully directed towards opening up spaces for new possibilities, new problems and new levels of consciousness, both beyond the bounds of the classroom and within it.

Equally important, my praxis and research has attempted to account for the multi-faceted complexity and the unique contradictions and difficulties experienced by my adult learners, so that insofar as possible praxis has not been 'off the course' of lived learner realities and differentials.

My research elicits that adult learners desire to be critically and socially engaged. They wish to make critical interventions in the larger communities in which they live. Learners also need to be self-directing. Forming networks of interdependence and mutual reciprocity does not diminish this need. Indeed, I have found that the forming of such networks promotes positive self-esteem levels in learners so that they are further encouraged to embrace new learning and growth challenges, however 'painful' (Knowles:1990, 43).

This research, as it has been interpreted by myself as emancipatory action research, has been qualitative and somewhat impressionistic. This is because it has not been possible, in the space provided here, to account in detail on the wealth of meanings generated by learners throughout the project process. Neither has it been possible to discuss in any great detail the number of new social roles for Subject/actor/learners that have been encouraged through the critical emancipative process of communicative action in the classroom.

Walker (1991) quotes a Colombian activist to outline what emancipatory action research outlines to do:

"Action Research works ideologically and intellectually to arm society's exploited classes in order that they may assume their role as *conscious actors* in history. This is the ultimate destination of knowledge, that which validates the praxis and *fulfills the revolutionary commitment*" (Walker:1991, 168)(*my emphasis*).

How much the 'revolutionary commitment' of this research has impacted to ensure that adult learners, themselves, internalise and 'assume their role as conscious actors in South African history', fully able to challenge and assert their difference with pride against the 'cruel iconography' that Williams speaks against (Williams: 1997a, 158), cannot be here ascertained. I believe that the value of this research is immeasurable as responses to praxis have been plural, non-finite and contradictory, while yet encouragingly positive.

On this note then, it is perhaps useful to place myself in the following words of Alice Walker (1987) who looks forward to feedback, continuities, changes and criticisms of her own work, as part of the ongoing discussion that life-long learning is. She says of her work, in regard to its being non-definitive, the following:

"I hope the contradictions will show but also the faith and grace of a people under continuous pressures. So much of the satisfying work of life begins as an experiment; having learned this, no experiment is ever quite a failure" (Walker:1987, 32).

My closure here, is then merely a beginning, where I hope that at least some of what has been said, may advance the cause of adult learners and adult learner practitioners within South African society; promote new practices not of a strategic nature; and contribute to the entrenchment of the rights of blackwomen within the adult learner group. As agentic voicing re-contextualisers, the valuable insights of other researcher/practioners who work with adult learners, must be heard, so that adult learners, women and men, do not fall between the interstices of definitions and official policy documents that continue to perpetuate the 'invisibility' and marginalisation of adult learners by not giving them their due.

Indeed, we need to love the revolutionary commitment to the adult learner and to the vision of a transformed society, if we truly wish to actualise this vision and commitment. Presently, if the gaps, contradictions and retrograde actions found in adult education, as outlined above, continue unchallenged in the South African context, we will fail the adult learner yet again, and, in so doing, we fail ourselves.

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Appendix One:

Simunye Adult Newspaper, 1997,
Maryvale College, satellite of
City Deep adult learning centre,
Level 4A English project and
Design 'Product'.

Simunye Adult News

The voice of Maryvale Students

October 1997



The Simunye Adult News Team

HIGHLIGHTS

1. No Freedom for Domestic. See page 3...



2. YES, Apartheid is Not Over. See page 4...



3. Garden Better Than Mine. See page 4...

4. Men Can Do Soccer Jobs. See page 6...

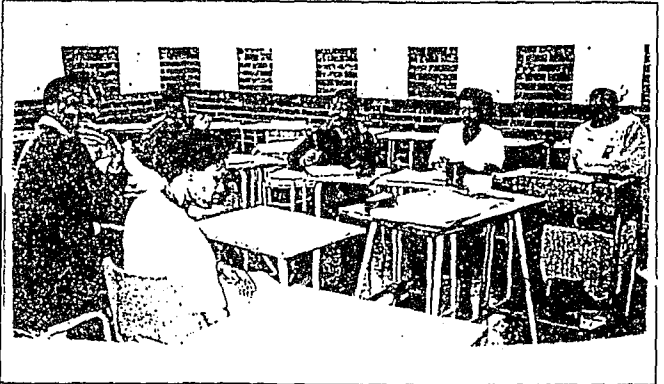


5. AIDS Advice. See page 7...



6. Healthy, Body and Mind. See page 7...

Dear Readers



Organising Articles, the News Team at a Saturday workshop.

This is our first newspaper edition. We are the students in both level 4 and level 4a who have created this newspaper. We've chosen the title *Simunye Adult News* because we believe we are equal.

We come from different places: Some of us are domestic workers in factories or plantations or companies, some of us are drivers, gardeners, construction workers and office clerks. Our experiences in these places are different, as our life stories show, but we have the same wish to be educated in order to make our lives better. We feel that with better qualifications we'll find better jobs. This is why we came to Maryvale College, the night school.

We are also "One" (*Simunye*) because we are all learning English, a language which is not our first. Learning English is not easy. Speaking, understanding, writing and even spelling in English are skills we've been working on through this newspaper project. We want to communicate well in English so that we will be able to communicate

with people around us and so that we will be able to cope in our jobs where English is used.

Many of the articles in this newspaper raise the issues of racism, sexism and Aids as problems that need to be dealt with in the country. We are one because nobody in the class can say that we have not been affected by racism and/or sexism.

Our stories show that we are against discrimination and that we believe that people

identify about black people and/or women are all around.

If you are aware of this you have the power to fight for your rights and change circumstances around you.

To produce this newspaper, we had class discussions on: Aids, the different possible relationships between men and women and racial discrimination.

After discussions, we wrote individual articles. Sometimes we wrote about our life stories which include a focus on these issues. We then shared our stories and, as a group, we discussed our experiences to understand them better. By sharing them, we become stronger.

We invite readers of our paper to write to us. We have a box: "The *Simunye Box*," where you can leave your opinions or stories for us in the Maryvale Office.

We hope you enjoy reading our *Simunye News*!

"We want to communicate well in English with people around us so that we will be able to cope in our jobs where English is used."

must work together to stop it. We talk about our personal experiences of discrimination in the hope that by making others aware of them we can teach them to see that this treatment is wrong and hurtful.

We say that if we don't speak out against this kind of treatment we will continue to be discriminated against, because stereotypes (ie, false

Author Hunt D

Name of thesis Dreaming The Future / Making Voice / Making Choice: Advocacy For A Multiplicative Praxis In Adult Education Through An Action Research Project That Designs The Future Hunt D 1999

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