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Teackerly A cts of Transgression: How Fem inist Educators are Changing Composition

Kay Siebler

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Teacherly Acts of Transgression: How Feminist Educators are Changing Composition

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of
Miami University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of English

by

Kay Siebler
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio
2002

Dissertation Director: Kate Ronald

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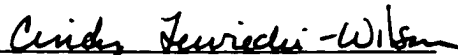
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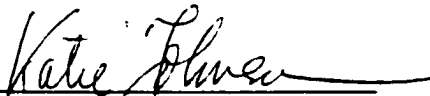
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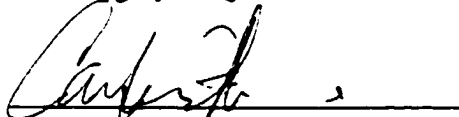
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ABSTRACT

TEACHERLY ACTS OF TRANSGRESSION: HOW FEMINIST EDUCATORS ARE CHANGING COMPOSITION

By Kay Siebler

The purpose of this project is to research how feminists in the field of composition have used feminist pedagogy to change standards of writing instruction. The first two chapters create a collaborative and comprehensive definition of feminist pedagogy, culling three decades of research on the issue to extrapolate a contemporary definition of feminist pedagogy that focuses on 16 themes. The subsequent three chapters of the project document ethnographic studies of three feminist teachers and scholars in the field of composition, investigating how they are practicing feminist pedagogy in classrooms, leadership, and scholarship. The three feminist teachers who are the focus of the ethnographic chapters are Harriet Malinowitz, professor of English at Long Island University and author of Textual Orientations: Lesbian and Gay Students and the Making of Discourse Communities; Lynn Worsham, professor of English at South Florida University and editor of JAC; and Jackie Jones Royster, associate dean of research and faculty affairs at Ohio State University and a composition scholar whose current work centers on African American Women rhetors of the nineteenth century. In the ethnographic chapters I examine how these three feminist leaders in the field of composition are living their feminist pedagogy and how their work helps shape contemporary composition theory and practice.

Acknowledgments

Gracious thanks to the members of my dissertation committee who worked tirelessly on my behalf: Kate Ronald, Cindy Lewiecki-Wilson, Katie Johnson, and Carolyn Haynes. This project would not have evolved as much as it did without your helpful feedback and careful reading. Through these teachers' feminist ways, I have learned much about teaching, leadership, and scholarship. This project reflects what I strive to be as a teacher, what these educators consistently model for me. This project would also have not been possible without the help of Lynn Worsham, Harriet Malinowitz, and Jackie Jones Royster. These amazing feminist educators and scholars opened their lives to me and allowed their work to be scrutinized and written about here. They are truly examples of what feminist teaching, feminist pedagogy, is all about. I learned truck loads from each of them and there are no words to express the brilliance and generosity of their spirits. A special thanks to Kate Ronald, always and forever a patient and understanding mentor and friend. She puts up with much and can create a teaching moment out of the most unlikely cloth. This project certainly would not have been without Kate as a model of feminist teaching and friendship. Through her open heart, passion for pedagogy, and delight in rhetoric, she has shown me the way. Special thanks to V.J. and Nancy who "hurrahed" me along every step of the way, always positive and encouraging. And The Momma (a.k.a. Bunhead) who never hesitates to say how proud she is. Lastly, here's to Effie, Ellie, Eula, and Estel, soaring somewhere out there with wings that work well.

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*Introduction:
Trying to Figure It Out*

If I were you I would just go straight to the last three chapters. The ethnographic studies. That is where this whole project really takes off: real life stories of how feminist teachers practice feminist pedagogy in their teaching, leadership, and scholarship. But I'm not you. In fact, I am the opposite of that kind of reader. I would no more be able to "jump ahead" in any book than I would be able to wear my pants backwards or register Republican. I am maniacally religious about beginning in the beginning and moving through the text as the goddess (in the form of the writer) intended it. And I can count on one hand, with a couple of digits left over, the number of times I have started a book and not finished reading it until the last page was turned. Even if I hated the book or the ideas so much that I physically threw it across the room, I would pick it up again, curse, and continue reading, every word, page after page in the order designated by chronology. I figured I owed the author at least that much.

The first two chapters of this project are the historical grounding and the theory for my definition of feminist pedagogy, where it came from, and where it is going – specifically in the field of composition. The first three chapters are an attempt to gather some *ethos* so that the reader will understand I know a bit of what I was talking about when they get to the ethnographic chapters. But the passion of this project is in those last three chapters where the reader gets a glimpse of feminist teachers in their natural habitat. In those chapters I try to do justice to the work Lynn Worsham, Harriet Malinowitz, and Jackie Royster are doing in the name of feminism, as feminist teachers, in the field of composition. I am not really sure how I got so lucky as to be able to do this

project. Once I started the site visits and the ethnographic writing, I had black and blue marks lining my arms from me pinching myself: “Do I really get to do this? This is my job?”

After the first site visit of my ethnographic work – with Lynn in Tampa, Florida -- I felt like someone had delivered me into a euphoric realm of impossible happiness. I wanted to do ethnographic studies of feminists in their natural habitat for the rest of my life. If I am very lucky, perhaps I will be able to do a few more. Here are the first three.

I fell in love with these scholars as I read their words and examined their work. Once I visited them in person, I became almost too elated with the physical reality of their intelligence and warmth to be anything close to objective. They are caring, gracious, humble, dynamic, passionate, and smart, smart, smart. I hope I have communicated that well enough in the details of their life and work recorded in this project. Of course, there are bushels of great things that I couldn't fit. I had enough to say to fill a book about each woman, but I had to pick and choose what to focus on – the tyranny of page limits. I tried to let each woman determine, through what she chose to talk about in her interviews with me, the focus of the ethnographic chapter. And then I would try to squeeze in my own agenda of what I found fascinating about their work. If I have done my job, you will want to meet these people. You will want to congratulate them for what they are doing and have done. You will want to sidle up to them and get close enough to hear what they are saying. You will want to physically touch their scholarship, like the hem of something they have worn, to know the material reality of their words and work. And, if I have done my job, you will go to the nearest bookstore and sweep your arm, elbow to finger tips, across the shelf where their work is peddled, and clean it all into your shopping cart for

weeks of brain sustenance.

I am a fanatical keeper of journals. Even as a small child – from about the age of 10 – I kept diaries sequestered between my mattress and box spring. When I discovered my domineering brothers took great pleasure in first reading through my thoughts and then announcing them at the family dinner table, I invented a hieroglyphic code that I only abandoned when the process became too time-consuming and painstaking to bear. After that, I just got better at hiding my journals. Since that young age, journal writing has been a daily ritual for me, like brushing my teeth. While I was writing this project, I kept three kinds of journals: my regular personal journal, teaching journals for each course I taught, and a project journal. I keep a personal journal religiously, writing in it every night before I end the day in slumber. I also keep regular teaching journals, although I typically don't write in those every day, but rather when something happens within the context of a class or with a student that I need to figure out. The third journal was specific to what I was thinking and physically doing in regards to this project. It should go without saying that many times I was writing about the same event differently in each journal. Sometimes I would just mention something in one and cross reference to a detailed entry in another journal. But it was important to devote specific space to each of these three areas. I wanted to clarify thoughts in relation to each, although they were all part of my day-to-day lived experiences – and part of this project. Within this project I use those journal entries (indicating the type of journal and the date the entry was posted) to position myself as a physical reality within the text. Through the use of these various journals, I am allowed to talk back to my own text, to integrate my material reality and private thoughts, into the world about which I am writing. The journals entries are me

talking to me about my work and life. The excerpts within this project are meant to inform the ideas represented here, to add dynamics and perceptions that are missing otherwise. They are my voice trying to figure it all out, whether “it” is the project itself, my approach to the research, an interaction with a student, or my beliefs and ideas on the topic of feminist pedagogy.

My compulsion with journal writing comes from that desire, the physical need, to figure out. Some people can figure out by conversation. Others by reading and thinking. My primary way of figuring out is through writing. Thinking, sure, but writing almost as a way of creating a physical space for what I am trying to figure out. Most people would probably call what I have named “figuring out” as critical thinking. Others may call it theorizing. For a feminist, woman, Marxist, queer, witch, there is little in the world that makes sense, so one either tries to figure it out, goes numb or runs crazy. Journaling is what keeps me teetering on this side of sanity most days -- although I have been known to run crazy.

During the mid-1980s I served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco. At the end of my three-year service, I was living in the capitol city of Rabat. School was out (I had been a teacher and community educator in the Moroccan countryside) and I had six weeks before my service officially ended and I was sent home. Another Peace Corps volunteer, Eric, lived up the coast about an hour by train. We fell in with each other and spent long days walking the streets of the city, flopping around on the beach, and sitting in the cool retreat of our cement apartments when the heat was unbearable. In those six weeks it felt as if I talked more with Eric than I have ever talked with anyone in my life. It felt like a high-pitched, fevered, month-long conversation. We were just trying to

figure it all out. Politics, sex, capitalism, relationships, family, injustice, poverty, culture, gender. We couldn't stop talking. It felt as if we had invited each other into a collective brain where we were hashing out everything we had known, trying to make sense of the world. With the intensity of intellectual engagement came laughter that often overwhelmed us, crumpling us to the ground, our muscles too weak to support our bodies. There isn't much separating the serious from the ridiculous.

Even while experiencing those wildly passionate days on the Moroccan coast, I knew that most people didn't get that kind of moment in time. I remember looking across the rocking train at Eric, both of us sweaty and sick from the sun, and thinking, "This will be burned in my mind. This will be a moment I come back to and wonder on." And I do. Eric and I didn't keep in touch after the Peace Corps -- mostly because I think any sort of connection would have paled in comparison to those six weeks. It was an intense stretch of figuring out. My need to keep extensive journals on my thoughts and experiences are a substitute for that experience. I kept journals before I spent time with Eric, but the reason I keep journals came into sharper focus after that time. I wanted to sustain that kind of conversation and intellectual stimulation. I don't think I am unusual in that I want to reflect on what is happening in my life or in the world around me; that seems to be the *modus operandi* of most academics. But I need the physical reality of a journal, to refer back to, to remember what it is I figured out -- and how my conclusions or ideas have changed since a specific point in time.

A few weeks ago I was walking down a corridor in the English department when I passed a colleague who was furiously muttering under her breath, punctuating her internal monologue with gestures. I called her out of her internal conversation with a

greeting. Startled, she looked at me and with a dawn of recognition said, “Oh. Sorry. I was just talking to a student.” “Oh, whew!” I thought. “I’m not the *only* raving lunatic around here.” I also have conversations with students, colleagues, friends that take place in the total absence of another person: in the car, in my office, in my home. They often get very high pitched and loud-voiced. And, of course, I am articulate and brilliant and utterly convincing. It is, after all, *my* conversation. Usually these conversations are just the beginnings of what I am trying to figure out. They make their way into my journal at the end of the day: “Here is what I accomplished in regarding how to figure *that* one out.”

In this project I am trying to figure out many things. One of them is what *is* feminist pedagogy? Where does it come from? Why are some people – ironically people who define themselves as feminists – so skeptical about what it means to be a feminist teacher? And, as the ethnographic studies hope to show, how are people enacting their feminist beliefs in the classroom, in their scholarship, as leaders in the academy? I don’t know that I come to many conclusions. “Figuring out” shouldn’t imply that one has decided on anything. Only that the conversation is growing, changing, and moving as we learn, live, and teach. Perhaps after you have read this, in whatever order makes sense to you, you will be able to help me in the journey to figure it out – ending, again, with more questions, different questions, than those stated here. What are you thinking now? Where will it take you? How will my thoughts and words anger, excite, persuade, or alienate you? Will you, in the end, be able to articulate those things for me? Isn’t that all we can hope for: a really good conversation where we both learn something new?

Chapter 1: When Rapunzel Escapes the Tower and Runs Amuck: The History of Feminist Pedagogy

Personal Journal: July 10, 2001

I went to V.J.'s today, first visit since I got back to Nebraska. She told me that Barbara had asked after me, so I need to call her. As I was walking home, laden with the trappings of good friendship (home-baked cookies, a huge clutch of flowers from her garden, and the warm buzz of good conversation still in my head) I again remembered how central Barbara is to this project. It was 1985. I was a fifth-year senior (journalism major) at UN-L when I signed up for her Women's Literature course that rocked my world. The poignancy of that moment in my life is that profound, and perhaps that simple. I can't even remember why I signed up for the course in the first place. Had someone recommended it? Or perhaps specifically Barbara as an instructor? Did I just need three more credit hours to round out my schedule (I had always been a sucker for English courses: the candy of my school work)? Perhaps it was all just the gentle poke of fate.

After 18 years (!) of formal education, that class was the first time I remember reading women's writing. That in and of itself sent me to the stratosphere. It was the first year that Norton had published their Norton Anthology of Literature by Women, so that was the course text. The pages, onion thin and almost transparent, reminded me of bible pages – an apropos analogy. I read that book cover to cover: 2400 pages, writing in the margins and filling up corners of white space with thoughts and ideas. Barbara didn't assign the entire text, but once I started reading, I couldn't stop. It was like a compulsion. So, the text was life-changing – it was the one book I carried with me to Morocco as a Peace Corps volunteer. But so was the way Barbara conducted the course. For the first time in a college classroom we were sitting in a circle. I remember feeling giddy that I could actually look around and see other people in the class – and really listen to what they had to say. Instead of students talking to the teacher, answering pointed questions to impress, they were talking to each other. *We were talking to each other.* I was also a bit intimidated. More than once I thought, "These people are so smart." The other astonishing difference was the amount of feedback Barbara gave on my work. We had journals due every week and as a journaling freak I filled up pages and pages of thoughts and reflections. My love of personal self-reflection and the surprise of reading women's words exploded in my class journal. Profound pleasure also came, though, in reading Barbara's response to my work, hearing her thoughts, and feeling her push me to think of things in different directions. I must have been relatively quiet in class – stunned, perhaps, which is hard for me to believe because now I always have to check and double-check my

talk time in a classroom – because once she wrote something along the lines of, “You write such interesting things in your journals. I wish you would share them in class discussions. Others can learn from your insights.” That floored me. Again, I had never considered that others would find my ideas interesting, let alone learn from them. And even more odd was my belief that I *shouldn't* share my bright ideas with others because they were mine and I should save them to impress the teacher, a conditioned response to the traditional classroom where performance was only related to getting the teacher's attention, not interacting with other members of the class. That class literally moved my world in various directions. I became a different student, understanding the purpose of the classroom to be interaction and exchange. This way of teaching, although I didn't identify it then as feminist pedagogy, fascinated me and became the model for the type of teaching I would try to do as a Peace Corps volunteer. And the politics of curriculum development would never, ever be transparent to me again. When the class ended I cried. But I also felt anger. Why hadn't I read women's voices until my last year at the university? Why had I been an unempowered, passive student for so long? Why didn't other teachers really listen and hear what their students had to say?

Walking home from V.J.'s, sweating in the hot, mid-day humidity, I felt that anger and righteous indignation all over again. This project – almost twenty years later – began in that Introduction to Women's Literature classroom. It began with Barbara. What would I be doing, who would I be today if I hadn't landed in that course? And how in the world did Barbara manage to do what *she* did, transgressing the norms in such profound ways? How many other lives did that feminist teacher change as dramatically as my own?

Documenting history is a tricky thing. For a feminist historian, the accusatory questions loom threateningly before the pen is put to paper: Whose voice is being left out? Whose perspective is being privileged? What perspectives are lost to us forever? Even as I begin to document the history of feminist pedagogy, a short history as history goes, I feel almost paralyzed by these questions. Questions of where to start and who to include immediately call into question the choices I make. By virtue of these choices I give voice to some and silence others. I exclude and include, and the choices seem

largely arbitrary based on who I have read, who has influenced my work and teaching, who has been cited and written about before. The ideological machine creaks and moans as I run my hands over it, picking through the pieces it has spit out in its churning, trying to document and analyze *one* history of teaching that is part of the machine and yet somehow a deviation of the typical product generated. Here I attempt to argue that although these theories and voices are part of the machine, they have also disrupted it, jammed it – as Lynn Worsham has written (1992:42) – and thereby altered it in significant ways. Feminist theory and pedagogy as well as the status, location, and power of feminists in the academy have changed the practice of teaching.

In this chapter I will articulate the influences of feminist ideas and theories on teaching practices. I will discuss feminism and feminist teaching practices as they first made their way into the academy, in the form of Women's Studies courses, and how those cultural shifts changed the theories and practices of composition. What I document here, however, represents only one view of *a* history, not *the* history, for all the reasons outlined above. After contextualizing feminist pedagogy in a historical moment, in chapter two, I compile a definition of feminist pedagogy that is an amalgamation of definitions culled from scholarly books and articles across the disciplines, published over the past three decades.

This definition provides a more comprehensive – and I argue precise – definition of feminist pedagogy that reveals and documents the evolution of how teachers and scholars enact this specific pedagogical approach. I perceive this definition as collaborative because it comes from many scholars who have added different themes to the definition – or who have further developed a theme outlined by a previous scholar.

Through this documentation I hope to clarify, to offer precision, to a philosophy of teaching that rails against static definitions or prescriptive recipes for teaching.

Therefore, I am walking a fine line between offering a more precise definition of feminist pedagogy and creating a positivist view that runs counter to the spirit of feminism. I feel I work to avoid this trap by clarifying the distinction between the themes of feminist pedagogy (the ideas and theories behind the practices) and how an individual teacher chooses to enact those practices within any given classroom. By making a distinction between the beliefs that drive feminist pedagogy (the themes) and how a teacher teaches (the practices), I try to avoid creating a judgmental framework where some practices are seen as feminist and others as not feminist.

Through my research I have discovered that although there is not one static definition of feminist pedagogy or one way to practice feminist pedagogy, in their scholarship feminist teachers write about various themes with enough frequency to articulate them more specifically and systematically. In chapter two I also connect feminist teaching theories to the field of composition, and how the current trends of writing instruction have changed as a result of feminist influence.

In this first chapter, to create a context for how feminist pedagogy came to be defined as such, I begin by explaining the power of the pedagogical site – how the act of teaching itself and the methods used in the classroom carry a significant power to change the culture of education and the academy. The way a teacher approaches the classroom and the material taught in the classroom has the potential to not only change the culture of the academy, but the broader culture as well. By educating students (both through classroom practices and course material) to the why and how of cultural disruption

through critical thinking skills and personal consciousness, students potentially can work to question ideology as they move about in the world.

After arguing for the power of pedagogy, I demonstrate how broader social movements (women's rights, labor movements, civil rights movements) worked to change the standards of education and teaching practices in ways that furthered – and sometimes hindered – contemporary feminist pedagogy.

The Power to Name

Even to begin my project I must rely on the documented – which means published – records of feminist teaching. The first mention of feminist pedagogy *that I could find*¹ appears in 1982. Two articles that year gave name to feminist pedagogy: a chapter written by Margo Culley in MLA's publication Teaching Women's Literature from a Regional Perspective and an article on curriculum development written by Janet Miller and published in Journal of Curriculum Development. Culley's article names feminist pedagogy as an innovative approach to the pedagogy of literature where diaries and personal histories constitute the texts and work of the course. Culley also identifies the need to connect course work to the lives of students as part of feminist pedagogy. She writes that the structure of the course moved beyond a challenge to canonical texts: "The

¹Certainly there were theorists and teachers who identified pedagogical methods as "feminist" prior to 1982. The problem in identifying these scholars is that electronic databases do not contain a comprehensive list of every article published or every presentation given. Through searching databases that compiled citations and records of publications from the fields of education, language and literature, communication, social sciences and women's studies, I found the Cully and Miller citations. These were the earliest references of "feminist teaching" or "feminist pedagogy." That is to say, these were the first articles where certain practices were named as "feminist teaching practices" where the database administrator used those key words ("feminist teaching" or "feminist pedagogy") as a signifying way of cataloguing the articles. That is not to say there were not theorists who wrote about feminist *approaches* to teaching before this date. Rather, these were the first instances where "feminist teaching" as a pedagogical approach was defined explicitly.

nature of the course *changed the authority structure of the classroom*, the modes of research and strategies for *sharing knowledge*, even the *relationship between the classroom and the local community*" (88 emphasis mine). These themes of students as knowing subjects, creating connections to the community, and subverting the authority of the teacher and even the academy mark the first themes of feminist pedagogy. Central to this discussion is the work of recovery of women's voices and experience, reinforcing the centrality of *women's identities and experiences* to feminist pedagogy. The same year that Culley published her article, Miller's article, "'The Sound of Silence Breaking: Feminist Pedagogy in Curriculum Theory,'" defines feminist pedagogy as an innovative way to approach curriculum design integrating voices and texts by Traditionally Marginalized People (TMP)², subverting teacher authority, and opening up curriculum development to student choices. If we understand these articles as signifying the

² I created this term, Traditionally Marginalized People, because I was wholly unsatisfied with the more common lexicon used to describe people who are outside the perimeters of the dominant culture. The word "minorities" I reject because it continues to reinforce the idea of a white, male majority which is a fiction of the dominant culture (white males have never been the majority, only traditionally those with power). Likewise, I reject the rhetoric of "People of Color" as inherently racist because the "norm" is the un-named whiteness that immediately casts all those who aren't "white" as being "colored." Through struggling with how to name those outside the dominant culture, I came to "traditionally marginalized people" because it encompasses not only those of various races or ethnicities, but all groups that have been systematically denied power in the white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy. Those who have been traditionally marginalized include women, queers, poor people, the aged, the differently-abled, and all groups who are not identified as "white" or Anglo Saxon. I also especially like this term because the acronym "TMP" implies a temporary position as traditionally marginalized people. As feminists - and others - do their work to change the cultural norms, the hope is that people who are traditionally marginalized will gain access to power. Therefore, the feminist work is to make sure that although these groups and individual have been *traditionally* marginalized, they are only *temporarily* so.

Some African Americans individuals and organizations are working to remove "minorities" and "People of Color" from the popular lexicon arguing that "minorities" indicates a lesser status. June Jordan prefers the term "the world's majority" instead of "minority" because she finds the latter diminishes not only of the realities of all the various groups of people corralled into that one category but also because her term more accurately reflects reality where, in sheer numbers of people, the only minority when considering the world's population are people of Anglo-Saxon heritage, or "whites." The 2000 census reported that one in four Americans identify as either Hispanic or African American. In places such as California, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, and New Mexico the majority of the population reflects people often defined as "minority" (Harrison 15-16). When I do use the term "minority" I will put it in quotes to show that this is not my term of choice, but how the dominant culture chooses to lump all people who are not of Anglo-Saxon heritage or an arbitrary skin color designation into one category.

beginning of feminist pedagogical theory, it would be easy to overzealously view the documentation of such a very short history as a relatively simple task (1982 to the present). But who was practicing or naming these or other pedagogical strategies as feminist before this date without the benefit of publication? Who first named certain classroom practices as “feminist,” and how long did it take before the taxonomy was legitimized in a publication? How did we, as a culture, as an institution (academia), arrive at the moment of publication, of naming (as late as 1982)?

The Stilted Distortion of (his)Story

History is a culture’s narrative of itself (Hennessy 137), the stories we tell each other about who we are, as a group. Therefore, within one story, depending on *who* is telling that story, a specific perspective becomes dominant. Even when we hear the three bears’ voices (“Someone’s been eating my porridge!”), we are rooting for Goldilocks. It’s her story after all, her hunger and fatigue that finds respite and satiation at the home into which she breaks, enters, sups, and sleeps. The Bears are only hanging around on the fringes to provide the conflict that Goldilocks triumphantly overcomes. With any history, any narrative, there is conflict; it is at the root of what makes a good story. But to avoid the tunnel-vision and blinders of typical history-writing, feminists, among others, have demanded a rigor of historicization or the contextualization of the story, overtly articulating whose perspective is privileged, whose perspective is left out, and the implications of those choices. The conflict that creates a good history needs to be contextualized by asking questions such as, “Whose voice is missing? Whose location is

privileged? Why and how are these gaps and hierarchies changing the story?" (deLauretis 266)

Equally crucial to the story is how the data is collected – the information from which the story springs. The identity and location of the person who collects and interprets the data, and their³ agenda even before they begin pouring over it, changes the story in significant ways. In the telling of histories, there is no neutrality because we are all victims of ideology and these ideological forces become regimes that rule our thoughts and perspectives. Some scholars believe there are ways to question “The White Guy In My Head”⁴ and therefore move in directions that are counter to what the White Guy says. Feminism and a feminist approach to history-making offer a method by which to begin the critical questioning of the story. Questioning whose reality the story represents may be evidence of how this questioning can happen. Feminism offers a way to push the dominant ideological boundaries and demand new perspectives. The question then becomes, does feminism become a part of ideology – or, if not -- does it construct an equally oppressive ideology of its own? This causes me to return to the historicization questions: “Who is being left out? Why?”

In recording the history of feminist pedagogy, I must first look at the subculture – or secondary ideology – that is feminism, understanding that even when doing so I am choosing a specific feminist ideology informed by my own position as a feminist (queer, white, privileged class, educated, teacher, writer, activist). The subcultures of feminism

³Throughout this project I use “their” as a generic third person in relation to both singular and plural nouns. Although many would see this as a grammatical error, my intention to use “their” as a generic third person is a way of creating non-sexist language. In Standard English there is no non-sexist third person plural that doesn’t point specifically to gender.

interact with and react to the dominant culture with the objective of forcing change in the dominant culture.⁵ In historicizing feminist pedagogy, I need to look at what forces in the dominant culture – and in various other subcultures – created the space for contemporary feminism. What created *this* history, the one I am choosing to write about or even construct? The most obvious force in any history of feminism is the mere presence of women, and specifically in this history, the presence and power of women in the academy both as students and as teachers. The power of women in the academy, their individual experiences and their collective experiences constitute this history. But since there is no one experience that represents the collective when considering not just gender, but race, class, sexual orientation, age, abled-bodiedness, among others, the mappings and definitions become problematic and confusing. As a person attempting to document this history, I need to be vigilant about my own location and communicate that to my audience. I need to remind myself and my reader which perspective I am not only writing from but recording. My experiences will become part of this history, but I need to contextualize and historicize those experiences, making sure I am aware of my own biases (Scott).

Project Journal: October 22, 2000

I finished a draft of the first chapter today: the history of feminist pedagogy in 65 pages or less. The draft feels good, but *damn* history is hard to write. At every turn I kept thinking, “I am leaving out X! What am I suppose to do about that?” In the end, I felt like I couldn’t do much about leaving things out. If I were writing a book just on the history of feminist pedagogy, perhaps I would be able to do more in-depth history making. The most discomforting part is that I feel this

⁵Even “radical feminists” who try not to interact with the patriarchy at all must do so on a daily basis if they watch television, listen to the radio, read texts published by non-feminist publishers, work with men, buy groceries, or even pay taxes. Even separatist feminists who live on self-sufficient communes with only other women struggle against the indoctrination of patriarchal styles of leadership and systems of thought and knowledge.

is a very *white* history. It is obviously privileged class (because I am talking about academia, a context systematically denied anyone outside of privilege). For the most part things such as sexuality and able-bodiedness, spirituality, and all those “other” identities that are traditionally marginalized are erased – teachers don’t identify in their scholarship these identities, at least historically. So, those discussions – or the lack of those discussions – feels less problematic. But the issue of race and ethnicity does feel problematic. I’m so very white. The texts I am reading are so very white. Beyond a smattering of texts (like those written by hooks, Villanueva and Freire) the focus of what I am reading seems to be gender with occasional nods to ethnicity, sexuality and other stuff. So, I look at the draft of Chapter 1 and I feel as if I have fallen exactly into that trap myself. Can I gnaw off my leg to escape? Is there an escape?

I forwarded the draft to the writers’ group. It felt great to do that, but the stance of my perspective will probably be a conundrum to them as well (all white women!). Before I forwarded them the draft I took out all the personal narrative in my latest revision. It didn’t feel right there – and it felt like a bad decision to take it out (no personal interrogation or self-disclosure??) The most difficult part of this project right now is coming to terms with the fact that I can’t escape my biases, but even as I begin to point to them I becomes lost in sea of black holes that show me just how spotty this history is.

The biases I most struggle with are those of my whiteness and my activist roots.

Because I came to feminism as a grassroots activist, devoting many years of my life to working with and against organizations, agencies, government, and other institutions to create material change in women’s lives, I often find myself impatient with or judgmental of the academic branch of feminism that tends to focus more on theory than practice. In the same way that I privilege practice over theory, I privilege the white perspective because it is through that lens that I see the world. These being my two main Achilles heels in approaching this work, I will vigorously try to push myself to recognize these prejudices in the project and interrogate them when I see them. The clincher in that statement, however, is *when I see them*. They are everywhere, and yet they are often

hidden from me. These biases will inherently play out not only in how I attempt to write this history of feminist pedagogy, but in the way I collect data and interpret the data I find during research.

An empiricist historian believes that data = facts and that history results from the sifting through this “data” and documenting it, without bias. But a feminist historian rejects this approach as deeply entrenched in uninterrogated ideology. Where does the data come from? What is the historian looking for? Whose perspective is promoted or hero-ized? Material feminism, a school of thought that believes gender is a class system that can only be abolished by restructuring entire systems that reinforce gender as class, demands of historicization: “What counts as history? How do we understand [various] histories’ materialit[ies]?” (Hennessy 100)

To contextualize myself, I acknowledge that I am a feminist and personally define feminism as the commitment to combating oppressive ideologies and hierarchies wherever they exist. More specifically these oppressive hierarchies and ideologies exist in the form of racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia among others in my definition of feminism. As a feminist activist, when I am outside of the grassroots feminist organizations with which I work, the dominant culture identifies me as “other” because of my feminist beliefs. As a feminist academic, within my teaching and scholarship, I do not feel that “otherness” as poignantly as I did when I worked in the private sector as a journalist, software analyst, or communications coordinator. As an academic feminist I work in a department and at an institution where many people identify as feminists or study feminist theory without the type of alienation that is experienced by many feminist activists working in other public or private institutions, organizations, and corporations.

That is not to say that feminism is whole-heartedly embraced by academia, only that the feminist communities and theories seem to have more legitimacy and voice in *this* academic community than what I have ever experienced in other communities where I have worked.⁶

Not only do I identify as feminist, which will cause me to privilege feminist approaches in my teaching and research, but I also identify as a white, able-bodied, bisexual woman. All these identities shape my perspective. My whiteness prevents me from truly understanding what a feminist of color – or a woman of color who does not identify as a feminist – experiences in the academy or the classroom. Because often I am read by students and others as heterosexual, I can hide my bisexual identity when it benefits me and use it as a way to confront homophobia. The decision whether to name my sexual orientation is mine to make, unlike other people who are read as homosexual, regardless of their sexual orientation, and have to confront homophobia regardless of whether or not they choose to.

All these locations and identities influence my approach to this research. My interests will be drawn, and biases will play out, in relation to these identities. I will try to confront the privileging of these perspectives when I see them in my research. I am sure there will be areas where these identities influence my perception when I am not aware – indeed they influence every word that I write and every thought that I have – so the most I can hope to accomplish is being as overt and aware with myself and my audience as I

⁶I do not want to make generalizations for all academic feminists. In locating myself, giving context to who I am as the scholar and author of this work, I want the reader to understand that Miami University's English Department should not be seen as a typical – or atypical – example of a general response or relationship to feminists in higher education.

can be, hoping my audience will use feminist critique to point out ways in which my research is biased when I neglect to do so.

In addition to the personal context and perspective I bring to this project, the social and political historical context also bears down on the shaping of any history. Historically, pedagogy shifts according to social and political movements external to the academy and how these movements define knowledge-creation and education. Feminism first entered the academy as concern about the education of females, a result of the women's rights movement during the 1960s and 1970s where activist feminists were working to gain equal access to patriarchal systems of power, education being one of these. However, educators concerned with the education of women are not unique to the late twentieth-century. Likewise, a history of what I identify here as feminist teaching philosophies existed centuries before any scholar placed the term "feminist" in front of the word pedagogy to identify specific teaching practices. The power of pedagogy and how pedagogy can create a site for dynamic institutional changes has existed throughout history. My argument focuses on how twentieth century feminism changed methods of teaching, leadership, and scholarship, these changes manifesting themselves at the site of feminist pedagogical practices. In the next section I argue that feminist teachers have used pedagogical approaches as vehicles to initiate cultural and systemic change within structures of education.

The Power of Pedagogy

Pedagogy represents an interesting point for research in the academy because it is one place where traditionally marginalized people have access to power through teaching

and learning. Through teaching, and their agency to construct their own classrooms as they desired, women and other TMP gathered power for change. By subverting the dominant ideology of what a classroom should be, feminist teachers perpetuate academic change. It has always been easier for a feminist to alter her pedagogy than to take on the patriarchal structure of the academy. When the administration allows teachers control of their class and curriculum, the pragmatic work of teaching shifts power away from the administration to the teachers. Policy change or administrative change is more difficult to accomplish than implementing changes in one's own pedagogy. This type of systemic administrative and cultural change requires great numbers of people advocating change as a collective. Administrative and structural shifts involve creating coalitions of people working together to initiate change from a common goal. But with teaching strategies, TMP teachers have the power to create change through how they construct their classrooms, building an environment where teachers and students feel more empowered. Feminist teachers also create slow change throughout the academy as their students become ambassadors to other courses and disciplines, asking teachers to adopt the types of empowering teaching strategies they experienced in feminist classrooms. Of course, when administrators mandate standard syllabi or curricula, the power of individual teachers diminishes. In these cases, some power remains with the teacher within the site of the classroom and in the way that the teacher chooses to execute the syllabi or curricula. How teachers choose to implement these standard curricula can either support or subvert the larger ideologies of education.

In chronicling the evolution of feminist pedagogy there are several ideological forces at play. The most obvious represents the dominant culture's relegation of women

and other TMP to outsider status – outsiders to the power structures that produce ideology. One example of how these power structures play out in education is the lower status of teachers (largely female) in relation to administrators (largely male). Ideology is also reflected in classroom rituals themselves. In most traditional or public educational institutions, from the age of five students are asked to sit in rows, color in the lines, raise their hands, line up to go to the lunch room according to gender, and stand with hand over heart to say the Pledge of Allegiance (Martin 50). Ideology of the dominant culture is present in these rituals, routines and practices of schools, but largely transparent to students and educators (Aronowitz and Giroux 72). These standards or norms create an ideology that reflects the dominant culture both in macro and micro systems: gender distinctions and obedience to hierarchy reflect the macro ideology of the culture; raising hands, sitting in rows, looking to the teacher for the “right” answers to questions, taking notes from what is written on the board by the teacher reinforces the micro ideology of most traditional classrooms as well as reinforces an obedience to power. Because of these sorts of practices, Antonio Gramsci believes that critical thinking cannot be learned in schools (36)⁷. These practices and school rituals inherently reflect state ideology. Feminist teachers, however, commit their classrooms to disrupting these types of systems and practices of domination. Educational theorist and teacher bell hooks offers a definition of feminism that fits particularly well with feminist pedagogy: “eradicating the

⁷“Critical Thinking” is a term that few people take the time to define. The danger is that my understanding of what critical thinking is may be a radical departure from how someone else envisions that term. There is ambiguity in how various theorists and writers have defined “critical thinking.” Although many theorists I quote in this section use the terminology of “critical thinking,” very few actually define what “critical thinking” means within the context of their work. Fisher defines critical thinking as skills of argumentation and analysis as well as ability to critique prevailing (or perhaps dominant) relationships and social structures (52). This definition would most closely articulate how I define critical thinking.

ideology of domination that permeates western culture on various levels – sex, race, class to name a few – and reorganizing United States society” (Kramarae and Treichler 59). Perhaps Gramsci would have more hope for educating students to critical consciousness if he considered hooks’ definition and feminist pedagogy.

That is not to say that disruption is easy. When a feminist teacher comes to the institutional ideology of education, bringing her feminist principles to bear upon that ideology, she threatens the system. Teachers who attempt to subvert the ideology of education are often met with resistance not only by the administration, but by their own students, who feel displaced or uncomfortable with disruptions to the normal classroom practices they have been conditioned to accept. Feminist teachers struggle to help students move towards critical consciousness within the ideology of education. Can institutions with patriarchal ideologies be reformed by subcultures? By virtue of their pedagogical strategies, feminist teachers say “yes.” A more complex question is, “Are feminist teachers exchanging one ideology for another, with neither being particularly more or less empowering for individual students since each student will need and demand different things from a classroom community?” I address this question specifically in the section entitled “Skeptics” at the end of chapter two.

Another concern when considering whether feminist pedagogy can change education ideology is whether any academic can see beyond their own collusion with the system. Academics, regardless of their political beliefs, may be the “most indoctrinated part of the population” because they have obediently and submissively passed through many gates to get where they are (Chomsky 19). In some cases, feminist academics may support, rather than subvert, the ideologies of education. When a feminist supports the

status quo, one only hopes that she does so knowing that she is making the choice consciously and has specific reasons for abiding by institutional norms. Feminist pedagogy demands transgression of traditional educational systems and rituals, always with an eye to empowering students and moving them towards critical consciousness. Some feminists may be tempted to appear to support traditional ideologies of education, but take a stand to resist or subvert these practices within their own classrooms.⁸ Feminist pedagogy provides a way in which teachers can transgress or ignore institutional practices that are not feminist, replacing them with practices that are feminist within the microcosm of individual classrooms.

Because of the power located in the site of teaching, feminist pedagogy is an important part of the history of women in the academy, and more recently, feminist change in the academy. Before examining how feminist change manifested itself in the teaching of writing (chapter 2), I must first historicize the place at which women entered the ideology of education as pedagogical theorists and teachers, mapping the route of feminist pedagogy through the contemporary feminist movement. In the next section I will examine when and how North American feminists teachers began changing the ideology of teaching.

When and Where Women Enter/*When and Where I Enter*

When looking at history as a white American woman whose first language is English, I have easy access to texts written in English and published in the United States.

⁸I want to make the distinction between feminists in the academy and feminist teachers. Feminists who work in the academy are not necessarily feminist teachers. Feminist teachers are teachers who are committed to feminist pedagogy as a specific way of enacting their feminist beliefs in their lives. Feminist academics do not necessarily identify as feminist teachers or enact feminist pedagogy.

This immediately limits my perspective. I will not know whether there were foremothers in other cultures who were creating radical, or wildly deviant or unsanctioned, approaches to the education of girls and women⁹ because my knowledge base is specific to my culture. Because the dominant culture in North America is anglicized, the white perspective is not only privileged in historical texts, but often the only voice/perspective available for consideration. Only in the past twenty to thirty years have histories of other cultures within the dominant North American culture been translated and published (African American, Native American, Latin American, among others). Scholars who have devoted their professional lives to the endeavor are performing recovery and restoration of these lost or absent histories; one such scholar, Jackie Jones Royster, is the subject of the ethnographic study in chapter five.

Because I am examining the formal education system¹⁰, when and where women and feminists entered, and the change that resulted, the resources available to examine perspectives other than the white, male, privileged class perspective are limited. Scholars such as Susan Jarratt are researching historical black colleges and universities and the voices of women at those sites of learning, but nothing that I have read has investigated the role of women specifically as teachers in such institutions. In the past few years there have been articles and books focusing on women in administrative positions at

⁹I am not suggesting that boys and men are neither initiators of nor affected by feminist pedagogy. In many ways male theorists have contributed a great deal to the definition of and practices of feminist pedagogy. I single out girls and women here, and in other places, because the roots of feminist pedagogy began as attention to the education of girls and women and adapting the institutions and ideologies of education to empower and educate girls and women in a culture where females held a disempowered position.

¹⁰Feminist approaches to teaching that existed in less formal educational sites will not be included in this research. For example, during WWI and post-WWII, the feminist movement integrated with the labor movement where literacy work for immigrant and other under-class women workers was a primary way feminist activists furthered the rights and education of women. An analysis of these pedagogical approaches is outside the scope of this project.

historically black colleges and universities. There has also been research on Native American boarding schools, institutions of education that the federal government established to force native children to assimilate to the dominant culture and which resulted in the coerced betrayal and abandonment their own cultural heritage.¹¹ These schools were often run by religious orders, many times by women in the vocation of nuns. However, investigation of the role of women teachers in these systems are outside the scope of my project. To narrow my research on women in education, I will be looking at the public university system and the ways feminists changed that system specifically in regard to methods of teaching.

From Whence Sprang Feminist Pedagogy

"Most of the things I have read about [feminist pedagogy] have gotten on my nerves. They make all these points for being feminist that aren't necessarily. And of course all the touchy-feely stuff. I don't really understand why they have to define certain things they do as feminist." (Harriet Malinowitz, personal interview)¹²

When I tell people that I am doing my research in the area of feminist pedagogy, I am often met with quizzical looks. Many ask me what feminist pedagogy is. When I offer a distilled definition of what I have come to believe is feminist pedagogy, they typically ask, "Why is that feminist?" My mission is to reclaim feminist pedagogy for what it is: a thoughtful, self-critical radical pedagogy that has earmarks of both liberatory and critical

¹¹Renato Rosaldo, in his book Culture and Truth calls these "civilizing missions," a staple of imperialism where the inferior culture of the native was annihilated in the name of progress and civilization by imperialists (74-87). In my research, two books I found most helpful in describing the dynamics of civilizing missions as applied to Native American boarding schools were Seeds of Faith: Catholic Indian Boarding Schools and The Churches and the Indian Schools: 188-1912.

¹²Although this quote, taken out of a context of a very long discussion Harriet and I had regarding feminist pedagogy (spanning months), may seem to indicate she doesn't "believe" in feminist pedagogy, Harriet was expressing her frustration of earlier descriptions of feminist pedagogy rather than the definition I am using here.

pedagogies, as well as to further these schools of teaching theory, in ways that are very useful in moving both students and teachers towards critical consciousness.

Feminist pedagogy sprang from liberatory and critical schools of pedagogy used by feminists in the early Women's Studies courses in the U.S. Since the late 1980s, in publications such as The Feminist Teacher and anthologies such as Meeting the Challenge, feminist teachers have been writing about how to apply feminist pedagogical principles in courses other than Women's Studies. However, most of these scholarly works focus on one theme or principle of feminist pedagogy as it is implemented in a classroom with articles devoted to collaboration; attention to race, class, gender; and issues of teacher authority. Through my research on feminist pedagogy, I have compiled a more comprehensive definition, organizing that definition into "themes." Here, I offer 16 themes that comprise a contemporary definition of feminist pedagogy.¹³ These themes have been extrapolated from books and articles on the subject of feminist pedagogy published over the past 30 years.¹⁴ This definition of feminist pedagogy presents a more comprehensive, precise, and contemporary view of how feminist teachers approach their work. To exemplify how the themes work, how individual teachers are thinking about

¹³That is not to say that this represents a static definition of feminist pedagogy. As pedagogical strategies and theories evolve, so will the definition. What the sixteen themes represent is a definition that reflects what feminist pedagogy is *today*, and that may change a year or five years from now. The definition should be in constant revision as the theory evolves through practice.

¹⁴When I originally began this project, I had gathered together fifteen themes. As I continued working and researching I added another theme to the category of "Teacher Critical Reflection:" *Teaching With the Whole Self*. My hope was that my classroom observations, during site visits, would help me clarify whether this was a distinct theme or rather a manifestation of another theme in that category, *Being Overt with One's Political Location (self-disclosure)*. However, classroom observations did not create a definitive answer regarding whether these two themes were redundant. Currently I am wondering whether the distinction lies between *checking authority* and *being overt/teaching with the whole self*; however, one could argue that checking teacher authority is a way of being overt with students about one's personal location. This offers just one example of how loosely grouped and named these themes are, and how they often creep into one another in ways that mock the clear lines of categories and themes.

and practicing the themes, I used classroom observations as part of my ethnographic studies. The results of these classroom observations, and examples of how the themes manifested themselves in the classrooms I observed as well as how each teacher practiced the various themes, are outlined in each ethnographic chapter.

Personal Journal; July 26, 2000

After lunch I went over to the Psych department to sit in on a graduate seminar entitled "Feminist Pedagogy." I had talked to the instructor and she said it would be great to have me sit in. It's a small class (five students besides myself) – graduate students from the psych department (3) and the English department (2). The instructor is great, but the course is very basic. The reading is very light and most of it feels outdated – or seems to reflect the "Women's Ways of Knowing" approach to feminist pedagogy, which feels more like a consciousness raising group than a classroom. Many of the articles on the reading list I have taught in my Intro to Women's Studies course in the "History of the Second Wave" section. The interesting thing is that the prof made the disclaimer that she often is accused of assigning too much reading. Wow. That probably speaks to the difference between the classes I am used to – English department classes where there is a book or so assigned for each class period – and other disciplines where the focus isn't so text-based. [. . .] We began class with a "check in." That was a blast from the past! I haven't done "check ins" since the CR-like coven I was a member of about twelve years ago, and I am very skeptical about how well this approach will "work" in a graduate class. Is this feminist pedagogy? It appears it is according to this teacher, but I think there needs to be more rigorous questioning both by the group and self to embody the critical self reflection that to me earmarks feminist pedagogy. The teacher is very soft-spoken in that new-age therapist sort of way and she said she wanted this to be a "safe space," another tag phrase that puts me on edge because I hear the subtext to that as being, "Everything is validated; no confrontation; no conflict." One young woman spent a lot of time talking about how much she hated her students, how they didn't respect her, how racist they are. That is the problem with "check-ins": it can quickly disintegrate into emotive processing with little or no analysis. It's going to be really fascinating, though, to watch how this teacher practices her feminist pedagogy in this class where the subject is feminist pedagogy. I am deeply grateful that she is allowing me to day-trip into the course.

Through conducting my research and hearing people's response to my project, I

have come to believe that one of the most common misconceptions about feminist pedagogy is that feminist pedagogy is a good fit for Women's Studies classes but cannot or should not be applied to other disciplines. This belief implies that feminist politics ground the content of a course, or that a student must adopt a feminist perspective to succeed in the course. By extension, this misconception comes to be understood as "if a teacher proclaims herself a feminist and is aware of gender issues in her classroom and curriculum, she is engaging in feminist pedagogy." Here I offer a much more complex view of feminist pedagogy. Being "a teacher who is feminist" is not enough to constitute feminist pedagogy. Some teachers who are feminist operate under masculine models of power and pedagogy that are decidedly not indicative of feminist pedagogy (Morely 75). Teaching based on masculinist models where the teacher represents an uninterrogated body of knowledge that is passed to the students whole-cloth is not feminist pedagogy, no matter who uses it. That is not to say that masculinist models are bad teaching; I have learned wonderful things in classrooms where this model of traditional teaching style reigned supreme. Rather, I argue that even if a teacher identifies as feminist, if she employs masculinist models of teaching – even if they are effective – this is not feminist pedagogy.

I argue that feminist pedagogy is a theory of teaching that moves far beyond feminist identity and gender issues. Similar to liberatory pedagogy, which sprung from Paulo Freire's experience with the under-class of Brazil during the social and political revolutionary of the 1950s and 1960s, feminist pedagogy arose from the North American women's movement of the 1960s. Since that time feminist teachers and scholars have been creating more clear and comprehensive definitions of what it means to be a feminist

teacher that extend beyond self-identification as a feminist, concern for gender issues, or a push towards social action external to the classroom. There are feminists, who are teachers, who don't implement feminist pedagogy; there are teachers who are not feminist who practice feminist pedagogical principles. Feminist pedagogy, I believe, has evolved into a method of teaching that can be applied by people whether they are feminist or not, just as one does not necessarily have to identify as a Marxist socialist activist to implement liberatory pedagogy. In other words, form *can* be separated from content. A class with feminist content is not necessarily feminist pedagogy at work.

Roots of Feminist Pedagogy

When feminist pedagogy was first named as a school of teaching theory in the late 1970s and early 1980s by scholars such as Kathleen Weiler, Carolyn Shrewsbury, Janet Miller, Margo Culley, and in the articles published in journals such as Women's Studies Quarterly and The Feminist Teacher, the core description reflected a Freirian approach to teaching that foregrounded issues of gender as opposed to socioeconomic class. Culley defines feminist pedagogy as subverting the teacher role as a source of knowledge, integrating women's work and words as course texts, and creating connections between the lives of women in the course and the community external to the academy. (85-89) Miller echoes these themes, seeing feminist pedagogy as breaking a silence by integrating the voices and perspectives of women in curricula (5-7). With Shrewsbury's 1993 definition of feminist pedagogy the influence of Freire's liberatory pedagogy is more evident. When Shrewsbury defines feminist pedagogy, she focuses on integrating critical thinking in course work with concerns for gender justice (10-12).

Further solidifying the connection between feminist teaching and critical thinking, in her 1988 definition of feminist teaching Weiler writes that feminist teachers use critical analysis and reflection as a center-piece for their teaching, committing themselves to seeing students as individual learners and thinkers. In addition, Weiler writes, feminist teachers provide strong, competent models for girls *and* boys of women in the world (110-120). Weiler also addresses issues of conflict in the feminist classroom and between feminist teachers and the institutions where they work, stating that feminist teachers work to change standard curriculums to reflect students' realities and to name sexism and other silences. For feminist teachers, Weiler writes, critical analysis and critical reflection is important, but there is also an underlying commitment to making the classroom less about memorizing facts and more about developing critical consciousness (100-103). The objective of teacher and student critical consciousness is not unique to feminist pedagogy; pedagogical schools such as liberatory or critical pedagogies also embrace this goal.

In addition to a focus on critical consciousness, attention to teacher power and authority also became a cornerstone of feminist pedagogy. Shrewsbury articulates this by defining teacher power as energy, capacity and potential, not domination (12). Although Miller, Culley, Weiler, and Shrewsbury all echo Freire when including dialogic learning where students and teachers are all learners and educators within the classroom community as part of feminist pedagogy, these three feminist teachers focus more carefully on the nuances of power complicated by gender, race, and class. By the end of the 1990s, theorists and teachers such as Frances Hoffman and Jayne Stake and Elizabeth Tisdell offered more concrete definitions of feminist pedagogy. In their 1998 article

“Feminist Pedagogy Theory and Practice,” Hoffman and Stake identify four elements of feminist pedagogy: participatory classroom communities, validation of personal experience, encouragement of social understanding and activism, and development of critical thinking skills (81). Although Hoffman and Stake are writing about feminist pedagogy within the women’s studies classroom, Tisdell opened up feminist pedagogy as a teaching practice for adult learners in other disciplines. In her article “Poststructural Feminist Pedagogies,” Tisdell defines the common elements of feminist pedagogies as attention to gender and women’s emancipation, and emphasizing connections between learners and between the world outside the classroom and course material (140).

More than individual articles and scholars, however, the collective voice of The Feminist Teacher journal continued to clarify and refine the definitions of feminist pedagogy from early 1980s through today. The Feminist Teacher began publishing in the early 1980s and as the name suggests, the articles focus on how feminist teachers are practicing their theories of teaching across the disciplines and at various educational levels. In The Feminist Teacher Anthology, a compilation of selected essays from the first 10 volumes of the journal, the editors provide a definition of feminist pedagogy. In their introduction, the editors “propose several tenets in feminist pedagogy” that reflect the evolution of this theory and practice of teaching at the time the book was published in 1998 (3). These tenets include: builds an orientation towards social transformation, consciousness-raising, and social activism (thought into action); stresses the subjective and communal reality of knowing; shows concern for women; addresses race, class, and gender as “crucial categories for analyzing experience and institutions”; confronts forces of sexism and heterosexism; and explores issues of sexuality honestly with students

(Cohee et. al. 3).

Most recently, Berenice Malka Fisher defines feminist pedagogy as evolving from Consciousness Raising (CR) methods and feminist theories of discourse. In her book No Angel in the Classroom Fisher articulates various themes that she believes are derivatives of CR models: awareness of women's relationship to the world (33), awareness of power (35), risk taking to "reveal something about [oneself]" (36), collective and cooperative activities (38), orientation towards action (40), and focus on critical thinking skills (52). Fisher sees a student's access to and an understanding of academic discourse as a foundational element of feminist pedagogy because without "access to discourse" students will feel disempowered and excluded from academic arguments. Again, she relates this to CR models where "many women who were hurt, angered, or disappointed by consciousness-raising have testified, the dominant assumptions, vocabulary, and expressive style of any discussion easily excludes those who do not share them" (46-47). In a feminist classroom, teachers need to be acutely aware of language practices, thus teaching the power and politics of language an integral element of feminist pedagogy.

The way in which Fisher stretches CR models to feminist pedagogy doesn't include self-critique by the teacher, although teacher self-critique *is* part of the discussion. Fisher writes that she talks to herself about teaching practices "for deeper and more continuous discussions of what I am doing" (213). She believes this strategy is crucial for feminist teaching, but these discussions also have to extend to others (213). Talking with other teachers of feminist teaching practices is the political work of feminist pedagogy. In her book, Fisher describes how talking with other faculty members about

her Women's Studies courses evolved into a seminar for students and faculty about teaching practices. The seminars are successful, Fisher writes, only if there is "mutual vulnerability" among participants, meaning they feel they can be honest and respectful with one another. She writes that although these discussions may reveal substantial differences and disagreements among approaches to teaching, "we may weigh truths differently as we seek to develop politically and pedagogically sound judgements" (217). This points to an awareness between the philosophies of feminist pedagogy and how individual teachers enact feminist pedagogy in their own classrooms.

When looking at all these definitions, from the earliest to the most recent, there are overlapping themes of feminist pedagogy, such as: challenges to teachers to be aware of power and student identity in both micro structures (classroom and student-teacher interactions) and macro structures (socio-cultural institutions like racism, classism, homophobia, among others). Despite these "overlapping" themes that can be seen, there are also many ideas or points left out of some definitions that are included in others. The main impetus for this project is my desire to more clearly define what feminist pedagogy is, a theory and practice of teaching that is separate and distinct from liberatory, critical, or other radical pedagogies, although feminist pedagogy shares some principles with all these theories.¹⁵ I want to create a comprehensive definition of feminist pedagogy that integrates the voices and perspectives of the body of literature that has spoken of feminist pedagogy, a pedagogy that is *not* exclusive or "the best fit" for Women's Studies. I want

¹⁵I define radical pedagogies as those which reject traditional models of pedagogy for approaches that subvert the teacher-focused classroom for one that is student-focused and replace a model of teacher power with one where knowledge is gathered and communicated by all members of the community, where domination in all forms is confronted, and where progressive and innovative theories of teaching are celebrated.

to show how this pedagogy has been applied and should be applied across the curriculum, the focus of this project being within the field of composition, and how feminists within the field of composition are practicing feminist pedagogy in their teaching, leadership, and scholarship.

In doing research for this project, I found that many scholars and teachers neglect to make distinctions between liberatory, critical, and feminist pedagogies. I have come to understand all three of these pedagogical schools to be distinct from each other, although they are all types of radical pedagogies, i.e. pedagogies that wish to radically transform the standards of education as a way of transforming the culture to dismantle systems of oppression. Liberatory pedagogy, as defined by Freire, focuses on student-empowerment with attention to socioeconomic class. The object of liberatory pedagogy centers on making students active participants in changing culture to a more socialist model. Class inequities – and the awareness of these inequities – as well as moving students to critical consciousness by incorporating connections between the classroom and their lived experiences are the primary tenets of liberatory pedagogy. Likewise, critical pedagogy focuses on teaching critical thinking skills and moving students towards critical consciousness.¹⁶ The distinction for me between critical and liberatory pedagogy is that liberatory pedagogy is more aggressive and overt about focusing on socioeconomic class inequities, power structures, and systems of oppression. Critical pedagogy's dominant

¹⁶I define critical thinking as being able to look at an issue or idea from several different perspectives and understanding how perspectives and personal location intertwine with culture. Critical consciousness, by extension, is a way of being in world where critical thinking becomes part of consciousness. When a person is aware of ideology and how locations, positions, perspectives and how the power of ideology interacts or forms those positions or actions, critical consciousness is at work. Critical consciousness is not something one arrives at, but a process in which a person who has well-honed critical thinking skills engages in whenever possible.

theme is working on critical thinking, understanding that once students have the skills of critical thinking they will be able to see the inequities of the oppressive systems and work to change them. In other words, critical pedagogy forges a more indirect road to change than liberatory pedagogy. Feminist pedagogy incorporates foundational principles of both liberatory and critical pedagogies, but also addresses issues such as teacher power, teacher self-critique, and attention to traditionally marginalized voices and perspectives both in the curriculum and the classroom itself.

Although scholars and teachers often conflate or fail to distinguish between these three schools of pedagogy, they each offer different approaches to teaching. That is not to say, however, that they have not informed each other or evolved together. Freire himself consistently revised his theories of pedagogy, and towards the end of his life, many of the elements of feminist pedagogy can be found in his own theories (see Teachers as Cultural Workers). I maintain that this evolution does not change the fundamental definition of liberatory pedagogy; rather it shows how feminist pedagogy and feminist scholars influenced Freire's own ideas on education and integrated Freire's liberatory theories on teaching into principles of feminist pedagogy.

Besides liberatory and critical theories of pedagogy, another primary influence that helped create feminist pedagogy was poststructural theory. Poststructural theory connects knowledge to power, works to de-center power structures, and deconstructs hierarchies – all of which appeal to feminist teachers. In the classroom this translates into teachers subverting their own power whenever possible. Whether it is coming out from behind the podium, sitting in a circle, charging students with the responsibility of discussion topics, or creating other strategies that shift the focus away from the teacher,

feminist teachers are working towards applying elements of post-modern theory in their classroom practices.

One of the ways that feminist pedagogy embodies poststructuralist theories is in how feminist teachers question and subvert the “norms” of a classroom (teacher authority, empowerment of students, creating connections between classrooms and social action). Lynn Worsham uses the metaphor of “jamming the machine” to describe these subversions of standard pedagogy (1999:2). This type of teaching attempts to create new models of power and bring the ideological machine to a screeching halt. But by 1999, Worsham questions whether these teaching strategies are still disruptive, arguing that they may have become so familiar as to have created another ideological machine that is not necessarily radical.

Another force that helped shape feminist pedagogy was the relationships between academic and activist feminists during the 1970s. Approaches to grassroots activism moved into the academy in the form of feminist theory and Women’s Studies courses. As feminist teachers created the new discipline of Women’s Studies, they redefined classroom processes to reinforce relationships and connections between the activist and academic worlds. By integrating processes used in grassroots women’s movement, feminist pedagogy emerged. One primary model taken from the grassroots political movement and transplanted into the pedagogy of Women’s Studies was Consciousness Raising (CR) groups. CR groups sprung up in the 1970s, a staple of the burgeoning feminist subculture. These small communities of women gathered together to talk about their experiences, make connections between their lives and the political and social climate of the culture, and discuss what action they could take, both personally and

politically, to contribute to social change.

CR groups became the stronghold of the feminist movement of the 1970s where “housewives”¹⁷ and other disempowered groups of women found strength, validation, and purpose in the company of other politically and socially involved feminist activists. These small clutches of “women’s space” fed the streams to local and national grassroots activist groups where personal consciousness became political action. The CR groups mimicked Margaret Fuller’s Conversation Groups of the mid-1800s in that there was no authority represented; authority rotated among the women present. Personal experience was validated by the group and the end goal was action, either within the public sphere or one’s personal life. CR groups provided a way for connecting the personal and the larger

¹⁷The symbol of the 1950s “oppressed housewife in the suburbs” has been called into question by some feminist historians who believe this reality only reflected a very small percentage of women’s lives, obviously almost exclusively the lives of white, middle to privileged class women. In the collection of essays entitled Not June Cleaver, the authors debunk the model of the middle class womanhood documented by Betty Freidan in Feminine Mystique as myth. The question for me becomes not whether the reality of the white middle class housewife existed in the form that Freidan described, but whether cultural propaganda of the 1950s created this image of middle-class womanhood as something to aspire to: the dainty housewife in her sparkling kitchen who waited eagerly for her husband to arrive home from work. Deborah Cameron theorizes that ideology is perpetuated and then recreated in the lives of women through the vehicle of magazine articles and other literature in popular culture. This theory, where the media creates an image that is then internalized and aspired to by the women in the culture, can be applied to the model of womanhood as manifested in the suburban housewife of the 1950s and 1960s. Although the “suburban housewife” identity may have only realized itself in a certain population of women (white, middle to privileged class), the fact that the media and popular culture perpetuated this as the ideal feminine identity would have made it something that most women aspired to. This theory parallels the example Cameron provides in her work on self-help articles in popular women’s magazines. Cameron writes that the articles document what a woman is supposed to be concerned with (e.g. passive-aggressive relationships, her weight or thigh size, whether she is orgasmic or not, how to find her inner spiritual self), and women reading the articles come to believe that these things are part of what a woman needs to be a “woman” or feminine. In Cameron’s theory, the women’s magazines create the ideological identity that individual women then aspire to or begin to embody. Women who read the magazines enact these identities, thereby creating a cultural reality that mimics propaganda in the magazine. I am applying this same theory to the image of the 1950s housewife as represented in magazines such as Life and Good Housekeeping as well as on television shows such as Father Knows Best and Leave It To Beaver. These popular culture media representations of women created a model of womanhood that was then enacted by middle class women – largely white middle class women – and aspired to by many others who weren’t white or middle class. The advertisements of the aproned wife/mother in her kitchen, articles on how to greet your husband when he comes home, television shows that portrayed wives/mothers as happy, smiling, and deferential to their family created an image of middle-class womanhood that women who desired to fit into the dominant culture then strived to achieve.

community and then creating political action (Weiler 58-59). From the CR groups sprung the now famous feminist slogan, "The Personal *is* Political." The strategies of the CR groups, deconstructing authority, validating personal experience, creating goals for action, when applied to the classroom formed some of the primary themes of Women's Studies pedagogy.¹⁸

Personal Journal; July 29, 2000

[The Multi-cultural Leadership Program] class went well today, although everyone was so low energy. They bring these students [first generation college bound high school juniors – primarily African American] to campus for a week of college life and then pack their schedule so full they are absolutely spanked by the end of the week. But what a great group of students. It was 9 a.m. and they were still rubbing sleep from their eyes, so I had them get up and we played musical chairs (people sang!). It did the trick; after that we all kicked in with a lot more energy to talk about writing. One young woman refuses to talk, even when I call on her. Today I asked her to read. She refused. After class I took her aside and asked her what the problem was. She said she just didn't like to be called on. I said that was *fine*; I wouldn't call upon her anymore as long as she made an effort to participate. I gave her my run down of reasons about why it is so important to use one's voice – especially when one is a woman and an African American woman at that: if she is silent she will not be seen; if she is silent no one will understand her perspective; verbally articulating one's ideas is important to developing critical thinking skills; when she is silent no one can learn *from* her and learning from each other is part of being a member of the community; by offering her ideas and perspectives to the group, the group will respond to them and her ideas and thoughts will grow as a result. I warned her that tomorrow everyone is reading part of their project to the group – I have been building up to this all week: the Stand and Deliver part of presenting one's ideas. I asked her whether she felt she would be able to do that – to participate as a member of the community, taking the risk to share her work with others. She said she would *try*.

When I talked about the situation in the feminist pedagogy class, the instructor said she thought I had made a very bad decision. I was immediately thrilled with the dramatic reaction in this class where no one has been

¹⁸I make the distinction here between feminist pedagogy and Women's Studies pedagogy to further clarify that the former is a pedagogy that evolved *from* Women's Studies pedagogy but also differs from Women's Studies pedagogy.

questioning/confronting, but only “validating.” Great! I enjoy hearing criticism about teaching choices; I *want* to be challenged and sometimes I can only go so far with my own self-critique. I brought the issue to the group because I was hoping to get a response. The instructor said that as a white woman, a teacher with power, telling an African American young woman/girl to speak up was unfair. African Americans, especially women, have historically been punished for speaking up, so I shouldn’t demand it. I countered that I understood that perspective and in fact struggled with it, but ultimately believe that my job as a teacher is to help these students practice using their voice so they feel more comfortable taking those risks. And the student has the choice, but she also has been told why I believe participating is so important. Yes, African American women who speak out will be punished occasionally – the dominant culture always extracts a price for speaking out against it; I have been taxed in that regard myself more times than I can count. So all the more reason to work on strengthening their voice and confidence and ability to articulate their ideas in a group of people. How is a young African American woman (indeed all women – or any persons reflecting a traditionally marginalized location) expected to ever speak out if she does not practice or is not encouraged and nudged? The ensuing discussion was one of the most productive we have had in that feminist pedagogy class, encompassing issues of power and silence. The discussion also spoke directly to the dramatically different ways we (the instructor and I) envision feminist pedagogy: nurturing and “safe space” as opposed to seeing discomfort as a place of growth.

The previous journal entry exemplifies one distinction between Women’s Studies pedagogy and feminist pedagogy. In feminist pedagogy conflict is not seen as damaging to the individual or the community, but as a power source for growth. As Women’s Studies pedagogy evolved into feminist pedagogy – and as feminist teachers began adapting this teaching style to courses other than Women’s Studies – definitions and discussions of feminist pedagogy flourished. The logistics of integrating feminist pedagogy in the composition classroom have been part of discussions in the field since the 1970s. Feminism and composition intersected in a way that called for a redefinition of composition (Ritchie and Boardman 586). This “redefinition” includes a focus on

writing process instead of product (helping each student define his or her own writing process), attention to identity issues in the classroom (race, class, gender, sexual orientation among others), confronting the politics of language, and using collaboration as a strategy for producing work. But shifts in composition also incorporate many other feminist pedagogical themes, including those I pointed to in the journal entry (addressing issues of conflict, paying attention to voices and silences, being overt with pedagogical choices, engaging students in active learning¹⁹). Focus on writing process instead of product, giving careful attention to identity issues in the classroom, confronting the politics of language, and using collaboration as a strategy for producing work points to changes in the field that have resulted from a shift in the culture of education. I attribute many of these shifts to responses to the women's movement as well as other progressive social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Although these changes in composition pedagogy reflected a back door integration of feminist ideas into the field, feminist teachers more overtly changed composition by writing about issues of conflict in the writing classroom, attention given to voices and silences, and attention to gender issues (as well as race, class, and sexuality). These theories and practices are those more specifically associated with feminist pedagogy, brought to composition by feminists in the field who wanted to apply these pedagogical themes to the writing classroom.

Throughout the 1990s, as more women in the field of composition and rhetoric

¹⁹Although "active learning" has been defined in various ways by educational scholars, in the context of this project I define active learning as a learning taking responsibility for their own learning, where the teacher allows space for the student to make their own choices and processes. Randall J. Ryder and Michael Graves define active learning as an instructor's acknowledgment of cultural, social, and cognitive diversity, giving attention to the processes of knowledge creation and not just memorizing information. For Ryder and Graves, active learning acknowledges diverse interpretations of information, encouraging students to be aware of their own learning processes and "promot[ing] students ability to monitor and direct their learning" (6-7). Jeffrey Cantor, in his book Experiential Learning in Higher Education, reinforces this definition and extends it to critical thinking and ability to solve complex problems (20-21).

openly identified as feminist – and their teaching practices as reflecting their feminist viewpoint – the field began to view feminist pedagogy in the composition classroom as a site of change and activism. Linda Brodkey and Michelle Fine write, “The future of academic feminism is activism and activism begins with pedagogy” (1992:70). As in Women’s Studies, feminist pedagogy became the logical extension of feminist activism within the field of composition.

From the Wellsprings of Feminism

Feminist pedagogy, one of the major forces that helped to create contemporary theories and practices of composition, has been at work both overtly and covertly in composition scholarship and practices over the past three decades. Without naming these practices or the general philosophies of contemporary composition pedagogy as feminist, we erase the very important work and change that feminists have brought to the field. The acceptance and use of feminist theories and practices are directly related to the status of women in composition. As women – and by extension feminists – gained more *ethos* in the field, other teachers and scholars more readily published, read, adopted and adapted their theories of writing instruction.

The first overt discussions of integrating feminist principles into the field of composition related to feminist literary criticism and teaching literature by and about women in the composition classroom.²⁰ During the 1960s and 1970s, composition

²⁰The May 1971 issue of *College English* devoted itself to a focus on feminist literary criticism and how to apply it to the English classroom. It also included articles that discussed the status of women students and how the college classroom was changing because of feminist influences. Elaine Hedges, the editor of the issue, writes that changes resulting from feminist influences are on the horizon and “we are still at the beginning” (5).

teachers used writing about literature as a primary method of teaching academic writing. At that time feminist literary criticism in the form of discussions of the role of gender in texts and integrating women writers in course curriculum provided a logical first step in bringing feminist themes to composition. Although discussions of teaching texts by women and of gender issues in course materials were prominent in composition journals during the 1970s, these articles emphasized feminist theories of literature, not writing pedagogy. The first time the “f” word appears in a scholarly article within a composition journal, Ira Shor argues teachers should apply feminist literary criticism to composition course materials. In the May 1973 issue of College English Shor published his article emphasizing feminist theory, but he is not writing about composition pedagogy. The article offers suggestions on how to use feminist theories to teach woman authors in an English classroom (“Anne Sexton’s ‘For My Lover . . .’: Feminism in the Classroom”). Connections between feminism and writing pedagogy did not begin to appear with frequency until the late 1980s. In a field that has been dominated by women since the 1970s, it seems odd that overt scholarly discussions of feminism arrived relatively late to the pedagogy of writing.

As the women’s movement gained momentum during the early 1970s, more female scholars began publishing – or their work was accepted for publication – in scholarly journals; this corresponds to a proliferation of women’s caucuses in groups such as MLA and CCCC. One can easily see evidence of the burgeoning presence of women scholars when reviewing the 1970s and 1980s publications two of the most prominent composition journals, College English and College Composition and Communication. In 1971 there is only one woman published in College English, but the

first issue of the 1972 volume is filled with the voices and perspectives of women. This issue of College English, devoted to the status of women faculty and students as well as the presence of women in curriculum, marked the beginning of increase of women's representation in subsequent issues of the journal significantly.²¹

In the 1972 "status of women in the field" issue of College English the conversations center on the burgeoning field of feminist criticism and how it applies to women in English departments and literature curricula. In this issue, the editor (Elaine Hedges) writes, "As they (women) rediscover what has been lost and as they reread and reinterpret what has been misread and misrepresented, women critics, scholars, writers, teachers, students are also *inventing*. They are inventing new classroom procedures" (4). These "new classroom procedures" are the beginning of feminist pedagogical practices.²² Hedges briefly notes what these new classroom procedures entailed: confronting the male model of pedagogy where the teacher is the active knower (traditionally male) and the student is the passive learner (traditionally female). Hedges also states that part of these new pedagogical practices demands confronting gender issues in the classroom, primarily in course material. Hedges writes that awareness of gender issues extends to those between students and bridging the gap between classroom experiences and students' own

²¹Between 1973 and 1980, women authored from a third to a half of all articles published in the journal. In College Composition and Communication articles authored by women compared to articles authored by men also reflected this ratio. During the 1980s and 1990s, the split became almost even with some issues publishing more articles by women than men, although these issues were still the exception and not the rule. Even so, in a field where the majority of teachers and scholars are female, even a 50:50 ratio hints at a male bias.

²²It is in this issue that Tillie Olson's now famous essay was first published, "Women Who are Writers in Our Century." In this essay she makes the call to teachers that they must teach women writers, but first they must educate themselves since their own training omitted women as writers of literature. "You who teach, read writers that are women" (16). The focus throughout this issue is the study of and teaching of women writers (Emily Dickinson, Sylvia Plath, Anais Nin to name a few).

realities. These changes to classroom practices are a dramatic departure from the traditional university classroom. Hedges believes that radical change— at the behest and sweat of women – is on the horizon: “And what goes on in the classroom will be different from what has gone on in the past, as students increasingly bring to the literature and other material they read their own personal experiences as women, or men” (4). Hedges points to the pedagogy used in Women’s Studies as a model for these changes, acknowledging that “we are still at the beginning” (5).

It would be another twelve years before a scholar detailed specific pedagogical practices for the composition classroom as feminist. In 1985 Pamela Annas published an article on feminist pedagogical principles in College English entitled “Style as Politics: A Feminist Approach to the Teaching of Writing.” In this article, Annas begins the overt integration of feminist pedagogy into the field of composition by defining specific teaching practices as feminist. These practices include attention to standards of style and the limits “standards” imposed on students, especially women. Annas calls for a subversion of or deviation from standard style templates of the academy. Annas believes that women students are especially at a disadvantage when standards forbade the integration of personal experience. Although Annas’ theory ends up essentializing gender characteristics (boys don’t want to write about personal experience; girls do), her article represents the first overt naming of feminist pedagogy in the field of composition. Focusing on the feminist pedagogical theme of “creating connections,” Annas argues that academic standards prevent students – in her argument specifically women – from integrating their lived realities into their writing (68).

Although Annas is the first within the field of composition to name these teaching

practices as feminist, themes of feminist pedagogy proliferated in composition scholarship during the 1970s and 1980s, although not identified as such. Editors published many theoretical articles during the 1970s and 1980s about student-centered pedagogical practices that easily fit into the themes of feminist teaching. Although Annas was actively working to integrate feminist pedagogy into composition, I am not suggesting that all composition scholars of the 1970s and 1980s who pushed for more radical pedagogical reform in writing were feminist scholars or teachers. Instead I am arguing that both overt moves by feminist teachers and more general changes that resulted from the feminist social movement of the 1960s and 1970s created a climate where teachers and scholars integrated more feminist pedagogical theories into the field, even if the authors of those theories did not identify them as such. As was the case across the curriculum in the 1970s, radical, student-centered pedagogical theories emerged with prominence in contemporary composition theory.

Despite strong feminist voices and perspectives such as Hedges and Annas, the first women composition scholars (those who wrote specifically about the teaching of *writing*) did not initially envision their work as feminist. Mina Shaunessey, Linda Flower, Andrea Lunsford, and Lisa Ede, all prominent women scholars in the field, did not originally define their scholarship or their own perspective as feminist. Although many of these women would later identify as feminists and write about feminism in the field of composition and rhetoric, if these women did identify as feminists when they first began publishing they did not overtly mention this identity in their scholarship. Even though they didn't identify their theories as feminist, their theories still reflect feminist themes and contribute to the integration of feminist pedagogical practices into the writing

classroom.

Beginning to Name Feminist Pedagogical Practices – the 1980s

Throughout the 1970s, as feminist theory and attention to the status of women in the subculture of the academy and specifically in the field of composition gained momentum, the presence of women increased in scholarly journals. The diligent, tireless work of feminists in the field, and of the coalitions these women formed in professional organizations and at conferences, created opportunities for publication. Because of this increased opportunity, books and articles by women on strategies of how to become better writing teachers proliferated in the 1980s. These texts focus on teaching, but the politics of language and the climate of the classroom are large pieces of these discussions. Extending post-structural theories to composition, much of the scholarship published in the 1980s theorizes that knowledge is socially constructed and writing is a complex act involving several different axes of social identity for both the writer, teacher, and audience. The classroom was seen not as a politically neutral location, but a site of learning where the teacher can help students see that the personal is connected to the larger culture and that gender, racial and other differences are not based on personal perspectives and beliefs but at ideological forces and socialization processes.

In 1987 Cynthia Caywood and Gillian Overing edited the text Teaching Writing: Pedagogy, Gender, and Equity, providing a precursor to the proliferation of feminist essays on pedagogy of the 1990s. Caywood and Gillian compiled essays that clarify feminist discussions of writing instruction. Today the book reads as a primer for what are now considered the basics of feminist theory in composition. In their book, Caywood and

Overing gather together women authors who create a preliminary definition of feminist writing pedagogy. The theories of the book focus on a feminine “ethics of care” model where achieving political equity for students in the writing classroom is obtained through accommodation of and nurturing of differences. The anthology represents the relationship between feminist theory and writing theory, seeing writing as a process, not product, focusing on revision and allowing students to write in their own voice.

In the Caywood and Overing book, the goal of the contributors’ pedagogical strategies is clear: not to create feminist students, but to use feminism to move students towards critical consciousness. The Caywood and Overing anthology attempts to confront the question of “What writing classroom practices create an inequitable climate for each student?” and uses a feminist pedagogical approach to counter what feminists see as traditional tyrannical practices, e.g. teaching Standard English with little regard for the political issues involved and ignoring individual needs of students and their cultural and personal locations. The principles of feminist pedagogy as applied to the writing classroom outlined by the book’s contributors include:

- creating a CR group models of discourse that focus on dialogue and not confrontation or hierarchy (Annas 3)
- recognizing silence as a transformative space, but moving students from silence to speech, from ignorance to knowledge (Annas 8)
- helping students to connect their writing problems with their personal location and the location of their audience; seeing writing problems as issues of discourse, not lagging cognitive development (Goulston 23)
- drawing on the life practices of a student’s first language (mother tongue) to understand

our role as teachers (Daumer and Runzo 47)

- bringing to the class the voices and perspectives of women (Daumer and Runzo 48)

- using non-sexist language and teaching students to be sensitive to non-sexist language in their writing (Freed 83)

- creating writing assignments that are meaningful for students and that allow students to make choices about their own work (Fuss 109)

Also during the 1980s, another direct influence of feminist theory on the field of composition came in the form of feminist reading practices. Reader response theory, used by many writing teachers, integrates feminist theory so readers will consider race, privilege, and gender of the author and the reader (Schweikart 36). In the spirit of deconstructionism, a school of thought that refutes the belief that there are truism or foundational structures on which knowledge, identity, or culture is built, Patrocínio Schweikart writes that neither the author nor the readers can supply all the meaning in a text (36). She argues that teachers can't just change the curriculum to incorporate women's voices: teachers need to integrate critical discussions of gender – and other identities – into classrooms. To do this students need new reading strategies. Schweikart creates a feminist reading strategy that recognizes the duality of interaction between the text and the reader. This strategy also recognizes that because the author is absent, reading is subjective. Therefore teachers need to challenge the reader to actively resist blending the perspectives of the author and the reader. Using this approach Schweikart wants teachers to recognize each interpretation not as valid or invalid but as one way of looking at the text (56).

In her theories, Schweikart connects feminist reading and writing: “Feminist

reading and writing are grounded in the interest of producing a community of feminist readers and writers in the hope that ultimately this community will expand to include everyone” (56). In this statement, Schweikart argues for a feminist ideology to replace the patriarchal ideology. Is the goal of the feminist teacher to create classrooms full of feminists, or just feminist readers, defining a feminist reader as one who uses the strategy outlined by Schweikart? Unlike the Caywood and Overing anthology where the teacher’s objective is to help students become better thinkers and community members, not necessarily feminists, the role of the feminist teacher as described by Schweikart is less clear. One can read Schweikart as advocating for or privileging a feminist ideology (see above quote), not in the form of feminist leadership or facilitation, but in the form of a feminist political agenda ultimately adopted by students. If this is the case, I would say her approach runs counter to the definition of feminist pedagogy I use in this project. However, if her definition of a “feminist reader” refers to one who reads critically and carefully, analyzing the ideological power and personal bias existing in and between the reader and the text, then the goal of helping students become feminist readers encourages critical thinking and analysis, not the indoctrination of a feminist political perspective.

Contemporary Feminist Writing Pedagogy in the 1990s

Between the early 1980s and late 1990s, the definition of feminist pedagogy evolved and solidified as feminists wrote about their teaching. In the middle to latter part of the 1990s publications such as The Feminist Teacher and Meeting the Challenge showed that feminist pedagogy wasn’t just a teaching method for Women’s Studies courses. By the 1990s composition theorists were naming certain pedagogical practices

as “feminist,” solidifying a definition of feminist pedagogy for the composition classroom. Even though the naming of feminist pedagogy in composition came late in the decade, throughout the 1990s elements of feminist pedagogy are clearly delineated in composition scholarship. As previously outlined, some composition scholars have been writing about feminist theories and pedagogical themes since the early 1970s, but these themes and practices are overtly named as feminist most prolifically during the middle to latter part of the 1990s. There are themes of feminist pedagogy running throughout composition theory since 1971.²³ Here I am distinguishing between overt discussions and specific naming of feminist pedagogy as it manifests itself in the composition classroom during the 1990s and describing classroom strategies that reflect feminist pedagogical themes but are not overtly named as feminist, as happened in the 1970s and 1980s. Even today, many teachers are reluctant to embrace the moniker of “feminist” pedagogy, instead describing pedagogy that integrates the themes outlined in later in this chapter as “liberatory” or “critical” pedagogies.

Here I want to challenge the prevailing belief in the field of composition that feminist pedagogy is primarily practiced by feminists and foregrounds a feminist agenda in the composition classroom, i.e. foregrounds issues of gender, and sometimes race, class, sexual orientation. As with the broader educational community, this narrow definition of feminist pedagogy prevails because there are few scholarly articles that attempt to articulate a more concrete definition of feminist pedagogy. These more limiting definitions of feminist pedagogy also are perpetuated because of an anti-feminist

²³The connection between themes of feminist pedagogy and theories in composition from the 1970s through 2000 are represented in the tables beginning on page 67.

bias that exists within the field causing some teachers and scholars to shy away from using the term “feminist pedagogy” as it applies to their own work. Consequently many theorists and scholars use rhetoric such as “democratic,” “liberatory,” or “critical” in describing what other scholars, especially those within Women’s Studies but certainly some in the field of composition, name as feminist.

One example of this appropriation or re-naming of feminist pedagogy is Mike Rose’s “democratic pedagogy.” In his 1995 book, Possible Lives, Rose describes the ideal composition classroom as a site for democratic ideals and that democracy²⁴ in the classroom will lead to civic action. “To imagine a vibrant democratic state, you must have a deep belief in the majestic of common intelligence, in its distribution through the population to become participatory civic beings” (432). Although Rose creates an idyllic and patriotic view of the power of pedagogy – and I argue even creates a model where democracy and social action seem to spring organically from simply believing in the intelligence of students -- his belief that a “good” classroom environment leads to social

²⁴Rose’s description of a democratic classroom focuses on the issue of student “care.” Noddings picks up this rhetoric when calling for an “ethic of care” in the composition classroom. I interpret Noddings’ description as an attention to the individual student’s academic needs and personal location using a careful and critical teacher eye. With her “ethic of care” Noddings challenges teachers to make assumptions about their students and their realities and to engage in critical self reflection of their teaching practices, themes of feminist pedagogy. However, Noddings’ rhetoric can also quickly fall into the “maternal teacher/feminine pedagogy” camp which focuses more on socialized stereotypes of how women approach teaching (nurturing mothers). Elizabeth Flynn, a scholar of feminine pedagogy, reinforces this connection to feminine contexts by creating the pedagogical binary of the authoritative father (bad pedagogy based on power of the teacher) and the nurturing mother (feminist teaching). Both Flynn’s and Noddings’ models quickly become oppressive when considering them in the context of essentialist beliefs where all females are innately nurturing and maternal – or that a feminine nurturing manifests itself in specific ways.

Cornel West might offer a way to reconsider the essentialist connections between care for students and nurturing mother/teachers. West writes that teachers need “politics of conversation,” converting nihilistic cultures to one of love and caring (28-31). West uses the example of Malcolm X, Fannie Lou Hamer, Martin Luther King Jr. as people who speak in rhetoric that shows they are physically and emotionally upset by the state of Black Americans, but also show deep care and concern for those same Black Americans. Using West’s rhetorical analysis of African American revolutionaries, the rhetoric of care moves away from a warm, fuzzy mother figure to one of critical rigor with points and barbs, enticing people to action.

action is grounded in feminist pedagogy. Rose describes the idea of a “good” classroom community creating social action almost through osmosis, and outlines what he believes are “good teaching practices” that will lead to this result. “Good teaching,” Rose writes, “is almost defined by its tendency to push the borders of things” (13). Pushing borders and breaking boundaries, feminist rhetoric used by Gloria Anzaldua and Mary Daly in the 1980s, creates even a more tenacious, yet unspoken or unattributed, connection between feminism and Rose’s democratic pedagogy.

Even without naming his philosophies on teaching as “feminist,” Rose evokes veiled connections with feminist theory and pedagogy. Another example of these oblique references is his attention to authority in the classroom. Authority, described by Rose as a management style employed by teachers, come from care for students, acknowledgment of students’ realities, constructing a classroom environment where students are “safe” from insult and diminishment, and where students can take risks (413-4). In a democratic classroom, Rose writes, authority is shared between the students and teacher, marking another prominent theme of feminist pedagogy. Rose’s list of “good teaching practices,” even as he resists a “final list of ‘good practices’” (13), includes themes of feminist pedagogy that extend beyond shared authority, social action, and pushing borders:

- affirmation of students’ experiences and realities (26)
- focusing on student energies and channeling those energies towards work that is meaningful to them (41)
- engaging in the local community to understand realities of students and also make connections with parents and other teachers as they create a community (420)

- knowing students well; having individual knowledge of students and their cultures and traditions (419)

Each of these points directly corresponds to one of the sixteen themes of feminist pedagogy that I offer here. Does Rose intentionally hide the similarities between feminist pedagogy and his democratic version? Is he as oblivious to other radical pedagogical theories to not see these connections or understand his borrowing from feminist pedagogy to construct his democratic pedagogy? Considering how thoroughly Rose's description of democratic pedagogy overlaps with themes of feminist pedagogy, not a single mention of feminist pedagogical theories in his book feels like, in the most gentle terms, a suspicious exclusion; a harsher interpretation of this omission could be branded as sexism.

Also using the rhetoric of democracy to describe composition pedagogy, Andrea Lunsford, in her 1989 speech to CCCC (Chair's Address) called for a post-modern pedagogy that was "radically democratic." Lunsford defined this post-modern pedagogy using themes of feminist pedagogy:

- non-hierarchical
- intensely collaborative
- dialogic
- heteroglossic/multi-voiced

As with Rose, Lunsford neglects to describe these practices as "feminist," missing the opportunity to give credit to feminist scholars who have named these themes as part of feminist pedagogy.

The conflation of post-modern and democratic pedagogies with feminist

pedagogy – without naming it as such – is worth examining. While post-modern pedagogy stresses social construction as its core, democratic teaching centers more on political elements of equality without questioning social structures. Even more interesting is how Rose, Lunsford, and others seem to fold these definitions and approaches into theories of pedagogy, creating definitions that are both post-modern and democratic, but never “feminist.” That these theorists are talking about feminist pedagogy – a pedagogical theory that had been evolving for over twenty years – but invent new ways to describe it, suggests an anti-feminist bias.

Have feminist pedagogical principles become part of the status quo, part of the general belief of what creates a “good” classroom community and pedagogical approach to writing so as no longer to be disruptive or subversive? I believe that some feminist pedagogical practices have been accepted to the point of no longer being radical, but naming these practices as feminist still is radical rhetoric. Most scholars prefer to use words like critical, liberatory, post-modern, and democratic to describe pedagogical themes and principles that other scholars define as feminist. This avoidance of the “f” word may also speak to why use of the word “feminist” itself evokes deviant concepts and disruptive models. These pedagogical practices labeled as democratic, radical, critical, or liberatory reflect feminist pedagogy, but because of the stigma, stereotypes, or ambiguity about what feminist pedagogy is, some scholars and journal editors use these alternative rhetorics of naming. The main purpose of this chapter has been to clearly define not only what feminist pedagogy is and how it manifests itself in the composition classroom, but how themes of feminist pedagogy and naming popular composition practices as feminist have been both embraced and avoided. It is because of the

ambiguities, stigmas, and stereotypes regarding feminist pedagogy in composition that a clearer and more comprehensive definition of feminist pedagogy in the field is desperately needed. In the sections that follow, I offer just such a definition, using the sixteen themes of feminist pedagogy to create a historical roadmap over the past thirty years of composition theorists and scholars²⁵ who have written about the themes in relation to the teaching of writing.

Taking Shape on the Cusp of the New Millennium

Today a substantial body of work exists describing feminist pedagogy, creating a rich tapestry of methods and practices as a definition. Most articles on the subject are still published by Women's Studies journals. It is unclear to me whether this phenomenon reflects a bias by scholarly journals that aren't specifically Women's Studies against the idea that feminist pedagogy can be separated from Women's Studies or whether it indicates that the scholars themselves perpetuate the stereotype of coupling feminist pedagogy with Women's Studies by only submitting such articles to those types of journals.

From the articles and books that have been published on the subject over the past three decades there is missing a synthesis of the scholarship on feminist teaching, which would provide a clearer definition of how scholars and teachers define feminist pedagogy. This type of information, a more precise definition of feminist pedagogy, is

²⁵I am not suggesting that the theorists represent a comprehensive list, but that these scholars furthered the feminist theme as standard pedagogical practices in the composition classroom. Many of these theorists, especially the earlier ones, would probably not identify their approach to writing instruction as being inherently feminist, but, I argue, their work adds to the comprehensive definition of feminist pedagogy is commonly used in composition today.

sorely needed. Without it, many educators still see feminist pedagogy as a pedagogical approach that foregrounds feminist issues in course curriculum or a touchy-feely Consciousness Raising (CR) brand of teaching that focuses on expressivist methods and lacks academic rigor. In fact, feminist pedagogy works against both these tendencies, offering instead a rich, rigorous, complex, critical approach to teaching. Berenice Malka Fisher uses the CR model as the foundation for her contemporary definition of feminist pedagogy; however she stretches the CR model beyond sharing of personal experiences. I applaud her complications of the CR model and her ability to reclaim CR history as complex and multi-leveled.

In 1998 Elizabeth Tisdell, in identifying three major themes of feminist pedagogy (attention to the construction of knowledge, authority, and positionality), wrote that there are many feminism(s) and just as many feminist pedagogies (140). Although I recognize that there are as many definitions of feminism as there are feminists and that there is a danger of any one person or group identifying what is or is not a feminist, I don't necessarily extend this philosophy to a definition of feminist pedagogy. The distinction for me is that feminist pedagogy, like other theories of pedagogy, must be understood in order to be implemented. Unlike the personal identity of feminist, where one can enact that belief as one desires either in personal lifestyle or by becoming active in political and social groups, feminist pedagogy exists within the confines of educational institutions. Similar to feminist leadership strategies, feminist pedagogy needs to be more precisely defined so that those who wish to adopt such practices will have information on how to

do so.²⁶ Another reason why feminist pedagogy needs to be more clearly defined is that by creating a more comprehensive and succinct definition, feminist pedagogy will gain validity as an educational theory that teachers can apply to various classroom situations – similar to but also distinct from pedagogical schools such as liberatory or critical.

Feminist pedagogy is not about picking and choosing from these themes outlined in chapter 2, but striving to engage all the elements within a single classroom or course experience. This idea of a feminist pedagogical utopia, where the teacher is enacting all sixteen themes, is what feminist teachers strive for. That is not to say that someone who only enacts two of the sixteen themes in a single class period is not engaging in feminist pedagogy. The attempt to continually work towards the utopia, aware of the sixteen themes, is what makes a feminist teacher. Feminist pedagogy is a vision of what education might be like, but isn't (Shrewsbury 1993:8). It is the elusive goal to which conscientious, critical teachers strive. Feminist pedagogy is a way to name and aspire to what we are committed to, even if our teaching practices don't always meet these goals (Bridwell-Bowles 187).

In attempting to synthesize a short definition of feminist pedagogy from these sixteen themes, I define feminist pedagogy as a keen awareness of classroom dynamics, continually striving to confront issues of power and authority as they play out between students and teachers; it is an attempt to move students to critical consciousness, especially in regards to racism, classism, sexism, homophobia and other ideological forces that create hierarchies; it is a commitment to creating connections between the

²⁶Creating a pastiche of definitions that becomes "feminist pedagogies" seems unhelpful. The definition I offer here struggles with the lack of open-endedness or the fuzzy borders that are celebrated by feminism(s) in the larger culture, while attempting to articulate a more precise definition that will be helpful to all teachers and educational theorists.

external world and the classroom, creating a learning environment that is high energy, using the kinetics of a classroom as a critique of traditional models of education. A feminist learning community harkens back to the definition of feminism as “creative energy for change and critique,” empowering students to become active learners (Morley and Walsh 1).

Chapter 2:
A Definition of Feminist Pedagogy: The Sixteen Themes

I'm sitting in my office with a student. To describe him physically seems beyond the point, but somehow there is a connection between his physical manifestation and the reason I am writing about him now, so here goes: he's tall and lanky; quiet; effeminate – although that can be anything that is “not masculine.” here it means that he is docile and overtly passive, but I am to find out passively aggressive --, quiet as a mouse, in fact he is mousey. He wears those long rectangular black-framed glasses that seem to evoke images of BoBos (Bohemian Bourgeois) in SoHo, dressed in black, drinking lattes and talking on their cell phones about yet another bad date.

Am I describing him in a negative light? What picture do you have of him now? How will this physical presence you have conjured inform your reading of this story? And how have I created him in order to support my version of this tale, this pedagogical moment that frustrates and puzzles me enough to write about it – kick off a chapter about feminist pedagogy in the writing classroom with it? What is the purpose of teachers – of me – telling these stories anyway? To justify our responses to students, to work through teacher angst, to work through how we helped or didn't help *this* student so the next time we will do better? My fear is most of the time we tell these stories to make ourselves feel good – and look good. The student is the antagonist and the teacher is the hero. I am aware of this as I tell this story and it makes me nervous.

This student has come to visit me during office hours to have me read his project draft. He tells me he didn't get any “good” feedback from his peers, that it was all vague

and unhelpful. In my composition classes – nay, in all the classes I teach – major projects begin with the setting of goals. I offer some to the classroom community, the community adds goals to the list. Consensus. The next step involves students writing their own research questions that will, in answering it, fulfill the goals. The research question has to begin with “Why” or “How.” Students need help defining these research questions – the most difficult part of the project – because the questions need to be narrow and specific and students have a hard time reigning themselves in and focusing. Don’t we all? I say to them, “The most difficult work of any project, whether it be a book, an essay, or a PhD dissertation, is defining a decent research question.”

After the research questions are defined, the students write project proposals. I approve their proposals. Then drafts are written and groups of students workshop their drafts. The project is revised before I see it. This student comes to me a week before the final draft is due, complaining of unhelpful peer feedback. As he sits in my office, digging through his cluttered green folder to find his draft, I search my mind to remember his project proposal. I remember something about boys in the classroom, or boys in the educational system, and how they are at a disadvantage. I remember on his project proposal telling him one book he needed to read was Failing at Fairness: How Schools Cheat Girls by Myra Sadker and David Sadker. The student locates the draft in his folder and slides it across the desk to me, like a secret offer that can’t be spoken. When I start reading his draft I quickly discover that his research focus is more pointed than I remember, more accusatory. The research question, it seems to me, is more along the lines of “How have feminists changed the institution of education so as to favor girls and discriminate against boys?” In his paper he cites statistics that boys have higher drop

out rates than girls, are more likely to be diagnosed with ADD, have a higher suicide rate than girls, and are less likely to go to college. The reason, he writes, is because of feminists. They made such a fuss about how girls were neglected in school that everything has now changed to favor girls – the pendulum has swung wickedly in the other direction, knocking young boys to their knees in the face of biased feminist teachers.

As I read I feel an emotional response equivalent to frustration and anger. I check this emotional response. I am his composition teacher, after all. What about the writing? The argument is ill-constructed. He quotes statistics without giving any sources. He makes general statements like, “I have never seen a teacher favor a boy in class” without any specific data presented as evidence. I read on, making notes in the margin, stopping occasionally to say, in what I think is a gentle tone, “You can’t really say this without backing it up somehow. Where did this information come from? Cite the source, set up the quote, explain why you are using it.”

On page three of the five-page draft, he brings in two specific examples from his personal experience of feminists whom he has had as teachers. At first I look up and say, “Good! Specific examples! This is what you need more of!” However, as I read on, I can feel frustration and even anger rising in my chest. The first example is of a feminist teacher who ignored the men in the class and only spoke with or talked to the women. The second example is of a feminist teacher who, in talking about the use of non-sexist language, drew a pig saying “Oink!” in the margin of her handout as a symbol of a “male chauvinist pig.”

The second example is one about me, but so hugely misconstrued that I almost

don't recognize it.

Here is my side of the story.

I had written a handout about non-sexist language use for the class. I wrote that it was perfectly OK for people to use "their" as the gender neutral third person, even when the verb is third person singular. I had written on the class handout "I know some teachers will cringe and circle in red pen if you write, 'The student was asked to bring *their* notebook to class' because they will say the pronoun (their) doesn't agree with the singular subject (student). That's hogwash in my book. Language is changing and one of the most interesting ways language is changing involves use of non-sexist rules. As a result, the standard is changing so that it is acceptable to use 'their' as a pronoun for a singular subject because the English language doesn't have a singular pronoun that is gender neutral." In the margin of the handout, I had put a squiggly line under "hogwash" and drawn a cartoonish picture of a little pig with a bucket of water being thrown over it (the pig was saying, "OINK!").

When I realize what I am reading in this student's paper – my cute little pig drawing and my paragraph on non-sexist language being twisted into a comment on "men as pigs" in this student's reality, using my teacher power to exercise feminist domination over and discrimination against males – I stop and look at the student. I wonder if my face is red. I smile and ask, "Is this suppose to be an interpretation of my handout?" The student smiles back and nods. I sigh, look down to collect my thoughts, and then launch into a short lecture on misinterpretation and what the *intended* reading of the pig drawing is. I am not sure he is convinced, this bespectacled young man in my office.

After spending over 45 minutes with this student, reading his paper, talking with him, giving him pointers on how to create a stronger argument and reminding him that his *audience* is a feminist, so he needs to be very aware of that dynamic when writing a paper about how feminists persecute male students, we have worked through a detailed outline of his paper. I feel exhausted. I have a headache. I feel relief as he finally rises from the chair to exit. He leaves my office nodding “yes” as I ask him, “Do you feel you have a clearer direction than when you came in? Do you feel you know where you are going with this project?” When he has disappeared around the corner, I lay my head down on the wood desk, smelling the dirt ground in from various teacher hands and, more than likely, drool and tears. My first thought is “How in the world am I going to objectively evaluate this paper?” The second thought: “Goddamn it! If I weren’t so overt about being a feminist – and using feminist pedagogy – in my class, would he have read my (witty and clever) pig drawing as a vicious man-bashing slam?”

Herein lies one of the many rubs when applying feminist pedagogy, a teaching method designed and evolved from Women’s Studies courses, to other disciplines. My composition students don’t expect a feminist teacher. In fact, many of them don’t *want* a feminist teacher. That is to say, the moment I identify as a feminist, many of them see me as man-hating and prejudiced. The feminist pedagogy themes of “being overt with one’s political location” and “teaching with the whole self” created a dynamic for this student – and many others, most of them male – where they can’t get beyond what they feel they know a feminist is (man-hater) and therefore they feel oppressed, dominated and often persecuted in the classroom.

Because few (if any) of their other teachers reveal, at any point in time during the

semester, their political and social locations, when a feminist teacher does, she is immediately suspect. Her mere confession of a political or social location is interpreted as a bias. She isn't objective or neutral, something the ideology of traditional education convinces students that good teachers are. Feminist teachers know there is no such thing as objectivity and neutrality, so one must be overt about where one stands; because feminist pedagogical practices are still not the norm, students don't know what to do with these overt discussions of teacher location.

There are also other dynamics, negative consequences – or at least they feel negative -- playing out in this example of feminist pedagogy in the writing classroom. In my composition classroom I enact other themes of feminist pedagogy – “giving students choice in the work they do” and “engaging students in active learning” – by allowing students to create their own research questions. We, as a class, collaborate on goals of the five major projects, but they decide how that work will be created, hopefully engaging in work that is not only challenging, but fun and meaningful to them. The danger of this is clearly represented in the above example: a student who decides to write a paper on how feminist teachers are responsible for increased suicide rates, lower test scores, and fewer males in college. Of course this project will elicit a strong negative emotional response from me, a feminist teacher. As a result I will be hyper aware of the comments I make and how I evaluate the work. In an effort to be “unbiased” I am likely to award this student a higher mark than he deserves, both to prove to myself – and to him – that I can be “objective” and “fair.” Evaluating papers is excruciatingly subjective, even more so in a composition classroom where the students design their own projects/questions as opposed to the teacher assigning scripted research questions that allow little wiggle room

for students to create their own work. To minimize this subjectivity, I use the goals we established as a class as a rubric for evaluating the papers. Even so, it *feels* subjective. It is up to me to decide whether, as one ubiquitous goal states, “evidence is clearly presented and cited to support claims.”

Another theme of feminist pedagogy playing out in this scenario is “embracing conflict instead of working to avoid it.” It is simply easier to not reveal that I am feminist – or committed to feminist pedagogy and what that means to me – because even the act of doing so creates conflict in the classroom. In the above situation the conflict is very local and specific: the student is using as evidence in his argument a misrepresented example of my feminist teaching strategies. I confront the student by attempting to explain the intention behind the “OINK!” drawing, but he may or may not buy my claim. Beyond this confrontational moment, now I feel a bias against this student. As he has judged me as “male-hating,” I now have judged him from this one encounter (since he never speaks in class – a silence I have been aware of) as ungenerous, interpreting strategies I use in the classroom in the most negative light so as to fit within his model of what feminist teaching is (domination and oppression of male students). I also feel a sense of panic: what if other people in the class interpreted the drawing in the same way. Should I bring this issue up to the class as a whole? Should I attempt to argue that non-sexist language is not necessarily a feminist issue? But it is, isn’t it? How can I embrace this conflict without making the student feel embarrassed, betrayed, or targeted?

Defining Feminist Pedagogy

The complexities of *how* feminist pedagogy is practiced surface in the above

example of my own teaching. The above reflections – and the actions that are the fodder for those reflections – spring from the definition of feminist pedagogy outlined below, a physical manifestation of several themes. In the following tables, the first column defines the theme of feminist pedagogy. The second column outlines the Women’s Studies scholars (as well as scholars from other disciplines outside of composition) who have specifically defined and refined the theme as part of feminist pedagogy. The third column represents composition scholars who have written about that theme in the context of the writing classroom. Sometimes the composition scholars identify their theories of teaching as feminist; other times not. Even in the composition scholarship listed that does not specifically identify these themes as feminist, I believe these theories spring from feminist pedagogy. Because feminist pedagogy focuses on connecting the classroom with the community, understanding ideologies, and subverting the authority of the teacher to create a more student-centered class where students create work that is meaningful to them, feminist pedagogy seems particularly suited for the composition classroom.

Following each table, I elaborate on each theme. In these sections I outline the major theorists who contributed to this collaborative definition of feminist pedagogy, showing how they have expanded upon or added to previous theories of feminist pedagogy since the 1970s.

The following is a comprehensive list of the sixteen themes, a preview of what I discuss in detail in the next sections:

- **Confronting sex biases, both the teacher’s own and others’**
- **Embracing conflict instead of working to avoid it**

- Being overt with one's political and social location (self-disclosure, often with strategic stealth)
- Reconstructing power so that it is empowering, not oppressive and checking teacher authority
- Teaching with the whole self
- Integrating theory and practice
- Critically reflecting on teaching through a teaching journal or other consistent method of critical engagement with classroom dynamics
- Creating connections between learning and knowing and connections between classroom and community issues
- Working towards student critical consciousness
- Considering dynamics and issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, among others
- Engaging students in active learning
- Considering each individual student's realities and needs
- Giving students choice in the curriculum and in the work they do
- Bringing joy and fun into the classroom
- Being aware of voices and silences in the class
- Recognizing that each classroom community is unique and each student is unique

A Clearer Look at Feminist Pedagogy: the Sixteen Themes

I have rather loosely grouped the 16 themes into three categories: teacher critical reflection, classroom strategies, and student concerns. The problem with these

categorizations is that few of the themes fit neatly into a single category. For example, is “engaging in active learning” about teacher critical reflection (teacher making sure he/she is creating an environment where active learning is possible), a classroom strategy (small group work and student led classes), or a concern for students (making sure students have power to engage with other classroom community members)? Consequently, many of the themes, one can argue, span all categories. This can be evidence of the interconnectedness of feminist pedagogy: boundaries and categories blur. The decision to place themes within specific categories is one of organizational presentation. These categories should not be seen as rigid or fixed taxonomies. In the tables that accompany each category, I list the themes in that category and the educational theorists who have written about each theme in chronological order.²⁷ The dates next to the names indicate when the author(s) published the article or book focusing on that theme. Following the tables I elaborate the descriptions of each theme and the scholars’ contribution to the theme. The themes named in each of these categories represent general teaching strategies, but each teacher will interpret and implement these strategies using many different practical approaches, as the ethnographic chapters demonstrate.

Themes of Teacher Critical Reflection

The themes in this category point to pedagogical practices that demand teacher

²⁷The list of theorists in these tables should not be considered a comprehensive list. I chose to include these theorists because of their focus on a particular theme of feminist pedagogy in their scholarship. Since most feminist teaching strategies were adapted by English studies (teaching writing, language and literature) after they were defined elsewhere, the second column in these tables highlight the scholars who first wrote about or significantly extended discussion of the themes. The third/last column reflects feminist pedagogical theory as it specifically manifests itself in the field of composition and rhetoric, listing scholars who have adapted feminist pedagogical principles for that discipline.

self-awareness and critical attention to classroom dynamics. Teacher critical reflection is a category that distinguishes feminist pedagogy from other schools of liberatory pedagogy; no other pedagogical theory insists so strongly on the centrality of teacher self-reflection of pedagogical choices. Liberatory and critical pedagogies focus on moving students to critical consciousness. With feminist pedagogy, turning that critical eye not only towards students and classroom dynamics but back on oneself is important to creating a classroom that meets specific needs of students. The themes included in this category are: confronting sex biases, embracing conflict, being overt with issues of authority, reconstructing power as empowering instead of oppressive, teaching with the whole self, integrating theory and practice, and consistent critical reflection of classroom dynamics.

Writing teachers engage in themes of teacher critical reflection by paying close attention to her authority in the classroom and the needs of individual students. Because contemporary writing pedagogy makes strong connections between writing and thinking and between language and power, composition course curricula often include political discussions and readings that push students to examine the politics of language or the intersection of language, politics, and cultural ideologies. The themes in this section relate to how the teacher creates a critically conscious and socially connected writing environment, through his/her own critical awareness of the classroom community. Themes of Teacher Critical Reflection also demand that the teacher be aware of his/her physical presence and voice in the classroom. Included here are theories that push teachers to reflect on decisions made about the course and how to embrace class conflict.

Themes of Teacher Critical Reflection	Women's Studies Theorists (in chronological order)	Composition Theorists (in chronological order)
Confronting sex biases (both the teacher's own and other's)	<i>Confronting sex biases (own and others):</i> Culler (1982), Weiler (1987), Rothenberg (1988) <i>Considering race, class, sexual orientation, not just gender:</i> Shrewsbury (1993), Sattler (1997), Tisdell (1998), Cohee (1998), Gusfstaftson (1999) <i>Integrating multiculturalism:</i> Mayberry (1999)	<i>Confronting sex biases in curriculum and course materials:</i> Hedges (1972) <i>Considering race, class, sexual orientation, not just gender:</i> Smitherman (1977), Malinowitz (1995)
Embracing conflict instead of working to avoid it	Weiler (1987), Deay and Stitzel (1991),	Jarratt (1991)
Being overt with one's political location (self-disclosure) and checking teacher authority	Maher (1987), Rothenberg (1988), Bleich (1989), Bensimon (1992), Omolade (1993), Shrewsbury (1993), Bauer and Rhoades (1996), Sattler (1997), Tisdell (1998), Weiler (1998)	Hedges (1972), Harold (1973), Elbow (1973)
Reconstructing power so that it is empowering not oppressive	Culley (1982), Shrewsbury (1993), Omolade (1993), hooks (1994), Damarin (1994), Bauer and Rhoades (1996), Sattler (1997), Cohee (1998), Tisdell (1998)	Hedges (1972), Elbow (1973), Malinowitz (1995)
Teaching with the whole self	hooks (1994)	Ronald and Roskelly (1998)
Integrating theory and practice	James (1994), hooks (1994), Cohee et. al. (1998), Hopkins (1999), Mayberry and Rees (1999)	Strotsky (1990)
Critically reflecting on teaching through a teaching journal or other consistent method of critical engagement with classroom dynamics	Bell, Marrow and Tastsoglou (1999), Gustafson (1999), Fisher (2001)	Rose (1980), Marshall (1997), Cooper (2000)

Teaching Journal: April 6, 2001

I began writing my end-of-semester narrative letters to each student. It usually takes me about a month to do that, working on three letters every day. It's a labor-intensive task – a labor of love? Sometimes I wonder if it is even worth it. Do the students even read the 2-3 page epistles I write to them about their work?

I keep a detailed “teacher’s book” page for each student, writing short comments throughout the semester: what they did that impressed or surprised me or made me proud, areas that they need to continue to work on, how I have seen their writing and critical thinking skills evolve and what to keep in mind as they continue to write. It is fun for me to take a careful, close look at each one of those student’s work and write them a personal letter about what I have seen. I find myself focusing a great deal on both their writing and critical thinking skills in these letters; the teacher dork in me rises up and claps her hands – I feel excited for the changes I have seen in each one of these students throughout the semester.

In their mid-term reflections I had a few students who wrote, “I’ve never been asked to critically think before. I’ve never been graded (sic!) on it until this class.” I don’t believe that is probably true (that other teachers have never called upon them to critically think or have never evaluated their work in relation to that skill), but I think the students’ comments reflect how little many teachers articulate for students – and themselves – *how* they are evaluating student work, the specifics of the rubric, if in fact they even *use* a rubric. I give the rubric I use to evaluate projects to students with their assignment sheet, so they know exactly what I am going to be looking for; there is *a/ways* an item on the rubric relating to critical thinking (phrased along the lines of “How well does the writer ask and answer How/Why questions, offering several different answers to complicate their ideas?” For many of the students it feels revolutionary to critically think about the critical thinking they are doing.

When it is all said and done, I’ll print off over 150 pages of single spaced “letters” to students, killing trees in the name of better writing. Who knows whether they even read the damned letters – or if they do, how carefully. My hope is that they not only read them and think about what I have seen in their work this semester, but keep the letter and refer back to it periodically to remind themselves of their writing process and progress. Who am I kidding? That’s a self-deluded teacher-fantasy, happy writers doing the happy writer dance in white spats, top hats, and canes, kissing and waving narrative letters like winning lottery tickets. Sheesh. I need to get some rest.

Confronting sex biases (both the teacher’s own and other’s): Attention to gender issues within the classroom community and course curriculum is a primary theme of feminist pedagogy (Tisdell 140). Feminist teachers are aware of how gender biases play

out in the classroom and continually check their own behavior to make sure it doesn't fall into typical patterns of calling on boys more than girls; responding differently to student comments, questions, or work in ways that reinforce socially constructed gender differences; and paying attention to female silences, encouraging girls to practice using their voices in class discussions. By doing so, teachers challenge their own sexist assumptions and actively work to resist them (Weiler 137); Carolyn Shrewsbury names this as a concern for "gender justice" in the classroom (10). Paula Rothenberg extends gender justice to include rigorous self-critique of the biases that teachers carry with them into the classroom. Even feminist teachers can be inequitable with female students, Rosenberg writes, and therefore they must come clean with their class on their own racist/sexist assumptions, modeling risk-taking behavior with students (142). With their students, teachers must examine gender with explicit critical analysis (Gustafson 249). This extends not just to the community dynamics of the classroom, but to the course curriculum as well. Feminist teachers include voices of women and minorities in their course curriculum and talk about sex-based stereotypes in the curriculum and classroom (Sattler 88).

This attention to gender stereotypes also applies to potential teacher biases regarding issues of race, class, ethnicity. With movements towards multiculturalism²⁸ in the 1980s, teachers were advised to acknowledge the cultural differences of their

²⁸I define multiculturalism as an attempt to integrate voices and perspectives from various cultures outside the dominant culture in both curriculum and class discussions. Recently there have been critiques of "multiculturalism" especially in regards to education as a way to further reify dominance of "whiteness," where all "other" cultures are lumped into one category of "multiculturalism." Regardless of this new problematizing of the rhetoric and concept of multiculturalism, the word "multiculturalism" is what these scholars use in their writing and therefore represents my primary reason for using that same rhetoric here. Their use of the word reflects the historical context of when they wrote the article/book, and not necessarily the contemporary view some educators have of what "multicultural" education or approach to meaning.

students. Maralee Mayberry writes that feminist teachers need to move beyond multiculturalism to looking at individual realities of students, an integration of Freirian theories and theories of multiculturalism. Mayberry challenges feminist teachers to look at difference on an individual level instead of generalizing from historical or social groups (26).

Awareness of biases that exist in the composition classroom begins as a discussion of women's voices and the representation of women in course curriculum (Hedges 2-3). The concern for how and whether teachers of writing are incorporating the voices of women is the focus of the special issues of College English in 1971 and 1972 devoted to the status of women on college campuses. Although the essays in these special issues discuss more general concerns such as the publication rates of women scholars and tenure rates of women in the field, many of the essays argue for integrating women's voices in the curriculum (Olson) and paying attention to women's voices in the classroom (Rich). As the discussion of gender in the writing classroom evolved, scholars began documenting research regarding how men and women approach different writing tasks, challenging teachers to be aware of the type of assignments they ask students to create and whether those assignments privileged one group's skills over another. Although contemporary feminists see this earlier gender-based research as lacking in discussions on gender construction or essentialist theories of femaleness, at the time these articles were published (in the 1970s and early 1980s), the mere mention of gender distinctions and awareness of how different social locations influence a student's response to a writing task was groundbreaking. An example of the evolving awareness to issues of gender construction and the complex interrelationships between various social

locations is presented in Linda Peterson's 1991 article on autobiographical essays and Don Kraemer's response to that same article. As is the problem with quantitative research applied to classroom situations or groups of students, Peterson neglected to complicate her research by taking into consideration dynamics such as race, class, and sexual orientation. Don Kraemer wrote a response to Peterson's research pointing this out, challenging composition theorists to reject easy taxonomies. In his response Kraemer challenges composition scholars to complicate their research by considering class and race and other locations influencing a student's classroom and writing experience.

Evolving from gender, composition scholars began discussing both class (Victor Villanueva) and sexual orientation (Harriet Malinowitz, Sarah Sloane) in the 1990s, relating these issues to how students approach writing tasks or how language and cultural expectations hinder students who belong to communities outside the dominant culture. **Embracing conflict instead of working to avoid it:** The feminist classroom has always been a site of conflict because it resists hegemonic forces of traditional classroom environments (Weiler). Feminist teachers do not try to minimize conflict, but instead strive to create an environment where students and teachers relate conflict to critical thinking, examining an issue from all angles. Ardeth Deay and Judith Stitzel write that conflict can lead to anger and defensiveness, but teachers need to see those dynamics as a natural response and to look for positive examples of conflict as well. By taking responsibility for negative dynamics in the classroom, teachers can help students work through the tension points, using them as a spring board to growth and critical consciousness (89).

During the early 1990s, when writing teachers began creating curricula where the

politics of language and cultural practices were part and parcel of writing instruction, the potential for conflict in the writing classroom increased. Students in the writing classroom often resist political discussions claiming these discussions have little or nothing to do with writing. By extension students (and others) can also reject the theory that writing and language are political. Attention to dynamics such as race, class, gender and issues of sexual orientation in texts, both the student's own and those read as part of the course work, bring potential for conflict into the composition classroom. In response to this conflict, feminist composition teachers call upon students to discuss these issues as they relate to writing or the politics of language and the dominant culture.

The theme of embracing resistance also extends to writing teachers who enact pedagogical strategies or curriculum that run counter to institutional norms. In her book Women Teaching for Change, Kathleen Weiler addresses both types of resistance: resistance by students because they are being asked to confront ideological and cultural beliefs that previously have not been questioned and resistance by administrations or institutions who are not committed to confronting gender or racial stereotypes in the curriculum. The writing classroom should always be a site of conflict, Weiler writes, because engaging in counter-hegemonic practices leads to critical consciousness (137). Because of this potential for conflict, coupled with the commitment to self-disclosure (see below), feminist writing teachers realize that they can be “an affront to students and their families” (Weiler 127). This conflict is not bad, Weiler states, but teachers need to be aware of it and help students work through the tension. Susan Jarratt locates her discussion of conflict specifically within the composition class in her 1991 essay. In “A Case for Conflict,” Jarratt challenges composition instructors to embrace conflict in the

classroom as a site of growth and critical consciousness instead of seeing it as a negative dynamic to avoid. Jarratt sees conflict as an important dynamic in classrooms where critical consciousness is one of the goals. Without conflict, teacher and student ideas, locations and cannot challenge their own and others' ideas, locations, and positions.

Being overt with one's political location (self-disclosure): Self-disclosure refers to revealing one's own agenda, location, and political beliefs, while also working to not privilege those beliefs (Weiler 137). Feminist teachers are not afraid to take risks and exhibit their own view point, but are careful to communicate that they are not privileging their views (Sattler 165, Rothenberg 142). In addition to making room for all perspectives, the teacher recognizes that perspectives are never static. Both students and teacher realize that opinions and perspectives – and even social and political locations – change with experience and knowledge (Tisdell 154).

Naming personal locations and ideologies often force teachers and students to confront dissent in the classroom community. The acknowledgment of differences, including the teacher self-disclosing her location to the class, moves students towards critical thinking as they challenge their own beliefs and assumptions. Overt discussions of political issues educates students towards critical consciousness (Bauer 386). Weiler writes that teachers need to reveal their own sexist assumptions to students so that students will take risks and confront their own biases. By doing so teachers show students that every member of the community, including the teacher, is a multi-layered subject. As a result students can more clearly see connections between culture and identity, between ideology and language. These disclosures, however, often cause much conflict as students feel betrayed when the myth of teacher neutrality is shattered before

their eyes (see discussions on conflict in the classroom above).

Through self disclosure teachers not only open themselves up to student critiques but to larger protests against discussions of the personal and political in a writing classroom. Because the dominant culture does not see writing as related to politics or power, students are not the only group that often resists this theme of feminist pedagogy as it manifests itself in the writing classroom. Parents, community leaders, and administrators can also raise their fists in outrage against strategies of overtness in their many forms (talking about one's own location, addressing the politics of syllabi and selected texts, integrating texts and discussions of traditionally marginalized perspectives), arguing that these topics have no place in a writing classroom.

Opening up one's teaching and syllabus for critique is part of feminist pedagogy. However, because students give more weight to the opinions of the teachers, feminist educators have to work diligently to encourage student questioning of their authority (see next theme on Reconstructing Power). The practice of placing oneself, as a teacher, into classroom discussion by asking students to voice their feedback and concerns regarding the course, implies that the teacher will be overt with students about the decisions she/he has made about the course and his/her political, social, and personal location.

In 1972 Elaine Hedges began this discussion of teacher self-disclosure in the field of composition by stating that writing teachers need to model, for students, how texts and course material intersect with personal experiences. Peter Elbow furthers the belief that overt reflections regarding one's identity as a writer, not just as a teacher, is imperative for a composition classroom. In his book Writing Without Teachers Elbow places teachers in the role of student, asking students to see the teacher as a peer writer and not

as an authority figure or expert writer.

The issue of subverting teacher authority becomes complicated when the teacher is not read as white, heterosexual, older, and wiser. In the early 1990s scholars like Barbara Omolade and Estela Mara Bensimon began writing about how feminist teachers who are not marked as “white” tackle the complex issues of authority both in classes where the student population is largely different from that of the teacher. These same scholars also write about classes where the teacher and student are marked similarly, but have different locations and experiences. In classes where the student population physically reflects the markings of the teacher, female teachers are more often awarded authority that they can then subvert. However, when the teacher is marked as “different,” the act of subverting authority becomes complicated (being African American in a predominantly white school or read as a lesbian, regardless of sexual orientation). In other words, teachers who do not reflect what a teacher is supposed to look like have to overcome cultural barriers that tell them – as well as their students – that they aren’t authority figures. For these teachers, their dress and physical appearance influences their *ethos* with students (Bensimon 142). Therefore some teachers may initially choose more conservative dress, demeanor, or pedagogy in a class, first having to establish authority before being able to subvert it. Black feminist pedagogy foregrounds the complicated issues of power and authority. By overtly examining the source and use of power in the classroom, black feminist teachers struggle with students to create a better university (Omolade 37).

Reconstructing power so that it is empowering not oppressive; checking teacher authority: Issues of authority and voice relate to power. Many feminist scholars have

written about recreating the role of the teacher and thereby empowering students to be both learners/teachers within the classroom (Culley 88, hooks 14, Cohee 3, Sattler 165). When Culley named feminist pedagogy in 1982, she wrote about a literature course where students brought in diaries and letters of their own relatives, or other women not included in canonical lists. Doing so recreated the authority in the class, shifting it from teacher to student. "The nature of the course changed the authority structure of the classroom, the modes of research and strategies for sharing knowledge, even the relationship between the classroom and the local community" (88). By redistributing power, the teacher models a construction of power that is positive instead of oppressive. Omolade describes her approach to sharing power as acting as "consultant to the learning process" (38). Suzanne Damarin writes that teachers need to be overt with students about the power the teacher has in the classroom as well as the teacher's own disempowerment within the educational system. Together, she writes, students and teachers can unpack the baggage of power and create new meaning (216).

Through empowerment, students learn to use their voices, both within classroom discussions and in community action (Bauer and Rhoades 110). In this way power is redefined not as a destructive force of oppression, but one of individual action and strength. Power becomes associated with energy, capability, and potential instead of domination and control (Shrewsbury 12). Later, feminist teachers also recognized that silence could also be a source of power (Tisdell 14). Refusing to speak, in the context of classroom discussions, can be a way that students empower themselves in the face of teacher authority. The problem with silences as power, however, is that the person to whom this action is directed can misread the silence not as resistance, but as

disempowerment and therefore the silence loses its intended meaning.

By subverting teacher authority, feminist classrooms open themselves up for student voices. Through this subversion of teacher authority both students and teachers help to create knowledge (Weiler 129). One way of subverting teacher authority involves creating a model of knowledge that is dialogic: “What dialogic teaching does, then, is to negotiate the public/private split, a pedagogy that constitutes feminist political strategy as part of the classroom” (Bauer and Rhoades 110). Feminist teachers strive to create a mutual exchange for better understanding, considering contexts and cultural ideologies. In this way teachers and students share the power source of the classroom, where students are active partners in learning (Shrewsbury 10). When a classroom subverts teacher authority, the students and teachers are both learning from and teaching each other (Sattler 205), freeing students to challenge and critique the teacher and the institution. This does not mean that feminist classrooms lack authority or that authority or teacher power is bad. Sometimes exerting the power of authority, for example in regards to class policies, is necessary to create a productive community (Maher 28). However, feminist teachers are aware of when they are using authority and have very clear reasons for doing so, communicating these reasons to their students. In composition scholarship, both Hedges and Elbow believe teachers must be vigilant about the use of power in the classroom, working to shift that power to students. In the writing classroom common manifestations of this theme create collaborative projects between students (Bruffee 636) and show teachers working alongside students as peer writers (Elbow). Training students on how to give meaningful feedback to their peers and peer review workshops also help reconstitute power so that all writers, not just the teacher, are legitimate sources of advice

and guidance.

Teaching with the whole self: Feminist teaching demands that teachers give their whole selves to students, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually (hooks 21). By teaching with the whole self, teachers show students that learning is connected to living, intellect is connected to life, and the personal has social and political implications. An extension of hooks' definition of engaged pedagogy where teachers bring their spiritual, emotional and intellectual self into the classroom, Kate Ronald and Hepsie Roskelly write that composition teachers must provide an example of "the whole person thinking" (157). This includes not just being overt with students about personal and political locations, but showing students that work and writing, thinking and writing, and – for the teacher – teaching and writing are deeply connected and inform each other. This theory overlaps with the previous theme of teacher authority and extends directly to the next theme of feminist pedagogy, integration of theory and practice.

Integrating theory and practice: Feminist teachers reject the dichotomy between knowing and doing (James 77). Both in their scholarship and pedagogy, feminist teachers blur the lines between theory and practice. In the introduction to their collection on feminist teaching, Gail Cohee et. al. state that feminist teaching gives rise to theory. Put another way, practice leads to theory and not the other way around (2). The connection between theory and practice harkens back to the earliest moments of feminist pedagogy in Women's Studies courses when political or social action was linked to personal experience. By extension, feminist teachers continue to ask themselves and their students "so what?" and "who cares?," searching for answers that connect to the world external to the academy. One way teachers connect theories to practice is by bringing in guest

speakers who create a direct link between the theories of the classroom with community action (Hopkins 124). Another way is by allowing students to work in small groups or produce collaborative work that creates a balance between theories in the class and personal experience of the work they do together (Hopkins 124). Other feminist educators use service learning or practicum projects as a way of connecting course work to community issues. Through such strategies as guest speakers, community service work, service learning, and collaborative projects feminist pedagogy connects theory to practice, to personal experience, to the larger community and culture (Mayberry and Rees 206).

These connections between communities and class inform hooks' belief that there needs to be a direct and tangible connection between women's lives and feminist theory. Composition teachers adapt hooks' philosophy to the classrooms when they create relationships between composition theories and the practices of students learning to write. Teacher research in the field of composition, especially observing and theorizing about one's own classes or colleagues' classes, offer a method by which to ensure practice and theory are inherently interwoven. Teacher research, a methodology often used in composition scholarship, offers a way for feminist teachers to engage in teacher critical reflection, holding up their own classroom practices for public scrutiny and as the foundation for scholarship, a connection with the following theme of Critical Reflection.

In the field of composition, the merging of theory and practice manifests itself in a unique way. Some composition theorists borrow social science human development theories to analyze student writing practices; doing so wedges theories that don't spring from composition into writing classroom practices. Sandra Strotzky warns composition

teachers that they shouldn't rely on "borrowed theories" from other disciplines (primarily referring to theories of cognitive development) for application in the writing classroom. She challenges composition scholars to create their own theories that can be revised through practice. Theories, she writes, need to be complicated with practice. Theories guide teaching practices, but theories aren't static; teaching practices revise theories, creating a reciprocal relationship between theory and practice.

Critically reflecting on teaching: Feminist pedagogy embodies reflectivity/self-criticism (Gustafson 249). Strategies such as interrogating gender issues in the classroom, overtly confronting one's own sexist, racist, classist, homophobic assumptions with the classroom community, and actively working to de-center the power source of teacher authority are impossible without teacher critical reflection. Giving conscious attention to teaching practices and adapting them for each student and each classroom community demands critical reflection by the teacher (Bell, Marrow and Tastsoglou 24). The use of teaching journals, teaching partners, or open letters to students that reflect on classroom decisions and dynamics help facilitate teacher critical reflection. Fisher moves this element of teacher critical reflection beyond simply writing or talking about one's own teaching practices and choices in critical ways. Facilitating seminars of teachers and students who want to talk about their own teaching practices brings this teacher self critique to a public forum (217). However, this method is not without problems. In such seminar settings, analysis can be used to discredit, and relations of authority can undermine equality and trust (217).

In the 1960s and 1970s, teacher critical reflection was not foregrounded in composition theory. During this time, attempts to simplify theories of writing into neat

taxonomies removed teachers from the responsibility of critically reflecting on how best to teach each individual writer. Mina Shaunessey, a pioneer of and advocate for theories on “basic writers,” was the first to demand that teachers look analytically and individually at “error” patterns in an individual student’s work. Adapting the same careful, critical attention to every student in the writing class, not just struggling or emerging writers, Nancy Sommers challenges teachers to move beyond the ease of teaching a static process to every writer (pre-write, write, rewrite) and help students discover their own individual writing processes. However, Sommers makes generalizations about writers, separating them into a binary of experienced and non-experienced writers, contradicting her desire to see students as individuals.

In 1980 Mike Rose wrote that taxonomies of writers, developed from applying cognitive development theories to composition, are acceptable only as long as they are diverse enough to accommodate a wide variety of student writers. Like Shaunessey and Sommers, Rose also believes the teacher’s primary role is to look closely at each student and analyze their writing patterns, helping each writer individually. No formula works for every student, so teachers need to be critically reflective for each individual. Joy Ritchie, in 1989, wrote that teachers need to resist the idea of a unified voice in the composition classroom, instead seeing writing classes as “multi-faceted, shifting scenes full of conflicting and contending values and purposes” (153). This theme of critical reflection manifests itself in teachers’ understanding that learning to write and teaching writing is an individual endeavor, calling for critical reflection and analysis of each student and classroom situation.

Also addressing this theme, Margaret Marshall challenges teachers to be aware of

the assumptions they are making about their students. Marshall believes there is no “majority” of students. Because teachers often see “types” of students or generalize characteristics from a general demographic of the larger student body, they must be vigilant about checking those assumptions. Marshall believes that one avenue to achieving this goal is better teacher training. She advocates for more comprehensive and careful training of graduate students in using critical consciousness when approaching teaching so they can be more analytical and reflective about teaching practices.

Teacher critical consciousness is important, but just as important is communicating what the teacher sees going on in the classroom community to her students. Most recently, Marilyn Cooper asks that composition teachers “explain to students *why* we’re doing what we’re doing in the writing class” (2000: 186). The act of explaining to students classroom strategies and goals subverts the authority of the teacher, ensures that the teacher has critically reflected on the decisions they are making for the class, and invites students to offer feedback on these decisions, all elements of feminist pedagogy.

Personal Journal; July 30, 2000

I am exhausted to the bone. What a full day and a full week, but I loved teaching the Multicultural Leadership Course. After agonizing over my “talk” with the silent student yesterday, she came to class today and volunteered to read part of her paper almost immediately and did so with a strong, confident voice. She not only read from her project, but talked about her work with articulation and insight. I was deeply impressed. I guess whatever I said to her resonated on some level. My speech about “Why participation is important if not imperative” worked for her, but it could have easily gone the other way. I made the right call this time. But that is just luck, I think. Later in the day I saw the same student in the lunchroom and she was all smiles and cheery greetings, so I really won that one over. You never know . . .

I didn't bring up the success in the feminist pedagogy course. I didn't know how to phrase it so it didn't sound like an "I told you so." Context is so important for the teaching moment – and I mean that in reflecting on both the conversation about feminist pedagogy and the way I successfully handled this particular student.

Late this afternoon I ran into Bob (the director of the Multicultural Leadership Program) and I asked him his opinion on the issue: should a *white* teacher push an African American student to speak out, understanding the consequences that could potentially occur. Bob, holding the life experience of an African American male who came of age pre-Civil Rights got a bit hot under the collar that a white teacher *wouldn't* push African American students to speak out. His perspective is that their survival depends on them learning to use their voice. He sees it as an imperative skill and by not pushing African American students to practice speaking, white teachers are robbing them of not only an education but an important life skill. Another interesting perspective coming from an altogether different location and reminded me of Delpit's rail against liberal white teachers. Of course Bob's response solidly supported my perspective, so that made me feel good. Bob's opinion plus the student's reaction to my discussion with her made me feel I had definitely made the right decision. But again, I have to add, "*this time*." Tomorrow I am bound to do some bone-headed, insensitive teacherly thing that will make me cower in shame and put me in the corner with a dunce cap on my head and a sign reading "Power Monger" hanging around my neck.

Themes of Course/Classroom Strategies

There are specific goals and strategies that are part of every course taught by a feminist teacher. More broadly, these themes focus on helping students become more critical learners and thinkers so they can engage in action that will create cultural change (both within the subculture of the university and the broader culture external to the academy). To further this larger goal, teachers use strategies that can manifest themselves in various ways, depending on the teacher and the classroom. For example, the theme of "engaging in active learning" can manifest itself by facilitating a service learning component, asking students to help design the course curriculum, or allowing students to

collaborate with peers to create lessons for the rest of the class. The themes named here outline the general strategies, but teachers interpret these strategies using many different practical approaches.

For the writing classroom, these themes move beyond the simple goal of helping students become better writer to goals of honing critical thinking skills and making connections between writing and public policy, rhetoric in the public space, and community issues. Contemporary composition theory creates a strong connection between critical thinking and writing, therefore one of the goals of a feminist classroom is to move students to critical consciousness through critical thinking and writing. Another theory relates writing to personal experience, extending to social action. This move to action manifests itself in the feminist theme of creating connections between learners and their experiences, and between the classroom community and the larger community. In both these endeavors (moving students towards critical thinking and community action through writing), feminist teachers use active learning and student-centered theories²⁹, keeping in mind the dynamics of race, class, gender, sexual orientation (among others) and how these multiple locations influence the writing tasks being assigned and written and how these dynamics play out between writers in the classroom. When specifically looking at writing instruction, the themes in this category relate to *how* the students engage in the work of composition, how the teacher integrates

²⁹I define active learning as any pedagogical strategy that moves students to take an active role in the learning process, as opposed to the more traditionally passive role of student as listener and note-taker to a professor's role of knower/lecturer. In active learning theories, the role of student and teacher is a reciprocal relationship where all members of the community take responsibility for knowledge construction and see themselves both as knowers and learners in the community. Brent Harold defines student-centered teaching as "a de-emphasis on grades, exams and lectures [. . .] and [an] emphasis on the freedom and independence of students" (200).

political and social issues into writing instruction, and how the teacher draws connections among students, themselves, course material, and the broader cultural forces as they intersect in writing.

Goals for the Classroom and Classroom Strategies	Women's Studies Theorists (in chronological order)	Composition Theorists (in chronological order)
Creating connections between learning and knowing and connections between the classroom and outside issues	<i>Connection to Action</i> : Golden (1985), James (1991), Wright (1993), hooks (1994), Sattler (1997), Hoffman and Stake (1998) <i>Connection to students' experiences</i> : Culley (1982), Ladson-Billing and Henry (1990), Omolade (1993), Mullin (1994), Tisdell (1998), Mayberry and Rees (1999) <i>Participatory and Collaborative classroom</i> : Culley (1982), hooks (1994), Gawelek et. al. (1994), Hoffman and Stake (1998), Cohee et. al. (1998)	Hedges (1972), Whipp (1979), Annas (1985), Brodkey and Fine (1992), Malinowitz (1995), Ashton-Jones (1995), Cushman (1996)
Working towards student critical consciousness	Weiler (1987), Bleich (1989), Deay and Stitzel (1991), James (1991), Shrewsbury (1993), Middleton (1993), hooks (1994), Sattler (1997), Hoffman and Stake (1998), Bell, Marrow and Tastsoglou (1999), Mayberry and Cronan Rose (1999)	Slattery (1990), Ritchie (1989, 1991), Covino (1991)
Considering dynamics and issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, among others	Weiler (1987), Mayberry and Cronan Rose (1999)	Ortiz-Taylor (1978), Kramarae and Treichler (1990), Peterson (1991), Kirsch (1993), Mullin (1994), Ritchie and Boardman (1999)
Engaging students in active learning	Ruggerio (1990), Shrewsbury (1993), hooks (1994), Hopkins (1999)	Lamberg (1980), Bruffee (1984), Brodkey and Fine (1992), Shrewsbury (1993), Bridwell-Bowles (1995)

Creating connections between learning and knowing and connections between the classroom and outside issues: Connecting learning to community action constitutes one of the primary themes of the first Women's Studies courses. In these classrooms, teachers

would often march in a long parade of guest speakers from the community to talk about their feminist activist work with the students (Hopkins 124). In this way these early Women Studies classrooms built a bridge between the learner and the public sphere of political and social activism. Feminist teachers make the effort to encourage social understanding *and* activism, an extension of the traditional classroom where students are asked to internalize the theory, but not often the practice (Hoffman and Stake 83).

This theme also includes connections between learners and instructors and between learners and their experiences (Wright 197). Teachers value their students' ways of knowing that extending beyond the classroom, allowing students to create their own meaning (Mayberry and Rees 196). The knowledge constructed in course texts, in individual class meetings, and in the larger classroom community pushes learners and educators to acknowledge which forms of knowledge the class or culture is privileging, attempting to subvert those epistemological hierarchies. This type of connected learning links the course subject matter to the students' cultural roots creating "culturally relevant teaching"(Ladson-Billing and Henry 82). For students who come from cultures not represented by the dominant ideologies, the classroom creates a space where their realities are legitimized. Culturally relevant teaching uses students' cultures to help them critically examine educational contexts and processes; teachers and students ask each other what role they take in creating a multicultural society (Ladson-Billings and Henry 82). For students who are ethnic, racial, economic, and sexual minorities, this pedagogy encourages education for survival, not just academic success (Omolade 35). Black feminist pedagogy has a responsibility to develop teaching strategies that have rigorous standards with the political aim of liberation.

During the early 1970s, creating connections between personal experience and the writing course began by integrating feminist literary criticism and composition. In her 1972 article, Elaine Hedges argued that teachers need to bring issues of gender into discussions of literature used within the writing classroom (Hedges 2). In 1979 Les Whipp made connections between the larger culture and the classroom more explicit by arguing that writing teachers need to be intimately familiar with the community from which their students came. Whipp believes teachers need to be aware of community mores and language use to avoid an “arrogant elitism” that will alienate students not only from their lived experiences but their community (144). In the first article to name a feminist pedagogy for composition courses (“Style as Politics”), Pamela Annas articulates the need for a strong relationships between the personal and the political, the private and public. Writing teachers must encourage students to see their own experiences as a site of knowledge construction, engaging in writing that reflects student realities.

Although some may argue that this theme is no different from liberatory pedagogy where critical consciousness leads to social action, feminist pedagogy engages in more overt connections with community action. It attempts to move students to action outside the classroom community as part of the course work, not assuming that action will eventually result if critical thinking is taught (Malinowitz 1995:92). In feminist classrooms across the disciplines action in the form of course work can manifest itself as service learning, course practicums with community agencies, or course projects that focus on public sphere rhetoric of change (writing letters to public officials about sexual education funding or organizing a campus zap action to protest sweat shop labor).

Feminist teachers believe that social action leads to critical consciousness more directly than classroom critical thinking exercises (Cohee et. al. 3).

One model of course work as community action is outlined in Linda Brodkey and Michelle Fine's "Presence of Mind in the Absence of Body" (1992). In Brodkey and Fine's article, community action becomes part of the course work when students critique the university's sexual harassment policies and ultimately write letters to newspapers and university officials to change the policies. The academic lesson for these students is one of awareness to discourse communities, but the cultural lesson is how to engage in productive community action for change. If students are not taught how to engage in constructive and productive community action, or if they feel their action is not leading to change, they resort to desperate measures (what Brodkey and Fine name "voices of despair") that are often destructive to their own cause (93). Feminist pedagogy shows students how to engage in effective community action and pushes students to become more socially responsible through that action (Golden 22). In this way the classroom community rejects the dichotomy between knowing and doing and approaches learning through critical and activist outlooks (James 77).

The natural extension of creating connections between learners' experiences evolved into discussions of collaborative writing projects. Evelyn Ashton-Jones argues that collaborative learning is inherently feminist because feminism depends on collaboration to succeed (8). One feminist working towards change will not accomplish anything; but several people working towards the same goal can make a difference. Ashton-Jones theorizes that collaboration moves students towards community action. By figuring out how to work with others on a writing project, students can more easily

transfer those skills of group work and collaboration to the community. In this model, writing and collaboration are the foundations of political work.

Harriet Malinowitz furthers this argument by saying one goal of a composition course is to give students experience in engaging in rhetoric that will initiate social change (1995:102). Echoing this belief, Ellen Cushman argues that the purpose of rhetoric is social change and that composition courses should be a primary site for training students how to engage in rhetoric for social change (14). Resistance to these feminist theories of linking writing projects to community action comes from teachers, scholars, administrators, parents and community leaders who believe that social action has no inherent connection to college writing. These critics argue that the purpose of a composition course is to teach academic discourse, not community or political issues through writing.

These modes of connected knowing and collaborative learning are not just important when considering how students are connecting their work with each other and the world outside the classroom. The theories of connected knowing and collaborative learning are also a challenge to teachers. Using these same theories of collaborative learning, feminist teachers talk about their pedagogical strategies not only with other feminist teachers, but with their colleagues who aren't feminist teachers, spreading the concepts of feminist pedagogy through mimicry, co-teaching, and communication (Gawelek et. al.190).

Working towards student critical consciousness: Borrowing from Freire's theories on "*conscientization*," this theme extends the theories of critical consciousness to ideologies beyond socio-economic class. Feminist pedagogy helps students see hegemony and

various ideologies as forces in their own lives, encouraging students to investigate how these forces have shaped their realities (Mayberry and Cronan Rose 40). Teachers challenge students to see the culture as racist, sexist, homophobic, classist, among other things; at the same time, teachers work to show students they are not being blamed, rather the teacher is challenging students to work for change. In this process, the class community acknowledges discomfort and resistance, often embracing this discomfort. For students, the discomfort is real and tangible and threatens to shutting down the educational process unless open dialogue occurs. One of the primary ways teachers help students work through their discomfort is by showing them avenues for action (James 78). Teachers let students know it is OK to be angry and defensive as long as this leads to further self-interrogation, giving them tools to make this transition to awareness, using field books or journals that focus on critical analysis, not just expressive and emotive writing to further this self-interrogation (Deay and Stitzel 90).

Critical thinking skills are tools needed for social action (Bell, Marrow and Tastsoglou 23). By furthering critical thinking, teachers shun easy binary models of pro/con; right/wrong; good/bad and instead replace them with models that integrate multiple viewpoints and opinions, encouraging students to see that there are no right answers, only more questions and possible answers (Sattler 182). The feminist teacher furthers critical thinking by showing respect for all views, struggling through new approaches to learning and thinking that engage everyone in the class (Shrewsbury 8). Other elements of teaching critical thinking include creating connections between biological, cultural, and historical situations and problematizing issues of language and knowledge construction. Through these strategies, the classroom becomes a site not for

memorizing facts, but developing consciousness (Weiler 103).

As stated above, the primary tenet of Paulo Freire's liberatory pedagogy connects critical consciousness to awareness of ideology and political structures. Compositionists adapt Freire's theories for the writing class by teaching the politics of language, the ideological structures imbedded in language, and how language reinforces power structures. Teaching that language is political pushes students to think critically about rhetorical choices. To analyze the ideological forces at play in language demands a critical analysis of each rhetorical situation. Part of this approach to rhetorical analysis is teaching students that in their writing, there are no right or wrong answers, just different options and perspectives to present to a reader (Ritchie 1990:260).

This theme of feminist pedagogy also pushes writing teachers to teach awareness of language standards, the power behind them, and when, if or whether to transgress standards in a specific context or rhetorical situation. Teachers and students need to interrogate the construct of academic discourse as a hegemonic force (Ritchie 1989:153). In the early 1980s, a debate in composition emerged as to whether teachers should teach the "standards." Some theorists argue that a conscientious composition teacher cannot teach Standard English without also discussing the ideological power entrenched in those "standards." Others argue that to do so within one composition course is an impossible task. William Covino believes that there exists a possibility of teaching the politics of rhetoric and language while still meeting the university's expectations for the writing classroom (28-30). Teachers can show students that academic discourse reflects the ideological system of oppression without reifying the language system as something to internalize *without question*. Through this approach students are taught that they can

make rhetorical choices, understanding the risk inherent in making choices that deviate from the expected standards of writing and rhetoric such as the consequences for choosing to transgress the expected form for a lab report or job letter).

Teaching critical thinking, leads to more sophisticated writing choices and awareness of the politics of language. Those smart and savvy rhetorical skills provide the means by which to negotiate the tricky balance between teaching the standards so that students will not be punished for not knowing them and showing students they can choose *not* to use the standard (although the dominant culture typically extracts a price for such transgressions). The feminist composition classroom uses writing as a road to critical consciousness, working with students as individuals and helping them integrate critical thinking in their writing tasks. In doing so, the teacher abandons theories that link cognitive development to static writing processes or writing skills and adopts more fluid and individual discussions of writing practices that focus on critical thinking, the politics of language, and discourse choices. Working with students to develop their own processes for writing and arranging thought replaces teaching a static writing process with teaching individual processes (Hatch and Walters 336). This approach forces teachers to look at the skills of each student individually, thus de-centering the role of authoritarian teacher; in this model, the teacher takes cues from the student about how to teach, creating a new and unique community in each classroom situation.

Beyond class discussions and teaching the politics of language, some theorists see connections between how teachers respond to student writing as a way to teach critical consciousness. Patrick Slattery argues that well-written end comments on student work helps students further their critical thinking skills. He theorizes that if a teacher writes

questions that ask students to think about their position differently or consciously consider what biases they may have regarding their position, students are more likely to develop critical thinking through writing (335).

Considering dynamics and issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, among others: Feminist pedagogy has evolved beyond the Women's Studies model of focus on gender (see section on history) to include discussions of class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other "isms" perpetuated by cultural ideology as they manifest themselves in the classroom, curriculum, and culture. Consequently, feminist teachers integrate multiculturalism in any course they teach (Mayberry and Cronan Rose 26). Issues of race, class, gender are not only discussed in the abstract of how they manifest themselves in the culture, but how they overtly manifest themselves in classroom practices (see theme of "Confronting Sex Biases" in the Teacher Critical Reflection category above). Teachers show students that we are all products of a racist, sexist, homophobic, classist culture and that these dynamics play out in all communities, even a feminist classroom. However, feminist teachers model, through their own classroom practices of critical self-reflection and rigorous confrontation of their own teaching, how one can confront these cultural forces and minimize them through awareness, honesty, and the commitment to change.

As feminist theories about gender flourished in the broader context of academic scholarship during the 1980-1990s, so did composition articles that discussed the way female students respond to writing tasks and how they use language differently from the standard academic practices (Peterson, Mullin, Kramarae and Treichler, Kirsch).

Feminists in the field want teachers to be vigilant about the equity of women in the

composition classroom, but also disrupt and critique hegemonic narratives that privilege a white male perspective (Ritchie and Boardman 587). Feminist composition theorists such as Sheila Ortiz-Taylor, Chris Kramarae and Paula Treichler, Linda Peterson, Gesa Kirsch, and Joan Mullin pushed the field to acknowledge and contemplate how identity issues play out in the writing class.

Engaging students in active learning: This theme of feminist pedagogy helps students create their own meaning, learning from the questions they ask and answer (Hopkins 132). Chris Ruggiero names this approach “open learning,” where students choose how and what to learn, having the class collaborate on the goals for course work, and letting students decide the format for their major projects (53). Feminist teachers realize that traditional educational ideologies have prevented students from creating their own meaning, and therefore these educators spend classroom time teaching students how to engage in active learning. Because traditional ideologies of education teach skills of passive consumption of knowledge, feminist teachers work with each classroom community to teach students skills of active learning and taking control and power of their education. They show students that, even in other classroom situations, they can feel empowered to demand new approaches to teaching and learning. In this “trickle over” effect, students ask other teachers to implement themes of feminist teaching. Active learning also encourages classroom members to engage with the other people in the class, not just engaging with course material (Shrewsbury 9). Creating a classroom community where students know each other’s names, use their voice to contribute to class knowledge, understand their peers’ perspectives, and respect differing realities are examples of active learning.

In the writing classroom, active learning takes the role of small group work, peer review writing workshops, and other collaborative writing tasks. Such practices are often standard fare in many contemporary composition classrooms. By using these active learning strategies, where students help each other with their writing and work together to formulate meaningful work in the course, students and teachers integrate feminist principles of collaboration, cooperation, and consensus. Kenneth Bruffee advocates for collaboration in the writing classroom because he believes the close interaction of students result in collective learning that furthered each student's writing awareness (1984). In the 1980s, peer review became a primary method of collaboration, where students benefit from having their peers critically examine their writing. When teachers guide peer review groups, giving students guidelines on what to look for, students not only become better critical readers of their peers writing, but they also become more conscious of their own writing practices (Lamberg 65). Students who take on the role of the teacher in peer review situations enact active learning instead of passive consumption. Other ways that teachers help students become active learners is by creating assignments that allow students freedom of choice, giving them permission to break the rules of standard discourse practices so they can construct work that is meaningful for themselves (Bridwell-Bowles 1992:350, Brodkey and Fine 90).

Teaching Journal; September 6, 2000

The young women in this class are *so* silent. Today – for the second day in a row – I had to say, “OK! We’ve heard from a *lot* of the young men. How about some young women?” It’s exasperating, especially considering the young women outnumber the young men by about five. When I am overt about it, eventually some do speak up. I am going to stop class the next time I see it happening and

ask them why *they* think it is happening.

Teaching Journal; September 18, 2000

We started out with the “personal location” exercise today. I wanted to get to a discussion of the term “politically correct” since it keeps popping up in their journals. I challenged them to consider whether the rhetoric of “politically correct” is really a way of *not* dealing with the complicated issues of diversity and power. Instead of grappling with difficult issues and conflicts of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc, we can dismiss thinking about, talking about, discussing them by simply saying, “I need to be politically correct” or “That’s not PC.” I told them I personally thought the term was imprecise and I wanted them to think through why they are using it; when they are tempted to write it, to stop and ask themselves specifically what it means and why they feel the need to use that particular term.

The gender issue [of young women not participating] continues, although there are one or two vocal young men who like to call out and engage without being called upon. That is what I want (instead of raising hands), but I also want a gender balance. The way it is playing out now, it reminds me exactly of the theories the Sadkers write about [in Failing at Fairness] where they say males seize and control power in the class by calling out, thereby gaining most of the talk time and teacher’s attention. I copied excerpts of the Sadkers’ book and they are going to read them for Monday. I told the students I typically have classes read this later in the semester, but because of the gender dynamics in *this* class I wanted them to read it so we could talk about it. I contextualized the excerpt by telling them about the Sadkers’ research. I said, “My experience has been that when students read this, they say, ‘Oh, this hasn’t been *my* experience [that girls are called on and participate less than boys].’ But *you all* can’t say that because this phenomena – of women not participating – is happening in *this* class!”

Then, lo and behold, when we started talking about the text (an article on race and class issues in education by Victor Villanueva), *lots* of the women participated. Even the really quiet ones. I was so pleased and I thought, “Wow. That was easy.” But we’ll see whether they can sustain that awareness and effort.

Themes of Student Concerns

Concern for individual student well-being and growth is important to feminist pedagogy. This close attention to individual students’ lives, originally gendered

“feminine” because of the association with nurturing and mothering, manifests itself in a variety of ways. Paying close attention to the gender dynamics of who is speaking in the classroom – giving room and voice to traditionally silenced females – and, as hooks advocates, seeing students as spiritual beings in need of guidance and care are just a couple examples of how concern for student manifest itself in a feminist classroom (149-151).

For the composition classroom, this last category of feminist pedagogical themes relates to the individual attention writing teachers give students. Working to achieve the feminist pedagogical goal of attending to each student individually is a labor-intensive task, but imperative in a writing classroom where attention to each student’s writing processes and practices is essential for success and progress. Feminist pedagogy demands that teachers not only critically analyze each classroom situation to determine what pedagogical approaches will work best for a community of learners, but to see each person in the community as a valuable part of the class with unique characteristics and needs. Theories of individual language instruction such as those put forth by Shaunessey, Sommers, and Murray criticize models of writing that attempt to create static methods for writers. Feminist-minded teachers abandon cognitive theories of writing such as those put forth by Flower and Hayes and linear process-focused theories, for those which give attention to individual student realities, cultures, and needs. Feminist teachers argue that static models of writing are obsolete because no one process or theory can be applied unilaterally to all students. The feminist pedagogical themes outlined in this section ask teachers to look closely and carefully at their students, the dynamics of the classroom, and reflect on how their pedagogical approaches best serve both the individual and the

community.

Themes of Student Concerns and Classroom Strategies	Women's Studies Theorists (in chronological order)	Composition Theorists (in chronological order)
Considering each individual student's realities and needs:	Golden (1985), Maher (1987), Weiler (1987), Ruggerio (1990), Ladson-Billings and Henry (1990), Woodridge (1994), Sattler (1997), Cohee et. al. (1998), Mullin (1998), Hopkins (1999)	Elbow (1973), Shaunessey (1977), Delpit (1988), Sloane (1993), Malinowitz (1995)
Giving students choice in the curriculum and the work they do	Culley (1985), Golden (1985), Maher (1987), Weiler (1987), Ruggerio (1990), Ladson-Billings and Henry (1990), , Shrewsbury (1993), Woodridge (1994), Sattler (1997), Cohee et. al. (1998), Mullin (1998), Hopkins (1999)	Murray (1972), Elbow (1973), Annas (1983), Cooper (1986), Berthoff (1987), Bridwell-Bowles (1995), Jessup and Lardner (1995)
Bringing joy and fun into the classroom	Golden (1985), Shrewsbury (1993), hooks (1994), Woodridge (1994), Damarin (1994)	Elbow (1973)
Being aware of voices and silences in the class	Golden (1985), Shrewsbury (1993), Tisdell (1998), Mayberry and Cronan Rose (1999)	Annas (1987), Spender (1990), Kramarae and Treichler (1990)
Recognizing that each classroom community and each student is unique	Shrewsbury (1993), Mullin, Tisdell (1998) <i>leadership development:</i> Shrewsbury (1993)	Rose (1980), Ritchie (1989), Marshall (1997)

Considering each individual student's realities and needs: In the feminist classroom, the teacher challenges students to critically reflect on their own lives and articulate their experiences as they relate to course material (Golden 21). Feminist teachers make room for students to share personal experiences, allowing students to tell their stories in unconventional ways (breaking standard formats or curriculum expectations) (Mullin 22). In the first years of feminist pedagogy, student experiences were integrated in course

material, but largely uninterrogated, a remnant of the CR group structure. Throughout the 1980s, the belief that students should be pushed to contextualize their experience instead of generalizing or universalizing a world view began emerging. Teachers want students to interrogate their experiences and discuss how these experiences intersect with cultural belief systems of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, among others. (Cohee et. al. 3)

By integrating students' experiences into course material, students engage with each other in more dynamic ways, confronting their own biases as they relate to their classmates' experiences. In her research, Cheryl Sattler reports that these strategies of integrating student experiences often create classes that go against the grain of standard curriculums (88). She concludes that feminist teachers resist standard syllabi and course curriculums, instead creating courses that reflect the needs of their students (see "Giving Students Choice" below).

In the composition theories, focus on student identities and individual writer's needs emerged with Shaunessey's theories about "basic writers." In her book, Errors and Expectations, Shaunessey models this feminist pedagogical theme in the form of teachers looking closely at "error" patterns in individual student texts to best teach each writer. During the late 1980s and 1990s attention to individual students and their identity issues within the writing classroom emerged in composition scholarship. Scholars wrote extensively about identity issues and power relationships in the writing classroom. Discussions regarding gender (Flynn, Kirsch, Gawelek, Mulqueen, and Tarule), race (Delpit,), class (Villanueva), and sexual orientation (Sloane, Malinowitz) caused the field of composition to reflect on how teachers construct writing assignments, teach language use, select course texts, and facilitate class discussions. Most of these theorists

argue that composition instructors must carefully negotiate class dynamics and course work to accommodate the identities and realities of individual students. However, these theories often conflict with each other. Lisa Delpit chastizes white, politically liberal teachers for not teaching or enforcing Standard English usage with African American students who need those skills to survive and succeed in the dominant culture (282-283). Others counter Delpit's argument by saying students have a right to their own language practices, recognizing the importance of teaching the *politics* of language (see Working Towards Critical Consciousness theme above).

Beyond language use, Malinowitz and Villanueva write that composition teachers need to be aware of identity issues such as sexual orientation or socio-economic class, working to understand the barriers students may have to assignments or class readings and discussions that potentially alienate them and their lived experiences. For the writing teacher, the feminist pedagogical theme of considering each student's reality and needs extends beyond students considering their experience in a context that varies from individual. Critically constructing syllabi, facilitating class discussions that embrace varied realities and perspectives, and paying attention to individual students' language and writing needs, are all dynamics included in this theme.

Giving students choice in the curriculum and the work they do: Relating to both subversion of teacher authority and practices of active learning, feminist teachers allow students to make decisions about the work they do for course credit, encouraging student autonomy (Sattler 173, Ladson-Billings and Henry 77). By encouraging students to design work that is important to them, teachers help students create their own meaning and learn from the questions they ask. In this way, a feminist curriculum is never static;

instead, it pushes teachers to create a course that evolves with student's questions (Maher 24). Because of efforts to shape the curriculum with students, feminist teachers reject standard curriculums, working to subvert them whenever possible (Sattler 88).

One way teachers allow students to shape the curriculum is to build the course on the students' questions (Maher 25). An extension of Chris Ruggerio's theory of "open learning" (see the theme of Engaging Students in Active Learning on page 97), some teachers use student texts as a bridge between the broader culture and their own world. The student texts provide a translation of course material or cultural narratives into a concrete form that relates to the student's reality (Mullin 22). Other teachers incorporate this theme by using small group discussions and collaborative group work as a primary element in their classes (Hopkins 133). These two strategies (small group and collaborative work) are often used in the contemporary composition classroom.

Gloria Ladson-Billings and Annette Henry make direct connections between student choices in curriculum and honoring cultural diversity (77). However, there is continual tension between cultural realities in a multicultural curriculum or classroom. Multicultural education, while designed to affirm traditionally marginalized perspectives, can also cause conflict in the classroom when students are asked to consider perspectives their personal value systems reject. When a teacher asks a Christian student to confront her/his strong-held belief that homosexuality is wrong, the student will often feel alienated or angry. To address these conflicts, Weiler suggests teachers create overt distinctions between community values of anti-racism, anti-sexism, anti-homophobia (among others) and individual belief systems, like spiritual or family beliefs (127).

In composition circles, the theme of giving students choice first took the form of

allowing students to define their own approach to and process for writing. In 1972 Donald Murray argued that teachers need to let students explore their writing process in their own way (14). Although Murray does not define his approach as such, his argument reflects this feminist pedagogical theme because it allows students to define the way they approach work as well as the type of work they do. The result manifests itself in students creating work that reinforces meaningful connections with their personal experiences and realities. Giving students choice in the “how and what” of their work directly applies feminist theories of student empowerment (Bridwell-Bowles 51). Encouraging student choice and empowerment gives students the authority to create connections between the work of the course, their own experiences, and the external community. In the composition classroom allowing students to define their own work extends to students creating rhetorical situations that connect with the external world, engaging in real or fictional public debate in the form of writing speeches, letters, brochures, or editorials (Brodkey and Fine 90). More specifically, Annas argues that composition teachers need to not only accept personal experience as evidence in student writing, but teach students how to use personal experience more effectively (1987:5). By creating a flexible curriculum that allows students choices, teachers reinforce, confirm, acknowledge, and reflect students’ realities (Jessup and Lardner 208).

Some composition theorists interpret this theme as allowing students to make rhetorical decisions to write outside the standard discourse or language practices (Bridwell-Bowles 1995:51). When teachers encourage students to create their own meaning or use their own language, they further classroom discussions on standards of academic discourse. By allowing students to write in other discourses besides those

sanctioned by the academy, students potentially can write projects that are more meaningful to them or more reflective of their own reality. Marilyn Cooper writes that students have a desire to please the teacher by writing in academic discourse, but because they haven't yet fully internalized the discourse rules and patterns of academese, their writing ends up sounding stilted and the students feel caged and stifled (1986:466). Cooper advocates freeing students from the idea that they have to write within a discourse they have not yet learned; by doing so, students can develop their thinking and writing skills within the institutional context with greater ease, gradually integrating academic discourse as they learn it (1986:468).

Teaching Journal: April 10, 2001

We had a very lively discussion in class, but it felt like the teacher against the world. We're examining the politics of Standard English, so I asked them to read June Jordan's "Nobody Mean More to Me Than You." It's a mesmerizing account of a teacher's work to help her African American students understand Black English as a language (not a slang or "improper" English). For Jordan's students there are also heartbreaking consequences for taking that stance: Jordan's class chooses to write about a classmate's brother being gunned down by police using Black English and realizes in doing so authorities and the community will not take their appeal seriously because of the language they use. As I have come to expect when I teach this text, most of the African American students in my class were on the verge of anger that anyone would call Black English a "language." They have been very effectively convinced that it is nothing more than the wrong way to talk, an ignorant, unintelligent version of "proper" English. It is interesting that most of the "white" students are willing to at least entertain the theory that Black English is a *language* as opposed to a dialect or slang; the African American students argue vehemently that it isn't a language. One student even went so far as to say the distinction resided only in pronunciation. "If I can't pronounce my words correctly, how is that a different language? That is just laziness, not language." So, Black English is "improper," "lazy," "incorrect." Overall, though, we had a good discussion, grappling with such issues as teaching "Standard English," the complexities of a teacher honoring many languages within the class, the taxes extracted by the dominant culture when one chooses to

transgress language norms, and the connections between language and culture. Still, I felt at the end of the class it was one of those situations where the African American students left class shaking their heads thinking, "White folks *crazy*." Or maybe that is even too gentle. Perhaps some of them were more angry than that, angry that a white woman teacher had the audacity to argue that Black English was a legitimate language. Perhaps to some students that sounds like a condescending commentary on the inferior intelligence of Black folks, if one has been indoctrinated to believe that Black English is inferior, ignorant, lazy, slang.

Bringing joy and fun into the classroom: The theory that rigorous intellectual engagement can also be fun was first brought to feminist pedagogy by Carla Golden. In her "Seven Point Plan" the first point is bringing her excitement to the classroom; Golden wants her excitement for teaching to infect her students. Because feminist teachers often deviate from standard curriculum to teach issues and texts that excite them, these teachers show their students how exciting and challenging different ideas can be (Golden 21). hooks expands the commitment to excite learners by articulating her desire to bring passion and joy into the classroom (7). Making learning and the evolution to critical consciousness a pleasure zone engages students more quickly and fully in course material (Weiler 149). That is not to say that there is not discomfort or conflict in the class, only that the teacher works to integrate pleasure as well. Feminist teachers fight passionately to create a space for joy and laughter (Damarin 218), viewing laughter as revolutionary.

Although some composition theorists associate attempts to make writing pleasurable for students as an indication of rigor-less play, teachers such as Peter Elbow and Carolyn Shrewsbury believe that without a sense of joy in writing, students will not engage fully in smart rhetorical processes. By bringing delight into the writing classroom

students discover positive connections to writing.³⁰

Being aware of voices and silences in the class: In conjunction with the theme of “Considering dynamics of race, class, gender, . . .” (See category of Goals for the Classroom above) teachers must be attuned to the voices and perspectives that are missing from class material and discussions so they can integrate these perspectives (Mayberry and Cronan Rose vii). Taking a cue from feminist activist work, teachers encourage students to use their voice, seeing the connection between voice and empowerment. In her poststructural definition of feminist pedagogy, Elizabeth Tisdell writes that teachers need to make sure all voices are heard, and that all silences are questioned, asking “Who is not speaking and why?” (151). Feminist teachers not only realize where the gaps and silences are, but question the reasons behind those silences. These teachers strive to help students to feel comfortable speaking out, to think for themselves, and to integrate their opinions and observations in discussions (Golden 21). Helping students find their voices is also part of developing students independence so they can confront differences and make connections with others in the class, creating real relationships instead of just interactions and conversations (Shrewsbury 14).

Teaching Journal; September 27, 2000

We talked about the gender split (or absence of female voices in class discussion) today, within the context of the Sadkers’ excerpt. There was a very lively and

³⁰Although I could find no articles in composition journals that specifically addressed the issue of humor in the writing classroom, when I was observing Lynn Worsham’s graduate writing workshop during my site visit to University of South Florida, one of the students in that class was writing about humor in the classroom. From what I remember of the discussion during the workshop of his project, there was a consensus that each teacher integrates humor in very individual ways depending on the personality of the teacher and the personality of the class. What works to bring laughter into one class for a particular teacher, may not work in another class or for another teacher. Because of the uniquely personal way in which laughter and pleasure is created, it is difficult to construct a knowledge-base of “how tos” when it comes to integrating pleasure and joy into the classroom community. Consequently, this may be why there seems to be no scholarship that focuses on this topic . . . yet.

engaged discussion. A lot of the young women spoke for the first time. Many were offering excuses for why they don't speak out in class: "I like listening to other people;" "Everyone always says what I'm thinking so I don't have to say what I think;" "I only talk when I am really passionate about something." I have heard those responses countless of times in conferences with female students when I ask them why they are silent. I gave my rebuttals to those reasons: other people can learn from you; everyone has to be an active member of the community for the community to be productive; we all have very unique and specific perspectives so even if you think you are absolutely the same camp as someone else, chances are they would like to hear that you are; honing verbal skills in part of becoming better writers and critical thinkers; by not participating you are not only robbing yourself of an education, but you are letting down your peers and relying on them do to the difficult work of speaking out for you. But there were also some young women who owned up to feeling self-conscious or having low self-esteem, feeling intimidated by others because participating seemed so much easier for them. We ended the class by making a commitment that more people needed to participate, and that the more vocal members of the class (in this class three very vocal male students) would try to make space for those who wanted to talk, but took longer to formulate their ideas (silent spaces would be not seen as dead, but productive think time). After class I felt very good. We'll see how this pans out, though. It does take a lot of extra energy to push oneself to talk in class, especially if that skill has been effectively squelched after thirteen years of traditional education. The early morning hour of this course only compounds that problem.

Attention to silences in composition scholarship sprang directly from feminist research that showed women are silenced both in the academy and in the curriculum. Because of these silences, women are invisible or absent to many students and teachers. In the early 1970s when feminist theories came to composition, these early articles about the relationship between feminist theories and composition challenge women to speak out and to express their ideas, and challenge teachers to alter curricula to include women authors/writers. In similar ways, feminist scholars studied voices and silences of female students, looking closely at socialized language practices that separate women and men (Kramarae 60-64, Spender 2). These discussions of gendered silences evolved to include students who are outside the dominant culture for various reasons (ethnicity, race,

religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class).

Silence is not always seen as disempowerment. Annas sees silence as potentially transformational, a way to claim power in a moment of reflection (1987:8). For Annas, silence represents a powerful moment before speech. But her theory relates to *moments* of silence, a significant distinction from the systematic silencing of a population or erasure of perspectives from curricula or discussions. Feminist theories on silence and voice challenge composition teachers to pay close attention to the voices and silences not only in the classroom, but in the curriculum, including as many perspectives as possible. It takes a finely tuned critical eye to *see* silence. Without close self scrutiny, teachers do not observe the gaps of silence in their classes or curriculum. Also problematic, especially in regards to inclusive curriculum, is the reality that not *all* voices will have equal representation. Feminist pedagogy asks that writing instructors work towards multiple perspectives and diversity, being cognitively and critically aware of the inevitable choices and silences, and communicating those to students.

Recognizing that each classroom community and each student is unique: Paying attention to voices and silences forces teachers to examine the dynamics of the classroom on a student level. Who is speaking and who isn't? Why? Who is engaging well in the writing tasks and who is struggling? As stated above, theories that brought individual student differences to the foreground have a major role in contemporary composition theory. From writing process theory to a student's right to their own language, individual identities and locations play a significant role in the contemporary theories on the teaching of writing. A feminist writing teacher looks closely and analyzes each writer and community individually (Rose 1995:132). Because students write in "unique and

varied responses to their experiences" a writing teacher sees each student as an individual with different writing needs (Ritchie 1989:153). Therefore, a teacher resists making assumptions about classrooms, students, and about student locations and perspectives. Showing an example of how assumptions can be quickly codified as truth, Victor Villanueva writes about the assumption in composition that race and "basic writing" are linked. In his essay "An American Freirista," Victor Villanueva critiques the field of composition for creating a direct correlation between "basic writing" and people marked as racially non-white. Through his own research he shows that "basic writers" -- those who have not internalized the rules of Standard English -- are not necessarily those students of specific racial locations, but are children whose primary language did not reflect Standard English -- most commonly associated with, but not exclusive to, socioeconomic status, not race. Margaret Marshall reinforces this argument by pointing out there is no "majority" of students in any category, so teachers cannot make assumptions about literacy practices of any group.

To honor the uniqueness of each learner and each community, the feminist teacher envisions herself as a leader/facilitator instead of the ultimate power broker. Creating a model of positive leadership means acknowledging that everyone acts on their beliefs, but the choices they make in how they do that determines their effectiveness as leader. This style of leadership encourages an autonomy of and mutuality of others, articulating one's needs while at the same time negotiating with others to incorporate their needs. Feminist teachers articulate their needs and goals for the course, negotiating with students so the course reflects the students' objectives as well (Shrewsbury 16). In

this way, leadership is clearly a form of pedagogy.³¹ When students and teacher negotiate course goals, each classroom becomes a unique community honoring the desires of both teacher and students. In situations where a teacher must exert her power, such as when consensus cannot be reached, the teacher is overt with why/how she is making decisions on behalf of the class, modeling responsible leadership.

An extension of positive leadership involves developing leadership qualities in each student. Shrewsbury writes that it is not enough for the teacher to model effective, positive leadership, but she must work to help students develop their own leadership skills by placing students in locations of power and leadership (16). Examples of how some teachers choose to accomplish this are student led classes, assigning discussion group or project leaders, and allowing students to plan and execute lessons for their peers.

In conjunction with honoring the uniqueness of each community, the teacher also extends this philosophy to each student. The teacher analyzes how each student learns best and adopts teaching strategies that work for the individual (Mullin 22). One way many teachers do this is to evaluate not by giving exams or other subjective means, but by allowing students to design their own projects or determine their own contract for course work. Because not all learners come into a class with equal chances or equal life experiences, teachers recognize that each student will offer unique perspectives, but the teacher must allow each student to create work that is meaningful and important to her/him (Tisdell 148).

³¹I believe that leadership is a form of pedagogy. In the ethnographic chapters, this idea of pedagogy as leadership plays out more fully. Harriet, Jackie, and Lynn use leadership, with graduate students and colleagues, in the university and the field of composition and rhetoric, as a site of feminist pedagogy.

Skeptics

The previous sections have outlined and articulated the sixteen themes of feminist pedagogy. This definition of feminist pedagogy is not a handy set of instructional techniques, but an approach to teaching that interrogates inequalities and power imbalances both within the classroom and the broader culture. It is a pedagogy of liberation (concerned with politics and power), explicit gender analysis, self-criticism and reflexivity that values ways of knowing that extend beyond the classroom space, with a focus on critical consciousness (Gustafson 249). The definition of feminist pedagogy I put forth embraces sixteen themes, many of them overlapping or informing each other. But this definition is not without complications. There are within the field of composition vocal critics of feminist pedagogy – some of them critics identifying as feminists. There are scholars who bristle at any attempt to codify a definition of feminist pedagogy, but there are also scholars who reject even the spirit of feminist pedagogy as no more liberating or progressive than more traditional theories of education. Skeptics of feminist pedagogy believe there is no way to measure whether feminist pedagogical practices further critical consciousness (Gore 90). Critics like Jennifer Gore believe that feminist teachers privilege a feminist political perspective and therefore don't encourage critical thinking, but instead actively work towards indoctrination; in this model, the dominant ideology is replaced by a feminist ideology that is no less oppressive or less rigid.³² This seems a short-sighted interpretation of the scholarship on feminist pedagogy and reflects

³²Throughout this project I define ideology as systems or structures that create a way of being in the world, a way of constructing the world, and a way of creating knowledge about the world. The dominant ideology is one I see as grounded in patriarchy, racism, classism, sexism, homophobia as well as capitalism and consumerism. These systems of power and knowledge are reflected in institutions of religion, education, marriage/family, and government, among others.

a criticism leveled against the very early years of feminist pedagogy as it manifested itself in Women's Studies courses where the agenda of the course was education in feminist beliefs and activist movements. As feminist pedagogy has evolved and become more interdisciplinary, the focus is no longer education of feminist beliefs so much as considering all perspectives, honoring student differences, and being overt about one's own belief systems.

Another critique of feminist pedagogy is that it is too focused on specific practices (like sitting in a circle or coming out from behind the podium) and not focused enough on teaching strategies. It seems, however, very few feminist scholars prescribe specific practices they believe are inherently "feminist." Rather, they describe the goal ("empowering students") and suggest ways in which that goal can be achieved (coming out from behind the podium, sitting in a circle, allowing students to lead classes) rather than offer one way or practice that will work to meet the goal in all classroom communities. Because one of the themes of feminist pedagogy is recognizing that each learner and community is unique, it is unlikely that a feminist teacher would implement the same practices in any classroom or advocate that one specific practice reflects the *only* means by which to exercise a theme. For example, sitting in a circle is not inherently empowering, nor does it work in every classroom. Feminist teachers recognize that sitting in a circle can be inherently oppressive for students who want to hide in the class, who feel exposed, or who feel uncomfortable participating; the logistics of some classrooms (the sheer number of students or lecture halls where chairs are bolted to the floor in rows all facing forward) also create barriers to arranging a class in a circle. If they do use a circle, feminist teachers clearly articulate to the class *why* this is the chosen

structure, allowing students to voice their own opinions.

I once taught an Introduction to Women's Studies course where a young man in the class who had panic disorder frequently missed class because he felt over-exposed in the circle. In a conference he told me he had to take extra medication before coming to the Women's Studies class solely because having to sit in a circle, where he felt everyone was looking at him, was too much for him to bear. I asked him for suggestions on how to make the class less stressful for him, but he could offer none, understanding that the circle was important for discussion and seeing the benefits of that simple logistical maneuver in the closeness of the community and the vibrancy of discussion. I felt at a loss to make the class a place where this student felt empowered. He ended up dropping the class largely because his disorder prevented him from being able to attend. Looking back on the situation, I feel as if I did not go far enough as a teacher to accommodate the special needs of this student. It was a humbling learning experience for me, where I failed to follow the spirit of feminist pedagogy in the way I handled the situation.

Bernice Malka Fisher believes that some criticism of feminist pedagogy comes from a feeling of judgment by the word 'feminist.' In our culture, the word "feminist" is often associated with judgement – someone who is pointing the finger at others to say they aren't being fair or just to women (specifically, but other TMP as well). Because of this cultural reaction to the word feminist, some people may be reacting to feminist pedagogy as a challenge to their teaching credentials (Fisher 45). Fisher believes this is uniquely compounded by the nature of how some people view 'professor' as a word that implies a right and wrong way of approaching knowledge. She writes, "If 'feminist professor' is not a contradiction in terms, it is at the very least an invitation to mental and

emotional fatigue” (45). From this perspective, feminist pedagogy or feminist teachers are misunderstood as judging those who teach a certain way, pointing the finger and saying “you are doing it wrong.” However, the point of this project is not to say one method of teaching is less valid or on practice less desirable than another, but to more clearly articulate a definition of feminist pedagogy so more people understand what it is. Although feminist pedagogy is the theory of teaching I choose to adopt, and which works best for me and my philosophies, I would not suggest it is universally the best for everyone or that the way I practice feminist pedagogy is the way that anyone else will choose to practice it.

From my research, when considering the main criticisms against feminist pedagogy as outlined above, I believe the skeptics are working from an old model that reflects an outdated definition of feminist pedagogy harkening back to early Women’s Studies courses where the main determining elements of feminist pedagogy were attention to gender issues, subverting the authority of the teacher, and educating towards a feminist perspective. Although there are remnants of these elements in the contemporary definition of feminist pedagogy I have compiled here, the current praxis and scholarship are much more rich, complex, and comprehensive, creating a definition of feminist pedagogy that can be applied to any course across the curriculum by a teacher who is devoted to student-centered teaching that evolves to critical consciousness and community connection.

Because of the attention to critical consciousness, student-centered teaching, attention to ideological power structures like racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia, among others, a feminist pedagogical approach is particularly well-suited for a

contemporary humanities course, and more specifically a composition classroom. In the contemporary composition classroom, students are asked to see language as a powerful tool of ideology and create connections between their identities as writers and thinkers and the larger culture. Contemporary theories of composition challenge students to be active learners invested in their own intellectual development and writing processes, seeing language as a powerful tool for social action.

The Practice of Change

In this chapter I have defined the specific theories and strategies of feminist pedagogy in the hopes of creating a definition of feminist pedagogy that will clarify instead of essentialize. In the next three chapters I will show how feminist pedagogy and scholarship are being practiced by contemporary scholars. Each of the next three chapters will be devoted to an ethnographic study of a specific feminist composition scholar. These chapters will show how each of the three feminist composition scholars are enacting their feminist beliefs in their classrooms, their university communities, and their scholarship. These ethnographic studies of Lynn Worsham, Harriet Malinowitz, and Jackie Jones Royster demonstrate the histories and theories of feminist pedagogy and feminisms in the field as outlined above. The ethnographic research offers clear and dynamic examples of how feminists in the field are enacting their beliefs in the areas of scholarship, teaching, and leadership. Before launching into the ethnographic chapters, a short inter-chapter provides some background on feminist research in this field and introduces my methodology for the ethnographic studies.

Inter-chapter on Research and Methodology

Project Journal: August 28, 2000

I'm reading an amazing book by Cheryl Sattler (Talking About a Revolution). She interviewed nine feminist teachers – both at the high school and university level – about feminist pedagogy. The very interesting thing is, many don't identify as feminists (mostly the high school teachers). A couple tell her they resist categories and labels – one even said “group mentality” was bad and that feminists who are really into sisterhood begin to menstruate together (!! (71). But Sattler believes some of this feminist-phobia (my term, not hers) may have to do with being afraid, as high school teachers, of identifying themselves with a politically unpopular group – dangerous even. Almost as dangerous as being an out lesbian high school teacher (or worse yet, an out gay man as a primary or secondary school teacher, since the prevailing myth is that male teachers are potentially pedophiles – otherwise why would they want to be around small children? Add to that the myth of gay men preying on boys . . .).

My immediate response when reading was “paranoia!” What are folks so afraid of: “a group of women with minds! Run for your lives! They are controlling our children! EEEK!” And then I thought back to the meeting I had with Kate last week. We were talking about the letter I am going to send to Worsham, Malinowitz, and Royster (the people I am hoping to persuade to participate in my ethnographic research). I had given Kate a copy of the letter to read, the questions for me being: Why would they say yes to helping me? How can I convince them to participate? Kate said she was talking with a colleague about the letter and she asked the colleague – a feminist teacher – “What would be your response if you got a letter like this, asking you to participate in some research about feminists in the field?” The colleague's response was, “I'd be afraid I was being set up.” “Set up” as in “used in a nefarious way to make me look bad.” I was floored by that response. Taken aback. I keep coming back to it in my mind. Why would that be the *first* response when approached by a researcher to talk about one's feminist identity? What *is* that about? At first I wanted to cluck and say, “Well, there is that academic insecurity, that ugly beast, raising its grizzled head. Everything is a competition with/against each other so paranoia runs rampant.” But when I think more about it, paranoia runs rampant in activist circles, too. I am thinking of a woman in the SinCity (Cincinnati) NOW chapter who refuses to give the treasurer's report if there are any “new” people in the room. I always think, “What the hell is she afraid of?”

I know I'm different from most people – most women, especially. I tend to spend very little time thinking about what other folks think of me or spending lots of

time and energy strategizing how to gain access to systems of power. That often gets me in trouble, manifesting itself in a maverick spirit that pisses people off. So I have a hard time relating to reactions of what looks – at least on the surface – like fear in others.

Why are feminists afraid or paranoid? Or *some* anyway. Are we still persecuted and punished for being feminists? Individually? After reading Sattler's book, perhaps I can understand the response of Kate's colleague a bit better. Maybe it is coming from the same place as the resistance of some of the high school teacher to identifying as feminist. University women were (in Sattler's study) more embracing of the "f" word because it is more accepted, but they still expressed some nervousness about it. Still, it makes me feel a well of frustration and sadness when the *first* reaction towards one's own colleagues – fellow feminists – is the assumption, "She's out to get me."

That reminded me of a day last fall in the graduate class I was sitting in on. The prof (a "out" feminist) talked about a young feminist scholar who had "attacked" her work at a conference. It was apparent the prof felt the attack was *not* just about her *work*, but some sort of personal assault. The prof spoke of the trickiness of the rhetorical situation: how to respond to what she felt were misrepresentations of her work by the young scholar without looking like she was defensive, without shutting down conversation. But clearly, she *did* seem defensive.

These situations feel all too common: a replay of the Biesecker/Campbell-Kohrs "cat fight." And how much of this – like the Biesecker/Campbell-Kohrs point counterpoint that became so personal it was painful to read – is staged by journals: "See? The feminists really just *can't* get along."

The Sattler book gave me a lot to think about. But not just about the insecurity and unease many women feel in their academic work. The methodology of her project interested me. She allowed her participants to read and comment on the transcripts of the interviews. She also wanted to make sure her research "gave back" to them in some way. She overtly asked them to try to think of how her research *could* give back to them. I want to make sure I incorporate some of those strategies in my own research – or perhaps take them even further: allowing participants to talk back to not just transcripts, but my interpretation of the interviews.

The Sattler book also brought to my attention the complexities of what I am trying to do: identifying teachers and scholars as feminist and asking them to talk

about their feminist work. That could be perceived as a huge risk on their part. And I worry about them feeling “set up.” Very problematic. I don’t want them to feel that way; I honor their work too much. But can I be completely analytical about their work while worrying about whether they will not like what I am seeing or discovering? How can I know what will make them nervous? I plan to ask each of them that question specifically, “What makes you nervous about this project?” But the more I think about all these issues of honesty and critique and research and feminism, the more overwhelming it becomes.

A project that begins with one question, “How are feminists in composition studies enacting their beliefs in their teaching, leadership, and scholarship?” quickly blooms into a multitude, a maze, of sticky issues. The number of choices *any* researcher makes about a project are mind boggling, if not infinite. For a feminist researcher, these choices weigh even more heavily because she is pushing herself to be critically *aware* of all those choices, and critique them at every turn in the complex labyrinth that is a research project.

The definition of feminist pedagogy outlined in this project is culled from a tremendous amount of feminist scholarship on activism and teaching (see chapters 1-2), but in the end, I was the one who made choices about the sixteen themes and how to name those themes. *Feminists in composition* carries many themes of feminist teaching strategies over to composition from activist work in the community and in Women’s Studies (subverting teacher authority, allowing students to make choices about curriculum, attention to gender representation in curriculum and classroom discussions). But *feminists in composition* also create their own theories and practices of feminism specifically in relation to women writers, leaders, rhetoricians, and being a woman scholar in the “publish or perish” world of academia. These theories and practices focus more squarely on women as writers and rhetors both in the classroom, in the community,

and in the field of composition. The point of the ethnographic studies in each of the next three chapters is to show the connections between philosophy and practice: how these three women are enacting their feminist beliefs in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and leadership. Being a woman, let alone a feminist, in the academy has never been a carnival cake walk, but historically we seem to be at the top of our game. At least I personally feel that way, especially after the ethnographic studies where I saw, first hand, the profound ways in which my experience as a feminist in the field is better, easier, kinder because of the thirty years of feminist work that prevailed before I even considered myself a composition teacher and scholar.

As a scholar attempting ethnographic research, I am aware of the complexities of ethnography – and applying feminist methods to my ethnographic research. In her book Ethnographic Writing and Research Wendy Bishop defines ethnography as taking place in a specific sociological space, celebrating the identity of the people/place that are the focus of the research, and incorporating a hybrid of research methods (3-4). In her reflective article on her own ethnographic research, “Postbook: Working the Ruins of Feminist Ethnography,” Patti Lather adds to Bishop’s definition, writing that an ethnographer uses a variety of methods, collecting data from various sources, and “troubling the very claims” that the data represents (201). An ethnography gains power when the researcher spends as much time with the object of the research as possible, collecting multiple sources of data, while allowing participants to guide the research questions (Bishop 45). But feminists realize that every ethnography is, in the end, a fictional representation, regardless of the amount of time spent on site, in the culture, interacting with the participant. An ethnography that is specifically feminist consistently

questions the power position of the subject of the research and the researcher. Feminist ethnography also extends the issue of research power to questions concerning race, class, gender, national origin, and other systems of power. The feminist researchers has to ask, “How am I using my power and my voice? How can I make sure the power and voice of the research subject is foregrounded?”

In her book Fictions of Feminist Ethnography, Kamala Visweswaran complicates the idea of feminist ethnography by naming it a fiction; feminist ethnographers understand they are writing a story, a fiction, that will never reflect any one person’s reality. She writes that the connection between ethnography and fiction is that fiction “builds a believable world, but one that the reader rejects as fiction” (1). In the same way, ethnography “sets out to build a believable world, but one the reader will accept as factual” (1). This definition of feminist ethnography understands that the story told by the ethnographer is just that: a story. The story pieces together what the ethnographer chooses to include. But understanding that the ethnography is a story is not enough. The feminist ethnographer must also rigorously interrogate issues of power and agency (both systemic and individual), situational knowledge³³, shifting identities, temporality, and silence, and the politics of identity and identification (Visweswaran).

³³I am using “situational knowledge” as defined by Donna Haraway: knowledge produced in and for a specific context. In the ethnography, the researcher produces knowledge, the story she is writes, in and for a specific context. In this ethnographic project, the knowledge I am producing resides in the context of the academy, with all the power relationships that exist both within the academy and between me as a researcher and the participants. Because I am the younger/student researcher and they are the tenured professors, the power relationship that is part of these ethnographic studies is – in some ways – more complex than the traditional ethnographic research where the researcher (educated academic) is “studying” a person or group of people with less cultural power. In my situation, I have less institutional power (student) than the participants (tenured professors who have a lot of authority and celebrity in the field of composition), but by virtue of being the researcher, I have power over them. I get to decide what to write about.

In her feminist ethnography of "Esperanza," Ruth Behar attempts to draw the life of her research participant, a 60 year old Mexican woman, through storytelling, both her own and Esperanza's. In her research she confronts the issue of histories – these stories told – as "false document[s]" told by various unreliable narrators (16). What the researcher creates in the text, the result of the ethnographer's pen – or keyboard – reflects the power of the researcher. She decides what is included or excluded, the order of things, the way they are spoken or told on the black and white of a page. "[I]t is not orality versus textuality that I call into question here, with the image it conjures up of the ethnographer salvaging the fleeting native experience in the net of a text. The more relevant distinction for me is [. . .] the contrast between storytelling and information" (12). In my own ethnographic studies, as in any feminist ethnographic study, the awareness of who is *writing* the story and how the writer's story circles back into the center, the focus, is often as important as the stories of those being studied or observed.

Feminist ethnographers struggle to negotiate the complexities of telling someone else's story in various ways. Behar gives us insight into her and Esperanza's discussions on the work of the book itself, including the power of naming as represented in the title of the book, and how Behar chose what to include and what not to include of Esperanza's story. Visweswaran creates a "play" in three acts that reinforces her belief that ethnographic research is fiction. The three act play also articulates the power relationship between participant and researcher -- how participants gain power by passing their own fictions to the researcher as "truth" – and how a researcher confronts these fictions when she discovers them as conflicts to textual evidence. In "Tell My Horse" Zora Neale

Hurston attempted to subvert the power relationship between researcher and participant by inserting herself into the “subject’s” culture or becoming part of the subject.

The frustrations of feminists doing ethnographic research and how to negotiate issues of power, identity, and storytelling lead to creative methods of writing, as is evidenced when fiction is merged with ethnography (Viswesaran, Hurston) and inserting first person narratives both of self and participants into the text (Lather 1997, Behar). In their book Troubling the Angels, an ethnography of women living with HIV/AIDS, Patti Lather and Chris Smithies wrestle with the issue of power, identity, and storytelling by creating a horizontally split page with inter-texts that record the first person narratives of the participants. The participants’ words are on the top of the page in larger text; the researchers’ words appear beneath that in smaller font, an attempt to foreground and privilege the narratives of the participants literally “over” those of the researchers.

In her recent article “Postbook: Working the Ruins of Feminist Ethnography” Lather provides an extremely interesting feminist critique of her own ethnography and the decisions the researchers made in how to create the story and present it. In this article, Lather includes participant responses to the book. Some of her participants critique the book, saying that it was too difficult to read because of the way Lather and Smithies chose to represent their research/story. Lather writes that her critique – and their critique – of the physical text that was the result of the ethnography represented the failures of representation. “Textual experiments,” Lather writes, “are not so much about solving the crisis of representation as about troubling the very claims to represent” (201). The most a feminist ethnographer can hope for, she writes, is an ethnography of ruins and failures, one that recognizes limits and misfirings. In this way, “ethnography becomes a kind of

self-wounding laboratory for discovering the rules by which truth is produced” (202). In the end, a feminist ethnographer, as Lather does in her “Postbook” essay, needs to track the failures, since there is no method that can solve these failures.

In these ethnographies that follow, I attempt to trouble the text by including my personal journal entries. They provide the first personal narrative of the researcher. I also include transcripts of interviews, although the entire transcripts are not included, an omission I feel uncomfortable about but page limits mandated their exclusion. Although I chose to include each of these three women because I saw them as examples of feminists in the field and I wanted to discover, to record, how they practice feminist pedagogy, I let each woman steer the interviews in her own direction. I *did* forward each woman questions that I wanted them to answer before my site visit. They all knew my main interest was feminist pedagogy. However, the stories they told me, the conversations I had with them over the phone, over email, and in person went in different directions depending on how each woman chose to represent herself to me. Because of this, one may feel a “tension” in these chapters between a discussion of feminist pedagogy and a discussion of other subjects the participants wanted to include. Another way I attempted to make sure I honored the participant’s story and how she wanted that story represented was to forward each chapter to “interrupt and disrupt.” I discuss the process of this more later in this inter-chapter. Because I wanted to offer the participants “the last word,” I did not “rebutt” any critiques they made of the project. I felt it was important to let them explain their perspective, to offer the critique, without me taking the power back by being able to have “the last word.”

Because of the complex politics of writing histories, storytelling, and false histories of research almost more challenging than the act of the research itself and gathering data are the logistics of the words on the page. “How do I *write* this? How do I write about other people’s lives and work in ways that are analytical, but also worthy of the astonishing, powerful work these women are doing? How can I bring my voice and style to this project and still write in a way that will be publishable’? Is the end result of publication personal benefit (career enhancement) or service to the field (others will learn from my research and become better teachers)? Why do I feel it needs to be mostly the latter to make me feel comfortable doing this work? How do I tell this story and still maintain the voice and power of these women’s stories and *their* words instead of mine? What are my words and what are theirs?”

In Gesa Kirsch’s 1993 study of “successful women writers,” she found that even as women tried to break gender norms and challenge traditional approaches to research, scholarship, and teaching, there were prices to be paid for such deviations. The women that Kirsch studied expressed a desire to write in a voice different from the standards typically abided by in the discipline. They expressed this by saying they wanted to write for people beyond the academic community. This desire to write to audiences other than their academic peers in the field could also be evidence that these women wanted to create connections between their academic work and the world external to academia, an extension of their feminist belief system.

Kirsch wanted to find out how women in the academy negotiated issues of “professionalization” and academic discourse. Do women submit to the standards or create new ones? Because “the material pressure of academia is writing” (quoting Linda

Brodkey xvii), Kirsch set out to discover how women academics approached writing, how they felt about academic writing, how they established authority in their writing, and how gender influenced the use of language/writing for women academics. The issue of how a feminist approaches writing and scholarship emerged as a prominent concern for all three of the scholars in my ethnographic studies. In the following three chapters, each scholar articulates – in very different ways – the barriers she is working against to publish the kind of work she is passionate about. These approaches and the subject of their research are intricately woven together with feminist awareness and beliefs.

Similarly to my desire to research feminist teachers – and ask feminist teachers about their research – Kirsch’s interest came from her location as an English professor. Because historically women had not had the opportunity/authority to speak publicly, she wanted to investigate how women in the academy were claiming that authority. Kirsch investigated the difference between women who described themselves as successful, confident writers and those who did not, although she herself defined all the women in her study as “successful writers” within their academic position. She wanted to know how women writers positioned themselves in the context of academia, how they spoke to specific audiences (and who those audiences were), and how they claimed authority.

Kirsch’s study was significant because for women academics publication is imperative to academic success as well as to furthering feminist theory. In the “publish or perish” world of academia, people who don’t publish are at a grave disadvantage when it comes to job security and salary. In their writing, women academics often feel they need to appease the patriarchal hierarchy to be seen as legitimate (Ray 32). All three of the women in my ethnographic studies express their desire to bring diversity of language and

epistemology to the field. But they also express concern in varying degrees that scholarly work incorporating maverick approaches to scholarship or deviations from the expected discourse practices are often not accepted for publication. All believed that their scholarship points to – as their teaching and leadership does as well – a site of feminist activism in the university. Within all of the discussions I had with these women, the power of feminist language and rhetoric provided a consistent focus.

Project Journal: September 5, 2000

I am reading about feminists who have been told (by mentors and editors) to “tone down” their work so it isn’t so offensive (i.e. unabashedly feminist). I nod. I’m already worried about that. I can feel myself self-monitoring already, holding back my own voice that is so judgmental, restraining the hotheaded feminist in check so the calm, cool, collected researcher can stroll through unassaulted. Is that just audience awareness or self-censorship? I haven’t decided.

Besides Words

Before the physical act of putting words to the page – and my conflicts with how to use language to communicate what I saw, I was first consumed with the logistics of research methodology. Many feminists research methods have been articulated over the past ten years. Most helpful to me were Ruth Behar (Translated Woman), Gesa Kirsch (Ethnical Dilemmas in Feminist Research), and Patti Lather (Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern, Troubling the Angels, and “Postbook”). Behar, Kirsch, and Lather all adamantly work to make their research choices as overt as possible, to themselves, to their audience, *and* to their participants. In 1991, Patti Lather outlined some basic questions everyone should ask about one’s own research, an attempt to be vigilant to feminist ideals:³⁴

³⁴These feminist principles for composition theorists were not only applicable to pedagogical research, but more traditional rhetorical research. In the latter part of the decade, composition/rhetoric scholars began writing about women’s rhetoric or feminist rhetoric, attempting to articulate or identify the differences between women’s use of language and men’s. Most scholars believed that a woman’s position as an

- did I encourage ambivalence and multiplicity?
- what was muted/repressed? Shaped? Subverted?
- did I create a text that was multiple without being pluralistic?
- did I focus on the limits of my own conceptualization?
- who are my “others”?
- did I make resistant discourses more widely available?
- what is my interest in this work (career? power?)?
- how is the data interpreted? How can I keep myself from the center?
- what is the political moment/relationship of people?
- data = the means by which the story is told (fiction)

When I first read Lather’s list of questions, I scrawled them onto a 3x5 card and taped the card to the inside of my project journal, a continual reminder to me of what I should be doing each time I entered the project zone. Eventually I moved the card to my computer monitor; I couldn’t sit down to write without the feminist research fairies

outsider to the dominant culture placed her in a rhetorical position where she had to manipulate language to gain ethos in ways that men did not. Extending French Feminist theory to the field of composition, Worsham examined “écriture féminine” and looked for ways to radicalize the writing of the body. She argued that feminist writing goes beyond “writing the body” to radical mimicry: disrupting the dominant phallogentrism (“laughing at the truth”) and creating new visions of language. The dominant culture dismissed any radical language as a fad or fashion – language that was not part of long-standing systems. But, she wrote, feminist composition would move beyond this to teach writing as a mode of learning where radical language choices are celebrated (1991). Scholars such as Biesecker criticized these attempts as epistemological affirmative action, marginalizing all who didn’t fit the definition. Instead, Biesecker argued for a language theory that recognizes resistance within power structures, where powers of equal strength push and pull each other. Biesecker wrote that there is no difference between the way women use language and the way men use language; instead there exists the need to research and document the rhetorical history of women, long left out of the rhetorical canon. I disagree with Biesecker’s claim that there are no differences between the rhetoric of men and women – as well as other traditionally marginalized people. Because women – and others – are afforded less power and authority in the culture, they therefore have to work harder at *ethos*-gathering strategies in their rhetoric. Also, the tools of a male rhetoric may not challenge the status quo, so purpose changes strategies of rhetoric that some women, especially feminists, use. Because of these reasons, women’s rhetorical moves are slightly different than those of men. Men don’t have to work as hard to prove *ethos* to their audience; authority and credibility are culturally assigned to men by virtue of being male.

tickling my ear with these questions. The two questions that most often plagued me were “Did I encourage ambivalence?” and “Am I keeping myself from the center?” I engaged in constant arguments with myself over the answers to these two questions. No, I was not being ambivalent. I was trying to *argue* a specific perspective. How in the hell can I create a good argument, convince people of the dramatic (positive) impact feminists have had on the field of composition by being ambivalent? “Was there anything I can ever remember being ambivalent about?” asked the opinionated, bullheaded feminist researcher.

And, quite frankly, I had no intention of keeping myself from the center of this work. In fact, I felt it was my duty as a feminist researcher to constantly remind myself and my audience and my participants of where *I stood* in relation to what I was writing. What did Lather mean that feminists should keep themselves from the center? Did she have a 1-800 number so I could call and find out: customer service for feminist researchers? I wrestled with my understanding of feminist methodology as acknowledging the researcher is always at the center of the project, shaping and molding it, creating the results she desires – communicating that to the reader, and what it felt like Lather was suggesting: *don't* see yourself as center. If I am not in the beginning, middle and end of this project, then who is? Or was Lather suggesting that one must constantly step aside to make room for the participants' voices – to make sure their perspective and reality is given a wide berth, unmutated by the researcher's meddling ideas? The latter is what I attempt to do with my own research, understanding that all ethnographies are, in the end, a fictional representation from the perspective of the writer.

My Methodology

A feminist methodology demands that a researcher be as overt as possible both with herself and her audience about her research biases and confront those biases whenever she can, challenging her methods and approaches, being rigorous with what she is “seeing” and what she is obscuring, both from her own eyes and those of her reader. It feels like a mea-culpa: “I know that I am a weak-minded human, a mere machine for hegemony. I privilege my own agenda and ignore those pieces of the puzzle that don’t fit. Please understand that this is just a feeble attempt to try and sort something out, even as I know I am not sorting out, rather I am messing up.” The following is a list of the assumptions I am *aware* I was making as I approached the ethnographic research.

Assumption number 1: My working definition of feminist pedagogy is a definition that is legitimate; that is to say, it isn’t unique to me but others would also agree with this definition of pedagogy being distinctly feminist. This is a very tricky assumption. The crux of this entire project is an argument that this definition, the sixteen themes, is a more precise definition of feminist pedagogy. Yet even talking to people about my research project (both with participants and others) I had to convince them that this definition is distinct from other radical or critical pedagogies *and* that the traditional way they thought of feminist pedagogy (nurturing mother with focus on gender issues) is a throwback from the beginnings of the Second Wave.

Assumption number 2: The teacher identifies as feminist and therefore practices feminist pedagogy in her classroom. What I was attempting to codify with the classroom observations was the legitimacy of the themes. The primary questions I wanted to answer were, “How are these themes enacted? Do they accurately reflect how feminist pedagogy

is practiced?" The underlying assumptions are, however, that Lynn, Harriet and Jackie³⁵ are indeed *practicing* feminist pedagogy – and feminist pedagogy specifically (not critical, liberatory, Marxist or other brands of radical pedagogy). I wasn't entering the classrooms to determine *whether* they practiced feminist pedagogy, but *how*. The classroom observations were a way of testing the rubric, to determine whether there were themes missing or redundant themes represented.

Assumption number 3: The themes would be reinforced by what I witnessed in the classrooms. I wanted to affirm my themes, even as I was telling myself – as a good feminist researcher would – that I *wanted* to challenge them. This subtext of affirmation in the form of a challenge began as I was observing the classes, when I took notes and tried to align specific practices with themes, but it also occurred after the tapes were transcribed when the *real* coding began. I used various colors of highlighters and an intricate numbering system to code the transcriptions, marking when a practice reinforced a theme on my list. Some utterances or interactions were coded to more than

³⁵Some may see my use of the first name as reckless disrespect and disregard for these pre-eminent comp/rhet scholars who helped me with my research by generously opening their lives to my scrutiny. Even to me it feels a little odd, using a first name instead of just a last name when referring to another person in a scholarly or even a journalistic article. From the beginning, in my correspondences with Lynn, Harriet, and Jackie, I used only their first names when addressing them. It seemed the feminist thing to do, a small subversion of hierarchies. Within the dominant culture, and in many subcultures, the use of only a first name when speaking to or about an elder is seen as a sign of disrespect. I thought of this more than once when I (a younger white woman) referred to Jackie (an African American elder) by her first name; could this be done without evoking the oppression imposed upon African Americans for centuries where they were called by first names yet had to address others (whites) with courtesy titles? What right did I have to call any of these women by their first names, as if they were colleagues or friends? Yet I proceeded this way because I have never called a professor by anything other than a first name. Or at least I cannot recollect a time when I did, although perhaps as an undergraduate student in the early 1980s this was more the status quo. And because that was how I proceeded, addressing these three incredible scholars and teachers by their first names, it felt false to then switch to a last name when writing about my experiences with them, a harkening to some jocular sports jargon: "Way to go, Royster!" Still, as I write this I wonder if I have a right to subvert this standard of respect in the name of feminism. At moments it feels uncomfortable, but the alternate feels even more so. "Discomfort," I always tell my students, "is often good. It means we are challenging ourselves. And perhaps we will learn something in the process." I am not quite sure, yet, what this discomfort of using familiar first names for people I afford so much respect is teaching me.

one theme, if I felt the utterance/interaction reflected more than one. An imbedded assumption in doing so was part of my desire to avoid rigid categorizations and delineations between themes.

Assumption number 4: The classrooms I observed are “typical” classrooms for these teachers. That is to say, the classrooms I observed, although small in number (two at each site) were an accurate representation of a typical classroom scenario. Inherent in this assumption is that my physical presence in the class would have little influence on either students or teacher. Or at least minimal influence. But how could my presence not alter the dynamics of the class, especially when I am tape recording the class and furiously taking notes throughout in full view of all members of the classroom community?

Knowing that I was there to observe, even if the specifics of what I was there to observe were or were not discussed, probably altered behavior of students *and* teacher.³⁶

Assumption number 5: Although no single classroom would reflect all of the themes of feminist pedagogy, I had a desire to prove that the vast majority of themes were being played out, often subconsciously, in any given classroom situation. For example, when observing and coding Lynn’s “Graduate Writing Workshop,” I coded at least one utterance/interaction to each of the sixteen themes, most themes having multiple entries. In Lynn’s “The Image of Women in Literature” course, I coded utterances/interactions for all but three of the themes, most themes having multiple entries. Because I was primarily looking for evidence of the themes to reinforce my definition, challenges to my

³⁶Each teacher introduced me to her class in different ways. All of the teachers asked the class whether they were comfortable with my presence and asked permission for the tape recorder to be on, allowing students an opportunity to oppose the taping. In none of the classrooms I observed did anyone object to the tape being on. Lynn introduced me to her classes herself. Harriet and Jackie both provided preliminary introductions and then asked me to tell the class what I was doing. In all classes I attempted to make clear to the students that I was observing the *teacher and her teaching practices*, not the students and that the students’ names or identities would not be revealed in my research.

definition would have quickly been obscured or erased. The number of times a certain theme, or theme, arose within the context of one class may be an indication of the importance of that theme to a particular teacher. However, I am unwilling to make that claim after observing a limited number of classes. To make the claim that a certain teacher foregrounds a theme because she feels it is more important could only be answered after observing and examining data from various classes over a several semesters.

Assumption number 6: There is a lot of thinking that goes on about teaching that isn't *seen* when observing a class. Therefore, there will be some themes that will become more prominent than others. For example, the theme of "Confronting sex biases (both the teacher's own and other's)" would likely play out more in planning lessons and syllabi or individual comments on student's papers rather than in the actual classroom discussion. The theme of "Critical reflecting on teaching" would, by its very description, not be readily observed in the classroom. Only through conversations with the teachers about their thoughts on the class would practices relating to these themes be noted. However, in order to get to those practices, I often found myself asking loaded questions such as, "Do you ever keep a teaching journal?", which would lead the teacher to an answer that they may not provide in general conversation, thereby privileging a specific theme and obscuring other teaching strategies about which I didn't inquire.

When conducting my ethnographic research, I tried to incorporate the ideas of Kirsch, Behar and Lather as much as I could. I incorporated the ideals of these feminist ethnographers by attempting to be as overt as I could with my subject about what I was doing and why. When gathering data, I asked them what work they were most proud of,

or what work of theirs they wanted me to read, letting them establish part of my focus. Although I did forward them questions that I wanted to ask at the site visit, each site visit was very different as each woman determined how much time we spent together, what meetings or classes I would attend, what information they would offer outside what I specifically asked for, and what stories they would tell me about who they were as feminists, academics, and teachers.

When writing I incorporated their voices and agendas as well as my own first person narrative into each chapter in an attempt to mess up the story or complicate the research (Lather 2001:20). As much as I could, I tried to represent these women's voices in their own words as Behar, Kirsch, and Lather modeled.

When I first approached each participant, I began by writing a letter telling them about my project and asking if they would be willing to participate as feminist teachers. Whether the letter I drafted worked well or whether these three women are simply too generous to turn down a young scholar's request, all three said "yes!" immediately and enthusiastically, putting to rest a small edge of my initial trepidation regarding whether the participants would perceive this project with suspicion. I decided to ask these three women specifically because I was impressed with how open they were about their feminist beliefs both in their scholarship and conference presentations. To me, each of these women squarely centered her work on feminist theories, unabashedly using the "I" word in ways that I found refreshing, smart, and exciting. Secondly, I selected these three scholars as participants, Lynn Worsham, Harriet Malinowitz and Jackie Jones Royster, because they represented different locations and perspectives within the field of

composition and rhetoric. They were also all three well-known as feminist scholars and teachers.

Lynn, a “white” feminist, provides the perspective of an editor of a scholarly journal (JAC). Lynn’s experience as the first openly feminist editor of a scholarly journal in the field provide important insights on the intersections of feminist scholarship and leadership. Her position as editor allows her to speak to how she is using feminist rhetoric and feminist scholarship to change comp/rhet scholarship. Through her work as editor of JAC, Lynn has committed herself to furthering discussions of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in comp/rhet scholarship.

Harriet’s work in the area of queer pedagogy and scholarship, and most recently work in the area of critiquing identity politics, provides an important perspective into feminist teaching practices. Harriet has been involved as a feminist community activist, working with grassroots organizations in the areas of reproductive freedom, issues of rape, assault and domestic violence, and gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered concern. Harriet provides important insights on the bridge between academic work and community activist work.

Jackie’s most recent research focuses on restoring African American women’s rhetoric of the nineteenth century. She has also published articles on feminist pedagogy and the dynamics of race in the classroom. Her location as an African American – and woman – Associate Dean of Humanities at a large state university in the Midwest, provides a unique perspective from which to interrogate issues of feminist leadership.

With each ethnographic study, I engaged in telephone, email, and personal interviews with Lynn, Harriet and Jackie. When I asked three prominent feminists in the

field of composition to let me follow them around for a few days of their working life, the participants decided how to interpret that: how far they would let me into their world, what classes or meetings I would observe, the people I would talk with, and how many hours of their day I would be tagging along. I spent three days at each “site” (their home university) and shadowed them, talking with students and colleagues, observing classes and meetings, and talking to them about their work and their lives.³⁷ I spoke with the women about their personal beliefs regarding feminism, life in the academy, being a feminist in the academy, feminist pedagogy, feminist scholarship, and leadership. Before each site visit, I emailed each participant a list of questions that I knew I wanted to ask while visiting them. Emailing the questions two to three weeks before my site visit, I hoped that each participant would have time to think and reflect on the questions so that they could give me more complete, thoughtful answers.

Email to Harriet: March 3, 2001

Harriet,

I wanted to forward you the questions I have formulated to ask when we can find a time to sit down and talk. I don't really want to go down the list and ask each question. I envision the site visit as including a series of conversation that will take us most places the questions cover. That being said, I did want to forward you the questions so that you can ruminate on them for awhile.

Here goes

³⁷Although some may say that spending such a short amount of time “on site” does not constitute an ethnography, feminist ethnographers contest the belief that amount of time spent with a group or individual will make the ethnography more “true.” Ethnography is more generally defined as a anthropological method that looks at various sites of data collection and interaction. Although it almost always includes first personal interaction, it also includes textual research, communication between subject and participant that doesn't necessarily take place in person or “on site.” Where traditional ethnography was grounded on the belief that an objective observer could learn the most about a group of people by observing them impartially, contemporary ethnography, especially feminist ethnography, complicates the issues of objectivity, impartiality, and observer so that ethnography is reconfigured beyond observation of and time spent in the physical presence of the participant(s).

Describe your career path, i.e. how did you come to be where you are professionally?

Thinking back on your career in academia, what were some of the pivotal moments or "forks in the road"?

Who were your mentors and how have they informed your work?

Who are the women (feminists?) you have watched or looked to as examples of your own work or teaching -- women in power positions or those who have ethos within the field? Do you have any feminist role models in the field?

How would you define feminism?

When did you first publicly identify as a feminist?

What has been your most radical feminist act?

Have you been involved politically in feminism outside the academy? If so, how/why?

How have your feminist beliefs influenced your approach to your work?

How is your approach to scholarship different because of your identity as a feminist? Your approach to leadership? Teaching? The teaching of writing specifically? Training graduate students to be better writing teachers?

How has feminism changed the teaching of writing or the field of composition?

Research? The discourse in the field?

How would you define feminist pedagogy?

What is the difference between feminism and feminist pedagogy?

I know that may seem like a lot of questions, but hopefully we can have a conversation (or more than one!) that touches on most of these issues in one way or another.

k

At each site, I had a number of conversations where I would ask a prompting question, but more often would let the participant begin the conversation and talk about what they were interested in telling me. They spoke about how they believed their lives and work intersected with my research topic (feminist pedagogy). Most of the interviews were tape recorded, taking place in offices, classes, restaurants, and coffee shops. A few of the conversations were not recorded, the conversations we would have while dashing across campus or during class breaks. In those situations I would try to frantically

scribble down any notes I found important to record. At the end of the site visit, the participant and I would have a final conversation where I would look down the list of questions and go over any that I thought we didn't cover.

With all three site visits I found that the participants were very generous with their time and thoughtful in their comments to me; I left each site visit feeling overwhelmed with what I had learned, but also energized and excited having seen these women in action. During the time we shared on site, I asked them to reflect on their own teaching, scholarship, and leadership, allowing them to lead the conversations and focus on topics that were important to them.

Also at each site, I observed classes the women taught and meetings they attended or facilitated. I spoke with colleagues and students, both in the presence of the participants and often separately. Once again, each participant decided the level at which I would infiltrate their lives, who I would speak with, which classes and meetings I would attend, and how much of their day I would tag after them. I was continually humbled and amazed at how open and giving these teachers and scholars were with their time and energy towards my research project.

After returning from the site visits, I transcribed the hours and hours of tapes from the classroom observations, meetings, and interviews. When I excerpt these transcripts in the following chapters, I use a bracketed ellipsis – [. . .] – to indicate that I cut some words or perhaps sentences from the transcript. I only cut words or phrases that are redundant or off topic to the point I was attempting to emphasize with the quote. As is the case with any verbal transcription, speech patterns are not as neat and precise as

written thoughts. The ellipses are used to indicate that there were some words I cut, but they were not essential to the idea or point the participant was making.

In addition to the personal interviews where the research participants reflected on –and often reminisced about - their own history, story, perspective, experience, in the “ethnographic” chapters (one devoted to each woman), in each chapter I offer my own rhetorical analysis of their scholarship and language. Through observing them in their classrooms or at department/university meetings, analyzing how they enact their feminist pedagogy, and speaking with their students and colleagues, I observed them in varying contexts. By speaking with their students and colleagues, I gained insights into how others view these feminists’ approach to teaching and leadership. I also read and analyzed both published and unpublished scholarship, speeches, and syllabi from their classes, looking for themes of feminist pedagogy and uses of feminist rhetoric.

A large part of the site visits was observing each teacher in her classroom. At Lynn’s and Harriet’s sites, I observed two classes each. Because Jackie is now in an administrative position, she was not teaching when I conducted my site visit with her. Consequently, my ethnographic study of her work is more grounded in leadership as a site of feminist pedagogy. With Lynn and Harriet, however, observing the classrooms was very important to this research because without it, I would have little access to the actual practice of feminist pedagogy in the more traditional classroom setting. Self-reported data – data that I gathered from interviews with the participants – provides interesting insights that cannot be “seen” by an observer (such as how critically engaged the teacher is with the choices they make or how these choices relate to an underlying feminist belief system). Both self-reported data and observed data create complexities the

researcher has to address. There are biases in both research approaches. With self-reported data, the bias resides in the reporter, primarily: she talks about how she sees herself – or wants to see herself – which may vary wildly from how an observer (no observer is ever neutral), sees her. With observed data, the bias resides in the researcher: what I saw is what I typically wanted to see, ignoring the pieces of data that conflicted with my thesis or hypothesis. In other words, the data the researcher (me) needs to gather to reinforce her hypothesis is typically the data she finds: what she wants is what she gets. As a way of minimizing these biases – or perhaps in an attempt to complicate them – once I drafted and revised each ethnographic chapter, I forwarded it to the participant for her add her perspective to my interpretations and analyses of her life and work. I forwarded both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the chapter to the research participant, inviting her to talk back to the text, to interrupt it, to insert her ideas, reactions, responses in any way she felt compelled to. This was my way of allowing the participant to get in the last word, so to speak, and to correct or clarify interpretations I had made of the data that perhaps did not reflect their own perspective. Because I wanted each participant to interact with, to mess up, my ideas, analyses, and observations in ways that were meaningful to them, I gave few guidelines on what I expected from these responses or interruptions. This resulted in three radically unique chapters with the participants choosing to insert their voice and perspective in very different ways. I also did not alter or edit any of the ethnographic chapters after the participant added her thoughts and edits. This was my way of truly allowing her the last word on the subject.

Letter to Lynn, asking her interrupt, disrupt, talk back to her ethnographic chapter

A Rumbly, Bumbly Rainy May Day in Ohio, 2001

Dear Lynn,

Whew. Here you go. I don't know about you, but when I am this entrenched in a project, I seem to go in cycles: "This is a piece of crap." "Well, this is taking shape." "This is a mess." "Hey. I kinda like what this is becoming." "Oh, this will never come together." At some point, I just have to let it go. I don't know that I am ready to let it go yet (am I ever?), but here it is anyway. The tyranny of time constraints.

This is a long chapter. Much of that is due to a lot of explaining and details regarding my coding and analysis of the classroom observations. Since this is the ethnographic chapter I have worked on most thoroughly (and began first – once again you are the guinea pig) I can't really tell whether the methodology details in this chapter belong in the methodology chapter or are good right here. I've given you excerpts from other chapters so you have some context for what I am trying to do: the introduction, a hunk of the chapter where I describe the sixteen themes of feminist pedagogy, the methodology chapter. You can glance through these for some context and supporting information, but they aren't part of the stuff I am asking for your response to.

I'm giving you both a hard copy and an electronic copy (on disk) of "The Lynn Chapter." The file on disk is a WordPerfect file – I think that works for you, right (or at least I think I remember that was what you were using at school for word processing)? I want you to not only "talk back" to what I have written, but to get into the text and mess it up. You can decide how you want to do this, but the reason I am giving you the file on disk is to allow you an easy way to insert your comments and thoughts within the text itself (rather than as a separate "ending" or essay). I am inviting, in other words, a feminist disruption of my work. I want the "participant's voice" to be an integral part of this. On one hand, that's rather false since I got to choose what to write about – and there are so many things I wanted to write about that I didn't have space to include. I want your reactions to those choices (what I included and what I left out) and how I am thinking about, talking about, and presenting what I did choose to include – and your life – here.

Also, if you are uncomfortable with any of the interview excerpts (or other things) that are included, let me know. If you read something and think, "Did I really say that? I didn't mean that," change it to reflect what you did mean – or let me

know that you feel misrepresented. I am very concerned that I don't misrepresent conversations, thoughts, and ideas. So, please, please, please let me know if you are in the least uncomfortable with any of the information presented from my site visit.

I've also included disks for Merry and Colleen [graduate students I talked to during the site visit]. Their words are here, too, so I want to offer them the opportunity to read and respond (if they choose to).

Ok. Once again, "whew." [. . .] I don't plan on touching the chapter after you have commented on it, unless it is to relocate the methodology stuff to the methodology chapter or to correct/change things you have instructed me to change. I want your responses to be "the last word."

Thank you, from the bottom of my feminist heart, for being so gracious with your time and energy and helping me with my work. I hope that you feel the chapter does justice to all that you do.

Gumby's Lesser Known Side Kick

I approached and wrote each ethnographic chapter very differently because each site visit experience, and each participant, created a different context and view of the world and her work. I resisted creating a standard format or template for how these chapters would look, instead allowing the themes, structure, and writing style that I used for each chapter to emerge as I worked through the data I had. The only consistent element of each chapter is that I try to address three prominent sites of feminist pedagogy: teaching, leadership, and scholarship. The emphasis, amount of space, and language used regarding these three sites as they relate to Lynn's, Harriet's and Jackie's lives and work play out very differently in each chapter. In an effort to offer consistency and contextualization for who these women are and work they have done, I begin each chapter with a short biographical piece about each of these teachers and scholars. These chapter prefaces, entitled **Contextualizing the Knowing Subject**, are a way to more

traditionally introduce the participant for those who are unfamiliar with their work, to provide a context for who this scholar and teacher is and how her work has added to a feminist perspective in the field of composition and rhetoric. More specifically, through my ethnographic studies of these three feminists, I aspired to uncover and articulate the personal impact feminism has made in their lives; how they negotiate their feminist beliefs within the culture of the academy; how they enact their feminism in their scholarship, their teaching, and their leadership positions within the university community; and how they are changing the teaching of writing as a result of their, and other feminists', work. What I discovered was a tremendous amount of careful, thoughtful, critical work and self-reflection that these women produce in the name of feminism. I was continually inspired and awed by their self-critique and awareness and the astonishing, powerful work they do. My hope is that the following ethnographic studies will pay tribute to that work and the individuals who generously gave of their time and energy to help me complete this project.

Contextualizing the Knowing Subject: Lynn Worsham³⁸

I can't really remember how I came to ask Lynn to participate in my project. It was probably a suggestion offered to me by Kate, a logical choice since Lynn is a feminist and editor of one of the field's prominent journals, JAC.³⁹ What I knew of Lynn before I began close, critical readings of her publications as part of this project, was that she had co-edited a book with Susan Jarratt of feminist essays about composition practices (Feminism and Composition Studies: In Other Words). I was charmed by her afterword ("After Words") in this book. To me this one essay represents a model of feminist scholarship that wows me in writing style, self-disclosure, smart connections and critical analyses. It was this essay that brought me to Lynn's scholarship and offered me an example of how dynamic and passionate academic writing could be. Plus, the essay is just fun to read. Lynn crafts her words with a deliciousness that is too often absent from academic scholarship. As I read more of Lynn's work, I came to see her love of words and the sculpting of amazing prose as part of the signature of her scholarship.

³⁸In traditional (white supremacist patriarchal) philosophy, man is "the knowing subject" and woman (and other traditionally marginalized peoples) are relegated to the status of "object." In her book What Can She Know? Feminist philosopher Lorraine Code writes that academic philosophers and researchers often treat "the knower" as "a featureless abstraction," that unquestionably embodies the male gender (1). A feminist approach to epistemology, therefore, not only positions woman (and other traditionally marginalized people) as knowing subjects, but articulates even further an identity of "the knower," understanding that there is no unbiased standard of knowledge construction. In these ethnographies, I want the reader to position the participants as "the knowing subjects." Rather than "subjects" of my research, they are participants. Rather than "objects" from which I construct knowledge, they are "the knowing subjects" creating knowledge. The knowledge they bring to this project helps us work together to construct something new.

³⁹JAC was formerly an acronym for Journal of Advanced Composition. When Tom Kent became editor of the journal in the 1990s he changed the name of the journal to JAC, dropping what he saw as an inaccurate title and replacing it with a descriptive subtitle: "A Journal of Composition Theory." When Lynn took over the editorship, she dropped the subtitle, explaining her decision by writing, "JAC has long since stopped functioning as an acronym, properly speaking; those three letters have no fixed referent. Today JAC, like the term *composition*, is a floating signifier. In other words, just as *composition* has been, and continues to be, articulated to radically different intellectual, educational, and political agendas and thus continues to be a site for hegemonic struggle, the journal has been devoted during most of its twenty-year history to the struggle over the proper boundaries of *composition* and over what literacy, broadly conceived, will mean" (JAC 20.1: viii-ix).

Lynn premiered her first issue as editor of JAC in January 2000. That same year she (and the journal) received the prestigious “Phoenix Award” given by the Council of Editors for Learned Journals. In addition to the book she edited with Jarratt, Lynn has also co-edited books with Gary Olson (The Kinneavy Papers and Race, Rhetoric, and the Postcolonial). A strong feminist theoretical approach grounds all of her research. She is currently working on two books, The Grammar of Complex Words: Gayatri Spivak’s Rhetorical Theory and On the Edges of this Time: Feminisms, Rhetorics, and the Promise of Inquiry. Lynn has also written a plethora of articles that focus on feminist rhetoric, reading, and writing theories in JAC, Rhetoric Society Quarterly, PRE/TEXT, among other composition and rhetoric journals.

Currently Lynn is a professor at the University of South Florida, where she teaches graduate and undergraduate courses and edits JAC. She designs and teaches courses in pedagogy, cultural studies, women’s studies, and rhetorical theory. For ten years (1988-1998) she was on the faculty at University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in pedagogy, rhetoric, feminist theory, literary theory, and women’s and African American literature. Although not listed on her vitae, Lynn’s feminist work has a strong foundation in grassroots organizations, working with victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and welfare reform.

Chapter 3: Lynn Worsham Counting Ribs and Other Measures of Story Truths

Project Journal Entry. Friday, November 9, 2000:

There was a Center for the Study of Writing meeting today. Small group. Only three people there from the exec board (myself, John, and Mary). We basically went around the table and people described their research project du jour. I talked about my project, describing it as something along the lines of “a history of feminist pedagogy in the field of composition and case studies of three prominent comp/rhet feminist scholars and how they define and enact their pedagogy.” One of the graduate students at the meeting asked why I was including Lynn Worsham since she was all about rhetorical theory – not pedagogy. That caught me off guard. There is that split again: rhetoric or composition, the former seen as foregrounding theory and the latter seen as foregrounding pedagogy. It sounds like the theory/practice split. I feel that, within the field, there are “the teachers of writing” and then there are “the rhetorical theorists” with a hierarchy quickly established where theory is privileged. The question asked by the graduate student got me thinking: why *did* I choose Lynn Worsham? Was it because she co-edited the book with Susan? Because Kate suggested her? Because she is the editor of JAC? Because, more than any other essay in this field, I carry around her “After Words” in my back pocket as writing I want to emulate? Upon reflection, I don’t know, but what the graduate student said made some sense: when I think of Lynn’s work, I don’t typically think of a person who writes about teaching but a person who writes about rhetorical theory. The connection is not always clear.

Interview with Lynn Worsham. February 20, 2001:

Being the first *feminist* editor [in the field] for me is very symbolic. You know, what you were saying about your focus. That one of your focuses is pedagogy. I really feel that my pedagogical scene is much more about the journal than in the classroom. But also about the field. What I can do pedagogically through the journal in terms of letting people know what feminism is and what scholarship can be. So it is all inter-related to pedagogy.

My site visit to the University of South Florida (USF) was an amazing three days filled with stories, critique, and observations. Despite having bronchitis festering in my lungs and zapping my energy, I felt invigorated although exhausted at the end of each day. The openness with which Lynn brought me into her world astonished me. The care

she took to make sure I was, as she kept putting it, “getting enough” was humbling. But, back home under the grey winter skies of Ohio, transcribing the tapes from the site visit was equally gratifying. Revisiting those conversations and listening to this feminist scholar and teacher reflect on her life and work felt encouraging and uplifting. While I review the tapes and transcripts, Lynn’s focus and critical self-reflection impressed me. In her life, she doggedly questions how she personally and daily colludes with systems of oppression in order to more actively resist that collusion. My problem, faced with the physical reality of communicating what I was witness to, was how to create a “chapter” from this information that was scholarly and also a reflection of the incredible work Lynn does in the spirit of feminism. And, of course, capture the brilliance and openness of Lynn as a human being.

Project Journal. April 22, 2001:

I started writing the Lynn chapter today. I was so excited to begin, but then everything fell apart. After three hours of writing, the result was nothing but schlock. False start number 1. How to distill 80 single-spaced pages of transcription into what I want to say. And what do I want to say? On my prospectus I remember Katie writing, in the margin next to the chapter summaries, “What is your argument for each of these chapters?” A good place to start, although I really don’t want to “argue” anything if to argue means to position myself as having decided something definitive about Lynn’s work or feminist pedagogy – beyond proposing a more specific definition of what feminist pedagogy is and showing how Lynn’s work embodies that. I could argue that Lynn is a really smart chick who writes mesmerizing prose and who is crazy-passionate about her feminist work. But really what I want to write is just some sort of tribute, to communicate how important the work she does is *to me* as a feminist scholar (sheesh! Why don’t I just send her some frickin Hallmark card with pastel butterflies on it and some rhyme-y verse: “Dear Lynn. The card says it all. [smiley face], Kay.”). Who is my audience? What do they expect me to argue? Do I write the chapter that carefully shows how Lynn’s work reflects my definition of feminist pedagogy? That would certainly serve me well. Utterly pointless – and clearly biased (as opposed to obliquely biased??); In that scenario, I will see whatever I am looking for and ignore the rest – and what researcher doesn’t do that? Maybe a feminist researcher? What I really want to write is about how I was

inspired by all that I saw Lynn doing – as a feminist – in her work. Ugh. What a mess. So, I took a long ride on my bike. I pedaled furiously for about 20 miles, my brain churning over the long stretches of greening Ohio countryside. The cows seemed exceedingly bucolic today, which made me want to get off my bike and whack ‘em – or at least chase them around a bit. Make them bellow startled moos in cow-panic. Back at the computer. No bright ideas. Just more schlock.

After transcribing the eighteen hours of taped conversations and classroom observations, I poured over the transcriptions looking for themes and connections to what I had written about in the first three chapters of my project. What I kept highlighting and annotating in these transcripts were sustained discussions of passion, of critical reflection, and of storytelling, not only as self-critique, but as connection both to the larger cultural systems of oppression *and* with students’ realities. It was these three approaches (passion, critical reflection, storytelling) that helped me define Lynn’s feminist approach to pedagogy.

Central to Lynn’s feminist pedagogy – at whatever site she is practicing – is public self-critique, and the insistence of connecting her experience to theory and theory to the material reality of women’s lives.⁴⁰ Often these critiques and connections manifest themselves in the form of storytelling. Although storytelling in and of itself is not necessarily a feminist pedagogical practice, stories, told in certain ways, can demonstrate intricate intersections of feminist pedagogical themes. A story told by a feminist teacher, in the way Lynn uses stories, demonstrates self-disclosure and self critique, interrogates

⁴⁰I know. “Women” is an essentializing category. There is no such thing as a succinct way to define “women” or “women’s lives.” However, there are material realities that result in being gendered female in this world, and when I write “women” I am aware that post-structuralist theorists argue against using such categories to define groups of people. But I am also keenly committed to recognizing gendered locations and how they intersect with a wide range of other social orders (race, class, sexual orientation, able-bodiedness, age, . . .). Women are not a unified group, as are not feminists, but by being gendered female they take on a location of systematic disempowerment, even if that disempowerment also varies with other locations and identities.

the norms of ideological systems – one’s role in perpetuating these systems – and creates connections between classroom communities and lived experiences. Used in this way, storytelling becomes a complex strategy of feminist pedagogy.

Lynn is an expert rhetor, a wordsmith, a spinner of captivating tales. I found it easy to listen to her.⁴¹ Lynn’s stories move beyond parables of expected or socially sanctioned behavior. They are precise and careful acts of critical reflection; her stories are connected to her feminism because she believes careful critical reflection and self-critique are imperative to feminism. “For me (feminism) is first of all politics. First of all politics,” she told me over dinner the second night of my site visit. “And yes, it is a way of being, but it becomes a way of being as you continually critique yourself and the world around you and understand how it operates to a small degree. And this is a process. It is a process through and through. It is also an epistemology, a way of being, a philosophy, a pedagogy, ethics, and it acts as a politics, *always*.”⁴² This belief in rigorous and public self-critique plays out brilliantly in Lynn’s stories.

Through her narratives Lynn not only critiques her own location, but calls upon others to critique theirs. This strategy moves beyond the typical feminist critique of larger systems and structures to a personal critique. She uses this strategy in her scholarship, in her classrooms, in her conversations. Her stories become axes of politics, a way of connecting the political to the personal and back again: “Narrative is radical,

⁴¹“Is that a southern woman thing,” I wondered. “The ability to spin a yarn in such a way that one doesn’t even realize they are listening to a story until it is all said and done?” Despite the essentialist notion of Southern Womanhood this statement evokes (*all* southern women are good storytellers?), I rationalize that it may have some cultural bearing where oral histories are more important. Or is that just my stereotype of the South?

⁴²Quotations that are not attributed to a specific text and page number came from personal interview transcripts.

especially when commonplace, for it is in the interstices of the everyday that identity and experience are produced" ("After Words" 345). This use of storytelling embodies Lynn's definition of feminism. Through her stories, whether she tells them in her classrooms, conversations, or writing, she engages in the feminist pedagogical practice of pushing students to critical consciousness; she pushes herself in that direction as well.

Kay: So when or how did you come to identify as a feminist? Was it then, in academia, at first or no?

Lynn: I was raised by a feminist. I mean, it wasn't this sort of theoretical type of thing. It was about standing up for yourself, having economic freedom. My mother was extremely, not obsessed, but concerned, that I would hear the message, "Do not find yourself economically tied to anybody." To a man. I grew up, I came of age consciously, in the 1960s when all of this was going on at that time. So I was very much aware of the larger field, issues around women and feminist issues. And I think one of your questions [that I emailed to Lynn before the visit] was "What was your first public feminist act" or something like that?

Kay: Yes. Most radical.

Lynn: No. That was another question. This may perhaps be my most radical and my first public expression of my feminism. Four years old. My mother always had this really ambivalent relationship to being a mother. So, while we were not religious people and did not go to church, she decided one summer she was going to send me to Vacation Bible School. And she . . .

Kay: (laughs) To try something new maybe?

Lynn: Yeah. To get the kid out of the house. Mother's day out. So I was sitting there learning these bible lessons and one of the lessons was "Eve was created from Adam's rib and therefore women are lesser." And, I can't remember, they said women have one more rib or one less rib . . .

Kay: One more because Adam had to use one of his . . .

Lynn: Right. OK. So I proceeded to go out on the playground and started pulling up people's shirts and counting ribs. I wanted to have some empirical evidence. I got kicked out of Vacation Bible School. They called my mother and had her come get me because I was a problem child.

Kay: You weren't a blind believer. You had to prove it.

Lynn: Right. I couldn't accept the voice of authority. So basically I have been a feminist since I was four. The academy has been very important to me to sort of articulate, to raise my own consciousness, and articulate the importance of feminism, but it was really much more of a community-based, social activist kind of thing in my history. [. . .] I like activist work because it is really where you remember what you are doing and why you are doing it. I mean, I was only half kidding when I said my first radical feminist act was when I was counting ribs on the playground when I was four. You know? It is the only thing I got kicked out of!

Within this story of Lynn's first public feminist act of counting ribs, there is another story imbedded: one of the biblical tale of how woman came to be, from a piece of Adam's rib. The patriarchal story that dooms woman to inferior status (made not from God but from the mere mortal, Adam) is the fodder for Lynn's own feminism and – consequently – her story. The other story peeking through is one of her own mother – and her “ambiguous relationship” to the patriarchal institution of marriage, communicated to Lynn overtly and repeatedly in stories, maxims, and the hard evidence of her mother's own lived experience. It occurs to me, as I think about the stories I have read or heard Lynn tell, that this embedding of stories is not uncommon. In her “After Words” she tells the uncomfortable story of her childhood caretaker, “Blue Betty.” The story pricks uncomfortably my white-anglo-saxon-liberal consciousness because “Blue Betty” is a nickname given to an African American nurse maid by her petite white charge, the power of naming assumed by a small girl-child. Within that story is the story her mother tells others of how “Blue Betty” got her name. And through the telling and retelling, both by Lynn's mother and now by Lynn, the public display of shame, and the interrogation of

that shame, is laid open, a way of not allowing the wound to fester any longer, but to lance it and analyze one's own role in the infection.

“Let me tell you a story . . .

The centrality of this theme – storytelling as self-critique – points to a significance in first person accounts that moves beyond the romantic to the political. In a story Lynn tells her “Image of Women in Literature” course the day I observe, she describes how her mother’s method of oral history was passed to Lynn, an example offered to the class in how to critically reflect upon the role of storytelling in their own lives. Lynn’s narrative also loops back around to the role of storytelling in the text the class was reading (Woman Warrior). In that text, the lines between histories become fuzzy and unfocused. Whose stories are being told: the mother’s? The daughter’s? The narrator’s? In The Red Tent, a novel that reclaims and rewrites the stories of biblical women, the narrator/main character states, “I am not certain whether my earliest memories are truly mine, because when I bring them to mind, I feel my mother’s breath on every word” (Diamant 75). Stories such as those told by Lynn, Kingston, and Diamant go beyond the mere act of telling tales that teach a single lesson or exemplify the heroic nature of families and kin. Instead they are stories that point to the corrosive effects of patriarchal power and the intersections of race, class, gender, and other traditionally marginalized perspectives.

In “After Words” Lynn asks herself and her audience, “What are the stories that shame us personally?” Stretching those stories across the loom of critical analysis, weaving together the sharp shards and smooth satins of personal identity and history,

demonstrates the art of storytelling as feminist pedagogical strategy. Michelle Fine writes, “The stories that document our lives tell what we find worth remembering and contemplating and sharing” (77). A story used in the context of feminist pedagogy goes beyond this simple sharing to connections, critical consciousness, and interrogation of both ideology and self.

Publicly and physically declaiming a personal experience so as to communicate a reality to an audience has been a feminist rhetorical trope even before it was systematically reproduced as part of Consciousness Raising (CR) groups of the late 1960s and 1970s. In fact this CR approach of incorporating the voices of women’s personal experiences into the classroom was one of the earliest themes of feminist pedagogy in Women’s Studies classes of the 1970s. This CR approach has stretched and grown as feminists demanded contextualization of socio/political locations before, during, and after the telling of the story (Scott). Named Standpoint Epistemology because it relies on the interrogation of the knower’s point of reference to the world, in this feminist approach to knowledge construction, a story – an experience – cannot exist in isolation or as a romantic universal, or even personal, truth. Instead, the storyteller must relate the experience to larger ideologies of culture. In short, the storyteller must interrogate the experience through the lens of feminist critique. These critiques and connections move from the personal experience to the broader culture and back to the personal location of the storyteller. In shaping the narrative, the storyteller also provides a space for a crucial moment of discomfort and disruption. The stories themselves show how, in our lives as feminists, we both collude in ideologies of oppression and attempt to transgress them. Feminist pedagogy demands not only that we critique the patriarchal

forces as they play out in the broader culture, but how they play out in our classrooms and in our own lives: giving light to and naming our shame. It demands that we interrogate the moments when we are the *least* feminist. Through these stories, we exercise feminist critique of ourselves and others, writing a feminist world. “Storytelling is the way we compose our lives; all identity, all social construction, begins with narrative” (Gibson et. al. 71). Through the stories we tell, we produce culture. By integrating a feminist critique within our stories, claiming the shame of them, we push a feminist perspective into the foreground.

Michelle Weiler writes that feminist methodology begins with the ruptures between experience and knowledge (60). Within the crevices of these ruptures shame resides; by exposing these moments, rooting them out for interrogation, we hope for the possibility of change. The language of critique and possibility are dialectically related to what and how we teach (Weiler xiv). In this way feminist teachers such as Lynn move beyond the earlier CR mode of feminist pedagogy to one of dissecting stories to find how we perpetuate the ideologies that bind us – and others. The result minimizes the chasm between academic rhetoric and the lives of women and provides one possible answer to Jane Roland Martin’s question: “How can feminist scholars find acceptance in the academy [. . .] without cutting ourselves off from the sound of women’s voices? Without forgetting how to speak to other women? Without severing ourselves from our feminist roots?” (4-5)

Knowing that what politicizes people is not so much books or ideas, but experiences connecting the work of the classroom to their lives, storytelling becomes a central strategy to further student and teacher critical consciousness. Like Dorothy

Allison's stories, Lynn's stories show her exerting the right to speak, to tell the stories that have the potential for shame, while portraying two or more positions, thereby complicating the reality represented in the narrative. In her essay "Epistemophilia" Lynn asks, "How will we *not* fail for those whom feminism would work, if the old, familiar language is impossible and the new does not yet exist? How do we speak to each other now, in the interim, in this strange in-between space?" (42) Her answer, within that essay, is to "jam the machine" and "engage in wild improvisation." Although she does not say so there, these acts of storytelling are ways to do just that – ways of exposing those strangely murky, in-between spaces, and connecting the academic work with the realities of women's lives, creating a feminist epistemology. Rather than "women's ways of knowing," the epistemology that is created is one of "woman as knowing subject," a dangerous move in a world where women are denied the position of knowledge-makers.

Philosopher Lorraine Code challenges feminists to re-map the epistemological terrain by scrutinizing the traditional concept of "man as knowing subject." Using women's stories as a space for knowing, experience becomes a part of knowledge making. The cultural topography shifts so that mutual relationships, personal location, and relational choices become part of knowing, an epistemology based on conversations and storytelling. Although Code doesn't name it as such, she is describing *ethos* and the social positioning of males that affords them easy *ethos* as a knowing subject. Code illustrates the gendered way the culture defines access to knowledge creation with the story of a Toronto court case regarding infant deaths as a hospital. When doctors (males) were called to testify, they were asked what they *knew* about the infant deaths. When nurses (females) were called to testify, they were asked what they *had experienced* in

relation to the infant deaths (222). The example illustrates a rhetorical and hierarchical distinction between knowing and experience. The women didn't have access to *knowledge*, rather only *experience*, reflecting the belief that knowledge transcends experience instead of experience *creating* knowledge. Code offers an alternative model of epistemology that she observed in female scientists Rachel Carson, Barbara McClintok and Anna Brito. These scientists, Code wrote, approached their work by touching, listening, and engaged vision. They understood that knowing and controlling are not sequential processes. The objects of study "spoke" for themselves and therefore observation needed to be respectful and engaged – a conversation or story; because nature was complex and irreducible, the scientists needed to embrace difference, recalcitrance, and disruption (150). In the same way, feminist storytelling as an act of pedagogy embodies these characteristics of epistemology. It embodies careful listening and critique, using personal experience as disruption. Consequently, a new site of knowledge building emerges. New meaning is created from the deeper structures of women's lived experiences. Mary Daly names the places of deeper meaning "Critical Memory," for it is where women's realities exist because they have no place in the patriarchal culture's master narratives.

Project Journal. March 3, 2001

Yesterday I went to hear Jackie Royster deliver the keynote address at the Race and Gender Symposium. She talked about her research to recover African American Women rhetors and their words – and said she was writing their stories. Her research was a compilation of history and theory and all sorts of cross-disciplinary work, but she was also creating their stories: adding their voices to history. Again the storytelling theme. Maybe this will be the focus of the ethnographic studies: connecting our lives to our work with stories; sharing ourselves with our students with stories; the stories that shape our scholarship; the stories we tell *in* our scholarship. It made me go back and dig through The Red Tent. I found what I was looking for. "But the other reason women wanted

daughters [beyond helping them with work] was to keep their memories alive. Sons did not hear their mothers' stories after weaning. So I was the one. My mother and my mother-aunties told me endless stories about themselves. No matter what their hands were doing – holding babies, cooking, spinning, weaving – they filled my ears" (3). So, here is to the stories we tell and the meaning that is gathered from them – perhaps the meaning that is *created* by them.

. . . Of the Rib-Counter Grown Up (leadership as pedagogy)

Through watching Lynn work and reading her words, I realized that there is very little separation between teaching, leadership, and scholarship. She sees all three sites as opportunities to enact radical, pro-active, *visible* feminist beliefs. In her work as editor of the JAC – not only the first adamantly feminist editor of a composition journal, but the first woman editor of JAC – she embodies feminist leadership as pedagogy in her work with graduate students, the way she envisions and constructs the journal, and in her approach to reviewing and accepting articles for publication. She wants to create a journal that provides a stellar example of what a scholarly journal can be, not just because she is passionate about writing and rhetorical theory, but because she knows she is providing a model of what a feminist edited journal looks like. She wants it to look as close to perfect as she can get it. As Colleen Connolly, a staff editor of JAC and one of Lynn's proteges told me, "As a representative of feminist scholarship, she needs the perfection; the disruption [caused by her overt feminism] makes people uncomfortable. It's Lynn's idea to *change* the conversations. The way to gain credibility with that is the professionalism in the text itself, in the editing. So we are hyper aware of text citations and works cited. Little details like that. That adds to her credibility, the journal's credibility, and the credibility of her feminist politics."

This eye to detail surfaced within the first ten minutes of my meeting Lynn in her USF office when Lynn was fretting over an small error on a galley page. The desire for minimizing errors – or what Lynn sees as errors – relates to the careful construction of *ethos* for a woman, a feminist, editor. Because a woman’s capacity to think, judge, and analyze is not granted to her as it is to men (“men as knowers”), she must create her own authority position by proving her worth (Code). Women have to prove themselves worthy of *ethos* in ways men do not. Her status as a woman and as an “out” feminist are two of the reasons Lynn strives for perfection in her JAC position. Although JAC is not a feminist journal, Lynn has a feminist mission for it: “I wanted to do this because I am a feminist and I wanted an opportunity to publish work that foregrounds the politics of difference.” Feminist journals have traditionally been a “crucial vehicle” for the production of feminist knowledge (Secrist 217). They first sprang from collaborative work between the feminist activist and academic communities, working to maintain the connections between grassroots work and life in the academy.⁴³ Although today feminist journals are more specific to academic feminist issues and theories, they are still primarily associated with Women’s Studies as a discipline, something that makes a feminist editor of JAC – or any academic journal – unique. Although Lynn’s editorship won’t create a feminist journal out of JAC per se, her feminist work foregrounds issues of feminism such as identity issues and cultural theory. Because editors act as gate keepers to new ideas and theories within any given field, having a feminist editor of a

⁴³Examples of feminist journals that sprang from the Second Wave feminist activist movement and the discipline of Women’s Studies are Signs, Feminist Journal, and Frontiers. Contemporary feminist journals such as Women’s Studies Quarterly and The Feminist Teacher are more squarely rooted in the academic earth, located in the Woman’s Studies plot. Whereas the earlier feminist journals attempted to straddle the two worlds of activism and academia and create connections between the two communities, contemporary feminist journals rarely attempt to reach across an ever-increasing divide between grassroots activism and academic feminism, many seeing such work as “unscholarly.”

field-specific journal is significant. Even more than gatekeepers, editors bring forth new epistemologies. “Scholarly journals [. . .] provide a legitimization of knowledge by the decisions that are made on what to print” (Altbach 177). In light of this power to legitimize certain ideas and theories, a feminist at the helm becomes even more significant.

Initially I was not considering JAC as a site of feminist pedagogy or feminist scholarship. When I embarked on the site visit I was more interested in “teaching,” defining “teaching” very narrowly: what went on in a classroom. Although Lynn certainly is a feminist teacher within her classrooms, practicing feminist pedagogy in dynamic ways, I also saw how she translated those pedagogical beliefs to her JAC work. I arrived at the USF campus on a deliciously warm and sunny day (an unadulterated miracle for someone who had just left the brutal February cold and slate grey skies of Ohio), finding Lynn hard at work, tying up the latest edition of JAC. After we introduced ourselves to each other, I settled in the chair opposite Lynn’s desk as she finished the tasks at hand so she could devote some time and attention in my direction. As part of the initial conversation Lynn talked about the latest issue of JAC that was just about to go to press. She showed me a problematic galley page and pointed to some hairline marks on a publisher’s advertisement. The lines would be visible when the ad was printed and Lynn was annoyed with herself for not catching the error. I assured her no one would notice the lines. Indeed they were at the bottom of a page and, unless she had pointed them out to me, my eye would have not even seen them. Throughout my three day visit, Lynn got various other people’s opinions on the tiny lines. All of those polled said the same thing: no one would notice. Gary Olson, a colleague of Lynn’s and a former editor of JAC, by

way of sympathy and commiseration, pulled a copy of JAC he had edited off the shelf to point out a blooper that had slipped by his editorial eye. These reassurances seemed to do little by way of settling the matter. The issue was irrevocably marked, a blemish of error. A chiseled chip of *ethos*.

This attention to detail and extremely high standards reflects not only Lynn's awareness of her *ethos*, but vivacious passion for the work. Both Merry Perry, the associate editor of JAC, and Colleen Connolly, assistant editor of JAC, connected Lynn's attention to detail with the feminist ideals of the journal. Colleen told me, "JAC has to be as perfect as possible, but she is forgiving at the moments when you aren't. She uses (those moments) as a pedagogical experience -- not to shame or humiliate. She challenges us to be conscious, be in the moment. Don't just answer, but think about it. She is conscious and she wants you to be conscious, too." In Colleen's comment one can see that Lynn is "teaching with her whole self" -- asking her students to interrogate the work as she does, self-disclosing her concerns, striving for the highest quality without shaming or casting blame. One can also see Lynn's attempt to reconstruct power to be empowering instead of oppressive and pushing students toward critical consciousness of "the moment." From Lynn, both Colleen and Merry said, they have learned what feminist scholarship and mentorship is about. Although the standards are high, both students feel Lynn treats them more like colleagues than plebeian graduate students. "She treats me as an equal; she praises me and is very respectful," said Merry. "To me all of these things are feminist because she *does* have more power than me; she's higher than me on the totem pole, but she treats me like an equal."

Another way that Merry sees Lynn as a feminist teacher or engaging in feminist pedagogy is through the collaboration encouraged by the staff of JAC. "People do what they are good at and what they like to do," Merry said. "We make assignments according to interests. There is no hierarchy of jobs." Is that inherently feminist? I had a Boss Man once in Corporate America who had a similar approach to leadership. I always thought he had a very feminist viewpoint regarding his role as leader in the company. But I am sure he would have blanched at that description. What makes that style of leadership feminist? Is it feminist even if someone else says, "That isn't feminist. That is just human decency or being a good boss." Many times there is resistance to naming a strategy or approach as "feminist." similar to the resistance of naming oneself as a feminist or naming the practices one engages in as feminist.

Personal Journal: January 22, 2001

Ryan [a former student] had Elizabeth and me over for a birthday dinner tonight. Steph [his roommate and also a former student] is such a bullheaded German woman (are we *all* that way?). We were talking about the election and I was ranting about Dubya's first official presidential act: repeal family planning moneys to international agencies that even whisper the word "abortion." Steph turned to Elizabeth and said, "Are *you* a feminist, too?" So, I clattered out my little soap box and asked Steph – who doesn't consider herself a feminist – "Do you think women should get the same amount of money for doing the same work as men? Do you think women should be able to decide when, if, or whether to have children? Do you think women should be have equal access to education? So why don't you consider yourself a feminist?" She said, "Yes, but that isn't being a feminist. That is just being a smart woman. I wouldn't mind if all feminists were like *you* Kay, but most of them aren't. I mean they are out there screaming on street corners. It isn't productive." At which point Elizabeth practically rolled onto the floor in laughter because, indeed, last weekend I was out there on a street corner in SinCity with the local NOW folks screaming anti-Bush slogans while waving a sign that read, "Get Bush Out of My Uterus." I said, "I most certainly *am* that kind of feminist." Steph only knows me as a feminist because I name myself as such in my classrooms; my "teacher self" didn't fit her definition of what a feminist was (the screaming lunatic variety).

Her response, “That isn’t being a feminist; that is just being a smart woman” reminds me of people’s reaction to my definition of feminist pedagogy. “That’s not feminist pedagogy; that’s just good teaching.” Both responses seem to stem from the same problem: negative stereotypes of what feminism is and what feminists are and unwillingness to embrace the label. The dominant culture certainly has done a stellar job in getting people to mentally sprint in the opposite direction whenever they hear the “f” word. Run away! Run away!

This hesitancy to embrace the descriptor of “feminist” is one of the main reasons this project is so important to me. I want to give a precise – or more precise – definition to feminist pedagogy. I want to clearly claim this definition of teaching strategies as “feminist” so others can not only better understand what this pedagogy entails, but so they can embrace it as well. I know critics will say, “That’s not feminist. That’s just good teaching.” My working definition – the consciousness of the themes – goes beyond the vague label of “good teaching” because the themes are specific. These themes are not specific practices, rather guiding beliefs that can be practiced in various ways. Some people *may* define the theme of “Subverting teacher authority” as “good teaching”; others may define this same strategy as bad or sloppy teaching. The themes are not universals to good teaching, they are, instead, a theory of pedagogy, *feminist* pedagogy. Even if a feminist teacher does not enact all the themes in one situation, she is aware of them and working towards them. If a teacher does not identify as feminist, can she be engaging in feminist pedagogy (without calling it that)? I would argue that she could, just like my white, male, heterosexual boss was enacting feminist leadership without embracing that categorization. Along the same lines, someone who has never heard of Freire can enact liberatory pedagogy. Likewise, then, wouldn’t it make sense that someone who would never identify as a feminist could enact feminist pedagogy? If feminist pedagogy is a

theory of teaching, like liberatory pedagogy, why would one have to identify as a specific political identity to enact it?

Early on in this project, while examining the list of the sixteen themes of feminist pedagogy culled from the past 20 years of feminist scholarship on teaching, I realized these themes were similar to how I approached feminist leadership or being a facilitator of a feminist activist group. If I substituted “organization” for “classroom” and “volunteer/group member” for “student” the themes represented a feminist approach to leadership. Pedagogy as leadership doesn’t seem like an earth-shattering revelation, but because my heart is in feminist activist work more than feminist academic work, it was significant to me. And maybe this is another self-critique of why this project is so important for me: I need to see my academic work as a kind of feminist activism even if it is not changing the material realities of women’s lives in any immediate sense. I have typically felt that my feminist work in academia is an ugly step-child to grassroots work, i.e. mostly theory that has very little, if any, impact on the real lives of women. As a feminist academic, unlike when I am working with activist groups, I rarely feel like I am doing enough for the cause, for the material realities of women’s, and other traditionally marginalized people’s, existence. Analyzing the way Lynn approaches her leadership position as editor of JAC, reinforced the very tenuous connection I saw between leadership and pedagogy, between activism and teaching.

... making her mark on the world/words.

At the site of Lynn’s JAC work, her feminist pedagogical approach with the graduate students who work with her to create the journal overlap with the pedagogical

philosophies used when choosing the types of articles the journal publishes. Lynn understands that the journal is a site of pedagogy for her peers and colleagues, where they can read about new ideas and learn what it means to be teachers and scholars. Because of this matrix where students, colleagues, new writers, new ideas, and the physical product of the journal intersect, feminist pedagogical themes emerge not just in Lynn's interactions with graduate students on staff, but in her work with authors who submit work to the journal, and in the decisions she makes regarding the content and form of a journal.

Part of Lynn's passion about JAC is creating a scholarly journal that isn't dull or boring. "It [scholarly publication] can be something else. And that's my attraction to editing the journal – scholarly writing can be *fun* to read. That's one of the reasons we have the color cover," Lynn told me. But clearly Lynn's passion goes beyond the dynamic colors of the glossy covers. The care with which she edits also speaks to her intense delight of writing, words, and scholarship. "I like to get down in the middle of the words and see how they work together, how the words radiate and resonate." Looking at my notes, I can't remember whether this comment was about her own writing or her work of editing other people's writing. In reflecting on Lynn's work, I believe it is both.

Lynn believes her position as editor – and her identity as a feminist editor – is important because she can influence the shape of the field in large or small ways. She told me she wanted to be editor of JAC because she wanted an opportunity to publish work that foregrounds the politics of difference (race, gender, class, among others). Looking over JAC under Lynn's tutelage (for perhaps the journal itself is like a student where dialogues occur and new knowledge is created – both personal and professional) it

is easy to see her commitment to “the politics of difference.” There are articles on cultural critique, gender, race, activism, and community. The word “pedagogy” appears frequently.⁴⁴

Beyond the content of the articles themselves, there are two ways the first issue of JAC edited by Lynn feels immediately different: the front cover and the opening essay. A bell hooks essay kicks off the new editorship with the simple, yet telling, lines, “Writing is my passion. It is a way to experience the ecstatic” (1). Ecstatic writing is not the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks of brittle and yawn-inspiring academic discourse, yet this sentiments reflect Lynn’s desire to bring vibrancy of words and ideas to not only her own scholarship, but the pages of JAC. The second radical departure, a glossy, five color cover, displays the art work of a world renowned artist. Lynn takes care to contextualize the cover and what the image represents in her first “From the Editor” column.

When I suggest to Lynn that the five color cover itself should be considered a radical feminist act, she is skeptical. But, if a radical feminist act is transgression of standards and sanctioned structures to achieve a feminist end, why wouldn’t going from a two-toned paper cover with no graphic to a five-color glossy cover depicting carefully-selected art that relates to the painstaking craft of writing and text production be a radical feminist act? By doing so, the cover may be enticing more readers to engage with the ideas nestled between, furthering a feminist consciousness. The cover, because of the role

⁴⁴As an example, in the first issue Lynn edited – 20:1 (2000) – the articles focusing on pedagogy include Henry Giroux’s “Public Pedagogy and the Responsibility of Intellectuals,” G. Douglas Atkins’ “On Writing Well,” and Bruce Horner’s “Politics, Pedagogy, and the Profession of Composition.” Of the seven other articles featured in this issue, one focuses on identity issues and activism (Chaput’s “Identity, Postmodernity, and an Ethics of Activism”), one critiques the whiteness of rhetorical history (Ratcliffe’s “Eavesdropping as Rhetorical Tactic”), and one applies feminist language theory à la Mary Daly to popular culture (Covino’s “Walt Disney Meet Mary Daly”).

it plays in drawing readers in, is inextricably linked to the contents. In her introduction to the premier issue, Lynn writes, “The digitally created image you see on JAC’s cover references both tool and technique; but, more importantly, it is almost self-reflective in its subtle suggestions of a history of mark-making implements, a history of difference that (as in this image) places one technology (the mezzotint rocker) in dialogue with another (the computer and the pixel) in order to achieve a powerful effect” (vii). This metaphor can be drawn out to just as much success when analyzing Lynn’s stance as a feminist editor, making her “mark” on the field, using technology both of the color cover – to draw new readers in – and computer to create a focused dialogue that reflects her feminist beliefs of careful critique integrated with personal action.

Lynn’s feminist pedagogy as editor extends beyond the physical construction of the journal, the contents of articles selected for publication, and the way she mentors the JAC staff. “I want JAC to be a place where women and feminists can publish, and also people of color. That is really important. I also value my working relationships with the people I work with and that is also another pedagogical sort of scene or experience. A lot of these people haven’t worked in this type of relationship where they have had a feminist or female professor.” Lynn is not only keenly aware of her role as mentor to graduate students on staff, but to young feminist scholars whom she has never met except through a submission to JAC. Lynn spends precious spare time to help new scholars become published, to help them hone and polish their work, so that it can be presented by JAC. She told me she often works one on one, via email or phone conversations, with young scholars who submit work that needs to be revised. “I get articles in that I think would not even get a look from editors because they are feminist, but they are going to

get a look now. It doesn't mean I will automatically publish them, but they are going to get a look. And hopefully a review. I think that is all very symbolically important." Lynn gives these articles "a closer look" because she wants to publish more work by women and because she likes the feminist argument they are making in their work. Still, many of these articles need major revisions before they can be considered. "I am working with women writers all the time who submitted work that wasn't exactly right; they need to elaborate their argument, so I work with them on revision. I help to get them to the point where they can publish." The generosity of mentoring individual scholars she has never met is even more astonishing when considered within the context of the yeoman's task of putting together a single issue of JAC where Lynn plays the part of copy editor, layout and cover designer, advertising and marketing representative, subscription service, acquisitions and submissions staff, production and typesetting worker, all the while teaching and writing as a full time professor at USF. There are as few as two and as many as eight graduate students (a transient population) who work on the journal part time. The number of staff fluctuates each semester, and none of the graduate students is paid for the JAC work. Each of these workers, in turn, needs to be trained, mentored, and monitored to make sure the journal is published with the high standards acceptable to the editor. "It's like writing a book every six months," Lynn said. In addition to the logistics of putting "the book" together, there is the careful consideration of content. "I want to publish good scholarship. It doesn't mean it has to be feminist, but I really do want to make sure that the feminist scholarship that comes along gets a fair hearing."

Personal Journal: April 23, 2001

I got my reviews back from Pedagogy today [in response to an article I had submitted about feminist pedagogy]. They want me to revise and resubmit, which

I am more than happy to do. One of the reviews was very helpful and gave me extensive comments for revision. It was a pleasure to read. The other review, a vitriolic condemnation, consisted of two very short paragraphs. "This piece is unsophisticated, both in rhetorical and practical terms. It is unsubstantiated, uncontextualized, untheorized. [. . .] I know that I am being harsh here, but this manuscript probably represents the worst of the 'teaching stories' that purport some modicum of scientific approach." And on. So very hostile. I actually laughed out loud when I read it, a big feminist bark of surprise. And I immediately thought, "Some white guy." Maybe *that's* unfair. But who is typically so hostile and resistant to the mere *idea* that such a thing as feminist pedagogy exists? I was very proud of the editors (both of them women) for giving me a chance to revise/resubmit after that response. Even though the first was positive and encouraging, the second was so negative it would have been easy for them to say "bag it!" It made me think of Lynn when she told me sometimes she sees the virtue of a manuscript even if it gets a bad review. And that she wants to help feminist scholars be published. It gave me hope that perhaps there are other women – dare I say feminists? – who are also out there doing the same thing.

When an editor gives space and voice to feminist perspectives in a journal, especially in a journal that is not identified specifically as "feminist" or associated with Women's Studies, she is engaging in a type of activism, albeit within the privileged sphere of higher education. In her book Talking About A Revolution, Cheryl Sattler explores the work of feminists within educational institutions. At the beginning of the project, she was skeptical about whether feminism could even exist, let alone change much of anything, within academia. "I never considered feminism an academic subject. Feminist is what I did when I wasn't in school" (19). This seems not an uncommon critique or tension: whether academic feminism is working towards feminist change or whether it is just colluding with the privileged system of higher education, limited to a sexy theory that will soon become passe and abandoned for the next theoretical approach du jour. The disconnect between academic feminist theory and the material realities of women's lives external to the academy concerns many academic feminists. "As academic

feminism becomes respectable, it becomes less connected, more abstract, and increasingly remote from everyday sexual oppressions. [. . .] One becomes complacent when one lives in one's head" (Middleton 7).

Others make the argument that social movements arise from rhetoric (Kohrs Campbell), and an academic journal could be considered a primary site of such new rhetoric. I agree that feminist voices and scholarship are important to changing the academy. But while the attraction to feminist theories provides a voice for an empowering ideology that has the potential to change the way people envision the world and (hopefully) work for change, the theories often stagnate in the academy instead of moving into the lives of women outside that privileged arena. This relates to another question about whether one can resist ideology while entrenched in it. Secrist asks, "Can institutions constructed by patriarchal ideology be used to oppose it?" (215) Feminist editors and feminist journals hope that the answer to that questions is a resounding "Yes!" They also know the often hard road of being "out" feminists in the patriarchy of the academy, choosing when, how, and whether to enact their feminist beliefs, always measuring – just as grassroots activists do – what the best approach will be (liberal? radical?) depending on a given context. This is also a lesson Lynn passes on to the students she mentors. "One of the things Lynn has taught me is she always says you have to be really smart with your feminist politics. It goes back to the rhetorical nature of the world. You have to know, where, and how to name yourself as a feminist. [. . .] One of the greatest things about Lynn is that she takes a stand for feminist politics. She is not afraid to say no and stand behind it and be firm in her resistance" (Connolly). In Lynn's JAC work, the interconnectedness of leadership, scholarship, and writing creates a

pedagogy that finds itself creating feminist models for change, disruption, and empowerment beyond the walls of a traditional classroom.

With a Sharp Eye of Critique, Weaving Captivating Tales,

As Lynn herself stated, one of her primary sites of pedagogy these days resides in her JAC work: the authors who submit work, the graduate students helping to put the journal together, and the general audience of scholars in the field of composition and rhetoric. But that is not to say that Lynn believes the journal represents her only, or most important, site of feminist pedagogy. Because she gets no teaching reduction for her work on the journal, she has to juggle her full teaching load with the already full task of putting together a journal. That does not cause her passion for teaching or her commitment to her students to wane. "I am still a full-time teacher, a very committed teacher," Lynn states. She cares seriously about her classroom work, and enacting her feminist beliefs within the courses she teaches. Although the first part of this chapter focuses on Lynn as feminist teacher in the context of her JAC work, I also observed – and was inspired by – Lynn teaching in a site representing the more traditional idea of pedagogy: teacher in front of a class working with students. For me these classroom observations were some of the most important witnessing moments. These were the hours where I could see feminist pedagogy *in action* as opposed to hearing it described by Lynn (her philosophy of editing JAC) or her graduate students (reflecting on their work with her). It was during these classroom hours that I caught a glimpse of how Lynn's beliefs of feminist pedagogy translated into classroom work.

All my assumptions that I carried into this project, a big bag of trickiness (see page 131 for methodology), played out not only when I was observing, but when I was coding transcripts. First, I wanted to observe the classes to test my sixteen themes: were they an accurate representation of the kinds of strategies feminists were using in the classrooms? Was my definition of feminist pedagogy working? My immediate self-criticism of this approach was that no single classroom would embody all of the themes. And my interpretation of a practice, naming it as a manifestation of a specific theme – or even multiple themes – might not be what was actually going on at all. With all these problematic assumptions, I was still excited to get into the classroom with my rubric of sixteen themes and compare these themes to classroom practices. Even in her disclaimer that her primary site of feminist pedagogy resided in journal work, Lynn’s teaching reinforced my themes of feminist pedagogy just as strongly as her JAC work did. The difference was, of course, I was the primary witness in the classroom whereas with the journal, I depended on second-hand accounts of the practices.

Just as self-satisfying for me, my research agenda, and my definition of feminist pedagogy was the way Lynn’s classroom practices called into question some of the themes I had entered her classroom to confirm. One primary example was the role of storytelling in Lynn’s class. As in her scholarship, Lynn integrates a lot of stories in her classes, mostly telling them on herself, connecting issues of the course to her personal experience or history. When I went back over the classroom transcriptions to begin coding for themes, I found myself coming across these stories and coding some of them twice or three times. Depending on the nature of the story, these moments of personal reflective narrative could be coded once under the theme of “Being overt with one’s

political location (self-disclosure),” a second time under the theme of “Teaching with the Whole Self,” and a third time under “Creating connections between learning and knowing; between classroom and outside issues.” In doing so, I had to consider whether some of these themes needed to be collapsed. Was there evidence of practices – or could I invent any – where the practice could only be coded under one of these themes? Should I create a new theme of “storytelling” and get rid of a “Teaching with the Whole Self” and “Being overt with political location”?

In the end, closely looking at how I had coded specific practices, I discovered there were stories Lynn told that didn’t always encompass all three categories. I also discovered that there were several other practices that I would code multiple times because they reflected more than one theme. Instead of making me nervous, this excited me. The categories or themes were not showing a one-to-one relationship with practices. That is to say, I sometimes coded one utterance or one practice as more than one theme (see example on page 183). In effect, this type of overlapping of themes in the space of one utterance was evidence of feminist teachers’ multi-tasking. This overlapping or double-coding showed how teachers practice several themes at once. The metaphor of feminism transgressing boundaries, even those of themes within feminist pedagogy, comes to mind.

The idea of sixteen feminist pedagogical themes, however, caused several people much trepidation. Where I saw a more precise definition of feminist pedagogy, others saw a check list against which I was “testing” feminists to see if they were, indeed, feminist teachers. Kate was the first to bother me with this interpretation of my research. After reading a draft of my second chapter where I outline – at that point in time *fifteen* --

themes, Kate wrote in her memo back to me, "I am worried that you're going to wrench these three women (Lynn, Harriet, and Jackie) into the fifteen categories." This concern over me using the themes as a measuring stick with which to whack the feminists I was studying came back more than once.

Project Journal Entry. March 28, 2001:

I met with Kate today to talk about the prospectus – I have to submit it to the graduate chair to apply for a fellowship next year. While I was talking with Kate she said she had "heard through the grapevine" that Lynn felt I was using the [16 feminist pedagogy] themes as a checklist – at *test* to see whether or not she was a feminist teacher. What a crushing blow. Kate was quick to say that the news came through someone else, and that Lynn didn't say anything directly to Kate about it when they talked at 4Cs, but that she thought I needed to know. I felt wretched. Of course I am not using the rubric as a test, but to *reinforce* my themes by noting when/how they are practiced. And, as I have coded the transcriptions (from Lynn's classroom visits), it's clear the themes do provide a great working definition of feminist pedagogy and in very dynamic ways. It's exciting to see. So, I need to email Lynn. I also need to forward her the themes so she can see what they are like. Oh, ugh! I was *so* excited. Now I feel hurt. Why didn't Lynn tell me that she felt nervous about my approach?

Email to Lynn. March 30, 2001

I met with Kate yesterday to regroup before I head off to see Harriet M. She said that you were nervous about the rubric I was using for the classroom observations. What was passed on to me (via Kate) was that you may have felt I was "judging" you -- as a feminist teacher -- against the rubric I had created.

I feel horrible if that accurately represents your feeling. It makes my stomach hurt! So, I decided that I needed to email and explain the rubric. I probably should have done this when I was there, but I didn't want to show you the rubric before I observed the classes in case you would consciously or unconsciously have the rubric in mind while you were teaching. I desperately want you to understand that the rubric is not meant to "measure" whether the people I observe are feminist teachers. Rather it is to check my definition of feminist pedagogy against what is being practiced. That is to say, the rubric is what is being challenged when I observe classes. [. . .] I compiled the themes to try to get some sort of working (and more comprehensive and collaborative) definition of feminist pedagogy; an attempt at organization and precision. Rather than using the rubric to measure a

teacher (to see whether he/she is a feminist teacher), I want to discover whether these themes are accurate. That is to say, I want to test my definition of feminist pedagogy. How does this definition represent the reality? To figure out whether the themes accurately represent what feminist pedagogy is, I use them when I observe classes. I am not only looking at the themes, but also looking for new themes that may emerge. My main questions are:

Are there any themes I am missing in my current definition of feminist pedagogy?

Are there themes currently on the list that really shouldn't be?

Are there themes that should be collapsed or merged?

Rather than using the rubric to measure the teacher, I am actually trying to test the themes/rubric. Does that make any sense?

[. . .]

It seems to me that the themes -- and the rubric -- represents the theory and how I am coding the transcripts represents the practice. And of course, the themes are only part of the observation. They are one tool I am using to ground a part of the research. As you know, I am also looking at feminist pedagogy as leadership/mentoring and feminist pedagogy as scholarship.

I don't know if any of this makes sense -- or makes you less nervous (if you were nervous before). I definitely feel a sense of doom when I think of you feeling "judged" by my approach. I have such deep admiration for your work, your teaching, your scholarship, and the way you enact your feminist beliefs. I know that you had to afford me a lot of blind trust to allow me into your life to take notes and examine your work. I can't express how much I appreciate that, how much I admire you for that, how grateful I am. Not just because this furthers my project, but because it also furthers my hope of what it can be like to be a feminist in the academy.

Perhaps I wasn't as overt as I should have been regarding the rubric? Do you think I should have shared the 16 themes -- my working definition of feminist pedagogy -- with you after I had observed the classes? How could have I done this differently so you wouldn't have felt nervous or judged? It would really help me to hear your thoughts so I don't screw up again.

Project Journal Entry. April 10, 2001:

I got an email from Lynn today [in response to the one I sent explaining the rubric]. What a relief! I had been so nervous. It was a short email – she didn't have time to answer all my questions. But, she assured me, she wasn't nervous or upset. Whew. I feel a tremendous weight has been lifted.

Response from Lynn after reading this chapter:

About your project journal entry: You still don't have a representation of my concern very clearly stated. I didn't know anything about your 16 themes while you were here on the site visit. I heard about them after the fact from [a colleague]. I was perplexed that you didn't discuss them with me, if not before the visit then after. Why didn't I tell you that I was nervous about your approach? You didn't tell me what your approach was. I don't know what the "proper" thing to do is—what a researcher is supposed to do about such disclosure. But it didn't feel very "feminist" to me—to be kept in the dark about the measures through which I was being interpreted. Again, if it was not proper to tell me up-front, then it might have been a better plan to tell me afterwards just before you left, in some sort of "debriefing" session.

The journal entries, email exchanges, and Lynn's response to my analysis chapter show that not only was there a problem with my research approach – a blunder I am willing to take full responsibility for– but there was initial trepidation about the themes themselves. The first problem being the skeptical question, "What makes these things feminist?" Even after answering that somewhat satisfactorily ("because the scholars identified them as such, although no one scholar compiled them *all* in one definition as I have"), the next concern was, "Is this list going to be used to measure whether or not someone is a feminist teacher?" I tried to explain that the list of themes was what I was "testing" in my research – hoping to document *how* this reflected a more precise definition of feminist pedagogy, not whether teachers were or were not feminist teachers. Nevertheless, the rhetoric of how I talked about the themes caused concern. "Was it a checklist?" "No, a rubric," I insisted. A rubric, for some, still implied a sort of evaluation

because in this field, we typically use “rubric” as a description of how we are going to evaluate student writing. In other words, a rubric typically represents a descriptive list to help teachers make grading more equitable, e.g. “An ‘A’ paper is one in which . . . A ‘B’ paper is one in which . . .” followed by a specific criteria that needs to be present to afford a certain “grade.” Because of this, people heard “rubric” and many times the quickest association was “evaluation.” However, the actual definition of rubric is one of explanation, description, or categorization, not evaluation. There was no hierarchy to any of the themes I had identified. Neither was there any conscious attempt on my part to suggest that “a good feminist teacher” will embody X number of themes in one class. My objective was to describe, explain, and code practices as I saw them playing out in the classroom and transcriptions to reinforce my definition of feminist pedagogy, not to evaluate whether any specific practices were good, better, best.

The process of coding

After transcribing and coding the classroom observations, I looked back over the data to see whether there were any larger interests beyond whether the themes were represented in classroom practices. From my coding of Lynn’s classrooms, there were several themes that were prominent: “Reconstructing power so it is empowering not oppressive,” “Creating connections between learning and knowing and connections between classroom and outside issues,” “Engaging students in active learning,” and “Considering each individual student’s realities and needs.” In both classes, these themes emerged four or more times.

The rest of the themes had at least two notations, with the exception of two themes in the “Image of Women in Literature” course with no notations: “Embracing conflict instead of working to avoid it” and “Integrating theory and practice.” I attribute the absence of these themes to those specific themes’ ability to be obscured, although present, within a classroom. Because I was only observing one class, it would be difficult for me to understand the nuances of tensions or points of conflicts that may exist within the classroom community, and therefore I would not be able to identify as easily when Lynn was confronting areas of conflict. Similarly, there was no literary or other kinds of theory overtly discussed on the day I observed, but that does not mean the discussion I witnessed was not based on theoretical groundings laid down in previous class periods.

To provide some context the coding chart, the reader should know that this undergraduate course is a general education requirement, so most of the students are not English majors. When Lynn and I were talking before class began, Lynn told me that she has taught this class (“Image of Women in Literature”) before and she always begins the course by talking about the title of the course (“Image” as opposed to “Images”). She tells students that “image” is problematic because it implies there is only one kind of image of women represented in literature. Lynn also focuses the course on issues of gender identity, questions of race, ethnicity, and nationality. One of the most difficult things, Lynn said, is to get students to talk about issues of race. Although these comments were not part of the actual classroom observation transcription, I coded them as such. The attention to explaining to students the significance of the course title I coded as evidence of “Confronting sex biases.” Lynn’s attention to centering the course on

issues of race, ethnicity, and nationality was coded as “Considering dynamics and issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, among others.”

One of the major requirements of the course is a journal. Each week students write 1-2 pages (typed, single spaced). Lynn collects these journals periodically throughout the semester. Each week she also gives students focus questions for their journal writing. Lynn told me she usually has a focus question in mind before class begins, but doesn't make the final decision about what the focus question will be until after discussion (coded as “Giving students choice in the curriculum and the work they do”). “If there is some passion there, I have them write about it,” she told me.

This particular week, she said, she was toying with the idea of having them connect what was going on in the text (Woman Warrior) with a personal experience (coded as “Creating connections between learning and knowing”). Lynn said she hasn't done this with this class before. Typically the journal prompts are text-based. “I am interested in what they have to say, but I don't have things written in stone when I start a class. I want to be able to do that depending on the group of people I'm teaching.”

The room where the class is held is windowless, lending it to a closed-in institutional feel. The walls are yellow and have not been painted for some time. There is brown, grungy carpeting on the floor with “brown boards” at the front of the room. Florescent lighting adds to the general yellowish-blue hue and hum in the room. The chairs are arranged in rows facing the front where there is a podium. The students file in and chatter amongst themselves before class begins. Some have the assigned book open (Warrior Woman) and are doing some last minute reading. There are 18 students in class; one white male, two African American females, one Hispanic/Latina female, and one

other female “marked” as part of a traditionally marginalized group. The rest of the students *appear* to be white females.

Lynn begins class by taking role, standing to the side of the podium and “teacher table.” When she is taking role it is clear that she knows the names of her students as she only calls out names periodically when she cannot immediately see who she is looking for. She banter lightly back and forth with several students before she launches into the daily quiz over the reading. The quiz questions focus on reading comprehension, such as “What explanation does Brave Orchid give for why she cut Moon Orchid’s tongue?” and “What is Moon Orchid’s husband’s profession?”

After the quiz, students hand forward their papers and Lynn goes over the answers to the quiz, having the students provide the answers. During this activity there is general discussion and light-hearted jesting between all members of the class (between Lynn and the students and between the students themselves). After the quiz questions have been answered, Lynn allows the students to direct the discussion by asking a general starter question: “So now that you are finished with the whole book, did you like it? Not like it?” As students respond, Lynn asks them to clarify or asks the class to add their perspectives to what a student has said. She pushes students to go further in their analysis of the text by asking them for page numbers or to read passages aloud to support their claims. By asking questions like, “What do other people think?” or “Let’s think of more examples,” Lynn draws the entire class into the discussion.

Lynn also moves the discussion gently in the direction she wants to take it by asking students to make connections between the stories and look for themes. She emphasizes the links between silence, voice, and identity found in the text and asks

students where they can find examples of these themes. When a student asks a question, Lynn turns the question over to the class: “Good question. What do you think?” During the discussion the students are comfortable revealing how their own experiences relate to the text. A Puerto Rican woman talks about coming to the United States and not being able to speak English and feeling overwhelmed at school because of the language barrier. Another student shares her knowledge of speech pathology with regard to the tongue cutting scene in the book. Lynn herself models the connections she has with the book by telling stories about her own life and the role of her mother’s storytelling from family photos (see dialogue excerpt below charts). The discussion and Lynn’s own stories smoothly culminate with the journal assignment to write about the role of storytelling in one’s own life. Throughout the class Lynn orchestrates a mesmerizing balance between contributing teacher knowledge, facilitating student-created discussion, pushing students to further analysis and critical thinking, creating clear connections between the book and the student’s own lives, and communicating self-disclosure as a partner in the learning process.

Coding Chart from “Image(s) of Women in Literature” Class

code#	Themes of Teacher Critical Reflection	Utterances/Mentions/Instances
1	Confronting sex biases (both the teacher’s own and other’s)	- addressing issue of course title (“Images v. Image”)
2	Embracing conflict instead of working to avoid it	
3	Being overt with one’s political location (self-disclosure) and checking teacher authority	- creating space where students are source of knowledge (speech pathology student sharing details on speech patterns and tongue cutting) - Lynn’s story about family photos
4	Reconstructing power so that it is empowering not oppressive	- “Good question. What do you think?” - letting students direct discussion
5	Teaching with the whole self	- telling her personal and emotional

		response to <u>Woman Warrior</u> - sharing story about family photos
6	Integrating theory and practice	
7	Critically reflecting on teaching through a teaching journal or other consistent method of critical engagement with classroom dynamics	- contextualizing class with me before class begins; reflecting on dynamics of individuals and classroom community

code#	Themes of Classroom Strategies	Utterances/Mentions/Instances
8	Creating connections between learning and knowing and connections between the classroom and outside issues	- journal topic = connecting family stories to text - "What do we learn from these stories?" - Reader response discussions - "We're trying to draw connections now between the narratives" - "What is the meaning of storytelling in our own lives?" - journal assignment: connections of personal experience/mother/storytelling/course text - syllabus: "literature is not just a school subject"
9	Working towards student critical consciousness	- pushing students to ask/answer their own questions - Socratic questioning - syllabus: "This will not be a lecture course where you will be asked to listen passively"
10	Considering dynamics and issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, among others	- considering Chinese culture in text and issue of gender/ethnicity/Americanism - overtly addressing issues of race and nationality - syllabus: selection of course texts
11	Engaging students in active learning	- Reader response discussions - Socratic questions - journal topics (generated from discussion) - having students answer quiz results in class - "Where in the book can we see that?"

code#	Themes of Student Concerns	Utterances/Mentions/Instances
12	Considering each individual student's realities and needs:	- Puerto Rican student speaking out about her experience - allowing students to write about "some other guardian" (besides mother) - openness about final paper topic - asking students to share their knowledge

13	Giving students choice in the curriculum and the work they do	- "What did you find interesting?" - open-ended questions and discussions - journal topics generated from class discussion
14	Bringing joy and fun into the classroom	- humor integrated in class discussions - students feel comfortable making jokes
15	Being aware of voices and silences in the class	- calls on students who haven't spoken by name
16	Recognizing that each classroom community and each student is unique	- syllabus: "subject to change" - details of final exam determined from student interest - waiting for students to finish answering quiz questions before moving on

As an example of how I coded the transcripts, I offer the following excerpt from the "Image of Women in Literature" course. The following excerpt is from the end of the class period where Lynn is introducing the journal assignment for the next week. The class has been discussing the overarching theme of storytelling in the book Woman Warrior and how each of the independent stories relate or speak to one another. By way of introduction to the assignment, and consequently providing a personal connection to the text, Lynn tells a story of her mother's storytelling from old photographs.

Text indicates themes within the category of **Teacher Critical Reflection**, the number reflecting the code for the specific theme.

Text indicates themes within the category of Goals and Strategies, the number reflecting the code for the specific theme.

Text indicates themes within the category of *Student Concerns*, the number reflecting the code for the specific theme.

LYNN: So, we have these stories. The first time they are given voice. Storytelling is central in this book. All of these stories are being narrated and re-narrated. I think that is one thing that we should take from this book is the centrality of storytelling. *What are the stories that you have been nurtured with, that have encouraged your life?* (8) Have any of your parents told you stories about your family, about your relatives? (12)

Student1: Nothing good!

LYNN: Nothing good? Really? But you were told stories.

Student1: Yeah. My mom always tells stories about all the bad people in the family. Her outlook is pessimistic.

LYNN: But what about others? Did your mom tell you stories about where you came from?

Student1: Not my mother, but my father. He always told us stories about how much trouble he got into. It was always the bad stories. How he and my aunt would do all these things.

Student2: Yeah. My mom always told about the bad things she did with her sister when they were young. So we wouldn't do them, I guess.

LYNN: What was the role of storytelling in your lives. This is important. I want you to think about this. What stories did your mothers tell you about who you were or the people in the family?

My mother wasn't a greatly organized person. She had all the family photos in these old shirt boxes. When she was working – cooking or ironing or engaged in some other task around the house – I would dig through the boxes and pick out two or three pictures. I would take them to her and say, "Tell me the story." It was constant as she was doing some task she was obliged to do as a wife and mother. These photos chronicled her life and she told stories to me about each person in the photos.

After she died, my father put all those old photos in albums, something my mother never got around to doing. Part of it was his grieving process. He put them all in albums and organized them properly, but I don't know how many times he came to me and asked, "Lynn, who is this?" And I knew because of the stories. It was a way of handing down history and memory to me. And that's one connection I have with this book. (3, 5 8)

Student3: So, are we suppose to think of one specific story?

LYNN: Good question. *What do you think? (13)*

Student3: (inaudible)

L: OK. for your journal question this next week, I want you to think about storytelling. Woman Warrior is about identity and relationships between mothers and daughters. So I want you to think about your identity to/relationship with your mother – or some other guardian figure – (8, 9, 12) and think of a story that kind of exemplifies this.

Student4: Does it have to be a woman relative?

LYNN: I would prefer a woman. (10) This is the image of *women* in literature! (1) I am asking you about your experience. You need to write about your experience here. (8, 11)

[Students are all a titter over this: Lynn hasn't asked them to journal about their own experiences before. Within the mix of voices I hear one student ask whether she can exceed the standard page limit because she won't be able to tell her story in one or two pages; Lynn attempts to field a barrage of spontaneously erupting questions. The questions seem to stem from the novelty of this assignment.]

LYNN: Bedlam! I know it is something new. Try to struggle with how you are like someone and how you are different. Tell a story to exemplify this. Think of a significant moment that seems to sum up your relationship or identity in relation to this person.

I chose this section to use as an example because it codes themes from all three of the categories as well as shows how I coded some excerpts for more than one theme. One example of multiple codings is Lynn's own story of her mother. In this section she is not only being overt with the class about her own personal history and social/political location – exercising self-disclosure – but she is also showing the class, through example, how to connect the work of the course (in this case Kingston's message on the importance of storytelling) to the world outside the classroom. By asking students to think about a their own identity in relation to “your mother – or some other guardian figure,” Lynn is showing she is aware that not all students in her classroom may have grown up with a “mother” in their lives (giving attention to individual student identities). By asking students to focus on a female guardian figure (“I would prefer a woman. This *is the image of women* in literature!”), Lynn is asking students to consider both the significance of gender as it plays out in their own relationships, and is also confronting sex biases by alluding to the importance of focusing on *women's* lives and students' relationships to women.

In this short excerpt I offer the complexity of analysis and coding, the kinds of decisions I made about the utterances/situations in the classroom, and how those decisions reinforced the themes of feminist pedagogy. In coding these transcriptions, I tried to be as critical of my analysis as possible, asking myself, “How else could this be coded?” or “Am I imposing a theme on this utterance that does not fit?” After the coding was completed, I went back over the transcripts to see if there were other themes that seemed to emerge that didn’t correspond to my list. I then went back to the list and tried to analyze whether there were themes that should be collapsed. After reviewing Lynn’s transcripts, I was tempted to collapse the “Teaching with the whole self” and the “Being overt with one’s political location (self-disclosure)” themes, but decided it was too early to do so. I needed to analyze more classroom situations before making that decision. I had initially defined these as two distinct themes because bell hooks had used the idea of teaching with the whole self, “being wholly present in mind, body, and spirit,” as a primary tenant of what she calls “engaged pedagogy” (Teaching to Transgress 21), implying that this pedagogical practice moved beyond simply being overt with students about one’s own location to something more physical: a mental, spiritual, and emotional connection to the course work and the students.

Storytelling and self-disclosure were prominent themes in Lynn’s classrooms, both pointing at a commitment of critique. “I try to teach critique and all my courses are about learning how to critique culture. There is certainly a focus on critiquing the patriarchy, but also heterosexism and capitalism – the hardest of all to get students – especially undergraduates – to think and talk about [. . .] That kind of criticism of everything, including feminist pedagogy, is what my version of feminist pedagogy is.”

The more I reviewed Lynn's transcripts, the more I saw the significance of storytelling to her pedagogy. This storytelling provided a site of not only self-interrogation but of vulnerability – allowing others the opportunity to critique her.

She shamelessly and proudly told,

After having analyzed the sites of leadership (with Lynn's JAC work) and teaching (in the traditional classroom sense), I moved to looking at scholarship – the words Lynn herself had written – as a site of feminist pedagogy. When considering Lynn's own writing I am compelled to return to the theme of "the stories that shame us" I mentioned at the first part of this chapter. With her own writing, in her own words, the richness of her stories arch a nimbus over the exacting structure of a strong feminist perspective. In this most personal site of scholarship as pedagogy, the care Lynn takes to reflect on the stories she tells is magnified and illuminated by her delicately constructed rhetoric. Within the stories of her scholarship, there are not only the overt layers of narratives told and examined, but the meta-stories that are the intricately designed paragraphs, weaving theory with practice with intellectual rigor. As with her teaching and leadership, when I read Lynn's writing, I see intense attention to detail, the careful crafting of words, rhetoric, ideas. Lynn's passion for putting words together in scintillating ways produces some of the most beautiful and powerful prose in the field.

Because of her public identification as a feminist, Lynn understands that her work will be judged, first and foremost, as "feminist scholarship" and therefore works excruciatingly hard to make her published work a positive, passionate, and proud example. Lynn's commitment to writing from a strong feminist perspective – scholarship

that overtly and unashamedly uses the “f” word – results in jarring slams against the dominant culture’s resistance to feminist ideas and perspectives. One of the most telling and poignant examples of this was her experience publishing Feminism and Composition Studies: In Other Words. She wrote about that experience in her essay “Working Titles and Entitlement(s),” in the form of a careful rhetorical analysis of the proposed title (rejected by the MLA press) and the revised title. Her analysis focused on a critique of the power of naming, extending to the publication board’s perceived threat of an uppity and assuming maverick brand of feminism, a threat they felt was spoken in the proposed title (Between Feminism and Composition Studies: Words Without Shame).

In this article, beyond the careful rhetorical and feminist critique of the review committee’s reactions to the book’s proposed title, the act of writing about the experience was itself a feminist act of self-disclosure. This public declamation exposed the inner workings of the publication process and how a feminist voice, throwing itself against that very patriarchal structure, is a radical act of naming. In one of my interviews with Lynn, she offered a broader perspective of this experience of entitlement and naming as well as editorial power and the politics of publication.

[When receiving feedback back from MLA after submitting a proposal for the book] there were several comments saying “This is too feminist.” The problem with it, and this is a quote, is that it was “listing towards feminism.” And we [Susan Jarratt and Lynn] were commissioned to do a book on composition and feminism and the response was that it was too feminist? That is the kind of resistance, backlash. And so if we don’t have women who are at least sympathetic towards feminism or men who are sympathetic towards feminism in positions of decision-making, you don’t know what kind of work is going to get turned down or never even see the light of day. So that is important. [. . .] But the thing we need to remember is that the book made it into print. While there may have been people who didn’t like it and didn’t really want it published, it did get published and it got published substantially how Susan and I conceived it. But it was a long, hard process. So just the very fact that the editor of JAC is a feminist is

symbolically important because I would have liked to have that symbol when I was a student. I want to emphasize that it isn't just a symbolic point, but it is a pedagogical point, right? It's instructive. There is a lot of power in that, and in any editorial position, in that you are pointing to whatever to say "This is significant."

It interests me, after reading the "Working Titles" essay that "shame" was in the original title that Susan and Lynn proposed for the book. As stated earlier, shame is an issue that surfaces more than once in Lynn's work: in the stories she tells (interrogating shame) and in her work with graduate students (constructing power so that it doesn't shame). In the "Entitlement" article – and of story that was Lynn's experience with MLA – the issue of "shame" appears again, but this time with a different twist. Shame in these contexts (the proposed book title and the subsequent article that tells the story of the book title) points to a personal and collective feminist rejection of shame imposed by the patriarchal order. In telling the story of how the people at MLA responded to the proposed title, and the proposed title itself, there is a rejection of ideological forces that would impose shame. Instead, the stories are told "without shame," a brazen, sassy even, rebuke of patriarchal propriety: "I./We will not feel ashamed for this work, this voice, these words," is what the proposed title declares.

Sociolinguists and anthropologists have long written about the distinction between shame and guilt – both related to issues of "face" in discourse practices.⁴⁵ Shame, they argue, is public and guilt is private. Both shame and guilt are products of our internalization of ideology and what we are told is "normal," proper, and good. When we

⁴⁵Attributing general theories of shame and guilt to one theorist is difficult if not sloppy scholarship. Ruth Benedict may be one of the first names associated with discussions of shame and guilt. Margaret Mead has also written on the subject. Another theorist that has helped me further my understanding of these distinctions has been Hajime Nakamura. Interestingly, all these researchers wrote about the concepts of shame and guilt in the context of observing "other" cultures, as if the workings of these social norms were not part of their own cultural experience.

publicly transgress those norms, we are shamed, in effect enduring a public finger wagging or humiliation.

Guilt, however, is a personal and internalized reaction to transgressing ideological norms. Guilt is a form of internalized shame, where we self-police our actions and behavior and feel guilty when we don't measure up.⁴⁶ Although some argue that guilt also distinguishes itself from shame by relying on a personal belief system rather than a more public, cultural belief system, those personal beliefs and values – those actions that make us feel guilt when we don't live up to personal expectations – come from a cultural ideology. Catholic guilt is a ready example. A more specific example within "Catholic guilt" is that the broader culture may not consider "pride" to be worthy of shame. Therefore many people can feel a sense of pride without any internal tugs from the conscious or public ostracization. But Catholic ideology teaches pride is a sin, a smart slap in the face of constant humility before God; therefore a Catholic indoctrinated with that ideology, having a prideful moment, would – as a result of that recognizing the pride as a sin – feel the discomfort of guilt, even if there is no public shame involved.

Feminists, then, not only refuse to feel guilt for – or refuse to apologize for – stepping outside the boundaries of what the dominant culture has defined as female or feminine, but they also work to exorcize shame from their consciousness, a public act of defiance against white supremacist patriarchal ideology. In her words and work, Lynn

⁴⁶Ironically, instead of a jury or judge pronouncing an individual "shamed" for a crime, the judicial system pronounces the person on trial "guilty." In fact, one person cannot pronounce another to be guilty of something because guilt is a internal and individual self-judgement. Instead, the public condemnation of being named as a criminal is an act of shame, not guilt. Equally interesting is the way the dominant culture articulates the distinction between guilt and shame. Guilt is a state of being, an existence, an identity: "He was guilty." Whereas shame more often constitutes a feeling, a temporary emotion: "He felt ashamed." The different rhetoric used when describing the state of guilt or shame reinforces the public/private distinction: internal (feelings) versus external (state of being).

offers two way to exorcize shame: publicly picking through with careful critical self-analysis the stories that shame us, and refusing the imposition of shame imposed by the patriarchal status quo for not being feminine enough or female enough, for being sassy, uppity, and vociferous about our feminist beliefs.

Shame is a way that ideology overrides lack of personal guilt. It is when we don't self-police, when we resist ideology enough to not feel guilt, that shame then becomes a check of the ideological norms. Even if someone has not internalized the norms enough to abide by them personally, publicly they will be called upon to do so or risk shame. In both the proposed title ("Without Shame") and in her storytelling ("tell the stories that shame"), the end result is to call into question the cultural wagging finger, to protest against it, to interrogate the moment of shame and question what ideological structures have caused the shame *and* what actions have produced the shameful moment. Those very actions of naming or writing through shame herald the power of feminist transgression and its threat to cultural hegemony.

In the context of the proposed title, Between Feminisms and Composition Studies: Words Without Shame, "shame" becomes "shamelessness," reflecting an unapologetic feminist approach. In the patriarchal empire, feminism is a cause for shame where "shame pre-positions" people in "a highly stratified, meritocratic social order" ("Entitlement" 25).

This concept of "shame" – the way people in authority traditionally cast those without power as being riddled with errors if they do not march in lock step with the defined ideology – makes avoiding shame or being shameless a feminist strategy for transgression. In addition to the title evoking ideas of unapologetic feminism, the

proposed title can be read as pointing to a conversation *between* equal representatives: feminism belief system and the world of composition studies, which although the latter is traditionally female-dominated, inherently male-controlled (see chapter 2 on representation of female scholars in composition journals). After the colon, the title teases us by hinting that the texts between the covers will engage in a feminist critique, perhaps a critique some would see as hostile, about the relationship between the distinct and perhaps opposing viewpoints of composition studies and feminism(s).

“Between” can be the crevices separating the boundaries or borders that have kept women – and specifically feminists – out of epistemology in general and out of composition scholarship specifically. Feminism seizes the power to name the between. The proud, public, shameless claim of feminism or feminist identity doesn’t necessarily mortar up the between, but creates a foot bridge, a path, by which to create conversations over the between. Even in my own project, in the act of redefining feminist pedagogy to take it away from a definition that positions women as nurturing mother facilitating a CR group or a hostile, overbearing feminist pushing her ideology onto unsuspecting students, is an act of naming the between. By creating a collaborative and collective definition of feminist pedagogy and testing out that definition with ethnographic research, I am trying to forge through the thick underbrush of negative stereotypes about feminist pedagogy to articulate a useful and meaningful pedagogical theory that can be claimed not just by feminist teachers, but by the field, as a rich, complex, careful, smart pedagogy of scholarship, leadership, and teaching.

Project Journal Entry. April 3, 2001:

I tried to nail Harriet down today on her definition of feminist pedagogy. She carries mostly negative ideas around about it: nurturing, maternal, touchy-feely. It reminded me immediately of coming across Lynn's description of "feminist pedagogy of maternal nurturance." I think it is in her pedagogical violence article. And then I think of Kate, stating in my comp exam that she was uneasy about the term "feminist pedagogy." It seems most people I have encountered have a real hesitancy to embrace "feminist pedagogy." It feels as if there is a dominant understanding of feminist pedagogy as some sort of watered down critical pedagogy with an inherently "feminine" twist (un-rigorous, nurturing, womb-like). Critical pedagogy is good. Liberatory pedagogy is acceptable. Feminist pedagogy is somehow problematic. Even in the graduate level Women's Studies course about "Feminist Pedagogy" that I sat in on last summer, the working definition seemed to be some sort of CR-group model of teaching where everyday we had to "check in" and make sure everyone's ideas and feelings were "validated." It felt like a feminine pedagogy, not feminist pedagogy. But in my definition – an amalgamation of definitions I find outside of comp – there is nothing really "feminine." As a woman – or as a feminist – I have *never* been accused of being "nurturing" or "maternal" in that way some people think is "inherently female." At least in my conscious memory. I remember, as a child, being chided because I wasn't feminine enough: "Kay! Ladies don't sit that way!" So the idea of socialized femininity, like maternal nurturance, being associated with feminism, even feminist pedagogy, seems foreign to me. Why is that so much a part of how some folks think of feminist pedagogy? I remember Lynn talking about that issue: being accused of not being "womanly" enough as a teacher with the story of the hostile student who commented on her "tits" in a student evaluation. And also her saying that there are several different ways of being nurturing that aren't "feminine," but that people expect female teachers to embody that mommie role of feminine nurturance and when they don't, they are criticized for it. Is there a way to reclaim feminist pedagogy in the field of comp to define it distinctly and clearly from the idea of "feminine pedagogy"? I feel that is what I have been trying to do with these site visits: not only challenge my definition by watching these women in action, but also trying to figure out ways to reclaim a more empowering, accurate definition for the field.

Being shameless, then, is a feminist pedagogical strategy: refusing to feel shame – or guilt – for not being a nurturing mother. Rejecting how the dominant culture defines feminism and feminist pedagogy – feminist leadership, scholarship, and teaching – and creating something new, claiming the power to name that as feminist, is what this project

is about. And, it is also about celebrating the feminist teachers who are using this pedagogical approach to confront patriarchal practices in words, ways, and work to a most radical feminist end.

Lynn's Response to Reading the Chapter:

I think you don't make as much as you might make of the fact that I am the first "explicitly" feminist editor of a journal in r/c---i.e., someone whose scholarship is explicitly feminist, whose teaching is explicitly, publicly feminist. [I]n making that claim I was gesturing toward all those people in our field who think that they can go about being feminist in quiet, unannounced, and relatively nonpolitical ways, and it still counts as feminism. There are those people who say that comp studies has always been feminist. It's like saying that since there have always been a majority of women in comp, then the field is and always has been feminist. [. . .] My point [about being a vocal, visible feminist doing feminist work in the field] is really made in the last section of the "After Words" where I say that it matters when explicitly feminist scholarship becomes possible in a field; it matters when an explicitly feminist editor is appointed to a major journal. I mention all this because I think you miss the opportunity to make a larger point about certain claims in our field.

. . . without apologies or whispers, the Words After All That."

The belief systems and theories used to enact pedagogy create scholarship, but rhetoric itself plays a role in how the pedagogy is constructed. The language used to communicate an idea becomes a teaching tool, a primary implement within the classroom, in scholarship, and working with colleagues or students one-on-one is rhetoric itself. Language has the power to not only describe a perspective or a reality, but to change, to transform, to alter or shift the audience's view of the world.

The classroom, or working with students one-on-one, constructs an obvious teaching moment. A feminist teacher constructs her rhetoric carefully to engage the learner, offering expertise without belittling. Instead, she pushes students to see themselves as learners and knowers, interrogators and investigators of the world. As

described in the previous sections, Lynn has various strategies for doing these things. But, she also pays careful attention to the rhetoric she uses. One example is Colleen's and Merry's remarks about Lynn's care not to shame. In separate conversations, both Colleen and Merry mentioned Lynn's care to avoiding shaming workers when errors were made (Merry: "She is very aware of her authority position and concerned that she doesn't shame people. [. . .] How do you let people know they make errors, but at the same time don't shame them? She enacts feminist leadership principles in the way she handles this;" Colleen: "She's forgiving at the moments when you aren't. At those moments, she uses it as a pedagogical moment; not to shame or humiliate."). To avoid the trap of public shame, Lynn carefully chooses her words and approach when working with JAC staff, embodying careful, caring feminist leadership.

In the classrooms I observed, Lynn also takes care to shape her rhetoric, inviting a continuation of the conversation, a give and take between all members of the classroom community, not just a series of dialogues between Lynn and individual students. When Lynn responds to students by throwing the question back to the group ("That's a good question. Anyone have an idea about that?") or by inviting the entire class to find a passage that supports another class member's argument ("Does anyone have a page number?"), she is drawing the rest of the community into the discussion, creating a vibrant classroom of learners and knowers who are engaging across the aisles or the circle with peers. In her graduate seminar that I observed, Lynn pushes students to take control of the discussion by consistently asking, "Anything else?" before moving on to another topic. With her rhetoric in these examples, Lynn is positioning herself as a

facilitator, albeit a very knowledgeable one, with the main objective of pushing students to further their skills of critical consciousness and critical reflection.

Scholarship has the potential to move the reader to critical consciousness in ways similar to a classroom experience. Lynn's scholarship does this not just in message alone, but in the rhetoric with which she delivers that message. I am drawn, again and again, to Lynn's scholarship because there is beauty in the words. Yes, the ideas are smart and she has important things to say, but it is the beauty of the words that causes me to write down phrases and keep running over them, like sand through my fingers. It feels good. One of these show stopping passages comes from her "Confessions of an Epistemophiliac" article. When I read it, I hear her speaking to academic feminists specifically, challenging them to do more, to think more critically, to challenge their own location of privilege. The message speaks to me, but the use of metaphor and the poetry of the prose are stunning:

We live in the neighborhood too, though on the outskirts perhaps, and we know it is a dangerous place, with an exclusive address. With this knowledge in hand, some of us will continue trying to reclaim and renew the neighborhood with the tools at our disposal. Others will resolve to move their wild patience elsewhere, to some place as yet unspoken in the history of desire. *A few will leave no tracks to follow.* Though we may no longer dream of a common language and destiny, I improvise with Adrienne Rich when I say there are words we cannot choose again, words so permeated with the fibers of actual life as we live it now that they have no power to reconstitute the world" (60-61) (Emphasis mine)

In her work, in her rhetoric and scholarship, Lynn is making sure to leave tracks to follow. She is offering a model of other tools, those not of the Master, to create scholarship that connects the personal with the political with the cultural with the pedagogical. It is through this work, her scholarship, leadership and teaching, that Lynn

is taking care to reconstitute the world, cutting a new path. This is what feminist pedagogy can be: lyrical, political, smart, and bursting with self-critique as well as institutional or hegemonic critique.

In her path-forging trek Lynn moves through feminist theories, carefully creating alternative rhetorical practices; she leaves a trail, one not of bread crumbs but of bright, enduring sign posts, for other scholars to follow. She is not colonizing new terrain; rather she is reclaiming territory ripped out from under and violently kept from traditionally marginalized peoples. Although there is wild(er)ness in her work, she is, as most feminists are, working against the machine of the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. She works to jam that machine with her leadership, writing, teaching, and rhetoric. She implants cultural, political, personal, and field-specific discussions into the nooks and crannies of that machine, all with a sharp feminist focus that will change the product of the churning machinations of ideology. In her article “Critical Interference” she uses the rhetoric of “jamming the machine” (9) as a way of resisting the normalization of language, an echo of the above excerpt from “Epistemopheliac” where she advocates new language, new words that are “permeated with the fibers of actual life” (61). It is through the careful personal and critical stories she tells in her scholarship that she weaves these threads of life through theory. The result is a model of feminist rhetoric and scholarship, a model of pedagogy, that departs from the traditional/impersonal/third person singular model heavy with the tongues of white, privileged class males – the forefathers. Objectivity is named for the ruse it is and in its place is frank personal critique, the teacher and author turning stories, holding them up to the light of feminist

consciousness, and examining the prism from all angles, creating new meanings, and reconstituting the world.

Instead of replicating the world with their rhetoric and pedagogies, feminist teachers and scholars struggle to create an altered view of the world – one that exposes the systems of domination. As Woolf wrote in Three Guineas, “Prevent war not by repeating your words and following your methods by finding new words and creating new methods” (143). Therefore feminists have to be linguistically creative, rejecting sanctioned discourse, the rhetoric of the snools,⁴⁷ as Mary Daly describes it. Although strategies are difficult to employ – as we are all drooling fools for ideology – even small diversions do not go unnoticed. Through her writing Lynn provides a model of rhetoric that others can further interrogate and follow. “Those who have power to name the world influence reality,” and with every article published, Lynn is renaming the world through a feminist gaze (Spender 165).

While reading Lynn’s published work I find myself scribbling down passages to go back to for inspiration. These passages raise a raw challenge about writing I should be doing as a feminist in this field. Although all her writing offers me nuggets of inspiring and delicious prose that I trace in a journal or notebook in my own hand, feeling the way they spill out of a pen, it is her “After Words” essay that I cannot dissect by dividing into passages. This essay, for me, is holistically an amazing rhetorical moment, a radical pedagogical move, and a wild feminist act. It is the one essay from this field of composition and rhetoric that I can’t be far away from because it shows me what is

⁴⁷Snools are foreground rhetors who govern and legitimate what Daly refers to as the “bore-ocracy.” Only by pushing language from the Background (feminist consciousness and community) into the foreground will feminist ideals ever take root and grow in the dominant culture.

possible and what to work for: the careful self-critique, the integration of theory and practice, the power and importance of storytelling and connection, and the tangible, palatable, delicious sensation that comes from language carefully and smartly crafted.

Most days in the academy I feel as if I am not doing feminist work. A political activist at heart, I feel most at home in grass roots meetings, in the company of a community of women struggling to change the material reality of their lives, or banging on the doors of senators or others wielding power and confronting them with the voices of traditionally marginalized perspectives. There are few academic voices that articulate the frustration, the yearning, I feel being a grassroots activist in the extremely privileged world of academia. The “After Words” was the first essay I can remember that spoke to *my* feelings of discomfort as a feminist devoting less and less time to community activist work as I wrote, thought, talked in these ivied walls. After reading the following passage. I wrote a margin notation in emphatic pencil, “Right. We’ve got to work outside academy!”

[W]e may not grasp how limited is the role academic feminism plays as an abeyance structure that in twenty years has become a relatively safe harbor, insulated in many ways from a persistently hostile social and economic climate. With our energies consumed in the day-to-day demands of teaching and service, with our attention focused on the pitched battles in feminist theory, we may misrecognize the true sources of hostility and mistake the institutional changes we have made in higher education, most of which have been only cosmetic, for the revolution itself. [. . .] Many of us may believe, for example, that we are actively resisting the gender genocide taking place around the world through our latest research article presented at an annual professional conference (see Jordan). We who try our luck here – in the college classroom or the academic publication – work a particular corner of the world, a *corner that is not especially important to the overwhelming majority of women throughout the world.* (347-48) (emphasis mine)

Lynn is not suggesting that feminist work in the academy and feminist scholarship are not contributing to the larger realities of women. Rather she is insisting that we, feminist academics, remind ourselves continually of our “exclusive address” in these hallowed halls and critique our own social location, doing work on many fronts instead of just one. We must act, publically and speak loudly, as feminists. We must be vigilant about what other feminist work is going on in the world and remember that because of that grassroots work we have the privilege of freely naming ourselves as feminists whereas many woman working the private sector do not. In academia feminism is many times seen as a sexy theory that looks good on a vitae. Not so in the private sector where the “F” word has become a contemporary scarlet letter, a mark of shame, upon which one can be denied a job or promotion. Perhaps that is also true of the academy and I just haven’t learned that lesson yet.

My attraction to the “After Words,” the significance of it for me, goes beyond the fact that I felt my thoughts and feelings articulated for the first time in an academic forum. It is, again, the construction of the rhetorical site, the radical departure of what is expected of an “After Words” that Lynn transgresses and reconstructs that offers a model of feminist pedagogy, a site of learning and listening.

Kay: The “After Words” is the piece that I go to, the piece that I go to where I can see that things can be different. It is so wonderful, but it is also so deeply interrogated. At first when you are talking about Blue Betty, I said, “No! Oh, no!” because I thought, “Oh no! This is a *bad* story!” But at every point that I am nervous that you are telling that story, you interrogate yourself.

Lynn: That is so interesting to hear because that is exactly what I was trying to do. I was trying to put together the personal and the theoretical with the interrogation of what is here [in the theory] with what is here [in the personal]. It was very hard to write because there were so many places where I could just really fall apart, it could all fall apart. At the same time I was undergoing lots of

mourning. My father had recently died and I was in a different place than I am now [or] when my mother had died. I grieved for years about her. I was also was doing something different; I had never written a personal [narrative], I had never written that kind of autobiographical criticism. In fact, I don't like most of it that I see out there. I was really taking a risk. I was doing something I was uneasy with, but I wanted to do it, but I wasn't sure I could do it.

Kay: What made you want to do it?

Lynn: I've been wanting to work out the story of Blue Betty for a long time. I had been thinking about writing it somehow for a long time, but didn't know how. [. . .] I am really trying to take from those essays [in the book] and make them into a critical process that puts me at risk and all of it at risk. I didn't want it to be, I mean how do you write an afterword? What do you do? "This is a smart article. Smart article. This is how you apply this article; this is how you apply that article." But that is how an afterword is typically done. It puts into relationship what comes before, either in a congratulatory sense or in an applying this to pedagogical situations. And I didn't want to write the usual afterword. I didn't want to write what people expected. I wanted to do something different. But I also wanted to write something that was about feminism both being self-critical as well as being able to move forward in a political direction and all of that; about [how] we come into feminism at different times, in different places, different moments in history; the point at which we enter the feminist movement. [. . .] But that doesn't have to make us unable to talk to one another; we can deal with each other through our differences and in terms of our differences and in spite of our differences without it being this centralized sisterhood or pressure. We have a lot of different feminisms. So, I am trying to talk about collective subjectivity in a kind of abstract theoretical way. I had a kind of collective subjectivity from my mother and other women in my life who are in here, in me somewhere. I guess it was very important to me at that particular moment in my life that I wrote something both very theoretical and very personal; that was about more than academic feminism, composition studies; [it was] an active self-criticism.

The "After Words" nourished me with the type of feminist rhetoric and feminist scholarship for which I was hungry. In the essay I see connections between theory and practice; between feminist theory and feminist lives; between lives of women and academic writing; confrontations of race, class, gender, and sexual identity. When I first

read the essay, the reason I go back to it again and again, is because I felt starved for all those things and I couldn't find them in the academic writing that I was reading. The "After Words" essay is also brilliant in its self-reflection and self-interrogation, the weaving of theory and lived experiences and *the teaching of writing*.

Project Journal Entry. February 20, 2001:

I went to dinner tonight with Lynn. Over Indian food, I asked questions and listened. But I was really dying to ask her about the "After Words" essay – it's the one question I have been itching to ask. At the end of the interview I told her how much her "After Words" meant to me and how I kept going back to that and (Dorothy) Allison as models for my own writing. The entire conversation was amazing. ("Amazing" seems to be the word for this visit, but I am getting tired of my own redundancy and lack of creativeness; what can I say other than "amazing"?). She was so candid and open about her thoughts on the essay – and about everything I asked. When I asked her what her most radical feminist act was, she said – without hesitation – not getting married or having children. I found that brilliant and – once again – so affirming. That is another word to describe this visit. I have felt *affirmed* by her words and work over and over again. The way she articulates and lives her feminism offers me great hope. It is a way I can feel good – instead of guilty – about being a privileged class feminist in academia.

Beyond the feminist message of the scholarship – not just this essay but her published work which has feminism as its central theme – the passion that is visible between the words themselves provides a model for feminist rhetoric and scholarship. When I read Lynn's work, I see how carefully she puts words together. There is a real passion, a serious art, to it. The words are pleasurable to read. I often find myself stopping to read passages aloud to hear how they sound, and they sound great. They are words meant to be read aloud, like a public manifesto, full of high spirits and conviction. When I tell Lynn of the delight that comes to me reading her words, she expands on the attention she gives to her own rhetoric.

I am glad [that passion] comes through because that is what I am interested in. I have a lot of, I get a lot of pleasure and intellectual stimulation by working out something through the words. [. . .] I want to be entertained. I can't just sit down and deliver a message. I have to have fun while I am doing it. Even if it is something deadly serious, something that very much matters, I have to be able to have fun with it, be involved in working out the language; that interests me, excites me, makes me laugh. [. . .] I think you can do scholarly work in ways that are not just plodding and explaining. It makes it harder. I think it makes it harder and maybe more time consuming, labor intensive, but I think you need to it that way.

Because Lynn is doing it this way, she is marking the trail. Through her careful counting of ribs and other storytelling measures of lives and words, she creates a feminist pedagogy through her mentorship, scholarship, teaching, and rhetoric. It is a pedagogy of self-interrogation, self-critique, passion, and – of course – pure delight.

Contextualizing the Knowing Subject: Harriet Malinowitz

I first encountered Harriet not through her scholarship but through conference presentations at the Conference on College Composition and Communication. I remember being wowed by one presentation specifically, although now I can't quite remember what the heck it was about. I do remember that I walked away from that presentation saying to myself, "*That* is the kind of academic feminist I want to be." "*That* kind of academic feminist" is one who strongly grounded her scholarship in activist work, making constant, continuous, persistent, and poignant connections between the field and life and work in the community.

Now that I have spent time with Harriet listening to her talk about her life and work, I see that her approach to academic feminism is the logical extension of a feminist consciousness that was first grounded in community activist work. Harriet's feminist work and activist work began almost at the same moment, when she marched into a Graduate Committee meeting in the English Department meeting at the University of Massachusetts and, with a group of fellow graduate students, suggested a revision to the qualifying exam reading list to include more women (out of 60 authors, two were women; the feminists proposed adding six women to the list). That was in 1978. Since then she has carried her feminist spirit with her to Central America as well as into the streets of New York City, working for labor, reproductive freedom, queer rights, and on behalf of rape and domestic violence survivors.

Her feminist perspective permeates her teaching and scholarship, but so does what she calls her "dilettantishness." She has been a student in various programs: Labor Studies, Women Studies, Creative Writing, and Composition. Harriet holds an MFA in

fiction, an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language, and a PhD in composition. Currently Harriet is an associate professor of English at Long Island University in Brooklyn where she founded the Women's Studies program and designed much of that program's curriculum. At LIU she teaches women's studies, cultural studies, queer theory, composition, rhetoric, and various writing courses to graduate and undergraduate students.

Harriet first and foremost defines herself as a writer. Indeed, she writes in various contexts and genres from short stories and stand up comedy to literature reviews for The Women's Review to academic articles within the fields of Composition and Rhetoric and Women's Studies. She has published scholarly articles in women's studies journals and comp/rhet journals; she has also written for feminist activist presses and popular newspapers and journals in the New York area. In the field of composition and rhetoric is she best known for her consistent feminist perspective and her attention to queer issues in the field, specifically through her book Textual Orientations: Lesbian and Gay Students and the Making of Discourse Communities.

Because Harriet grew up in New York City, she strongly identifies with that location and culture. During our conversations she pointed out that she was poignantly aware that her colleagues in the Midwest (among other places) did not enjoy many of the freedoms she took for granted. For many, it is often not smart or safe or in their best interest to openly identify as a lesbian, or a queer, or of a social activist bent that rubs against the status quo of smaller communities and more conservative spots in the country. Her awareness to the privilege of her position is also something I deeply admire about Harriet's work. She is acutely aware of locations and identities and how her

geographic location informs her identity. These points came to bear very dramatically near the end of the project when Harriet's life changed as a result of the September 11, 2001 incidents that leveled the World Trade Center, only a couple miles from where Harriet teaches at Long Island University. Because of this tragic event, Harriet was unable to respond to the ethnographic chapter in the way she wanted to. Her life was thrown into a frenzy, not of the least of which was the impromptu course she felt the need to teach on "The Rhetoric of The War on Terrorism." Between the extra teaching responsibilities of the class and emotional upheaval of the time and location, the task of responding to this ethnographic chapter understandably dropped from the "to do" list. My location as a Midwestern feminist provided me a relatively safe haven from the drama of New York City, the fear, and the panic that Harriet was living through, helping her students through, and creating a teaching moment out of it all through her course on the "War on Terrorism." Her need to connect the events of the day to her students' lives, to her own work and life, and to the politics of the day provides yet another example of feminist pedagogy in action and Harriet's commitment to connecting community activism to classroom work.

*Chapter 4: Harriet Malinowitz
The Writer-Passion of a Feminist Dilettante*

I quickly become overwhelmed whenever I visit New York City. Too many tall buildings. Too much concrete. There never seems to be enough light, enough sun on my skin, enough space, enough solitude. Too many people. Too much thrum and screech. My heart is definitely one of a prairie chick, yearning for the solace of wide open spaces. When I arrive at Harriet's office at Long Island University (right off the 2/3 subway stop in Brooklyn at Nevins Street), I have been in "The City" (as if there is only one) for three days and the harried pace is beginning to clench my psyche. Harriet is coming in just as I arrive on the fourth floor of the humanities building. We are both scratching through our bags furiously – even the simple task of looking for pens or keys seems fevered. We are busied, individually, in the minute trappings of official business. We cheerfully greet each other and then hurry through the atrium. Harriet stops our collective bustling to introduce me to the administrative assistant as her "trailer who is shadowing me for three days." I feel slightly mysterious or at least vaguely sly and important, a dime store novel detective.

The fourth floor of the humanities building has just been renovated, so it feels new: light, airy, a residue scent of latex paint. The wood is blond. The furniture is low to the ground with soft cushions that one sinks deeply into when sitting. The grit and noise of "The City" are exiled elsewhere. There is the soft, cottony hum of air purification and climate control. The offices have large plate glass windows, even if these windows only face the internal corridors. It seems almost more fitting that they do. This clean, blond, hushed world peers in upon itself instead of out onto the honking, hacking, beeping

cacophony of Brooklyn. Harriet and I settle into her office. She seems frazzled and rushed. Flustered, almost. She must have a million things on her mind, I tell myself. Or is she just nervous about me being there? I believe the physical reality of me to be an intrusion. There is an awkwardness at first. The bodily presence of me, with my tape recorder, seems odd to us both. Unlike politicians or other people within the public domain, academics are rarely called upon to be the subject of a feature-like article. As a former journalist, I am used to these sorts of tagging along story missions. As an academic, I know how foreign they are in this world where the written word is the more genuine representative of the person, not the messiness of day-to-day working and living.

Harriet leaves her office door open as we talk. Periodically a colleague walks by and Harriet calls after them so she can introduce me. When one colleague, Celie, stops by, Harriet explains, "This is a visiting graduate student who is shadowing me for a few days so she can write about all the horrible things about me in her dissertation. It is a total exercise in self-absorption." Celie asks me what my dissertation is about, and I summarize by saying it is about how feminists in the academy translate their beliefs into classroom practices. Celie quips, by way of answering that question, "With a phallic hammer, right Harriet?" Rather, for me, feminist pedagogy is about laying down that phallic hammer (Master's Tools!) and using implements, instead, from a decidedly different tool box or work bench.

Later in the week Harriet tells me it is with colleagues like Celie, and not so much students, with whom she maintains more of a mentoring relationship. The main connection Harriet has with others, she believes, is her passion for writing. "My true mentoring instinct comes out with the writers. [. . .] They know me and are connected

with me in some way, and they know I am obsessed with writing. They know I think of myself as a writer.”

In Harriet’s pup-tent of life, the center stake is writing. Harriet first and foremost sees herself as a writer and wants, more than anything else, to write, write, write. Sometimes, in the context of academia and specifically in the field of composition, Harriet is a frustrated writer. Most of the conversations I have with Harriet pivot on writing: her own, her colleagues, how to teach it, how to write with glee and meaning, how to find critical consciousness through writing, how to do the kind of writing she wants to do and get published. Harriet tells me more than once that at various points in her life she has finagled to create a life where writing is the center; in conjunction with this, she has also attempted to create a space where she can do the kind of writing she likes to do, which specifically is not academic writing but writing alive with personal experience and response to the world.. It is this type of writing, which Harriet describes as a personal essay genre that shows up most often in the articles she write for The Women’s Review. This style, what seems to me to be more a relaxed, conversational tone that deviates from the stiff, lingo-laden prose of academic discourse, also takes on starring roles in some of her scholarship (“David and Me” and “Unmotherhood” most obviously).

Listening to Harriet talk about her writing life and in analyzing the transcriptions of our conversations, I see very prominent feminist pedagogical themes emerging under the guise of “the writing life.” One of these is a feminist consciousness that, although Harriet may not immediately identify as a foundation for her writing, seems central to the end result – the work she produces in the form of text. Another theme is, of course, the

sustaining chord of passion about writing that she carries with her into her classrooms. Through her teaching and scholarship, Harriet creates connections between the importance of writing and critical consciousness. The critical thinking skills that she encourages her students to exercise in their writing are skills she also pushes them to utilize in their own lives.

Harriet tells me that teaching is her “day job” but that writing is her life, the sustenance of her mind and soul. This distinction that Harriet sees, and I am sure feels, between writing and teaching is less distinct for me. What I witness in Harriet’s teaching and writing is an integral and overlapping relationship that hinges on feminist consciousness. Her delight in teaching and writing inform each other, enliven and enrich each other, providing intellectual fodder in an infinite loop of kinetic energy. Together these two parts of her life, teaching and writing, create texts and classrooms that model feminist pedagogy. What grounds these twin constellations of teaching and writing is the energy of feminist consciousness.

A Sketch of the Feminist Mind at Work

To contextualize her world for me, Harriet recounts the story of how she came to Long Island University (LIU). This is the way we begin the conversation in her office, my tape recorder turned on and tested, a quiet, yet telling piece of evidence on the desk: this is not just a friendly conversation. But we both, it seems, want to pretend it is. At least I do. I am genuinely interested in finding out about Harriet. There is no roving reporter on assignment, waiting for the sound bite to squeak out so that she can move on to the next story on the docket. I settle back to hear what Harriet will choose to tell me.

Her story starts out “In the beginning . . . ,” but quickly moves into a rather elliptical, stream-of-consciousness monologue that touches on many different stories of how she came to be where she is – and how she sees the world as she does. Harriet’s narrative begins with her entry into the world of adjunct teaching at LIU in 1984; the linear plot is quickly abandoned for one of cross association. The plot of this personal story thickens and twists with interesting curves, corners, and intersections around and between writing, critical thinking, feminism, teaching, and social/political activism.

I got my MFA . . . Well, let me go back even farther than that because it all kind of connects. First of all, I sort of had this very, despite being Jewish, a Protestant Work Ethic kind of upbringing. [. . .] I had a father who felt that it was really hedonistic and immoral ever do anything you liked. Or that gave you pleasure. Work had to be unpleasant and also very practical, the kinds of things you have a license [for]. Basically he encouraged me to be a research librarian and my brother to be an accountant. He thought I would enjoy, well, not enjoy, that wasn’t permitted, but being a research librarian would be good because I could help other people who were doing very interesting research. [. . .] I loved books. I loved reading and writing. And my brother was more of a math person. So, [my father] sort of thought, “How could you take these proclivities and turn them into something really boring? And practical.”

As Harriet talks, my mind’s eye creates the image of a wild-haired girl child, tilting her head back to scrutinize the world of her father; he steers her to a quiet, sedate, feminine profession, this man who thinks she should “help others” do interesting work rather than embark on her own adventurous and mind-stimulating path. While Harriet talks and my mind spins new images to accompany the stories told, Harriet is trying to eat her lunch: a bagel with cream cheese and some carrots. Somewhere in the far-reaches of my brain I feel badly about this. Not the food, but the fact that Harriet is trying to eat and talk at the same time. I watch her struggle to chew, speak, and swallow and I am pricked by tiny tingles guilt. But I don’t stop her. I could let her finish her lunch before

we start the conversation, but I am also acutely aware of time limitations and don't want to waste the short five to ten minutes it would take to yak casually while she finishes her lunch.

Between bites and swallows Harriet tells me she began adjunct work at LIU in 1984 teaching first-year writing courses. "Nobody was supervising what I did. They just gave me an old syllabus and told me to teach." She jumps from this first memory of LIU to reflecting on a future yet to play out: currently LIU is considering replacing first-year writing courses, housed in the English department, with Writing In the Discipline or Writing Across the Discipline (WID/WAC) writing intensive courses in each discipline. Harriet is concerned about this shift because she doesn't think people in other disciplines have been trained in teaching writing. The intense pleasure she finds in the act of writing and the teaching of writing is at the core of this trepidation. Harriet believes that to teach writing well, one must have passion for writing, a hunger to create text that is interesting, vibrant, and meaningful. Although possessing a sense of deep delight and commitment for what one teaches is not exclusive to feminist pedagogy, this is an example of how the various themes of feminist pedagogy figure prominently in Harriet's approach to her thoughts of teaching and writing. Harriet's concern for having people in other disciplines who are not writers teach writing also reflects Harriet's deep care for students. She wants them to learn to write, to think consciously and carefully about writing, to be able to create well-constructed arguments, to enjoy the craft of putting words together as a way of engaging minds and audiences, and to understand the politics and ideologies at play in different discourse communities. The WID/WAC shifts at LIU concern her because even if the tenured or permanent full time instructors receive training in WID/WAC, the

writing intensive courses, because they are more labor intensive, will probably be farmed out to adjuncts or grad students who don't have the writing training or expertise.

These sentiments echo the critique Harriet leveled against WID/WAC programs in her essay "A Feminist Critique of Writing in the Disciplines." In that essay she wrote that WID/WAC programs caused her grave concern because they took the critical awareness of ideology out of discussions on writing. The focus of WID/WAC programs is to teach students how to unquestioningly ascribe to hegemonic norms, where instructors most commonly ask "What kind of writing do you do in your discipline?" Instead of critiquing discipline standards and who those standards and structures work to include in and exclude from power, the question of "What kind of writing do you do in your discipline?" hides the power and politics from writing, impeding the work towards critical consciousness. Because Harriet sees writing and working towards critical consciousness inextricably related, especially in her feminist classrooms, she is critical of WID/WAC programs. "As WID now exists, it doesn't help students critically assess how forms of knowledge and method are hierarchically structured in disciplines, so that some achieve canonical or hegemonic status whereas others are effectively fenced out. In the absence of such a critical framework, students are easily beguiled by the mystique of dominant knowledge systems, which are bolstered by and in turn legitimate asymmetrical social, material, and ideological arrangements" ("Feminist Critique" 293). For Harriet, leaning to write in a formulaic way to please a specific discipline, audience, or institution runs not only counter to feminist work, but robs students of opportunities for critical awareness through writing.

Harriet's skepticism regarding WID/WAC courses comes, in part, from her experience as a day-tripping faculty member sitting in on other courses. Because of Harriet's fascination with the offerings and processes of higher education (she refers to herself as a perennial undergraduate) she frequently sits in on classes her colleagues are teaching across the curriculum. "I really like seeing how other people teach and being a student again," she told me. From these experiences, Harriet has observed that instructors in other disciplines don't really teach writing – or at least they don't teach writing as a vehicle for critical consciousness, although the main product of course work may be projects or other major writing assignments. Most typically, Harriet has observed that students create a paper at the end of the course, but there is no discussion about the project or the process before it is due; there is no discussion on how to construct an argument or hone a text. There is no conversation about the power structures at work and the ideologies hidden within expectations held by a specific audience of what is good or appropriate writing.

Perhaps because of her concern about how writing is taught (or not taught) in other disciplines, Harriet prefers teaching writing in her non-comp classes, a version of WID work in humanities courses. Because these courses aren't first-year writing courses, Harriet's approach the pedagogy of composition feels different in these contexts. In the Women's Studies, Cultural Studies, Queer Studies and other Humanities courses that Harriet teaches, she feels she is a better writing teacher. This may be due to the focus on critical thinking and cultural critique that are inherent in the curriculum of these types of courses that works so well with Harriet's vision of writing. Also, in her non-comp courses Harriet feels freer to abandon composition ideology for her own writerly

instincts. From Harriet's perspective, composition ideology dictates a process theory (pre-write, write, revise) that often doesn't work for students. Composition courses also force students to churn out a huge quantity of text (four or five papers using the pre-write, write, revise process) leaving little time for in-depth discussions of writing or careful contemplation of a student's own writing style and habits as well as the work involved honing, crafting, and fine-tuning a text.

To listen to her talk about composition, one would not immediately define her as a strong advocate of composition theories or approaches. However, even this rejection of what Harriet terms "composition ideology" is a firm connection to feminist pedagogical theory because Harriet is looking for ways to connect with students – to bring her passion into the class and share that part of her life with her students. Also, by resisting disciplinary boundaries and looking towards integrating rhetorical theory – by teaching Women's Studies and Cultural Studies courses with an eye to how to construct a convincing argument and pay close attention to how words fit together to shape an idea – she brings the feminist ideals of creating connections and blurring boundaries to her pedagogy.

Bringing her Writer-Passion to the Non-Comp Classroom

Harriet's resistance to the distinct delineations between disciplines brings writing squarely and centrally into all courses she teaches, even those that aren't specifically listed as English or composition credits. With fewer number of projects assigned in non-comp courses (two instead of four or five), Harriet says she can spend more time talking at length and in detail about writing in non-comp courses. Much more than teaching

“composition,” the term laden with the theory and practices of the field, Harriet likes teaching writing. “I am more and more teaching my so-called comp classes [. . .] as other kinds of writing courses. I taught a graduate course in reading and writing the personal narrative a couple years ago and I am going to teach it again. That was an occasion where I could have died of happiness. I really was in my element. When I was teaching that class I realized I was drawing on all my real instincts of writing rather than anything I learned in composition.” In this writing course, Harriet allowed herself to abandon the composition ideology (process theory, writing assessment theory, teaching academic discourse, contemplating “contact zones”) and focus on her own instincts as a writer. This move speaks to the feminist pedagogical theme of integrating theory and practice. When the composition theory Harriet had internalized as a graduate student or member of the field didn’t make sense, she recreated and reshaped the theory from her own practices as a writer, modeling the dialogic relationship feminist pedagogy describes between practice and theory.

Listening to Harriet talk about her passion for writing and finding another way of teaching writing – one that feels reflective of her own love for words– one feels the connections between her own practice as a writer and the theories about writing she carries to her students. Instead of doggedly trying to practice the comp theories codified during her graduate studies in composition, Harriet creates theories out of her personal practice of writing, translating her personal approach to her own writing pedagogy. In Harriet’s description of her love for writing and her struggles to present her writing experiences to students in ways that are meaningful to them as writers, I am reminded of Jan Zlotnik Schmidt’s introduction to Women/Writing/Teaching. “How did I come to

embrace a life guided by a love of words? How did I come to know as a child and as a teenager that teaching and writing together would give my life form and meaning? How did I come to feel that the classroom was a place where at times I felt most 'rooted,' most at home, most alive" (1). To hear Harriet talk about writing – and her desire to teach writing in way that is meaningful and delightful to students –I think back to Zlotnik's questions and Harriet's story of herself as a child, burdened by a father who eschewed anything as impractical as a writer's life. How did she find her love and life of writing despite the patrician's manifesto that pleasure was hedonistic and work should be divorced of delight? In Harriet's case, the answer to Zlotnik's questions seem to be "The Women's Movement." Through feminism, Harriet found a way to disrupt the father's messages and seek her passion instead of hide from it.

By talking with her students about her own affinity for writing, Harriet models the feminist pedagogical theme of self-disclosure and working to dismantle traditional systems of teacher hierarchy in the classroom. She positions herself as a colleague and learner with her students, all of them writers working towards creating a more satisfying and dynamic argument.

My strength is my instinct about writing, having that instinct about writing. Being able to talk about that. I think I am good at talking to students about their writing. There are a lot of things I am not good at, but that is actually one of the things that is my forte. And not only [with] students, but also colleagues and friends. I definitely do a lot of writing mentoring. And I am a slave driver for friends. If they bring a project to me, I definitely push them to do more than they wanted to do, but I am fanatical about writing really. And that is one reason, paradoxically, I feel, that I am not that happy in composition. I don't feel that composition is so much about writing or I feel like it is full of people who dislike and distrust writing. [. . .] After I taught that personal narrative [graduate level] course, I really started teaching, even my basic writing and writing courses last term, more like a writing workshop. Group line-by-line readings of their stuff, which I had never done in a comp class. I really felt they were developing instincts about

writing. Anyway, this is just a long-winded way of saying, writing is the central, driving force for me, and it is ironic that composition would alienate me because it is not enough about writing.

Harriet's desire to share her life-long love affair with writing with her students reflects the feminist pedagogy theme of creating connections between one's life, the experiences of the classroom, and the learning process. Feminist pedagogy challenges instructors to work towards connectedness between learners and the instructor, between learning and experience (Wright). By bringing her delight for writing, and the way she approaches writing, into her classrooms, Harriet connects her life to her students'. She is not only inviting the students to experiment and find their own way to satisfying, meaningful, critical writing, she is carefully explaining how she writes and why she is passionate about the art of putting words together to convey a message. By extension, she is also embodying the feminist approach of helping students bring their lives and writing together (Sommers 174).

Related to Harriet's fascination with writing and teaching students to become better, smarter, more critically conscious writers is her commitment to teaching critical analysis. Teaching cultural critique exemplifies a fundamental way in which her feminism intersects with her teaching practices. Her own well-honed skills of cultural critique first came to Harriet via feminism. As Harriet moves through the chronology of her life with me, carefully articulating how she came to see the world, she marks her first moment of critical consciousness as taking place within the context of a Women's Studies course in 1978 when she was working towards her MFA at University of Massachusetts Amherst.

I am never doing what I am supposed to do at the moment. I am always doing something other than what I am supposed to do. So, in the MFA program – no sooner did I have my life set up so I could write and devote myself to writing – I discovered Women’s Studies. I had never encountered anything like that before. My very first graduate course there was called “Lust Fiction of American Women.” [. . .] It was a very life-changing thing. And that is what started me on my feminist trajectory. Having started that I became just obsessed and had to take every Women’s Studies course in the world. Women’s Studies was my entre to politics in general. From there, that was where – in that area I guess – I began discussing issues of racism, primarily racism in the women’s movement, and I was listening rapt – with rapt attention. [. . .] It really, I would say, made me an intellectual. It was my port of entry into the intellectual world.

The subtext of this description of how Harriet came to understand feminism and live feminism are the feminist pedagogical themes of critical consciousness and creating connections: connections between disciplines, connections between systems of oppression, connections between the academic world and the experiences of lives outside the academy, and connections between feminist theory and the political issues feminist activists work for and against. Harriet’s “feminist trajectory” began in a graduate women’s studies course, but continues today through every strain of her pedagogy and scholarship.

Escaping the Tyranny of the Composition Canon

As we talked about teaching, Harriet described her approach in ways that I immediately identified as feminist teaching. In her eyes, however, her methods have little to do with feminist pedagogy and more to do with her transgressions against how she was taught to teach composition. She talks about composition theories such as process theory almost as tyrannical forces that have prevented her from becoming a good writing teacher.

In her book Textual Orientation, for example, she takes Peter Elbow to task, writing that his expressivist theories of composition alienate or disregard gay and lesbian students who may not be safe coming out to their teacher of their class by writing about their world/lives (38). Another example of Harriet's critique or resistance to canonical comp theories is her response to David Bartholomae's "Inventing the University," in which Bartholomae examines students' attempts to use academic discourse and explains ways that comp teachers can help them make the transition from their own discourse communities to those of the university more successfully. Harriet sees Bartholomae's theory as an example how the field of composition often ignores hegemonic power structures when teaching writing. "This discursive positioning that Bartholomae favors [not questioning whether/if students understand the ideologies at work when adopting academic discourse] seems to be precisely the contrary of that encouraged by liberatory pedagogy, whose aim is to help students *transcend* the naive belief that they can – or should – magically enter mainstream culture by 'mimicking' its mass discourse and behaviors, as mass media, schooling, advertising, and other institutions encourage them to do [. . .] Might [students] learn something very different if they were to examine the ways in which the privileged discourse of the university represents particular agendas, perspectives, and principles, and contrasted these with the ways other discourses – in which they play a part – represent particular agendas, perspectives, and principles?" (Textual Orientations 83). Elbow and Bartholomae are just two examples of cannonized contemporary comp theorists who Harriet feels ignore crucial interrogations of dominant ideological forces that have systematically excluded traditionally marginalized people. Certainly not all composition theories ignore questions of power and hegemony;

feminists in the field – like Harriet, Jackie, and Lynn among many others – have published scholarship where interrogating power structures and ideological oppressions as they play out in rhetoric and the writing classroom are central. However, the composition canon – and certainly the theorists that Harriet read as part of her doctoral studies – represent theories that often ignore the complexities of power and oppression.

It was only after Harriet abandoned what she had been taught about teaching composition – those theories like Elbow’s and Barthomomae’s that were presented to her in graduate school -- and instead configured her own feminist principles with her passion for writing that she felt she was most effective as a teacher.

Harriet: One other thing I do want to say. And again, I don’t know how this fits in with the feminist part, but this fits in with all the stuff I had to say about writing. This is one way I would link it more to pedagogy, because I am so much more concerned about writing in life than I am about pedagogy. I mean, I think about it as the center of me, and teaching is just my day job basically. Something happened in my Basic Reading and Writing class this past year. I might have said this, when I was talking about the personal narrative graduate class and I realized my own instincts as a writer came into play there, and I started doing this in that basic writing class and it really seemed to mean something. And I really just kind of threw over a lot of the usual mantras from composition and decided to bring myself as a writer in there. And take them through a piece of writing the way I take myself through a piece of writing and that often has to do with grappling, trying to figure out what is really the right word here? And why is this one OK, but not good enough? And how can you make sense of this sentence? Just at that really minute editorial level. And it was turning the class into a workshop. I had never taught it like that before and there is so much we have to do in these classes. It involves reading, just a million things. All the assignments they have to do. And I decided to really cut down the assignments and go in depth into that. And I pretty much feel like I would continue to do that. That I liked that. It was a lot more pleasurable for me and they really got it. So.

Kay: So the main difference being that it was something you were excited about or it was a model that you used that you could transfer to the classroom?

Harriet: It was real to me. I almost feel like an impersonator in a lot of these comp classes. I felt like I was doing what . . .

Kay: What people were telling you to do, how to teach comp.

Harriet: Yeah. I even used revision. "OK: First you draft. Don't worry about the grammar. Then . . ." (Laughs) I had really felt like an impersonator. I also felt like there were times that I was having conferences with students but I wish I had a tape recorder and could just present the transcripts and send it into one of these comp journals. They were so hilarious because of the way they would completely manage to avoid – the students – manage to avoid the net of composition. I would have these completely whacko conversations with them where I wasn't getting through to them at all, but they were very enthusiastic. I am often amused a lot by the realities of classes instead of what we usually talk about in conferences. And so much of it is so funny.

Kay: Well, it is the separation between the theory of what you think you should be doing and what you actually end up doing, which is what works.

Harriet: And also how students react to things. So, I don't know how that relates.

Kay: No, it is very important. And it also relates to one of my themes.

Harriet: What do you mean?

Kay: My themes of feminist pedagogy. Like you were saying "This isn't feminist pedagogy" but I think it is. The desire to connect "This is how I do it" or "This is my perception," or "This is what works for me. I am going to communicate that with the students so they can see, they can either feel empowered to create their own way of doing things or that the way I do things will be meaningful to them." That self-disclosure is somehow useful to them.

Harriet: Right. And again going back to the mantras in composition, in so many of those process books they say, "This is how writers really write." And I would pass that on, but it's not how I wrote. I thought, "I am a writer. I can show them how I write. And that is what I really know best." And it works for me, so I am the most equipped to teach that way. It seems to work.

Kay: I think you are right. I think it is important to be passionate about what you are teaching instead of following the formula. If you are passionate about writing, tell them why and how. But I think a lot of comp teachers aren't passionate about writing.

Harriet: Exactly. And a lot of them treat writing as suspicion. As I was saying yesterday, so much of the work is about how can you triumph over the misery of writing. And I always find it amazing that people in composition never talk about people like Ellen Willis, Kathy Gordon, Patricia Williams. Patricia Williams they do because of her books. But I know her not because of her books. I know of her from her column in The Nation. Writing like The Voice and The Nation writing to me is the best writing around, as far as I can tell. How come we don't ever talk about that stuff and who are we reading?

This question, and its answer, of who we are reading and how we are reading with students, with our colleagues, circles back around to the issue of writing and scholarship as pedagogy. Harriet is critically aware of what she is asking her students to read – and write. But she also extends that focus to the field. She yearns to make a space for the writing she wants to do, the writing she is passionate about, within the field – integrating the personal essay into her scholarship. That is not to say others are not doing this type of scholarship in composition. Victor Villanueva is a prominent scholar who consistently grounds his scholarship in personal narrative. Harriet certainly is not unique in her desire to integrate personal essay into her scholarship or to pursue a style of writing she is passionate about, even if it transgresses the standards of academic discourse. However, this is Harriet's struggle: to write how she desires and still get her work published in the field.

Researchy, Footnote-y, Fact-Thingees

Conversations I had with Lynn and Jackie about scholarship swooped through my mind as Harriet talked to me about writing. All three of these women are passionate about their writing and yearn to change the discourse practices and standards of the field to incorporate the kind of writing they like to do. For Lynn and Harriet, they want their

own writing to be delicious for the reader to gobble; they also want to integrate direct, personal connections to lives outside the ivied walls of academia. Jackie's approach brings the realities of traditionally marginalized lives and voices to the field, but in doing so she wants to create a methodology that disrupts traditional epistemologies, creating a more feminist approach to knowing. For all three of these women the passion for writing and feminist scholarship as disruption becomes a site of feminist pedagogy as it teaches and leads others to new ways of teaching, learning, knowing, creating.

Despite Harriet's frustrations and struggles with what she feels is the field's resistance to the type of writing she wants to do, Harriet understands the privilege of being able to do the work and writing she does. One of the things that thrills her about a life in the academy is that it facilitates a writing life. "I know for a lot of people the pressure to publish is a huge burden to them, but I revel in it. [But] I am increasingly realizing how unhappy I am doing these real researchy, footnote-y, fact-thingee kinds of essays." This discontent, the feeling of using a language that does not represent what they want to articulate, is expressed by many feminist academic writers. Patricia Secrist, in her work on feminist scholarship, writes, "Feminist scholars are often in the position of trying to break out of, rather than rely on, the authority of received knowledge" (185). In scholarship, "received knowledge" often embodies the expected standards of the academic discipline, the researchy, footnote-y, fact-thingee models that Harriet resists. Instead, Harriet says, she wants to integrate human drama in her academic writing. Later, in a way that I feel illustrates this point, Harriet told me about an essay she was sending out about choosing not to be a mother, and the rhetoric in "motherhood" and "unmotherhood" discourse communities. Harriet first gave the essay to friends to read,

but then revised it before she sent it out to academic journals. “I went back and took something that people outside the academy really enjoyed when they read it and made it into something they probably couldn’t enjoy.” In explaining why she felt the pressure to do this, Harriet said, “I put it in much broader and subjective terms and I probably took a lot of the joy out of it.” This seems to echo the mental wrestling match that consumes me as I write this project. How much personal information is unacademic or anti-intellectual? How can academic discourse and intellectual analysis be integrated with personal experience in a way that will be seen as smart and scholarly instead of just self-indulgent brain purge?

A couple months after my site visit with Harriet, I called her to talk about some questions I had as I was pouring over the transcriptions, her syllabi, and scholarship. The phone call happened to fall the day after she received a letter from The Journal of Feminist Studies about the “Unmotherhood” article she had submitted for consideration. The “Unmotherhood” essay begins with a narrative moment of Harriet on vacation, encountering a evangelical preacher man and their exchange. Harriet’s personal narrative reads easily and wittily, a pleasure to read.

I told him how, as a Jew3ish atheist, I had read the bible for the first time while preparing to teach a literature survey course. “My favorite character, without a doubt, was Jesus,” I asserted generously and truthfully. [. . .] I felt myself speaking not only to a person, but to a person framed within the certifying tableau of the American Family on Vacation – while he spoke to someone unframed, the tacked-up edges of a canvas showing. I kept waiting, with a familiar clench in my stomach, for him to ask me, as people often do, if I were married and had children. I had already told him, outwardly breezy, that I was Jewish, an atheist, and pro-choice. Surely that was enough for one afternoon.” (2-3)

It moves from this narrative moment to theoretical reflections on the rhetoric of parenthood focusing on choice, eugenics, sterilization practices, fertility, and teen motherhood. Throughout the theoretical and cultural discussions, Harriet weaves in her personal story talking about her relationship with her mother, and how she formed her definition of motherhood by first examining her own mother as a child. She chronicles the ways in which she came to her understanding of what motherhood entails, moving carefully from her childhood to her adolescents to her adult life. Through her personal storytelling runs a solid stream of theory that speaks to the connections between femaleness and motherhood. Harriet is brutally honest regarding her own decision to not become a mother. "I like to be alone, and I don't like to be bored. [. . .] I like kids – there are some I love – but the unremitting contact raising them requires would destroy me. This is in large part because I'm unable to get engaged with their culture." The article is balanced between careful cultural and rhetorical analysis, grounded in smart theory, and intelligently candid, often humorous, self-disclosure. The reviewers and editors of The Journal of Feminist Studies responded by saying they wanted more of the "research-y, fact-thingee stuff"; they wanted the autobiographical elements weeded out. One reviewer wrote, "This manuscript is way too long (38 pages) for what it delivers. Anecdotal theme setting (pages 1-2) offers nothing new and doesn't encourage the reader – at least this one – to continue. The essay begins in the final paragraph of page 5." In other words, the reviewer thought the personal narrative, the autobiographical context that begins the essay, the part that situates Harriet as a person within the text interacting in a real way with the issue of motherhood and childlessness by choice, cloyed at her. The reviewer rejects it as "anecdotal" instead of a feminist epistemological approach to theory and

scholarship. Rather than trying to understand the subversions and disruptions and new ways of knowledge-making through personal storytelling, the reviewer seems to feel annoyed with the disruption to her expectations for an academic essay. I would not say the reviewers in this case aren't feminist.⁴⁸ They are feminist, but they are working within a decidedly patriarchal model. There is feminism that works within the patriarchal system and there is feminism working to change the system, to recreate the system. By clinging to academic standards of "it has got to be more theoretical and what is this autobiographical stuff doing in here?" the reviewer is showing her investment in a model of scholarship that was created by the patriarchal academy, designed to devalue or dismiss personal experience as epistemology.

In talking about the reviewer's response to Harriet's "Unmotherhood" article, our conversation began with the connections I saw between Harriet's scholarship and her pedagogy.

Kay: I would say that [as your pedagogy strives to create strong connections to the personal, making it political, that] is true also of your scholarship. I am also trying to make the argument that feminist scholarship is a type of feminist pedagogy where the things you are doing in your scholarship, *you* may not define as feminist pedagogy, but I am going to.

Harriet: Well, actually, I have a really interesting little addendum for you about that. Very hot off the press as of last night. Remind me, what was it? We had talked about the personal essay form.

⁴⁸Certainly the journal is a feminist publication. Certainly the people who are reviewing [the article] are feminist, or I would assume that they are, or at least that they are defining themselves as feminist. But I would also say the more radical feminist response to Harriet's article would be a closer more critically self reflection of their discomfort with the essay: "I am uncomfortable with this, but I am uncomfortable with this probably because I am entrenched in the structure that this article is disrupting. So, in the name of transgressing old structures or creating other models that are more engaging, that are more welcoming, that are more inclusive of different feminist voices and different feminist approaches and perspectives, I am going to publish something like this. And thereby begin a discussion about changing the standards of publication."

Kay: You said you wanted to, part of your real joy in writing was getting to a place where you could do that more. And that you were trying to do that more. So what I am trying to argue is that, in and of itself, is a feminist move. Because you are trying to integrate the personal with the theoretical and you are trying to shift the discourse standards of the community to make it not something that – as you said – “bores me to tears.” Academic discourse, you said, “bores me to tears.” So you are trying to shift that, to say, “it doesn’t have to be that way.” And you are trying to do it in a way, that I would say, the end result is something feminist. The end result is integrating the personal with the theoretical, to make the personal political.

Harriet: The funny thing is, and here is my little addendum. There are actually two parts, but the more pertinent is that last night I came home and saw my mail and had a letter from The Journal of Feminist Studies. I had sent them “Unmotherhood.” They have had it for months. This editor sent it to three readers. One reader was enthusiastic about it. Two were not. And this editor seemed to feel that she would like to send it out to more readers. But it seemed, the upshot was, could I get rid of the personal stuff. The problem they had was that the theoretical part wasn’t developed enough and “What is this autobiographical stuff doing here?” [. . .]

Kay: I remember that you said that [you had revised the article so that it was more theoretical and less personal and therefore less interesting]. In fact you said that it was less satisfying for you because of that. [. . .] That is the whole distinction I am trying to make is that just because [a teacher or scholar defines] as feminist, doesn’t mean they are [enacting feminist pedagogy] in the classroom or their scholarship.

Because I think of feminist pedagogy as a specific type of pedagogy, one can identify as a feminist teacher and not necessarily be enacting feminist pedagogy. That is, feminists who are teachers can be enacting traditional classroom practices, resulting in a pedagogy that is decidedly not feminist. Likewise, a feminist journal can be publishing feminist essays – work that is feminist in content and idea – but not be doing so in ways that embrace disruption to standards. Harriet’s scholarship is feminist both in message and style and structure because of her disruption to traditional academic standards and her willingness to die on the sword to do the writing she wants to do, being vigilant and

maverick about making connections between theory and practice, between lived experiences and her academic work. Unlike me, however, Harriet does not see her struggles to integrate richer personal reflections in her academic prose particularly as feminist pedagogy or feminist rhetoric. Instead she see is as a compulsion to quench her nagging thirst for interesting prose in academic discourse. To her, academic writing is typically “just bad prose.”

I think one of worst examples of writing in the world is academese. I think that it is so deadly. And [academics] seem to pride themselves on their deadliness. And a lot of what people criticize as being academic jargon I don't think that is the right word for it. First of all there is so much postmodern language that it has almost become cliché. They were interesting when they first started doing it, but then . . . even things like “situating yourself” and all that kind of stuff. Like anything it just became rote. And it makes you wonder. It makes you wonder about the people writing these things. [. . .] There is such a pressure to publish in academia that it is like a mill. You have to publish, so people just write slop. And then people are forced to read it or they force themselves to read it. I decided I didn't want to write slavish themes. That's why I chose the lesbian/gay theme originally. It wasn't a theme everyone else was writing about. It was something new. If I had to write that book over again, though, I would do it differently. There are still things in there – how I wrote it – that was part of that [traditional academic] model. I was trying to fit into a certain model of how academic writing should be. Now I try to write things that move away from that. Like “The Music Man” or the “David and Me” essays. I am moving more towards integrating personal narrative in my work. Academic writing almost makes me want to cry. I want to *write*. The emergence of creative non-fiction has been a life saving genre for me. I was dying to write personal essays. That is why writing for the Women's Review of Books was so important to me. It allowed me to write those personal narratives and weave them into the book reviews.

The reviews of the “Unmotherhood” essay were not the only disappointments Harriet has suffered recently because of her desire, her need, to write in the way she wants to write, striving to use the personal essay genre as part of her academic scholarship. A couple weeks before the response to “Unmotherhood,” another essay Harriet had written about the personal essay itself and the interdisciplinary nature of mixing genres as a form of

academic argument had been turned down by two book editors. In this situation, Harriet was solicited by the editors to write an essay for the book. She told the editors she needed to write a personal essay. They said they were interested in having her contribute and a personal essay would be a dynamic addition to the collection. However, faced with the reality of the text itself, they wrote Harriet and said after “much agonizing” they felt the essay did not fit within the context of the book. As with the editors of the feminist journal, the editors of the collection invited Harriet to revise and resubmit. In both situations, Harriet politely declined, attempting to argue for the essays as they were written, a feminist transgression of the expected.

But is *That* Feminist?

When I suggest that these moves to subvert the standards – by integrating the autobiographical or the personal essay genre into academic writing – are feminist pedagogy and feminist rhetorical moves, Harriet is skeptical. The reoccurring refrain that pops up in this song that is my project is, “Why do you define *that* as feminist?” In an email exchange with Harriet, I try to convince her of the connection between feminist pedagogy and feminist scholarship, in effect arguing that there is such a thing as feminist rhetoric. I believe that the integration of personal narrative reflects a feminist strategy because it subverts the form and standards of academic publication. But, these subversions are only feminist if the objective is a feminist message. That is not to say that traditional academic prose cannot be feminist scholarship. Feminist scholars who use traditional rhetoric/standards are indeed engaging in feminist scholarship/rhetoric because their message is feminist. Certainly transgression for the sake of just doing

something different isn't necessarily feminist. But if one is transgressing the structure in order to convey a feminist message, – "I am messing with the standards because they limit my feminist message and I want to communicate a feminist perspective in a totally different way that speaks to that identity," – then that *is* a feminist transgression.

Personal narrative isn't always feminist, but when feminists use it because they feel the personal needs to be part of their scholarship as a way to connect the personal to the political or theoretical (feminist), that is feminist rhetoric/scholarship at play. It all slithers back around to good, ole feminist self-reflection: Why am I doing this? If the answer is, "Because it is important to my feminism or my feminist message" then that is feminist scholarship – and feminist scholarship as a form of feminist pedagogy, as a way of showing others the way and changing the standards. Certainly feminist pedagogy and scholarship, in all their varying forms, are not necessarily exclusive to feminism.

Although Victor Villanueva is communicating, for the most part, a feminist-type message in his work, if he doesn't see himself as a feminist rhetor/writer, then it would be hard for me to categorize that as feminist scholarship. On the flip side of that Susan B. Anthony Silver Dollar, just because someone plays around with form once in the name of feminism doesn't mean she always will. A good example is Patricia Williams. Her messages are most always feminist, but sometimes she uses the standard discourse/style that is obviously not a deviation from standard discourse practices. Sometimes she integrates self-reflection and critique in the name of her feminist analysis (essays like those in Alchemy of Race and Rights). And sometimes she really outdoes herself by playing with form all over the place to communicate a feminist message (her "Muleheadedness" essay where she integrates fiction with political commentary with

fable/myth and drama). *All* are examples of feminist scholarship, although in very different forms.

So, in my mind, it is feminist scholarship/rhetoric if:

a) the message is feminist (even if the form follows traditional patriarchal standards, e.g.

Judith Butler or Cheryl Glenn)

b) the objective is to reconstruct or deconstruct the standards because doing this emboldens the feminist message, e.g. inserting personal narrative in an attempt to integrate the personal with political/theoretical (Lynn's "After Words" or Harriet's "Unmotherhood")

c) Re-vising or recreating the standards by way of embodying a radical departure of style/form/function in the name of feminism, e.g. the William's "Muleheadedness" essay

And it could be a, or b, or c and be feminist scholarship/rhetoric; most feminists choose different approaches depending on audience and context, not always using the same tack. Of course the writer/rhetor has to identify as a feminist -- and the message has to be feminist -- or all bets are off. But this is a hard theory to sell. I feel as if no one is buying this. I must not be explaining it well; it makes perfect sense to *me*. Maybe I am a polyester-clad sales rep of an incredible pointless product that no one really has much use for, but which *I* am ridiculously and pathetically invested in. I lug around a big black case of "feminist stuff." I keep knocking on doors and trying to peddle it. My pitch is off, apparently. No one seems to be buying.

But then again, Harriet does consider what I have to say. Because of my argument, she revises her beliefs of feminist pedagogy. She sees that a course's content, containing a calculated feminist perspective that is communicated in complex ways

within a curriculum, does signify that there may indeed be such a thing as feminist pedagogy. Perhaps, she tells me, there is nothing that is inherently feminist in form, but there can be in content. This feels like a small victory to me. But I have a difficult time separating form from content so neatly. For me, feminist pedagogy is about form and content, an intricate combination of the two as embodied in various strategies unique to a teacher or an individual classroom. There are, after all, unlimited ways that a teacher can actually practice the sixteen themes. For me, the themes represent possibilities for both form and content. It is the awareness of the themes, the commitment to them – all of them – that creates a site of feminist pedagogy, whether that is in the classroom, in scholarship, or as a leader in the department, university or community.

Shaping Critical Consciousness Through the “Why/How?”

When I observed Harriet’s classes, the themes I heard echoed in our conversations about her teaching (integrating the personal and community in the classroom, teaching critical thinking, subverting teacher authority) played out as dominant themes in her classrooms as well. I observed Harriet teach two courses. One was an introduction to Women’s Studies course entitled “Women in Culture and Society.” The other was a Cultural Studies course, “Ways of Reading Culture.” In her “Women in Culture and Society” class, the most prominent theme was “creating connections between learning and knowing; between classroom and outside issues.” Harriet’s teaching also emphasized themes of self-disclosure and confronting teacher authority (13 and 14 mentions respectively). In the “Ways of Reading Culture” class I observed, these themes were also the most prominent. Other themes that showed up

regularly in Harriet's classes were themes of "working towards student critical consciousness" and "engaging students in active learning." Typically Harriet's strategy for engaging students and pushing them to critically think involved asking students questions to complicate issues or further their responses. She also used the strategy of asking students to focus on the "How?" question.

The codings for the sixteen themes on the table below are from the "Women in Culture and Society" course. This class was extremely small (three students), making the 2½ hour class not unlike an intense, in-depth conversation. There were two young women in the class (one African American and one Middle-Eastern American) and one young man (African American). Before we went to the class, Harriet told me a little about the dynamics of the group: the male typically had very high talk time and one of the young women hardly ever said anything at all. This dynamic proved to play out in the class I observed as well, with both Harriet and I actively working to draw both young women into the conversation as much as we could. Harriet said she wanted me to feel free to participate in the class, instead of just observe. I ended up inserting myself in the conversations a great deal. When I was transcribing the tapes, I felt as if I had done too much "participating." The subject for discussion was reproductive issues, so my contributions to the class were often in the form of personal experience as a pro-choice activist in the Midwest, trying to reinforce connections between the articles that had been assigned and my own lived experience (theory and practice). Harriet persistently pushed the students to relate the readings and issues of reproductive rights to their own lives, thus the strong showing of theme 8.

The class room itself was large and airy. Long windows stretched along the west wall and the afternoon sun warmed the room. The floors were highly polished salmon-colored tile and expanses of black boards lined the room so that I was not at first clear which was the front or back of the class. Chairs were scattered around in no particular arrangement and because the class consisted of only five people, including myself, we formed a rather loose group near one side of the room. All of us sat at desks, adding to the casual feeling of a group of friends or colleagues having a conversation.

Although the texts read for this class focused on reproductive rights, the conversation moved from abortion, to motherhood, to insurance coverage, to rape, to mental illness. Harriet let the students lead the conversation, beginning the discussion by asking, "We won't have time to talk about everything, so what do you want to begin with?" Students launched discussions of government funding for social services and the abortion rhetoric used by both Pro-Choice and Pro-Life groups, moving back and forth between reading citations from the text that caught their eye or furthered their point and relating the text to their personal experience or popular culture. All of us consistently drew from our own stories to deepen the conversation. The Arab American student talked about becoming pregnant and not getting married, much to her Muslim parents' chagrin. I spoke of being a Pro-Choice activist and clinic "defender" in the Midwest. Harriet talked about her reproductive rights activist work in New York City. The African American male student talked candidly about his family and definitions of motherhood, his views on abortion, inequities in insurance coverage, and whether crack mothers should be put in jail. This student's opinions typically reflected a very conservative social agenda; Harriet asked questions to complicate his perspectives and engage other students

in the conversation. She also consistently brought in other perspectives that the students were not considering such as issues of socio-economic class and living in rural areas where abortion services are not available.

Laughter and humor were central to these discussions. Although Harriet was challenging some of the student's views, she did so with a lightheartedness that allowed them to avoid feeling defensive or silenced. To draw the quieter female student into the conversation, Harriet talked about a connection she saw between that student's campus activist work and the class discussion.

With 20 minutes remaining in the two hour class, Harriet turned the control of the class over to the student who was responsible for the "Woman of the Day" presentation. Each week a student researched a famous woman and then presented the information to the class. The day I observed the student talked about Pat Parker, talking about Parker's life and reading some of her poetry. The student easily made eye contact with everyone in the group as she talked about what she thought the meaning of the poetry was. Other students also offered their analysis of the poems, as did Harriet. The class ended with Harriet adjusting the syllabus to accommodate a guest speaker. She invited students to bring guests to the next class to hear the speaker, ending the class with the same sense of close community in which it began.

Coding Chart: Intro to Women's Studies: Women in Culture and Society

Code#	Themes of Teacher Critical Reflection	Utterances/Mentions/Instances
1	Confronting sex biases (both the teacher's own and other's)	- awareness of the one male's high talk time
2	Embracing conflict instead of working to avoid it	- engaging with S. argument that crack moms should be jailed
3	Being overt with one's political location (self-disclosure) and	- telling story about vegetarianism - "What do you think?"

	checking teacher authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Here’s what I think. Tell me if this works.” - “One thing I noticed.” - telling story about friend in law school - student asks “What do you think of pro-life feminists?” - story about escorting patients into clinics - overt about her position on mental illness and health care services
4	Reconstructing power so that it is empowering not oppressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Woman of the Day” activity - asking students if it is OK if I tape the class - “So, let me ask you this . . .” (Probing students to think further, articulate more of their argument)
5	Teaching with the whole self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - telling story about her thoughts on vegetarianism - giving examples from personal experience - telling story of student who was a rape survivor - telling story of Salvadorian activism and pro-choice statement - telling story of friend who was stalked by mentally ill man
6	Integrating theory and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - talking about theories of the debate v. personal beliefs - public/private split
7	Critically reflecting on teaching through a teaching journal or other consistent method of critical engagement with classroom dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contextualizing class dynamics for me before class

code#	Themes of Classroom Strategies	Utterances/Mentions/Instances
8	Creating connections between learning and knowing and connections between the classroom and outside issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - integrating speakers and films into curriculum - talking about school shootings in relation to course material - open discussion on personal views of abortion and where they came from - wanting to relate texts selected for the course to larger cultural issues - allowing students to bring guests to class - creating connections between readings and videos - “What do you think of parental content

		<p>laws?" (To a woman who is a mother)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - connecting parental consent laws to school issues - connecting abortion "rights" to "right" to carry a gun - connecting the news article of breastfeeding mother charged with neglect/manslaughter with issues of responsible parenthood in Woody Allen's visitation rights case - talking about repro rights funding cut by the president - creating a cultural context for the narrative stories - connecting mental illness and jail sentences to addicted mothers and jail sentences
9	Working towards student critical consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - asking "Why? How?" questions - Socratic method: "But where are the men when we talk about abortion?" - complicating the issues
10	Considering dynamics and issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, among others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who is speaking - issues covered in syllabus - mentioning socio-economic class when talking about access to abortion services - mentioning rural women when talking about access to abortion services
11	Engaging students in active learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - questioning students, pushing them to further define their argument - "Woman of the Day" presentation - asking students to respond to each other's comments/questions/ideas

code#	Themes of Student Concerns	Utterances/Mentions/Instances
12	Considering each individual student's realities and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "This could be difficult" (talking about discussion on reproductive rights) - making sure students are OK with my presence and my tape recording the class - "Do these texts seem outdated to you?" - "What do <i>you</i> think?" - students talk about their experiences as they relate to the course texts - bringing student's work with activism into the discussion
13	Giving students choice in the curriculum and the work they do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - changing syllabus as needed - "What do you want to discuss?" - "Woman of the Day" presentations - "What are <i>your</i> thoughts on the video?" - "We won't have time to talk about everything, so what do you want to begin

		with?"
14	Bringing joy and fun into the classroom	- lots of humor and laughter - light-hearted teasing of students
15	Being aware of voices and silences in the class	- awareness of high talk time of male; actively working to draw the females into the discussion
16	Recognizing that each classroom community and each student is unique	- changing the syllabus - relating questions in the text to personal experiences

The coding of Harriet's "Women in Culture and Society" class reflects a strong feminist approach. In her teaching she is continually striving to give students choices and challenging them to make connections between the course material and their own lives. She wants her students to actively engage in the learning process, but also – almost more importantly than that – she wants them to work towards critical consciousness as they make sense of how the course material influences or reflects their own lives and the world around them. Through storytelling, Harriet continuously models these kinds of connections for her students. By doing so, she is also showing the students that she is willing to share her personal beliefs and life with them. She is a co-learner in the classroom community, facilitating and leading in a feminist approach of equity and understanding.

Project Journal Entry. April 4, 2001.

I am waiting outside Harriet's office before class begins. I can hear her talking to a student. She is telling the student, "You need to closely analyze what you're doing. Unless we learn how to closely analyze what we are doing, we can't do a critique. Focus on the 'How?'" This conversation strikes me because, in teaching any course, I am constantly asking students to focus on the "Why/How?" questions. I tell them that if we are going to think or analyze anything critically, we have to ask and answer these questions from various different perspectives. Here Harriet is telling her students the same thing. It seems eerie that we would both come to one of the same strategies for teaching critical thinking. We are both pushing our students to think critically, giving them the same tool to help them (the "Why/how?" questions).

In our discussions of teaching, Harriet identified teaching students critical thinking and analysis skills as primary goals in any class. "Over the years I have become less and less interested in [having Women's Studies students understand what feminism is] and more interested in offering them material that is a great vehicle to critical thinking. I don't even see critical thinking as a way of getting them towards the material; I see it as the other way around." And that, she said, is her real goal. "If I can help them think critically then I can help people; if they can think critically about things that are just naturalized to them, they can take that with them and whenever they are going to apply it or however they are going to apply it is their business. But that is my ultimate goal now." This goal echoes Harriet's own political awakening; it was through feminist critique that she was moved to action. The critical thinking skills she learned in the Women's Studies courses she took as a student allowed her to see the world in different ways and created the teacher and writer she is today.

The Practical Father's Guide to Getting a License

Although Harriet was trained in composition – she eventually obtained the “license” to teach composition that her father would be proud of (a PhD in composition from NYU) – she often feels alienated by the field of composition because of the canonized theories and way some of her composition colleagues talk about writing. This tenuous relationship to composition as a field may also be one of the reasons why she chooses to teach a variety of cross-disciplinary classes such as the two I observed, an intro to Women's Studies and a cultural studies course. As Harriet tells it, teaching cross-disciplinary general education requirements satiates what she calls her dilettantish nature. “It never even really occurred to me to identify with the comp people as a discipline. I think divisions represent [. . .] ideologies, politics, personality. I have never felt that I haven't had friends in other departments. [Through] my work with Women's Studies, because it is interdisciplinary, I feel connected to people throughout the university.” This resistance to categories or disciplines that feel limiting to Harriet, and seeing connections between ideas and theories across various disciplines, reflects a feminist maxim of transgressing or blurring boundaries and borders.

Harriet found composition, as she tells it, through purely practical venues. Despite a public rejection of her father's “be practical; get a license to do something” message, his voice continued to whisper persistently in Harriet's ear. During the early 1990s, Harriet struggled to exercise her passion for writing by teaching part time at several schools to pay the bills. At that time she was resisting her father's mantra by being what she now calls a subway flyer. Riding the subway from job to job, often nodding off from exhaustion against the rhythmic rock of the subway car, Harriet

realized she wasn't getting to be the writer she wanted to be. "In New York there are a lot of adjuncts in English departments who are would-be writers," Harriet said. "They really consider themselves writers and that this is a temporary thing for them and then their writing careers will take off and it's sad to see how these people spend their life adjuncting.[. . .] I was working four different places and constantly running. I was always just falling asleep in the subway between things. It was just hell." Exhausting herself by teaching adjunct writing and ESL courses at various New York colleges and universities, Harriet saw an ad in the paper advertising positions for full-time composition instructors. "I had resolved never, ever to get a PhD. I didn't want to do that. I wanted to write and I knew [a PhD] would ruin me forever." But the prospect of having a full time job instead of "hobbling this stuff together constantly and living at the edge" appealed to her, so into the PhD world she went.

The PhD composition program, housed in the teacher's college at NYU, was less than satisfying for Harriet. "This program was the kind of program you could get through with your eyes closed." She is quick to add that this may have been due to the program being associated with the Teacher's College instead of in a strong composition/rhetoric program in an English department. Serendipitously perhaps, as part of her program of study she took a graduate level introduction to gay and lesbian studies course in 1991 that decided her dissertation focus. The dissertation focusing on gay and lesbian students in the writing classroom, followed by the publication of her book on the same subject (Textual Orientations), marked Harriet as the preeminent lesbian theorist in the field of composition. "I had this revelation [taking the graduate queer studies course] that I could do a dissertation on [queer issues in the comp classroom]." Her work created a splash in

the field of composition. Although her relationship to the field was ambivalent, the discipline of composition and rhetoric glommed onto her as the lesbian spokesperson, and often still does, much to Harriet's frustration.

Because of the recognition the field of composition gave Harriet's scholarship, one of the first ways I identified Harriet as a feminist teacher was through her visibility and voice within the field teaching and talking about queer issues. Her identity as one of the most, if not the most, prominent queer scholars in the field is the primary reason I wanted to include her in this research. Harriet's relationship to that identity, foisted upon her by the field, is one she is less than comfortable with. When I originally contacted Harriet to ask her to be a part of my project, she sent back an email that made it clear she no longer wanted to be identified as "the lesbian comp scholar."

Email from Harriet. October 17, 2000:

Dear Kay,

I got your letter – your dissertation sounds great. It also sounds like fun, and I'd love to be your research subject! Let me just explain a couple of things, though, so you can be sure that in your view I really qualify for the project.

First, at this point in my life and teaching (as opposed to some earlier parts), feminism and issues of gender/sexuality remain the bedrock on which much else is based, but they no longer figure as spheres of thought and action privileged above all else. Race, class, culture, public rhetorics, many other things, in fact, pop up equally in my courses and in my writing. [. . .] [Right now] my desire [is] to pursue (sometimes, leap among) very varied and wide-ranging interests – which in recent times have included Hollywood musicals, Australian literature, meanings and implications of globalization, personal essays, choosing not to be a mother, oral history, the book review as a genre, social justice in the broad range of contexts, and many other things that have little or nothing to do with compositions (and/or feminism) per se.

The email continues to also disclose her skepticism about feminist methodologies for teaching and writing. During the site visit, we talked about her doubts regarding feminist pedagogies/methodologies and the label imposed upon her in comp circles as “the scholar of queerness in comp.”

Kay: Do you see [your scholarship] as a form of pedagogy? Of course it is educating people, but how do you see it as a form of pedagogy?

Harriet: Well, it has changed over the years. I started out as an intimidated graduate student. I had a sort of slavish approach to things. Those were the things I *should* do. But I was also influenced by things like, the first thing I ever published and the first conference paper I ever gave, was when I was in the Labor Studies program so a lot of my thinking and my ideas came out of that particular context. So I think partly because I was often in different contexts at the same point in time I would use one to inform the other. There was that, but then pretty soon I got into this lesbian/gay writing thing. And that seemed like a great revelation to me at the time. I didn't really even know there was such a thing as lesbian/gay studies and it wasn't really developed. It was just starting to really explode around the time that I had discovered it. [W]hen I thought I would [make this the focus of my dissertation], I thought I was this lone voice in the wilderness. Little did I know that I wasn't.

Kay: But in comp you were.

Harriet: Yeah, but there was the [Gay and Lesbian 4Cs] caucus.

Kay: Right. But I mean talking about how these issues manifest themselves in the classroom. [. . .] Yes, you are right. People in Women's Studies were talking about it, but I think your writing about it in relation to the writing classroom was, because you created a relationship to the writing classroom, it was new to the comp field.

Harriet: And when I think back to the time I was doing that, I remember thinking, “I don't remember seeing this, so I feel like there is no place for me. There is no place for me to bring that stuff in.” And then I thought that by writing about it I could create a place. I would create a place first for myself and then for others. I was thinking of it quite selfishly. It was just a framework that I wanted to build because I didn't have it. And it really, for me, that worked tremendously. To the point where I am totally sick of being identified that way.

Not identified that way but there are others things that I am thinking about and I am always supposed to come and be a lesbian.

Kay: Right. Well, isn't that what Adrienne Rich always said, too? She was so tired of being asked just to be the spokeslesbian. She would be on a panel and they would say, "And you're supposed to talk about the lesbian stuff." Another connection with Adrienne Rich.

Harriet: Right. All roads lead to Adrienne Rich.

All Roads Lead to Adrienne Rich

Because of the work Harriet was doing (writing about the intersection of queer theory and composition) in the place she was doing it (the teacher's college at NYU) she said she felt particularly lacking in mentors. This is a steady refrain I heard from Lynn, Jackie and Harriet. Because of the work they were doing at the time they were doing it, there weren't any mentors at hand to lead them carefully through the more bramble-y thickets of academia. That is not to say that mentors didn't exist, for there have been feminist academics across the disciplines even prior to the beginning of the Second Wave. But for these women, doing the kind of research and scholarship they were interested in, there seemed few feminists (if any) close at hand within their programs or departments when they were younger scholars. Lynn was trying to forge her way as feminist scholar in a program where there were few women professors, let alone feminist teachers. Jackie was an African American woman graduate student at institutions where there were no other African American faculty members and even paltry few colleagues, let alone Black women who identified as feminist. As a graduate student Harriet was trying to find her way as a writer, lesbian, feminist. All three women dealt with stepping gingerly through the foggy terrain of academe, looking around for others to help them

along the way. To help herself navigate, Harriet invented mentoring relationships in her private mind with writers she admired. The most prominent of these was Adrienne Rich.

Harriet: Some of my main mentors have no idea they are my mentors. I tell you one person who inhabited my head for years [. . .] who I had dreams about and was a huge influence on me was Adrienne Rich. [. . .] She was absolutely the ultimate mentor figure that I internalized in my head. I loved her writing. I feel like I have discovered other writers whose work means more to me now, but for quite a number of years her writing was kind of the ultimate for me. I loved its seriousness. One thing I realize now that was missing from her work was humor, absolutely. It is very humorless, but I loved it. I loved her seriousness, her thoughtfulness, her use of language – she is a poet – and I am not just talking about her poetry but her essays that I loved, but her poetry also. I loved the way she truly cared about things and was not just self-involved like a lot of people. But she took everything so seriously and applied such thoughtfulness to everything. And that she was so smart. I had so many dreams about her that involved some kind of approval from her.

Kay: And they were good dreams?

Harriet: Only when I woke up I was sad. She wasn't really there. And then when I did encounter her in real life a couple times, and when she acted as if she took me seriously as a human being, it was incredible to me then. There were only those fleeting and few times, but she just really helped me in that way without having any idea that she did. And I think I look to different writers for guidance more than the people I have actually encountered. And a lot of the people I think of, the mentors or people who have influenced me, had nothing to do with pedagogy or composition. I would often read The [Village] Voice or The Nation, some of the columnists I would read really closely because I loved the writing. [. . .] Some were academics and some weren't. It wasn't what we would call creative writing in the old days, but it wasn't academic writing either. [. . .] Some of those writers would be Katha Pollitt, Patricia Williams, Ellen Willis.

Harriet sees herself first and foremost as a writer, therefore her primary mentors were people to whom she looked as writers she wanted to emulate. The care and concern for writing, the integration of personal narrative into the intellectual discussions of cultural issues, and personal self-critique and disclosure were the main qualities that

attracted her to writers like Rich and Williams. It was these writers who forged a path for Harriet to follow in her own prose. Williams' book, Alchemy of Race and Rights, became a model of the kind of writing Harriet wanted to do in her academic world. "I loved what she did. I had been trained to write that somehow it had to be fiction and that couldn't come out in the academic part. She really showed me that, when she wrote essays about legal things, that were personal and novelistic and I thought, 'Wow. This is something I could do.'" In addition to integrating fiction-like prose, Williams also modeled for Harriet rigorous self-critique. And self-mockery. "Her students would say something about her to the dean and she would say, 'What the hell are you doing?' I really loved that she included that. And then she would say things like, 'I am lying here in my ratty old nightgown thinking about . . . ' [. . .] I could read [all these women] slowly and carefully and drink up the prose. It inspired me to be more precise than any editor of an academic journal would ever [. . .] require me to be." This approach to writing, integrating not only autobiographical information, but a careful critique of self, shameless self-disclosure, is a way to practice the feminist pedagogical theme of self-interrogation in the form of scholarship.

As Harriet is talking to me, I think of how Lynn, Jackie, and Harriet all approach their scholarship with their own brand of a careful, critical feminist approach. The attributes that Harriet assigns to Williams, Rich, Pollitt, and Willis are those I see in Lynn's, Harriet's and Jackie's teaching and writing. Instead of having a far flung mentor with whom I have to create a vicarious or fictional relationship, I have the luxury of the living embodiments all around me. Because these feminist teachers and scholars – as

well as others closer to home – are doing their work, I have models of hope for the way I want to do mine. The privilege of that is not something I carry lightly.

In the last moments Harriet and I spent together during my site visit, she said she needed to go back to the subject of mentors. She had been ruminating on her need to fabricate mentors from the public sphere and wanted to give credit to women who were more integrated into her lived experience. She told me about a feminist mentor in her first Women's Studies class, Judith Bransberg, a graduate student who seemed so much more worldly and well-read than Harriet was at the time. "She was six years older than I was. I was 23 and she was 29. I always felt she was my intellectual mentor. She encouraged the intellectual part of me to surface." In general, women in Women's Studies classes showed Harriet a way to be female and not afraid. "Part of my attraction to Women's Studies was seeing older women saying, 'You should take risks.' Seeing that they weren't fearful, that they took risks. I was taught to *obey* authority because it would protect you. My mother taught me to respect authority, not question it."

Through these fearless feminists in her Women's Studies courses, Harriet dove into social activism. Her work surrounding political issues in Central America in the mid 1980s led her to grassroots activist mentors. Harriet specifically remembers Francisca Morales, a woman who mentored her through the example of Contra-resistance in Nicaragua. In 1985, Harriet was living with Morales during the heat of revolution. In Morales, Harriet saw an immediate and important connection between feminist activism and writing, as well as writing *as* feminist activism, a way of communicating feminist thoughts to the world.

[Francisca Morales] was so amazing. I learned so much from her. Just listening to her and talking to her. She was this little woman. You wouldn't see her as physically threatening or powerful. But here she was surrounded by 4,000 Contras. It was totally terrifying. There were deaths and funerals every day. I was living with her family. She was the mother, Francisca Morales. She was 51 years old and really active in the radical organizations. Before the revolution she had been illiterate, but it was difficult for me to process that. She was physically little, but so powerful. A *real* activist, and her activism was centered on reading and writing. I went with her to various meetings. She caught two Contras herself. It seemed like every day I was coming home and she was telling a story about how she nabbed another Contra. Like Adrienne Rich she was incredibly opposite of my mother. I always thought that if she and Adrienne Rich could meet, that would be great. They both had the same small intensity.

Bransberg, Rich, and Morales provided essential mentoring in grassroots activism and feminism, and giving voice to those experiences through stories and writing. As Harriet continued to talk about mentors, she mentioned Jackie Jones Royster as someone within the field whom she has looked to and engaged with in a mentor relationship. Harriet describes Jackie as being "startlingly available" to Harriet and her ideas. She initially contacted Jackie because of a point of contention Harriet had with a piece of Jackie's scholarship. "I disagreed with something she wrote and so she emailed me and we had this really rich email exchange," Harriet recalled. "It was honestly her attempt to try and understand my position and to communicate her position to me. I found it so enriching and positive." Harriet said there are few people who embody both personal warmth and intellectual vibrancy, but she sees that combination in Jackie Jones Royster. "There is a certain openness that comes from her. She has that warm/smart nexus." To clarify, Harriet said she defines smart people as those who engage in self-critique. "That is really important to me, that we aren't just critiquing the work or the scholarship or the culture, but that we are engaging in self-critique as well. Smart people do that." Harriet's definition of "smart" very closely reflected how Lynn articulated her definition of

feminism, strengthening the connections I see between Harriet and Lynn and their approach to the world and their teaching.

The Feminist Template

Through feminism in the form of Women's Studies, Harriet found a port of entry into her intellectual life. Harriet describes feminism not only as the foundation of her beliefs, but "in every pore." "That fundamental layer was through Women's Studies which led me to an interest in race and it was through race, that I got interested in class, and it was through class that I got interested in sexuality, in Central America, in environmental stuff; these things just sort of grew, but feminism was the template."

Through feminism Harriet also discovered community activism, the power to change the world one corner at a time. Her first public feminist act was also part of that transitional Women's Studies course in 1978. A doctoral student in the class pointed out that her qualifying exam reading list only included two (out of 60) women authors. The class collectively added eight additional women authors to the list and presented the proposal to the English department. Harriet was part of the small coterie of women who went to the English department meeting to argue for the change. At that moment, in a mid-winter English department meeting surrounded by Good Old Boy faculty looking bored, disinterested, and hostile, she realized the influence a small group of people could have on the world. "I didn't know what I was doing, but I realized I was excited to go with [the feminist graduate students]. It was also the moment when I realized I could do something that might affect policy somewhere. Policy always seemed ready-made. I had

very essentialized notions of policy and structure of things and really no concept of its making.”

After this baptism in the power of activism, Harriet worked on various feminist fronts both in her home of New York City and in Central America. When she became involved in these causes, she turned herself over to them heart and soul. “I tended to get involved in things and become completely consumed, completely active, a maniacal member of the steering committee.” Her work with rape crisis centers, revolutionary groups in Nicaragua, gay and lesbian task forces, and abortion rights coalitions trained her in grassroots political and social activism. Through these associations, she furthered her critical consciousness. The activists involved in the grassroots organizations showed Harriet a new way to see the world. “They were the type of people who did things in the world in a way that I really hadn’t. So I remember being at NYWAR (New York Women Against Rape) and just being befuddled by how the world worked. And for me, being in those organizations was largely figuring out how the world worked.” Harriet eventually used these organizing and activist skills to create the Women’s Studies program at LIU, developing curriculum, writing and receiving grants, and training faculty in feminist theory. These activist beginnings find their way into Harriet’s feminist pedagogical practices by asking students to take the classroom theories and discussions into their lives. A ready example of this commitment to integrating community and classroom work manifests itself in the form of “Oral Histories” Harriet had assigned the students in the “Women in Culture and Society” class I observed. The students were asked to find a woman in the community who was over 70 years of age and talk to her about her life, specifically in regards to an issue that had been discussed in the class curriculum

(reproductive freedom, issues of work equity, race, sexual orientation). The students then had to transcribe the interview and create a narrative around the woman's story, creating very tangible and real connections between one person's life and the work of the course.

Harriet's commitment to this theme of feminist connections between the community and the academy, one that began in a Women's Studies graduate course and led to grassroots activism, evolved to feminist pedagogy as leadership: designing and launching the Women's Studies program at LIU. Stepping forward and positioning herself as a leader in the university setting was a seemingly natural extension of Harriet's feminist activism. Her feminist belief system drove this project and touched every part of her life. "[Feminism] was a way that I could enter something that I realized was going to be vital to my life, intellectually, politically, and personally and affect my relationships with people and my sense of happiness." Through Women's Studies Harriet found a way by which to enter into discussions and ideas that would have been obscured from her without the critical awakening provided by those courses. "[Feminism] gave me a familiar pattern; I *knew* how to enter into something after that."

Harriet applies this feminist template to various sites: activism, leadership, teaching, scholarship. Because Harriet experiences feminism in every pore, as she says, it is difficult for her to define or describe practices or beliefs that are specifically feminist. "I think of a lot of things in terms of atoms and molecules. An atom is this totally homogenous thing. A molecule is, too, but it is a compound element. An atom is just this one thing. I can think of feminism, anti-racism, whatever, as these atoms. In a way they exist there, but in a way it is all molecular, too. They are just so totally mixed in together. I know now how many different versions of feminism there are, and because [of that] I

don't particularly latch onto one." Harriet resisted my questions regarding how she would define feminism, eschewing a potentially essentialized, static way of measuring feminism and feminists.

To further explain the complexity of settling on one definition of feminism Harriet uses the analogy of trying to define what it means to be an American. "If an American is a citizen of the United States, which is also kind of iffy because there are people who are not citizens who are Americans, who have been living here forever. But let's just say you say [an American is a citizen of the United States], it still doesn't say what kind of citizen. So when I think of feminism I think of that kind of dispersal of realities. They all have something to do with women's entitlement to exist as people." This definition of feminism, "women's entitlement to exist as people," comes only after I have pushed Harriet more than once to try to define what feminism is for her. When I began asking on the first day, she politely dodged my question. I kept asking, though. I wanted to hear how she thought of feminism for herself, but she kept hearing the question as my pressing her to offer an over-arching definition of what feminism is in general, for everyone. Harriet relates the way she perceives feminism or her resistance to offering a comprehensive definition of feminism to her geographic location.

The fact that I live in New York, that I am here, makes life different than if I were in most places. You see yourself and your beliefs relative to others and here it is so easy. Sometimes I am out in the country someplace and I realize suddenly that the difference is so huge between me and other people that . . . And I know there are people at 4Cs who have this problem with me. They think I am a spoiled brat. That I don't understand what it is like. That I don't understand what it is like for them. And they are right. I mean I understand basically what it is like, but I also wouldn't be there. I couldn't be there. I just couldn't. Because I really want to live where I want to live. I chose where I wanted to live and I chose New York above any particular institution and I have never regretted that at all. That again has to do with my concept of feminism. My wits become a little dull by lack of having

really to face that kind of challenge, that truly anti-feminist challenge, in a long time.

Perhaps this is the crux of my pressing Harriet to define feminism, and her resistance: I hail from a geographic location where claiming the identity is imperative to my activist work. I live in a place where I believe I need to publicly embrace the moniker so people have a better understanding of what feminism is. By understanding that I am a feminist, they have to revise the dominant culture's definition of feminist as a man-hating warrior for female domination.

Offering a definition for feminism was not the only point of resistance between Harriet and this project. In an early interview with Harriet, she said she really didn't think feminist pedagogy existed; that is to say, she didn't feel there was a distinct quality to feminist pedagogy that made it different from other pedagogies. When I pressed her to offer a definition of what she thought it was or what people meant when they used the term, her definition seemed to harken back to the earliest models of feminist pedagogy based on progressive education meets CR groups. "Most of the things I have read about [feminist pedagogy] have gotten on my nerves," she said. "They make all these points for being feminist that aren't necessarily. And of course all the touchy-feely stuff. I don't really understand why they have to define certain things they do as feminist. Often it veers into a belief about content and you have to be anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic." It isn't that Harriet is opposed to being aware of social and political representation when designing a course or choosing course materials, only that some educators tend to use the tag words without understanding the complexity of the issues involved. "When I write a syllabus I am very aware and care a lot about creating a

syllabus that represents diverse people, but I realized a long time ago that the reason developing a syllabus is so hard is that in addition to that there are a million other forms of diversity you want. So you might want diversity, but in what area? Like in the course I am teaching now (Reading Culture), what culture are we looking at? Are we looking outside the United States?"

A lot of feminist teachers focus on diversity, Harriet said, but for them diversity is limited to basic identity issues. "Diversity" becomes a sexy part of the rhetoric that remains uninterrogated. This, in fact, relates to the themes of "teacher critical reflection" in my definition of feminist pedagogy. A teacher who is practicing feminist pedagogy will be more critical of how she is interrogating, integrating, and teaching "diversity" than a teacher who is simply including diversity because it is part of what is. There is a significant and profound distinction between a teacher who includes some texts by women or "minorities" on the syllabus because that is the standard operating procedure in her enlightened department and a feminist teacher who rigorously interrogates how diversity will be represented and discussed and what kinds of diversity will be represented, always being overt with these choices not only with herself but her students as well.

To illustrate the problematic way "diversity" has become a tag word with little substance or critical reflection behind it, Harriet told a story of buying a house in Brooklyn. The rhetoric realtors used to describe different neighborhoods proved interesting. "Diversity" became a signifier they used to indicate a neighborhood that was largely white middle to upper-middle class with a few traditionally marginalized cultural representatives acting as spice. Many of the realtors spoke about the diversity of the

school. "But it usually meant that there weren't even five kids in the class who weren't white. It also wasn't socio-economic diversity. [Diversity] was something that their children had to be exposed to," Harriet recalled. Translating this scenario to feminist pedagogy, the diversity issue is one where teachers feel their students need exposure, but too often the interrogation stops there. Instead of talking about systems of oppression or why having a smattering of readings on the syllabus that represent traditionally marginalized voices doesn't count as diversity, some teachers use diversity as a way of syllabus design and nothing more. In this way teachers, schools, and university administrators can talk about diversity without really getting serious about their collusion with the systems of oppression or giving serious consideration to those systems. Instead, a feminist teacher is critically aware of the voices and silences within her syllabus or curriculum and openly confronts those with her students. Harriet's critical awareness of diversity and her critique of the rhetoric surrounding "diversity" stems from her original feminist training in critical consciousness. Currently, institutions and individuals who are not enacting feminist pedagogical principles have fetishized marks of difference; the identities of traditionally marginalized people or the world perspectives who don't represent the dominant culture become exotic points of intrigue as opposed to sites of critical analysis and change. There is no critical reflection or awareness involved.

For me, this severe lack of teacher critical reflection that Harriet sees in some educators points to a type of pedagogy that is decidedly not feminist. As one of the crucial elements of feminism is the ability to critically reflect and change one's own reality and collusion with systems of oppression, so is critical reflection of choices and decisions made by the teacher on behalf of the class essential to feminist pedagogy.

Smart critical reflection is not a short-term goal, but a skill one works on over a lifetime. Patricia Bizzell compares writing and critical consciousness by saying they are both “a life long practice” (12). Ironically, what Harriet originally named as the elements she most resented about feminist pedagogy (lack of attention to real critical analysis of diversity issues; touchy-feely classrooms where chairs are in a circle, but content is anti-intellectual; and lazy teachers who use the theory of student-centered classrooms to excuse themselves from actual teaching) are descriptors that are very much not a part of the feminist pedagogy I am investigating. Instead, the very elements that Harriet articulates as necessary to all of her classrooms (careful selection of texts and topics that cover various perspectives – often those traditionally left out of curriculum; a strong focus on teaching students critical thinking and analysis; making connections between her life and experiences and her classroom, and encouraging her students to do the same) are themes in the definition of feminist pedagogy that ground my research.

In email and phone conversations with Harriet following the site visit, she revised the way she saw feminist pedagogy. As I tried to explain and argue for a distinct pedagogy that was feminist, Harriet came to embrace the term as a valid descriptor for a specific pedagogical approach. Although Harriet’s definition of feminist pedagogy may not exactly line up with the one I am using in my research, she said our exchanges allowed her to see feminist pedagogy that was not so much about form as it was about content. For her, it was easier to see that there can be content to a course that is uniquely feminist.

I remember then [when taking the course on feminist pedagogy in graduate school in the late 1970s], and forever afterwards, thinking, ‘So what is feminist pedagogy?’ I never really did get it. I guess I am finally turning that around and

saying maybe there is nothing to get. Something you said, wrote, made me think that feminist pedagogy is really about content and not about form. And the problem for me was that it was suppose to be about some kind of form. But that never seemed exclusive to feminism or feminist pedagogy, nor did it seem particularly always present in feminist pedagogy. I guess my final conclusion is that there is no form that is feminist pedagogy, it would really be about content.

Kay: The other thing is that I don't want to wedge [you into my definition], for example, to say, "Well, she is a feminist teacher," which I totally believe and I feel like the data I have gathered supported that and then to have you say, "No I don't believe there is such a thing as feminist pedagogy. Therefore, I can be a feminist teacher in that my ideology of feminism impacts how I teach, but there is no such a thing as inherent feminist pedagogy."

Harriet: But now I would say, something you had said before in an email, did make me rethink it that there is such a thing in terms of content, an ideology, and that does seep into everything that I do. It is kind of like a feminist perspective, almost. I guess I feel I have more of a feminist perspective than a feminist pedagogy. Because that somehow has to do with more with content and relationship to content. And again, [feminism] is not the only perspective, but it is one very dominant one.

Feminist perspective. Feminist ideology. Feminist pedagogy. Although all these three ways of describing a feminist approach can generally be interpreted in similar ways, my project is about getting specific about what those approaches are. It is only when we have a more precise and specific definition that we can be critically aware and cognizant of the work we are doing and how we are furthering, or not furthering, a feminist belief system and approach to our work, teaching, and writing. I agree with Harriet that there is not one "form" that is feminist, but I would change the rhetoric of that and say there is not one "practice" that is feminist. Each teacher will enact any or all of the themes in differently depending on their own teaching style, their social/political location, their personality, and the context of each specific classroom.

The Nature of a Dilettante

Harriet's commitment to writing passionately, and teaching her students to do so as well, demonstrates a connection between scholarship and teaching, between the personal and the theoretical, between feminist pedagogy and feminist rhetoric. Her desire to teach from the center of that passion, and to bring her lived experiences into her writing and her classrooms, provides a model for her students – and colleagues – to do the same, thereby subverting the standards of the field and recreating a feminist way where a more traditional patriarchal model existed. Using critical consciousness and honest, sassy self-disclosure, Harriet's writing and teaching merge into a dialogic force of energetic interactions. Her desire to create connections where she sees divisions, resisting dividing lines and categories of identity and instead exploring many different ways of knowing, being, learning, and teaching, speak to the dilettante-ish nature she claims for herself. This identity seems to me inherently feminist in nature, blurring boundaries and resisting neat categorization, seizing the power to name and create new ways, new roads, new models. Perhaps, in the end, this is why Harriet resists the idea of a distinct feminist pedagogy. The messing up, the disruptions, seems too important to be contained in one approach or theory. Her drive to avoid rigidity and stagnation is in itself, I would argue, a feminist pedagogical strategy for making connections and consistently and carefully reflecting with a critical eye on teaching, writing, and their intersections with lived reality. Although I have a need to see Harriet in this way, I understand and respect her rejection of parts of my argument that would create a more comprehensive – and perhaps neater – view of feminist pedagogy as it manifests itself in her life and work.

Perhaps, it is inevitable that where I see themes, she sees disjuncture. It is her dilettantish and eclectic nature.

Addendum

Harriet had intended to respond to this chapter by inserting her thoughts within the text. I e-mailed her electronic copies of the chapter in July 2001 so that she could add her comments before my November 2001 deadline. However, on Sept. 11, 2001 tragedy struck New York City when the World Trade Centers were reduced to a pile of rubble. As one can imagine, Harriet – a life long New Yorker – was deeply shaken. To help the community to cope with the event Long Island University, where Harriet teaches, created courses to examine the rhetoric of “The War on Terrorism.” the phrase the press assigned to the war on Afghanistan, declared by President George W. Bush as a result of the Sept. 11 attacks. Harriet fell in and began teaching extra courses to meet the need of the community. Because of all this upheaval, Harriet was not able to comment or integrate her thoughts and responses into “The Harriet Chapter” before the project deadline. Below is the email she sent in response to my last effort to wiggle something out of her. It constitutes her response to this chapter, pointing to how the material realities of teachers’ and women’s lives effect the work to be done.

Email from Harriet dated November 11, 2001.

Dear Kay,

When the lumpy envelope from you appeared in my mailbox, I thought it must be my much-deserved anthrax.

.... I’ve been absolutely crazed with overextension since Sept. 11. The two books I was reading--a novel by Stendhal and a biography of two Australian women artists--have been frozen in time on my bedside table, with the bookmarks exactly

where they were that day, like victims of Pompeii.Along with several other faculty members at LIU, I'm teaching an impromptu, half-semester, 1-credit, tuition-free, and open to the public course called "Critically Reading the 'War on Terrorism.'"I've been putting all my energy into that, to the point of fairly neglecting my other (real, full-credit, full-term, tuition-fed) courses. In addition, I turned my Miami paper over to that whole subject (Keith did, too), and actually presented the paper just a couple of hours before the bombs started to fall. (I got to watch them on CNN at the airport gate, for quite a while before boarding.) Since then, in addition to everything else, I've been doing a tenure review for someone, adding things like the Koran to my literature course--which of course requires a lot of special, unanticipated preparation--and have turned my Basic Reading and Writing course completely over to that theme as well. There was also a series of teach-ins before the war course kicked in. In sum, the relatively tranquil term I was expecting after the early Oct. conference in your old stomping grounds has been non-existent. In truth, I spend a great deal of the aforementioned time immersed in media--the NY Times, CNN and the networks, The Nation, independent media sites on the net, and then at night, obsessing about it all on the phone

And you know what? I don't feel like my response has been particularly "feminist"! In fact, I remember in my early, tender feminist years, being very influenced by Adrienne Rich's insistence that she would no longer call herself "humanist"; that was passé; now she would claim only "feminist." Of course, I, being a little know-nothing without an intellectual past, had no "humanism" to renounce; I just claimed "feminism" over "vapidity." But lately, I've really taken the opposite tack from her (and I bet she has, too); "humanism" just seems, even if a bit vague and general (!), a more apt description of the orientation of my heart and head. Between despair at the unbelievable and pointless suffering of so many people, and despair at the completely bankrupt rhetoric of Bush et al., which is embraced without question, critique, or investigation by the media and thus by our pathetic populace (I have to remind myself that "they know not what they do"--I mean the pathetic populace, not the media--and thus are not as culpable as people who have not been so relentlessly stupidified--though they could learn more if they really, really wanted to--and some actually are doing just that), I'm in a general state of panic and want to run off to some faraway place, far from flags, God Bless Americas, and the revolting and enduring World Trade Center Smell--someplace populated only by Quakers, Buddhists, and kindly, intelligent atheists. I don't care if they're feminists or not, though I guess if they're not, I'll start caring a lot more about that again.

In any case, CONGRATULATIONS at being on the cusp of doctorhood.
What's happening next? How has life been in Nebraska? I was really sorry you weren't in Oxford when I was there.

So take care.
Harriet

Contextualizing the Knowing Subject: Jackie Jones Royster

I approached Jackie Jones Royster and asked her to participate in my project because I believed her to be one of the most prominent, outspoken, and out-feminist African American scholars in the field. I had listened to Jackie present at various conferences, including Conference on College Composition and Communication, Feminism(s) and Rhetoric(s) and Rhetoric Society of America. I first came to know Jackie as a scholar through her essay “When the First Voice You Hear is Not Your Own.” In the essay she describes the physical reality of being an African American teacher in the classroom and discusses issues of voice and representation in a college setting. The bold and honest confrontation of racial and gender issues – and typically both – are the trademarks of her work. So, what I knew of Jackie before I began this project was most importantly for me the “When the First Voice You Hear” essay. In the past few years I have listened to her present at conferences and read her scholarship that focuses on her work restoring the voices of African American women of the 19th century to the American rhetorical canon.

Jackie’s book, Southern Horrors and Other Writings: the Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900, re-introduced the rhetorical style of Wells and republished some of her speeches and essays within the context of the anti-lynching campaigns of the South. As with the “When the First Voice You Hear” essay, the physical presence, the bodily reality, of being African American and female featured prominently in the introduction where Jackie included editorial cartoons that featured lynchings from Harpers Weekly as well as photos of Wells and the people who mentored Wells. The book marks a reclaiming or restoring of Wells to the rhetorical American

canon, grounding the scholarship in feminist theory of identity politics as Royster examines how the physical reality of being Black and female manifested itself in Well's life and work. The Wells project led Jackie to more research of African American women's voices lost to the great white male master narratives of dominant history. Her most recent book, Traces of a Stream, continues the project that began with Wells, providing rhetorical analyses and historical context for other women – those less famous than Wells – whose voices were heretofore lost to us. Jackie strongly identifies with the women she has researched and written about. Her scholarship in this area began as part of a centennial celebration Jackie was organizing for Spelman College. Through archival research as part of the centennial plans, Jackie discovered women that had been erased. Her passion became resurrecting those women and their voices so that they could take their rightful place in the annals of American history.

Jackie was a professor of English, Writing Program Administrator, and Associate Dean at Spelman college for sixteen years before moving to Ohio State University (OSU) where she is a Professor of English and now Associate Dean of Research and Faculty Affairs. At OSU, Jackie has been involved with the university's Writing Center and helped to organize the Women's Center on campus, where Women's Studies is housed. Her scholarship reflects the intersections of these three areas: composition, rhetoric, and feminism.

Jackie's leadership is not limited to the campuses where she works. She has served on the executive committee for the Teaching of Writing Division of the Modern Language Association and on the executive committee for College Composition and Communication, serving as chair for the latter in 1995. Jackie worked as associate editor

of SAGE: Scholarly Journal on Black Women from 1983-1996. Her identity as an African American teacher, scholar, leader always figures prominently in her scholarship as well. Jackie's approach is always one of directness, confronting the difficult issues of racism and sexism with frank honesty that provides a model for how we *should* approach such difficult, thorny issues, but often don't.

Chapter 5: Jackie Jones Royster *All Roads Lead to Sassy*

Journal Entry: May 15, 2001.

I want Jackie to have a different office: more spacious, with stately furniture befitting an associate dean. In her small office space, a large desk dominates the room; a small table with four chairs is squeezed into the area just inside the door. There is little room left, unless one counts the huge amount of space overhead, with fifteen foot ceilings belying the cramped quarters beneath them. There is hardly room for two people to stand comfortably. When other people entered while Jackie and I were in her office together, I tried to stand small and hunch over: too cramped. She definitely needs more room, more space. And she is *so* insanely busy. It was exhausting just watching her work – and following her around for the day. This project, which has become in my mind “observing feminists in their natural habitat,” always slams me up against the material realities of their lives. These women are so intensely passionate about their work, Harriet, Lynn and Jackie. And I at least want people to appreciate that and acknowledge that. So that is another reason for this project. In the meantime, I want Jackie to have a different, better, more comfortable and spacious office.

I arrived at the Ohio State University (OSU) campus on a rainy day in May. The building where the administration for Humanities is housed, University Hall, is stately in that academic, brick, “founding fathers” sort of way. It is situated just off “The Oval” (a prominent green space in the middle of the Ohio State University campus). As I dash to the building under a too-small umbrella, I am confused by bustling students on a campus I expected to be deserted. Since OSU is on a quarter system, students and faculty are still wearily winding down the term whereas mine ended a full two weeks ago.

Once inside University Hall, I find the main Humanities office and chat with the administrative assistant. She is contemplating an Intro to Women’s Studies course for the first summer session, and I am trilling the praises of the course, even though I have no idea what the intro courses are like at OSU. “It’s a life-changing course,” I tell her. “Or at

least it typically is for many of the students in *my* classes.” I am saved from fully contemplating the arrogance of that comment, as well as my assumptions that this young woman embodies a similar social/political location as my students – clearly she does not as a non-traditional student who is African American – by Jackie trundling me back into her office. I sit down at the small table, piled high with packets and papers, as she finishes up some administrative tasks before we dash off to the first of many meetings that day: the life of an administrator.

The wall behind Jackie’s desk displays prominent portraits of Ida B. Wells and Frederick Douglass. There is also a framed poster displaying concentric circles of carefully arranged Native American beaded moccasins of varying sizes and shapes, toes facing in. The poster advertises a Smithsonian exhibit. I saw the same exhibit in New York City last fall. “All Roads Are Good,” the poster declares.

Roads. Pathways. Passageways. Trails. Treks. Traces. Ways. Journeys. I encounter this rhetoric of travel, of guidance, of marked journeys in Jackie’s scholarship, leadership, and teaching. The poster’s declamation, “*All roads are good,*” can be read as a validation for ways typically not recognized by the dominant culture, specifically in the context of the museum exhibit, Native American ways. This reading also works well when applied to Jackie’s own work. She is a trailblazer as an African American woman who is associate dean at a Big Ten university. But her work of creating paths for others to follow does not stop there. As a scholar of 19th century African American women, women who similarly created paths of leadership to follow, Jackie re-forges those women’s paths with scythe and grit, paths obscured – and sometimes obliterated – by the asphalted interstates of master narratives. By re-cutting these trails, she offers an

alternative route: *all roads are good*. By extension then, *all destinations are good*.

Through her work as a leader in the field and in her university community, as a teacher, as a Black feminist scholar working to reclaim, recover, restore the paths and journeys of African American women who traveled before her, Jackie creates the possibility of not only other roads and ways, but new destinations.

As I sit at the table while Jackie roots through the papers on her desk, she exclaims, “I would have so much more time if I could actual *find* things.” My first response is to commiserate: there are stacks and stacks of papers everywhere. The table I am sitting at is covered with thick piles of annual reviews for both college of Humanities programs and professors. I stop this train of thought. “Actually,” I think, “You do a great job of finding things.” Really, it is more about finding people, stories, identities, and places and then creating road maps so others can find them – or others – as well. Jackie would probably protest this analogy: she isn’t “finding” them at all; she is reclaiming them. They weren’t lost or undiscovered; these trails have been a part of this United States culture all along. They have only been ignored and overgrown because the white supremacist patriarchal super highway is easier, faster, more readily available. But it isn’t better. *All roads are good*.

Pathways and Passages Forged, Obscured, Cleared, and Re-cut

Before a pathway or road can be traveled, acting as a more expedient way to get from point A to point B, it needs to be forged. In the restoration scholarship of 19th century African American women that began with Jackie’s book on Ida B. Wells and the anti-lynching campaign, the paths they forged have been obscured. Jackie has taken it

upon her self to clear these treks and, in some cases where the overgrowth has obliterated the course, re-cut the trails so others can follow. In her latest book, Traces of a Stream, the title itself describes the clearing work that Jackie has taken it upon herself to do. There are only “traces” of a stream to follow, but the records show a stream existed, delivering the water essential to grow lush vegetation and to provide sustenance to entire populations or communities. In this book, Jackie’s work historically follows the stream – the identities and stories of African American women who helped write the history and culture of this country – and creates, from the traces, a record of what the burbling, thriving, surging water force was before the dominant culture rerouted the life-giving source away from the communities that depended on it for survival. In this way her work is like remapping geographical and geological terrain. In her own words, however, Jackie names her processes and projects of restoration “historical ethnography.”

Jackie defines historical ethnography as a transdisciplinary and multidimensional approach to history making. “I get to discover little-known people and retell, as I have done today, their stories” (“Sarah’s Story” 47). But this scholar is not just telling stories; instead she is looking closely at historical context, cultural practices, rhetorical moves, and the relationships of the world to these women, the relationship between these women and the world. She fills in the gaps carefully and with deliberate attention to the authority and responsibility she is taking on when she does so. In the spirit of feminism and the spirit of these women whose lives have been covered up with the thick dust of the Master and his narratives, Jackie takes the risk to deviate from standard practices of scholarly research where evidence is presented, not created. The deviation, then, comes not in form so much as approach. It is *they way* she pieces together these histories, from photographs,

newspapers, personal letters, essays, that creates a model of feminist scholarship. The “stories” are not created from documented sources or scholarship, but from a plethora of personal and cultural artifacts where Jackie fills in the gaps as she can. In using this unconventional approach, Jackie acts defiantly; she has the nerve – as she often says of the women she is writing about – to forge a new way. From her work comes an alternate approach to scholarship, another way of seeing the world, a new path to follow.

In her keynote address at the 2001 Race, Gender and Orientation Symposium at Miami University, Jackie said she wanted Traces of a Stream to encourage other scholarship, evidence of her own deliberate, defiant trail blazing. Because the methodology she uses in that text is a deviation from standards of historical data collection and analysis, some have scoffed at her invitation that others should follow – or *are able to follow*.

Kay: I think another way of looking at defiance within your work is just the way, the methodology you use. The way you say, “Well, you know, I know parts of these stories, but I am telling the other parts because those voices are lost and . . .”

Jackie: “. . . and so what. We can know a lot of stuff and not know it all.”

Kay: And that kind of defiance of, “I don’t care what you’re going to say about that approach or what the standards are to the approach when there are gaps and how people fill them. I am going to do it this way.”

Jackie: And I think it makes sense. And so, yeah. That is the way I see me. I feel a lot more radical than people think I am. In some ways you would think that I have conformed to certain kinds of traditional expectations for how women might proceed. Even this year, someone was saying [. . .] my choices were very different choices, but not everybody can do that. Only privileged people can do that. “So, you are Jackie Royster, you can do that.” It took me 15 years to do this book, so you think these are easy choices? They are not. I have experienced quite a bit of turmoil in having made these decisions and pushed these ways of doing things. If you think people automatically accept what I do, think again. So it is that kind of

thing. At this point in my career, after having done things in whatever way that I have, that pushing the boundaries in whatever way I have managed to push, there is the assumption that I am just, everything comes easy. But it is difficult. I can expect that. If you tried to do it, then you would have a problem.

Kay: Well, I think, reading over the stuff I have read by you, I have always been attracted to the way you approach things because it is never in the typical way. [. . .] You always throw in some surprises. You are always trying to turn it, twist it, shape it in another way that I think is really refreshing. So, for someone to say, when they just happen to pick that last chapter [of *Traces of a Stream*], that you could do that, but they never could, when you look back through your work, you can see evidence of that [maverick approach] throughout. So it is not like all of a sudden, "Oh, I think now that I have this secure position, I can start dinking around with the ways I use rhetoric and the way I am presenting my information."

Jackie: And that is the point that this person didn't see. In a way it reminded me of something I had just not paid attention to for awhile. It was really very nice to have Pat [Bizzell at the Rhetoric Society of America conference] talk about my work with critical attention. It wasn't necessarily just being laudatory, but by giving it critical attention, after 15 years, just trying to make a space for something. "Ok. Ok. I am here. You can look at this. It has some credibility." That was a very different moment to have that critical attention as compared to the earlier days when I heard people say, "Oh, I didn't know that Black women could read." And then that question reminded me that, there are some people who just don't know. Who don't see the pathway in quite the way I see it.

The way Jackie sees it, that *pathway* is a life-force for African American women's history, African American history, and *American* history. Through her re-cutting and re-forging and re-claiming that path, she becomes one of the trailblazers she writes about. In writing about Sarah – one of the children on the *Amistad* – Jackie reclaims her story and the importance of that small, African, girl-child's life, stating Sarah was a person "whose personal history happened to include one of the most dramatic events in African American history" ("Sarah's Story" 47). The small African child, abducted and held captive on a slave ship, became a success story of the

abolitionist movement: college educated at Oberlin, she became a dynamic rhetor, a teacher, and trailblazer. In conversations with Jackie and in her speeches and scholarship, Jackie often asks, “Where did they get the nerve?” Where did these women of African descent find the strength, tenacity, and nerve to forge ahead in a pathless jungle of the dominant culture, so that others could follow. They led lives in constant jeopardy, and where, Jackie asks, did they get the nerve?

Sassy Defiance

This nerve, this sassiness as Jackie often defines it, is a recalcitrant shrug at the white, supremacist patriarchal conventions. The patriarchal conventions of how history is written or how a scholar creates research don't fit Jackie's approach. By piecing together history from sources that are seen as traditionally credible (newspapers, books) and those that leave room for feminist interpretation and gap-filling (photos, personal letters, speculation), the sassy defiance of Jackie's work thumbs its nose at dominant ways of doing things. “Does my sassiness upset you?” Maya Angelou asks in “Still I Rise.” Jackie isn't really asking. Rather she, like the narrator of Angelou's poem, is taunting and daring. Whether her sass, her intellect, her refusal to cower before the culture that assigns her the traditionally marginalized and disempowered position of black and female upsets or not is of little concern to her. Sassiness becomes a rhetorical action, like the shamelessness Lynn writes about in “Entitlement:” words without shame; words dripping with sass. It reflects a rhetoric of defiance; and still I rise.

Like Angelou and the women Jackie's work reclaims and restores to American history, specifically American rhetorical history, Jackie embodies the same defiance, a

feminist spirit of resistance, in her work as scholar, teacher and administrator. "You can write me down in history, with your bitter, twisted lies/[. . .] But still, like dust, I rise," Angelou narrates in the voice of her sassy woman. Like the dust of the road left unpaved, ignored, but still well-traveled, African American women's lives rise up through their own spirit, certainly, but through Jackie's pen and voice as well. By telling the stories other's won't, doing her "historical ethnography" that gives stories and identities to those who are lost to history, Jackie not only names others as sassy women, those with nerve to rise and survive despite all odds, but she herself is included in that category.

Jackie knows to include herself with these women she is restoring to American rhetorical history. In her inaugural address as Full Professor to faculty and administrators at OSU, she tells the stories of "Sassy Women;" within her speech, the "they" becomes "we."

I particularly want to represent how African American women stand solidly in one world, a world that is not particularly accommodating to *them* and by various processes, *they* systematically imagine and create a new vision of a world that is filled with possibility and cast light on various processes that help us transform ourselves so that these imagined worlds become real.

[. . .]

The very inclination to speak, to write, to use literacy is in and of itself an act of resistance, an act of defiance. The very fact of producing language becomes an authorizing event, one that African American women have been able to set *themselves* on pathways to personal empowerment, advocacy, and activism. In focusing on the 19th century, the physical condition of African American women was, whether free or enslaved or later freed, they led lives in constant jeopardy. [. . .] The hostile context and degrading circumstances, the critical context, gave lots of reasons to lay down and die. *We* didn't. [. . .] [D]espite consistent messages from a world that encourages *us* to think otherwise, African American women are sassy. *We* are irrepressible. Quite consistently we simply refuse to have our hearts and minds restrained or our spirits crushed. [emphasis added]

In her book Traces of a Stream, Jackie overtly discusses why she includes herself in the subject group of her research (using “we” instead of “they”). Because she identifies strongly with the women she is researching and writing about, she includes herself among them. “I intend for myself to be viewed as one among those who constitute the subject of this discourse” (13). In her work and in her rhetoric, Jackie rejects the dispassionate, objective stance for one that creates connections that bring power and strength to the work. In fact, this close association with the “Sassy Women” about whom she writes and talks applies feminist ethics to her work. She is not “othering” her research subjects because she includes herself among them. Additionally, by not only recognizing herself as a sassy woman, but positioning herself so publicly – specifically within the context of her inaugural address – Jackie is exercising that tradition of defiance she celebrates in the subjects of her research. At the rhetorical moment of her inaugural address, Jackie is declaiming to her colleagues that she intends to be sassy, defiant, critically conscious, irrepressible in her leadership role. The rhetoric of sassiness becomes one of public transformation, as if to say, “Regardless of what you thought you were getting, here is who I am.” In her speech Jackie is taking her authority, her *ethos* as associate dean, and describing how she will act in that role.

For an African American woman, not only is her public announcement of alliance with the defiant woman of history a radical act, the work of being a university leader in and of itself is a radical location. When I asked Jackie what her most radical feminist act was, she did not hesitate to name her very presence in the academy as such.

Jackie: My most radical feminist act. That depends on your definition of radical. It really does. Because I think it is a radical moment for any African American woman to be in the university context, my very presence is radical. We were

talking about defiance before. It is an act of defiance. African American women scholars are by existence a radical scene. There is nothing in the environment that is particularly accommodating to our being there and that some of us have managed to get all the way through the system. That is a radical moment. I do think that is the most radical thing. That and coming here. Being a full professor of English who is an associate dean at a Big Ten university is a radical moment. How many opportunities do you have [to witness that]?

Kay: Not many.

Jackie: Not many. No. So if your definition of radical includes that, then everyday that I live and breath is a radical day. There are other things that you say, I think I put more in the area of defiance. The fact that I have the nerve to study African American women, you know, when I have been told continuously when I first started this, "Now, why are you doing that? What did they do? Are they important?" And the most insidious question I have got is, when I say I am studying the history of literacy of African American women in the 19th century, "Could they read back then?" So for me, that is a radical moment. To have the nerve to do the work. To spend your time in a world that is very hierarchical, very conventional, that does not count lots and lots of things, to choose to do all the things that they say don't count. I don't count as an African American, I don't count as a female, I don't count as someone interested in rhetoric and composition, I don't count as someone interested in African American mentors, I don't count as a person who would say there is an intellectual tradition for African American women. There are lots of things that don't count about what I do, and I just do them anyway. That's radical.

Although her very identity embodies a position that historically "doesn't count," having the power of being associate dean is a very tangible way that Jackie's work and voice *does* count. And because it does count, her use of feminist pedagogy and her feminist beliefs that she brings to that work "count" a great deal. As Jackie herself stated in her keynote speech to the 2001 Race, Gender and Identity Symposium, "It is not when and where I enter, but *how* I enter."⁴⁹ The *how* is with a feminist pedagogical style and

⁴⁹The reference to "When and Where I Enter" comes from the Anna Julia Cooper essay "A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South," her only published work (1892). She wrote, "Only the BLACK WOMAN can say 'when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me'"

sensibility. Because of entering her work from a feminist perspective, Jackie defines herself as an academic activist. “I consider myself to be an academic activist, a person who has chosen (even if I have not been chosen) to be a politically conscious watchdog, a sentry for the need for positive change in the world of education” (“Time Alone” 41). One could argue that by virtue of being selected for leadership positions like that of associate dean, Jackie has been chosen because others are acknowledging – and supporting – her fiery spirit working for “positive change in the world of education” (she is not just self-selecting the work of academic activism). To codify her position of academic activism, her “Sassy Women” speech publicly claimed that stance.

During the question and answer period after the “Sassy Women” speech, someone in the audience asked whether Jackie’s use of the word “sassy” to describe the subjects of her research was related to the contemporary stereotype of Black women as “hostile.” Jackie responded personally (once again shifting the “they” to not just a “we” but an “I”) rather than to the impersonal collective of “hostile Black women.” “I got so sick of all the people who asked me why I was so angry. I am not angry. I do operate on a certain level of *passion*,” she laughed. “I am passionate. I do resent the dismissive qualities and the way we talk about sassiness. I want to recover the very spirit of sassiness.”

That spirit of sassiness is not just alive and well in Jackie’s scholarship, but an example of feminist pedagogy as it embodies itself in Jackie’s leadership. When Jackie demonstrates her commitment to and awareness of dynamics of race, class, ethnicity, and gender, when she pushes those she is leading to actively engage in critical consciousness

(31). Paula Giddings’ resurrected the phrase (and Cooper’s use of it) in her book When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America. In her book, Giddings describes the physical reality of being Black and female and how that identity shifts the contexts of her rhetorical moments. A Black woman does not assume a rhetorical position, but first must consider when and how she will enter that rhetorical space so that the audience will respond in ways that are effective.

regarding these issues, when she is intensely aware of the voices and silences that surround her and her role in bringing out more of the silenced voices, she enacts feminist pedagogical themes in her leadership. To hear Jackie tell it, however, is to hear a leader describe herself as someone who did not intend this path, did not actively choose it, but knows the imperative deliberateness of her feminist scholarship, teaching, and leadership. As she says of the African American women leaders of the 19th Century, "Something in Womanhood made it imperative that they worked for their people. That imperative was so strong that they could not choose *not* to take the opportunity" (Keynote, Mar 2, 2001). Although Jackie was not talking about herself directly when she made that statement, her feminist leadership dictates a similar consciousness.

A Critically Conscious Woman is a Defiant Woman

The theme of defiance is fundamental to Jackie's own life and work. Defiance is something she also associates with feminism. For Jackie, being a feminist means engaging in defiant acts. Therefore, it would follow that her definition of feminist pedagogy also has this theme running through it. "[Feminist pedagogy] has a willfulness about it. There is a deliberateness about it. A consciousness about it. And then there is a reflexivity in that consciousness." This theme of critical consciousness seems to be a foundational element not only of Jackie's definition of feminism, but Lynn's and Harriet's as well. It reminds me of a conversation a group of graduate students had in a feminist rhetorics and pedagogies class I was in. We were struggling with something, one identifying element, that made feminist pedagogy distinct from other critical or radical pedagogies. At the time, we came to the conclusion that the *one thing* that distinguished

feminist pedagogy from other pedagogies was critical self-reflection. The teacher had to use feminist critique and self-reflect on the class, on her own decisions, on the dynamics of her work, the students' work and their interactions together. It was feminist consciousness, feminist critique, applied not only to oneself as the teacher, but the classroom community as a whole and the teacher's role in shaping and leading that community. Because of my work on this project, it is impossible for me to simplify feminist pedagogy in that way, but I do think that the feminist critical consciousness as applied to teaching and the classroom environment is *one of the ways* feminist pedagogy is unique from other radical pedagogies.

In addition to identifying this critical consciousness and self-reflection as a primary element of feminist pedagogy, Jackie also saw it as a willful way of engaging with students, a classroom community, and the work of teaching. Echoing back to her definition of "sassy," Jackie's way of describing feminist pedagogy also reminds me about the way she spoke of her mother: a woman of willful deliberateness; the woman who showed Jackie how a person could be Black and female in the world. "She is very radical [. . .] I grew up with her as the kind of model of how you could do really crazy things and still live, really outspoken things and still live." At one point during my site visit, when I asked Jackie whether other people would define her as feminist, she laughed and said, "They would probably say, 'Oh, she's that crazy woman.'" "Crazy," a word that Jackie used to describe not only her mother's actions, but the way others would define her, is evidence of this willful defiance as it plays out in the larger cultural context.

Traditionally marginalized people who refuse to enact their assigned cultural roles are often described as “crazy.”⁵⁰

When I taught English in Morocco to Saharan school children who needed to learn English as much as they needed a trip to Disney World (more pressing needs such as hunger and disease kept them squarely in the clutches of poverty), I often integrated poems and songs in the curriculum. Together we would sing and recite verses, committing words of Bob Marley, Langston Hughes, and Bob Dylan to memory. A staple of this diet of poems and songs of oppression and critical engagement in the world was a Gwendolyn Brooks’ poem. Entitled “Crazy Woman” it spoke to this same radical willfulness of feminist defiance. “I shall not sing a May song./A May song should be gay./I’ll wait until November/ and sing a song of gray./ I’ll wait until November./That is the time for me./I’ll go out in the frosty dark/And sing most terribly./And all the little people/Will stare at me and say./”That is the Crazy Woman/Who would not sing in May.” Many of the Moroccan students responded passionately to this poem; they identified with the melancholy tone of the woman who didn’t feel like singing when she was supposed to; they knew the mournful tunes of grey and how often despair can comfort a heart or mind when happiness or physical comfort is not readily available; they understood the idea that “crazy” is an easy label to throw onto someone, instead of looking closely and trying to see the troubled life or unsettled spirit that moves someone to act outside the

⁵⁰If the people acting counter to expectations of the dominant culture are themselves members of the dominant culture, wielding power, they are not labeled as crazy, but as “eccentric” or “maverick.” The examples of Ted Turner or Hugh Hefner or William Randolph Hurst spring to mind – white, heterosexual, male, excruciatingly wealthy, and controlling an inordinate amount of financial, natural, political resources. These men are entrenched in the capitalist empire, therefore their behavior, often seen as out of bounds in relation to what the dominant culture defines as “normal” were/are typically described as eccentric or maverick, but rarely – if ever – as crazy.

expectations of cultural norms. The narrator of Brook's poem is engaging in radical acts of defiance. She is, as I am sure Jackie would agree, the essence of a sassy woman.

The insistence on redefinition and renaming also reflects an element inherent to feminism. In the way that Jackie wants to "reclaim sassy," Patrician Hill Collins writes that Black Feminist Thought focuses on renaming/reclaiming the concept of Black Womanhood. In her essay "Outsider Within," Collins defines Black Feminist thought as first self-definition/valuation: challenging *external* definitions of black womanhood and defining themselves not in relation to what is "other" but how they see themselves; secondly, it is recognizing the interactive nature of oppression: dualistic thinking (either/or) is the lynchpin in interlocking systems of oppression; binaries imply superiority and inferiority. Black feminist thought also recognizes the importance of African American culture and the material effects and supports of that culture. By virtue of working in the academy, identifying not only as a feminist, but a sassy woman, doing the work she is doing to reclaim and rename the obliterated past of African American women intellectuals and activists, Jackie engages with Collins' idea of Black Feminist Thought. Through her work, Jackie not only displays a model of what it means to be a Black feminist in the world, in the academy, in today's culture, but she also asks us to contemplate and consider the material lives of Black feminists whom history has attempted to erase. "What did it take for these women (of African descent) to believe in their own agency?" Jackie asks. "To act defiantly and dangerously, using speaking and writing?" (Keynote, Mar 2, 2001).

Even recognizing that these women existed, that they were part of history and deserved to be recognized as such, was an exercise in feminist thought. When describing

how she came to do this work of historic ethnographies, Jackie said, “I had seen before, I had known before, but I hadn’t noticed before [. . .] my knowing wasn’t transformed into knowledge until my head, heart, backbone, and stomach also knew” (Keynote, Mar 2, 2001). Through this kinetic engagement with the past, through heart, stomach, back, feet, mind, Jackie resuscitates a world – and lives – that were left for dead. After conference presentations or speeches Jackie told me it is not uncommon for someone to ask, “Why don’t you research black men? Why don’t you research white women?” These questions seem cast from the same racist, albeit perhaps naive, lack of critical consciousness that spawns another comment Jackie hears a great deal when she talks about her work: “Could black women read back then?” Do people consistently ask scholars of William Blake why they don’t study women? Do scholars of Thomas Jefferson get the regular inquiry as to why they are so focused on white, heterosexual privileged class males? Yet for scholars who are working outside the domain of what the dominant culture has considered worthy of research (feminists, women, traditionally marginalized people), they are often accused of bias and – furthering the critique – weak scholarship.

When Jackie was asked to respond to the question “Is there such a thing as women’s rhetoric?” as part of her work in contributing to Andrea Lundsford’s collection Reclaiming Rhetorica, Jackie responded, “We would never ask if there is such a thing as men’s rhetoric.” The underlying assumption behind the question was that what is white, what is male, what is privileged class is, obviously, of course, without question, worthy of research. Research outside these boundaries, research that attempts to give voice and life to anyone outside the dominant circle is, well, just craziness.

Sharing the Power and Training the Troops

Ironically, despite what I believe to be the obviousness of Jackie's trail blazing, Jackie eschews the idea that she is a leader. Jackie told me she doesn't see herself as a leader; rather more of a facilitator. Jackie measures her success as a leader/facilitator by how well the project thrives in her absence, not in her presence. "I don't see power or ego as useful in a facilitator," she told me as we are walking, *fast*, to an initiation ceremony for the OSU chapter of Phi Kappa Phi (Jackie was a new faculty inductee). "It's more a sharing of power." Her description of her approach to leadership reflects the feminist pedagogy theme of "reconstructing power so that it is empowering, not oppressive." This approach once again speaks to "how" Jackie enters this position of authority. To be a feminist in a position of authority or power (be she administrator, scholar, or teacher) seems to make little difference unless the "how" is different. "It seems just the presence of women in power positions is progress, but how do they *do* things different?" Cheryl Sattler asks in her book of feminists in the academy (116).

Jackie is doing lots of things differently, beyond just being a black female person of authority in meetings full of white, privileged class males and females. Perhaps the skills of feminist facilitation and leadership that Jackie employs have been developed over the several years she has spent in leadership and administrative roles. Jackie has worked in administrative positions for 23 of her 25 years working in higher education (writing program administrators and associate deans account for the bulk of those administrative positions). She implies, in telling the chronology of her administrative history, that none of that was intentional. She was tapped as Writing Program Administrator (first at Spelman College and then at OSU) and associate dean (also first at

Spelman College and then at OSU). “If I had been a more goal-oriented, long-range planner I wouldn’t have done any of these things. But I am deliberate, but not long range. Allowing myself to have possibilities open up for me that I hadn’t known were possibilities [landed her] in a field that just feels perfect to me. I love what I do.” In other words, the path she has forged was not one she set out to cut; it just happens to be the one she did create, which worked out very well.

I haven’t done a whole lot because it was thought out. I have done it deliberately, but not in a planned way. I can’t think of a single thing that I now count as part of critical moment in my professional development that was a real plan. I mean I never planned to come over here. I never planned to be at Ohio State. I never planned to do the work that I do. It was the moment and it seemed interesting at the time. I decided to do it. So it is that kind of deliberation, it is not very kind of goal-oriented type of planning. [. . .] I have done what I do by asking, “What work will I do? Am I enjoying it? How does this play out in the broader cultural context?”

Jackie’s need to enjoy the work she chooses reminds me of Harriet’s struggles to do the kind of writing she has a passion for and still publish in academic circles. At this juncture, Harriet seems to be having less luck than Jackie in doing the work she “enjoys” while still getting published. The reason for this may be related to something that Jackie wrote in her book, Traces of a Stream. In the “Preface and Acknowledgments,” Jackie thanks David Bartholomae, a colleague in the field who also works in the capacity of editor for the University of Pittsburgh Press, for telling her to pursue the work she wanted to do, the work for which she had a passion. “I particularly appreciated the

encouragement of David Bartholomae, who recognized the possibility of this project and, with his incredible style, said, ‘Why don’t you think about doing what you really want to do?’” Although one theme of feminist pedagogy is bringing that personal passion to the work, it certainly helps when one has a benefactor with power who is urging one to take the plunge. That is not to suggest that before Bartholomae encouraged Jackie she wasn’t doing work that she was passionate about; rather the distinction between Harriet’s experience of doing work that she is passionate about and Jackie’s experience seems to be one of overt and active support of peers and colleagues who are in a power position, helping the work along and getting it published.

Besides the need to enjoy what she is doing, Jackie is also aware of how it fits into the “broader cultural context.” The attention Jackie pays to the larger cultural impact of her work shows a keen eye to critical reflection of what she is doing. Although joy and passion are essential for the work, equally important is the impact her work will have, once again evidence of what Jackie calls her academic activism. In her administrative role, this activism takes the form of feminist pedagogy as leadership. As I stated in the chapter on Lynn’s work (chapter 4), there is little distinction for me between feminist pedagogy and feminist leadership. The sixteen themes of feminist pedagogy seem to be the educational twin of feminist leadership as enacted in many grassroots organizations. Because Jackie is primarily an administrator these days, filling her life with facilitating meetings, mentoring young faculty and graduate students, and acting as advisor on issues of professional faculty development to the Dean of Humanities I tested the feminist pedagogy rubric against feminist leadership as Jackie enacted it.

I observed several meetings of varying dynamics as part of my site visit with Jackie. Whether she was meeting with a group of faculty members (the Graduate Committee for the college of Humanities), advising a graduate student on his dissertation ideas, having a “working lunch” with an editor to talk about a book project, or reflecting on her approach to leadership in her role as associate dean of research and faculty development I could see the themes of feminist pedagogy practiced in her leadership. One of the consistent ways Jackie enacted feminist pedagogy was her awareness of her power position in relation to others. She asks graduate students to call her by her first name, she listens first and then offers her opinions when running a meeting or talking with a colleague or student, and she asks more questions than makes statements, all ways of turning her position of power and authority into a more open exchange with people who have less power within a given context. The strategy of listening first connects to Jackie’s approach to her research, where she feels she is listening to the traditionally silenced voices of African American women. “I acknowledge, then, the importance of listening well, of paying careful and close attention to what they [African American women] say on, between, and around the lines; of listening to what they say about the day before, for example, and the day after; and of paying attention to who is in the conversation with them, where it is taking place, and how it interacts with other conversations that may be occurring simultaneously” (“Sarah’s Story” 48). By listening first, Jackie models a form of leadership that empowers rather than dominates.

The (in)Visible Race/Gender Divide

Her philosophy of working to be a moderator or facilitator rather than a leader was evident in a meeting I observed of the College of Humanities Graduate Committee. The particular meeting I observed embodied not an unusual dynamic for Jackie: she was the only African American woman at a table of white men. Although it did not occur on the day I visited, she said often the men will sit along one side of the table across from her evoking, Jackie said, the mental image of Anita Hill at a senate hearing. "I kind of chuckled when I realized you were coming on a day of that meeting. [. . .] It is kind of me against the world, in a way, just physically in the way we sit in the room. Now, that wouldn't be so noticeable if there weren't the differences between race and gender, but it makes the line up just so obvious. Black woman here. White men there." Jackie is quick to point out that although the physical logistics of the room play out in a way that evokes cultural references of hostility of white men towards black women, the dynamics of this group are not that way; there is a permeating aura of respect and cordiality. "I come to the meeting with a certain kind of status, if not authority, that makes my participation not to be an onerous one."

Jackie: The investment I have in the engagement [of conducting the meeting and working with these men] is professional and not personal, in a way in that we are all there in the interest of graduate students. I don't know if that really answers your question.

Kay: Yes. The question was do you find that politeness, that unwillingness to really address the difficult issues, does it play out at much in this job as you see in playing out in 4Cs.

Jackie: And I guess my point in bringing up that example [of her 4Cs address as president of the organization and people's response to the address (see page 292)] is the systemic way it always plays out because the power dynamics are amazingly resilient in this country if not this world. So you can see it if you want to pay attention to it. And then in some ways it is mediated because of position and

status that can operate or cannot operate. I think that the men in that room in the meeting you observed are respectful of me.

Kay: Yeah. Very much so. There was definitely a tone of respect, on both sides of the table, so to speak.

Jackie: It's not that way all the time, but it is nice to get that in return. If everybody had been pushing me with attitudes I have experienced before, like "Who do you think you are? Doing this, talking to me, acting like I owe you something?" So I didn't get any of that in there and there isn't much in my day that operates that way. Part of it may be a function of age. Because when I was younger, doing some very similar things, it was a more familiar thing to happen. I was too young to have any authority. I was too Black to have any authority. I was too female to have any authority. So, here when I am the only Black or woman in the room, I can't tell you the number of times I have been in a situation like that.

The race and gender dynamics of these meetings, and Jackie's awareness of them (another theme of feminist pedagogy), recreate the image of authority and leadership to *include* people other than white males. Angela Giddens names this critical self reflection of race and gender dynamics the "reflexive self" where, specifically in Giddens' and Jackie's cases, Black women create their "self-perceptions" of their own authority and leadership, despite the cultural messages that indicate they should not be these things because of their femaleness, age, skin color. By re-ordering a self-narrative to include the status of leader, the role of leader is recreated in their own image (244). Naz Rassool writes that Black women recreate self identity and overcome barriers to authority and leadership by 1) networking and finding mentors, 2) choosing a place in the field that has strategically high number of women, and 3) claiming a rightful place, engaging in a challenge with the male-dominated field just by being there. In Rassool's description, the claiming of ethos seems to be more passive – just by a Black woman's presence, the academy changes. Giddens' theory positions the woman more as an active subject,

working to create an ethos, to define her own public version of “self” to become knowledge and culture producers in the academy. Jackie seems to follow the model Giddens proposes, being actively aware of *how she is entering* this sphere of authority and leadership. By doing so she is actively and consciously changing the ethos of African American women as a group.

By using feminist leadership strategies, Jackie creates an *ethos* that embodies an alternative model of leadership that is more empowering for those who are afforded less institutional power than herself. Although there are distinctions between feminist leadership and feminist teaching (power relationships may be less pronounced because knowledge is more shared than in a classroom situation), there is enough overlap between feminist leadership and feminist teaching to see the themes of feminist pedagogy playing out in administrative tasks facilitated by feminists. To demonstrate the complexity of Jackie’s use of feminist pedagogy as leadership in the context of a single Graduate Committee meeting, I have coded the transcripts of that meeting on a grid of the sixteen themes of feminist pedagogy.⁵¹

The day I observed the Graduate Committee was winding up the semester and adjourning for the summer. Items on the agenda included discussion of what issues

⁵¹Because Jackie was not teaching during the term when I visited her, I could not observe her teaching a class. I observed several meetings that Jackie facilitated. The meeting coded on the chart as an example of how Jackie practices feminist pedagogy when facilitating meetings represents a Graduate Committee meeting for the College of Humanities. I was not allowed to tape the meetings, therefore I had to rely solely on note taking during the meeting to record how the themes were reflected in Jackie’s leadership. As I know from classroom observations with Lynn and Harriet, there are only so many things I can see or notice during a meeting/class. Coding transcripts adds depth and analysis to the process of identifying how themes play out in any give context. Therefore, my researcher’s hunch is that only a portion of the ways Jackie practiced the themes of feminist pedagogy are recorded or noted here. That may account for the number of themes that have no codings assigned to them, but these “blank themes” may also be related to the differences between using feminist pedagogy in a leadership/administrative position as opposed to a traditional classroom situation; perhaps in administrative/leadership positions not all of the themes are germane.

needed to be carried over to the next term's agenda (graduate student funding and relation to attrition, graduate teacher training programs) and a couple proposals regarding adding a graduate major or emphasis in the areas of film studies and comparative studies. There were four attendees (not counting Jackie or myself), each one from a different Humanities department/program. Although there are two women, besides Jackie, who have been appointed to the committee, Jackie was the only woman present the day I attended. The meeting was held in a room with a very long and wide conference table, about three times the size of what was needed for a group of six people. Jackie sat on one side of the table and the committee members (all white men) sat across from her or on the end of the table. The tone of the meeting was friendly and focused and Jackie moved the group through the morning's agenda with deft organization, all the while making sure everyone had contributed or commented on an agenda item before moving on.

Coding Chart: Graduate Committee Meeting, College of Humanities

code#	Themes of Teacher Critical Reflection	Utterances/Mentions/Instances
1	Confronting sex biases (both the teacher's own and other's)	- absence of women and other traditionally marginalized people is noted and commented on (Jackie to me after the meeting)
2	Embracing conflict instead of working to avoid it	- when people disagree, Jackie allows room for the discussion to continue (always respectfully)
3	Being overt with one's political location (self-disclosure) and checking teacher authority	- takes notes (positioning herself as a learner/member of the group) - "But that is my personal bias." - "In the English department we follow a similar model."
4	Reconstructing power so that it is empowering not oppressive	- introduces me and what I am doing, letting the group know they can ask me to leave at any time - "I want to clarify how you are directing me." - summarizes ideas/use of paraphrasing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - takes notes of what people are saying (what they say is important) - carefully looks around at each person, making eye contact, when asking "Anyone else?" - "What about other departments?" - allows members various ways of responding (verbally, email, personal memo) - "Advice, please?" - "How does that sound?"
5	Teaching with the whole self	
6	Integrating theory and practice	
7	Critically reflecting on teaching through a teaching journal or other consistent method of critical engagement with classroom dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - awareness of race/gender dynamics of the room and how she has thoughtfully reflected on how to handle them

code#	Themes of Classroom Strategies	Utterances/Mentions/Instances
8	Creating connections between learning and knowing and connections between the classroom and outside issues	
9	Working towards student critical consciousness	
10	Considering dynamics and issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, among others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aware of race/gender dynamics of the group and asks dean to be aware of appointments in this regard
11	Engaging students in active learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Any other comments we need to include?" - "Anything else we need to add?" - asks members to talk about their experiences or process in their department

code#	Themes of Student Concerns	Utterances/Mentions/Instances
12	Considering each individual student's realities and needs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - allowing members to communicate either verbally or via email - allowing members to speak of their own experiences or policies in their departments
13	Giving students choice in the curriculum and the work they do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the group establishes the day's agenda - members of group present/introduce/control various agenda items - asks for agenda items for next fall (and takes notes while people offer ideas)
14	Bringing joy and fun into the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regular laughter and light jests
15	Being aware of voices and silences in the class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making sure everyone has space to respond to a question or offer feedback (allowing for

		silence while people think) - works towards consensus (“Do we agree on that?”)
16	Recognizing that each classroom community and each student is unique	- recognizes that each department operates differently and asks for those perspectives/ideas specifically - recognizes some people are better verbalizing thoughts and others better at writing (option of email messages to Jackie)

When reviewing the coding chart, the theme showing most prominence reflects Jackie’s desire to see herself as a facilitator rather than a traditional leader (“Reconstructing power so that it is empowering”). Several other themes that also emerged relate tangentially to this issue of sharing power and authority: giving people choice in the work of the committee and how to approach that work (theme 13), Jackie verbalizing her own biases to the group (theme 3), and asking members of the committee to draw on their own experience/expertise and share that knowledge with the group (theme 11). There are several themes that did not overtly manifest themselves in meeting practices or leadership strategies. When considering these themes it is easy to see that they would not be readily identifiable in a single meeting and without more pointed reflection on behalf of the facilitator. For example, the integration of theory and practice is less obvious in a meeting, especially a faculty meeting, where administrative concerns are the topic of discussion. That is not to say that there isn’t theory that could potentially ground the processes created for designing a new minor in film studies, only that the theory would be transparent to me, as the observer/researcher. In the practices that relate to “Creating connections,” one could argue that every topic discussed at the meeting was connected to a real issue in the university community that the committee was charged with addressing. If that is the case, then every agenda item would be considered

manifestations of that theme in the meeting. Themes such as “teaching with the whole self” and “working towards student critical consciousness” seem specifically related to a classroom situation or a site where “learning” is the objective rather than a meeting situation where administrative decisions are the goal. However, one could argue that Jackie’s physical presence of being Black and female in a room of white males would embody the spirit of “teaching with the whole self” in that the group is not unaware of the very physical, cultural disruption Jackie’s location places on the cultural paradigm of leadership as white and male.

Jackie’s commitment to facilitate instead of dominate is evidenced brilliantly by the number of mentions/utterances in the category of “Reconstructing power so that it is empowering not oppressive.” The prominence of this theme also plays out in her definition of what she perceives her role as a leader to be: “I have more information and resources, so my job is to present that to others so they can do the work: put it together and stir it up; see what happens.” Mixing it up and seeing what happens also relates to another one of themes: embracing conflict instead of avoiding it. Instead of controlling and limiting conflict as is typical not only of traditional leadership but of socialized female/feminine discourse practices, where the goal is smooth sailing rather than rocky currents, Jackie instead sees the benefit of stirring things up and working through the rough spots.

A Challenge Politely Ignored

Another public example of embracing conflict instead of ignoring it was Jackie’s challenge to the members of the College Composition and Communication Conference

(4Cs) to email her their responses to her public declamation that members of 4Cs were not confronting issues of race within the organization or the profession of composition and rhetoric effectively – or perhaps at all. In 1995 Jackie was the chair of 4Cs. In that capacity, she opened the annual conference with a speech where she confronted publicly her experience as a Black woman in the organization and what she felt was lack of attention to race issues in scholarship, in classrooms, in presentations, and in professional interactions. At the end of her speech she invited the audience to talk with her about these issues, to begin a dialogue. She asked her colleagues to “talk back” to her about the speech itself. Only a handful of people took her up on that offer. I asked Jackie what the nature of the responses were, what she expected when she extended the invitation, and what kind of responses would have been productive.

Jackie: Well, I got a response from one person who wanted to use the talk in their class and engage in a rhetorical analysis (a graduate seminar). I had a response from a woman who was doing her dissertation on deliberative rhetoric who wanted to use it. And I got a couple more general responses like, “Thanks for the opportunity. This is what I am interested in. This is what I am thinking.” So, there was less volume than I was expecting. I was taking something of a risk in having my box flooded with response. But then when I thought about it, it is hard for people to respond to issues about race.

Kay: I think it is especially hard for white folks to do that because they feel, there is so much baggage with that.

Jackie: So, I think folks were not wanting to take the risk of saying what they thought.

Kay: When you extended that invitation, you just said you were anticipating that you could have had lots of responses, but what were you anticipating as far as what did you think . . .

Jackie: What I hoped for was a dialogue. At the time I thought we were not having such a dialogue in rhetoric and composition and that was a really a little silly for us not to be more actively and directly engaged in these issues since we

claim to have the general interest in the field. So, let's see if we can keep our feet to this fire. What I *expected* was no response.

Kay: Really?

Jackie: Really. Because that is what we generally get when we raise issues of race or you get a clap. Or you get a "Yeah. That's right," or "That was so interesting." We get response around the issues instead of to the issues. I remember that day just being hugged to death. I let people cry on my shoulder for about half the day. [. . .] People couldn't say more than, "That was courageous of you." You know, in that kind of breathless way. It was a difficult dialogue to get going and I wanted to get that dialogue going.

Kay: When I was talking to Harriet one of her critiques of the field of comp rhet was that people want to be so nice. They want to be concerned. "I am so concerned about issues of race. I am so concerned about issues of gender and sexual identity." All that kind of thing, but she said that people aren't willing to honestly confront the issues. We have good hearts about it, but . . .

Jackie: Well, a lot have been perceived as doing something about it. But being able to engage in the issues is difficult, being able to look ugliness in the face, be willing to look at our own complicity in certain kinds of things without being distracted by the fact that "This is a bit embarrassing that I am going to admit this," or "I hadn't thought about that. I am kinda guilty of doing this with my students or having this situation ride without my asking a question even though I think of myself as X, Y or Z." So, I agree with her that it is the image of the field that we are the good guys. So, if we are the good guys then we don't have to admit anything. We don't have to do anything. We are just kind of righteous and above ourselves. No, we are not. So it is hard to enable a discussion.

Kay: What would have been the response you would have liked to receive from that. Give me an example of something that would have been a meaningful, substantive response.

Jackie: Well, I think for some people an honest response would have been to say, "Oh, I think you are full of it. This is not right. This is not right. This is not how you should be interpreting these things. You are just really being overly sensitive." Show me I'm wrong. Or "Let me tell you how I would have interpreted that." So to me that would have permitted conversation to happen. To seriously sit down and try to figure out, "So why is my perspective this way and your perspective that way and what does this difference suggest about the kinds of things we are able to do inside this organization when we seem like we are on the

same page but we are really far apart when we try to make sense of our lives?" That would have been the kind of conversation I would have ideally wanted to have. Or one that would have said, "You know, I am not an AA woman, but I often feel that way in these types of situations, so how is my situation like yours? How is it different? How can I see you in the same light that I have experienced my own life in a way that is useful to me? Or what do I need to know that would make me see things the way you see them?" Any of those kinds of things would have been very interesting. Or for somebody to have said, "Oh, I really don't think you went far enough with that. There are some other issues that you didn't deal with at all from my perspective. I wonder what you think about X, because I think this." And I don't see that kind of conversation at presentations. I think of it as a desire to try to figure out what is going on between human beings who are the same in so many ways and different in so many ways. Who are trying to do certain kinds of things with a certain community of interest, but it didn't happen.

Jackie's reflection shows that "embracing conflict" and actually getting people to engage with conflict are two very different things. Although she was willing to engage in the difficult discussions of honest dialogues on race with the predominantly white membership of the 4Cs, the challenge was not accepted. It was, for the most part, politely ignored. Thinking about this challenge for critique and conflict that was ignored made me think back to Harriet's comment on the politeness of the discipline. Harriet told me about her essay "David and Me" published in JAC and how it was also politely ignored. In the essay she talks about her critique of David Bartholomae and how he became, in her dissertation, a theory ("Bartholomae"), not a human being. When she was confronted with the physical reality of the man at a conference, she was taken aback. She wrote the essay as a way of critiquing the theory, but also of attempting to confront the man. She ended the essay with two simple words, "Hello, David," signifying her willingness to engage with *the man* who wrote the theory. I asked her if David Bartholomae ever

responded either publicly or privately to her essay. She said he hadn't,⁵² marking another moment where confrontation and potential conflict was politely ignored.

And then I am reminded of the baldly honest responses Lynn Worsham and Susan Jarratt received on their book proposal for Feminisms and Composition. The difference, it seems, is that these critiques were anonymous and therefore did not hold back angry responses to what "they" perceived as a project that was "listing towards feminism." In one context, where a human face must be addressed and the physical reality of another human being must be considered, we become cowards, running from conflict and politely turning away. In another context, where the faces are hidden and our opinions "anonymous," we get to say what we *really* think and feel, with less than productive ends, for it is too easy to dismiss a faceless comment and even more easy to dismiss a faceless comment full of hostile rhetoric, the masked coward on a rampage.

In her feminist pedagogical approach to leadership, Jackie offers another way: respectful conflict that is honest, meaningful, thought-provoking. Instead of politely ignoring the issue of race, a subject that makes many liberal-minded white folks hang their heads or wring their hands in concerned abjectness, Jackie names the conflict, the points of contention and challenges us all to engage instead of run away. However, if we refuse to engage in discussion, to embrace the conflict, the challenge hangs in the air like an empty thought bubble, a gasp void of breath. Instead of claiming and telling the stories that shame us, as Lynn Worsham challenges feminists to do, analyzing and critiquing our own lives from various angles, the 4Cs audience that Jackie addressed

⁵²Bartholomae's non-response to Harriet's article about him seems a tad ironic since Jackie attributes her book Traces of a Stream to have, in part, resulted from Bartholomae's support and encouragement regarding her work (see page 283).

chose to politely ignore instead of publicly declaim. Instead of the audience engaging in rigorous self-critique, the response was to use the rhetorical moment as a teaching tool in classes or as an example in a dissertation (demonstrative rhetoric!), or give a clap on the back (“That was so interesting!”), or offer a breathless hug (“You are so courageous!”). Jackie’s challenge to tackle the conflict, to name the various rough edges of contact, was politely ignored. The well-meaning, good-hearted people that Harriet typifies as the 4Cs membership shied away from the challenge of conflict, despite the feminist challenge to engage. Jackie’s anticipation of no response speaks to her experiences of being black and female, a person who historically, traditionally “doesn’t count.” Instead of critiquing our shame and working through those deep-running currents of ideological bigotry as they manifest themselves in our lives and work, we pat the head, rub the shoulder, tightly embrace the physical body, but politely decline, in silence, to make similar intimate contact with the issue that has been named. Although in this example the “we” is typically white folks at 4Cs who refused to publicly examine our own racist shame, in the context of feminism the “we” are feminists and the issues encompass much more than race, but class, ability, age, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, religious or spiritual bigotries, among others.

To further integrate Lynn’s point that we are all responsible for publicly interrogating our internalized racism, sexism and homophobia into this example, we must also consider that it is not the African American’s duty to point out racism. It is not the lesbian’s job to point out homophobia. It is not the woman’s job to point out sexism. Instead we must be self-critical enough in the name of feminism to recognize our own collusion with systems of oppression, in whatever form they take, as well as naming

them as they are manifested in the organizations, institutions, and classrooms in which we work. As Harriet expressed weariness of being cast as the spokeslesbian, always called upon to give *that* perspective, by virtue of being an African American woman leader, Jackie is called upon to be the watchdog of racism. Just as the women Gesa Kirsch interviewed said they were exhausted from serving on several committees as the token female, so are African Americans within the academy called upon to serve so the committee/group has the *face* of diversity. The onus of calling attention to issues of “diversity” then falls on the shoulders of these few individuals who are selected (because they are physically marked) to represent the perspectives of an entire group. This dynamic is only compounded by the “watchdog” responsibility of bringing to the table issues of racism/sexism/classism, (etc.), allowing others to feel blissfully irresponsible to interrogate or publicly name these issues.

The 4Cs address is just one example of how Jackie takes the feminist high road of embracing conflict instead of politely ignoring issues some may feel uncomfortable addressing; another is the dominant group’s expectations that Jackie name or doggedly police racism because she embodies the physical reality of a Black woman. This same dynamic could have been playing out when Emig and Phelps asked Jackie – and others – to comment on the table of contents for their anthology Feminine Principles in Composition. In her response, Jackie leveled a careful, honest critique regarding the absence of African American voices, and the acknowledgment of their experience in the history of the field (388). When talking with me she said it was a frustrating exercise to be asked to comment on the Table of Contents because she was commenting on someone else’s decision. “It was a pointless exercise,” she told me. “It was their choice, so why

are they asking me?" The very answer to this rhetorical question is likely that the editors wanted "The Black Feminist" perspective. Jackie rose to the unspoken demand and offered that perspective, but – again – she did so in the feminist spirit of respectfully engaging in conflict rather than politely ignoring it. Reverberating through these examples is Harriet's description of Jackie as embodying the "nexus of smart and warm." The careful and honest critiques Jackie offers, the challenges she extends, and the patience she exudes in the face of tireless demands to speak as The Black Feminist show us the ideals of feminist pedagogy as leadership. Jackie has, in fact, answered the call of Maria Stewart, to "distinguish yourself" (qtd. in Inaugural address, May 22, 2001), furthering the path that Stewart herself forged along with other sassy women of African descent in our culture's history.

The Bridges Between Feminist Nurturing and Mentoring

Before one becomes a leader, one looks to others for models of what it means to effectively move a group or community toward common goals. Inherently there is a connection between mentoring, being mentored, and leadership. To learn to lead effectively, one looks to others who embody effective, compassionate, and empowering leadership and, in the best of circumstances, is mentored by a role model. In turn, as a leader one mentors others, both directly and indirectly as novices and plebeians keep keen eyes cued to the *how*. As Jackie articulated, a good leader – as manifested in her own philosophy -- "trains the troops" so that the work can be carried on even when the leader is not physically present. In feminist pedagogy, a leader shares the power of authority and trusts those with less power to make decisions – and make mistakes – and

do things differently, recognizing the unique needs of each community. This style of mentoring and leadership involves careful listening, turning an ear to voices that are traditionally disempowered and silenced, hearing the stories they tell, their ways of viewing the world. This style of mentoring is also a manifestation of feminist pedagogy.

As a Black woman in the academy, Jackie found mentors hard to come by. Her mentors, instead, were the women who surrounded her as a child and then the women she came to know through her research. As Harriet created relationships with writers whose work she admired, a fictional mentoring to substitute for the physical presence of a mentor, Jackie found mentors in the stories of the women she researched. Through the stories of people like Anna Julia Cooper, Maria Stewart, and Ida B. Wells (among many others), and her work of historical ethnography, Jackie has not only come to know these women's stories, but to see them as mentors, models of effective leadership, a way to take a defiant feminist stand to integrate voices and perspectives long ignored. "What does it mean to look into the eyes of a woman of African descent and know there are stories that should be told, could be told, *need* to be told?" Jackie asks (Keynote, Mar 2, 2001). By clearing the way to these stories, she and others find ways of leadership and mentoring that speak to the lives and perspectives of Black women.

"I feel conspiratorial with the women who I have met through texts, like Anna Julia Cooper," Jackie told me during my site visit. "And the women I have grown up with. And by that I literally mean I feel like I breathe with them. So I have found great comfort in understanding that we share the same air in our spirits. So, in that way, yes. I look to them. But I look to them for the inspiration, not for the 'This is what they would do.' In fact it has often been the other way around. When I first started looking at 19th

century women who were all doing incredible things, I would often say, ‘If they could do what they did under those awful circumstances of their lives, I have no excuse. What is *not possible?*’” The conspiracy Jackie feels with these women is one of sororal, even feminist, leadership and access to power. The way women like Anna Julia Cooper used rhetorical skills to gain ethos and a public forum *despite* their racial and gendered locations and the way Black women in Jackie’s immediate childhood world seized power through acts of public defiance, blazed a trail to follow. Repeatedly in her conversations, speeches, and scholarship Jackie asks her audience if these women could do what they did at the disempowered location of being black and female in the 19th century through even the latter part of the 20th century, then “what is *not possible?*” Jackie places the responsibility for action not only squarely on her own shoulders, but everyone in the audience: “If not now, when? If not me, who?” Although the site for interrogation is the 19th century, Jackie finds role models and mentors of how to enact feminist leadership in her life and in the academy.

That is not to discount or ignore the contemporary mentors and role models Jackie has learned from. As she articulates it, “I have had a lot of nurturing, but little mentoring.” The distinction between nurturing (offering encouragement and support) and mentoring (showing the way and taking someone by the hand to help them through) is an important one to make. For Jackie there was a bridge between feminist principles and where and how Jackie found mentors. Through the strong connections she had with the women who showed her the way, through their support and nurturing, these mentors showed Jackie how to survive, to live, to work, to proceed as a Black woman doing her work in the academy. Although these women may not use the label of feminist to

describe themselves, Jackie said she found feminist principles in the way they chose to work, speak, and live. This bridge between feminist mentoring and leadership, arching between generations of Black women, has strong groundings in feminist theory. Without that theoretical base, the bridge would be more rickety in structure, largely unable to sustain the history it holds. Through feminism Jackie found a way to see these women, to tell their stories, showing the strength and power of these women's lives and how they paved the way for their daughters of the future. And because of her work others will find hope and strength on this path, as Jackie did. But the power of women was not first revealed to Jackie in the academy, but as a feminist tool in the home and community in which she grew up.

Kay: When did you first have an inclination towards feminist theory? Do you remember when that happened?

Jackie: Well, probably on the first day. I don't remember not having a particular inclination to be, to admire, let's just say women's power. I grew up around women who did very interesting things and I watched them all my life, so how can that not count? I went to a women's college before the words became vibrant. How can that not count? When I look back over the various papers that I wrote [as an undergraduate] a lot of those had an interest in various things of women. And certainly since I have become a professional in this arena almost everything has been that way. Even having spent 16 years teaching at a women's college [Spelman]. There are certain kinds of patterns to my life that suggest maybe there was something quite significant about my context that fed those interests and inclinations and what has happened is that they have gained vibrancy because the times we have lived in have been fed by the system of what we do. So, you have a field [feminist theory] that was evolving just as I needed labels for what I was interested in. And that happens with both rhetorical studies and feminist studies. I can't think about them alone. I still define myself as a person who is centered in language studies. That is what I do. But my interest in that area has really been informed by my own experience and the fact that these other things were bubbling around me at just the right time with a collection of people. I was lucky to have very interesting friends. Very interesting work. [My mother] loomed large in my life all the time. She's not famous or anything, but she is very active. [. . .] A

leader in her community, she has always been very involved. She is what I would call a radical woman; she is very radical, much more radical than I am. I grew up with her as the kind of model for how you could do really crazy things and still live, very outspoken things and still live. She certainly wouldn't have used any of this vocabulary that we used today to talk about this, in the same way that Anna Julia Cooper would not have called herself a Black feminist, but for me that is how she functions. [. . .] I just happened to have the advantage of being born with the people that I knew. And they were very strong. There were really strong men, too, but the women were the real movers and shakers in my life. And in the world, too. They were the movers and shakers. And by the time I was in high school I just knew that if you wanted to do something it wasn't impossible if you really wanted to do it. And I think that is kind of an "ah-ha" moment that most people have to come to and I really didn't have to come to it in that way.

Project Journal: March 19, 2001

When looking over the transcriptions of the site visit with Lynn, I highlighted a particularly captivating quote. She said, "My mother was the only thing that stood between me and doom." Jackie expressed that her mother was the first model that represented the power of being a woman. It seems that for these feminists, and for me, too, because it is also true in my experience, that our first model of womanhood was a prototype for our feminist beliefs. It was through observing our mothers that we came to know not only the oppression of women, but the power to overcome that or the strategies to use to get beyond it. Also, it seems significant that we all have these strong women *behind us*. They not only showed us a way, but then followed us through. That seems significant. It is all so intensely interesting and complicated because Harriet, on the other hand, had a mother who Harriet describes as being "afraid of everything." Harriet only found the strength and courage of women through Women's Studies courses and community activism. So, I can't make a generalization that we are all following the models our mother's created for us. I wonder, however, if this primary relationship to a prototype of feminist consciousness allows people like Lynn, Jackie, and myself to approach our feminist work with less trepidation or apology (in Jackie's words: more sass)?

Rather than a defining moment when Jackie felt the "click" of feminist consciousness, the self-actualization through female power was more gradual and seamless from the time she was born. She said her mother's light and voice follow her through her days, inhabiting her head, and whispering in her mind's ear. "Her way of

making the decisions and her outspokenness are the voices I hear in the back of my head. And so they have always constituted affirming instances for me,” Jackie told me. But her mother’s voice is not the only one that guides her. “When I was at Spelman one quotation particularly from one of [the women who Jackie discovered doing archival research] who said she had ‘A righteous disdain for second best.’ [. . .] So, it is true there are words that I found inspirational.

Kay: So it sounds like, with your mom or the people you have found in the text, a lot of people you look to kind of as a mentor are either people who are in the immediate surrounding, like family, or people you historically find through your research. Are there people you can identify within the academy?

Jackie: I have had a lot of nurturing by all kinds of people. But I haven’t had a lot of mentoring. I haven’t had a lot of people within the profession who have mentored me. I have had a lot of people who have supported me, who have been kind in various ways, you know, folks who have written recommendations for me, you reap some benefits from that. But I think of mentors as being people who advise and guide. And I have to say that I just have stumbled along on my own or in the company of people who are stumbling along with me rather than people who are actually leading, advising, counseling who could smooth the wake in a way I try to do for people now. At one point in Traces I talk about the mentoring program that we ran for Sage when the co-director and I said we wanted to do what we wished someone had done for us when we were at that stage. I often find myself in that spot.

All three of the women in my ethnographic studies talked to me about their difficulty finding mentors. I do not want to cast these women as lonely or isolated in their work. That is not the case. Each of them talks about mentors they did find and others, perhaps not feminist mentors, who greatly helped them along the way. Rather, I want to recognize that there are difficulties being a feminist, even within the privileged location of the Ivory Tower. I also want to point out that thirty years of the Second Wave still makes for a relatively new movement and so young feminist scholars of twenty years ago

– in this project specifically Harriet, Jackie, and Lynn, definitely did feel the absence of established scholars who could take them under a wing and show them the way. For Jackie, the problems of a being a traditionally marginalized person within a subculture dominated by traditional (re: the academy as white, male, heterosexual, decidedly unfeminist) becomes exponentially more difficult when a person is not only marginalized by gender, but race as well. Heidi Safia Mirza – the author of the much celebrated play To Be Young, Gifted and Black – wrote the play in response to her PhD advisor who told her she would never complete her work because she was a single, black mother (Fem Aca). Safia Mirza reflected, “I did not end up in university because of role models [. . .] my motivation lay in my determination to reveal the myths about black women’s underachievement” (145). Safia Mirza, like Jackie, felt an obligation to forge another trail, blazing the way for a new vision of Black womanhood, not defined by the dominant culture, but instead defined by the people’s whose lived experiences, whose lives, would not be pushed aside or silenced.

Kay: What do you attribute that [lack of mentors] to? Do you think there just weren’t people?

Jackie: Who would there have been? And that is not to discount the people who have been supportive. People who have been kind in different ways. But mentoring, it wasn’t a big deal when I was in graduate school. People didn’t mentor people when I was in graduate school. [I]n the absence of mentoring I got very lucky, rather than in the presence of mentoring I understood what my choices were and I was able to make a good decision. I didn’t have that. You know, you guys are very lucky.

Kay: It is true, though. I think it is very true. And I don’t even think you have to go back 25 years; ten years ago the idea was competition, not helping along.

Jackie: And then I look at other things like who like me was here to help me see the kind of work I was doing? Nobody. I am here for people now. Ten years ago I

was not here for people like me. A few people were in my place. There were a couple of senior African American women who were doing other things who were, again, kind to me. Often not even realizing the extent of their kindness at the time. That is mentoring, when you don't know you are doing. There is credit I pay to having good people in my life at some very good moments. But the kind of specific relationships and nourishment and attention that you give and you can take more for granted these days, I didn't have. In rhetoric and composition in particular now we are doing very well. [. . .] [But still] there is a lot of pressure, or need, among African American graduate students. And then there is blame. If we don't connect or don't work well together or they don't like what I am telling them, then it is my fault. I am not being a mentor to them. And it is just because we are two very different people. We don't connect. There is no fault in that. But because I am the only one, if not me, who?

The incredible responsibility Jackie places upon herself not only to do the work she is doing – to use her voice to reclaim and declaim the journeys and paths of the women obliterated by the dominant culture's master narratives – manifests itself as a feminist act of defiance, a most radical act. Through her feminist scholarship and leadership, she holds back the undergrowth so that others can see their way through. Her resilience to the hostile elements, a sassy woman on an expedition of a lifetime who refuses the trail that has already been paved and cleared by hegemony for one that leads in a territory not on the map, allows others the option of making a similar journey. “Who like me was here to help me see the kind of work I am doing? Nobody. I am here for people now,” she said. And her very presence is evidence of a new way. As Audre Lorde wrote, “We [African American women/girls] were never meant to survive.” Jackie realizes that her very act of survival, in the world and specifically in the academy, is a living, breathing embodiment of sassy defiance. Jackie herself said, “Everyday that I live and breathe is a radical day.”

Afrafeminist, Black Feminist, Womanist

Although Jackie claims the label of feminist easily, she is also quick to add that for her “it is never without modification.” Primarily this modification entails placing the modifier “Black” before the word “feminist”⁵³ to emphasize a consciousness about being a woman of African descent in the world, in this particular time, at this specific geographical location. In the last chapter of Traces of a Stream where Jackie describes her methodology, she substitutes her own rhetoric, “Afrafeminist,” for Patricia Hill Collin’s term of Black feminist or Alice Walker’s term of Womanist. She writes that it is this afrafeminist ideology that grounds her scholarship, teaching, and administrative work. Afrafeminist ideology, Jackie writes, defines African American women as “sentient beings who are capable of proactive engagement in the world. I deal consciously with the world as a place that is materially defined by social, economic, and political relationships” (271). This Afrafeminist ideology signals new feminist rhetoric to describe Jackie’s own pedagogy, leadership, and research as well as the women she is writing about. The term signals African American women’s “action despite hostility” (279). To be pro-actively engaged with the world as an African American woman,

⁵³I asked Jackie about the distinction between Black feminist and Womanist. She responded by saying that the distinction between Black Feminist and Womanist (a term coined by Alice Walker) seems to lie between a definition that is scholarly (Black Feminist) and one that is cultural (Womanist). “[Womanist] draws from a popular, a cultural arena, and in some ways I find that unsatisfying when I think about ways I want to theorize African American women’s rhetorical history. So feminism, as studies rather than an activist orientation, is somewhat more vibrant in an academic way. [. . .] There is part of me that goes beyond the academic, where all those things are still true, but most of the time it is in this circle and I want to be able to theorize about life experiences, achievements, practices in ways that vocabulary helps me to do. So, I am rather selfish in being absolutely free to use whichever one of those terms I personally choose. I am not offended by either one. And I especially understand why some African American women choose Womanist over Feminist because of the association with white woman’s identity.” In fact, in her inaugural address, Jackie defines and claims the term “Womanist” instead of Black Feminist, showing that the rhetorical situation and context dictate which label she chooses to use.

despite the systemic hostility imposed by the dominant culture, to do the work in the face of the barricades – instead of bridges – describes Jackie’s life and work.

In addition to this Afrafeminist ideology, feminist theory allows Jackie to look more “critically at systems of power and privileged and authority and those issues that seem very constructive to me. I try to think about them fairly constantly.” This critical consciousness, pushing herself to constantly keep feminist theory and its ideas at the front her mind, is a deliberate process. “There are occasions when I find myself slipping and not being consciously aware of the implications of location, position, privilege, power in how a situation is operating,” Jackie told me. The theme of self-critique and self-monitoring, to make sure one is enacting feminism and living the theory through daily lived practices, is prominently featured here. Jackie said she first and foremost sees feminism as a theory that works well when applied to the areas she is interested in. When I asked her to reflect on how her scholarship was a site of feminist pedagogy, she said, “I think it is feminist in subject. It is about women. It is feminist by theoretical frame. I am speaking through lenses that are specifically identified as feminist theory. Attention to class, race, culture. Attention to systematic forces. And all things that come through other methodologies as well that still resonate with feminist pedagogy. But the fact that much of my work is ethnographic, one way of looking at a scene or an event is inadequate to generate what is going on there. So this multi-lens approach that I came to through having been taught linguistics by an anthropologist. That gets translated in my work, the multi-lenses. They are central concerns to feminist theory.”

New Routes to Knowledge Through Feminist Epistemology

Working through a multi-lensed approach creates a feminist epistemology where experiences, stories, histories, cultures, and identities interact with historical documents of record to create a new way of knowing, seeing, and understanding the people Jackie works to “recover.” Jackie told me she is interested in creating knowledge in a new way. The last chapter in her book (*Traces*) is devoted to articulating Jackie’s theory about making knowledge in a way that is meaningful to those outside the traditional power structures. “It is a theory I have developed on how one is able to acknowledge – when you are talking about people who have not been privileged by mainstream power structures,” she told me during my site visit. In her book she writes that she is “forging ahead in uncharted territory,” creating a new space, a new way, a new path or route for others to follow (252). This Afrafeminist scholarship – or perhaps epistemology – “creates bridges from which to speak and interpret” (276) and creates a collective of the heart, mind, body and soul where intellectual work, critical awareness and analysis, and passionate attachments coalesce into new knowledge-making.

This approach to epistemology is also evident when Jackie presents her research to others. An example of this is the slides Jackie uses when making presentations. The slides are used to introduce her research, jump start the audience, and confront the material reality of existence of her “knowing subjects.”

Project Journal. March 28, 2001

I had lunch with Beth Harrick today. We were talking about the Gender, Race, Orientation Symposium a couple weeks ago. Beth didn’t know that Jackie (who gave the keynote) was one of the people I was doing ethnographic research on. She said, “Well, her presentation was itself a site of feminist pedagogical approach.” I didn’t really understand what she meant. I knew that the methodology that Jackie uses is what I would consider to be feminist (both

epistemologically and methodologically), but the presentation itself? Beth said, "Sure! Those slides. In the psych department (Beth is finishing up her dissertation in psychology) we talk about people all the time. All the time. But we would *never* think of showing them. The material reality of those women in the slides. It changed everything." Beth saw the slides as a big transgression of structure, form, approach. It wasn't a presentation where the "expert" was "reading a paper," in effect banking information to a passive audience. Instead, Jackie was forcing the audience to confront the material reality of these women. To confront the fact that they lived. To look in their eyes. I don't know if that is feminist pedagogy – I'll have to think more about that – But it *definitely* is feminist rhetoric because it transgresses norms in form and structure to further a feminist message.

During my site visit, I told Jackie about what Beth said. She said that transgression of boundaries was something she was aware of – and did intentionally – to confront her audience with the material lives of these women who had been erased from history. She said it is also an approach she uses in her classes. "I often structure my talks on an experience-based arena. In order for you to understand what I am saying [in my talks], you have to have the experience where you are able to stand and place people here [in your physical reality]. And if you can see it and hear it, it might make more sense than if I just say it." Jackie told me that in her experience, when she talks about her research that extends outside the dominant culture or dominant history, people don't understand what she is talking about. But when she confronts them with the physical evidence, the slides and the faces, it becomes real. She likens it to a bridge that she needs to build before they can move across the chasm between what they know and what they need to know. "You have to walk across the water, but if there is nothing there yet, you aren't going to get there. I have to build it for them."

Jackie also uses this strategy of forcing her audience to confront the physical realities of the people she is writing about in her book on Wells, Southern Horrors and Other Writings. At the end of the introduction in that text, Jackie includes a full page spread that is a facsimile of editorial cartoons Harper's Weekly published on lynching. The graphic images of white men pontificating while two Black men swing from a lynch rope bring the reader face to face with the grizzly reality of lynch laws, the subject of much of Wells' work. These images are followed by photographs of the people who Wells looked to for support and guidance: Frederick Douglass, Victoria Earle Matthews, Maritcha Jones. The reader, once again, must confront the physical reality of these people, looking into their eyes as they are represented in the photographs, creating a tangible connection between the words on the page, the story recorded there, and the lived realities of human lives. The use of graphics and photographs in Jackie's own rhetorical work moves the audience to a place where they must confront the physical realities of these people's lives. By doing so, Jackie transgresses the academic norm where the audience is comfortably at home in the words, having removed themselves totally from the physical and bodily manifestation of the subject.

Transgressing the boundaries in the way one presents information embodies the theme of feminist pedagogy that asks teachers to not only be critically conscious of their approach to meet the needs of students, but to take risks and model a new way of using authority and leadership. By using these alternate strategies, by building bridges that previously didn't exist and leading students and colleagues trip-trapping over that bridge, Jackie creates a road of defiance that furthers a feminist pedagogical approach. Through her feminist leadership, as an administrator, teacher, and scholar, Jackie uses these

strategies as way of forging ahead. By doing so she embraces labels of crazy, sassy, defiant. It is all part of the work, creating new ways of knowing and moving through the world, paving roads so others may join or follow her, leaving more than traces of these lives and minds in her wake.

There Are No Conclusions, Only New Beginnings

I have an old t-shirt somewhere in my stack of thread-bare, tattered tees. On the front, in big red letters, it proclaims “Feminism is the radical notion that women are people.” The slogan on the shirt has felt outdated for a number of years. I understand feminism as working towards the radical notion that not only women are people, but so are Blacks, Hispanics, queers, transsexuals, transgendered people, transvestites, children, the poor, and all the other identities that are rejected, ignored, or marginalized by hegemonic systems of power. In other words, feminism is about everybody getting access to systems of power, especially those traditionally marginalized people who have been held back at the turnstile for so long: sorry you need to be white, male, heterosexual, privileged class, abled-body before you can go on *this* ride.

Now, when I am asked what a feminist is, I say, “a person who is committed to confronting and dismantling systems of oppression wherever they exist, whether in the form of classism, sexism, racism, homophobia, ageism, etc.” That pesky “etc.” It leaves so much out, but the list seems not only infinite but ever-changing. Perhaps it would be easier to say, “a *person* who is committed to confronting and dismantling systems of oppression that exclude traditionally marginalized people from the status of personhood.” That isn’t exactly right, though, on two counts. First because I really mean “a *woman* who . . .” when I say “a person who . . .” Or rather, I don’t mean “a man who . . .” I don’t believe men can be feminists in the same way that I don’t believe whites can be anti-racist. Men can only work towards feminism (men can be pro-feminist, but not feminist) because they inherently embody an identity on which the systemic oppression of those gendered female is built. Second, this definition obscures my belief that men, and not just

women, can benefit from feminism. When we dismantle the oppression of socialized gender identities, boys/men win, too. However, because the dominant culture portrays feminism first as “male-bashing” or man-hating, it is often difficult to convince people – both men and women – that males have something to gain from feminism.

Teaching Journal. May 6, 2001.

I finished up the Foundations of Education course yesterday. Turned in grades. So many of the students wrote heartfelt, critically smart reflections about their work and the semester in their portfolios. I was quite surprised by all the “this class changed my perspective” comments. I felt like I was constantly struggling throughout the semester against their unwillingness to take responsibility for and critically engage with the material. And, as always, I had a lot of “this was *so much* work for a three credit general ed course.” It’s maddening. They carry the unquestioned belief that gen ed or liberal arts requirements should be coast classes.

B. (the persecuted white guy – there is always one) wrote a very hostile reflective letter saying I really didn’t know anything and shouldn’t be teaching. It was a two-page single spaced mantra of hurled insults. To demonstrate how little I knew about education theories and practices, he cited the fact that Freire was Chilean, not Brazilian, and then he wrote that I needed “to get your facts straight.” I copied the back of Pedagogy of Oppressed where it outlines Freire’s bio (his life in Brazil before he fled for Chile and the U.S.) and slipped it into his portfolio. He also said, in addition to my stupidity, I didn’t know what feminism was about. (We had a couple conversations between us about feminism because his first major project was grounded on the question of how feminists had restructured the educational system to place boys/males at a big disadvantage.) I had, he wrote in his reflective letter, been claiming things for feminism that weren’t feminist, like gender equity (feminists really want dominance, not equity) and freedom from gender oppression for males *and* females. I still haven’t figured out how to avoid this kind of hostility from the occasional white male student – or how to most effectively deal with it when I am confronted by it. I photocopied that letter to keep me humble and reflective.

The undercurrents of how to define feminism and feminist pedagogy churn throughout this project, at moments towing me under and making me writhe with discomfort. “You can’t say *that!* Who do you think you are! *You* don’t get to decide what feminist

pedagogy is – or tell these teachers what they are doing is *feminist* if they don't see it that way!" Certainly there are a multitude of definitions for "feminism." Each feminist will likely define it for herself. But is there some general agreement? One could argue that gender oppression may be the central issue, but I reject that as an old version of feminism. Confronting gender oppression may be my primary attraction to feminism because I am a white privileged class female living in the United States. Ending racial oppression may be the primary focus of someone else's feminism. Although I identify as queer, I am often not marked or identified by others as queer, so typically I experience the privilege of heterosexuality; queer issues are a part of my feminism, but may not be the primary focus *today*. Tomorrow, it may be. These shifts and changes make my definition more general than specific. I want to believe that feminism can embrace other realities where the primary association is not gender oppression. As Nancy Fraser writes, feminists are more than remiss if they ask people to choose a priority identity (race or class or gender or sexual orientation) (179). But this is not a new take on feminism; Audre Lorde wrote over two decades ago that there was no hierarchy to oppression, meaning gender oppression does not trump homophobia or classism or racism or all the other systematic ways groups of people are denied tangible power. Instead, feminism embraces all these multiplicities. When I was talking with Harriet she attempted to describe how she articulated these complexities, relying on a story she has told before, both in her classrooms and in her book.

Harriet: I actually told this in class recently, too, a story about when my mother came up from the country with her second husband and we were going out for a walk and it was getting chilly and he didn't have a jacket and so I had to offer him one of my sweaters and it sort of gave my mother an anxiety attack. When I was dismissive of that she said, "Oh, Harriet. I know that you say there are no

differences between genders.” And I said, “Well, yes. There are huge differences between genders, I just don’t think there are differences between sweaters.” But I went on to say that if she had accused me of a different feminist prejudice, I would have taken a different tack. You know, multiple feminisms, and who knows what they all are.

Kay: But for you personally. What would you say? If someone said, “You’re a feminist? What does that mean?” What would you say?

Harriet: It would be really hard to say what it is for me at this point. In a certain way I would say, it’s comparable to me being Jewish. It’s like my relationship to the Jewish religion. I have a lot of irritation about it. A lot of it reaction to my overexposure and to being forced to be certain things and yet it was meaningless. And yet, Jewishness is a big part of my identity, and yet, not unlike a lot people I know, I am not celebrating it. I am not into celebrating it. I forgot that it was Passover this week. It slipped my mind totally. I just don’t care about those types of things. And my sort of gestalt; I think feminism is the same thing. It is so hard to describe. For anyone to understand what it means to be Jewish, if you don’t have any relationship to religion. And I feel like feminism would be wholly unintelligible to the world and to myself. It is part of my physical make up kinda thing. I just couldn’t define it. And if I had to, I would probably have a lot to do with audience, who asked me.

I agree that audience is important when defining feminism. Jackie indicated the same when she told me it depends on the context whether she identifies herself as a Black Feminist or a Womanist. Jackie also sees feminism as a theory that fits well with her scholarly interests, whereas for me it is more of an identity.

Kay: How do you think feminism affects how you approach to leadership?

Jackie: Feminism for me is never without modification. I don’t have any problem putting myself in the feminist circle, but when I take it on as a personal identity, I usually like to add ‘Black’ to be very conscious about being of African descent in the world – in this particular time period and geographical location ideology and experience that foregrounds things that are not necessarily foregrounded in feminism. So that is what Black feminism signals for me. What feminism as a scholarly area does that I like very much for the things that I want to do is that it allows me to look more critically at systems of power and privilege and authority and those issues that seem very constructive to me. And I try to think about them

fairly constantly. I think it is a deliberate process. I have been doing this for the past ten years, there are occasions when I find myself slipping and not being consciously aware of the implications of location, position, privilege, power in how a situation is operating. My guess is that a person who is in rhetorical studies I am concerned about processes. What is going on? How is it going on? What is the impact of it going on? Those kinds of questions are fairly consistent for me. So, actually I am going to talk about this next week (in her inaugural address), the alliances that I have formed in scholarly arenas have been in those fields that centralized those interests. So I draw into my circle feminist thought, African diasporas, and rhetorical interests. All those studies. It is all very interdisciplinary. All those contexts are very much part of the way have formed my ways of being and doing in the professional area.

Kay: What is the distinction in your mind between a Womanist and a Black feminist?

Jackie: I don't know what those distinctions are. Labeling is problematic for me at best. I think there are ways in which Womanist satisfies some of what I like to think of myself as being and doing. I am using that quotation from Alice Walker in my talk. But it draws from a popular, a cultural arena, and in some ways I find that unsatisfying when I think about ways I want to theorize African American women's rhetorical history. So the feminism, as studies rather than an activist orientation, is something that is more vibrant in an academic way. The way in which Black Feminist and feminist studies, African diaspora studies, women's studies, they work for me in my work, in my academic work. What I want to do more often than not is the combination between theory and practice. So there is part of me that goes beyond the academic, where all those things are still true, but most of the time it is in this circle and I want to be able to theorize about life experiences, achievements, practices in ways that [particular] vocabulary helps me to do. So I am rather selfish in being absolutely free to use whichever one those I personally like. I am not offended by either one. And I especially understand why some African American women choose Womanist over Feminist because of the association with white woman's identity.

Still, I yearn for – at moments feel desperate for – a definition of feminism that can act as a signifier for the group of people committed to doing this work, the work of changing power structures and standards so that they are more open and embracing of alternative and disruptive perspectives, those of TMP. As a feminist in the Midwest, that solidarity

in numbers feels important. In fact, typically I am so thrilled when another human being simply identifies as a feminist out loud and in public that I couldn't care much about what that means to them, although privately I cringe whenever Camille Paglia is trotted out by the national press as the spokesfeminist regarding the gender crisis du jour. My Midwest Feminist Experience has proven to be less than pleasurable at times: women in the Midwest don't generally like to publicly identify as feminist. It is not unlike openly identifying as queer; most people feel the amount of explaining and overt discrimination they would have to go through to claim the label isn't worth it. It isn't that they "hide" who they are, but they don't, as I have heard more than one person put it, "advertise it."⁵⁴

As a feminist in the geographic location in which I live and work, I feel I have to publicly proclaim that belief system and carry the banner high and proud in order to educate others, in order to make it understood that feminism is not about male-bashing or man-hating. By the same token, I have very little patience for academic feminists to spend reams of paper trying to define various categories of feminisms (ludic, liberal, radical, Marxist) because these categories seem essentializing and a betrayal of the complexities in the reality. Because every feminist enacts her feminism – and defines her feminism – differently, these static categories irk me and – in my mind – contribute to the ever-widening divide between feminist theory and feminist activism. In Jane Roland Martin's book, Coming of Age in Academe, she attempts to confront the murkiness of feminist theory and its various conflicts; a kindred spirit, Martin also believes that the chasm between activism and academia is ever growing due to the rhetoric of theoretical

⁵⁴Another tee-shirt memory. The Omaha chapter of the National Organization for Women sold tee-shirts during the Bush administration (The First Reich) that pictured a close up of a young, white blonde woman's face in the throws of an anguished scream, harkening back to comic book gels of the 1950s and 1960s. From the her caption bubble came the desperate cry, "Oh, my GOD! I'm a Feminist in Nebraska!"

labeling: "The language of the academy places its speakers at an aerial distance from the world's ills" (28).

Some theorists believe the solution to the problem of language and naming is to abandon the word "feminism" and create a new word. I resist getting rid of the term because I believe it is vitally important that we historically honor and claim the work that has been done on behalf of gender equity and systemic oppression. Rather I want feminists to realize we are all radical, liberal, ludic, Marxist and various other kinds of feminists depending on the context, the day, the audience, the situation. No one is ever 100 percent a radical feminist in every corner of their lives and psyche. Yet within these various contexts and corners, isn't there some idea of what feminism is that will help us identify a solidarity? Instead it seems at various times those who would like to or do identify as feminists feel paralyzed by the accusation of "essentializing." To avoid that scarlet letter "E," we tie ourselves in knots writing theory that seems to go nowhere. These accusations of "essentialism" (which is always, used in the context of feminist theory seen as very, very bad) stifles the work. This "self-policing kills our courage, silences our voices and restricts our vision" (Martin 23).

Personal Journal. March 15, 2001

A full day at 4Cs. I quickly get over-stimulated at these things. Too many people. Not enough alone time. I went to a session this afternoon that made me want to spit. The title of the session was something about critical pedagogies. But only one of the panlists actually talked about teaching. One young woman presented a paper on how the new site of radical feminism is the internet. It was as if liberal feminists never engage online. Or that radical feminism is the "good" kind of feminism and liberal feminism is the "stupid" kind of feminism. The presenter went on to say while "liberal" feminist organizations like NOW were still trying to mobilize in the old fashioned way, radical feminists were using web sites and chat rooms. I had to hold my head onto my shoulders. Lots of feminist organizations (including NOW) use web sites and chat rooms and email list

groups to discuss, distribute, and call to action. No one person or organization is a “radical feminist” (a signifier that has come to represent “the right kind of feminism” when actually it means, at least the way I remember theorists originally defining it, as feminists who believe a new system and structure needs to be created to replace the old order that marginalizes women and keeps them from power and self-actualization) all day every day. Depending on the audience and what I am trying to convince them to do, I can be radical, liberal, Marxist, whatever. Sometimes I am not even a feminist – or at least I catch myself not acting or thinking in very feminist ways! There seems to be no awareness of a feminist continuum we all slide across on a minute by minute basis. My frustration is also related to people talking all about categories but never critically reflecting on their own lives to realize there is no way to embody one category fully and completely 100 percent of the time. I wanted to ask the woman doing the presentation, “So what feminist activist work have you done lately and how would you categorize that work? How many NOW meetings have you been to and why do you categorize them as a ‘liberal’ organization?” My frustration today reminded me of my response to the JAC trilogue about feminism in the last issue (“Negotiating the Differend: A Feminist Trilogue.”). It was almost like the three theorists were calling for abolition of the “f” word because they just couldn’t resolve the messiness of the slippery day to day work that is feminism. They talk a lot about listening and hearing, but not about their own political action. They want to cling to or reject the categories (“I’m a ludic feminist and you’re a radical feminist!”) but they don’t seem able to move beyond those static categories to say, “Well, primarily I have these beliefs and this is how the work I do reflects those beliefs. Here is how I am living these beliefs.” I know they would say “rhetorical listening” and hearing can be radical feminist acts, but I want more critical self reflection: what are they doing in the community to further their feminist beliefs? Writing and rewriting the circular argument of “What *kind* of feminist are you?” isn’t enough.

As I struggle with my discontent with how some theorists or scholars are defining or categorizing feminism(s), Harriet originally expressed a similar concern regarding “feminist pedagogy.” For her, the category was problematic because there was nothing in the way she had heard people described feminist pedagogy that seemed distinct from other theories of pedagogy. More than once during this project I have wondered whether I am doing with feminist pedagogy what I adamantly resist about theorists who attempt

to parcel out feminisms into various distinct categories. I answer these nagging questions in my own mind by saying feminist pedagogy needs a precise definition to save it from the misrepresentation it now suffers from: that of a weak-minded form of critical pedagogy where the feminine, nurturing mother situates herself in the touchy-feely classwomb where students feel “validated” and “empowered.”

The definitions of feminist pedagogy articulated in the articles I read on the subject – the articles and books from which the sixteen themes sprung – varied considerably. None provided as comprehensive a definition as I am proposing in this project. The editors of The Feminist Teacher Anthology rely on the basic definition of incorporating issues of race, gender, and class into the classroom (1). Diana Gustafson compiles a series of definitions offered by other theorists at the beginning of her article “Embodied Learning” but ends this collaborative definition by stating, “Just as there are multiple and sometimes contradictory feminisms or feminist perspectives so too are there multiple feminist pedagogies” (250). I think this is one of the main problems people have with embracing the idea of “feminist pedagogy:” too many varying definitions. Instead, what I am arguing in this project is that there is a more precise definition of feminist pedagogy, but that it is the classroom practices – how that pedagogy is enacted – which can potentially vary wildly and exist in multiple ways; the theory, in the form of the sixteen themes, creates a definition that is open to various practices or interpretations.⁵⁵

When I asked Lynn how she would define feminist pedagogy, she acknowledged that because of the ambiguity surrounding the idea of feminist pedagogy, the term was

⁵⁵In the end, my need for a definition of feminism is not that much unlike my definition of feminist pedagogy in that the definitions represent broad theories and the *practices* define the individual’s unique interpretation or enactment of the theory.

used in wildly different ways. The conflation of feminine pedagogy and feminist pedagogy seemed to be at the heart of these ambiguities.

Kay: How do you define feminist pedagogy? In a lot of the articles I read you use the term "radical pedagogy." Is there a distinction? Is feminist pedagogy a type of radical pedagogy?

Lynn: It can be. It can also be terribly conservative. I think that liberal feminism is a very conservative type of feminism. I wouldn't call it radical. Liberal is radical even that it is arguing for equal rights. But, I wouldn't call it a true radical pedagogy. But not splitting hairs, I would say that feminism is a kind of radical pedagogy, in the category of radical pedagogy. I use the term "radical pedagogy" as an umbrella term to gather group together a lot of these different kinds types of pedagogies.

Kay: OK. So then there is post-modern pedagogy. Is post-modern pedagogy a type of radical pedagogy, or is it a different kind of pedagogy?

Lynn: It's a type of radical pedagogy. And critical pedagogy which is a real leftist, it has sort of a harder, Marxist, approach than a post-modern approach. So critical pedagogy would be a type of radical pedagogy. I think we use this kind of categorizing to make sense of all this stuff. So the question is what is feminist pedagogy?

Kay: Yeah. How would you define feminist pedagogy as a distinct pedagogy? Distinct from other kinds of radical pedagogy.

Lynn: Well, Essentially it is a way of teaching and a subject matter that keeps gender very up front. My sense of feminist pedagogy is not that it must be collaborative, must be nurturing in some sort of feminine way of nurturing. One of the things I have a lot of personal experience with as a female and feminist teacher is the demand that I need to be everybody's momma. And guess what? I am nobody's momma, and I don't want to be [anybody's momma]. (laughs) So, it is very interesting to experience the resentment when you do that. Not because you are an uncaring person, or even an un-nurturing person, it is just that you want to express nurturance in a different way.

Kay: Do you think feminist pedagogy has evolved a little bit over the past ten years to include other issues like class, race, sexual orientation?

Lynn: Absolutely. So when I said it keeps gender at the forefront, it also shows that gender isn't the only category intersected by the institutions of hetero-normativity, of white supremacy, etc. I am directing a dissertation in which the person is arguing that feminism is a bad thing. And this is a Queer Studies person so he's not arguing this from a conservative position, but he is saying that feminism is entirely hetero-normative and trying to show that in composition studies it becomes hetero-normative. I wouldn't argue against him on that point. But he wants to lump feminism together with Women's Studies, and that we're part of the hetero-normative institution. And I don't think he's wrong, but my point is I really want to keep the word feminism. I don't want to have it become gender studies or I don't want Women's Studies to become Gender Studies. I want feminism to remain the term. Not the "F" word, but a term for naming a political classroom, pedagogy, area of study – all those things – and we still have a lot of work to do. So when I said earlier that feminism puts gender up front as an important category of struggle and of knowledge and so forth, it wasn't to the exclusion of other anything else. I consider myself a Material Feminist and Material Feminism is trying to be very careful about understanding the complexity of the relationships between gender, race, class, sexual preference, able-bodiedness, ageism, those sorts of things.

I think that the operative term of what I try to teach is critique and all my courses are about learning how to do cultural critique. There is certainly focus on critiquing the patriarchy, but also heterosexism and capitalism -- the hardest thing of all to get students -- especially undergraduates -- to think about and talk about because capitalism has plans. That kind of criticism of everything, including feminist pedagogy, is what my version of feminist pedagogy is. It's not about being the nurturing mother.

Students say about me that I am hard. And I actually published this as a footnote, so I don't mind telling you that, my first semester in Milwaukee as an assistant professor and I got two student evaluations. One of them is not important, but I will tell you it anyway. He wrote, it had to be a guy, one of my evaluations said, "I like to get up behind her and smell her hair." (Laughs) It was years before anyone [again] got anywhere near enough to smell my hair. But the other one said, which I thought was an *amazingly* hostile thing, he said, "She's a good teacher, but she has invisible tits."

Kay: Oh, my god!

Lynn: And to me that is about not being feminine enough. Not being capable of being sexualized enough. And so I had somehow failed, not as a teacher, I was a good teacher, he said; I had failed as a woman. And I am telling this story because

I think that is the reality of not just being a female teacher but being a feminist teacher because that was a power play, an aggressive move. It was an act of aggression. He meant, because of course he knows I am going to read it, he meant to get at the part of me that is vulnerable to having my femininity questioned.

Kay: Wow.

Lynn: So, I am a good teacher, you know, but not a good woman.

In feminist rhetorical theory, the descriptor “dangerous moves” is sometimes used to distinguish feminist rhetoric from women’s rhetoric. Feminist rhetoric breaks the norms enough to be dangerous. For Sojourner Truth to stand up before a group of white people and point to the physical reality of her Black, female body and challenge, “Aren’t I a Woman?” was a dangerous move. For Margaret Sanger, imprisoned for distributing birth control information to poor women, refusing to be silenced by threats of prosecution and prison was a dangerous move. For Leslie Feinberg to follow her heart and live as a transgendered person, speaking and writing about her experiences of persecution and hope is a dangerous move. To be *feminist* rather than *feminine* is what makes the assumption of power a dangerous move. To walk into a classroom as a teacher is to assume a position of power. As with the heart-stopping example Lynn offered, being a *feminist* teacher – instead of the expected *feminine* teacher – disrupts the dynamic of the classroom and sends some students reeling. For most students, though, feminist pedagogy provides a liberating, empowering model of knowledge-construction and critical thinking – and this is disruptive because it challenges traditional models of learning and knowing. In order for educators to be better able to adopt – or consciously reject – feminist pedagogy, it needs to be more clearly defined and understood. And *that*

was my goal for this project. Through historical research of the feminist movement and women's studies, I attempted to synthesize the many ways that feminist pedagogy has been defined into a more comprehensive and precise definition. I wanted to apply this definition specifically to the field of composition and rhetoric to show how feminists and feminist pedagogical principles have changed the way contemporary writing teachers teach writing. And finally, I wanted to show how three feminist teachers embodied these themes. I wanted to hear about their experiences with being feminist teachers and leaders. I wanted to *show* how the theory of feminist pedagogy plays out in day to day practices, from class to class, from meeting to meeting, in an article or a conference presentation or a speech.

In the end, I have more questions than answers. Although I believe that a more precise definition of feminist pedagogy is desperately needed, I continue to struggle with the danger of essentializing. What I offer here is the most comprehensive definition to date, understanding that tomorrow this definition will change, evolving as feminism always evolves, in answer to specific issues and concerns that previously we had obscured or ignored. In the lives and work of Lynn, Harriet, and Jackie I see the powerful passion that is feminist pedagogy – and feminist ideology – spinning out in dynamic and exciting ways. Being able to see a glimpse of their lives has not only codified my belief that feminist teachers are smart, funny, amazingly self-critical educators, but that they are the *best* kind of teachers, changing more worlds than they will ever know. For me, it all began in an Intro to Women's Literature course in 1985. A feminist teacher changed my life. Over 15 years later, I am still awed and thrilled by what feminist pedagogy offers, as

a teacher, as a student, as a scholar. I am sure I will be critiqued for being a romantic, a bleeding heart, a dewy-eyed idealist. There are worse things, I suppose.

It is only through my continued questions and challenges will I move further in figuring it out. As I said in the introduction, figuring it out always means ending with more questions than what I started with. Hopefully the questions are more sophisticated, more complicated, further along. In the spirit of feminist conversation and helpful critique, I ask you here, now, “What questions do *you* have? How can I help to pull the thread that begins an answer?”

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