COUNTERHEGEMONIC PEDAGOGIES: EDUCATORS' REFLECTIONS ON SOCIAL VISION, SUBJECTIVITY, RESISTANCE AND PRACTICE

By

ELIZABETH MONTAGUE

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Department of **Educational Studies**

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

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ABSTRACT

This study identified and pursued some recurring issues and questions in recent journal articles on socially transformative or counterhegemonic forms of pedagogy. The articles were written by critical educators whose pedagogies include feminist, postmodern, anti-racist and other socially transformative approaches to teaching practice. I pursued questions in dialogue with four prominent critical educators and authors through a review of their self-reflective writings on critical practice, followed by discussions with each about their theoretical frameworks and practices. The authors who participated in these discussions were Dr. Elizabeth Ellsworth, Dr. Magda Lewis, Dr. Roger Simon and Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum. My questions related to the social visions and theories of subjectivity that inform their pedagogies; and to student resistance and educators’ transformative practices in the context of their classrooms. Our discussions emphasized many of the limits and possibilities of critical pedagogical practice and highlighted the importance of collective social visions that remain open, indeterminate and unfinished; as well as models for performing social positions differently for those in both dominant and subordinated positions. The absence of non-oppressive models was identified as a clear problem for addressing social reproduction in relation to race and gender. Discussions on subjectivity in the context of socially transformative projects underlined the importance of taking account of the difficulties involved in abandoning known and familiar positions and social relations, of appreciating the force of hegemonic meanings and of individual investment in existing relations of power. Important
also is an appreciation of the blind-spots inherent in positions, and the need to deconstruct dominant positions in dialogue with subordinated ones. Educators described the ways they encounter, interpret and acknowledge student resistance and emotional reactions in classrooms. To address resistance, some educators again emphasized the importance of new and non-oppressive models for performing social identities as well as opportunities for students to practice such positions. All educators discussed the importance of community, shared vision and collaboration both within and beyond the classroom as a crucial support in undertaking counterhegemonic pedagogies.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The field of critical educational theory has produced a range of pedagogies and practices including those described as feminist, feminist/postmodern, anti-racist, transformative, critical, and counterhegemonic. I have chosen the term counterhegemonic for the title of my thesis because it is more comprehensive and could be used to describe any and all of the separate terms above. It is based on the Gramscian notion of hegemony, a particularly valuable notion for describing the often taken-for-granted and unquestioned operations of structured power. Counterhegemony refers to critical, collective and systematic responses to hegemonic operations rather than sporadic and isolated forms of resistance (Weiler, 1988, p. 54).

The questions that gave rise to this dissertation concerned how educators position themselves within counterhegemonic pedagogies, how they address issues of voice, positionality, and advocacy, and how they respond to student resistance and the emotional reactions that are part of the conditions of counterhegemonic teaching and learning. A central focus was the actual contextualized critical practices educators employ in classrooms, as well as the current conditions that both support and undermine counterhegemonic pedagogies and practices. While practice is always conceived as individual, particular and contextualized, it is an aspect of critical approaches to pedagogy that remains abstract, sometimes vague and often difficult to imagine in much of the literature on critical pedagogy.
Hegemony and Counterhegemonic Pedagogy

The notion of *hegemony*, as developed by Antonio Gramsci, refers to the process whereby dominant groups within a society achieve temporarily a state of intellectual and moral unity. Through organizational and leadership efforts within dominant groups, a relatively coherent world-view prevails, one which appears to be shared by all major groups composing the society. Hegemony is maintained in part by control over the production of meaning such that the dominant groups' way of viewing social reality is projected so successfully that it is taken-for-granted, as a natural order, even by those who are in fact subordinated by it (Jagger, 1988, p. 151).

Gramsci’s position held that humans are not completely taken in by hegemonic ideology. Through what he called *common-sense*, they have the possibility of self-critique and can organize to direct historical and social change. His view of human nature always upheld the active, creative qualities of consciousness and the social, relational conditions of its production (Gramsci, 1971; Radhakrishnan, 1990, p. 82).

How subordinated groups effectively organize to resist hegemonic ideological control was a central question for Gramsci. He emphasized the importance of counterhegemonic cultural and political institutions through which subordinated groups could articulate their positions and interests and organize towards social transformation (Weiler, 1988, p. 15).

Counterhegemonic pedagogies involve socially transformative purposes approached, in part, by the practice of recognizing and addressing the ways
power circulates in classrooms through the multi-layered subjectivities of students and professors in relation to knowledge. Current projects for social transformation in educational contexts could be described simply as efforts both to recognize and transform the operations of power/knowledge\(^1\) that contribute to social reproduction, the reproduction of structured social privilege based on differences such as gender, race, class, sexuality and ability, as well as other categories of difference.\(^2\)

Analyses of how relations of dominance/subordination are exercised in social institutions and in the particular context of educational sites, in classrooms and in the social construction of knowledge have given rise to many approaches for addressing the exclusion, silencing or marginalization of particular subordinated groups. Ethnic studies and women’s studies programs, for example, continue to provide important localized spaces of counterhegemonic knowledge production.

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\(^1\)Michel Foucault developed the problematic of power/knowledge which he used to analyze the link between social power and knowledge construction. His analyses emphasized that knowledge is positioned, never neutral; and always tied to certain interests; that it is struggled for by those with conflicting interests and therefore never unitary or fixed.

\(^2\)The clumsiness of listing categories of difference separately continues to be a problem. The list “race, class and gender” has become the most common way of denoting difference in relation to social power and discourse, but it is a far from exhaustive list. Without wishing to exclude or erase the many relevant categories of difference that operate in particular contexts, such as ethnicity, language, religion, sexuality, ability, I will continue to use race, class and gender, sometimes sexuality, sometimes ability, and sometimes simply “categories of difference,” depending on the texts and conversations I discuss.
In most classrooms, however, it is a given that the multi-layered subjectivities of students and instructors include many complex variations on dominant/subordinated positions based on class, race, gender, sexuality, ability and any other category of difference that carries differential access to social power. In practice, and in the embodied subjectivities of human social beings, these categories are neither discrete nor separable (hooks, 1989; Minh-ha, 1989; Bourne, 1983; Spelman, 1988).

Counterhegemonic practices involve teaching and learning across differences in ways that acknowledge the unequal social power implicit in positions within difference; that challenge the often taken-for-granted relations of power that are enacted and re-enacted within the classroom. They involve validating experience and social identities, while always recognizing them as historically-contingent, non-essential and socially-constructed within complex relations of power (Riley, 1988; Spivak, 1988; Fuss, 1989; Mohanty, 1990).

The socially transformative purposes of counterhegemonic pedagogy include "...an attempt to get students to think critically about their place in relation to the knowledge they gain and to transform their world-view fundamentally by taking the politics of knowledge seriously" (Mohanty, 1990, p. 192). Clearly, this is a very complex pedagogy.

In recent accounts by instructors who practice socially transformative³

³Magda Lewis, discussing her own teaching practice, described transformation as "... the development of a critical perspective through which individuals can begin to see how social practices are organized to support certain interests and the process whereby this understanding is then used as the basis for active political intervention
pedagogies, there are recurring themes, issues and questions that relate to classroom process. Questions about how educators position themselves in such a project in terms of voice, advocacy, and positionality provoked this dissertation. How they reflect on the notion of subjectivity in understanding possibilities for agency and transformation is a key consideration.

Many accounts I reviewed described a range of emotional responses from students that included silence, anger, impatience, guilt, helplessness, hopelessness, despair, denial and sometimes withdrawal. How to address these reactions is a frequent question in the current literature. The consistency of these reactions suggests the need to understand their meanings and to acknowledge them through specific practices. How educators interpret and respond to the forms of resistance enacted by students in relation to counterhegemonic practices is a central question. What practices educators have developed that make use of the productive conflict generated by such pedagogies is an important focus of this study.

In this dissertation, I pursue these questions through discussions with the authors of four recent articles. They are:


directed toward social change with the intent to disempower relations of inequality" (1990, p. 469).


These articles were written from the perspectives of educators who continue to develop and refine forms of counterhegemonic pedagogy and to reflect upon their own contextualized practices in their classrooms. Each article included discussions on subjectivity, resistance and the theoretical frame works which the educator uses. Each was informed by a well-developed and critical theoretical perspective although there were differences in what theories were used and how they were integrated within pedagogies. The articles also represented some differences in discipline-based perspectives on subjectivity and socially transformative process that related importantly to practice. In spite of these differences of approach and interpretation, the authors discussed issues and practices relating to voice, positionality, resistance and subjectivity in very similar terms.

All four articles were published in the late 1980's and early 1990's in the *Harvard Educational Review*, a journal of opinion and research in education. The journal's discussions and reviews address a broad-based audience, including teachers, practitioners, policy makers, scholars and researchers in education and related fields, as well as informed observers.

As the journal has high status in the field, the articles represent some of what is judged to be the most important scholarship and argument at the time.
Since articles on teaching and practice are a major focus of the journal, one can expect to find excellent, timely writing about the ways contemporary issues and social theory are being integrated in pedagogy and practice. These articles are also influential because of their positions in the journal.

Between the mid-1980's and 1992, the year I drafted my proposal, I read a kind of discussion, at times a debate, in progress in the journal on counterhegemonic forms of pedagogy. These discussions took place through the related areas of feminist, critical, anti-racist and postmodern approaches to pedagogy. The journal provided a vehicle for conversations among educators who shared or critiqued perspectives, reflected on experiences, dilemmas and questions that arise in the context of their classrooms.

This thesis provided an opportunity to extend some of those conversations on a range of issues and questions through discussions with the four authors.

**Theoretical Background: Critical Educational Theory**

To provide a background for the articles I discuss, I offer a brief discussion of critical educational theory, its central problems and questions, from the mid-1970's to the present.

The development of many of the critical and transformative approaches to pedagogy found in the *Harvard Educational Review* during the late 1980's and early 1990's can be traced through critical educational theory from the mid-1970's, when questions were prominent about how existing social structures and relations of power are maintained and reproduced. What have become known as reproduction and production theories offer analyses of the interplay of social
structure and agency, and examine how education as a social institution is implicated in maintaining existing relations of social and economic power. Production theories also examine the ways educational sites might offer possibilities for challenging or undermining existing relations towards more inclusive and equitable social relations.

Theories of reproduction often make economic or social class their focus of analysis. Exemplary studies, such as those of Althusser (1971) and Bowles and Gintis (1976), examined the roles of schools in accommodating student subjectivities to the needs and the structures of capitalist labor and the reproduction of existing class positions. With greater emphasis on linguistic and cultural forms associated with class identifications, the now classic studies of Basil Bernstein (1979), on elaborated and restricted linguistic codes, and Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (1977), with the theory of "cultural capital," offered analyses of the ways schools legitimate and value particular forms of cultural and linguistic knowledge associated with the dominant group or ruling class of society. In this way, they advantage students who already possess a competence with such forms; and delegitimate and disqualify the knowledge and competencies of working class students.

Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, referring to the incorporated, internalized ensemble of bodily dispositions and deportment, the expressive, verbal and gestural realizations of a person, the *modus operandi*, through which relations of dominance and subordination, are often enacted and re-enacted
unreflexively, is especially relevant to the analysis of social power and its reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977).

Important as these analyses continue to be, they have been criticized for characterizing the interplay of structure and agency in an over determined way. While emphasizing the force of structure, they said little about agency, the possibility for individuals to exercise creativity in making new meanings or resisting dominant meanings assigned to cultural and linguistic forms; or to act in ways that thwart the operations of social reproduction. Another criticism has been that reproduction theorists did not offer a satisfying theory of consciousness or subjectivity that could explain how subjects take up their positions in existing power relations, either positions of accommodation or instances of struggle, resistance or counter-discursive meaning making (Weiler, 1988, pp. 12-13).

Emphasizing and theorizing agency, production theorists examine the ways individuals and groups define experience and reality for themselves. The focus is often on conflict, contestation and resistance to hegemonic representations and practices. An important study is Paul Willis' analysis of resistance to school knowledge by working class "lads" (Willis, 1977). This study interpreted an instance of resistance that ironically illustrated how, of itself, resistance offered no guarantee of effectively countering the force of structures. In their celebration of class-based male identity, values and knowledge, the "lads" acted defiantly against the mental labor valued in school, thereby limiting their own possibilities in the labor market and reproducing their class positions in low-end working class jobs. Agency in the form of resistance, in this case, played into the operations of social
reproduction. An important part of the analysis of resistance is to examine its political effects (Weiler, 1988, p. 21). Questions of how to develop pedagogies that carry liberatory or transformative potential continue to be raised.

Because many of the early studies on reproduction had focussed exclusively on a class or economic analysis, neglecting to examine the often present social power relations based on race or gender, separate projects and literatures in education have developed that make race and/or gender central. Feminist and anti-racist projects and pedagogies frame the questions specifically to ask how schools and other educational sites are implicated in the reproduction of social relations of power based on race or gender. They also examine instances and possibilities for contestation and resistance; and the political effects of such instances. Some analyses have incorporated simultaneously several categories of social difference, such as class, race and gender. However, understanding the dense interplay of all categories of difference through the multi-layered subjectivities of participants in the context of actual classrooms is a truly complex undertaking (Ellsworth, 1989; Mohanty, 1990).

Critical pedagogy and cultural production have become terms of identification through which many separate analyses of social difference, analyses based on social class, gender, race, sexuality, ability, can recognize one another and come together for collective theorizing and research (Simon, 1992). Production theorists in education continue to examine the openings and possibilities for students and teachers to recreate meanings and cultural forms in the context of their classrooms by drawing on individual and collective
One criticism that is leveled at production theorists is their apparent assumption that once the nature of knowledge and difference as socially constructed was recognized, material reality and power relations would be transformed (Weiler, 1988, p. 12). The approach is largely a voluntarist one. It does not sufficiently address the obstacles to transformation or the ways that individuals invest in knowledge and relations of power remaining the same (Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, and Walkerdine, 1984).

Production theory could be strengthened by accounting for the ways power/knowledge and relations of dominance/subordination operate through as well as upon subjects, how subjectivities constructed in unequal social relations can also be implicated in maintaining relations of unequal power. For this emphasis, production theory could draw upon more developed theories of ideology, hegemony and resistance that address the questions of subjectivity and consciousness.

In recent years, the influence of poststructural theory has been increasingly prominent in the social sciences in general, as in critical educational theory. What poststructural theory offers in this context is a more developed and compelling theory of subjectivity, of human consciousness and an analysis of power as productive, not merely repressive (Foucault, 1980). This analysis carries great
explanatory power, especially in terms of understanding social reproduction. Poststructural theory assigns a central place to language and discourse in the production of subjectivity, and in operations of social power and their reproduction. Michel Foucault's analyses of power offered new possibilities for examining its operations and reproduction and the subject's implication. Since the terms come up frequently in this study, I return to a brief discussion of poststructural notions of language, discourse and subjectivity in the following section of this chapter.

While embraced by some, poststructuralism/postmodernism has been a heterogeneous, controversial and frequently resisted body of theory, chiefly because of its apolitical, nihilist and relativist tendencies (Hawkesworth, 1990; Radhakrishnan, 1989). It has also been rejected by some because it has been exclusionary in its analysis, and often written in exceedingly dense and difficult theoretical language. Like reproduction theory, much poststructural theory has

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4Foucault elaborated on the ways the individual represents a prime effect of power: "... It is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals. The individual, that is, is not the vis-a-vis of power; it is, I believe, one of its prime effects. The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is an effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle" (Power/ Knowledge, 1980, p. 98).

5Poststructuralism and postmodernism are terms that are frequently used interchangeably. The distinction has been explained to me as a disciplinary one: poststructuralism has been used more in the human, behavioral and social sciences of linguistics, anthropology, sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis, and postmodernism has greater reference to the arts, architecture, fine art, music, and literature. It should be emphasized that the field of poststructural/postmodern theory is itself heterogeneous, often contradictory, and in flux.
little to say about the subject’s agency, the possibilities to contest or resist the
operations of power.

In spite of these problems, like many others, I continue to find much in this
body of theory that is valuable. My approach to it has been through feminist
appropriations and developments that make a critical, feminist transformative
politics and vision primary (Flax, 1990; Butler, 1990; hooks, 1991; Lewis, 1993;
Minh-ha, 1989; Fuss, 1989; Ellsworth, 1989; Spivak, 1988; De Lauretis, 1986;
Weedon, 1987). This approach emphasizes the materiality of discourse; the social,
relational and embodied nature of identities created in discourses and the agency
and creativity of subjects in their ability to become conscious of subordinating
ideologies and to organize towards self- and social transformation.

In many respects, this approach resonates with the Gramscian notion of
hegemony which conceives it as a process that is never complete, always
challenged by subordinated positions, ever dynamic and always transforming.
Gramsci acknowledged the materiality, the power and constraining effects of
discourses but always affirmed the human capacity for self-critique, for collective
organization in transforming social relations, even while being shaped by them
(Radhakrishnan, 1990).

Because the writings of the educators/authors central to this study
incorporate either implicitly or explicitly principles of poststructural theory, this
study serves to highlight the ways this theory enables new ways of thinking about
transformative educational practices. I now offer a limited discussion of the terms
discourse, language and subjectivity in poststructural theory.
Poststructural Theory: Discourse, Language, Subjectivity

The term *discourse* encompasses many meanings. While some work on discourse limits itself to speech and writing, discourse can also include non-verbal signs. Whatever signifies or has meaning can be considered a part of discourse, including any institutional practice or technique in and through which social production of meaning takes place (Laclau, 1980).

Discourse is a key concept of poststructural theories of language. Against the notion of language as a transparent vehicle through which meanings are communicated freely, the concept of discourse holds that all language and communicative behaviors are positioned, not neutral significations. Discourse is alert to the ways objects are constructed in language, given that the power to name, to create legitimate meanings and to produce and circulate legitimate knowledge is controlled by those with greatest social power.

Those whose experiences and meanings are excluded, marginalized and/or contradicted by dominant meanings and legitimated discourse, those subordinated by virtue of, for example, class, race, gender, age, ability, know dominant discourse differently, from a different vantage point.

Subordinated groups often construct their own meanings, counter-discourses with currency within the group; but the meanings and knowledge of which often remain little known, negated or suppressed by dominant versions, what Michel Foucault called "subjugated knowledges."

According to poststructural theories, meaning in language is not fixed or unified, nor is it guaranteed. Meanings are multiple at the site of reception; are
inferred in relation to context, and are a function of many elements including the social and ideological positions of participants in meaning-making, the historical and cultural contexts, who is present, and what events have just occurred.

Unlike the humanist notion of language as the instrument used by individuals to express a universal, objective, unitary reality, poststructural notions of language hold that different languages, themselves, structure reality differently, that different languages often have fundamentally different concepts implied by parallel words. Furthermore, while humanist notions place the individual as central, primary, and autonomous user of language, the origin of signification, poststructural theory makes language primary in structuring the human subject within a set of social relations, histories, and struggles. Rather than the subject speaking language, language speaks the subject.

Poststructural theory holds that there is no pre-given individual who could know or express reality before entering language; rather, the self becomes a "self" when s/he enters language, discourses and the set of social relations these entail (Weedon, 1987; Silverman, 1983; Benveniste, 1977). Language and discourse pre-exist the subject and structure the existing possibilities. They provide the frames of reference whereby a self could articulate itself as such. They frame its social self-intelligibility. There is no pre-discursive self.

In this sense, the meaning of the term subject is double-edged and contradictory: the subject is the agent, the active element, the performer, the doer; but this agent is always constrained or subjected to existing relations of power,
subject to the existing positions and forms of governance that pre-exist her/him in discourse.

Poststructural theory generally presents a rather pessimistic picture in theorizing the agency of the subject, and emphasizes the heaviness of determination by pre-existing positions and relations of power. For, even when the subject exercises choice or resistance, these acts are already limited by the terms of that which is being resisted (Macdonell, 1986). Opposition takes place against that which already exists, and, in part, relies upon it for its very intelligibility (Terdiman, 1985). It takes a radically strategic imagination to effect a deviation or derailment of existing terms.

Discourse is a central analytic concept used in the writings of all the participants in this study, although they do not all use the term *discourse*. Magda Lewis' analyses draw upon the constraining effects of hegemonic discourses of gender and meaning-making upon female and male positions, and her practices include strategies such as deconstruction and reversal to create possibilities for critiquing such discourses. Roger Simon employs discourse to analyze critically the limits of existing and unquestioned conditions and social relations of what constitutes necessity, and to develop a vision of new possibilities. Liz Ellsworth works with the meanings of difference in order to disrupt categories and create new meanings. Beverly Tatum raises awareness about discourses of racism in order to allow students to become conscious of their pervasiveness and effects on all who are socialized in racist societies.
Clearly, in spite of poststructuralist pessimism about the possibilities for change or intervention into existing relations of power, these theorists and educators, among others, have made discourse a primary site for attention, analysis, intervention and invention.

Not only is discourse the site of struggle for meaning in the multitude of social contexts where power is enacted, it is also the site of our subjectivity, our sense of who we are and what our possibilities might be (Weedon, 1987). The humanist model of the stable, unitary, autonomous, rational, conscious, private and essential human being, the origin of signification and meaning is still prevalent in language, thought and theory. However, poststructural theories have offered abundant and persuasive evidence for historically contingent and non-essential human beings whose complex identities are always-in-process, constructed socially, relationally, often hierarchically. The subject is constructed through language and discourses that offer a range of subject positions. In taking up positions in discourse, the poststructural subject is not unitary or necessarily coherent, is often emotional as well as rational and operates from both unconscious and conscious levels.

Because feminist poststructuralism emphasizes the attention to discourse as socially constructed, susceptible to critique, deconstruction and reconstruction, and the mutability of subjects-in-process as they take up positions in discourse, it offers possibilities for social transformation. Its attention to the workings of power through discourse and the contingency of subject positions upholds a politics of persistent critique of the self in relation to the social (Spivak, 1988).
The Researcher: Putting Myself in the Picture

Because it is always significant, I sketch my position in this study, and have decided to do so in the usual terms, as well as to reflect a little on ethnicity/identity as a Euro-Canadian, bilingual, feminist, graduate student and sometimes teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL).

I write as a White, middle-class, middle-aged, heterosexual and able-bodied woman, a Euro-Canadian whose cultural heritage draws upon historically recent Irish and French elements. Through both of these cultural traditions, it is easy for me to identify traces of internalized oppression in attitudes received in my family. It is also possible for me to identify counter-examples of very affirming self-definitions. I find myself increasingly attentive to the cultural forms that endure — the way my mother cannot speak without using her hands, the snatches of histories through my father's well-honed practice of story-telling — forms that endure in spite of the pressure upon North American immigrants to suppress or bury European-derived histories and cultures. These contradictions for the most part go unexamined and continue to live uncomfortably together, the elements of cultural identity that have become part of who I am. In terms of doing a thorough critical historical analysis of my own position, I have yet to properly take on that project (Spivak, 1990, p. 62).

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6 Putting oneself in the picture, a practice exemplified and described by Roger Simon, is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

7 One of many recent references to this topic is Gary R. Howards' "Whites in Multicultural Education: Rethinking Our Role," *Phi Delta Kappan*, September, 1993.
As a person born and raised in Montreal, I have lived face to face with the linguistic and political conflicts that are part of the history of Quebec within Canada, and I carry childhood memories of being positioned alternately as insider and outsider, based on first language, during different phases of my education undertaken in English and in French. As an anglophone, I was positioned as outsider in French schools, even though my paternal great-grandparents were from Ireland, a country with a deeply problematic relationship to the English language. My maternal grandmother was French-Canadian but for reasons that are still not clear, she did not teach her own children to speak French. For some reason, I have never doubted my claim to the French language and culture as part of my heritage. I am sure that these are some of the experiences that contribute to my interest in language and subjectivity; in historical conflicts and the current challenges of teaching across differences.

As a doctoral student and a researcher approaching this study, I bring an academic background in language studies, including language acquisition, both first and second; related studies in the sociology of language and teaching English as a Second Language. At the graduate level, my focus has continued to be language studies, but in the context of educational studies on gender; multiculturalism and race relations, and discourse studies. Social inequality based on race, class and gender has been a central area for theory and practice in education during the late 1980’s and throughout the 1990’s. It has been a particularly rich time for developing social theory based on language through
poststructural theory with its focus on discourse and subjectivity in understanding social relations of power, social reproduction and cultural production.

My reading of poststructural theory and especially feminist directions that incorporate some of its principles have allowed me to envision new possibilities for teaching and learning across difference. This study has provided an opportunity to reconsider and integrate once more the implication of language in the construction of self and other, and especially in the context of transformative learning and teaching.

A feminist who began to call myself one in the early 1970’s, I have taken up feminist theory as a more rigorous academic study only in the last several years. In spite of the enormous production of what I consider to be brilliant, rich and important research and writing in this field in recent decades, my experiences as a student over the past ten years demonstrated to me that the goal of feminist knowledge across the curriculum has been slow, scant and localised in separate programs and places. Without denying the considerable efforts and accomplishments of feminists in academia since the 1970’s, the goal of integrating feminist knowledge across the curriculum remains, in large measure, a goal yet to be accomplished.

Many feminists have written about the resistance to feminist transformative knowledge in educational sites (Lewis, 1993; Aiken, Anderson, Dinnerstein, Lensink and MacCorquodale, 1988; Faludi, 1991). For myself, as for others who cultivate a feminist consciousness, the issues are never merely academic. Encounters with resistance occur everywhere, in the "public" spaces of the
workplace and the mass media as in the "private" spaces of the family and intimate relationships. Daily encounters with lived contradictions and with resistance are familiar territory in which to practice and repeat the exercises of seeing, interpreting, deconstructing and reconstructing enactments of social power based on socially constructed difference. Teaching and learning across difference are easy to recognize as a life work, as a way of being in the world and of living consciously as a human being.  

As a teacher, my very limited experience has been in the context of teaching English as a Second Language to foreign university students. Classes were sometimes made up of culturally homogeneous groups of students, affluent and from highly industrialized countries. Often motivated by career goals in international business and science, their appropriation of English was unambiguous, selective, narrowly focussed and uncomplicated.

In other contexts in which I taught, there was more complexity based on difference. Some classes were marked by antagonistic relations among students from different countries based on racist intergroup attitudes. Learning English for some students was complicated by the disorientation of culture shock; by the pain of long separations from families and their own new experiences of trying to learn a second language and culture in a racist society, a context that must have seemed not only unwelcoming but hostile. Always close to the surface, the emotions that I appreciated Liz Ellsworth's description (Chapter 3) of learning and teaching across difference as life's work and as a way of being in the world, as work not separable from other spheres of life, experience or relationship.
students experienced during their appropriations of language were quite visible. Emotions frequently created blocks to learning and constituted considerable challenges for them, and for me as their teacher.

As a graduate student whose principal emphases have been feminist/poststructural theories and social inequality in educational contexts, I have approached this study as a logical progression in my own efforts to mesh theory and practice. The study also provided a vehicle to explore how poststructural principles on discourse, language and subjectivity, are currently being used in the development of socially transformative pedagogies and the practices they suggest.

For the participants, the educators/authors of the four articles, the project offered some opportunities for reflection, discussion and the possibility to examine, in a more collective way, current issues in their pedagogical practices. Although the process was collective, variously dialogical and intersubjective, the final interpretation and articulation are my own. I now move to a discussion of the themes we explored through this study, and the questions I asked. The questions, as stated, are framed in general terms but were posed to each participant in a more personalized way, in relation to their own writing, and often using their own words or terms.

**Research Themes and Questions**

**Theme 1. Social Visions**

In their writings, the four educators discussed often partially or implicitly their social/political vision and how it related to their practices in the classroom.
This thesis explored a fuller description of this vision and its relationship to pedagogy.

Pedagogy here is understood as a dynamic process through which the agencies of teacher and learner operate towards the production of knowledge, meanings and consciousness (Weiler, 1988). Knowledge is never assumed to be neutral or objective. Both knowledge and knowers are understood as socially constructed within societies that are organized by differential social power assigned to gendered, racialised, class and sexual positions.

Counterhegemonic pedagogy begins with the assumption that these positions, operating through the subjectivities of teacher and students, imbue the production and appropriation of knowledge in classroom. The creation of pedagogies that acknowledge the complex subjectivities of students and instructor in relation to knowledge production takes seriously a notion of education based on democratic principles of equality of voice and access to knowledge, of equal participation and opportunity towards greater social justice. It recognizes that students and instructor engage with and produce knowledge as "multi-layered historical subjects" (Weiler, 1988, p. 126).

Because counterhegemonic pedagogies explicitly challenge the status quo of power relations, one focal area for this study was to identify the most important supports for this work and, correspondingly, the most significant limits or obstacles.

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9I use this term in the sense of "to make one's own" or "to take unto oneself."
Theme 1. Questions on Social Visions

1. The teaching practice you describe in your writing is part of a larger political and cultural project. Would you discuss this project, this vision of the future? What relationship does pedagogy have to this vision?

2. In your experience of doing this work, what are the most important supports, material or otherwise (for example, institutional supports, professional networks, student feedback, personal satisfaction derived from this form of teaching)? What are the most significant limitations or drawbacks?

Theme 2. Theories of the Subject

Where all of the articles central to this study articulate a socially transformative purpose, not all of them provide a clear concept of the human being, the subject. A well developed concept of subjectivity would seem to be essential both to develop practices that have transformative potential and to better understand the behaviors educators are likely to encounter.

The central texts include a range of perspectives on this question, some more fully articulated (Ellsworth, 1989) and some more implicit (Tatum, 1992). Liz Ellsworth draws on a feminist poststructuralist theoretical perspective, one which appeared to be compatible with the perspectives in writings of Roger Simon and Magda Lewis. It was not clear at the outset whether this perspective would be compatible with Beverly Daniel Tatum’s, although, in my initial readings, there were no obvious contradictions. A clearer and fuller operative theory of the subject was an area for further discussion.
In promoting social transformation, the educators in these accounts have chosen to work with consciousness, both their own and their students'. In their practices, they encourage and support students to recognize how they may be implicated in relations of dominance/subordination; to refuse oppressor positions and to become more aware of the ways power circulates in classrooms and in the production of knowledge.

Roger's question, "What is my view of a 'person'?" (1992, p. xvii) is of key importance for all pedagogies. Kathleen Weiler has argued that "...educators in particular need a theory that can place human action and consciousness in an historical and social context" (Weiler, 1988, p. 3). Subjects are not born, but become who they are with complex gender, race, class and sexual identities that are not fixed but always in process. Having some understanding of how that process operates is vital for projects that aim to transform power relations as they exist.

Poststructural theory points to discourse as centrally important in the structuring of identities. Discourse offers positions through which the subject can articulate itself. The multitude of ways that dominant or hegemonic discursive forms and meanings circulate in classrooms become a focal point for the educators participating in this study. In a variety of ways, and from their particular positions as historical subjects, they and their students explore the opportunities for interruption, disruption and transformation; and struggle with forms of resistance as well as possibilities for constructing new meanings.
My discussion questions on the theme of subjectivity involved drawing out a fuller description of the instructor’s operative theory of the subject. Because current theories are complex and contradict still-prevalent humanist theories, I asked whether students are explicitly introduced to the social theories of subjectivity that inform classroom practices, and how this is accomplished.

Because their writings discussed student resistance as a persistent challenge in counterhegemonic teaching and learning, I asked how instances of resistance were explained by the educator’s theory of subjectivity. I asked about educators’ perceptions of how experiences and practices in the classroom inform their theory of subjectivity; and whether and in what ways these experiences contradict or are consistent with their operative theories.

**Theme 2. Questions on Theories of the Subject**

1. Theories of the subject inform all of the central articles either explicitly or implicitly. However, fundamental understandings and emphases can be very different within the discipline of Sociology compared with Psychology, for example. Can you discuss your theory of the subject?

2. Contemporary social theory, projects for social transformation and their related practices can be very confusing to the uninitiated. Are students explicitly introduced to this theory as part of the practice?

3. How do your classroom experiences inform your theory of the subject? Are there contradictions or unanswered questions? In what ways does practice inform theory?
Theme 3. Resistance and Transformative Practices

According to the notion of hegemony, the dominant group or ruling class of a society exercises control over representations of reality and over the production of knowledge such that their interests and values are upheld. Dominant representations conceal the ways the ruling class exploits and subordinates the rest of the population, and so produce distortions of reality. From the standpoint of the dominant, such representations are likely to be very convincing. Their experience shields them from the contradictions that are the daily experiences of subordinated groups, and their positional interests discourage them from looking any further.

Dominant justifications of the status quo are less persuasive for subordinated groups. Their daily experiences show up the contradictions of dominant ideology; the lived contradictions provide the substance for different and oppositional interpretations, representations arguably more valid because they both incorporate dominant explanations and expose their distortions, inaccuracy or inadequacy.

Students’ and educators’ complex identifications with dominant and subordinated social positions in relation to gender, race, class and sexuality raise pedagogical questions about how they acknowledge these positions in speaking. This process, as Chandra Mohanty asserts, is very complicated: "...Such teaching must address questions of audience, voice, power and evaluation, while retaining a focus on the material being taught" (1990, p. 193). She wrote that claiming a voice is a complex historical and political act that involves understanding the
interrelationship of voices, as well as the recognition that social constituencies are differently empowered (Mohanty, 1990).

While the authors I include often emphasized the imperative of taking an advocacy role, they frequently discussed dilemmas related to voice. We explored how they as positioned historical subjects think about advocating without speaking for\textsuperscript{10} a group.

In these texts, important and recurring issues follow from considerations of voice and standpoint. The participants perceive their roles as educators who both promote productive dialogue from a variety of differently-empowered positions while avoiding the slide into relativism when the admitted partiality of standpoints threatens to suggest that all positions are equally valid. The notions of relationality and co-implication help to provide this focus:

Co-implication refers to the idea that all of us ....share certain histories as well as certain responsibilities: ideologies of race define both white and black peoples, just as gender ideologies define both women and men (Mohanty, 1990, p. 195).

Educators emphasized the importance of both authorizing voices and legitimating experience as well as holding up experience for critical collective scrutiny. This involves encouraging students to speak from their own positions and experiences as well as to reflect on the limits of experience.

\textsuperscript{10}Leslie Roman described "speaking for" as one individual's or group's voice replacing or standing for another's (Roman, 1992). Chandra Mohanty described another difficulty with "speaking for" in the following way: "... when one individual is perceived to stand in or speak for the whole collective; a collective voice is assumed in place of an individual voice" (Mohanty, 1990, p. 194).
All of the central texts explore to some extent the emotionally charged moments, the moments of conflict that often carry transformative potential in counterhegemonic classrooms. In these classrooms, conflict is both unavoidable and productive:

... That conflict can become the text for counterhegemonic teaching. What is important is not to deny conflict, but to recognize that in a society like the U.S., which is so deeply split by gender, race, and class, conflict is inevitable and only reflects social and political realities" (Weiler, 1988, p. 145).

With its very different history and policy of multiculturalism, the Canadian context produces conflicts often based on differences of language and culture, as well as race, class and gender.

How to create socially transformative effects out of conflict is often described as a difficult process. Instructors often described the range of students' reactions, from anger and resentment to shame, guilt and helplessness. They described familiar reactions of a variety of forms of student denial and withdrawal. All offered suggestions for enabling students to move through their emotions to more active and politically enabling positions. Most critical educators recognize that creating conditions for learning in counterhegemonic classrooms means coming to terms in some ways with student resistance.

Resistance in much of the literature on social reproduction is discussed in terms of the agency of individuals who are "... not simply acted upon by abstract 'structures' but negotiate, struggle and create meanings of their own" (Weiler, 1988, p. 21). Following Paul Willis, Magda Lewis described resistance as the struggles against social forms that are experienced as oppressive (Lewis, 1990, p.
One such example in this study is Roger Simon's analysis of what he called students' "fear of theory" (1992, pp. 79-100), which I discuss in detail in Chapter 3. However, Weiler and others continue to emphasize that the political content, the quality and effects of resistance must be considered. In the texts central to this study, the types of resistance frequently described involve students' denial of or withdrawal from critical analyses based on gender, race and class, and avoidance of acknowledging one's own implication in relations of power.

In these texts, educators' interpretations of student resistance are contextualized and sensitive. They often draw upon students' own explanations of their feelings and reactions. More than efforts to uphold positional interests or maintain power/knowledge relations, these forms of resistance are often described as students' attempts to protect their self-intelligibility and the coherence of their world-views (Simon, 1992; Tatum, 1992; Lewis, 1993).

Resistance is often described as emotional. One implication here is that counterhegemonic pedagogies need to acknowledge affective as well as cognitive aspects of such learning, and that resistance be addressed in practices. Fragmented poststructural subject-in-process notwithstanding, the students described here seem to struggle for coherence and often resist change in and of itself.

All educators included in this study have developed various ways to acknowledge and address the emotional reactions of students. They were asked to elaborate on these practices and to comment on the specific conditions needed for this work.
Theme 3. Questions on Resistance and Transformative Practices

1. What practices do you use to address some of the dilemmas related to voice, standpoint and advocacy?

2. What discursive forms do you notice developing in your practice? For example, Beverly emphasized the importance of speaking from experience and self-generated knowledge (Tatum, 1992); Liz has written about the many speakings "to," "for," "with," and "about," — the politics of voice, and the question of who speaks for whom and from what position (Ellsworth, 1989).

3. What in your experience are some of the most effective strategies for helping students come to terms with the emotional responses of transformative process?

Significance of the Study

Critical educational theory has analyzed the many ways reproduction of unequal social relations takes place in educational contexts. It has not always offered a clear articulation of counter-practice that could transform existing inequalities. Moreover, there are few studies that have taken critical practitioners as objects of study (Anderson, 1989, p. 257). Much of the existing literature on critical pedagogy has often been criticized for being too abstract, too theoretical and too distanced from the "terrain of struggle" that the counterhegemonic classroom often becomes (Weiler, 1988; Ellsworth, 1989).

These are some of the reasons why the accounts central to this study continue to be of particular importance. By beginning with these accounts, which
were informed by sophisticated theoretical perspectives as well as the dilemmas and questions of grounded practice, this study pursued some of the current pressing issues of transformative practice as identified by practitioners.

Through focused questions, interviews and discussions, this study attempted a collective exploration of issues relating to positionality, voice, advocacy and student resistance in counterhegemonic and transformative classrooms. These discussions aimed to provide a fuller exploration of theories of subjectivity that inform practices, as well as how practices continue to inform emergent theories of subjectivity. The discussions on resistance aimed to provide more nuanced contextual interpretations of student responses and their meanings. The question of how to develop practices that are both critical and empowering for all students, and how to envision classrooms as sites of both persistent critique as well as affirmative and projective community, always in process, were at the heart of this study.

This thesis aimed to produce valuable insights for other critical practitioners. By exploring issues within the micro-politics of the classroom, it contributes to critical educational studies that focus on the process of social reproduction and emergent theories of subjectivity, especially those drawing on critical or feminist poststructuralist perspectives.

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11R. Radhakrishnan used the phrase "affirmative and projective community" in his discussion of how feminist theory has used postmodern indeterminacy to advance its own political projects in "Feminist Historiography and Poststructuralist Thought: Intersections and Departures." E. Meese and A. Parker (Eds.). The difference within: feminism and critical theory. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1989.
CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

The study began with a literature review of articles that discussed issues and practices in the context of counterhegemonic pedagogy. My central focus was practices, recognizing these as always contextualized and never separable from theory. I was particularly interested in articles by critical educators who reflected on their own experiences in classrooms. I was looking for articles that incorporated poststructural and discourse theory in the analysis. Of these, I had hopes of narrowing my selection to three or four central articles each of which included some discussion of subjectivity, resistance and the theoretical framework used by the educator, as well as discussion of contextualized practice.

Once the four articles and authors were selected, I continued to search for and read any other relevant publications by the authors. The next step was to contact the authors to request their participation in further discussion of selected topics. Their articles had often addressed similar issues and problems, practices and theory, and discussed these in ways that raised new questions. My research questions grew out of issues and questions on practice and resistance common to all four articles, as well as questions on social vision and subjectivity that encouraged the authors/participants to further contextualize their work in theory.

My hope was to promote and participate in collective theorizing and possibly open up a productive dialogue that would be rewarding to all participants. To accomplish this, each participant would respond to questions either in writing, by e-mail, by audio-tape or in whatever fashion was most feasible for them. Once they had opportunities to provide feed-back on my draft
of their response, the responses would be shared among all participants. I now outline the actual research process.

The Process

My original plan was to schedule conversations with each participant at separate times as much as possible so that I could work with one at a time. Personalizing the questions for each participant meant becoming thoroughly familiar with their theoretical frameworks, language and assumptions. This was focused and time-consuming work and seemed more feasible if I could work with one author at a time.

I had hoped to work with Roger Simon and Magda Lewis during the Fall of 1994, and be ready to work with Beverly Tatum and Liz Ellsworth in the Spring of 1995. I wanted, whenever possible, to communicate by e-mail for speed, convenience and for the fluidity and sometimes informality that it seems to promote.

I first contacted Roger Simon and Magda Lewis by telephone and e-mail in the Spring of 1994 in order to introduce myself and the project, and to make arrangements for meetings with each of them at the Canadian Society for Studies in Education conference in June of that year. At the conference I met each separately and presented them with a copy of excerpts from my proposal including the introduction, the discussion questions and the bibliography. This shortened version of the proposal offered the context of the study and allowed them to reflect on the questions in advance of our subsequent discussions. The meeting served as an opportunity to clarify the questions, to get acquainted, to
discuss schedules, to lay out the terms of participation and discuss the logistics of carrying on a discussion at a distance.

Of all the participants, Roger Simon was the most reticent from the beginning. When I described the study as one that focussed on critical or counterhegemonic practices, he was very clear that decontextualized practices, presented as a simple collection of tools or strategies, was something he very definitely wanted to avoid. After further discussion and assurances on my part, he reluctantly agreed to participate, with the proviso that this study not be entered into hastily or superficially, that it be given due time and effort. I have tried to the best of my ability to fulfill my part of the bargain.

Roger had requested that the questions be staggered over the less busy times of the academic year, that they be sent in four separate installments, based on the four themes. I took careful notes of the schedule that would best suit him. I realized that my participants are some of the busiest people I will ever meet, and I was both surprised and grateful that every one of the four actually agreed to participate.

Roger’s initial resistance, however, was not so easily overcome and, as the events of this study began to unfold, it became clear that his missives and replies would be brief, infrequent, apologetic, polite but not engaged with the questions. He was supportive in other ways, directing my questions to material he had already written, and sending me current and yet-to-be published work that also related to my questions. He offered encouraging remarks and bits of news from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). My engagement with
Roger's perspectives on pedagogy, therefore, are based almost entirely on his writings.

For me, this was a somewhat disappointing turn of events, and I am aware that, even though I have struggled to be even-handed in my treatment of the material, this feeling of frustration may have crept into my engagement with Roger's writings.

I began by addressing my questions on Theme 1 to Roger by e-mail. When he did not reply in a matter of several weeks, I sent questions on all themes to Magda. I faxed them to Magda, as she was in the process of going on line, but she was not ready for e-mail at that time.

The responses I had hoped for did not come. Some of the questions were difficult, I acknowledge, but others could have been answered without much time and difficulty. I allowed more time to pass and then checked in with Roger and Magda again. My messages were answered with apologies and excuses but little of substance on the questions.

In retrospect, I have tried to imagine how this process could have been more successful. Ideally, I should have been able to conduct taped interviews over coffee, a beer or dinner; to return to the participants our transcribed conversations for review and feed-back; and then returned with follow-up questions conducted in the same way.

However, research conditions are not often ideal. My four participants live in two countries, all in locations across the continent from where I live. They are all working professors with unrealistic work-loads, pressing dead-lines, many
more urgent projects than the one I had proposed. I am a graduate student with limited resources, a mother of two children who holds a half-time job and spends all of my "free" time thinking about or working on a thesis.

Nonresponse is a weakness of the questionnaire approach to gathering data (Wiersma, 1986, p.180). My efforts to personalize the questions were not altogether sufficient to overcome the built-in limitations I have described. In fact, in an uncharacteristically pessimistic or perhaps realistic mode, I had anticipated this circumstance and knew that I could, if necessary, return to my participants' published work for the material I required. I was fortunate that both Magda and Roger had recent publications that offered extended discussions and reflections on the questions I posed.

The process of addressing questions to written texts, however, is certainly more laborious, less direct, less dialogical. It does not allow for on-the-spot corrections of misapprehensions that conversations with the author would have allowed; nor does it allow for questions that follow from other questions. In addition, some of the published material I was examining dated back to 1986, and, to some extent, compromised the currency of the study.

Moving along with my original schedule as much as possible, in the Spring of 1995, I contacted my prospective American participants, Liz Ellsworth and Beverly Daniel Tatum. I introduced myself and the project first by mail, followed by phone calls. Both expressed interest and a willingness to participate.

In April 1995, I managed a brief meeting with Beverly at the American Educational Research Association conference in San Francisco. I presented her
with my proposal excerpt and questions and we discussed the logistics of participation. Beverly suggested that it might be most feasible for her to respond by audio-tape, a suggestion to which I enthusiastically agreed.

Meeting with Liz was not possible that Spring and, although I have enjoyed some lively interchanges with her and have found her to be a very open and generous participant, we have yet to manage a face-to-face encounter.

I subsequently sent my questions to Beverly by mail, together with blank audiotapes, a return envelope, and a copy of a paper I had written that laid out my position on anti-racism in theory and educational practice. My decision to include this paper was motivated by two considerations: I wished to establish trust by disclosing more about myself and my positions and interests relative to the literature I find compelling in this field, and I hoped to establish the basis for more of a dialogue by providing information about my frames of reference.

At about the same time, I sent off my questions to Liz Ellsworth and included a paper I had written laying out my position on feminist poststructuralism, again in a gesture of both self-disclosure and in an intersubjective move towards clarifying positions. Once again, after several months, no responses were forthcoming.

In the Fall of 1995, I entered a year-long term of extension in which to complete the thesis. The pressure was on. I had projected a time-table for completion and was determined to be rigid about it. I informed all participants that I needed them to respond to the questions by January 1996, otherwise there
would be no time to do what should have been most interesting for them, namely
the sharing of responses and opening up of a dialogue.

In November 1995, the first set of responses arrived. Liz Ellsworth sent
very satisfying short answers to all of my questions, supplemented by copies of
several recent papers, some published and some as yet unpublished. In the
meantime, I had prepared my preliminary drafts on the writings of Roger and
Magda, while continuing to work with the writings of the others.

By early January 1996, I contacted all participants once more. I requested
and received Liz's permission to circulate her responses among the others. My
hope was that her 5-page short-answer replies would offer an engaging model
with or against which the others could formulate their own responses. In
addition, I sent Roger and Magda my drafts based on their published work. I had
written these drafts in critical and questioning ways so as to provoke some
responses. Roger responded that he was constantly feeling overloaded with work
at OISE.

In February, Magda sent a long, reflective and richly autobiographical
response by e-mail that did not fit easily into the frame-work of any of my
questions, but related to them obliquely.

In February, Liz wrote back to me on the subject of counterhegemony, a
discussion I have included in Liz's section in Chapter 3. Towards the end of
February Beverly also wrote to let me know that she was taping her responses
and would send them at the end of that week. Her very substantial and
satisfying answers, recorded on audio-tape, arrived at the end of February.
During the month of March, I communicated with Beverly on her remarks on postmodernism, in order to be clear on her position and to explain my reading of her taped responses. I had been working since November with Liz's articles and had been communicating with her about my questions.

By May I had completed my transcription of Beverly's audio-taped responses and my review of it and her writings. In early June, I heard from Liz that she would try to answer my questions during the summer. Beverly also stayed in touch and gave me permission to circulate her responses. In June, having completed my review of Liz's responses and writings, I sent Beverly and Liz each a copy of both reviews.

My task at that time was to pull together all the disparate pieces of this fairly unmanageable project and produce a draft thesis by the end of August. I did manage a rough draft by early Fall 1996. I heard from Roger in August with an update on the state of transformative pedagogy at OISE at that time; and Magda wrote again in September, this time with a several page and very relevant discussion on teaching from the margins.

Of all the modes of communication used in this project, including face-to-face conversations, mail, phone, fax, e-mail and audio-taped responses, while each had a place, e-mail provided the greatest advantages. Immediate, informal and convenient, exchanges in this mode are freer, more fluid, less constrained by the more formal conventions of other modes of address. In addition, all e-mail exchanges could be stored, dated and printed if necessary. Of particular relevance
to this study, e-mail appears to be the most reliable mode for communication in
the academic world.

**Studying Up**

All the participants in this study are my seniors in terms of their
professional experience, publications and their positions and locations in
universities. This study has been a case of "studying up" in which the researcher
occupies a position of lesser power than her participants. At the time I submitted
my proposal, I outlined some ways that I anticipated this power relationship
might influence the project. For example, I had noted that all participants were
clearly conscious of power issues in their teaching practices and could therefore
be expected to be equally aware of them in other forms of representation and self-
representation and that they would be able to skillfully negotiate their places in
this study.

However, there were many aspects of this relationship that I did not
anticipate and that I discuss now. These comments are not offered in a spirit of
blame nor in a gesture of self-pity, but as significant factors in the unfolding of
this project. The participants’ delays and apologies, while understandable, not
only set back my schedule but had the effect of dampening my enthusiasm for the
project. On the other hand, the responses that did arrive, even late in the project,
had a very energizing effect on me and the project as a whole.

I must note that *all* the participants were behind schedule in responding.
This circumstance is undoubtedly a function of impossibly busy schedules, a fact
that all participants mentioned in the course of our communications. I consider it
to be a built-in function of the power relationship that, in their having to prioritize their own commitments, the commitment to this project would have to rank behind many others.

Their agreement to participate certainly had to be on their own terms, and these were left quite negotiable at the time of our initial discussions. A consequence of this situation was the need for me to chase, cajole and pester participants. Not only was this a disappointing aspect for the researcher, but a rather risky one, given the strict time frame set forth for completion of this research in the Ph.D. program.

Other aspects of this relationship involved power differences in voice which, at times, made it difficult for me to be a critical reviewer of the material. As a great admirer of the work and the writing of all the participants, and as one who shares many of their commitments to theoretical perspectives used in their analyses, I often found it difficult to engage in a critical, rather than a laudatory, review.

An important focus of this study is practice and all the participants are very experienced teachers; while I, the researcher, have very little teaching experience and certainly none that could be called transformative. I hasten to add that I have participated as a graduate student in many classes similar to those described, and as a student and researcher with some experience as a teacher, I have managed to work and rework my position in this study as a facilitator of a tenuous dialogue among my participants and myself.
In my original thesis proposal, I had written about my choice of writers, texts and themes as an initial recognition of an "interpretive community" (Anderson, 1989, p. 255); as a conversation or a dialogue already in progress in the discursive medium of the academic journal, in this case, the Harvard Educational Review. While I register an easy identification with the writings of each author, as the study progressed, the differences of approach and frames of reference among them seemed to become more prominent, and sometimes problematic. While their issues and questions were very similar, my task often seemed to be one of teasing out similarities and differences in their positions and placing these in the context of the broader questions about agency, resistance, hegemony and subjectivity.

The study was originally designed to promote a reciprocal reframing of theory and practice, one that would help "re-orient, focus and energize participants" (Lather, 1986, p. 67). Because the actual responses were late or not forthcoming, the second phase of the study, wherein a dialogue might take place among participants, was never realized. I did circulate what I received in the ways I had been given permission to circulate it. All participants will receive a copy of the thesis.

For myself, although this study has been a very difficult process, it has also been an extremely valuable process of engagement with counterhegemonic theory in pedagogy that has produced much greater understanding of the possibilities and limits of socially transformative processes. With all its frustrations and short-
comings, I continue to feel that the study has accomplished at least some of its goals.
CHAPTER 3. THE AUTHORS

In the four sections of this chapter, I introduce the authors and educators who participated in this study: Elizabeth Ellsworth, Magda Lewis, Roger Simon and Beverly Tatum. There is considerable diversity among the participants in their disciplinary backgrounds and research areas; in their approaches to pedagogy; in theoretical frameworks they employ and in how they integrate these differently in their pedagogies and practices. While their research areas vary across film theory, feminist and discourse theory; transformative pedagogy and postmodern theory, theories of racism and racial identity formation, all the participants work centrally in the field of education and all are involved in teacher education. All are involved in developing and writing about pedagogies that aim for transformation of existing social relations.

In separate sections for each author, ordered alphabetically, I discuss their work and new directions. I then discuss the ways their responses and writings address my questions on social visions, subjectivity, resistance and transformative practices.

Elizabeth Ellsworth

Elizabeth Ellsworth is a Professor in the department of Curriculum and Instruction and a member of the Women's Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. She has taught there since 1981, beginning as a lecturer in the Women's Studies Program. In 1982, she lectured in the department of Communication Arts. She has taught in the department of Curriculum and
Instruction since 1983 and has been a member of the Women's Studies Program since 1984.

Liz's work is based in film and mass communication studies, with a strong emphasis on antiracist feminist perspectives. Her work increasingly incorporates feminist postmodernism for theorizing difference and for developing pedagogical theory, practices and curriculum in education.

Her research emphasis on mass communication and film has been continuous since the early 1970's. She earned a B.A. in Mass Communication in 1972 at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and pursued a Master's degree there with a concentration in the history and criticism of documentary film. During the years 1972-3, in a television production of the Department of Mass Communication, Liz co-produced a program of media criticism, selecting guests, writing copy and leading on-camera interviews. She earned her M.A. in 1975.

In the years 1976-7, Liz taught in the department of Communication Arts at Cardinal Stritch College in Milwaukee. During this time, she initiated and coordinated conflict resolution work-shops for high school students during the early months of Milwaukee public school desegregation.

She began her Ph.D. studies at the University of Madison-Wisconsin in 1977 in Communication Arts with a concentration in theory and criticism of film and mass media. During this time, Liz conducted research on the relationship of film viewing to social change and lectured in the department of Communication Arts and in the Women's Studies Program. She completed her Ph.D. in 1984 with a
dissertation entitled "The Power of Interpretive Communities: Feminist Appropriations of Personal Best."

Extremely active in developing the Women's Studies program at UW-Madison since 1982, Liz has organized forums, lectures and film series, participated on research committees, as well as developed and offered courses on women in film, and mass media and the sexes.

In recent years, between 1991-6, she has offered through the Department of Curriculum and Instruction courses on media, postmodernism and education; on representation, educational media and the construction of knowledge, and on video production for education. During 1990-1, she taught courses on race, class and gender in curriculum and instruction and she has chaired the department’s Minority Student Affairs Committee continuously since 1988.

One reason why Liz’s work is so valuable for this study is that she continues to write about her reflections on difference from the position of educator based on her classroom experiences. She has written about the difficulties of teaching within the terms of critical or liberatory pedagogy, and has continued to develop context-specific teaching practices within the terms of feminist postmodernism, focussing on situated possibilities for personal agency towards the transformation of existing social inequalities (Ellsworth, 1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1994; 1992; 1989).

Liz’s work first came to my attention in a feminist discussion group at the University of British Columbia in which the discussion topic was her article, "Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of
Critical Pedagogy" (Ellsworth, 1989). This provocative article captured considerable attention, judging by published responses and subsequent reprintings (In Ceismar and Nicokau, 1993; in Lynda Stone, 1993; in Luke and Gore, 1992). The article explored the many dilemmas, contradictions and difficulties Liz encountered when she attempted to implement a critical pedagogy within the terms laid out in the existing literature. Grounding her discussion in reflections on her everyday classroom practices and experiences, Liz produced a critique that included very important insights from feminist and poststructural frameworks, such as notions of identity and difference, issues of voice, positionality and power relations inherent in those positions. A central question of the article was how critical educators incorporate such insights into a teaching practices.

I have followed Liz’s work through her articles and our correspondence. In addition to the Harvard Educational Review article, articles cited in this discussion include "Educational Films Against Critical Pedagogy" (Ellsworth, 1987); "Teaching to Support Unassimilated Difference" (Ellsworth, 1992); "Situated Response-ability to Student Papers" (Ellsworth, 1996); "Working Difference in Education" (Ellsworth and Miller, 1996) and "Double Binds of Whiteness" (Ellsworth. In Fine, Wong and Weis, eds., 1996).

The considerations of identity, difference, power and the production of meaning remain central concerns in Liz’s current writing. She recently completed a book-length work entitled Teaching Positions: Difference, Pedagogy and the Power of Address (in press); and a chapter "Who Does Your Education Think You Are? Pedagogy and Modes of Address" (under review).
In her more recent publications, Liz’s work continues and extends the projects of feminist postmodernisms\(^1\) with sustained interest in the implications of this work for pedagogy and educational theory, what she and others have described as an emergent paradigm in educational theory. Although I find these new directions theoretically exciting, innovative and potentially very important, I find myself mildly skeptical and cautious about one aspect of them: the subtle change of emphasis from acknowledging one’s implication in historical power formations towards exploring possibilities for disruption in the postmodern sense, a change that can leave unaddressed the blind spots inherent in subject-positions.

Ideas central to Liz’s writing on teaching practices include the importance of context in articulating teaching practices, grounding theory in practices, and grounding practice in particular context, using moments of crisis in the classroom as part of the curriculum and acknowledging one’s own position in power relations. Examples of how Liz’s rethinking of the role of teacher/instructor within critical and postmodern practices include using classroom experiences as a vehicle for exploring notions of difference, freedom and community; and asking disruptive questions, questions that disturb the business-as-usual of power relations and knowledge construction.

\(^1\)While the merging of feminism and postmodernism have often been seen as highly problematic, this theoretical fusion has been has also been characterized as mutually corrective since postmodern theory curbs feminism’s tendency towards utopianism and essentialism, and feminism re-directs postmodern tendencies of nihilism and relativism towards emancipatory politics (Diamond and Quinby, 1988, pp. xvi-xvii).
I have yet to meet Liz, but I have found our e-mail exchanges lively and intellectually rewarding. A painstaking and careful thinker/writer, she clearly appreciates the importance of precision in articulating visions and practices, and the complex notions that grow out of teaching contexts. I move now to Liz's short-answer responses to my particular questions for this study, beginning with an elaboration of the political and social vision that motivates her work.

**Social Vision: Continuous Deconstruction**

When asked to discuss the vision that inspires her current work, Liz responded by citing the work of several feminists "who are currently rethinking gender and other social positionings through postmodernisms" (personal communication, 11/95):

> With Brenda Marshall, my pedagogical "project" is to support students in cultivating and acting from an awareness of being within language and within a particular historical and cultural context. It is a project that tries to support students in constructing actions out of that awareness -- actions that are able to respond to and within the particularities of historical and cultural contexts -- actions that are necessarily partial, incomplete and interested. Actions we take, even with such an awareness, will inevitably have unintended and unforeseen consequences. Those consequences will require us to deconstruct what we just did and the knowledge we just acted out of, and work to become responsive in new ways to the new (unpredicted and uncontrollable) circumstances we just helped to create. With Shoshona Felman, I see teaching as an "interminable" project, as a way of being in the world, not as a means to a utopian end somewhere outside of power (E. Ellsworth, Personal Communication, 11/95).

I have already written about how many feminists are using postmodern theories to further their projects towards social transformations. Liz works with individual consciousness by directing students' awareness to how they construct
themselves within language, culture and history; to the notion of identity as non-essential, continually strategically performed and always in process.

Relevant to this thesis and therefore important to highlight here are several notions implicit in feminist and postmodern perspectives. Liz writes about the subject as being non-essential, but constructed through discourses that are themselves historically and culturally-specific; and that construct gender and race in terms that are often oppositional and hierarchical.

Acknowledging one's position within these configurations of social power would involve an awareness that one's perspective is partial, since there is no Archimedean position outside such relations; incomplete, because the constructing of the self is always in process and never finished; and interested, because one's positionality always entails relations of power, self-interest and larger-group interests that exist beyond one's control or intention. There is no outside of power relations as there is no outside of language: when one uses language and enters discourse, one is always already embedded in relations of power that pre-exist the subject. There is no exit, no escape, no outside of language, only continuing and multiple possibilities for deconstruction and reconstruction, possibilities continuously reconfigured in each new context.

In their article, "Working Difference in Education" (1996; hereafter "Working Difference"), Liz and colleague, Janet Miller, wrote about their desire to politicize conceptions of identity and difference. Their work of politicizing difference includes not only understanding difference as contingent, but also pointing to the possibilities for agency, for identifying the points of intervention that exist at
every moment in contextualized social relations. Following Judith Butler, they write about identities and differences being constructed both in the service of and in the contestation of oppressive relations (ibid., p. 5).

The notion of working difference developed in their paper offers a way of both thinking about difference and understanding the significant labor that reworking boundaries entails. Elaborating on the notion, they write:

We use "working difference" here...to refer to the possibility of engaging with and responding to the fluidity and malleability of identities and difference, of refusing fixed and static categories of sameness and permanent otherness (ibid., p. 4).

And:

..."working difference" suggests a constant kneading of categories and separations. Just like the kneading of bread starts a process of transformation of separate elements into something that gives those elements new meanings and uses, working difference is a continual motion that keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm (ibid., p. 3). ²

And also:

"Working difference" foregrounds the possibility and significance of reading and performing difference as work in progress. It calls attention to the work of configuring and re-configuring the boundaries and meanings of difference over time and within particular historical contexts. We are proposing then that the boundaries, meanings and uses of gender and race can be re-worked. However, by no means do we want to imply that they are 'artificial,' dispensable and able to be put on and taken off at will. Indeed, Butler argues that some social constructions, such as gender, are "constitutive." They have acquired a kind of necessity that is not an

²This notion was discussed earlier in this way by Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) in describing mestiza consciousness: " I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining that which not only has produced both a creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings" (p. 80).
essential one but rather a product of history and power relations; ... without them, "I" or "we" would be unintelligible (ibid., p. 8).

The effort required for working difference is not to be underestimated. Liz has written about experiences in the classroom and her memories of countless moments "when discussions about social and cultural difference have become stuck in seemingly endless repetitions of guilt, accusation, ignore-ance (wilful ignoring), platitude or denial" (ibid., p. 31). Described here and in other articles on difference in the context of the classroom, these moments signal what Liz has called the "difficulties and potentials of becoming and staying conscious" (Ellsworth, 1992, p. 5).

Considering supports for her work, Liz indicated that "the fearless words and writings by cultural theorists who are also teachers/educators" were equal in importance to the support she received from her students. In her words:

These include Patricia Williams, Toni Morrison, Shoshona Felman, Brenda Marshall, Suzanne Lacy, Linda Nicholson, Douglas Crimp, Greg Bordowitz, Anne Devere Smith, Marlon Riggs. Equal to these is the support I get from students, in the uses to which they have put this "project" in their own research and lives as graduate students, and in the ways they have let me know that this "project" is meaningful and useful to them. In particular, they have let me know that this "project" has allowed them to put their graduate school education to use — rather than being used by their graduate school education (E. Ellsworth, personal communication, 11/95).

In addition to these, Liz has written about the importance of other kinds of support. In her 1989 article, "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering?," she emphasized the importance of institutional and collegial support in carrying out an anti-racist event on campus within the context of her course entitled "Media and Anti-Racist Pedagogies":

I was in the fourth year of a tenure-track position in my department, and felt that I had "permission" from colleagues to pursue the line of research and practice out of which this course had clearly grown. The administration's response to the crisis on campus gave further "permission" for attempts to alleviate racism in the institution (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 303).

Another important type of support is collaboration, which Liz describes throughout her articles as taking place with students and other colleagues. Explaining the pleasures of collaboration specifically in her article co-authored with Janet Miller, they wrote:

We want to work together. Not only or primarily because we are interested in the potentials of collaborative work. Not only because of the political and intellectual commitments and interests we share. But because we derive great pleasure in each other's company and in working side by side....That pleasure transforms academic work into academic play, into a heightening of academic imagination, and into a shifting of the social relations of academic life. Those shiftings are one way of taking action to change what has been defined for us as academic work as well as the ways that we should accomplish that work (Ellsworth & Miller, 1996).

Commenting on current limiting influences, the obstacles and draw-backs in doing this work, Liz's response reflected the difficulties of working at the forefront of emergent paradigms, especially in the politically-charged discourses about postmodern theories:

... The issues I face include institutional and collegial misunderstandings, suspicions, fears and misinformation about "activist" education and about postmodernisms as ways of framing academic research and pursuing academic research. My sense is that postmodernisms raise serious threats to some colleagues' senses of themselves as scholars, researchers and teachers. And that the changes in personal and institutional practices that postmodernisms provoke seem too overwhelming to engage with — especially by scholars and administrators who have based their careers and writing on other frameworks and approaches. Often it seems that colleagues make wilful misreadings or cursory readings of feminist
postmodernisms so that they don’t have to seriously engage with its challenges. The ways this shakes out in real life include not having research grant proposals funded because the reviewers don’t understand or disagree with postmodernisms; and having my pedagogical practices misunderstood and misinterpreted by colleagues because they hold to some cartoon caricatures of what those practices are or mean (E. Ellsworth, personal communication, 11/95).

In other articles Liz has written about her work of exploring the implications of postmodern discourses for educational theory. In spite of the kinds of reactions that Liz describes above, educational discourse ignores (wilfully ignores) postmodernism at its own risk. Postmodernism’s critiques cannot be dismissed or shrugged off and, as Liz and others have observed, those who do so frequently proceed from a position of being uninformed, often because the task of engaging with and integrating this theory can be fairly daunting.

**Subjectivity: The Split Subject**

Liz’s writings and responses so far have given some indication of the theories of subjectivity that influence her perspective and work. My questions to her on subjectivity elicited further elaboration. Discussing her notion of the subject, Liz is clearly drawing most heavily on postmodern frameworks that emphasize the importance of language and discourses in the structuring of the subject, as well as psychoanalytic contributions to social theory. She has highlighted the importance of feminist influences that use these frameworks toward supporting the agency of the subject in creating and recreating forms that can work to disrupt or confound oppressive relations. Elaborating on these frameworks, Liz discussed the importance of the unconscious:
I'm convinced by theories and analyses that argue that the human subject is a split subject — a subject split between consciousness and the unconscious. This means I always know more than I can say, I always say more than I intend or know, I'm always forgetting what I've learned, my ignorance is a wilful forgetting and denial — an ignore-ance. I'm convinced that the human being is a socially constructed subject whose experiences and whose ways of making sense of her experiences always exceed the socially constructed discourses available for making sense. It's this excess that becomes the material for reworking and rewriting socially constructed identities (E. Ellsworth, Personal Communication, 11/95).

As I've mentioned already, one of Liz's ways of troubling and disturbing the business-as-usual of power relations is to ask questions. Contemplating the unconscious in relation to more traditional educational practices, she asks:

I'm interested in how theories of the unconscious trouble educational discourses that are based on assumptions of a fully conscious, fully self-aware, fully rational human being — assumptions of full cognition. What happens to pedagogies and curriculums when the unconscious is taken into consideration? What happens to my pedagogical practices when I begin to grapple with the ways that the unconscious guarantees that no teaching is ever complete, finished, and no understanding is ever full (ibid.)?

While the subject is always in process, Liz explicitly rejects what she calls 'stage theory' or the notion of reaching stages in a one-way or goal-directed manner in projects for social transformation:

I really don't subscribe to "stage theory" when it comes to commitments to social transformation. That is, I really don't think anyone is "uninitiated" in issues of social transformation and the social construction of subject positionings (ibid.).

And also:

With James Donald, I see the relationship between this unfinished, split "social" "outside" of the human subject, and the unfinished, split, unconscious "inside" of the human psyche to be a relation not of one-way determination, nor even of a dialectic — "it is characterized by oscillations, slippage, and unpredictable transformations" (ibid.).
An important notion discussed in Liz’s recent writing is that of *performativity*. It refers to the understanding that social identities, being non-essential, rely on performed acts to effect their social intelligibility. Judith Butler discussed the notion very clearly in relation to gender identity. The following passage briefly explains performativity in relation to gender:

... Gender proves to be performative — that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed ... There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results (Butler, 1990, p. 25).

Liz extends this analysis to racialised identities in her article "The Double Binds of Whiteness," in which she suggests that enactments and relations of whiteness are "learned social and cultural performance," historically framed and situated. In this article, Liz analyses one such performance in terms of rules of speaking and silence which constituted a double bind, a no-win situation from which one is unable to leave; and in which one is not able to point out the contradiction. Liz goes on to ask what ways of working against racism become possible for teachers when "whiteness is thought of not as an aspect of self or group ... but as a form of social and cultural double bind" (Ellsworth, 1996).

While the notion of performativity provides new insights about the contingency of identities and possibilities for transforming existing relations, I caution that the persistence and force of such "learned performances" should not be downplayed. To represent them as weak imprints, easily changeable, is to lose sight of the power of the act performed unconsciously, shaped by the only
existing models available, and justified by the only existing explanations and meanings, rendered intelligible by existing relations — in other words, to deny the power of hegemonic processes and meanings.

Resistance and Transformative Practices: Working Difference

On practices, Liz's writings foreground for me the ways her feminist/postmodern reframing of the educational project is provoking a rethinking of the role of the educator, and how this rethinking applies to particular aspects of the role in the acts of reading, critiquing, framing and presenting curriculum materials, and the performative act of teaching itself. The model that is forming in her writings is one of both teacher and learner, one who acknowledges the limits of knowledge; who acts to facilitate dialogue across difference; who performs the practice of questioning; who identifies and uses the moments of crisis in the classroom as an important part of the curriculum; as one who acts collaboratively to articulate particular and contextual visions or goals that are always in process.

Liz has described education as an interminable project and a performative practice: "... a process of constructing and enacting culture and social relations in the classroom, not of representing in the classroom some 'outside' culture and social relations constructed elsewhere" (Ellsworth, 1992).

Like several of the participants in this study, Liz has been emphatic about understanding practices as always developing in particular contexts. For example, reflecting on a course she taught called "Using Media for Education About and Across Race, Class, Gender and Other Differences," she wrote:
I had begun to understand my own complicity as an individual and as a white woman in the history and dynamics of racism. I was committed to the long term effort to unlearn racism and to find ways of interrupting it and other oppressive formations as a white woman/professor. How to translate these unlearnings and commitments into the form and content of courses and into my own teaching practices is a question that requires different answers for each time, place and context in which I ask it (ibid., p. 4).

In the context of her class on media and anti-racist pedagogies, she described the role of the teacher as facilitator, as both teacher and learner, as one who needs to reflect on the ways she is positioned in relation to institutional power:

As an Anglo middle-class professor ... I could not unproblematically "help" a student of color to find her/his authentic voice. ... I could not unproblematically "affiliate" with the social groups my students represent and interpret their experiences to them. In fact, I brought to the classroom privileges and interests that were put at risk in fundamental ways by the demands and defiances of student voices. I had brought a social subjectivity that had been constructed in such a way that I have not and can never participate unproblematically in the collective process of self-definition, naming of oppression, and struggles for visibility in the face of marginalization engaged in by students whose class, race, gender and other positions I do not share (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 310).

Describing the opportunity for the critical teacher presented by moments of crisis that occur in the classroom, Liz explained that these moments, "uninvited, uncomfortable, threatening and confusing as they may be," become the curriculum:

I am convinced that teachers committed to supporting unassimilated difference must not and cannot meet such incidents with a prescriptive pedagogy, a technology for fixing the break-down in communication. Rather, I see these moments as unique and powerful conjunctures of social positions, histories, power relations, languages, and ways of knowing. Out of such moments, which we can never predict beforehand, "course materials" that may be emotionally and
conceptually confusing or oppressive become available to use as educators — and these include racist, monoculturalist languages and interpretations; body languages of fear, anger, and withdrawal; silences (Ellsworth, 1992, p. 7).

Reflecting on how her integration of postmodern theory has influenced the practice of reading students' papers, she wrote:

... There can be no illusion on my part or the students' that I'm the universal reader, capable of responding meaningfully to requests for an infinite variety of readings of student papers. Framed by the work we do in class about the limits of representation and reading, and about the interested and partial and situated nature of reading — students recognize that the responses are also partial, interested, changing from week to week as I revisit my own memories (and forgettings) of the work we've done in the class, of their last paper, or of my readings of curricular texts. Their writings are enactments of working through curricular texts. And my readings of their papers are my working through pedagogical issues of the class, and my understandings of students' singular projects and processes (Ellsworth, 1996c).

Other ways of reflecting on difference and positioning are discussed in an e-mail exchange between myself and Liz prompted by her objection to my use of the term counterhegemonic. Liz wrote:

I wouldn't call that project "counterhegemonic." Because "counter" anything places me in an oppositional stance. It positions me as being against something and for something else, and in that way it positions me within certainty. An oppositional stance reinscribes dualisms such as oppressor/oppressed, powerful/powerless, false consciousness/correct consciousness, self/other (E. Ellsworth, personal communication, 11/95).

My response to this objection touched upon issues which concern me about potentially relativist positions within postmodernisms, issues involving the politics of representation and the unequal playing field in terms of power and discursive representations. I wrote:
The reason I disagree with you, in this case, that "counter"anything places you in an oppositional stance, against something and within certainty, reinscribing dualisms that are embedded in language and thought, is because hegemony isn’t a thing. I hold it to be a process, what Gramsci called an "articulatory practice." Alison Jagger described it as the process whereby the dominant within a society project their version of reality so successfully that those subordinated consent to the terms of this version. Without resorting to brute force, hegemony is largely effected through discourse, speech and other signifying practices — anything which signifies or has meaning. The Latin root of the word discourse, "discursus," means "running to and fro" and captures the moving, changing, never-fixed, point-counterpoint quality of discursive practice; the element of context and the quality of (if I may borrow from your article) "never the same twice," because always occurring at a fleeting moment of history and in an ever-shifting context. Counter-hegemony, I argue, is not a thing but part of a process. It is often used to describe positions in discourse that effect a contest, a challenge, a competition or diversion — at any rate, an undermining of frequently taken-for-granted meanings that underpin dominant versions of reality. Hegemony could never be countered by a single oppositional stance once and for all with certainty — on that we agree. Possible counterpositions are always multiple, changing, with effects hard to predict and impossible to control. And hegemonic versions — because they are so pervasive, often persuasive, sometimes seductive; and because they can buy so much air time and so much corruption and can repeat their messages with such force — need to be countered by vigilant and critical minds trained to deconstruct and to consider the multitude of competing if marginalized versions of the way things are. The work I’ve been interested in, the teaching practices I’ve called counterhegemonic are those that do not neglect to raise as issues the many versions; to examine, argue and to develop ways of nurturing critical and vigilant dispositions of mind in themselves and their students; to encourage them to re-examine critically the meanings they’ve relied on in structuring their world-views and to ask where these meanings come from and what they imply for those positioned differently within discourse (E. Montague, personal communication to E. Ellsworth, 2/96).

To this Liz responded:

I think your discussion of counterhegemony is very clear. I guess I’m still more comfortable and drawn to conceptions of power that see power as much more dispersed, and power-over or "dominance" as a matter of net-worked relations of knowledge, desire, and power
that creates moving and shifting nodal points of power — which have power-effects at particular locations, sites and moments — and which gain their "hegemonies" only through their reiterations by people, institutions, discourses, practices. To me then, strategies of interruption, disruption, troubling, dispersal, re-articulation get suggested and called up, which I guess I see as significantly different from strategies of "countering." There's an element of a meta-level of action in disruption, troubling, re-articulation that seems absent for me in countering. For example, you make a move on the chess board, I counter with another move in a way that tries to beat you within the rules of the game — beat you at your/my own game. But we're still within the game and its rules. If I win by my counter-move, I'm winning within the given game, and haven't changed the game. What if, instead of countering your chess move, I respond to your attempt to win by showing Anne Devere Smith's video about the L.A. riots/uprisings? Now I'm not only not playing chess, but I can begin to meta-communicate about the chess game itself, its rules, who we "are" when we play it, who we "are" when one of us calls attention to its rules etc. This "feels" much more like a lateral move to me, an end run around, a Ki Aikido move that refuses to meet force with force, but instead, bends the energy/intent of the force so that it flows in another direction altogether, having different effects without being "countered" (E. Ellsworth, Personal Communication, 11/95).

As for the semantic fine-points of what counter-hegemony might mean, it seems Liz and I are largely in agreement, although I see a danger in dismissing or down-playing the magnitude or force of continually re-articulated hegemonic representations. This lack of emphasis often contributes to the rejection of or discomfort with postmodernisms among different and differently-empowered constituencies such as feminists, people of color, gay/lesbian and so on. In addition, this lack of emphasis down-plays the powerful imprinting and internalization of hegemonic messages on individual consciousnesses through which oppressor/oppressed identities become established and then acted from in the multiplicity of power relations at nodal points in institutions, social practices
and personal and familial relationships. Hegemonic versions disproportionately influence the terms of the definitions and the rules of the game. It is in part because of this power to influence that critical work, "working difference," deconstruction, is such hard and unrelenting work, and work that is never done.

One other aspect of deconstructing from the position of privilege has been raised repeatedly by those who occupy subordinated positions. Not only do those in privileged positions frequently act out of blindness about how they continue to exercise privilege, but deconstruction is difficult to effect in isolation from subordinated perspectives. Without hearing from these positions, it is difficult to know how one's position might be used to effect a reversal or disruption.

Because Liz has often been so impressive at describing her dilemmas and experiences in teaching towards socially transformation, it came as a surprise to me that her current practice avoids some of these earlier student experiences, the experiences of guilt, shame, helplessness, hopelessness, denial, withdrawal, despair. On student reactions that she currently encounters, she writes:

It seems that guilt, helplessness, hopelessness, anger, despair, and denial were much more of a problem for me as a teacher in the 1980's than they have been in the 1990's. These emotional responses don't seem to be called up since I've shifted the emphasis and focus of my courses from who's bad, who's the oppressor, who's the oppressed, what "is" racism, what "is" sexism — to something more like: Given the context of power relations (in which a particular group and/or individual is being exploited, oppressed) what actions, interventions, interruptions, dislocations, discursive innovations — would make something possible and comprehensible that is currently needed but is currently blocked, stuck, unimaginable, unsayable (E. Ellsworth, personal communication, 11/95)?
Again, I find myself responding with a sense of caution, an alertness to something missing, a lack of emphasis on a crucial element. How can one act, intervene, interrupt and so on if one cannot even perceive one's implication in the context of power relations. Is it possible to talk about one without the other? Also, the context of power relations is so mystified, so often hidden, normalized, and unquestioned, that the "given" is really what's so difficult to get at. On student reactions, Liz has written elsewhere:

In many instances, it may be the pedagogical address of either/or, rather than the "news" of social and cultural difference that leads to what teachers have been reporting as resistances, increased tensions, rejections, angry denials, and separatisms when they try to teach about and across social difference. Such responses might actually entail resistance to "the sensation of oxymoron" — to being forced to read oneself and others as either oppressor or oppressed, either black or white, either gay or lesbian or straight, either racist or non-racist. To what extent does this linear, fixing and dichotomizing way of addressing students and teachers sever or make difficult, if not impossible, connections between our 'lived experience and social perception' of ourselves and others (Ellsworth, 1996).

Because our gendered, racialised, classed and sexual identities are already inscribed within language and relations of power, they can never be neutral. It is possible to act out oppositional and otherwise subversive moves within these relations, possible to disinvest in privilege; but to be conscious of how we act out of our positional privilege really takes some work. It is work that is almost impossible to do alone, because one frequently acts out of blindness. It is continuous work and it is frequently painful, as attested to by many who engage in it. So, if Liz is now no longer encountering the reactions of guilt, helplessness,
hopelessness, anger, despair; the breakthroughs and back-slidings, I cannot but feel that something is missing. Liz elaborated on this new approach:

... The shift from "who are you and what is your implication in oppression" to "what will you use your social positionings and identities for and how will you construct cultural and social relations in your classroom today?" has tapped into emotional energy that was otherwise foreclosed by more essentializing questions and focuses (E. Ellsworth, personal communication, 11/95).

The importance of focusing on enabling or liberatory possibilities cannot be overstated, and it is undoubtedly a difficult balance to find. I return to an earlier instance in which Liz articulated a contextualized collective vision within difference:

If you can talk to me in ways that show you understand that your knowledge of me, the world and 'the Right thing to do' will always be partial, interested, and potentially oppressive to others, and if I can do the same, then we can work together on shaping and reshaping alliances for constructing circumstances in which students of difference can thrive (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 324).

The important elements of dialogue across difference, attention to partiality and the potential for oppression are all present in this statement. It is the critical and collective nature of the process that I hold to be of central importance.

Liz's current enrolments may be made up of students who have become so familiar with the terms and practices of transformative pedagogy that they can participate without the usual resistances. Those who enroll in courses identified as having feminist or anti-racist orientations may already be committed to such positions. It may be a case of "preaching to the choir" or the converted speaking to one another or involving one another in collaborative visions. It would certainly be intriguing to sit in on or participate in one of these classes.
Discussion

It is a given that any discourse privileges certain meanings and representations to the exclusion of others. My reading of Liz’s project as she represents it is that it is very optimistic in outlining the possibilities rather than the limits of positions and identities — and, in some ways, this is refreshing. It seems to always be a case of representing this struggle for agency in postmodern terms as an either/or proposition, either already lost in the more relativist or grimly nihilist side of postmodern discourses; or endlessly winnable in the playful, disruptive and unsettling possibilities suggested by the contingency of positions.

Self-reflexivity and self-critique are a continuing part of this interminable project, interminable because always in-process and never fixed. Liz’s closing remark to my questions, and one I might also address to myself, was this:

Nevertheless and "interminably," the current issue coming up for me is: What unintended and as yet invisible silencings and marginalizations am I producing in the name of all I have described above (E. Ellsworth, Personal Communication, 11/95)?

Magda Lewis

Magda Gere Lewis is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, where she has been teaching for the past ten years, beginning as a doctoral student in 1986. Magda earned her PH.D. in 1988 from the University of Toronto Graduate Department of Education (OISE), having obtained her Master’s degree there in 1977. Teaching at the graduate and undergraduate levels in Sociology, Women’s Studies and Education, she has
recently developed and taught courses on feminist theories in education, educational issues in cultural studies, culture, power and possibility, and Black feminist thought.

For the past four years, Magda and a colleague at Queen's have developed and taught an alternative teacher education program for students particularly interested in issues of social justice in schooling and teaching. The enrolment, based on a process of self-selection, represents about 5% of the total population of the Faculty of Education.

Employing theoretical frameworks that include feminist, materialist, postmodern and discourse theories, Magda's central research areas include feminist pedagogy and practice, cultural production and the construction of subjectivity; women's relationship to discursive power and women's silence in academic and other cultural fields. Her work has also included, over the years, the related areas of subject formation in the experience of home, school and work, peace education, and the social construction of racism in representations in children's picture books.

From 1984 to 1987, as a graduate research assistant at OISE, Magda participated in the "Learning Work Project" funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The project, with principal investigators Roger Simon and Joel Weiss, involved a large-scale ethnographic study of high school students in their graduating year to investigate the structures and influences that both guided and limited their career choices. Magda's particular focus on gender in the process of shaping and limiting the perceived possibilities
of high school girls produced important analyses of how family and school expectations combined with local economic conditions to channel and limit career choices for girls. These findings have subsequently become a chapter, entitled "Learning Femininity: Schooling and the Struggle for Self," in Magda's recent book, *without a word: teaching beyond women's silence* (Lewis, 1993).

When my thesis proposal was in formative stages in 1991-2, two of Magda's articles, "A Discourse Not Intended for Her: Learning and Teaching Within Patriarchy" (Lewis, 1986, co-authored with Roger Simon; hereafter, "A Discourse") and "Interrupting Patriarchy: Politics, Resistance and Transformation in the Feminist Classroom" (Lewis, 1990; hereafter, "Interrupting Patriarchy") had become extremely important because they made the site of the classroom a central focus for examining the possibilities and limits of counterhegemonic pedagogy and practices in context. In "A Discourse," Magda wrote as a graduate student offering her perspective as one of the women in the class who confronted the discursive hierarchy which threatened to silence them. In "Interrupting Patriarchy," she wrote as a feminist teacher working in the chilling climate of political backlash. Both articles explore in generous detail the conditions of participation and the positions and relations to social and discursive power of students and teachers in context.

By the time my thesis research was underway in 1993, these articles too had been incorporated and re-framed in Magda's book, *without a word*, in which she theorizes and re-interprets the meanings of women's silence. The analyses, perspectives and issues she brings to her discussions include important current
challenges and directions for feminist pedagogy, as well as suggestive approaches for all forms of counterhegemonic and transformative projects.

During our brief meetings, first in Calgary at the Canadian Society for Studies in Education conference in June 1994, and the American Educational Research Association conference in San Francisco in April 1995, Magda and I have had some opportunities to discuss a range of issues including the theoretical frameworks we share, feminist pedagogy and practice, but also the day-to-day problems of negotiating the demands of graduate school and parenting, and the dilemmas of raising sons as feminist mothers within patriarchy. Magda’s analyses, because they incorporate the personal and the everyday, are particularly refreshing, vivid and tangible while never losing the critical edge that her theoretical frameworks enable.

In this project I have asked each participant about the larger social and political vision that inspires their work. Many poststructural writers have pointedly avoided the issue of social and political vision towards which we struggle. I remain keenly aware of how such a question can be at odds with a body of theory that holds as inherently oppressive the fixed, the unitary, the universal. Magda’s own strategy, what she has called "teaching from the margins," involves the feminist counterdiscursive position of using the local, local, local,...

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3 Conferences present excellent opportunities for arranging meetings, conversations and interviews with people who share one's research focus. They were important in this study for making contact with participants, for initial discussions on the logistics of participation and for discovering what questions or hesitations they might have on participation. Beyond these pragmatic concerns, meetings allowed us to get to know one another better.
everyday contexts of power relations to enable new ways of seeing and new responses to what is taken for granted. Working in this way involves remaining ever innovative and one-step-ahead of relentless processes of co-optation (M. Lewis, personal communication, 9/96).

However, it is a given that all pedagogies unavoidably embody the principles of a larger social vision. I maintain that we can hold onto a notion of a comprehensive social and political vision as an ongoing and collective enterprise, one always struggled for and never achieved. For this reason I support the continuing efforts to articulate ever clearer, more compelling, internally consistent visions which offer a way out of the fragmentation and paralysis that much contemporary social theory entails.

**Social Vision: Solidarity Across Difference**

Thorough readings of Magda's work continue to bring me up short on a truly comprehensive or consistent larger vision of a future social order towards which we move. More prominent is a vision of the present read differently, critically within the framework of a materialist feminist analysis. Her analyses theorize the personal, problematize the everyday and produce new interpretations of women's relationship to discursive power; and the meanings of women's silence, not as an example of deficiency but as politically-motivated act of resistance. Magda's insights involving the desire/threat complex⁴ that frequently

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⁴The term threat/desire was used by Kathleen Rockhill in a study that analyzed women's relationship to literacy (Rockhill, In Gaskell and McLaren. (Eds.). 1991.).
operates when women attempt to appropriate feminist analyses offer new challenges for thinking about gender relations in transformative terms.

Magda articulates a vision in feminist terms and describes feminist teaching as teaching which clearly names the social construction of gender identities as one of its concerns (Lewis, 1993). While making gender construction its central problematic, feminist teaching necessarily incorporates other forms of oppression, given that they are not separable. Outlining this vision, Magda writes:

I believe that achieving solidarity across our differences, however these may be marked in gender, class, race, ethnicity, desires of the body, body proficiency and presentation or any other socially divisive category of human be/ing — is the challenge of feminist practice. And transforming the terms of our difference toward the possibility for social equality is the potential achievement of feminist politics (Lewis, 1993, p. 17).

Recognizing sexism as only one axis of the many sites of social inequality, Magda stresses that what is particular about this site, especially for her analyses, is the way it is bound up with desire and emotional investments. Magda draws upon the insights of bell hooks who writes:

Sexism is unique. It is unlike other forms of domination - racism or classism - where the exploited and oppressed do not live in large numbers intimately with their oppressors or develop their primary love relationships (familial and/or romantic) with the individuals who oppress and dominate or share in the privileges attained by domination (hooks, 1989, p. 130).

Why this is significant for Magda in her teaching is that she frequently encounters the ways these primary relationships and emotional investments create formidable dilemmas for women who are both attracted to the socially transformative knowledge and keenly aware of the ways it can threaten them.
The desire/threat dilemma is one of the most significant challenges that feminism and feminist pedagogy faces at this time, according to Magda. It is a familiar area of resistance for women who are not prepared to undertake the difficult shifts in perceptions, the anger, the frequent upheavals in relationships and life circumstances that politicizing the personal often involves.

In my view, one area of apparent contradiction in Magda's writing on feminist goals for women is her use of the terms "autonomy" and "independent personhood." She contextualizes these terms within Ruth Roach Pierson's definition of feminism, which I include here:

One identifiable characteristic of feminism across an entire spectrum of varieties has been the pursuit of autonomy for women. Integral to this feminist pursuit of independent personhood is the critical awareness of a sex/gender system that relegates power and autonomy to men and dependence and subordination to women (Pierson, 1987, p. 203).

The humanist notions of autonomy, or self-governance, and independent personhood stand in contradiction to much feminist writing about human nature and women's experiences in relation to humanist ideals. They appear to stand in contradiction to Magda's theoretical frameworks on discourse and subjectivity in that notions of autonomy and independent personhood do not sufficiently acknowledge the inevitability of relationship for humans, however gendered.

Elaborating on the notions of autonomy and independent personhood, Alison Jagger discussed problems with the assumption of political solipsism. She writes:

Individual self-sufficiency ... is an unrealistic assumption even if one conceives of all human beings as healthy adults, which most social
contract theorists have done. As soon as one takes into account the facts of human biology, especially reproductive biology, it becomes obvious that the assumption of individual self-sufficiency is impossible (Jagger, 1988, pp. 40-1).

Jagger argued that the liberal social paradigm is male-biased especially in regard to its emphasis on autonomy and individuality. She adds that it is hard to imagine that women's experiences would have led them to frame human nature in these terms. Because much of women's traditional and taken-for-granted work has been the bearing and rearing of children, the caring for the sick and the aging both in familial and larger social contexts, women are more likely to understand the necessity for such care-giving and -receiving functions for all human beings as intrinsic and unavoidable aspects of living and surviving.

Human material and social relationships, however mystified in humanist terms, do not sustain, except as a questionable and unattainable ideal, the notions of autonomy and independent personhood. The notion of autonomy is unattainable because, as I have argued, no human being exists whose survival has not depended on the care given by others during infancy and childhood, and in times of sickness or old age. Beyond the extreme case of survival, humans exist in social and economic relationships that are interdependent in every way.

On the more symbolic levels of human social existence, human beings always exist in relationship to limits and possibilities as subjects of history, language, discourse and culture. The notion of autonomy, even in the sense of self-definition, cannot take place except against or in relation to other conceptual
frameworks already in place. In light of these considerations, the goal of autonomy seems a contradictory one.

Magda's own attention to women's unequal access to discourse, and her attention to practices that silence and exclude women, suggest to me other ways of articulating feminist goals for women, and men. Understanding gendered positions as contingent, relational and continually re-articulated might suggest attention to the particular and local re-inscriptions of gender, and attention to both terms of the relation. My reading of Magda's work suggests that, where her focus has been women's unequal and problematic position, it has not yet sufficiently addressed the dominant term of the gender relation. What men's relationship to gender equality and to feminism might be is an admittedly difficult question, but one that might productively be pursued in this work. The difficulty lies in how to pursue it, especially in light of what I now discuss.

I move to the questions of what conditions provide the context for Magda's work, and how these present possibilities and supports for feminist transformative work as well as obstacles and limits. Characterizing current conditions within which her work takes place, Magda described the recent political climate as one of "backlash" (Lewis, 1993, p.52). The specific manifestations of this climate are experienced by most women in a variety of ways, but feminist educators who confront with courage and integrity issues of structured inequality day-to-day in classrooms can meet with particular threatening and extreme forms. Among other forms, Magda described the continuing struggles of feminist teachers for the legitimacy of their theoretical frameworks and their teaching practices; of the lack
of institutional support for socially transformative pedagogy in general and of the excessive scrutiny of feminist perspectives:

I know that as feminist academics in socially and culturally elite institutions mostly resistant to social critique unsupportive of the status quo, feminist courses are derided for being too political, too subjective, too personal. I know that such derision has come from colleagues who have not troubled themselves to become knowledgeable about the work we and our students do. I know that the work of students who embrace a feminist perspective has been excessively scrutinized from outside the intellectual frames from within which it was proposed while that of the students doing more "traditional" work has been waved on with a nod of the fatherly head (Lewis, 1993, p. 53).

Magda described educational institutions as being unfriendly and uncomfortable places for feminist and other types of transformative work:

As feminist women we know that intimidation often accompanied by the threat of the denial of tenure or promotion, often articulated through limits on our intellectual freedom, is the consequence of our choice to embrace a politics of possibility aimed at broadening access to political and economic viability for all marginal and socially disenfranchised groups (ibid., p. 147).

As one whose work disturbs taken-for-granted relations of power, Magda explained that institutional support for her work is not something she expects:

I don’t expect institutional conditions to support my work....in fact, I am surprised (if not suspicious - though somewhat relieved) if I find such supportive conditions. I expect resistance, I expect backlash and I expect the work to be undermined. This doesn’t mean I am a pessimist or a masochist for keeping on!! Rather, it makes me realize what is possible. I know where the resistances are and knowing this enables me to know what those who push against transformation have invested in keeping things the same (M. Lewis, Personal Communication, 9/96).

She wrote about how discouragingly slow progress can sometimes seem, in spite of all the initiatives and efforts, especially with regard to women’s access to
educational discourses and how draining the work can sometimes be (Lewis, 1993, p. 18).

She also described the powerful elements that provide continuing support for her transformative work such as the sense of community, shared vision, hope and laughter (ibid., p. 147). In her words:

We look to share materials and teaching methodologies that bring women's experiences out of the shadows and make them legitimate curriculum content. We seek to share strategies on classroom practices that make the daily rigor of classroom teaching less draining and more supportive between students and teacher. We attempt to share in finding effective ways of making clear our political position not as an ideological construct, but as a perspective or vantage point derived from our experience ... (ibid., p. 148).

The notion of intellectual or political community discussed here emphasizes shared experiences and political commitments. It does not address the more difficult-to-achieve sense of community described by the vision of "solidarity across differences" which Magda has described as the feminist challenge.

As a teacher, Magda describes the energizing moments in the classroom when the perspective she brings enables students to perceive the taken-for-granted in new ways:

What has always motivated me in my "teaching" (I, who I imagined had something to share with someone from my own position as also a learner) are those high moments when a "student" (that person who perhaps had not had access to the materials that allowed me to think about the things that I was thinking about) responds with intellectual exhuberance. That moment of the "glint" in the eye, when a student says: "I have never thought of that before." There is an incredible high associated with this ... seeing new knowledge find a "home." This isn't about "numbers." If there is one student in the class who gets to that place it is enough to make the going on possible. It is about being able to imagine what the outcome could be. Students often talk about life-changing experiences. If this can
be achieved in such an unlikely setting as a classroom it is incredible (M. Lewis, Personal Communication, 9/96).

What Magda never mentions, and perhaps goes without saying, is that teaching from the marginal position of feminism is not an optional position for those who do it. To avoid or shrink from raising issues about the relative power and access to knowledge construction of students in one’s classroom would create intolerable personal contradictions.

Reflecting on the limits of what her practice might accomplish, she writes:

... (I)t would be far too arrogant of us, as educators, to imagine that we could create the necessary life conditions students require in order to see the world in any particular way. Teaching from the margins is helping/enabling students toward, as John Berger puts it, "another way of seeing." Transforming students to another way of seeing is not so much about what I bring to the classroom but about what they bring to the classroom and what I do (and consequently what they are enabled to do) with what they bring with them. It’s not so much about me (as teacher) changing their hearts and minds, but about creating the conditions whereby they can come to their own changed hearts and minds (ibid., 9/96).

The process of social transformation, of the deconstructing and reconstructing of the "hearts and minds," inevitably raises questions about how this engagement with subjects-in-process might be effectively undertaken, and what subjectivity is. I now move to Magda’s writings on subjectivity, as well as on women’s position in discourse and their responses to feminist discourses.

Subjectivity: The Subject of Discourse

Magda brings to her analysis an understanding of the measure of power women possess within the patriarchic symbolic and discursive economy, including the power to control and attribute meaning (Lewis, 1993, p. 109). She
describes discourse as a form of governance that structures a field of constraints and possibilities such that differently-positioned social actors have unequal access to forms of power including speech, the power to name, and to attribute and circulate meaning. She writes about women's contradictory position as simultaneously being the object of phallic discourse while being non-participants in its articulation:

... Even as women contribute disproportionately significant labor to the maintenance of the earth, simultaneously we have been, and continue to be, denied the status of meaning-makers; we have been excluded from the stories we are told as well as from those we are encouraged to tell to and of ourselves" (ibid., p. 70).

Feminist analyses offer women the possibility to examine and understand their positions in new and self-empowering ways, to make new meanings. However, as Magda's observations illustrate, for women to engage with feminist analyses and connect them to their own lives frequently involves daunting personal transformations:

To the extent that women's social/economic survival is structurally connected to our relations with men, severing our selves from it is a potentially dangerous prospect. Yet not to challenge its conceptualizations leaves us equally annihilated. Understanding this dynamic is one aspect of the feminist political project. The other is the will to want to change it (ibid., p. 31).

Feminist poststructuralist, Chris Weedon, wrote that to speak is to assume a subject position within discourse and to become subjected to its power and regulation (Weedon, 1987, p. 119). Magda's insights on women's position in discourse have produced new and sensitive interpretations of women's silence.
She offers interpretations different from how silence has been coded in much educational literature within an ideology of deficiency:

I am among those feminist teachers and scholars who have worried about the way women’s silence has been coded in the academy. I have been worried about how I might look anew at the practices and possible meanings associated with women’s silence as a function of our multiple and complex social location.... I question what sort of understanding of women’s silence is required in order to see in it women’s concrete and active engagement of the world as social, political, and economic agents in the face of massively phallocentric discursive and symbolic practices (Lewis, 1993, p. 3).

Rather than deficiency, Magda’s interpretations range variously among silence as refusal to participate in the existing discourse, silence not as absence but as political act, as an act of subversion, of refusal, as political intervention and as a "counter language" (ibid., pp. 40-9):

We need to understand women’s silence - the silence of all oppressed, exploited, and subordinated people - as in Bonnie Smith’s words "a counter language" (1981), a language carrying the full force of our opposition to what has been said before — those words that have created the world in their own image....Silence in this case is a political practice that challenges how social meaning is made (ibid., p. 49).

An example of this type of politically motivated silence is analyzed in the article, "A Discourse" (Lewis and Simon, 1989). In that case the women’s silence was broken by a collective women’s voice. Reinterpreting the meanings of silence as politically-motivated act does not suggest that it is a politically effective strategy. In addition, the silences that Magda sometimes describes could also be understood as examples of defeat or resignation.

Magda’s attention to women’s silence underscores the importance of understanding what motivates it in order to move towards conditions and
practices that can address women’s equal participation and access to meaning-making, discourse and knowledge construction:

... I want to disrupt the understanding that seems able only to support the dominant images of women as both silent and, by our silence, simultaneously consenting to and absent from a discursive arrangement of male privilege to name the world (Lewis, 1993, pp. 30-1).

How these insights can translate into classroom practice is a continuing question, one with which Magda clearly struggles, in different ways depending on the gendered positions of her students. Some of the ways that struggles for meaning play out in her classrooms and Magda’s contextualized responses are illustrated presently in the discussion of resistance and practice.

**Resistance and Transformative Practice: Reversal/Deconstruction**

Magda’s framing of women’s silence argues for interpreting silence as a form of resistance rather than compliance or deficiency. It is not, however, the only response that she encounters from women, especially in relation to feminism. As Magda points out, feminist politics challenges the everyday lives women have learned to negotiate (Lewis, 1993, p. 177). Describing more vocal forms of resistance to feminist discourses from female students, Magda wrote:

... I also hear the young women who speak to me in anger, who deride me for being the bearer of "bad news", and who want to believe that our oppression/subordination is something we create in our own heads. Given the context of violence within which students are being asked to embrace feminist politics, their concerns about their emotional, intellectual, and quite obviously, physical safety have to be recognized as crucial. For women, overt acts of violence, like the one that occurred at the Universite de Montreal, are merely an extension of their daily experiences in the psychological/social sexual spaces of the academy. Resistance to the emancipatory potential of a liberating politics indicates the extent of women’s subordination.
Thus, we cannot expect that students will readily appropriate a political stance that is truly counterhegemonic, unless we also acknowledge the ways in which our feminist practice/politics creates, rather than ameliorates, a feeling of threat: the threat of abandonment; the threat of having to struggle with unequal power relations; the threat of psychological/social sexual as well as economic and political marginality; the threat of retributive violence — each a threat lived in concrete embodied ways. Is it any wonder that many women desire to disassociate from those women whose critique of our social/cultural world seems to focus and condense male violence? (ibid.)

Acknowledging and addressing the ways feminist discourses can constitute threats for women is one of the most important challenges currently facing feminism, and feminist pedagogy in particular, Magda contends. It is clearly an urgent and continuing area of attention in her own practice.

Reflections on her practice are presented most fully in "Interrupting Patriarchy" (Lewis, 1993, pp. 145-180). Using examples from the particular classroom contexts in which she teaches, Magda interpreted students’ forms of resistance to feminist pedagogy from female and male positions. She summarizes some of her practices in the following passage:

Shifting our focus from larger social issues to the dynamics in the classroom so that we might explore the relationships between the two; legitimating the meanings women bring to their experiences by turning challenges to these articulated meanings back on to the questioner thereby requiring the questioner to make different meanings sensible; disrupting the order of hierarchy regarding who can speak on whose behalf; requiring that men in the class own their social location by exploring the parameters of their own privilege rather than the limits on women of their oppression; providing opportunities for self-reflexive critique of unequal power relations; staying attentive to the political context of women’s lives ... and treating women’s resistance to feminism as an active discourse of struggle derived from a complex set of meanings in which women’s practices are invested (ibid., p. 179).
Magda has argued the importance of continuing to develop inclusionary practices. Beyond including women in the curriculum, such practices can take many forms. Her own practices demonstrate an alertness to the silencing forms which are common to classroom interactions.

One such form is the discounting of the personal in the construction of what is considered legitimate knowledge. She argues that traditional hegemonic knowledge has neglected and discounted the personal, claiming it to be subjective, particular and therefore without validity. It is a particularly silencing form for women whose position within the patriarchic discursive economy is already a problematic one. Traditional and hegemonic knowledge has aimed for objectivity and universality in the construction of a fixed and unitary truth. Even though this form of knowledge construction can no longer be sustained or argued for, it remains nonetheless a residual form in the everyday habits of thought and speech among the participants in classrooms and a stubborn argument used to delegitimate the variety of types of socially transformative pedagogies within academic institutions in general. On this, Magda writes:

What can we learn from the stories we have lived? I have for a long time felt uneasy with a characterization of feminist methodology as a process of empowerment achieved through the practice of personal confessionals. ... Locating our experiences in the materiality of our everyday lives is not the same as "telling all" (Lewis, 1993, p. 53).

As argued by feminist and poststructural discourses, the personal is always political; never separate from and always constructed within material and symbolic relations. As Biddy Martin and Chandra Mohanty have pointed out:
The claim to a lack of identity or positionality is itself based on privilege, on a refusal to accept responsibility for one's implication in actual historical or social relations, on a denial that positionalities exist or that they matter, the denial of one's own personal history and the claim to a total separation from it" (Martin and Mohanty, In De Lauretis, 1986, p. 208).

As a feminist teacher in the classroom, Magda affirms the need for a pedagogy that can help "create a space for mutual engagement of lived difference that is not framed in oppositional terms requiring the silencing of a multiplicity of voices by a single dominant discourse" (Lewis and Simon, 1989, p. 569).

Magda's writings on inclusionary transformative practices raises questions about how the men in her classrooms might be engaged to do the difficult work that feminist and socially transformative teaching provokes. She underlined the importance of this aspect of feminist practice when she wrote:

As is the case with any oppressor group, for men to ally themselves with the oppressed, they must understand the power of their privilege and the privilege of their power, and self-consciously divest themselves of both. This requires the envisioning of a pedagogy that simultaneously articulates the possibilities for accomplishing freedom from power over us as well as freedom from our power over others (Lewis, 1993, p. 144).

However, as many social theorists and writers have pointed out, it is easy to remain insulated and blind from the position of privilege. Magda has touched on the difficulty for students of separating the notion of collective responsibility from guilt — an unproductive and disempowering response, not one that often leads to personal or social change, connection or intervention; but rather to avoidance, denial and withdrawal. How to effectively address men in the classroom in the context of feminist pedagogy is a continuing challenge.
Magda describes forms of resistance enacted by male students. These include denial of co-implication in social inequalities (p.148); conflation of the notion of collective responsibility with guilt (p.149); resistance to the language of feminist theory (p.163); and expression of feelings of threat and discomfort brought on by course readings and classroom discussion (p. 176). Magda asks what it is about the readings and discussion the causes these feelings. How do male students experience this discourse? She writes:

Sometimes they attempt to cope with their difficulties by seeking to be exempted from fulfilling the course requirements of a final paper which requires them to take up the theoretical concepts we had used during the term. They say things like: "I am not very good with words," "I don't understand the words and when I get to the end of the article I don't know what they've said," or even more pointedly, "these are not very good authors because the language they are using doesn't make sense to me, it's like they're not speaking English" (ibid., p. 163).

Feminist theory can be and often is written in difficult exclusionary and jargon-filled language. More than simply the language, however, Magda suggests that what the men are resisting is feminist meaning-making that forces them to think of themselves in uncomfortable ways. Asking the question — "where is my body in this text?" — we would have to acknowledge that, in the feminist text, men's bodies occupy an uncomfortable place.

Magda mentions instances of illumination for men in her classes, sometimes enacted as a willingness to listen; sometimes through brief acknowledgments such as "I had never thought of it in that way" (ibid., p. 162). Part of their difficulty, as Magda suggests, is that men's position at the advantaged side of gender relations does not raise contradictions within the hegemonic meaning system of patriarchy.
While Magda contends that men must acknowledge their positional privilege, how to mobilize this necessary component of the transformative process is discussed as an unresolved problem. Magda asks and asks again how this process can be engaged.

Magda’s insights go beyond much feminist theory that discusses male resistance as framed more within a materialist analysis of positional interests rather than within other sorts of explanations, such as resistance to a discourse that challenges the naturalness of received hegemonic meanings, or resistance to discourses that position men as the oppressor.

While resistance to feminist pedagogy is enacted by both females and males within the terms set by patriarchic meanings, Magda’s analysis of women’s resistance responses is much more detailed and empathic, incorporating an understanding of women’s primary relationships and emotional investments. Employing an analysis of material interests and relative power, Magda explores this resistance through the complex of desire/threat. Practices that can address forms of resistance to feminist meaning-making from both female and male positions pose a continuing challenge.

In a particularly ironic example of how hegemonic forms are acted in her classroom, Magda described women’s practice of care-giving towards men who might be feeling uncomfortable because of the discussion. In this case, Magda used the deconstructive tool of reversal to show up the lack of mutuality in gendered relations of care-giving and how the social organization of gender
positions women as care-givers "not only in economic/material relations but in emotional/psychological ones as well" (ibid., p. 161):

I asked them to think of instances when we might expect men to reciprocate for women the kind of care taking practices and ego support that women are expected to extend on behalf of men. Most specifically, I asked the women if they had ever been in the company of a male friend/partner/family member/stranger who, upon seeing our discomfort at the common display of misogyny in such examples as billboards, had ever offered support for how uncomfortable and violated such displays must make us feel. By asking students to focus on the personal, I felt that it might be possible to relocate the women and men in a social configuration that did not take a gendered hierarchy and its attendant practices for granted. Not only the women, but the men as well, admitted that they had never had such an experience. More to the point, there was general agreement that the possibility had never even occurred to them (ibid.).

Magda described the practice of speaking in ways that might empower female students and provide models for them. She described the aspect of teaching as dramatic performance and of recognizing key moments in discussions when students may be most receptive to challenges to their received ideas. Reversal of the terms of a taken-for-granted power relation, as in the example above, is an excellent tool for showing up unequal relations that masquerade as natural.

The practice of providing space and safety, especially for women, is taken seriously. Magda writes:

Women need space and safety so that they are free to speak in order to better understand and act against the violations they experience in a social/cultural setting that subordinates them in hurtful and violent ways. The consciousness around which men need to do hard work is the pain of their complicity in benefitting from the rewards of this same culture. I support men in doing this hard work. Personally, I would like to see more of them try. Those who have are good and welcome allies (ibid., p. 176).
This example highlights the difficult question posed by many instructors of how to engage those in privileged positions to acknowledge their privilege.

At the risk of re-enacting a care-giving posture, I ask if space and safety might be a necessary condition for all who undertake a curriculum and a practice that "are potentially seriously disruptive of students’ world views" (ibid., p. 149). In thinking of ways that might address the difficulties of engaging male students in an analysis of gender relations from the position of privilege, there may be suggestive approaches based on other forms of counterhegemonic pedagogy discussed in this study.

Discussion

In the context of the larger socially-transformative project, it would greatly promote the achievement of many feminist goals to have more men engaging in non-oppressive forms of masculinity. Addressing the gendered power relations by engaging with both terms might to some extent address the complex of desire/threat for women who experience feminist knowledge as a potential threat to primary relationships, by allowing them to imagine those relationships differently.

In many ways, Magda’s questions about addressing men in the feminist classroom begs the question of men’s place in feminism. To the extent that we understand feminist discourse as a counter-discourse articulated defiantly against patriarchy, and a place of strategizing and constructing new possibilities and self-definitions for women, there is certainly an irony in having to provide care and
safety for men encountering this discourse. Can we think of feminist discourse as a place of new self-definitions for women and men?

I am keenly aware of this dilemma, and as any feminist whose life intersects with a male partner, a son, brothers or other male relatives, my life is complicated by the everyday contradictions of how differently we live and experience gendered power relations, and how we continue to work at learning and unlearning power relations from our different positions. In terms of a socially transformative practice, one would have to ask how this practice addresses both the subordinated and the dominant terms of the needed transformation.

Returning once more to the discussion of feminist goals for women and the notions of autonomy and independent personhood in envisioning a future free of gender inequalities, feminist, critical and poststructural theory have offered abundant evidence of how gender is constructed relationally and oppositionally in Western culture and in language. Because gender is constructed relationally, and because subjects in any historical time or culture are always participants in various forms of social relations and arrangements, in forms of exchange and mutual dependency, I find the notions of autonomy and independent personhood immediately difficult to sustain.

Magda’s own analyses have highlighted the complex of desire/threat as a particular pit-fall for women appropriating feminist analyses. A possible direction is to conceive of feminist goals differently by acknowledging from the outset the inevitability of relationship while targeting the discourses, customs and practices
that re-inscribe subordinated/dominant positions as a needed place of intervention for all persons, regardless of gender position.

Postmodern strategies emphasize the local, the immediate and the partial as sites of disruption and intervention. Magda’s own practices offer some valuable models of how to accomplish this purpose. Her focus on discourse and particularly on women’s relationship to phallocentric discourses; her reinterpretation of women’s silence; and her attentiveness to classroom interactions that effect silencing and threats; her ability to understand clearly the dilemmas of feminist insights for women who are struggling to negotiate lives that have a modicum of safety and stability, are some of the ways her own practice acknowledges the inevitability of lives lived relationally.

As to pursuing the question of men’s place in the project of transformation towards gender equality and in relation to feminism, some of the visions and practices developed by others in this study could offer possible directions. I return to this discussion in the final chapter of the thesis.

Roger Simon

Roger Simon is a Professor in the Department of Curriculum at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), where he has taught since 1970, first with the Department of Educational Administration from 1970 - 1984, then with the Department of Curriculum from 1984 to the present. Roger earned his PH.D. in 1967 at Yale University in Administrative Science, after which he taught for three years in the Department of Psychology at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.
Roger’s work in education has been in the fields of critical and transformative pedagogy and cultural studies, with important emphasis on discourse theory and the notions of experience, agency, identity and difference. During the years 1982 - 1989, a major focus of Roger’s research and writing was the "Learning Work" project, in which he and Joel Weiss of OISE were principal investigators. This large-scale study investigated the world of work in relation to subjectivity and the production of experience. This period, and extending into the early 1990’s, was one of considerable collaborative work with Henry Giroux on popular culture, critical pedagogy and practice, and curriculum studies (Giroux and Simon, 1992; 1989; 1988a; 1988b; 1984).

This was also a time during which Roger continued to clarify his vision of what he has called a pedagogy of possibility, a vision of education "... rooted in a view of human freedom as the understanding of necessity and the transformation of necessity" (Simon, 1992, p. 57). Necessity in this context refers to taken-for-granted and unchallenged everyday notions of what must be in the conditions and visions within which people live their lives, such that freedom, human potential and compassionate justice are limited or foreclosed. The outlines of a pedagogy of possibility are discussed most fully in Roger’s collection of writings, *Teaching Against the Grain: Texts for a Pedagogy of Possibility* (Simon, 1992).

More recent writing shows an increasing integration of postmodern influences with sustained attention to subjectivity, discourse, the production of meaning and how postmodern insights provoke a rethinking of positions in pedagogy and practice. These considerations and questions are explored, for
example, in his article "Face To Face With Alterity: Postmodern Jewish Identity and the Eros of Pedagogy" (in Gallop, 1995; hereafter, "Face to Face"), where Roger examines the possibilities of teaching from a position of embodied difference while making evident the process of its constructedness.

An earlier and distinctly different instance of this focus on the implications for pedagogical practice of acknowledging positions in discourse is the 1986 article, co-authored with Magda Lewis, "A Discourse Not Intended For Her: Learning and Teaching Within Patriarchy" (Lewis and Simon, 1986, pp. 457-472; hereafter, "A Discourse").

In terms of the present study, what is of particular value in these two articles are Roger’s reflections as a teacher addressing the contradictions between how curriculum is conceived by the instructor and then engaged with and integrated/resisted by the students from their gendered (and other) positions. The unforeseen and often unseen, (because they pass largely unnoticed) everyday discursive practices that impose a curriculum of their own become part of this analysis. Questions of meaning and subjectivity, constructed in the process of cultural production in education, are addressed as Roger wrestles with dilemmas that arise when intentions prove inadequate to ensure equal access to texts and to predict possible meanings at the site of reception. Roger’s analyses often mark some of the limits of counterhegemonic practices, the dilemmas of the critical educator. He writes:

Thus while one may strive to develop an organization of classroom work that is for example, nonclassist, nonsexist, or nonracist, this by no means will eliminate the effects of capitalism, patriarchy or
colonialism from the classroom. That one is constantly being positioned within such relations while striving to stand outside them is often a great source of frustration and despair for those of us "trying transformations" in our everyday lives (Simon, 1992, p. 67).

In recent years, Roger's graduate courses have included courses on history, memory and commemoration; the languages of critique and possibility in Foucault and Bloch; implications for theorizing education in the writings of Michel Foucault; issues and problems in the practice of critical pedagogy; and curriculum, popular culture and social difference.

Always active in promoting opportunities for collaboration and community so often mentioned as valuable by all participants in this study, Roger helped to establish the Critical Pedagogy and Cultural Studies Forum at OISE in 1979 as a way of helping to bring together several separate but mutually-informing educational projects including feminist studies, critical studies, antiracist education and radical pedagogy. He continues to play a vital role in the Canadian Critical Pedagogy Association.

As to the term "critical pedagogy," Roger described it as one that was nearing the end of its usefulness; in danger of institutionalization, of having its meanings, terms, assumptions and practices fixed and reified (Simon, 1992, p. xvi):

I have continually tried to subvert the establishment of an orthodox notion of critical pedagogy. For me critical pedagogy is a useful term only to the extent it helps to bring together people who share enough in the way of political commitments and educational perspectives to be able to learn together, refine our vision, and support our diverse efforts as educators. The utility of the term "critical pedagogy" is its reference to an ongoing project and certainly not a prescriptive set of practices (ibid.).
More recently Roger wrote that the terms of choice, at least at OISE, are changing from critical to "transformative pedagogy" or "transformative learning" (R. Simon, personal communication, 8/96).

My first contact with Roger’s work was in 1990 when he presented a paper in the department of Social and Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia, and I registered an immediate recognition of theoretical frameworks with which I had been working that emphasize the importance of discourse, language and their relation to social power. In 1991, "A Discourse Not Intended for Her" was developing into a central text for my questions on counterhegemony, difference and pedagogy. The publication, in 1992, of *Teaching Against the Grain: Texts for a Pedagogy of Possibility* provided several essays that addressed these issues in a more comprehensive way, making Roger’s work in this area of key importance to this study.

When, in the Fall of 1994, I framed my questions to him in terms of this text, he expressed a difficulty re-engaging with it and my impression is that he is more involved in new directions at this time, with history and memory and directions in subjectivity and meaning signaled in "Face to Face with Alterm: Postmodern Jewish Identity and the Eros of Pedagogy" (In Gallop. (Ed.). 1995).

A strength of Roger’s perspectives on critical/transformative theory and practice is the integration of theoretical fields of discourse, subjectivity, cultural production and postmodern theory and how these bear on theories of pedagogy and practice. While his writing is visionary, inspiring and engaging, I have also found it abstract in many ways. What I have come to regard as a difficulty in
some of his more theoretical writing is the absence of definitions for particular key concepts which leads to confusing terms, some ambiguity and a vision that at times appears inconsistent. I note that Roger has described this collection as an "interim report" on his attempts to wrestle with questions on political vision and pedagogy (Simon, 1992, p. xvii). My response to this work takes seriously his stated wish that his work be relationally engaged. My critical reading acknowledges his decision to "tell new stories" even as he recognizes these as partial, unfinished, continuously open to critique and revision.

In addition, I concur with others who have found his writings on a "pedagogy of possibility" fairly abstract (for example, Ellsworth, 1989). For these reasons, Roger's writings can be frustrating for those looking for clear guidelines or concrete practical suggestions on critical or transformative teaching practices.

On practice, Roger has been adamant about the need to avoid its reduction to a collection of decontextualized strategies and techniques. He maintains that practices must never be abstracted from context. While his writings promise a vision of practice, clear guidelines are never drawn. The notion of practice is one that Roger either implies, exemplifies or frames as a question. This approach is consistent with a position that holds knowledge as partial and embodied:

I am striving to clarify the outlines of an educational practice based on the partial, situated, embodied (and therefore responsible) character of knowing and the hopeful ethos of a critical responsive imagination (Simon, 1992, p. 11).
Holding an awareness of the self as positioned knower, Roger exemplifies the practice of "putting oneself in the picture" as he discusses its significance and limits. Describing himself, Roger writes:

... What might it mean to put myself into the picture? An Askenazi Jew, white, male, 48-year-old, heterosexual, able-bodied, university professor and parent, born in New York, working and living in southern Ontario for the last twenty years - certainly such reductive categories will not do. ... More must be said, but without effacing what these categories do signal, the privilege and partiality of my position within the various interlocking relations of power that etch what Philip Corrigan has defined as "the figure of dominance"; the one who has been setting the terms of North American life for the last 300 years (ibid., p. 5).

Roger has warned repeatedly of the dangers of reifying practices. It is vital to understand practices as contextual, changing, moving. It is clearly in the interests of counterhegemonic projects to remain dynamic, creative, one-step-ahead of the processes of co-optation. For these reasons, the practices described here should never be considered more than suggestive and provisional approaches. For my own discussions of practice and resistance, I draw upon Roger's writings in which he reflects on contextualized examples, and I acknowledge here most emphatically the partiality of my own position.

I now move to discussions on my specific questions for this study, on social visions and their relationship to pedagogy; on subjectivity, student resistance and transformative practices.

Social Vision: Communities We Imagine

For a discussion of Roger Simon's unfolding vision of a social and political project, I draw primarily on Teaching Against the Grain: Texts for a Pedagogy of
Possibility (1992), and his articles "A Discourse Not Intended for Her" and "Face to Face with Alterity: Postmodern Jewish Identity and the Eros of Pedagogy." In addition to these and where relevant, I include dialogue from our brief conversations and e-mail exchanges over the period between June 1994 through September 1996.

Roger positions his work within the research literature of sociology of education of the past twenty years, which has characterized the agenda of schooling and knowledge production as a hegemonic struggle to impose a narrow set of valued and accepted forms (Simon, 1992). He writes that these restricted forms have limited the possible realizations of human capacities while advancing the interests of particular economic and social groups at the expense of others. The outcome for students has been a structuring of possibilities wherein relations of social inequality, based on gender, class, race, sexuality and ability are re-inscribed and reproduced. In his words:

Understanding schooling within such a frame means grasping the ways (complex and contradictory) in which forms of power and legitimation in schools structure a field of possibilities and regulate actual behaviors, including thought, speech, image, style, and action. In this process of regulation, particular identities, knowledge, interests, forms of sociality, needs, modes of embodiment, and expressivity are normalized and privileged. Those who either fail or refuse to acquire and display the required capacities are marked and mapped as simultaneously different and disadvantaged, executing a scarring and placing of bodies (frequently as acts of classism, racism and sexism) in reconstituted relations of social inequality (ibid., p. 10).

Beginning with the recognition of such structuring processes, Roger asks how a vision of pedagogy can be created that addresses the exclusions inherent in structuring processes; and one that also acts upon the social imaginary through
which people define what is both possible and desirable \( (ibid., \text{pp. 3-11}) \). As any pedagogy, this is a form of cultural production, one which aims to "enable people to alter the terms on which their lives are lived in favor of a life-sustaining, just and compassionate community" \( (ibid., \text{p. xviii}) \).

What are some of the elements of the political vision that sustains a "pedagogy of possibility?" How would they differ from those in the vision of what Roger has characterized as most North American educational practice, whose founding premise is that of the person as autonomous human being with multiple potential, operating within an open structure of opportunity and exercising freedom of choice \( (ibid., \text{p. 18}) \)?

Roger wrote that pedagogy is never neutral; it always carries with it a political vision \( (ibid., \text{p. 122}) \). The social and political project, the vision of the future sketched in his writings is both compelling and clearly unfinished — compelling because it draws on some of the most important areas of social theory in relation to social reproduction, including theories of discourse, subjectivity, and resistance; and unfinished, in part, because many central elements of the vision are unclear or undefined.

While Roger proposed a vision that is never finished, always in process, open to engagement from a multitude of positions, a collective and democratic venture \( (ibid., \text{p. 13}) \), I argue that some areas of indeterminacy in these texts sometimes result in confusion and leave them too open to interpretation. Problem areas for this reader involve the following notions: "human dignity," "freedom," "an expanded set of differentiated human capacities," and the notion of
"expanding the range of possible social identities that people can become" (ibid., p. 22).

I discuss these concepts now beginning with a passage that contextualizes several elements of this vision:

Taking the stance that human dignity is enhanced under the banner of freedom, I have been trying to develop a pedagogy that would support the endeavor of creating specific social forms that encourage and help make possible the realization of an expanded set of differentiated human capacities rather than denying, diluting, or distorting those capacities. This would be a practice devoted to enhancing possibility through enabling ways of understanding and acting that encourage the transformation of particular relations between social forms and human capacities and hence the expansion of the range of possible social identities people may become (ibid.).

In this passage and throughout this chapter, entitled "The Horizon of Possibility," Roger discusses forms that marginalize, differentiate and restrict along the lines of difference including class, race, gender and other categories. However the terms of the discussion are confusing. He writes of encouraging an "expansion" of a set of differentiated human capacities without problematizing the operations that effect exclusions along the lines of social difference. Without specifying what a "capacity" is, he writes of their being denied, diluted or distorted.

On the notion of "human capacities," while one can assume that Roger is referring to human capacities that are non-oppressive, he does not clarify what he means. It is well-known that not all human capacities serve the best interests of all members of any society. We know humans to have the capacity for violence,
abuse, fascism and so on. The notion of human capacities in these writings is never clearly defined and therefore remains open to question.

The term "human dignity," although repeated throughout his writings, is one that Roger never defines. As a notion central to the vision, this is an important omission. The term is one which Roger leaves as an open question in the following way:

What constitutes human dignity is of course a long-debated question within social philosophy and political theory. My purpose here will not be to review and discuss this debate but rather to sketch the ways in which I as an educator am trying to come to grips with the necessity for me to respond to this question (ibid., p. 17).

Rather than rely upon an unspoken agreement about the meaning of human dignity, I feel it would have been more useful to offer a brief statement of his position in relation to writings on human dignity that he considered compelling.

On "freedom," Roger wrote that it is "... not a state of being but an openness to a process of possibility" (ibid., p. 22). As a practice, freedom is not a passive state but an activity, a method, a mode of living as questioning and changing. Freedom does not lie in discovering or being able to determine who one is, but in rebelling against those ways in which we are already defined, categorized, classified (ibid., p. 23). However, the political implications of such rebellion can be very different depending on positions from which one acts. It needs to be clarified what kinds of definition, categorization and classification inhibit freedom and possibility. In any social context, these delimiting processes are a part of one's self and social intelligibility. As unavoidable elements in the process of enculturation and socialization, not all forms of restriction and shaping
of the self are undesirable. More than forms of self and group identification, they often serve important political purposes that are themselves empowering.

The concept of "freedom" in these texts involves some unresolved ambiguities for this reader. Roger has clearly distanced himself from a liberal humanist notion of freedom that assumes the autonomy of the individual within an open structure of possibility; yet, it is not clear what assumptions underpin his notion of freedom. What notion of freedom could be invoked based on a concept of human beings as unavoidably social, always becoming and developing relationally, always within social contexts, motivated by interests of larger groups as well as self? Following Roger, I quote Raymond Williams in this regard:

We are born into a social situation, into social relationships, into a family, all of which have formed what we can later abstract as ourselves, as individuals. Much of this formation occurs before we can be conscious of any individuality (Williams, 1989, p. 85-6).

An accident of birth, family, gender, skin color, religion, geography, history, the subject is always already embedded within relations of social power that pre-exist her/him. What might be explored in more depth when we consider internal constraints on freedom, such as individual consciousness and social imaginary, is the limiting factor of the self as historical subject, participating in what I will call communities of struggle. Understood in this way, the terms of one's social identity cannot easily be negotiated, discarded or abandoned, based as they are on self-definitions often articulated defiantly against dehumanizing discourses around differences of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and ability. For example, Liz Ellsworth described the speech of oppositional groups as a talking back, a
defiant speech constructed in communities of resistance as a condition of survival (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 310).

Social constructionist, postmodern and feminist theories of the subject affirm the constructedness and contingency of social identities; and often affirm the dangers and wrong-headedness of essentialist positions. They have also stressed the importance of not losing sight of the social dynamics that produce and entrench such positions; nor of the political purposes that essentialist positions often serve (For example, Fuss, 1991; Butler, 1992).

My reason for considering this aspect of social identity is to acknowledge how this configuration of subjectivity can of itself constitute limits to freedom, since resistance to dominant and hegemonic knowledge forms and constructions from marginal positions does not often promote equality of access to life possibilities, to social and discursive power nor to transformed knowledge.

Roger writes of a view of human freedom as the understanding of necessity and the transformation of necessity (Simon, 1992, p. 57). Considering possible conceptions of freedom that take account of existing structure of social inequality within a moral and ethical vision of human possibility, individual dignity and compassionate justice, what could this freedom look like?

Poststructural theory has emphasized that the constitution of the self takes place relationally. It has also provided insights into how one's structured position embodies a multitude of axes of power such that limits on the freedom of one position constitute the often unexamined privilege of another. Where those limits exist, freedom is diminished — not only for the person disadvantaged, but for all.
One reason is that if denial of freedom can occur at one point, no one can rest assured it won’t be denied at some other point or moment. Safe-guarding freedom means safe-guarding it for all. This notion of freedom must therefore extend beyond a notion of individual freedom to a collective notion — one struggled for collectively, always in process — that adopts a "critical and responsible attitude towards self-in-relation," mutuality and what Chandra Talpade Mohanty has called "co-implication" (Mohanty, 1990).

Operations of dominance/subordination are based on self/other definitions that are historically-specific, mutable, culture- and class-specific, diverse and non-essential, socially-constructed and, very importantly, relational. Social meanings of what constitutes female/male, black/white are often constructed oppositionally and hierarchically, in language and other signifying social systems. There are no neutral positions or identities within gender, race, sexuality, class — only contextualized, dynamic, particular and ongoing re-definitions and contestations of such positions.

While I support the value of a pedagogy that encourages an active imagination about how one might work and rework one’s positioning towards a vision of collective freedom and mutuality, a process of continual deconstruction and reconstruction of social meanings, it seems clear that this practice cannot be realized without encouraging a habit of attention to one’s co-implication in relations of power.

The restricting process Roger identifies cannot then be remedied by a process of expansion. I argue that transforming the relations between social forms
and human capacities means looking more critically at the immediate, local and contextual operations that bring about exclusions based on differences such as gender, race, class.

Roger envisions a practice that promotes freedom and enhances possibility through enabling ways of understanding and acting. It seems important to emphasize the operation of power as a relation and to address more emphatically how unexamined privilege can function to limit freedom; how we can embody privilege or dominance along particular axes of power, and often unknowingly perpetuate unequal relations. Beyond understanding this aspect of power as relation, it seems important to act in ways that disable such relations.

How does the embodiment of privileged positions function in educational settings to exert limits of its own? The issue of privilege and embodiment is examined to an extent in some of Roger’s writings, including, for example, "A Discourse" (Lewis and Simon, 1986). Roger also addresses the issue of co-implication to some extent at the level of theory when he writes about attempting "... to divest forms of power that unjustly limit others and understand one’s implication in the situation of another" (Simon, 1992, pp. 65-6). He describes it in terms of a moral imperative in "A Discourse" when, with Magda Lewis, he wrote:

Men need to embody forms that do not express and construct masculinity as defined in patriarchy....They must understand the power of their privilege and the privilege of their power, and self-consciously divest themselves of both (Lewis and Simon, 1986, p.470).

However the notion is not well integrated into the larger vision that advocates unproblematic expansion of the range of possible social identities
people can become, and that advocates the unqualified refusal of what we are. These proposals do not sufficiently or clearly address the premise of structured inequality, social reproduction and symbolic violence. They do not address the relational configuration of dominant/subordinated in relations of power, nor the creation of counter-discursive positions constructed in opposition to dominant ones.

Before relating these issues to Roger’s discussions on subjectivity, practice and resistance, I now briefly consider what he has identified as important supports and obstacles of transformative learning and teaching.

In the following passage, Roger addressed many of the difficulties of doing transformative work while outlining some needed forms of support:

Teachers embarking on such a pedagogy have to be prepared for a sizable investment of time and energy in an activity that will likely require battles for legitimation and be inherently conflictual. What then will enable teachers to sustain themselves in such work? What sorts of collegial association would help in this regard? How can support be given for one’s "private" life, not only as a source of replenishment and renewal but in full recognition that love, justice, compassion, and joy are required in numerous places? Then again, there are questions of what constitutes an adequate preparation for the initiation of such forms of teaching. What new competencies must be learned? What new sources of information and opportunities for study should teachers be encouraged to seek? What other experiences besides teaching might contribute to such pedagogies (Simon, 1992, p. 69)?

Collegial association, collaboration, communities of solidarity with shared commitments, are described as important supports by all the participants of this study. A clear message is that this is difficult work, and hard to undertake alone. More than what Roger has characterized as "teaching against the grain," these
forms of pedagogy pose a direct challenge to many existing frameworks and practices in education. For example, they challenge still-prevalent humanist practices that rely on the rational unitary subject and notions of knowledge as objective, impartial and universal. There will continue to be institutional struggles for legitimacy with this as with any emergent paradigm.

Transformative teaching and learning, as inherently conflictual and unsettling, frustrate secure notions of truth, certainty, consensus, community, self and self-in-relation to world. Such a pedagogy would rub many the wrong way. Roger describes transformative process in the following passage:

In other words, a pedagogy of possibility, if successful, will challenge its participants with processes of re-orientation, redefinition and revisioning. This challenge to go beyond one's existing knowledge and identities constitutes no small degree of risk; risk of failure, loss of coherence, rupture of existing relations with family and friends, social ridicule, colonization within new ideologies, and a feeling of disempowerment as old certainties are abandoned (ibid., p. 62).

Needed conditions to support such a project are described in some detail in Roger's chapter, entitled "Pedagogy as Political Practice." The conditions he identifies here are communicative openness, the recognition of partiality, and the sense of collective venture (ibid., pp. 55-75).

Communicative openness is a condition fostered by the sense of trust and respect in classrooms. Roger writes about the unavoidable risks and threats that accompany pedagogies of possibility. More than encounters with new and unfamiliar ways of naming and framing the world, these practices show up starkly the politics and refracted positions in relation to knowing and the mutual implications of such positions. Students and teacher move towards understanding
and using new modes of address and new ways of naming the world. Roger stresses the importance of trust and respect among participants as a way of supporting these collective efforts.

In allocating how classroom time and space is used and shared, the need for patience and mutual recognition, mutual support and a sense of collaborative struggle are important conditions to foster. In addition, Roger suggests opportunities for more private modes of self-expression to allow participants opportunities to process doubts, fears, and feelings which they do not feel they could express publicly.

The recognition of partiality refers to the acknowledgment that knowledge is constructed by knowers who are themselves positioned within relations of power that shape what can be known and what knowledge means. As such, knowledge claims must be based on a recognition of their partiality, embodiment and construction within relations of gender, race, class, age and so on.

Participants would need to be responsible and accountable for their truth claims. Because social positions, such as gender and race, are frequently constructed in mutual opposition, conflict and dissent are anticipated conditions in these classrooms. In discussions involving competing knowledge claims, Roger warned against the dual dangers of "political epistemological dogmatism" and cynical relativism (Simon, 1992, p. 64).

Where traditional pedagogies based on the values of individualism and competition have often assumed individual agendas in learning, pedagogies of possibility would proceed from partiality and responsibility for knowledge claims
towards a collective project or collaborative social vision. Roger writes that such a venture would entail understanding one’s implication in the situation of another, a relation of interdependence, the courage to admit ignorance and the commitment not to give up on each other.

Subjectivity: The Semiotic Subject

In the preface of Teaching Against the Grain, Roger asks the question: "What is my view of a 'person'?” (1992, p.xvii). This question underlines the importance for transformative educational projects of theories of the subject that examine the process of subject-formation because they offer important insights on social reproduction, identity formation and resistance. They indicate where possibilities for progressive social change might exist.

Roger stresses that all pedagogies are forms of cultural production which attempt to influence experience and its resulting forms of subjectivity. He writes:

As a mode of organizing and regulating symbolic productive practices, pedagogy attempts to influence the way meanings are absorbed, recognized, understood, accepted, confirmed, and connected as well as challenged, distorted, taken further, or dismissed. Indeed, the practical work of pedagogy is always grounded in the discursive regimes that structure the particular forms of representation (written texts, television programs, music, films, personal stories, experiential simulations) to be engaged and the different modes of engagement deemed desirable (ibid., p. 59).

Roger writes about the construction of the self in discourse is an unending process of negotiating and integrating or resisting positions available in many disparate, often contradictory sites. It is a semiotic interaction between outer and inner worlds through which we construct "how we know who we are and how
we know the world" (ibid.). The sum of available versions and stories in any
given time and place sets limits upon the social imaginary in terms of what is
perceived as possible or desirable. Roger offers an example of the variety and
disparity of possible sites of discursive engagement in the following passage:

"Thus, in the span of a day I might play my tape of Otis Redding
singing "Try a Little Tenderness," listen to a feminist radio program
on a public access radio station, teach a class in which we discuss
how different forms of masculinity are produced both in schools and
sports, discuss the relationship between Abraham, Sarah and Hagar
in my Torah discussion group, participate in a demonstration
protesting the portrayal of African history in historical exhibit at a
local museum, attend a weight control clinic, shop at the Eaton
Center, leaf through a copy of Playboy at the barber shop, play a
game of softball and then have a drink with "the guys," go to a local
theater to see Clint Eastwood do his version of "the sensitive male" in
Heartbreak Ridge, listen to a recording of Act 2 of La Traviata with my
wife, watch "The Bill Cosby Show" episode I taped on my VCR, and
then flake out at 2:00 A.M. watching Arnold Schwarzenegger in The
Terminator on the videotape my son rented earlier in the day (ibid., p.
44).

This lengthy list undoubtedly leaves out the minute and more subtle sites
of semiotic production, such as gestures, modes of speech and self-presentation
among those who enter one's sphere of perception; billboards, books, background
music, visual displays and architectural styles in public and private spaces.

The success of the attempt to fix meaning is not guaranteed, nor ever fully
or finally accomplished:

While employed as an endeavor to constitute the work of semiosis,
cultural technologies cannot inscribe or guarantee meaning. The
character of semiosis as a potentially open-ended and indeterminate
process prohibits any simple reduction of meaning to representation.
Thus from the perspective of cultural technologies, it is a vast
oversimplification to posit such sites as schools, cinema, architecture,
and forms of religious worship as prescripted arrangements that,
through their symbolic representations, serve and accomplish a particular set of social interests (ibid., p. 43).

Semiotic theory is important for pedagogies of possibility in explaining how meaning is refracted at the site of reception based on the multitude of positions in the classroom; and for identifying the opportunities for destabilizing hegemonic meanings, exploring the multiplicity of interpretations, thereby opening up possibilities for rethinking positions and collective visions. In constructing such visions, Roger emphasizes that they must remain open and indeterminate, "... rooted in the ethical/political vision that attempts to take people beyond the world they already know ... in a way that does not insist on a fixed set of altered meanings" (ibid., p. 47).

Roger affirms the importance of these local efforts, and of recognizing the potential that exists in the microcosm of the classroom for working against "the hegemony that constitutes our daily life options" (ibid., p. 39).

Resistance and Transformative Practices: Embodying Difference

Because Roger has insisted on considering practice in context, my discussions of practice and resistance will engage with his own contextualized examples. I begin by identifying the exemplary forms of practice particular to Roger's writings. I then move to Roger's published discussions of examples of practice and student resistance. In "A Discourse," I examine Roger's efforts to analyze discursive positions and relations of power in a graduate classroom, his reflections on how his own actions perpetuated the relations and to ask what might be done to transform them. In Roger's discussion, "Fear of Theory," I
engage his writing on an instance of student resistance to theoretical language. In both examples, I ask how examining power as a relation, which implies at least two terms, might facilitate the process of transformative learning and teaching.

On the question of practice, while there are frequent references to it throughout Roger's writing, they remain sketchy and abstract. Foregrounded in his writings is more of what I read as an attitude or disposition, a position with regard to practice that Roger describes theoretically and also exemplifies through particular forms and textual practices. These include his use of forms such as: the posing of questions; the affirming of one's partiality; the act of "putting oneself in the picture"; acknowledging the implications of one's position in structures of social power, and, as in his article "Face to Face with Alterity," the asserting and embodying of difference, while destabilizing its meanings. What might be the significance of these forms?

The posing of questions. For example, in the preface to Teaching Against the Grain, Roger wrote: "Does the partial perspective presented here help in fashioning educational practices that enable people to alter the terms on which their lives are lived in favor of a life-sustaining, just and compassionate community?" (Simon, 1992, p. xviii). A frequent feature in these writings, the question form invites reaction, response, an attitude of collaboration. As in the above passage, it frames a vision that is not fixed, that can undergo collective revisioning.

The affirming of one's partiality. Also a repeated form in Roger's writings, he qualifies this as a "self-critical partiality" that implies responsibility "... that one
hold open for assessment those practices which generate one's claim to knowledge" (ibid., p. 16).

Expanding on the notion of responsibility for knowledge claims, Roger wrote:

Committed to a radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims including its own, a pedagogy of possibility cannot be allowed to degenerate into either a political epistemological dogmatism nor the cynical relativity that characterizes some forms of postmodern social constructivism. Rather, such a pedagogy calls on those who participate within it to be responsible and accountable for their truth claims (ibid., p. 64).

*The act of "putting myself in the picture."* This practice is consistent with the assumption that subjects and knowing are partial, in process, situated and embodied; and is intended to "....stress the seriousness with which I desire my writing to be relationally engaged" (ibid., p. 5).

The assertion and embodiment of difference. Roger has described this practice in his recent writing on postmodern Jewish identity. He described the practice as a means of exploring the "difference that difference makes in the pedagogical encounter," of disrupting normality and as a way to "interrogate what can be known beyond that which is taken to constitute the other" (Simon, in Gallop, 1995). Teaching from a position of difference, what Roger calls "teaching as a Jew," involves destabilizing both normalized categories of difference and the assumption of a universal episteme. It also involves continuous deconstruction of notions of identity and difference by making visible the constructedness of one's own identity (ibid.).
Acknowledging the implications of one's position in social power relations. A contextualized example of this practice is discussed in what I now offer as a critical reading of the article "A Discourse," with particular attention to notions of co-implication and practice.

In a very self-reflexive and self-questioning mode, Roger wrote about his experiences as instructor of a mixed-gender graduate seminar. The course agenda was an analysis of texts that addressed language and power. Roger wrote that his own agenda includes empowering all students by making available theoretical perspectives (Lewis and Simon, 1986, p.467). However, in this case, the established social and discursive forms of the graduate seminar in combination with particular course readings ironically had the effect of silencing the women students.

Roger described his responses to what had become a clear problem of male students monopolizing the speaking time. He discussed this problem with small groups of students after class on several occasions to try to come up with ideas for how to address the problem. He also resorted to acting as gate-keeper in class discussions, trying to make room in discussions for women, as well as to elicit their participation. He wrote:

I held to the steady but not very successful path of "space-making": asking for comments from those women who had not yet spoken, repositioning myself at the table so that I could see most of the women and perhaps through eye contact and body language encourage their entry into the conversation, noticing when a woman did try to speak, and cutting off those men who had been speaking most often (Simon; in Lewis and Simon, 1986, p. 461).
However, this tactic did not work. Roger wrote that he did not recognize, except retrospectively, that the women considered that classroom to be an unsafe place to speak. With no apparent further intervention on Roger’s part, the situation reached a crisis at which time the women collectively addressed the men, and some improvements resulted.

Attempting to understand the conditions that had created such a problematic experience for the women, Roger addressed the issue of theoretical language:

As we began the discussion of Reading the Romance, the majority of male students in the class and I defined the issues raised within the text in an abstract and distanced language. In my authoritative position as instructor I validated and legitimated this "preferred" theoretical discourse insofar as I encouraged it and - more important - participated in it. Through this very particular and academic form of homosociality, we simultaneously excluded and silenced the women sitting among us (ibid., p. 464).

Roger explained that the women were certainly able to participate in theoretical discussions but that their relationship to the text, as women, made the abstract mode of discussion not an option. Roger explained what appeared to be for him an impossible dilemma: how to maintain his agenda for graduate coursework and content while making such a program available to all students equally. He wrote:

My agenda is most simply described as the systematic discussion of an assigned set of readings (supplemented by lectures and assignments) examining various aspects of the relation between language and power. I have long felt that an important purpose of graduate teaching is to empower students through the development of the practical competence that is inherent in theorizing. Theorizing has meant to me exploring ways of comprehending and thinking about situations. What I had to offer was the possibility of a
discourse which might clarify and critique existing educational practices and create new possibilities. How this agenda is to be accomplished so that it might work to empower all our students remains a central teaching problem (ibid., p. 467).

While Roger's reflexivity and self-critique are valuable, the article really offers no new ways of thinking through his dilemmas. How to engage men in an acknowledgment of their privilege and reflection on the many social forms through which they enact it unthinkingly, is an unanswered question. What could have happened differently in that classroom, or how such a discussion might have been engaged, are questions not posed except in abstract or ideal terms. One concrete suggestion was that men should listen, but there is no mention of Roger making this suggestion at the time.

The article ended with a series of injunctions, such as "... teachers and students must find new forms": "... teachers must ask how ..."); "It is necessary for those men ..."); "men have to resist ..." (ibid., p. 469). The questions of how these qualities or conditions can be accomplished remains unanswered here.

More an illustration of the limits of practice in relation to established positions within a power relation, "A Discourse" succeeds in some measure by naming the problem, explaining the dilemmas, acknowledging the implications of positions and asking the questions of what can be done. What it does not accomplish is a contextualized rethinking of positions and actions that might disrupt relations of dominance/subordination.

As to considerations of student resistance, when, in the summer of 1993, I initially asked Roger about student resistance in his classroom, he directed me to
his writings on what he has called students' "fear of theory" (Simon, 1992, pp. 79-100). In writing about this form of resistance, Roger hastened to distinguish it from either laziness or anti-intellectualism on the part of students. His observation has been that students who resist theoretical discourse are frequently those most marginalized, "who have had to struggle for acceptance and recognition within the dominant institutions that define the terrain of everyday life" (ibid., p. 82): "These are students whose lives have been lived within the prescriptive and marginalizing effects of power inscribed in relations of class, gender, ethnicity, race and sexual preference" (ibid.).

Roger described his observation of the most common behavior associated with this reaction as silence; another reaction is anger in the form of an attack on "deliberately marginalizing obscurantist 'jargon' " (Simon, 1992, p. 83). A third reaction is a hesitant, apologetic tentativeness when engaging in theoretical discussion. A fourth reaction, one most often expressed privately, is the fear that one may be discovered as an imposter, that one may be unmasked because one does not belong in graduate school (ibid., pp. 84-85).

As a teacher who is convinced of the liberating power of theory and its potential importance and usefulness for students, Roger has attempted to both understand and address these fairly persistent forms of resistance. One explanation for resistance is to understand theoretical writing as a form of discourse that disrupts students' sense of who they are. It is a form that students can perceive as unmistakably linked to operations of power/knowledge, the language of the expert, the colonizer, the dominant. Roger suggests that for
students to really integrate this discourse can constitute a threat, for example, of being rejected or alienated from their original communities of support:

The students in my classes who have spoken and written about this most clearly are ethnic working-class women and men who are the first in their families to "make it out" and who sense that graduate study and the discourse of professional achievement is making them "Other" to the very groups to which a portion of one's fragmented self is tied (ibid., pp. 86-7).

Beyond attempts to understand or theorize student fear of theory, Roger asks what practices might be consistent with the goals of "a nonexclusionary, nonviolent pedagogy within which new and unfamiliar discourses can be addressed and assessed" (ibid., p.94). Without ever spelling out a strategy, Roger indicates a possible direction for addressing such resistant moments. He suggests that "both teacher and students overtly acknowledge their objective situatedness in a set of relations fully implicated in the production of knowledge":

... Teachers would have to be prepared to examine together with their students how a particular configuration of pedagogic forms, group and institutional structures, and personal histories and capabilities may be forming a dynamic of threat and exclusion (ibid., p. 96).

Further, Roger advocates a dialogic pedagogy that relies on a mutual acknowledgment of structured resistances, and a joint project of instructor and student helping each other to the knowledge "of what it is that resists in the other." He explains: "This knowledge is not in the teacher; it cannot be given. It is only to be acquired in the conversation between the teacher and students as co-investigators of each other's resistances" (ibid., p. 97).
This practice is hard to imagine and perhaps overly idealistic in the sense that, if students or teachers were to act in bad faith, the practice could certainly back-fire and be used to undermine any authority the other might have. In addition, it assumes that one’s positions, desires, motivations and responses are transparent to oneself or open to unerringly accurate interpretation by another.

While pointing out potential pit-falls of this proposed practice, I wish to acknowledge what I consider of value here: the positioning of teacher as learner and learner as teacher, both engaged in a collaborative project, both acknowledging the limits of their knowledge and interrogating their resistances to knowledge.

To make transformative practices intelligible, I think the explicit introduction to students of theories of discourse that frame such a pedagogical encounter would be very useful. I contend that such theory can be presented in ways that are widely accessible, although what may be required in certain instances is some prior translation from theoretical to plainer language.

More importantly, while Roger addresses this resistance in terms of the possible disjunctures for students between their sense of who they are and the language of theory, he focuses on their marginalized identities, the subordinate term in the power relation. It might be equally important to look to what in the language of the theoretical text marginalizes. Attention to the dominant term might help reveal what is not neutral or innocent in its construction.

The language of theory has been frequently criticized as exclusionary based on many characteristic forms: the assumption of an objective, autonomous and
universal knower, an a-positional knower; the use of the exclusionary language of
the expert, jargon-filled and pompous-sounding. These common characteristics
of theoretical language could first be acknowledged.

To engage students in such texts, there might be effective ways - such as
engaging students' own interests and pointing to texts that offer a particularly
relevant analysis, thereby engaging students' own agendas in knowing. Another
suggestion, one that could lead to very revealing and possibly hilarious results, is
to assign students the task of translating passages of theoretical texts to plain
language.

An analysis of both terms of the power dynamic might help educators
approach differently this problem of resistance. I concur with Roger that dialogue
between positions is needed to achieve such awareness. Uncovering and
acknowledging the forms that provoke resistance from marginal positions would
seem to a necessary step towards imagining and enacting new forms towards
transformed relations of power.

Discussion

Interestingly, in my reading of the two contextualized examples above, on
practice and resistance, I have turned my attention to focus upon the dominant
term in the power relation. In "Fear of Theory," Roger's attention is directed to
what resists in the student rather than what, in the language of theory,

5 For example, my own use of the term "counterhegemonic" has been the focus of
many resistant reactions both from colleagues who understand its usefulness as well as
those outside the academic world who are unfamiliar with it.
marginalizes. In "A Discourse," Roger described his efforts to understand the operations that silenced women in his classroom, yet apparently never addressed the actions of the men that perpetuated the established power dynamic that enabled them to dominate.

When I asked Roger more recently about forms of student resistance from the position of privilege, in the sense of resisting the notion of co-implication, he replied:

I honestly haven't had much recent experience with resistance from positions of privilege. Since I've just been teaching graduate courses that relate to history and memory, social theory, popular culture and language....all clearly from "transformative" perspectives....and there are so many graduate studies at OISE interested in and committed to "transformative" concerns ... the classes fill up with people who don't bring that kind of skepticism into my courses. The resistance I still experience is mainly to kinds of theorizing ... particularly that which seems abstract and in language a student is not familiar with (personal communication, 8/96).

It is possible that transformative pedagogies over the last decade have undergone a development such that their terms and practices have become more familiar territory for students at least at the graduate level.

Beverly Daniel Tatum

Beverly Daniel Tatum is a Professor in the department of Psychology and Education at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, where she has taught since 1989. Her research areas include racial identity development; the experiences of Black youth and families in White communities and the psychology of racism. Of particular interest for this study is Beverly's increasingly important emphasis on teaching about racism, and most importantly, her work on the
process of teaching about oppression-related issues in ways that address student reactions and forms of resistance. The practices and insights she has developed in teaching about racism for the past sixteen years are integrated into all the courses she presently teaches.

Beverly earned her Ph.D. in Psychology in 1984 at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor. As a dissertation fellow in 1980-1, she taught in the Department of Black Studies at the University of California - Santa Barbara. It was at this time that Beverly first developed and offered her course on the Psychology of Racism, which, at that time, was called "Group Exploration of Racism." Beverly remained at the UC - Santa Barbara until 1983 as a lecturer in the Department of Black Studies. From 1983 to 1989 she taught in the Department of Psychology at Westfield State College in Massachusetts, where she continued to develop and teach her course on the Psychology of Racism.

Aside from teaching, Beverly has extensive experience in group facilitation as a clinical and counseling psychologist. In independent practice since 1988, she currently offers consultations and training on issues of oppression and multicultural organizational development.

Recent publications include articles "Knowing your Students" (In M. Adams, L. Bell & P. Griffin (Eds.), Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook for Teachers and Trainers. In press); and "White educators as allies: moving from awareness to action" (In M. Fine, L. Weiss, L. Powell & M. Wong (Eds.), Off/white: Readings on society, race and culture. In press).
Beverly's work first came to my attention in 1992 through her article in the *Harvard Educational Review* entitled, "Talking About Race, Learning About Racism: The Application of Racial Identity Development Theory in the Classroom." This article offered important insights on counterhegemonic teaching as Beverly discussed her experiences with student resistance to learning about racism and other issues of oppression. Drawing on thematic analysis of student journals and essays as well as her own observations and experiences of teaching, Beverly offered a framework for understanding student reactions and offered many suggestions for addressing them.

As she points out, failure to address the students' emotional responses and resistance can undermine the transformative potential of this learning. Her suggestions include explicit working assumptions, guidelines for classroom discussions and attention to the classroom conditions that help to create a safe place to talk about what she has found to be a taboo topic. Beverly has managed the difficult accomplishment of offering a course which, due to the subject matter, often involves painful feelings for participants; and which has been steadily popular and much valued according to student feedback and course evaluations.

Her *Harvard Educational Review* article has been a very influential one and Beverly continues to hear a great deal about it from students and educators who consider it a valuable resource. For my discussions, I draw upon this and a related article, called "Teaching White Students about Racism: The Search for White Allies and the Restoration of Hope" (Tatum, in *Teachers College Record*,...
1994). I also rely heavily upon Beverly's audiotaped responses to the questions I posed for this study.

In her work, Beverly writes about "interrupting the cycle of oppression," consciously and intentionally speaking and acting against racism and other forms of oppression. She emphasizes the importance of "self-generated knowledge," of increasing one's awareness of instances of racism through first-hand experiences. She encourages students to consider how they can effect change from their own positions and within their particular "spheres of influence" (Tatum, 1992).

Besides her published work, Beverly is a frequent presenter at conferences. The 1995 American Educational Research Association conference in San Francisco provided an opportunity for a meeting during which we discussed her work and her participation in my study. Her communication style in speech, as in writing, is clear, forthright and jargon-free; and also friendly and engaging, a mode that facilitates discussion of difficult and taboo topics in non-threatening ways.

Among the participants in this study, Beverly stands alone in her treatment of the topic of oppression from the position of clinical psychologist whose extensive experience in group work has made her a keen observer, attentive to the emotional component of socially-transformative learning processes. The insights and experiences she continues to make available through her articles and presentations are a valuable resource for others who share a commitment to socially-transformative work.

In this study, I asked participants to discuss their work in the context of a larger social vision and a theoretical frame-work that outlines notions of human
beings, society and possibilities for transformation towards greater social justice and equity. I move now to these questions.

**Social Vision: Interrupting the Cycle**

Reflecting on how her work is part of a larger social and political project, Beverly spoke about doing much of her work alone, inventing it as she went (B. Tatum, personal communication, 2/96). Even though one of her research areas is the development of racial identity, teaching about racism is not work that she consciously chose:

... I began teaching about racism quite fortuitously. In 1980, while I was a part-time lecturer in the Black Studies department of a large public university, I was invited to teach a course called Group Exploration of Racism. A requirement for Black studies majors, the course had to be offered, yet the instructor who regularly taught the course was no longer affiliated with the institution. Armed with a folder full of hand-outs, old syllabi that the previous instructor left behind, a copy of *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-racism Training* (Katz, 1978), and my own clinical skills as a group facilitator, I constructed a course that seemed to meet the goals already outlined in the course catalogue (Tatum, 1992, p.2).

After recognizing how much students valued the course, Beverly decided to continue teaching it, introducing it to new educational settings at Westfield State and Mount Holyoke Colleges. Over time, teaching the course became "a personal condition of employment" (*ibid*.).

The continual development and refinement of this course grew out of a commitment to continue a form of learning and development that students particularly valued:

I was convinced that helping students understand the ways in which racism operates in their own lives, and what they could do about it, was a social responsibility I should accept (*ibid*.).
In response to my question about how she envisioned her work as part of a larger project, Beverly discussed it in the following way:

... I like to think of the work that I do as one way of interrupting the cycle of oppression. I think the cycle is well in place, whether we're talking about racism or sexism or homophobia or anti-Semitism or classism or ableism or whatever the -isms or forms of oppression that we are investigating — they're well in place and continually perpetuated by the institutions and cultural dimensions of our society. I think ... that it is not inevitable that our society operate the way that it does. However, we have to be quite intentional about interrupting it (B. Tatum, personal communication, 2/96).

She articulated her vision simply as one that incorporates equity and fairness on both the symbolic and material levels:

It's hard for me to say what my vision of the future is in the sense that what I'd like to see is not what I think is likely to happen. But what I'd like to see is a society which is equitable and fair to all people regardless of their background, in which everyone has enough. I think we live in a society where a lot of people have more than they need and many people don't have what they need, and I would like to see that change. I think that what that requires is for those who have too much to give some of it up, and to respond to the needs of those who don't have enough. I do not see our society headed in that direction ....but that is the vision that I would like to see (ibid.).

What Beverly stated as the most important goal of her teaching is to offer students information and the opportunity to integrate insights that will remain with them for years to come; to help them be more critical of what they encounter in the culture and the mass media, and to speak and act in ways that interrupt the cycle of oppression in their own spheres of influence. She asks:

... Most importantly, in my view, what can you do about it (the cycle of oppression), very practically? Who are you? What is your sphere of influence in the world? How can you use that to interrupt this cycle? If you are a teacher, what does that mean about what you should be teaching? If you are a president of a student organization,
what does that mean about how your student organization functions? If you are a parent, what does that mean about how you should parent your children, what books you choose, what you watch or don’t watch on television, how you talk to them about issues of justice and equity? Where do you do your banking? All kinds of things (ibid.).

A particular difficulty in doing this work has been understanding how to engage people in examining what are uncomfortable and often painful topics. Beverly writes about how difficult it is to engage people in talking about and addressing painful subjects, and particularly so, if they feel helpless to effect change. Part of the challenge in her teaching has been to find a balance between maintaining a level of tension and discomfort that allows students to understand and unlearn the lessons of racism, while avoiding a level at which students are overwhelmed and withdraw.

Framing of her work within a larger social vision, it is clear that Beverly’s work on racism has proceeded from direct teaching experiences and from training and skills in group facilitation — more from practice than from theory. Implicit in her practices are certain assumptions which I now explore.

Racism, like other systems of advantage, is well established and continually perpetuated through the socialization of individuals; through social institutions and mass media representations over which dominant groups exercise greater power. This system implicates all who are socialized within it, both dominant and subordinated. While not to blame for creating this system, individuals are responsible for actively promoting change.
Beverly's work assumes that identities shaped by racist socialization are socially constructed and can therefore be deconstructed, that racist learning can be unlearned. Her own work focuses on educational contexts as important sites of intervention and interruption. Because this work challenges established systems of differential power and privilege, I asked Beverly about what obstacles and what forms of support she has encountered in doing this work.

Beverly described the most significant support for her work as very positive student feed-back and personal satisfaction that the work gives her. Positive student feed-back was initially a surprise for Beverly. In her words: "It was real clear that students were being moved in ways that were very important to them and were very gratifying to me as an instructor" (B. Tatum, personal communication, 2/96). Beverly's course on anti-racism has been consistently popular and she described "...a clear hunger on the part of students to have an opportunity to talk in a safe space about issues related to race" (ibid.).

Other conditions that support the work have included institutional cooperation in the form of complying with Beverly's requests to structure the course in particular ways:

The course was always very well received and while I often felt that, you know, if I weren't teaching it nobody else would be teaching it — I didn't necessarily feel at Westfield that I had colleagues who were eager to teach it themselves — there were never any barriers to me teaching it. I was able to choose the time and the place, set the class enrolment at the size that I wanted. I had a lot of support in that way. And again, it was a very positive experience. At Mt. Holyoke it has continued to be a very positive experience (ibid.).
One factor that Beverly considers a very important personal support is her collaboration in recent years with colleague, Andrea Ayvazian, who also leads workshops on anti-racism:

... Being able to talk to her about the challenges and setbacks and the tediousness sometimes or the burn-out potential — all those things. Being able to talk to her about the dilemmas associated with teaching the class is really important and makes a big difference in terms of longevity. ... It's hard work to do alone (ibid.).

Considering the obstacles in doing this work, Beverly has written about the taboo nature of the topic of racism in her *Harvard Educational Review* article. Part of the socialization process in our society is a silence about racism, particularly in racially mixed settings. As already mentioned, Beverly reported that for most students this course represented the first opportunity they'd had to discuss racism in a safe setting. The force of the taboo is one of the first obstacles to overcome:

The first source of resistance, race as a taboo topic, is an essential obstacle to overcome if class discussion is to begin at all. Although many students are interested in the topic, they are often most interested in hearing other people talk about it, afraid to break the taboo themselves (Tatum, 1992, p. 5).

Another aspect of this taboo is demonstrated by Beverly's experiences with colleagues who wonder how she has managed to teach such a controversial course. Evidently significant obstacles would be anticipated:

Sometimes I've been asked by graduate students or other faculty "How'd you get to teach that course?" and I've always been a little surprised by the question because it's never been an issue for me. I simply said I wanted to teach it and that's what happened. I do know from other people's experiences that, you know, there are some campuses where teaching a course on racism would be seen as controversial or somehow an unpopular or perhaps dangerous thing to do, perhaps as an untenured faculty member, but that was never my experience (B. Tatum, personal communication, 2/96).
Personal obstacles are constituted by the very heaviness and seriousness of the work, and Beverly spoke about feeling exhausted, about feeling that there was too much to do and sometimes feeling inadequate to the task. She spoke about the importance of finding ways to overcome these kinds of obstacles because "... this is work for the long haul."

Beverly's observations and experiences in teaching about racism provoke further questions about her notion of human beings and human nature, the process of identity formation and the place of teaching as an key site of intervention in established systems of advantage.

Subjectivity: The Altruistic Subject

Notions of subjectivity, theories of the subject, or notions of human beings have been of particular interest for this study since they help frame explanations of the reproduction of social inequality, of resistance and the possibilities for change or transformation. The theoretical frameworks that support Beverly's work are largely implicit; theory proceeds from practice. My own questions and framing of this project draw heavily on feminist poststructural theory to which Beverly reacted by saying "I really hate postmodern jargon" (personal communication 2/96). When questioned further on this response, however, she was clear that it was the language of postmodern theory and not necessarily the concepts to which she objected.

Like others participating in this study, including myself, Beverly shows a fair eclecticism in the theoretical frameworks she employs. There are areas of tension and possible contradiction. For example, although she described her
operative theory of a human being in terms that were humanistic, as I understand her work and her reflections, I note significant correspondences with poststructural frameworks as well as areas of contradiction with humanist ones.

Beverly described her understanding of human nature and human beings in terms derived from Psychology and social theory as well as spiritual or religious belief systems. She began her discussion by using the notion of human beings developed by psychologist, Carl Rogers:

... He thought of people as being basically good, who have a desire to self-actualize, to seek opportunities to learn and grow and unless they're in a damaging environment, they will try to move forward in that way (B. Tatum, personal communication, 2/96).

Without elaborating on what a damaging environment might be, Beverly went on to discuss the process of socialization in American society as one that leads to what she described as selfishness and fearfulness:

I think that we are socialized in ways that lead us to behave selfishly ... that we develop files in our heads about other people, the Other so to speak. Some people would argue that, you know, it's natural to be fearful of the Other, and maybe it is. But I don't think it's inevitable. I think it is certainly possible to welcome the stranger. I think it is possible to be a loving presence in the world. I think it is possible to care for yourself and other people without exploiting other people (ibid.).

Explaining how personal religious and spiritual concepts enter into her thinking on human nature, she said that she considers human beings to be innately good, with free will, the freedom to do good or to choose not to do it.

Considering possible contradictions between this notion of a human being and her observations of people, especially through her work on anti-racism, Beverly was emphatic that there were contradictions:
Are there contradictions? Certainly! People are self-centered. There’s no question about that ... It’s also quite clear to me that students repeatedly take positions, not always knowingly or not always consciously, take positions where they clearly are seeking to maintain their advantage, to defend their advantage. Now, you know, if I believe that people are basically born good, that we have altruism that’s not dead, that it’s possible to think about acting in ways that are not completely self-centered ... how then do I justify or explain the ways people systematically defend their advantage (ibid.)?

If, for example, people are fundamentally good, how is it that they are so prone to perpetuating social injustices? If they are free to choose justice, why do they systematically defend their advantage, even at the expense of others? Why, for example, is it necessary for people to learn about issues of oppression? Why is racism such a taboo topic? Why, as Beverly maintains, do White students have "so little exposure to White people who will stand up and talk about issues of race in an open and honest and interrupting way" (ibid)?

These difficult questions are explored in many ways in Beverly’s articles. Drawing on students’ journal entries and essays written for the course, Beverly discusses, for example, the feelings of conflict that students report when they initially attempt to adopt anti-racist positions, how they worry about being disloyal to family, friends and other support communities. Examining old behaviors and positions can force painful and disorienting shifts in how one perceive oneself, past and present, and the social worlds in which one participates. Students confront alienation from former communities and self-identities.

The taboo on racism that is part of American socialization comes up again and again, in the code of silence about racism, in the absence of models for anti-
racist White identity, in the fear about confronting old attitudes and behavior, or 
the fear of integrating new perspectives, all of which leave students feeling 
helpless to effect change and contribute to the social reproduction of racism.

An essential part of Beverly’s course is to facilitate students’ understandings 
of how they can speak and act in new ways, and to encourage their practice of 
acting in ways that undermine racism and other forms of oppression.

She writes about human beings as simultaneously occupying multiple 
positions in systems of advantage based on the social categories of class, race, 
gender, sexuality and ability. She both models and teaches about using these 
positions in context as opportunities to deconstruct relative advantage and 
disadvantage from both dominant and subordinated positions:

I do talk about multiple identities a lot and I talk about the fact that 
we are both targeted and dominant at the same time; and that in 
those places where we are most focused on our dominant identity, 
we need to be allies to those who are targeted in those areas. And in 
places where we are most targeted, where we feel most targeted —
for example, in my own case, around issues of race and gender —
then it becomes important to find ways to feel empowered and to 
unlearn the internalized oppression (personal communication, 2/96).

As I consider Beverly’s discussions, it strikes me that her analyses and 
practices combine elements of humanist and postmodern frameworks. Her 
attention to the structuring of social identity through the discourses of the family 
and other communities of support and through the larger cultural discourses in 
the mass media is consistent with the social construction of the self and the 
postmodern attention to the many competing discursive sites of subject-
construction.
She also affirms the fundamental goodness of human beings; suggests that they possess an "altruism that is not dead"; describes what she encounters in students as a "clear hunger" for information about forms of oppression and her perception that students feel liberated by it (personal communication). If this type of information is unavailable, mystified and overridden by messages and representations received during socialization, what accounts for this prior altruism?

Beverly's discussion of the multiple positions of social subjects, and her attention to offering new and empowering subject positions sounds closer to postmodern versions of fragmented and sometimes contradictory selves. Her emphasis on the importance of the affective processes in this kind of learning, and how they can impact cognitive or rational processes is more consistent with a postmodern version of subjects operating from affective and rational, conscious and unconscious levels.

Also important, as in the writings of the other participants, the focus of this work is embodied subjects, who consciously and unconsciously act out the internalized relations of power through their positions in existing relations of race, gender and class. Postmodern conceptions of power do not conceive of power lying only somewhere outside of embodied subjects; but also existing within and through subjects insofar as its relations are internalized, embodied and re-enacted — the subject as vehicle of power.

Postmodern forms of resistance to power point to the local and particular as possible sites for disruption. Rather than addressing the larger sites of
intervention at the level of structures, institutions, in law or policy, Beverly's teaching addresses human consciousness. From their local, particular and contextualized positions, or "spheres of influence," students are encouraged to enact forms of resistance to racist relations of power. I move now to considerations of actual practices and forms of student resistance.

Resistance and Transformative Practices: Agents of Change

My questions to participants on practices and resistance were aimed at identifying what forms of resistance students enacted to teaching that undermined hegemonic meanings and what specific practices participants used in context. I also wanted to explore how participants engaged with the politics of voice, identity and positionality, recognizing that each of us occupies a multitude of positions simultaneously, and recognizing the possibilities and dangers of essentializing positions.

Beverly began her discussion on practice by describing the way she begins her course with an introduction of herself in which she identifies her own positions. In doing this, she takes care to avoid notions of universalizing and essentialized identity.

I talk about myself as African-American, as a woman, as heterosexual, as someone who grew up in a middle-class background, as someone who is able-bodied, as someone who is Christian, as someone who is 41-years old ... So I talk about who I am and where I'm from. I do that in the first class and I encourage students to do that themselves. And I understand that and I try to help my students understand that my experience as a Black woman is not a universal experience. You know, I grew up in a small town in New England and that is a legitimate experience. It's not an urban experience. It's not a Southern experience. It's not a poor experience (B. Tatum, personal communication 2/96).
In order to include marginalized positions or perspectives not present in the class, Beverly uses readings, videos and guest speakers. While she does exercise some control in selecting and framing their positions in discussions, these perspectives speak for themselves.

Considering my comment that multiple identities can be conflicting and contradictory, Beverly responded by saying that, in her experience and in her observations of how students behave, the situation one finds oneself in will often determine which identity is most salient and the position from which one acts:

I mean, it is contradictory to think of oneself as dominant on one hand and targeted on the other, but in particular situations I usually find myself connecting to the situation in one category or another ....you know wearing a particular hat so to speak. And so when I'm focused on this aspect of my identity versus that aspect of my identity, I don't see it as a conflict (ibid.).

She added that one could never predict which identity is going to be most salient for someone. In her work-shops where students often gather in affinity or caucus groups around particular identities, she noted that students will often choose issues of class as being more salient than issues of race, gender or sexuality, for example; and that this decision takes place in the context of a campus where many students are affluent. Perhaps not surprisingly in an anti-racism work-shop, she notices that White students will choose something other than being White:

... I also want to say that often White students will try to choose something besides being White, because they're so uncomfortable with their whiteness, and that I think is a developmental challenge that we have to help students work through (ibid.).

Aside from feelings of discomfort, I wonder if it is not more common to find subordinated positions more salient since they stand out as being different,
deviant or marginal. Where one’s position is in alignment with dominant meaning systems, there is no dissonance or difference to notice.

One marginal or deviant perspective that Beverly finds noticeably unavailable is that of anti-racist White position. In her writing and presentations, Beverly has repeatedly emphasized the importance for White students of having anti-racist White role models:

Racism is a White problem in contemporary American society and while it causes problems for people of color, addressing the problem of racism is largely I think a White responsibility and most White students ... have had very little exposure to White people who will stand up and talk about issues of race in an open and honest and interrupting way (ibid.).

In one of her articles, Beverly wrote of her experiences of addressing roomfuls of classroom teachers who were unable to think of a single White anti-racist activist without some prompting from her. In her words:

If well-educated adults interested in teaching about race and racism in their classrooms have trouble identifying contemporary White men and women who have taken a public stand against racism, it is a reasonable assumption that our students will not be able to identify those names either (Tatum, 1994).

This experience is consistent with what she continues to observe in her own classroom with students who have difficulty identifying anti-racist forms of White identity. Beverly maintains that while White anti-racist activists do exist, they are far from visible in the mass media, and far less visible than prominent racists in American culture.

She emphasized the importance of models for students and that providing such models is an indispensable part of her course. In addition to models,
students are required to consider possible ways that they, from their own positions, could become agents of change by interrupting racism:

Heightening students' awareness of racism without also developing an awareness of the possibility of change is a prescription for despair. I consider it unethical to do one without the other (Tatum, 1992, p. 20-21).

I have already touched on the difficulty of engaging students in exploring painful issues. Beverly has described these reactions in considerable detail in her articles. She writes about the range of responses from guilt and shame to anger and despair, depending on the position of the student. She notes students' own reports of these emotions in their journal entries and observes their frequent forms of withdrawal. Some forms of resistance Beverly describes are students' questioning or denial of the accuracy of information given in the course, their anger about the ways it has impacted their lives, their refusal to engage with course material and to complete course assignments, their absenteeism or withdrawal from the course (Tatum, 1992).

These types of responses, the emotions expressed, the disjunctions in worldview and self-perception, the denial of co-implication are by now familiar descriptions of resistance, common to classrooms where discussions of social systems of dominance/subordination take place.

Based on her observations and analysis of student journals, Beverly has identified common reasons for these responses. One, already mentioned, is that race is a taboo topic. Another is students' encounter with what she has called the "myth of meritocracy"(Tatum, 1992). Students are forced to re-examine their
assumption that the United States is a just and meritocratic society. A third reason is that students have difficulty accepting their own implication in this system of advantage based on race. White students may refuse to believe that they participate, even unknowingly, in racism. Students of color may become angry when they consider how this system may have unfairly limited their opportunities; or they may feel resentful at White students' denials or silence.

To address forms of student resistance, Beverly has developed several practices that establish conditions for learning about racism. Introduced at the outset of the course, these practices include: the creation of a safe classroom atmosphere by establishing clear guidelines for discussion; the creation of opportunities for self-generated knowledge; the provision of an appropriate developmental model that students can use as a framework for understanding their own process, and the exploration of strategies to empower students as change agents (ibid., p. 18).

Important ways that Beverly responds to resistance include forms of anticipation and acknowledgment. At the beginning of her course, she provides students with information about the process they are undertaking, about the feelings they will probably experience and the ways they will want to enact avoidance. She provides a schema that helps students anticipate or predict their own reactions and to see these as stages that they will move through towards a more comfortable position in relation to their social identities. She considers it crucial to acknowledge emotional reactions and to give students the time needed to process them.
This foreshadowing addresses ethical issues of informed consent and encourages students to see the process as a dynamic one that will be worth their efforts. Beverly has stressed that acknowledging the emotions from the start and providing ways of addressing them is crucial to the transformative process.

To create a safe place to speak, students are required to agree to guidelines for discussion. These include honoring confidentiality about what is discussed in class; maintaining mutual respect and not engaging in put-downs; and speaking from one’s own experience. In addition, Beverly explicitly lays out a set of working assumptions for the course, including the assumption that students cannot be blamed for racism or other systems of advantage:

Racism, defined as a "system of advantage based on race" is a pervasive aspect of U.S. socialization. It is virtually impossible to live in U.S. contemporary society and not be exposed to some aspect of the personal, cultural, and/or institutional manifestations of racism in our society. It is also assumed that, as a result, all of us have received some misinformation about those groups disadvantaged by racism (Tatum 1992, p. 3).

While affirming this non-blaming posture, Beverly also holds students to their responsibility for identifying and interrupting cycles of oppression (ibid., p.4).

To address the blindness often structured into dominant positions, Beverly creates opportunities for what she calls "self-generated" knowledge. For example, she wrote about an out-of-classroom project involving a White student accompanying an African-American student in apartment-hunting in order to experience housing discrimination first-hand.

To provide opportunities to process feelings, Beverly encourages students to write about their feelings in student journals, to participate in class discussions,
both small and large group discussions as well as caucus or affinity groups. She emphasized the importance of providing many opportunities for reflection and ample time for the process; in this case, a semester, rather than day-long or weekend programs.

... Mainly I think giving people a lot of time to talk and really reflect on what it is that they’re experiencing, to say that that’s okay; that’s what we’re going to be doing, and I expect you to do it. I expect you to have these feelings. I’m a big fan of naming the problem. You know, to say "This is hard. You get to feel bad, you know, you get to feel uncomfortable. And that’s okay, and here’s what we’re going to do about it, or how we’re going to address it and how you get to express it" ... But to try to do it without acknowledging that emotional component, I think is really inappropriate and ineffective (ibid.).

Discussion

Certain characteristics about Beverly’s course make it unique in this study. Foremost in my estimation is that it has developed in a disciplinary tradition very different from the others described here. Where Sociology’s object of investigation is society, including social power, positional/material interests and how human beings exercise agency in resisting or reproducing existing social relations, Psychology’s object of investigation is the human being and includes the dimensions of the cognitive, affective, behavioral, relational, social. This disciplinary frame-work shapes differently the approaches to questions of social transformation and practices.

For example, as a clinical psychologist with extensive experience in conducting group processes, Beverly draws on practices that include attentiveness to people’s emotional reactions, to intervening as part of a therapeutic practice,
part of a discourse of healing and health, and to considerations of professional ethics in practices that involve human subjects.

Another important difference between her work and that of others in this study is that she has developed and refined over a sixteen-year period what is essentially the same course, a course focused centrally on racism and identity formation. She has had the opportunity to test, alter and improve her practices in this particular context over time. Significantly, she reported that her experiences with students reactions throughout that time have been more similar than different.

Understanding the ways affective responses can affect learning, especially responses of denial, withdrawal, disengagement and absenteeism, Beverly has made responding to these reactions a central part of her course development.

Beverly's understanding of human nature draws on an eclectic mix of traditions and frameworks in Psychology, religion and spirituality, and theories of social construction and racial identity development. She acknowledges and discusses the inconsistencies and contradictions within and between these frameworks. Interestingly, the practices she describes have much in common with more theory-laden postmodern approaches. Like the others in this study, her approach to transformation is essentially voluntarist in that students are offered opportunities to perceive social relations differently and to respond to encouragement that they perform identity in ways that consciously "interrupt the cycle."
CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSIONS AND NEW DIRECTIONS

Considering now what I might highlight from my engagement with the notions of pedagogy and practice in the work of Liz, Magda, Roger and Beverly means performing a kind of distillation. This is difficult because the act of generalizing works against much of what is surprising, new and particular about how these educators articulate their perspectives. I will attempt to retain the particularity of each writer while I frame my discussion within some of the broader theoretical questions that move like undercurrents beneath the surface differences: considerations of the possibilities and limits of agency, the constraining and enabling functions of discourse, the places of freedom and autonomy, the notions of self, investment, and social vision.

Social Visions

My questions about social vision encouraged the participants to discuss the ways their work and writings on pedagogy responded to the reproduction of social inequality, and how their practices worked with individual consciousness in ways that promote the transformation of existing relations of inequality. Visions are important because, as Roger asserted, we must know in what direction to dream and to desire (Simon, 1992, p. 3).

However, with the exception of Roger's more visionary writing, I found the social visions discussed here quite abbreviated in scope and detail, with attention focussed more steadfastly on the present than on any utopian notion of a better future. Recognizing individuals and societies as always in process, inevitably mired in relations of power, most visions here are tentative, situated in time and
place, unfolding in particular contexts and voiced from finite and admittedly partial positions. Some visions resolutely avoid notions of a fixed, complete or universal end point towards which we collectively strive.

These responses are no doubt symptomatic of the postmodern times in which we live, with their characteristic political fragmentation and politics of temporary coalitions. Poststructural theory emphasizes the local, the contextual and strategic as important sites of intervention in relations of power; and would oppose in principle the notion of any new orthodoxy. In many ways this principled indeterminacy creates impossible obstacles in forming social visions sufficiently compelling to motivate transformation at the level of consciousness.

Some political theorists have argued that categories of difference have been maintained and used to gain maximum differentiation for the purposes of exploitation and political fragmentation.\(^1\) To the extent that social groups perceive their interests as mutually opposed or competing, collective organization becomes difficult. Moving beyond the temporary alliances of coalition politics as part of the larger vision implies going beyond one’s more narrowly-defined social identities and categories of difference in order to understand how these operate with other axes of difference within a global scheme of power. I now discuss how these conditions and perspectives relate to the social visions of the writers I have considered.

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\(^1\)This notion of the purposes of difference used to fragment and isolate is raised in a discussion of the politics of coalitions in R. Radhakrishnan, 1990, p. 60.
Each writer in this study either outlines or alludes briefly to some notion of a social vision that expresses in different ways some of these postmodern conditions. Liz described her work as part of a larger project of rethinking gender and other social positionings through postmodernisms. In the pedagogy she is developing, she encourages students to understand the ways language, history and culture shape, frame and limit identities. Liz’s practice aims to rework the boundaries of difference through continuous deconstruction and reconstruction of meanings, stressing that there are no utopian positions outside power relations. Insofar as she articulates a collective vision, she does so in the context of particular moments in her classrooms and in dialogue with her students. An example of such an instance is the following articulation of what she called a "pedagogy of the unknowable:"

If you can talk to me in ways that show you understand that your knowledge of me, the world, and 'the Right thing to do' will always be partial, interested and potentially oppressive to others, and if I can do the same, then we can work together on shaping and reshaping alliances for constructing circumstances in which students of difference can thrive (1989, p. 324).

Magda’s feminist goal of "solidarity across our differences however these are marked" clearly resonates with a more radical democratic strategy that moves away from the political paralysis of fragmented positions. Her attention to the differential power and access to discourse provides important insights for reanalysing gendered relations in contemporary conditions of backlash and particularly women’s silence, both in the classroom and in other cultural sites. Her understanding of the materiality of gendered power relations produces
insights about women’s and men’s resistance to feminist analyses. How to initiate a practice of communication across difference in ways that promote solidarity across difference has more often than not proved to be a difficult challenge.

Roger’s vision and work address the restrictions upon human possibility imposed by social forms in hegemonic schooling and knowledge production. This vision incorporates notions of human freedom, dignity, diversity, and compassionate justice, and therefore retains some of the humanist terms that constitute dominant and familiar social visions. How Roger breaks with more familiar and comprehensive humanist social vision is in the way he takes care to express it as open, indeterminate, unfinished and partial. His vision acknowledges the embodied and positioned character of knowing and knowledge production, and the obligations of our mutuality. His most recent writing moves further in the direction of postmodern notions of difference as strategic and performative.

Beverly’s vision is one that affirms the importance of equity at both material and symbolic levels and that addresses the cycles of oppression and systems of advantage based on race, class, gender, age, sexuality, and ability, towards a society where people might act without "selfishness" or "fear." Her emphasis on the importance of paying attention to the ways one’s position is aligned with dominance as well as subordination encourages a move beyond the isolation and limits of identity politics. Beverly discusses the need to understand identity as relational when she states that where we are dominant we need to be allies with someone targeted in that way, and where we are targeted, we need to
identify with an empowered model of someone in that position. This practice would help to address the blind-spots inherent in dominant positions, and the constrained imagination of possibility often implicit in subordinated ones.

It has often been stated that unlearning privilege cannot be done in isolation. It must take place in dialogue with those who occupy subordinated positions. The conditions and problems of initiating and maintaining such a dialogue are complex and often fraught with difficulty. They are not impossible, however. Beverly's classroom practices offer one model for promoting this dialogue.

All of these approaches to social vision emphasize the need to extend oneself beyond identities constructed in difference, and understand difference as contingent, relational, nonessential. At the same time, they often stress the strategic importance of affirming difference, experience and identity in its materiality, and of using identity as a means of cultural contest, as a site of counter-discursive production.

Roger, for example, described the practice of performing difference in order to make visible its constructedness. In a very different approach to identity as performative, Liz has developed the notion of whiteness as learned social and

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2 For example, R. Radhakrishnan wrote that "any dominant subject position that is in the process of deconstructing or calling itself into question cannot do so in solipsistic isolation, but must do so in a participatory dialogue with subaltern positions" (1990, p. 72).

3 Judith Butler described the importance of asserting identities while simultaneously interrogating the exclusionary operations by which they are constituted (Butler, 1992, p 108).
cultural performance for the purpose of examining ways it could be performed that undermine racism. Encouraging the practice and performance of anti-racist whiteness is a key part of Beverly's pedagogy, in her emphasis on the need for models of anti-racist White identities and the importance for students to act from these new positions. Magda describes her practice of performing gendered difference in an empowered way for the benefit of students, what she calls teaching as "dramatic performance" (Lewis, 1993, p. 168).

These examples highlight the importance of models for transforming oppressive social relations. Several of the participants emphasize the need to ensure that models are inclusive, that there are models of non-oppressive forms for those who occupy dominant positions, as well as models of empowered forms for those who occupy subordinated ones. Beverly and Liz wrote about how absent these positions and models are in hegemonic meaning systems relating to race; Magda's discussions suggest how unavailable such positions appear to be to her students in relation to gender.

As to notions of freedom, autonomy and independent personhood that come up in these discussions, there are clearly some tensions and lingering contradictions between humanist notions of the individual and postmodern or social constructionist notions of the subject.

Roger's very particular definition of freedom as the understanding of necessity and the transformation of necessity incorporates the social and discursive shaping and constraining of subjects, rather than the humanist notion of freedom as the absence of constraints. Roger's notion of freedom would
necessarily imply a collective rather than an individual notion, one which safeguards freedom for all persons as a necessary condition of freedom for each.

Beverly’s notion of freedom, free will, the freedom to do good or not to do it does not address the inconsistencies, structured inequalities and inherent blind-spots implied by the social construction of subjectivities in positions of difference, even though her practices clearly respond to social construction.

Magda’s goal of autonomy for women might be regarded as a provisional or temporary one based on current humanist conceptions of freedom, but her practices show up difficulties when idealist goals are so far out of step with material and discursive conditions that underpin unequal positions within gendered difference. Humanist assumptions of the subject as origin of meaning that support the notion of autonomy stand in contradiction to the poststructuralist assumption of gendered subjectivities constructed in discourse.

I offer this limited discussion to identify notions of freedom, autonomy, the individual and free will as areas for further theorizing, new directions to consider in this work.

As I consider again the importance of collective visions — especially with some sense of the difficulty students have in abandoning known and familiar positions assumed in the process of socialization in societies based on systems of advantage and the humanist celebration of the individual, freedom and autonomy, I find the provisional, tentative and indeterminate visions sketched in some of these accounts too insubstantial, too anemic. How could these visions
motivate a shift away from the known, the familiar, the social positions students have learned to negotiate?

Roger's pedagogy of possibility emphasizes the importance of imagination and of the communities we can imagine. I find myself looking for visions that are more substantial and vivid, that draw upon elements available in the forms of fiction, film, poetry, music, memory, anything that might provide food for the imagination. While the immediate, provisional and local collective visions are an important focus in this work, these could be strengthened by linking them to larger and more global visions. I consider the creation of more compelling and more global visions a productive area for further development in this work. Such visions would continue to be characterized by openness, dialogue, context, mutuality and an the acknowledgement that social identities are contingent and constructed in relation to difference.

Because counterhegemonic pedagogies very directly challenge established systems of advantage as well as traditional, humanist notions of self, knowledge and knowing, obstacles and limits might be anticipated. Conversely, one might expect areas where support is developing and gathering for such work. I summarize what participants currently identify as the most significant areas of support and limitation they experience.

Community, collaboration, shared vision, laughter and the energizing moments of new realization were factors that all participants variously described as significant in providing support for their work. Liz wrote about the importance of the courage and vision of the broader intellectual community of
social and cultural theorists. Beverly, Magda and Liz also identified positive student feedback as a significant form of support. Magda described the importance and excitement of the moments of discovery when students experience new ways of seeing.

Beverly and Liz discussed support in the form of institutional co-operation, and, in Liz's words, "permission" for the projects and initiatives she undertook on campus. For Magda, on the other hand, such support was not anticipated and, when available, was a source of surprise or misgiving. Their discussions, though abbreviated, signal the need for practitioners to exercise judgement about when, where and how transformative practices might be used. One can easily imagine contexts where opposition from colleagues or administrators would create circumstances in which some practices would be unadvisable, especially for untenured faculty, as Beverly remarked. Educational contexts in which participation is mandatory, such as public school settings, would also imply the need for careful consideration of the appropriateness of some transformative practices. The post-secondary classroom contexts included in this thesis are all characterized by voluntary enrolment.

Roger has described the importance of shared vision and collective venture for students and educators in transformative classrooms. Clearly community with shared commitments and vision provides an important condition for this work both within and beyond the classroom.

Conditions that the participants identified as obstacles took a variety of forms. The fact that the work is inherently conflict-producing and unsettling
often creates immediate obstacles in its reception, Roger writes. Beverly
mentioned the many facets of the taboo nature of racism as significant obstacles to
overcome in her work. Magda described the climate of backlash as creating
particularly trying conditions for her work. Both Magda and Liz described the
collegial and institutional suspicions about feminist and postmodern frameworks,
and the excessive scrutiny, misgivings and fear their work sometimes provokes.
Magda and Beverly described the work as sometimes draining and exhausting,
with progress slow and always much to do. They appear to agree, however, that
the more positive elements of the work continue to offset the obstacles.

Subjectivity

My questions on subjectivity drew out fuller elaborations on the theories of
subjectivity that informed these pedagogies. In these discussions, agency and its
limits are considered in context; the force of hegemony is factored in differently,
with considerations of investment, co-impliation, the importance of models and
the necessity for dialogue between positions receiving varying degrees of
emphasis.

While poststructural theory often emphasizes the subject as fragmented,
considerations of subjectivity in relation to social reproduction raise questions of
how the fragments of multiple and contradictory positions are held together.
What accounts for continuity in the subjective experience of identity? How does
one explain the predictability of people’s actions as they position themselves in
particular discourses (Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine, 1984)?
How can one explain the way subjects repeat courses of action that are apparently
detrimental to them? How does one account for the element of investment, described as "the emotional commitment involved in taking up positions in discourses which confer power and are supportive of our sense of continuity ... in accordance with frames of reference which are themselves socially produced?" (ibid.).

For, it is the element of investment, in part, that makes established identities and positions extremely difficult to transform.

Mahoney and Yngvesson (1992) have emphasized the social, relational and affective conditions within which subjectivities become established. These factors are important to consider in discussions of social transformation. I now discuss how each author's perspectives on subjectivity relate to the considerations of investment, the force of hegemonic meanings and the social, affective and relational nature of subject formation.

Liz draws upon feminist visionary approaches that empower subjects towards recreating social relations through performing social identity differently. She emphasizes the importance of the notion of the subject split between conscious and unconscious, where experiences and perceptions always exceed socially constructed discourses. This excess, she writes, provides material from which identities, definitions and categories can be reworked.

She also emphasizes the contingency of social constructions and their always-in-process, never-finished quality. The compelling tone of her affirmative questions steers students away from the tendency to be daunted by the complexity and enormity of this project. Her use of notions like performativity
and "working difference" provide tools for herself and her students to rework meanings, to deconstruct fixed identities.

Inasmuch as these practices encourage an active imagination about how to continually deconstruct categories of difference and divert operations of power that work through them, they seem promising. However, in emphasizing to her students the contingency of identities constructed in relations of difference, she does not say much about the force of hegemonic inscriptions and reinscriptions at both conscious and unconscious levels, the unequal playing field of discursive power and meaning-making, nor about the weight of investment subjects have in established positions.

Liz discusses the considerable effort entailed in reworking the boundaries of difference, due in part to what she called the effort of becoming and remaining conscious. She also described the continual back-slidings and oscillations, and the unintended and unforeseen consequences due, in part, to the fact that meanings cannot be controlled.

Notions of working difference and performativity are intriguing, even compelling, but very abstract and difficult to imagine. How they might be relevant beyond the rarefied discussions of graduate classrooms is a question worth considering. Without clear models and the opportunity to practice forms of deconstruction and subversive performativity, these notions remain very conceptual and difficult. Liz cites the writings of teachers, cultural theorists and film-makers and I assume their work does provide some examples and models. She also describes in her articles examples of student projects that provide
opportunities to employ these concepts. It is important to continually consider how they operate in relation to the terms and meanings current in hegemonic discourses. Does Liz continue to encounter and address student resistance and the affective elements of transformative learning? Does her practice acknowledge what is risked, what is resisted and how? In more current work, Liz reports encountering less of this type of reaction and I’m puzzled as to why. Her explanation is that her recent approach of focusing less on opposing and fixed identities, "... who’s the oppressor, who is the oppressed," and more on what racism and sexism are, as systems of oppression, has reoriented and energized students. But how does this approach adequately account for the blind-spots structured into privileged positions, or for the elements of investment and desire that fuel resistance? In my reading of Liz’s writings, these questions remain unanswered.

As I consider Liz’s most recent work, I find myself responding to the absence of an emphasis that was clear in her earlier writings, an emphasis on co-implication, on deconstructing one’s position in dialogue with subordinated positions, and on the collective, critical and dialogical elements of learning and teaching across difference.

In the sense that Liz’s work foregrounds the creative and imaginative liberatory possibilities, and poses these as affirmative challenges to students, her work truly characterizes the more optimistic tone of these pedagogies. I wonder to what extent her de-emphasis of the inevitable fixing and limiting influences that investment and hegemony continually exert on social actors is a useful
strategy. As I look at the way others have addressed this balance, I feel drawn to approaches that give more weight to hegemonic ideology and the element of investment, while continuing to develop diverse and powerful collective and dialogical strategies for enacting resistance to them.

Magda’s attention to the discursive structuring of the self highlights women’s unequal power and access to discourse. The educational contexts in which Magda participates as a researcher, as a graduate student and as a feminist professor provide opportunities to illuminate the structuring processes particular to each context. While affirming the potential importance of feminist counter-discourses for offering women access to more empowering meanings and positions, Magda’s work also raises awareness about the positional conflicts that block women’s appropriation of feminist meanings and analyses. In these perspectives, a clear sense of limits to agency is established.

Magda’s discussion of subjectivity relies on notions of discourse, experience and the social construction of selves, especially gendered selves. She employs practices central to feminist methodology which takes women’s experiences, consciousness of the world, and meaning-making practices as a ground from which to analyze the particular and situated relations of power based on gendered difference, especially those she encounters in classrooms and other educational sites.

In her analyses, Magda does give due weight to the problems of investment and desire. Where feminist perspectives can offer women important and liberating analyses and insights into their lives and social relationships, to
integrate these insights often involves coping with anger and impatience. For many women, integrating feminist analyses can create personal contradictions and dilemmas that, if confronted, can destabilize systems of material support and personal safety in the lives they have managed to negotiate, however problematically.

Magda's observations and analysis of student behavior in classrooms offer sensitive interpretations of the forms of resistance, from both female and male positions, that constitute obstacles to transformation. Even as she describes some of the practices she uses to respond to resistance, she continues to ask how such challenges can be addressed.

Posing this question within the larger discussions in this thesis, there seem to be some productive approaches suggested here. Beginning with the importance of models, it might be productive to emphasize more models of non-oppressive forms of masculinity as well as empowered forms of femininity, models that allow students to envision gendered relations in less oppositional and more egalitarian terms. Emphasizing gender as a relation that is variable by and within culture and history might encourage a shift from what is wrong with existing relations towards how they might be envisioned in new, more inclusive and egalitarian terms.⁴

⁴An excellent resource is a recent collection of cross-cultural studies on gender which offers actual examples of societies that configure female and male as complementary and egalitarian rather than oppositional and hierarchical. Beyond the question of how gender is organized in social terms, these studies often go further to focus on the social, economic conditions that promote and support egalitarian gender relations. See Sanday and Goodenough. (Eds.). *Beyond the Second Sex: New*
Acknowledging the difficult emotional work of disinvestment in earlier positions, as Magda does, and accounting for this as part of her practice undoubtedly helps to facilitate the shifts necessary for feminist analyses to be truly transformative. Addressing the male term of the relation in affirmative ways, as in the provision of subject positions in non-oppressive forms of masculinity, might also be helpful in accomplishing this shift. As I have mentioned, this approach might also help address the desire/threat responses of women by allowing them to perceive the potential for gendered relations to be enacted in more egalitarian ways.

Roger’s writings on a pedagogy of possibility discuss the structuring and limiting of human possibility in hegemonic knowledge production in education. He affirms the importance of educational contexts as crucial sites of cultural and discursive production towards new forms and possibilities. Roger’s discussions of subjectivity emphasize the construction of the subject in discourse and the process of semiotic production. He describes semiosis as sense-making practices through which meaning is produced in the context of historically and concretely defined engagements with written, visual and aural forms (1992, p. 39).

While semiotic productions attempt to fix meaning, Roger emphasizes that meaning is interactive and must account for the site of reception, the subject making sense through a frame-work of meaning that is built up trace upon trace in consciousness and experience, the interaction between outer and inner worlds.

To their engagement with symbolic production, subjects always come "already knowing and with concerns and questions important to their lives" (1992, p. 47).

As Roger points out, semiotic production has always been a central concern of pedagogy, and critical studies in educational sites have provided important analyses of how hegemonic meanings are produced. Roger affirms the potential of the classroom for the production of counterhegemonic meanings and defines the task of progressive cultural workers as one of engaging people so as to provoke their inquiry into and challenge existing views of "the way things are and should be" (1992, p. 47):

Such a pedagogy will require forms of teaching and learning linked to the goal of educating students to take risks, to struggle with ongoing relations of power, to critically appropriate forms of knowledge that exist outside their immediate experience, and to envision versions of the world that is "not yet."

In this discussion, I look for ways of accounting for investment and desire, the internal forms of resistance to challenges to the ways things are; and the backslidings into hegemonic reinscriptions.

In addition, while Roger writes about relationality and the obligations of our mutuality, about "recognizing our implication in the situation of another," this remains in his writing an abstract and hard-to-imagine practice. How is it enacted in the classroom?

In what ways can the dominant or privileged term in social power relations be hailed, interpellated, addressed so as to recognize itself as dominant? What moral and ethical visions might be sufficiently compelling to motivate the needed shift of perception or will to transformation? A mere unsettling of worldviews
through new and unfamiliar ways of naming and framing reality towards justice, compassion and a world that is "not yet," do not seem to be sufficiently compelling, concrete, tangible, radical or forceful, in my view. In the contextualized examples about which Roger has written, "A Discourse" and "Fear of Theory," the relations of power are not fully explored and the recognition of co-implication never occurs. I refer here to the blind spots structured into dominant positions; the problems of investment, positional interests, and absence of contradiction in relation to hegemonic meaning systems. Roger includes these notions and problems in his more theoretical writings but does not offer practical suggestions for disrupting such relations. One is left with an impression of the limits of agency here.

Beverly's perspectives on subjectivity draw most heavily on her experiences and observations in group facilitation and teaching about racism, rather than theory. While frameworks for explaining human beings and human behavior are unavoidable, Beverly's approach demonstrates the value of practice for informing theory. Sometimes highlighting contradictions and inconsistencies between theory and practices, Beverly's approach demonstrates the importance of attention to specific and repeated forms of resistance; and to accurately interpreting and responding to them.

Her work offers important feedback on how we think about subjectivity and resistance. By allowing students' own descriptions of how they experience anti-racist learning to guide her responses, Beverly addresses resistances with empathy and respect for the social and personal relationships this learning may
put at risk. Her continuing support for students' efforts to resolve the conflicts of position apparently succeed in promoting transformative goals.

Beverly's discussion of how she understands subjectivity points to some contradictions. For example, her discussions of altruism and the fundamental goodness of human beings, and free will, the notion of freedom to do good or not to do it, do not easily square with the heaviness of social imprinting that she encounters in teaching students to unlearn racism. This point is well made in the discussion on subjectivity in Henriques et al. (1984, p. 206), in which the authors argue: "Individuals free to take on norms or reject them — makes nonsense of the claimed effectivity of the normalizing apparatuses."

Beverly describes her observations of the ways students exemplify "altruism that is not dead" and she describes their "clear hunger" for this knowledge even though it disturbs their worldviews. These observations are consistent with a notion of the fundamental goodness of human beings.

It's important to remember, however, that enrolment was voluntary for students in all the contexts under discussion in this study. Despite the discomfort and commitments they entail for students, these pedagogies generally appear to be quite sought after, with courses popular and well-attended, and students becoming increasingly familiar with their terms and practices. But one must bear in mind that students who enrol in these classes may be only a small subset of the total population of students, may already be committed to counterhegemonic positions, and looking to extend their insights and build upon their communities and networks.
Beverly characterizes students' learnings and unlearnings as ways of arriving at more comfortable positions in relation to racial identities. One of Beverly's guiding assumptions is that racism is a system of advantage that damages all who are structured in it. The process of unlearning is approached as a way of healing the damage.

Working from insights developed in her practice, Beverly does give considerable weight to the force of hegemonic meanings, to the reproduction of racist ideology in the context of the family, and to continual reinscription in the mass media. She draws attention to the silence on anti-racist White positions and their absence in dominant discourse. She discusses the taboos related to talking about race. One has a clear sense here of the weight and pervasiveness of representations that underwrite the reproduction of racism.

However, Beverly also discusses agency in very strong terms, affirming the universal need for hope, peace and community. Using student response as a guide in developing her practices, she has systematically addressed the obstacles and forms of resistance that occur throughout the transformative process.

While responding to emotional reactions, and acknowledging the difficulty of examining identities formed in relation to family, friends, communities of support, Beverly continues to convey her confidence and clear expectations that students will resolve their difficulties. In Beverly's work, I appreciate the balanced approach to hegemony and agency, and the systematic and affirmative approach to resistance.
Resistance and Transformative Practices

The resistance described in this study has quite a distinct character in that it is enacted within pedagogies that claim to have a liberatory intent. While one might anticipate that the liberatory discourses of transformative pedagogy might provoke resistance from those in dominant positions because they threaten positional interests, there are many instances in these discussions of resistance from subordinated positions. It is not simply positional privilege that is being challenged, but negotiated meanings, positions and material relations; the taken for granted, the comfortable and familiar ways of thinking and doing social relationships for all positions.

For example, in the case of Magda’s students, feminist analyses often threaten the lives women have learned to negotiate. For many of these women, to enter a process of critique and deconstruction of social and material relations that structure one’s life can be very threatening and disruptive. It can unleash powerful anger, outrage and bitterness — emotions that, while often part of the early stages in a process of resolution or healing, can destabilize one’s internal status quo in alarming ways.

Of particular value in the discussions of resistance in this study are the sensitive and contextualized interpretations offered by the writers, interpretations that demonstrate respect for students’ explanations of their own feelings. To the extent that these interpretations embody the qualities of careful listening, awareness of context, empathy and respect for the participants while pushing the
boundaries of hegemonic meanings and engaging in the practices of critique and deconstruction, I consider these valuable models of transformative practices.⁵

Providing concrete models and many opportunities to envision and test new positions is an important part of the transformative learning and teaching. To ensure an inclusive vision and shared sense of venture, it would be important to include models of non-oppressive forms for those who occupy dominant positions, such as non-oppressive forms of masculinity and non-racist White identities. The absence of these models from hegemonic discourses of race and gender have been underlined in the writings of Magda, Liz and Beverly. Their importance for sparking imagination and fostering hope for change cannot be overestimated in my view. I consider the provision of models an important area for continued work and attention.

A recurring and valuable perspective on the social construction of categories of difference is one that conceives of them as relational and that explores and addresses both terms of the relation. As Chandra Mohanty and others remind us, racism defines both Black and White; patriarchy, both female and male. The approach to racism taken by Beverly in examining how racism affects those in both advantaged and targeted positions; and by Liz, as she explores the "double binds of whiteness," underscores how the integrity and full humanity of the dominant are compromised in systems that deny full humanity to a designated subordinated group.

⁵Dr. Jane Gaskell discussed the importance of these qualities for feminist ethnography (Gaskell, 1992). They are equally relevant in the contexts of transformative pedagogy.
In my discussion of transformative practices, I have grouped these under three headings according to areas that all participants have identified as important elements of their pedagogies. These are: Partiality and Positionality, Risks and Safety, and Collective Ventures and Affirmative Visions.

**Partiality and Positionality**

The recognition that social inequality and relations of power do not simply exist outside of individuals but also through them, the embodied social vehicles who internalize and act out the complex of symbolic behavior related to social power, would minimally imply examining and acknowledging one's own position, what Roger called "putting myself in the picture." This is a practice taken seriously by all the participants who enact it in different ways depending on context and other considerations best illustrated by examples.

Liz Ellsworth, in one example, writes:

I had begun to understand my own complicity as an individual and as a white woman in the histories and dynamics of racism. I was committed to the long-term effort to unlearn racism and to find ways of interrupting it and other oppressive formations as a white woman/professor (Ellsworth, 1989).

Here, Liz describes not only social and institutional positions, as a White woman and professor; but also her position relative to political and social commitments.

As she sets out to analyze the gendered power relations in a part of her life, Magda describes her position as a graduate student in relation to many aspects of social privilege:

Even as I prepare to tell the story of this experience, I realize and I acknowledge that my whiteness, my economic viability supported at that time by the social/economic forms of liberal patriarchy
embedded in the nuclear family, my able-bodiedness, my relative youth, and the outcome of the well learned lessons of Euro-American cultural forms provided me with privileged entry and, as well, having been allowed access, a less alienating environment than would have been available had I not carried these forms of social acceptability (Lewis, 1993, p. 124).

Roger Simon, in the following example, acknowledges the significance of position and the importance of unsettling essential and universal notions of identity:

My figure (heterosexual male, Askenazi, North American diasporic) is not to be taken as a metonym, a representational trope in which the voice of the Jew is reduced to my voice. ... I assert no quintessential history or tradition on which to found an identity (which is not to deny either history or tradition) .... I speak here as a Jew without claiming any authority to speak for Jews (Simon, 1994).

Beverly Tatum offers an example of acknowledging position while addressing the issues of essentialism and universalism:

I talk about myself as African-American, as a woman, as heterosexual, as someone who grew up in a middle-class background, as someone who's able-bodied, as someone who is Christian, as someone who is 41-years old. ... and I try to help my students understand that my experience as a Black woman is not a universal experience. I grew up in a small town in New England and that is a legitimate experience. It's not an urban experience. It's not a Southern experience. It's not a poor experience (Tatum, Personal Communication, 2/96).

Positioning herself relative to both privileged and marginalized positions, she then moves to clarify that position as particular, not universal. Even though it does not conform to more stereotypical representations of African-American experience — urban, Southern, poor — she asserts its legitimacy, at the same time drawing attention to the stereotypical representations.
Beyond the practice of putting oneself in the picture, and returning to theorize it, Roger also theorizes what might be accomplished by putting oneself in the picture as a teacher practicing a form of cultural politics. In what he describes as teaching in the terms of postmodern Jewish identity, Roger speculates on the possibilities this practice might offer of transgressing normalized notions of difference and refracting or breaking up categories through which he is apprehended. He describes postmodern Jewish identity as a practice through which a Jew makes evident the constructedness of her or his identity (Simon, 1995). This practice would arguably provide an example of what Liz described as "working difference," a practice of theorizing the personal while making visible its constructedness.

From acknowledging their own positions and what they might imply, instructors frequently encourage students to do the same. Beverly asks students: "Who are you? What is your sphere of influence? How can you use that to interrupt the cycle?" The questions themselves, framed in affirmative and positive ways, let no one off the hook. The first compels an acknowledgment. The second asserts that all occupy locations from which to exert influence. The third enjoins one to identify specific actions s/he can take.

Liz’s questions to students have the same affirmative compelling tone:

What will you use your social positions and identities for and how will you construct cultural and social relations in your classroom today (E. Ellsworth, Personal Communication, 11/95)?

And also:
What actions, interventions, interruptions, dislocations, discursive innovations, would make something possible and comprehensible that is currently needed but currently blocked, stuck, unimaginable, unsayable (ibid.)?

Classroom practices that allow students to examine the implications of positions often involve group dialogue organized both within and across differences. The formation of student caucuses or affinity groups is a practice that allows students opportunities to explore responses and experiences common to shared position. Liz discussed the value of caucuses as a way of doing a "reality check," an opportunity for strategizing around particular issues and for formulating collective articulations of patterned experience. In the group described in Liz's example (Ellsworth, 1989), these caucuses formed spontaneously and functioned both in and out of classroom.

Beverly described the formation of caucuses as an in-class activity based on social positions that students identified as relevant to their experiences. Beverly's comments regarding students' multiple identities was that students' decisions about which caucuses to join were unpredictable and often based on immediate and contextual relations, such as class or socio-economic status rather than race or gender (Personal Communication, 2/96).

Across-group dialogue provides opportunities to learn about experiences that one's positions do not make available, and these opportunities can take place both in large groups as well as in pairs or small groups (Lewis, 1993). Large group discussions are sometimes monitored (or self-monitored) for attention to how much "air time" individuals or groups take up (Ellsworth, 1989). Attention is
sometimes focused on differences in social power to fix meaning (Tatum, 1992; Lewis, 1993). Dialogue across difference is important for considering the notion of co-implication and for showing up the blind-spots structured into positions, particularly dominant ones.

These educators often mention the importance of acknowledging their own positions based on the institutional power they hold and the greater power and legitimacy it confers to their voices. Acknowledging this structured difference might involve practices like taking up little space in discussions while encouraging students to speak to each other (Tatum, 1992) or taking on the role of facilitator rather than equal participant in discussion (Ellsworth, 1989). Avoiding the role of voice of authority can be enacted by framing comments as questions (Simon, 1992).

Acknowledging the institutional power of position can also at times take the form of using one’s authority strategically to enact a position of advocacy or to show up the inequities in the discursive power of positions (Lewis, 1993); or to provide models of empowerment from subordinated positions (Lewis, 1993; Tatum, Personal Communication, 2/96).

Stretching or extending oneself beyond one’s own positions, understanding co-implication and practising mutuality continue to be areas of practice that remain quite abstract. Creating new practices and suggestions for practice is an area for continuing development, an ongoing new direction in this work.
Risks and Safety

The participants in this study all described, in some ways, the risks that students take in engaging in counterhegemonic forms of pedagogy. In Roger’s words:

This challenge to go beyond one’s existing knowledge and identities constitutes no small degree of risk; risk of failure, loss of coherence, rupture of existing relations with family and friends, social ridicule, colonization within new ideologies, and a feeling of disempowerment as old certainties are abandoned (Simon, 1992, p. 62).

The risks can involve significant disjunctions in world-view and self-perception often combined with feelings of guilt, anger, denial, despair; and the process often takes place in the context of classrooms marked by conflict and emotional responses from a variety of positions simultaneously.

Practices that anticipate these conditions of learning/unlearning include the setting of clear and forthright agendas, stating assumptions, guidelines and sometimes ground-rules for discussion. For example, Beverly’s ground-rules include mutual respect, honoring the confidentiality of class discussions and no put-downs. These practices are part of what all these educators have called the need to create safe places to speak.

Of all the participants, Beverly has placed great emphasis on the importance of acknowledging emotional reactions and forms of resistance as part of the process. She does this both at the outset of the course, by providing information that allows students to anticipate their reactions; and throughout the course, by offering support and the opportunities to express and process feelings.
I consider Beverly's development and guidelines in this area of practice an excellent resource for others who practice transformative pedagogies.

The use of student journals as a valuable tool for processing privately uncomfortable feelings is mentioned by all participants. Beverly stressed the need to provide adequate time and many opportunities for students to reflect. She does not recommend undertaking such processes in brief day-long or week-end work-shops.

The writers mention variously the importance of elements of respect, patience, empathy and non-blame, and they write about their own efforts to model these qualities.

Collective Ventures and Affirmative Visions

A recurring theme in these writings was the importance of addressing social inequality and positional difference within a larger vision; and of offering students opportunities to act as participants in a collective venture. In the poststructural terms of some of the writers, this vision must not be prescriptive, fixed, unified and determinate; it must avoid the trap of instating a new orthodoxy.

Examples of practices outlined in these writings include class activities such as Liz's "winning of semiotic space," a project undertaken by students acting as a temporary coalition organized to speak out about racism on campus (Ellsworth, 1989); or Beverly’s course requirement for each student to write about concrete ways s/he could interrupt racism, and the subsequent presentation of these ideas to the larger group of the class.
Beyond these immediate and contextual practices, important for encouraging a move towards transformed social relations in difference, I find myself also looking for some discussion of how they relate to more global vision, one that could better contextualize and frame practices. This expanded and global vision, indeterminate, in process, fluid and open, is clearly a direction for continuing development in transformative pedagogies.

Hegemony, as an organizing principle or world-view that projects dominant meaning systems, becomes very tangible in the accounts of classroom practice discussed here. In their analyses, the participants have discussed the particular institutions and agencies of ideological control and socialization, including the family, the school, popular culture and the mass media that continually re-impose the meanings of dominant groups. More pointedly, they have observed and interpreted how socially-constructed meanings are taken up by the complex subjectivities of students in their classrooms and acted from in ways that can re-iterate, disrupt or create meaning.

While Gramsci's was a notion of hegemony capable of being countered by the power of individuals to critically contest meanings, the accounts of counterhegemonic practice discussed here give some sense of the difficulty and complexity of this undertaking for both student and critical educator. The educators included here have each continued to develop their own particular and contextualized approaches to practice. From our collective explorations of practice, important elements are foregrounded, elements that could strengthen any critical practice.
To counter hegemonic meaning systems, the importance of social vision is a key element. It is crucial to a sense of where we begin in the present and what we collectively struggle towards; to a notion of a larger political project and where we each stand in relation to it. It is a vital support for imagining new possibilities and motivating the efforts needed for social transformation. To make the vision tangible, it should include models for embodying difference in new ways, ways that undermine established forms of dominance and subordination. It should include models for those occupying dominant as well as subordinated positions.

To address resistance, the accounts in this study underline the importance of understanding what is risked; the need for careful listening to students' own explanations; the need for empathy, respect and support as part of critical practice. Beyond these forms of acknowledgement, other elements of support include providing opportunities for students to reflect upon and process feelings; to imagine ways of enacting position that work against the reproduction of social inequality; and to practice these new forms.

For work that goes against the grain of established meaning systems, these educators have all emphasized the importance of community both within and beyond their classrooms, in the form of collaborative projects, collegial net-works and associations, and the continuing vision and inspiration of other cultural theorists and educators.
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