

Beyond "Talking Heads": Towards an Empowering Pedagogy of Women's Studies

Greta Hofmann Nemiroff
New School of Dawson College

ABSTRACT

Although Women's Studies has gained a foothold in Canadian post-secondary educational institutions, its position is precarious. This article examines: the definition of Women's Studies, the status of Women's Studies as an academic discipline within the post-secondary context, and the development of a Women's Studies pedagogy appropriate to the particular subject matter. The major elements considered necessary to a pedagogy of Women's Studies are examined as those which both stimulate and validate educators' and learners' definitions of women's experiences, values and knowledge. In this context, the pedagogies of both Humanistic and Critical Education are discussed and applied to feminist pedagogy, not only with reference to theory, but also with concrete suggestions for a pedagogy of empowerment.

RÉSUMÉ

Quoique les études sur la femme aient commencé à s'implanter dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur au Canada, la situation de ces études demeure précaire. Dans cet article, on examine: la définition des études sur la femme, le statut des études sur la femme en tant que discipline dans le contexte universitaire et l'élaboration d'une pédagogie des études sur la femme qui convient à ce domaine particulier. Les éléments principaux jugés nécessaires à une pédagogie des études sur la femme sont examinés comme étant ceux qui stimulent aussi bien que rendent valables les définitions qu'ont les éducatrices et les étudiantes des expériences, des valeurs et de la connaissance féminines. Dans ce contexte, on discute des pédagogies de l'éducation humaniste et de l'éducation de la liberté et les applique à la pédagogie féministe, non seulement en faisant référence à la théorie, mais aussi en donnant des suggestions concrètes visant une pédagogie de "empowerment," d'auto-mandatement.

We are approaching the twentieth anniversary of the proposal for the first Women's Studies course taught in a Canadian university ...an appropriate time to reflect on the development of Women's Studies in the academy.¹ A recent publication by RFR/RDF: *Women's Studies in Canada: A Guide to Women's Studies Programmes and Resources at the University Level*, lists numerous programmes and courses crossing the country from Newfoundland to Victoria. Significantly, this study does not address the context in which Women's Studies is taught, the structures of the numerous programmes and courses in Canada, or course content, methodology and pedagogy. It does, however, indicate the levels and kinds of degrees one can receive in Women's Studies from each of the institutions mentioned. It was somewhat discouraging to observe that despite the findings of the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1970)*, the growth of a women's movement replete with women's studies programmes in community colleges and universities, five

Chairs in Women's Studies, and several reputable educational organizations and publications supported by the state, the status of women in Canadian universities is not impressive. While women comprise only 17 percent of the teaching staff in Canadian universities (1984-85), the majority of those women are untenured and without security of employment.²

Women teaching Women's Studies in the university often do so at their own peril, most of them bearing a load of allegiance to two departments/disciplines, carrying within academia the kind of double load most women carry in society at large. The majority of women professors who want to attain the status of job security afforded to so many men are obliged to publish in the "hard" fields of the established disciplines, sit on committees for their own edification and self-protection, *in addition to* their labours of love in Women's Studies. Most Women's Studies teachers within the university system must carry extensive

workloads, high levels of anxiety and, at the very least, the exhausting consciousness of living in contradiction on a day-to-day basis.

Since Women's Studies is partially based on a critique of patriarchal epistemology and "knowledge," Women's Studies teachers (from "liberal" to "radical") are *de facto* committed to epistemological speculations which force them to swim (or at least tread water!) against the male-stream current. This difficulty has been addressed by various feminist academics:

On the one hand, our continued presence in the university shows that we still believe in the value of that social institution. On the other hand, as feminists trying to create that new thing, "Women's Studies," we are opposed to the university as it presently exists.³

It is important for women academics to examine the context in which we work, even if such examination gives us cold comfort:

It may be that full consciousness of the dimensions of these contradictions will not suffice to dissolve them, but our awareness of our circumstances may finally enable us to preserve the positive... qualities of nurturance and caring in our efforts to transform the classroom... We live in a world of numbers, office hours and competition for limited resources.⁴

If we examine our pedagogy and improve it, there is no reason why our situation of contradiction (which is not unlike that of women in other patriarchal institutions) cannot be integrated into our pedagogy:

Critical teaching in dominant institutions means that teachers are constantly living a contradiction. But possibilities for critical work exist within that very contradiction. It is vital that teachers recognize not only the structural constraints under which they work, but also the potential inherent in teaching for transformation and political work.⁵

Not only are most Women's Studies teachers poignantly aware of the contradictions inherent in their very presence in the male academy/preserve, but they are also doomed to teach students dedicated to succeeding according to criteria established within those dominant educational values considered by feminist educators to be flawed ...if not actually incorrect. Students entering Women's Studies courses "cold" (with perhaps only the most cursory media-managed exposure to "women's libbers") are often initially resistant to what they hear from feminist teachers, since it usually puts their own lives into question. While

some of their resistance may become transformed into a passion for the subject, many remain ambivalent, correctly assessing that this knowledge, this new *Weltanschauung*, can draw them into imposing upon themselves beliefs which will render them permanently marginalised, if not alienated, from the intellectual trough which can be so rewarding to those who toe the line. No matter which position the student eventually takes, however, she not only is caught in a situation of contradiction and double-think implicated in the feminist project in Women's Studies classes, but also wanting to maintain a respectable status in the majority of courses on "how men think."

A tension is created in the feminist classroom through the often differing objectives of student and teacher in their positions of cross-contradiction. To address the complicated labyrinth of contradiction, the Women's Studies teacher is impelled into a complex strategy of education: she must review and provide for her students a corrective balance to mitigate the sexist nature of the schooling they have received, and she must be aware and carry on the work of developing feminist theory to explain her critiques and conclusions. In order to achieve the compensatory "equal time" for feminist analysis, feminist teachers often emphasize the importance of exposing recalcitrant (and accommodating) students to the burgeoning body of feminist research; they want to challenge the students' assumptions and provide them with both material and a model of argumentation for informed discourse on women.

Given the relative recency of Women's Studies, the level of contradiction informing both teacher and student in the feminist classroom, and the huge task of compensating for millennia of institutionalized invisibility, it is not surprising that a pedagogy of Women's Studies is only in its early stages. It is also understandable that Women's Studies teachers, like all ordinary mortals under duress, are likely to reproduce in their teaching those modes which were used in teaching them. In many cases, the over-extended Women's Studies teacher will revert to a methodology which is "tried and true" within the university, featuring the teacher as a conduit through which "approved" information is passed along to students. What is surprising, perhaps, is that while Women's Studies teachers often give lip-service to the value of process, in practice, innovative teaching focused on process is usually overwhelmed by contradictory notions of "rigour" and "discipline" based on those criteria operant in male-stream university teaching. "Perhaps the hardest part of teaching Women's Studies classes," writes the Bristol Women's Studies Group, "is to achieve a balance between imparting infor-

mation, discussing the information, and just letting the class talk.”⁶ The very real value conflict mentioned here is too often obscured by our allegiance to the system which has nourished us (however badly), which has validated us with degrees (however suspect), and which has provided us with jobs we love (however precarious). Often Women’s Studies teachers, no matter how adept, fascinating and charming, settle into conventional academic “talking head pedagogy.” This is not only contradictory to our roots in the women’s movement and an egalitarian ideology of validation and empowerment, but given the emotionally volatile nature of much of the subject matter covered by Women’s Studies, one-way communication can be irresponsible. Those students who commit themselves to the study of women deserve recognition, validation and support when many of their most cherished beliefs and rationalizations are thrown up for re-evaluation. The primacy of “talking head pedagogy” means the silencing of students. While their need for maximum information is undeniable, imposed passivity will not help women find their authentic voice in an environment actively disconfirming their sovereignty and right to individual self-definition.

Before addressing some theoretical bases for a pedagogy of Women’s Studies consistent with its content and purpose, this paper will review commonly articulated objectives for Women’s Studies. What preoccupations form the *sine qua non* of this field?

What Is Women’s Studies Anyway?

An early articulation of the objectives for Women’s Studies from the State University of New York at Buffalo (1975) proposes as its purpose to: involve women in the women’s movement through education; serve as a focal point for developing a body of knowledge about women; act as an institutional base for the struggle against sexism, and be a centre of resources which can be tapped by the women’s movement for the community.⁷

Most efforts to establish parameters to Women’s Studies include some or all of these cognitive factors: women’s studies must compensate for the absence of women from curriculum by building a body of research on women; it must ensure the understanding of patriarchy in its historical perspective and of the effects of socialization and sex-role stereotyping on women and through a cross-cultural perspective; it must promote an understanding of women in history, of female sexuality, of the function of education as codifier of sex-segregation, of the function of the family vis-à-vis women in all cultures, of the relation of women to

paid and unpaid work, and finally of the relationship between social movements and women.⁸

Naturally, attention must be paid to theory, both for its intrinsic value, and also as an educational tool:

Theory is at its most ebullient when it can uncover, disclose, demystify and undermine that which is buried, masked, distorted or asserted as truth. There is no more fertile ground for buried truths and open pretenses than the systematic subordination of one group by another. This is why theory is one of the strongest allies subordinate populations can have, and why their rejection of it is always a catastrophic political error.⁹

Most Women’s Studies theorists accept an affective-political as well as a cognitive dimension to Women’s Studies. There must be an analysis of scholarship by and about women in both the traditional disciplines and in interdisciplinary forms. Scholars must analyse the structure and conditions of women’s oppression and contrasting models of and for self-determination. It is essential to examine the relationships between the personal subordination of women and the broader social, political and economic structures ...including egalitarian alternatives. Women’s Studies must encourage women to push themselves towards academic and personal excellence.¹⁰ Women’s Studies addresses the personal and the systemic dimensions of women’s experience in both its formal and informal content by starting with the self as subject,¹¹ thus “empassioning the students.”¹² It legitimates life-experience as an appropriate subject of analysis, concerns itself with process as well as product, is multicultural and explores interlocking systems of oppression based on sex, race and class.¹³ It promotes an investigation of the social world from the grounded position in one’s own subjective oppression, and an emphasis on lived and self-defined rather than mediated experience. Feminist research is politically committed to changing the position of women in society; it is grounded in praxis.¹⁴ Consistent with other theories of “liberation education,” literacy and writing skills must be emphasized as an important aspect of women’s studies. Only through well-developed communication skills can women convey important ideas and information. Thus, a feminist program of literacy improves each individual’s ability to think and to have access to a variety of interpretations of reality; it aids each woman’s individual survival and, finally, it is the cheapest form of mass communication appropriate for a movement of the most economically disadvantaged people in our society.¹⁵

While the above characteristics may not be equally important to all Women’s Studies teachers, it is my opin-

ion that the majority of us would find more rather than fewer characteristics with which we may agree. I state this knowing that each element needs an amplification which I must resist in an effort to restrain the length of this paper. Clearly, notions of theory, research and praxis are highly variable and deserve meticulous articulation. For me, the *sine qua non* is still the struggle to create an epistemological shift in human knowledge by rephrasing and critiquing all of our methods of developing questions, answers and paradigms. This epistemology would reject the dichotomous notion of cognitive/affective learning in favour of a theory of a dialectically dynamic continuum from the cognitive to the affective and unconscious levels of learning.

Another mode of examining Women's Studies content is through identifying some "feminist themes" which permeate feminist thought and form a sub-text in Women's Studies curriculum: ending patriarchy, encouraging empowerment, seeing process as important, understanding that the personal is political and that there is unity in diversity ...that differences must be respected and solidarity encouraged, validating non-linear multi-dimensional thinking, realizing that consciousness-raising is an essential element of feminist education and that feminist education must have a praxis ...a final application in the society at large.¹⁶

In examining the composite criteria mentioned above, it becomes clear that the "talking head" approach of "educational delivery" is inconsistent with many of the commonly articulated objectives of Women's Studies pedagogy. Because Women's Studies has not only emerged from the women's movement but grown inextricably with it, (and despite its locus within the conservative confines of the university), the emphasis on praxis and its role in transformational social and intellectual change has charged it with a mission far beyond the traditional intellectual patriarchal preoccupations. In positing an appropriate *modus operandi* for feminist classrooms, it becomes apparent that contextual contradiction is unavoidable (indeed would feminists have invented a *locus* such as "the classroom?"). For this reason, a good point of departure for the Women's Studies teacher is to accept contradiction as a given and to negotiate it into the material of discourse.

Some Educational Theory for the Teaching of Women's Studies

We have found that the most valuable criterion for identifying a feminist orientation in a Women's Studies Programme is the possibility for students to participate in their own education.¹⁷

Traditional education recognizes three components in the teaching-learning process: the teacher-knower, the student-learner and the material passed from teacher to student. Here the focus is on the nature and "viability" of the material passed along, and on developing means to assess whether the student has absorbed the material and can "return" it to the teacher in an acceptable fashion. Frequently, methodology precedes questioning, since the student is expected to demonstrate the ability to use the methodological tools provided through a particular course or discipline. "Under patriarchy, method has wiped out women's questions so totally that even women have not been able to hear and formulate our own questions to meet our own experiences. Women have been unable even to experience our own experience."¹⁸ This view is further amplified here: "The present goal of education is not to challenge the basis assumptions of the disciplines, but to use one's mechanical ingenuity to reach the same basic conclusions."¹⁹

Curriculum in the academy is so smoothly carried on and so widely accepted that it is almost unnatural for student or professor, both validated by their very presence in the academy, to question its premises and assumptions, or to question its seemingly unassailable epistemology and consequent criteria of expertise, propriety and validation. The very existence of Women's Studies is a challenge to the *status quo* of centuries of male hegemony. Some Women's Studies courses and programmes attempt to avoid direct confrontation with the academy by applying a liberal attitude to Women's Studies, proposing issues which do not threaten the basis of "knowledge" but actually invite a simple extension of masculinist ideology to include them. Here the focus is on observation and description of sex stereotyping and sex bias. It does not overtly address the issue of sexism in power relationships or in a socio-economic context. "Implicit in this view is the concept that sexism exists within the realm of ideas, and if those ideas are changed, then social relationships will also change."²⁰ The need to become part of the academy will not only limit the extent of discovery, but it will also limit the mode of discovering.

Traditional pedagogy in the university assumes that all meaning is created by the teacher and passed along to the student. It believes in the supremacy of the official classroom discourse, dominated by teachers who set curriculum, assign tests and assert their ultimate authority through evaluation. But there is also a classroom sub-text composed of both verbal and nonverbal communication among the students both inside and outside of the class. Furthermore, the discourse may be created from different

needs than those legitimized by the academy and those groups whose interests it represents.²¹ While this sub-text or unofficial curriculum exists in all classrooms, it is bound to be especially charged with emotion in the field of Women's Studies. "The communication of feminist knowledge cannot be separated from its context. Where the context of teaching and learning has its own grounding, there too will the communication of knowledge be distinctly different from the mainstream."²²

The material of Women's Studies informs and is informed by the deepest affective relationships of both female and male students:

...women students are no longer studying material that is totally outside themselves, but are learning about the ways in which their social contexts have shaped them as women. In this process, social knowledge and self-knowledge become mutually informing... For them the personal becomes intellectual and the intellectual personal.²³

In developing an epistemology and methodology, Women's Studies cannot avoid touching on the "personal" dimensions of the lives of both teacher and student. "The premise that men dominate women, in however partial or subtle or brutal a way, lends a certain urgency to feminist investigations."²⁴ This urgency is experienced on the level of one's personal life: "What does this mean for me? How will it affect my relationships with my lover, my brother, my father, my friend?" It is experienced in one's public political sphere: "How can I escape this domination?" "Will it affect my future success or my ability to attain my own goals?" The fact that both teacher and student are plagued by the same questions, to which there may be no definitive answers, should be enough to reverse the traditional model of an "expert talking head," but requires the sacrifice of habit. Fortunately, there have been two particular philosophies of education which can help inform feminist pedagogy and transform it from "talking heads with enlightened material" to a self-reflective pedagogy which elicits experience, listens to it, offers informed response, shares the functions of leadership and develops appropriate praxis.

Humanistic Education was developed in conjunction with Humanistic Psychology and is a natural elaboration of progressive education. It articulates some principles for addressing emotionally charged subject matter within an academic environment. The premise on which it is based is that rather than avoiding potentially explosive affective material, one should *use* it as the students' most appropriate motivational base for learning: "...when students

perceive that they are free to follow their own goals, most of them invest more of themselves in their effort, work harder, and retain and use more of what they have learned than in conventional courses."²⁵ That is, people learn best when they are engaged both cognitively and affectively. Their best motivation is when they feel an affective *need* for the material they are learning. Courses begin with *students'* concerns and knowledge. Because all learning must be self-referred, Humanistic educators define the teacher's role to facilitate the students' discovering their own affective needs and developing curriculum appropriate to meeting those needs. All learning is essentially self-taught, with the teacher as midwife ...assisting in the emergence of consciousness. The midwife teacher's "first job is to preserve the students' infant new-born thoughts and see that they remain with their truths intact and do not turn into acceptable lies. Midwife teachers don't focus on their knowledge but on the students' knowledge."²⁶ The feminist teacher must furnish informed and empathic insight into the students' lives because "learnings which are threatening to the self are more easily perceived and assimilated when external threats are at a minimum."²⁷ It is the teacher-facilitator's role to help elicit and clarify the students' purposes, organize and make easily available to the students the widest and most relevant sources for learning, and to mirror for the class its collective intellectual and emotional climate. Students also can provide this mirroring for one another and for the teacher as well. While the Humanistic educator is most important in initiating the class and helping it get started, this leadership role should decline as the class progresses, allowing the students to lead themselves and use the teacher as a resource person. It becomes the teacher's job to become part of the class, and to share her experiences, feelings and skills with the students as they require them.²⁸

Another theorist of Humanistic Psychology and Education, Abraham Maslow, identifies "self-actualization" as the goal of Humanistic Education. He defines a "hierarchy of needs" which must be satisfied before people can reach this state of self-actualization. At the bottom are basic survival needs for physical and emotional safety; once these are satisfied, people can work to satisfy their needs for social and intellectual knowledge. He recognizes the difficulties of achieving self-actualization (claiming only 1 percent of the people ever reach it), and sees its relation to gender. In a letter, he claimed that because our culture disconfirms feminine modes, "our conceptions of the universe, of science, of intelligence [and] emotion are lopsided and partial because they have been constructed by man... If only women were allowed to be full human beings." He also thought that the closer both men and

women came to self-actualization, the more similar they would become, each having *all* the human qualities.²⁹ While feminists have taken issue with the limitations of Maslow's views on women, it is clear that he saw some of the epistemological problems of the hegemony without investigating them very thoroughly.

In an atmosphere as threatening as the feminist classroom, it is difficult to create a climate of safety, away from the tyranny of both the *status quo* and the politically correct, so that the students will take the risks necessary to face, explore and interrogate ideas which will challenge their self-concepts and *modus vivendi*. Humanistic Education can inform Women's Studies pedagogy with the stated recognition that affective and cognitive learning must be mutually reinforcing; that students arrive at school not as empty vessels to be "filled" by expert-teachers, but with considerable expertise on themselves and many potential contributions for the collective wisdom of the class. Carl Rogers, another Humanistic educator, argues that it is the function of teachers to help students work out feelings of incongruence which arise when their "experience is quite discrepant from the way ...[they have] ...organized ...[themselves]," when they dare to be aware of what they are experiencing without defending against their own experiences.³⁰ The means by which people may arrive at congruence is through what Rogers calls the "valuing process," where people rid themselves of "introjected" and often highly contradictory values from various formative sources through analyzing the sources of those values and the affect attached to them. This means "restoring contact with experience unmediated by others' introjections."³¹ While I would agree that it is essential for Women's Studies (if not *all*) students to analyze "introjected" values, this individualistic process of discovering psychological roots is insufficient; it is also vital to identify and address those systemic socio-political roots to institutionalized incongruence. In order to help students in this vital process, teachers must undertake to become facilitators rather than conduits of information. Rogers describes various desirable characteristics for good facilitation. The teacher/facilitator must be a "real person ...entering into a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or a facade." She must "prize" the learner's feelings and opinions and hold the belief that the other person is fundamentally trustworthy. Empathic understanding is a necessary quality as is the willingness to live in uncertainty where only what she discovers in the process of facilitating will guide her along the way.³² Good facilitative behaviours should include flexibility, accepting and addressing both the cognitive and affective attitudes within the group, becoming integrated as a

member of the group, and taking initiative in sharing her feelings and thoughts with the group.³³ The curriculum should emerge during courses, matching the students' emerging awareness and needs; Humanistic educators argue that by addressing the affective needs of the students, a level of motivation is touched which will enhance the rate of cognitive learning while simultaneously improving affective learning.

In its application to Women's Studies, Humanistic Education asserts that women have different styles of learning from men, and that it is the function of women's education to help women develop...

their own authentic voices... [by emphasizing] ...connection over separation, understanding and acceptance over assessment, and collaboration over debate; if they accord respect to and allow time for the knowledge that emerges from firsthand experience; if instead of imposing their own expectations and arbitrary requirements, they encourage students to evolve their own patterns of work based on the problems they are pursuing.³⁴

Having taught for the past fifteen years in The New School of Dawson College in Montréal, a community college programme based on Humanistic Education, I have had occasion to apply many of the concepts and practices of this educational philosophy to over twenty Women's Studies courses developed over the years in response to the students' articulated affective needs. In the next section of this paper, I will discuss some of these applications of Humanistic theory to actual practice.

While Humanistic Education does address the affective element of the students' confrontation with emotionally charged material and concepts, its focus is often exclusively on the individual psychological resolution or within the context of a particular reference group like a class or a T.group. Clearly many of its techniques can be of use in consciousness-raising groups which I will argue are essential on the introductory level of Women's Studies. However, one of the articulated objectives of Women's Studies is social change; the process of examining our own feelings about being women often leads us to a desire for such change. We rediscover...

what the guardians of knowledge have wanted us to forget: that knowledge and all the methods we have of obtaining it are human constructions ...the critical attitude leads us to the deepest level, the level of unquestioned assumption (which not at all infrequently turns out to be in metaphorical form), and then asks of the unquestionables *what* purpose they serve ...and *whose* purpose they serve.³⁵

Critical pedagogy or liberation education, a later development in educational thought, identifies as the best learning process a socially contextual one in which the students situate themselves within their social context through a process of critical questioning. Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educational philosopher, is most commonly associated with this philosophy. He argues that it is essential for individuals to come to a critical consciousness of their "own being in the world." To him, both teachers and students are agents engaged in the process of constructing and reconstructing meaning. He deplores the division of teaching and research:

The first researcher, then, in the classroom, is the teacher who investigates his or her students. This is one basic task of the liberatory classroom, but by itself it is only preparatory because the research process must animate students to study themselves, the course texts, and their own language and reality. I think this kind of classroom can produce **unsupervised or unofficial knowledge**.³⁶

While it is difficult to escape from the dominant ideology which

...lives inside us and also controls society outside, ...transformation is possible because ...as conscious human beings, we can discover how we are conditioned by the dominant ideology. We can gain distance on our moment of existence. Therefore, we can learn how to become free through a political struggle in society.³⁷

Liberation education, to Freire, rests on our understanding of the social context of teaching which is that "education *per se* is not the lever of revolutionary transformation. The school system was created by the political forces whose center of power is at a distance from the classroom."³⁸

The first requirement for liberatory education, to Freire, is that teachers and students both must be "critical agents in the act of knowing." Furthermore, teachers must be aware of a contradiction inherent to liberating education. Unless the teachers are convinced of what must be changed, they cannot convince the students. On the other hand, although they are convinced of the value of their positions, they must respect students and not impose ideas on them.³⁹

Liberating education is not just a question of methods or methodologies, but it has a radical and fundamentally different relationship to knowledge and society.

The criticism that liberating education has to offer emphatically is not the criticism which ends at the subsystem of education. On the contrary, the criticism in the liberatory class goes beyond the subsystem of education and becomes a criticism of society.⁴⁰

Freire emphasizes the importance of the dialogic approach, a dialogue among students and between students and teacher.

Dialogue is a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it... [it] seals the relationship between the cognitive subjects, the subjects who know, and who try to know ...dialogue is a challenge to existing domination. Also, with such a way of understanding dialogue, the object to be known is not an exclusive possession of one of the subjects doing the knowing, one of the people in the dialogue. In our case of education, knowledge of the object to be known is not the sole possession of the teacher, who gives the knowledge to the students in a gracious gesture. Instead ...the object to be known mediates the two cognitive subjects... They meet around it and through it for mutual inquiry.⁴¹

Freire is not opposed to the use of the lecture or "talking heads" pedagogy as long as it is preceded by questions related to the content and dynamism of the lecture:

Does it critically orient students to society? Does it animate their critical thinking or not? How is it possible for you to provoke critical attention by speaking? How to develop a certain dynamism in the interior of your speech? How to have in your speech the instrument to unveil reality, to make it no longer opaque? If you can do that in one hour for students! Afterwards the class takes your very speech as an object to be thought about. Do you see? You take your speech as a kind of oral codification of a problem, now to be decodified by the students and you. ...Here the importance is that the speech be taken as a **challenge** to be unveiled, and **never** as a channel of transference of knowledge.⁴²

While Freire emphasizes liberatory education, he acknowledges differences between educators and students with the rider that these differences must not become antagonistic. Teachers must accept the authority of their skills and knowledge without taking on authoritarianism. The teacher's authority rests on the conviction that it is "epistemologically possible, by listening to the students speak about their understanding of their world, to go with them towards the direction of a critical, scientific understanding of their world."⁴³

Freire is convinced that the basis of all knowledge is the consciousness of one's life in its fullest social context.

Through a dialogical approach to this life, bringing to light upon it various concepts and ideas, it is possible for a liberating education to take place. Freire's education of liberation, which must result in social class empowerment, differs from the Humanistic objective of self-actualization. "Even when you individually feel yourself most free, this feeling is not a social feeling, if you are not able to use your recent freedom to help others to be free by transforming the totality of society ...you are exercising only an individualist attitude towards empowerment or freedom."⁴⁴

A young generation of educational philosophers has amplified Freire's ideas into the notion of a "language of possibility." This language or pedagogy of possibility rests on a vision of collective human freedom:

An education that empowers for possibility must raise social questions of how we can work for the reconstruction of social imagination in the service of human freedom.... There is no moral vision other than the insistence on people having an equal claim to a place in the public arena.⁴⁵

That is, educators must educate students to "envisage versions of a world which is 'not yet' — in order to be able to alter the grounds upon which life is lived."⁴⁶ While these critical philosophers legitimate student voice and the radicalization of students, they do not sufficiently address differentiating factors among learners' voices like ethnicity, class, gender and race. It is clear through reading their work, and through their own recognition of some of their limitations, that there is a need for a theory of "critical psychology" without which "educators have no way of understanding the grip and force of alienating social structures as they manifest themselves in the lived but often non-discursive aspects of everyday life."⁴⁷

Women's Studies teachers working together have an excellent opportunity to apply concepts of critical pedagogy to their own situation as a group. Frequently, tensions arise from the blissful stance of "sentimental feminism" in a group of professionals who would like to believe that the absence of Y chromosomes will obliterate profound disagreement within the group. I have confected a small checklist of "Necessary Questions to Ask Oneself and Each Other in Formulating Women's Studies Programmes" [see Appendix A]. Addressing these questions as a group helps establish *a priori* where there are areas of agreement and disagreement, what expectations are reasonable of and by each person, and how the group feels about power — the social control of its members over one another, and their individual and combined power over their students.

Kathleen Weiler, an American follower of Freire's, applies much of his philosophy to Women's Studies in her recent book, *Women Teaching For Change: Gender, Class & Power*. Here she applies the self-referent element of much feminist thought to critical philosophy:

Before women researchers can understand the experiences and consciousness of other women, we must come to understand ourselves and the ways in which we know ...we must interrogate our own consciousness, language, and ways of knowing in order to come to see the realities of our own relationships. In this way, feminism asks for a radical reappraisal not only of practices, but of consciousness itself.⁴⁸

While she uses the discourse of a Freirean educator, she extends his inquiry to include an affective inventory of personal consciousness. She indicates no influence from the ideology of Humanistic Education within her hybrid of feminism and critical pedagogy; however, she hints at some Humanistic objectives in the form of a feminist as well as Freirean version of consciousness-raising:

The empowerment of students means encouraging them to explore and analyze the forces acting upon their lives. It means respecting and legitimizing students' own voices in the classroom. But the empowerment of students also must entail the empowerment of teachers. Teachers need to have their work as intellectuals respected and recognized.⁴⁹

These considerations return us temporarily to the beginning of this essay. Women's Studies is marginalized in the academy; most women's studies teachers establish their academic credibility through their non-feminist work and their ability to produce work acceptable to those disciplines established within a system characterized by the judicious distribution of favours and validation found most regularly in the fiefdoms of large courts. Feminist teaching and research, ideologically and methodologically at odds with the academy, can not expect the academy to extend its criteria to an understanding of the epistemology of Women's Studies. Rather, as women in the universities we must strike out alone, negotiating carefully for our survival, to theorize, research and report our newly acquired knowledge through a pedagogy consistent with our aims and historic situation.

For teachers to relinquish the safety of "talking heads," and replacing it with the great unknown of a feminist pedagogy addressing the students' articulated cognitive and affective and socio-political context, requires a real devotion to teaching and a strong feminist ideology. "Feminism is taught through process as well as formal

content. To reflect feminist values in teaching is to teach progressively, democratically, and with feeling."⁵⁰

Towards an Empowering Pedagogy of Women's Studies

G. H. Nemiroff: If an 18 year old feminist were to approach you with this question, how would you answer: "I want to become an active politician and change the condition of women in Canada. I have finished high school and/or CEGEP and I would like to know how I should be plotting my life in order to reach this goal. What should I study, do? Where should I become politically involved? At what level? And what should I definitely avoid?"

M. Bégin: (*laughter*) I can tell you like a recipe. I would tell her to immediately take a crash course of Women's Studies [now that is crystal clear] she must go through a crash [because time is of the essence] course in Women's Studies to really equip herself with a certain number of concepts and go through a consciousness-raising exercise as a woman to become a feminist ...to be equipped, on the one hand, with tools which I think are tools to understand what is going to happen to her and not take it personally ...and at the same time trying to give her a conscience as a woman for other women. Then to become a member of her local association. And third, take a course of strategy... and of course, that doesn't exist because I looked for it. That's what I learned ...we've never learned the rules of action as a collectivity ...of women. We are the weavers ...we weave *les bonnes relations humaines*. We're so good at that ...we're great communicators because it's needed for good human relations. And that, by the way, is a fantastic skill for a politician, but it's only one skill.

from an interview of the
Honourable Monique Bégin
by Greta Hofmann Nemiroff
Montreal, November 1987.

It is my impression that most students in post-secondary Women's Studies courses are between 18-28 years of age. These are crucial years in the development of women's attitudes, sexuality, relationships with their peers, and life planning. Many of them would like to move into positions of prestige and power in our society, but how would they respond to Bégin's "recipe?" Since so many of the issues brought up in Women's Studies are so emotionally charged for women, there is a tendency among Women's Studies teachers to evade "emotional issues" and move right along into dense cognitive material which in itself can evoke anxiety and confusion which will remain unresolved if they are not addressed. It has been my experience that no matter how "objective" the starting point may seem from a distance, it is almost impossible to predict how the students will respond in Women's Studies courses. Some years ago in a Women's Studies class, I

assigned a chapter from *The Second Sex* for my students to read and respond to by writing on some aspect of de Beauvoir's text, which they could relate to their own experiences. In the assigned text, de Beauvoir makes two passing references to virginity. Five out of the twelve young women in the class, three of whom are sexually active lesbians, chose to comment on virginity, identifying themselves as virgins and writing rather confusing accounts of the value of virginity in their own lives. Now, from the vantage point of my age and understanding of my students' sexual activity, I had drawn the erroneous conclusion that virginity is not an important issue to them. Furthermore, it was not an important issue in the reading. I was curious about their selection; it precipitated a fascinating discussion on the meaning of virginity in heterosexual and all-female contexts. Is it a valid category to feminists ...to lesbians? To whose interest has this category been developed?

Women students come to us socialized into telling teachers what they think we want to hear. At school, they have usually been denied their own voice and experience through the imposition of the dominant world view derived from the patriarchy. Male professors tend to call less on women students, to ask them less probing questions, and to interrupt them more often. They tend to reward the kind of "devil's advocate" discussion and assertive speech that "bright young men" are educated to produce. Too often, women who try to replicate the latter "male style" are dismissed as "hostile."⁵¹ One of the functions of feminist pedagogy must be to help our women students break that silence by entering into dialogue with them, meeting them women-to-women, and learning in community with them.

...in breaking those silences, naming ourselves, uncovering the hidden, making ourselves present, we begin to define a reality which resonates to us, which affirms *our* being, which allows the woman teacher and the woman student alike to take ourselves, and each other, seriously: meaning, to begin taking charge of our lives.⁵²

Women's Studies teachers (as well as other women teachers in the university and college setting) have a difficult role, especially since "the context in which we teach tends to limit and corrupt our ability to deal with the issues we are discussing."⁵³ First we must deal with how we may appear to the students. We are frequent bearers of bad news; who else in the academy "fixates" on rape, incest, family violence, poverty, racism, classism, economic and educational inequities, in a way that so viscerally refers to *them*? Sometimes we may appear as the

archetypal bitter women, all-head-no-heart, who could be “cured” by the proverbial “good fuck.” Some of us may appear as mother-figures giving nurturance, but also withholding from and punishing students; we may be necessary for comfort, but we may also reinforce a feared dependency if such comfort is too easily accepted. It is difficult as a teacher to act in a relationship bearing echoes of that “lifelong relationship imbued with a complex and contradictory dynamic of individuation and fusion.”⁵⁴ We also represent an updated stereotype of the blue-stocking: brainy woman, mythic teacher, sexless virago, phallic mother who sometimes bears a fearsome resemblance to the father, the word-giver and truth-sayer.⁵⁵ Thus, the feminist classroom can become “transformed into a privileged space, the *locus desperatus* of reenacting, and perhaps examining for the first time, both threatening and joyous psychic events at a telling moment in the students’ developmental life.”⁵⁶

Not only can “personal discussion” shed light on the students’ images of women teachers, but very often the classroom becomes the locus of angry behaviour. Manifestations may include stone-walling, angry denial, defensiveness, and accusatory behaviour focussed on the teacher herself. Sometimes there is lateral flailing of students against one another, often through the use of stereotypical epithets such as “air-head,” “dyke,” or “women’s libber.”

Where does all this leave the teacher? Some teachers avoid addressing their students’ emotional responses to the material of the class through denial, ignoring them, or creating a context in which there is no room for the expression of the students’ feelings. They might resent the course agenda being “interrupted” by outbreaks of temper, tears, denunciation, divisiveness, vulnerability, awareness of love and hate, and exhibitions of self-rejection.⁵⁷ Because teachers have not only been educated, but have succeeded in complicity with male values and methodologies, many of us find that in Women’s Studies we are called upon to deal with more than we ever bargained for as teachers in our original disciplines. The first requirement of feminist pedagogy is to understand that “the *communication* of feminist knowledge cannot be separated from its *context*. Where the context of teaching and learning has its own grounding, there too will the communication of knowledge be distinctly different from the mainstream.”⁵⁸

The next task for feminist pedagogy is to understand our role not only in evoking, but in mediating the emotion which surfaces in our classrooms. I am not suggesting that the feminist classroom must become a centre for mass

self-indulgent catharsis. I suggest that not addressing the relationship between course material and each student’s experience is a betrayal of their trust in us; further, not only do we deny them the *means* of processing information in a manner relevant to themselves, but we are in danger of creating within them a long-term resistance to feminism. This is indeed wasteful, especially since our students are a self-selected group of potential allies. The role of the Women’s Studies teacher is to make the process conscious and the content significant. In order to achieve these objectives, we must recognize the students’ feelings, confirm their validity, and help the students deal with them. To accomplish this feat in good faith, we must disclose our share in such feelings and how we have dealt with them in our own lives. Of course, “for us as teachers, revealing ourselves as human beings is especially frightening and perilous, for it means we divest ourselves of what little institutional protection and power we possess, making us doubly vulnerable.”⁵⁹ In sharing and interpreting our feelings and situations and our strategies to improve women’s lot, teachers and students *both* become empowered by the fact that, through this process, they have moved from being consumers of knowledge to being creators of knowledge. This does not mean that teachers or students should be forced to self-disclose. Ground-rules can always be set in the beginning giving *every* member of the class the right to “pass” on a subject. Teachers and students both have a right to declare certain issues beyond our capacities for personal and/or professional reasons. However, we owe it to our students to assure them that our reasons are not a judgement on *them*. Various resources and institutions, which have been created to address many of the personal and political issues raised by our students, exist in our communities. It must not be overlooked that there is great value in peer intervention. Peers are able to communicate meaningfully with one another and to provide support in situations requiring a judicious mixture of support and good sense.

On hearing views like those above, other teachers often remonstrate that they are teachers, not friends, that such pedagogy is time-consuming and they already have their hands full with their own families and friends. My own experience is that while it might require some class time to address the students’ personal issues, class work can be organized to utilize peer intervention as well as the teacher’s. Written assignments may provide occasions for the expression of the students’ own feelings and responses. The fact that the students’ “real lives” are being shared in the classroom changes the dynamic of the feminist classroom, making it a place for their authentic voices to emerge — very often for the first time in public. It helps

students build confidence and improve their skills of public presentation. It also makes the work more interesting to them. We “do not need to establish a lasting, time-consuming personal relationship with every student” but simply “to be totally and nonselectively present to ...each student as she addresses us.”⁶⁰ After all, “giving information is the easiest part of teaching. The real challenge is to teach skills and inspire an interest that enables students to understand the content more fully during the course, and to take that understanding with them into the rest of their lives.”⁶¹

Many techniques have been developed for affective and critical pedagogies within Women’s Studies. It is always important to make sure that the layout of the class is viable for intra-student discussion. One can start the curriculum from the students’ articulated needs. I often ask them to articulate the question they would pose if they were guaranteed one absolutely true answer on something related to their own experience as women. Other times I ask them to write down the five most important issues in their current lives. They then refine their issues: which ones are urgent? Which ones are long term? Which ones can they share in the group? Which ones must they address elsewhere and how? How many of their issues relate to their gender in any way? They then select one issue related to gender (if possible) which they can share in a small group. In both cases, we put the questions and issues on the board as a foundation for our curriculum. Clearly it takes some skill to help them elaborate their issues and questions; we usually can identify various common themes running through them. Through consensus, we then place them in order of priority and agree on a preliminary assignment to be done at home and brought to the next class. It is usually my task as teacher to find readings and devise assignments appropriate to their articulated needs. At our second class, we might be ready to formulate a contract for class work. Individual students also write personal contracts with reference to their affective, cognitive and social needs. As the course continues, the contract can be renegotiated with everyone’s agreement. Subjects are interrogated on all levels: the affective, the cognitive, the social and the political. Sometimes we may become mired in emotion, but dealing with that is always instructive. Some years ago, I worked with a Women’s Studies class which identified as a priority to come to grips with the historical, geographical and cross-cultural bases of male violence against women. Some of the women were rape or incest survivors. One had briefly been a prostitute. For weeks, every class would disintegrate into tears of sadness and rage. To my surprise, I eventually found myself becoming impatient. I had an agenda too; I had picked superb and provocative readings

which they had read and written upon but never got to discuss fully in class. They had indicated the desire to hone their cognitive skills and wanted to excel in school. I shared my concerns with them, posing the following question: **Can there be an end to tears, and if so, what do you do after they stop?** The next week they shared their written responses in class. During that week some students had conversed and they had all reflected on this question, coming to the conclusion that tears and rage must be replaced by political action. Consequently, each member contracted to find some appropriate locus and form of empowering action in the face of male violence. One student initiated a media-watch study in the school the following year, extending her “praxis” into the community by lecturing on pornography and sex-role stereotyping for high school students. While this is an act of political action *for* others, it also helped a rather shy young woman find a passionate public voice for herself, becoming empowered by that process to anticipate a life’s engagement in women’s struggles.

Over the past two decades, many excellent pedagogical techniques have been developed in feminist experimental workshops. Many of these models can be applied to transforming the feminist classroom into a dynamic centre of dialogue. Students may maintain journals on their readings, on their experiences, or on their feelings vis-à-vis the latter. They can share these journals in small groups responding to one another’s work in writing. There are many interpersonal activities which can be developed in relation to cognitively dense course content. One can form students into small groups and give them a concept to decode together, then apply it to their own personal experiences which they share. By hearing other students’ interpretations and applications, they may be asked to refine their understanding of the concept. Does the concept ring true to their experiences? An open class discussion helps process the different views developed in small groups. This way, they learn the value of dialogue and collaboration, of review and verification on the basis of their own and others’ experiences, and how to critique and refine their concepts.

One way to ensure that the students focus on a critique of the social context in which they live *qua women* is to suggest compiling an inventory on the institution where the course is taking place. How does it treat women? I often start this by handing out a check list [see Appendix B] which they fill out first to identify those questions they have thought of and those to which they know the answers. They then research what they do not know. We discuss their information in class and formulate strategies

to effect change. Since we cannot “do it all,” the project is, among other things, a process of discovering how to set realistic goals. The list has changed over the years due to the contributions of countless women and women’s groups. It is an interesting point of departure for critical pedagogy.

Consciousness-raising groups should be an option, especially for introductory Women’s Studies courses. Many of us early Women’s Studies teachers were participants in such groups, using them to process our own lives from a feminist standpoint. All too often they are dismissed by these “veterans” as “old hat,” or “We’ve already done that!” This dismissive attitude may reveal our desire to come to terms with our past, but it is not helpful to those students who would benefit from the autonomy of a consciousness-raising group concomitant with their Women’s Studies classes. It is possible to ensure that consciousness-raising be grounded in both the Humanistic model of the analysis of introjected values and self-disclosure and the Freirean notion of “conscientization.” Consciousness-raising is an excellent vehicle for processing what happens both in the classroom and other parts of the students’ rather complex lives. These groups should be egalitarian and student-centered with the agenda emerging according to the needs of the group involved. Discourse should be exploratory, participatory and confirming of the students’ perceptions and choices, even when people may disagree. By their processes, consciousness-raising groups will give students a taste of social transformation, as well as providing a locale for the healing that results when people begin to rename reality according to their own experience.⁶² The groups themselves may inform the teacher of their progress without disclosing confidential details about their content and process. In 1973, I introduced a pilot consciousness-raising type group on a voluntary basis in a large Women’s Studies class I was co-teaching at Concordia University. Interestingly, not only did the twelve participants evaluate the experience very highly, but they all did substantially better than the class norm, none of them getting a grade under 80 percent. This would indicate that attention to the affective elements of Women’s Studies can increase the cognitive understanding of the material as well.

Modes of evaluation are an important factor in empowering pedagogy. The class should practice on-going evaluation of its process and direction, with everyone participating. Some evaluations might result in new contracts, others in the formulation of different tasks. Self-evaluations on the part of students and teachers are very important learning experiences, as are evaluation and feed-back by

others in the course. The process of establishing collective criteria for evaluation is instructive on both the affective and critical levels.

Other pedagogical practices may consist of group projects where resources, readings and contacts are shared; fostering collective problem solving; fostering the choice and exploration of life options, and developing assignments which encourage students to use their personal experience.⁶³

The Course That Wouldn’t End

I would like to conclude this paper with a description of a Women’s Studies course I facilitated at the New School of Dawson College in 1984. Here I think I reached the closest I ever have to a continual collaboration between Humanistic and Critical pedagogies; so much so that the dialogue appears to be without end. That semester there were many events about women going on in Montreal: McGill University was celebrating the centenary of women’s participation in the university with speakers, panels, films, and exhibitions. CRIAW was having its annual conference in Montreal; the YWCA was holding a weekend conference on pornography; and NAC was having its mid-year meeting in Montreal.

I informed students about these events and suggested formulating a course around them. When we looked for the students’ motivation, it arose from the fact that they were unaware of the possibilities for participation in the Montreal women’s movement. They wanted to find out what resources were available to them. We talked at length of their *feelings* about their isolation from other women; we examined the socio-political context which encourages the atomization of women in our society and how their own situations reflected this. Eventually, they traded off working for free admission to some of the conferences, and they spent much time deciding which workshops and/or talks they would exchange. After a few weeks, they decided that they wanted to explore the resources for women in Montreal. To this end, I designed a “treasure hunt” where they had to visit each place they heard about and write up an information sheet about its services. We decided that we would combine these in a loose-leaf as a community resource in our school library. When they complained about traveling to places they did not know in new neighbourhoods, we had a fascinating discussion on the roots of xenophobia and how they may apply to women and men’s attitudes to women. The next term they made a small reference booklet from their information, which they sold to raise money for an elaborate International Women’s Week celebration in the school.

The “official curriculum” of this course offered the students a chance to investigate local service resources, national resources (NAC), and intellectual resources (McGill and CRIAW) in Canada. They maintained journals on what they observed, what they felt, and what they learned from their feelings, observations and analyses. Each student decided to research a subject that interested her and make a class presentation.

However, it was the “unofficial curriculum” which had the most impact on them. Frequently we had to stop and examine how the members were feeling about proceedings. Sometimes they were blocked by complicated feelings which became unblocked through discussion and allowed us to continue with our project. This always ultimately saves rather than wastes time. Not only did they learn how to work collaboratively, but they also learned how difficult it is to maintain a high level of group motivation through the vicissitudes of their “treasure hunt” project. They learned how to negotiate their way into conferences which were too costly for them.

The obverse side of this experience was that sometimes they were exploited and/or treated with extreme condescension by some of the women running the events where they helped. This hurt their feelings, but we had very interesting discussions speculating why older women would treat younger women so shoddily.

Some of them decided to take part in an anti-pornography demonstration. They had never demonstrated and were most interested in the dynamics of the experience. They learned about the immensity of the field of Women’s Studies and the dedication of women scholars through their attendance at McGill and CRIAW. The sessions the students attended not only increased their knowledge, but also provided for them role models of accomplished women who take women very seriously indeed. Through their visits to resource centers and their attendance at the various conferences, the young women in the course formed strong friendships which are still in existence.

At the “official” end of the course, many of the students expressed a wish to carry on the next term with a course on women in politics in Canada. As part of that course, we attended the annual general meeting of NAC in Ottawa. At the NAC lobby, they could see their “representatives” close up and had the opportunity to enter into direct argument with John Crosby, then Minister of Justice, on issues related to sexual orientation in the Charter of Rights.

While they enjoyed and learned from this conference, the students wondered why there were not more young women at NAC. The mean age appeared to be around 40. They volunteered to present a workshop for young women at the next annual general meeting. Since that time, some of the students from that class, plus new students, attended the NAC annual conference and lobby, where they offered very successful workshops for young women. Naturally, the workshops were prepared together with other young women, and they availed themselves of my experience as a workshop designer. After two years of workshops, one of the students felt she was ready to run for the NAC executive. By this time, she was in university but coming back to visit the school on a regular basis. After some brainstorming about her written campaign material and her speech before the assembly, we accompanied her to Ottawa where she was duly voted onto the executive of NAC on a platform emphasizing the need to attract young women to the women’s movement in Canada. There were various crises over her first year, like “How do you make a budget?” On the whole, though, she and her group extended themselves to set up a NAC young women’s group in Montreal.

The next year she and another young woman graduate returned to the New School as volunteer teachers, offering a course entitled “Being Young Women.” They have offered this course twice and with great success. Since they were shocked by the lack of print material on feminist options for young women, they were interested in finding material by young Canadian women for a school text aimed at that clientele. They were initiating efforts to get such a book together when last seen.

This course illustrates what can happen through the concurrent application of Humanistic and Critical pedagogies. While the original impulse was one of searching for resources for their own immediate needs, the students developed a praxis for themselves in which they slowly took on further-reaching feminist projects requiring increasing courage. Their “informal curriculum” of collaboration, mutual support and consciousness-raising discussions late at night sustained them through this process. From reaching out into the larger community, they also gained experience to recycle at the school three years after their leaving it. I doubt that they could have become prepared to undertake these opportunities for learning, for teaching, and for political participation and strategizing by a course based solely on the traditional “talking heads pedagogy.” While a “course that never ended” might be a demanding reality in the life of a busy person, my own experience is that having a front seat at the process

of young women preparing themselves to take charge is rewarding and energizing. The "work" of our continuing dialogue provides me with a continuing sense of confirmation, purpose and contribution as an educator, and helps to keep me motivated those times when a pay cheque somehow is not enough. In a society which actively disconfirms women and rewards passivity in its schools, a pedagogy of empowerment is essential for the progress of women. If Women's Studies teachers are not ready to take on the task of facilitating the empowerment of our students, what are we doing in the field?

NOTES

1. As far as I can ascertain from discussions with other founding "mothers" of Women's Studies in Canada, the course "Women's Identity and Image," which I co-taught at Sir George William University (now Concordia University) of Montreal with Sister Prudence Allen (then Christine Garside) was the first Women's Studies course taught in a Canadian university. In 1968, we were beginning our proposal for the course which was first taught in an English university in 1970. It appears that Women's Studies was also taught at the Université du Québec à Montréal at the same time.
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15. Charlotte Bunch and Sandra Pollack (eds.), *Learning Our Way: Essays in Feminist Education*. Trumansburg, New York: The Crossing Press Feminist Series, 1983, p. 257. Hereafter cited as *Bunch*.
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31. *Ibid*, pp. 265-266.
32. *Ibid*, pp. 121-128.
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40. *Freire*, p. 35.
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42. *Freire*, p. 40.
43. *Freire*, p. 100.
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53. Culley, p. 13.
54. Culley, p. 16.
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56. Culley, p. 18.
57. Culley, p. 15.
58. Raymond, p. 59.
59. Culley, p. 18.
60. Belenky, p. 225.
61. Bunch, p. 260.
62. Bricker-Jenkins, p. 39.
63. Bricker-Jenkins, p. 41.

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APPENDIX A

CHECKLIST OF NECESSARY QUESTIONS TO ASK ONESELF AND EACH OTHER IN FORMULATING WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAMMES

1. What kind of a feminist am I? To be shared with all.
2. What values are the *sine qua non* of feminist education?
3. What are the content and methodological criteria for Women's Studies courses?
4. What are the content and methodological criteria for cross-listed courses?
5. What are the criteria for personnel to teach Women's Studies and cross-referenced courses?

6. What are the *sine qua non*'s of a Women's Studies programme?
7. What is our "feminist" commitment as a group?
8. How much time is each member willing to contribute to the group and programme over the next year?
9. What is the best internal structure for our programme, and why?
10. What matters external to the Women's Studies programme are we willing, unwilling, and/or unable to address as a group?
11. Do we want, in the long run, to effect change in the content and methodology of all courses in our college/university?
12. How will our programme interface with other departments?
13. How will our programme interface with the larger structures of our institution?
14. How will our programme relate to the community outside of our institution?
15. What is our attitude to questions of power: over members of the group? over students?
11. _____ Is there a hidden curriculum in your programmes or courses which reveals a masculinist bias?
12. _____ Is the teaching methodology equally empowering to women and men?
13. _____ Are teachers trained and/or expected to be aware of the issues of sexist bias and the different learning and communication styles linked to gender?
14. _____ In preparing your women students for the workplace, do you make sure that they are aware of problems of systemic and individual discrimination, sexual harassment, or exclusion from the informal information network enjoyed by men?
15. _____ Do your library and media services make a special effort to purchase material related to women's issues?
16. _____ Does your institution have a Women's Studies program?
17. _____ Does your institution have a Women's Studies department?
18. _____ What percentage of your tenured faculty are women?
19. _____ What percentage of your tenure-track faculty are women?
20. _____ Is there a policy of affirmative action with regard to gender in your institution?
21. _____ Does your institution have and apply a sexual harassment policy?
22. _____ Is the administration of your institution aware of the systemic discrimination of women and dedicated to its eradication?

APPENDIX B

HOW DOES YOUR SCHOOL ADDRESS WOMEN? A CHECK LIST

1. _____ Does your promotional material show females as *active and equal participants* to males?
2. _____ Are your counsellors aware of special needs of women students?
3. _____ Are academic, personal or career counsellors advised of the special counselling styles and information appropriate to the promotion of equality between the sexes? Is there a critical mass of women in these positions?
4. _____ Are there sufficient numbers of extra-curricular activities of interest to both sexes?
5. _____ Is the athletics programme equally varied, equally accessible to both sexes, and does it accord equal status to both sexes and their activities?
6. _____ Are there an equal number of women role models of professional success to males in the same categories in your school (i.e., teachers, professionals, administration)?
7. _____ Are women encouraged to excel in fields not traditionally associated with women?
8. _____ Have all aspects of your curriculum been rigorously examined for biases which either exclude or discriminate against women?
9. _____ Is material relevant to women's situation included in your curriculum in equal concentration to that relevant to men's?
10. _____ Do you examine your written material to make sure it is neither sexist nor gender insensitive?