

EDUCATING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:

CHALLENGING PATRIARCHAL ARTICULATIONS OF THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND
DOMINANT DISCOURSES OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN ACADEMIA

Dr. Antoinette D'amant¹

¹(University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

Abstract: *As a South African educator for inclusion and social justice, it is essential to be self-reflective about all aspects of identity which relate to diversity and differential power relations. Towards this end, I am part of a group of critical academics and practitioners committed to researching ourselves within the context of autobiographical studies. We employ various visual methodologies as tools for developing reflexivity as part of personal and professional transformation and social awareness. This conceptual paper is a result of one of these exercises and is based on critical reflection of an artwork of mine which has as its central focus a portrait of me and my horse, a gentle 15-year-old Chestnut gelding, against a backdrop of the medieval labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral in France. This exercise initially began as a process of artistic creation indulging aspects of my experiences and interests. Critical reflection on the artwork uncovered embedded commentary on the densely charged political context of the challenges and possibilities of educating for social justice within academia. This paper discusses how the equine perspective and the lost feminine aspect of knowledge could inform teaching and learning strategies that contribute to a critical pedagogy which challenges masculine articulations of the professional identity and dominant discourses in academia. Despite progressive policies, educators still need to develop new ways of teaching which challenge the prevailing system of social relations; and disrupt and unsettle the stereotypical assumptions of a dominant masculine discourse in academia.*

Key Words: Educating for social justice, Educators as transformative agents, Disrupting dominant patriarchal traditions in academia

Research Area: Social Science

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1. TRANSFORMING SOUTH AFRICA'S SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

It was evident by the last decade of the twentieth century, that the exclusionary politics of South Africa's past had run its course and that we needed to find a way to transform our social landscape by creating a radically inclusive and participatory social discourse in which diversity is celebrated and equality of opportunity promoted (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht, 1999). Such a discourse requires informed citizens who possess certain attitudes, forms of consciousness and commitments conducive to a deep sense of common good. Over a decade into our 'new' South Africa, we are realising that a well-intentioned Constitution and a set of progressive educational policies are not enough to bring about the healing of the divisions of our past. and the social transformation that our country desperately needs. We still need to find ways of confronting and breaking down old myths, ignorance, prejudice and fundamental disrespect of others. We still need to find ways of relating to each other in ways that sustain social cohesion and co-operation without suppressing our

differences. Embracing this liberal and progressive vision requires a radical restructuring of our society and a “reculturing and restructuring” (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007, 101) of our education system. Educators still need to develop new ways of thinking and teaching which seriously challenge the prevailing system of social relations and “enable attitudes to shift and awareness to deepen” (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007, 90); to take on the mantle of transformative agents (Giroux, 1988) - cultural workers for self and social emancipation (Freire, 1998); and commit to teaching for social responsibility, social change and social justice (Cochran-Smith, 1991).

As a South African educator for social justice, it is essential to be self-reflective about all aspects of my identity which relate in any way to diversity and differential power relations. Towards this end, I am part of a working group of critical academics and practitioners committed to researching ourselves within the context of autobiographical studies. We employ various visual methodologies as tools for developing reflexivity as part of personal and professional transformation and social awareness. This paper is a result of one of these exercises and is based on critical reflection of an artwork of mine which has as its central focus a portrait of me and my horse, Willpower, a gentle 15-year-old Chestnut gelding, against a backdrop of the medieval labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral in France. This exercise initially began as a process of artistic creation which indulged aspects of my experiences and interests with no critical agenda or scholarly thought on professional identity or practices. While comprising images of concrete historical moments for me, critical reflection on the artwork uncovered embedded commentary on the densely charged political context of the challenges and possibilities of educating for social justice within academia. This paper presents themes of understanding the equine perspective and acknowledging the lost feminine which emerged from this interactive process with the visual text. It further discusses how these relate to my work in educating for social justice and how they contribute to developing a critical pedagogy which challenges masculine articulations of the professional identity in academia and dominant discourses in education at university level.

2. TRANSLATING THE EQUINE PERSPECTIVE INTO HUMAN CONTEXT

I met Willpower about eight years ago. After having two bad falls and losing my nerve to ride, it was suggested that I try riding him. Willpower had come to the yard from a previous owner at whose hands he had suffered abuse and neglect. He was an angry horse with a large saddle sore on his back, refusing to allow anyone too close to him. Months later, after his saddle sore had healed, he slowly succumbed to being ridden, but would constantly bite anyone attempting to groom him or saddle him up, and constantly rear before going out of the gate on a ride in protest. His mistrust of people in general was obvious. The suggestion that I try riding him was unnerving, to say the least. As warned, Willpower reared at the gate. It was more an instinctual than conscious decision - I leaned over his head and rubbed his forelock, gently telling him we were both going to be OK. He calmed, walked out of the gate and we had a wonderful ride. My confidence grew a little more every time I rode Willpower. I can now say that I am a relaxed and confident rider again. I have spent as much time on the ground with Willpower as I have in the saddle and we have developed a respectful and loving relationship. He now knows my voice and comes to the fence with greetings when I arrive at the yard. He allows me to groom him and clean his hooves with no hint of biting, and he never rears at the gate anymore. This magnificent creature has become an important part of my life, bringing me hours of joy and friendship. It seems we have brought each other much healing. We have learned to trust each other and draw courage from each other. From a horse

whose spirit had been broken and body abused, I am seeing a growing change in this beautiful gelding and enjoying being witness to him regaining his spirit and individuality.

I have committed to never treating him in any other manner than with love and respect, in contrast to his previous owner who viewed his mounts simply as machines to be dominated, used and discarded without conscience. I ride him with a light yet persuasive touch, encouraging him as an “agile, thoughtful partner rather than a dissociative, machinelike mode of transportation” (Kohanov, 2013, 54). No doubt my gentleness would be criticized by those who believe riders need to show their horses who is in control. I believe people have historically relied too much on the use of abusive dominance techniques in their workings with horses and that there are other ways to work with these exquisite sensitive and intelligent animals. I remain committed to becoming a rider capable of harnessing the power and intelligence of my horse without conquering and repressing his spirit.

Kohanov (2013; 2003) has written extensively on mastering an alternative human-equine relationship. I find her writings intriguing and much of her philosophy informs my relationship with Willpower. I have chosen to develop a partnership with him – one of trust, genuine caring and mutual respect that demands compassion, sensitivity and a continuous awareness and respect for the other’s dignity. I have learned that if I force him to do something through a show of dominance, he loses the trust and mutual respect I have been at pains to build between us. But if I come alongside him in a manner which shows my intention to be an equal partner eager to work with him, the trust and mutual respect is maintained. In such an atmosphere of compassion and sensitivity, there is no place for abuse or enslavement. The more I work with Willpower, the more I understand why Kohanov encourages riders to set aside the need to be in control and work, instead, within an ethic of collaboration. Kohanov (2013, 3) poses the question: “What might we accomplish if we finally understood how to be powerful, together?”

I find this notion inspiring in both my work with Willpower and in my work as an educator for social justice. Against an historical backdrop in South Africa of education which practiced exclusion, segregation and unequal power relations between diverse social groups (Clark, Dyson and Millward, 1995), education today is responsible for nurturing a vision that takes the project of human liberation and social justice seriously – one that presents students with the means to transcend the divisions of the past, and finds an alternative framework for coexistence between diverse others (Sands, Kozleski and French, 2000). Ultimately, my role is to function as a “transformative agent”, “combining reflection and action in the interest of empowering students with the skills and knowledge needed to address injustices and to be critical actors committed to developing a world free of oppression” (Giroux, 1988, p.xxxiv). Kohanov (2013) claims that learning to form effective, working partnerships with horses provides important lessons for people in leadership and teaching. Understanding the equine perspective and translating horses’ intensely social, no predatory perspective on power into human context, “actively models how members of a free society would be expected to treat their colleagues, and their subordinates” (Kohanov, 2013, 56), thus providing the ultimate education in being able to empower ourselves and inspire others towards social change.

Fundamental to the equine perspective and educating for social justice, is building relationships of trust and respect and developing power *with* others, rather than perpetuating the historical focus on power *over* others. Fundamental to my role as transformative agent and cultural worker for social emancipation, is the nature of my relationship with my students

establishing safe environments of mutual trust and respect, coming alongside students in a supportive but challenging way and encouraging them to critically examine sensitive and personal issues through a variety of methodologies and strategies. Working *with* students towards social transformation within an ethic of collaboration mirrors the equine perspective that Kohanov presents. This ideology also aligns with Kreisberg's (1992) 'power with' vs. 'power over' paradigm for enacting the goals of social justice, and Charmaz's (in Denzin and Giardina, 2016) belief that working and researching *with* (not on or about) disadvantaged participants and their stories moves our studies and our work toward social justice.

3. ACKNOWLEDGING THE LOST FEMININE

My fascination with the Chartres labyrinth inspired the background image of my artwork. Walking the labyrinth is a spiritual practice believed to symbolize finding our path through life, to healing, balance and spiritual wholeness. My interest in labyrinths leads me to visit Chartres on a recent trip to France and walk this ancient labyrinth which was constructed in the 12th century and is one of the original labyrinths from the Middle Ages (Artress, 2006). The labyrinth is an ancient symbol of importance in heretic cultures, symbolizing matriarchal spirituality and acknowledging the equal importance of both masculine and feminine aspects to all things - a way of thinking especially heretical in the Middle Ages as the Church did not recognize the equal role of the feminine, but limited the feminine presence to the periphery of things sacred. The circular design of the labyrinth symbolizes "the inner map of knowing in women" (Artress, 2006, 54); the feminine aspect which has historically been absent from much of life and spirituality in our Western culture; the lost feminine.

Men and women have historically inhabited very different worlds. Men have had the power and autonomy to make the rules and define knowledge and truth, while women have been domesticated and subordinated, rendered powerless and subservient, having their choices and potentially restricted and limited. Women have lived for centuries under the patriarchal rule - overlooked, disenfranchised, exploited, devalued and often dehumanized. Years of masculine domination and subordinating and devaluing the feminine have resulted in the suppression and demonization of many aspects of feminine knowledge and values. Cycles of socialisation (Harro, 2000) have proved a powerful force in keeping men and women trapped in rigid roles and definitions of masculinity and femininity and producing and maintaining stereotypes of what characteristics and qualities the different genders should possess and aspire to. Human qualities have been systematically divided, polarized, and labelled masculine and feminine, and then the feminine has been consistently devalued. Hence our present tendencies to emphasize thought over emotion, logic, and reason over intuition, the territory over a relationship, goal over the process, strategy over responsiveness, force and coercion over collaboration, competition over cooperation, and judgement over compassion.

Essential to the equine perspective is the need to reclaim modes of wisdom and interaction, based not on conquest and domination, but on harmony and collaboration – indicative of a more intuitive and compassionate spirit, where we relate to each other as sensitive beings worthy of collaboration rather than domination. In its quest to discover new ways of negotiating power, the equine perspective is directly aligned to the notion of acknowledging the lost feminine. Both the equine perspective and acknowledging the lost feminine are movements facilitating the discovery of ways of being and working together where differences between individuals and social groups add richness to our lives rather than make us retreat into the traditional imbalances of the past.

While I created this artwork with no critical agenda and the two images I selected simply comprise two different concrete historical moments for me, the embedded meanings in both visual images are remarkably similar. What emerged from the artwork as a whole was a commentary on the densely charged political context of challenging masculine articulations of the professional identity in academia, reclaiming feminine aspects in educating for social justice, and finding a healthy balance between the two.

3.1 Telling our stories

When facilitating awareness of the prejudice, discrimination and oppression that surrounds various forms of diversity, I have found no better way than to have students share the stories of their experiences of these. Narrative storytelling facilitates students' self-reflection about their own journeys of socialization, understandings of how they have assimilated and internalized certain attitudes and values about diversity in its various forms, and how they may even be perpetuating certain stereotypes and prejudices in their daily lives. I am constantly witnessing the "healing qualities of narratives" (Gilyard, 1996, 99). Telling their stories, getting them out there, in all their pain, incoherence, contradiction, ambiguity and fragmentation, seems the first and most important step for students to take towards healing and beginning the process of redefining themselves and their worlds.

Narratives that function in emotive ways are potential catalysts for action and can work effectively for social change (Hogan, 2006; Blackburn, in Hammack and Cohler, 2009). Counternarratives (stories told and experienced related by those individuals previously marginalized and oppressed) "constitute and restore identities that are not always valued in society" (Blackburn, in Hammack and Cohler, 2009, 133), and "serve to restore meaning to individual existence" (Bacon, 1998, 254). Narrative exercises can be transformative because of their potential to facilitate the empowerment and liberation of students to change their conditions and renegotiate their identities. Having the opportunity to tell their stories encourages the authentic participation of students and affords them the space for critical self-reflection on internal and external structures and systems, which may have been keeping them trapped in traditional, unequal and harmful power relations.

Narratives have a fundamental effect on both the tellers and the listeners. The telling and the hearing of experiences, feelings and responses of people who have suffered oppression play a significant role in challenging dominant discourses that shape how we understand the social experience (Duncan, 2006). Counter narratives play a valuable role in the political work of educating for social change. Hearing first-hand someone else's story of mistreatment and pain sparks the listener's compassion and instantly works towards building relationships. Providing regular opportunities for students to reflect and tell their stories and listen to those of others, offers individuals and groups opportunities to move beyond the negative internalizations that are often the result of injustices and oppressive life experiences and the negative prejudices resulting from cycles of socialisation. I have found employing narratives an effective method of working towards empowering students to recognize and challenge their own positions of internalized domination and subordination and those of others. Narrative exercises not only provide spaces for students to critically reflect on, deconstruct and reconstruct their individual identities and understandings of their contexts and lives, but they also provide the opportunity for a new sense of community to grow among students – through narrative exercises they get to know each other, empathize with each other, and build bridges of friendship.

In her theorising about the power of stories, Charmaz (in Denzin and Giardina, 2016, p46) argues that connection, reflection, disclosure, intimacy and emergence can result from these face-to-face interactions. She claims that these: “*foster intimate connections*” between tellers and listeners; “create time and space for reflection”; validate that tellers’ “stories matter and are worthy of consideration”; and that tellers’ reflections during the telling of their stories “may spawn new realisations and interpretations of the past”, and “be sites of emergent reconstruction of meaning.” “We all come from such diverse backgrounds, that hearing others’ stories and emotions open our minds to completely different worlds than our own. We have benefitted a lot from sharing our stories and speaking about the experiences we have had. We have learned so much from hearing others’ experiences” (Honours student, 2013).

Narrative exercises are necessarily informal and non-academic. While this poses an overt challenge to the dominant discourse of academic educational interactions and lays such methods of teaching and learning open for criticism, students’ narratives facilitate the inclusion of previously and traditionally excluded “knowledges and ways of knowing, such as experiential and oral knowledge, and intuitive and emotional knowing” and allow for the negotiation of “different epistemologies towards more inclusive meanings” (von Kotze, 2003, 11).

4. ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTION

Kohanov (2013) promotes exercising intersubjective awareness and acknowledging the importance of emotion in working with both horses and people - skills which she believes have been seriously neglected in our modern culture. According to Kohanov (2003, 6), education unduly skewed toward the rational mind and neglectful of the heart “leads to a marked ineptitude in the more ephemeral realms of feeling, imagination and intuition”. She is critical of institutions which deny the wisdom in the body and the senses, as this does not translate as holistic learning and development.

Zukav (1990; 59) claims that “the time has come for a higher order of logic and understanding” and that the creation of this requires close attention to feelings. Zukav argues that an awareness of emotions allows us a connection with “the vital currents that energize and activate our thoughts and actions”, thus allowing us to “begin the process of understanding the effects of our emotions upon us, our environment, and other people, or the effects of the emotions of other people upon themselves, their environment, and us” (Zukav, 1990, 60), and warns that “without an awareness of our feelings we cannot experience compassion” (Zukav, 1990, 61).

Effective educating for social justice cannot simply involve processes based on reason, logic and the cognitive mind. Emotions play an enormous role in students’ developing the virtues of heart and mind necessary to live in a transformed society. Challenging young adults in the areas of ingrained prejudices and discriminatory attitudes towards diversity leads them into unfamiliar, uncomfortable and often frightening spaces. A large part of the work that I do involves facilitating reflection on our authentic, sometimes hidden and unresolved feelings and emotional reactions to experiences related to alienation, subordination, marginalization and other experiences of social injustice. Sharing such experiences within a group and consciously reliving these are seldom rational, logical and emotion-free, but more often raw and visceral, highly emotive and sometimes volatile, triggering strong emotions and responses. Spaces and relations which are sensitive, compassionate and respectful of an individual’s feelings and responses are fundamental to this process.

Noddings' (2003) thinking about education recognizes human encounters, affective responses and sentiments as basic facts of human existence. The "need to talk to participants, see their eyes and facial expressions, to receive what they are feeling" (Noddings, 2003, 3), takes educating for social justice beyond practices advocated by the dominant discourse of academic educational interactions and aligns more with the view of developing young adults into transformative agents – "mobile subjects sensitive to the shifting contexts of contemporary social life" (McLaren, 1995, 22).

5. ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCESS

While reaching the centre may seem the purpose of labyrinth walking, it is actually the process of circling to the centre and out that is vital to this endeavour (Curry, 2005). Living in an age which offers and demands instant gratification and results on all levels, we so often lose the value of the process and the important life lessons accompanying this. The practice of labyrinth walking was designed to facilitate reflection, enlightenment and transformation. These mirror the aims of educating for social justice. An equal emphasis on goal and process is reflected in Adams, Bell and Griffin's (2000) belief that "social justice is both a process and a goal. The goal of social education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs" (Bell, 2000, 3) and the process for attaining this goal should be "democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change" (Bell, 2000, 4).

An exercise I use is similar to the guided meditations which often accompany labyrinth walking and is similarly designed to raise awareness and facilitate a shift in consciousness. Students are encouraged to reflect on how they are "born into a specific set of social identities", which predispose them to "unequal roles in the dynamic system of oppression" (Harro, 2000, 15); how they have been socialized by powerful sources in their worlds to play the roles prescribed by an inequitable social system (Hardiman and Jackson, 1997); and how they might be participating in maintaining inequality. Identifying, acknowledging and critically examining the messages they have been fed throughout their lives and how these have shaped who they have come to believe they and others are can cause a dramatic and radical shift in individual perceptions and beliefs. Just as the labyrinth "invites our intuitive, pattern-seeking, symbolic mind to come forth" (Artress, 2006, 52), so too does this exercise encourage students to examine critically how they have received systematic training in 'how to be' and how they might begin to question, interrupt and challenge the status quo.

6. A CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Educating for social justice and critical pedagogy are closely aligned. Both recognize that meaning is produced through the construction of forms of power, experiences, and identities and that these need to be analysed in terms of their wider political and cultural significance. Both necessitate a refusal to sustain codes of the dominant culture and existing relations of power and aim to reverse the tradition of demonizing the 'other' by affirming diversity. The argument for educational environments as sites of struggle, and for pedagogy as a form of cultural politics is made by Giroux and Simon (1988), who believe that educational institutions should be places that expand human capacities to develop critical subjectivity which should lead to individuals being able to "intervene in the formation of their own subjectivities" and "exercise power in the interest of transforming the ideological and material conditions of domination into social practices which promote social empowerment and demonstrate democratic possibilities" (Giroux and Simon, 1988, 10).

Alternative teaching and learning practices potentially challenge the deep culture of traditional discourses and power relations in academia, which include forms of exclusion, non-participation and authoritarianism (Mattson and Harley, 2001). A pedagogy and praxis which incorporates the telling of stories, acknowledging emotions and valuing process (characteristics traditionally viewed as 'feminine'), can easily lead to connotations of a discipline or modules being viewed as superfluous or 'soft' options (not serious or academically rigorous enough). Attempts at transforming traditional discourses and power relations could lead to negativity, disrespect or perceived grounds for questioning my professional identity as an academic by those still embedded in traditional patriarchal discourses. There have been instances where fellow academics have asked "What is this thing Social Justice?", heavy with the implication that it is not as important as other disciplines and that it deserves a place at best, within and subsumed into other disciplines. Such "professional diminution" and "hidden forms of discrimination" (Kantola, 2008, 17) pose an ongoing challenge to advancing the agenda for social justice in the university, and it is a professional and personal test of perseverance "trying to listen to our muse over the din of skeptics who don't believe in what we are doing" (Kohanov, 2013, 16).

Disrupting existing deep cultures within the university necessarily incorporates the issue of identity: how my identity as an academic is defined for me and how I might redefine this identity for myself. Developing a critical pedagogy and praxis creates educational sites for greater social equity and inclusion, and enables educators to situate themselves as active social, cultural, and historical agents - resisting and transforming history (McLaren, 1991) - thus becoming "cultural workers for self and social emancipation" (McLaren, 1995, 22). Disarticulating any dominant discourse involves a continuous effort "to forge new ways of seeing, knowing and being" (Yancy, 2008, xxiii) and "demands uncommon courage and awareness, a kind of compassionate, creative intelligence willing to take chances outside conventional thought and behaviour" (Kohanov, 2003, 7)

7. CHALLENGING MASCULINE ARTICULATIONS OF THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN ACADEMIA

Despite a pervasive belief that gender equality has been achieved in the majority of first world countries, studies provide evidence that academic institutions remain inherently gendered and essentially patriarchal - "defined, conceptualized, and structured in terms of a distinction between masculinity and femininity" (Britton, 2000, 419). Research results from Katila and Merilainen's (1999) study on gendered social and discursive practices give clear support to the dominance of patriarchy in the academic context. Their study demonstrates how women in academia are characterized as 'lacking' in relation to the characteristics required for the professional identity and indicates that these are perceived to be "tied to a system of values in which identities defined as masculine are prioritized" (Katila and Merilainen, 1999, 4). The perpetuation of a masculine culture in many academic institutions worldwide indicates how deeply rooted patriarchal articulations and underlying assumptions of the professional identity in academia are (Kantola, 2008). One of the most insidious aspects of contemporary sexism is its ability to remain camouflaged in everyday academic practices, policies, notions and ideas. Educators for social justice need to be committed to and vigilant about unearthing the complexities of sexism and patriarchy within all aspects of the curriculum (Schmidt, 2005).

Despite being critical of the masculine culture in academia, the persistent and pervasive nature of sexism and patriarchy results in structural factors being often difficult to recognize. Academics thus often opt for “settling voluntarily into the position and space that is created for them in the masculine organization and accepting it as their own” (Naskali, 2004, 13). Katila and Merilainen (1999) warn that after years of hearing how feminine characteristics are lacking in one respect or another and have no place in academia, many academics may start to believe in it as an objective fact. Rather than trying to fit in with the dominant expectations, defining self and their relations with others in terms of the dominant discourse, and adopting the language of the dominant discourse in the endeavour to gain legitimacy, Katila and Merilainen (1999) encourage academics to become agents of change, resisting and challenging the dominant masculine discourse in academia through intentional acts. Such “counter-identification” – rejecting the dominant assumptions and expectations of the professional identity, and “dis-identification” – replacing the dominant discourse, allows radical alternative ideologies and pedagogies to flourish (Katila and Merilainen, 1999).

In attempting to find my place in academia, I can sustain and reproduce the dominant discourse by fitting in and conforming to its underlying assumptions and expectations, or I can contribute to disrupting it and transforming it. Educating for social justice using non-conventional, non-conformist, creative and innovative methodologies, disrupts traditional academic discourses, and unsettles the stereotypical assumptions of a dominant masculine discourse in academia.

While not wanting to buy into ways of theorizing about gender related issues which have been criticized as essentialist, I feel strongly that we cannot simply ignore aspects of such theorizing. Historically there have been powerful essentialist notions of male and female and the characteristics that have been assigned to each, and regardless of feminist theorizing having moved away from an essentialist position since the post structural turn in feminism, we are all still very much products of history and socialisation processes that encourage the perpetuation of essentialist gender characteristics. Jewkes, Morrell, Hearn, Lundqvist, Blackbeard, Lindegger, Quayle, Sikweyiya and Gottzen, in their article “Hegemonic Masculinity: combining theory and practice in gender interventions” (2015, p118) explore the critical question in developing processes of gender change, whether it is indeed possible to deconstruct gender as a binary, and conclude with citing Alsop, Fitzsimmons and Lennons’ (2002, p132) argument that

“even critical studies of masculinity which draw on a social constructionism often retain a residual essentialism that a division between men and women and the assumption that masculinity belongs to men and femininity to women unquestioningly underpins analysis”.

While recognising the limitations to such a paradigm, I have made this choice thoughtfully and consciously. There are necessary limitations to how much can be discussed in one article. For the purposes of what I intend to discuss and present in this article, acknowledging the existence of an essentialist focus on gender is beneficial. Having said this, my approach to teaching and learning reveals the importance of and my commitment to deconstructing gender binaries. Participatory exercises I employ emphasize the overlap between traits of men and women and the positive characteristics of both men and women.

8. FEMINIST RE-CULTURING

I believe it is a great loss to our humanity when we abandon the necessity of honouring the masculine *and* the feminine as equal and essential parts of an integrated whole. In acknowledging the lost feminine, I am not proposing a radical form of feminism which seeks to supplant the dominant discourse with women's modes of thinking and acting but advocating the possibility of re-evaluating and re-defining the professional identity in academia and re-creating feminine aspects of knowledge as valuable. Such a discourse aligns with feminism of the new moral vision, which integrates cultural feminism without the radical feminism, and works towards the goal of addressing inequality as the result of the masculine bias, and creating for both men and women, inclusion in a male dominated society (Donovan, 1994).

According to Noddings (2003, 1), "ethics has so far been guided by Logos, the masculine spirit, whereas the more natural and perhaps, stronger approach would be through Eros, the feminine spirit". She refers to the feminine ethic in the deep classical sense, rooted in receptivity, relatedness and responsiveness, believing that "the notion of psychic relatedness lies at the heart of the feminine ethic" (Noddings, 2003, 1). Despite highlighting contrasts between masculine and feminine approaches to ethics and education, Noddings doesn't intend dividing men and women into opposing camps, but rather illustrating "how great the chasm is that already divides the masculine and feminine in each of us" and suggesting that we "enter a dialogue of genuine dialectical nature" in order to achieve transcendence of this divide (2003, 6). Highlighting such contrasts does not imply that logic should be discarded or that logic is alien to women. Noddings presents "an invitation to dialogue and not a challenge to enter battle" (2003, 6). Re-culturing is not the exclusive domain of women, but of both sexes. Certainly, implementing feminist ideals into pedagogies is not new and they are advocated by both female and male educators seeking to improve the practice of education in general. The intention of feminist critique is to suggest alternatives to the traditional masculine models of power and domination; to subvert prescriptive methodologies in favour of developing redemptive methodologies which recognize women's ways of thinking and acting - incorporating a greater concern for context and explanation and a diminishing concern for control and domination, and utilizing the need to communicate (Wajcman, 1991; Kramarae, 1988).

I am committed to carrying the torch of educating for diversity, inclusion and social justice with passion, sensitivity and effectiveness, and developing my transformative capacity to challenge dominant masculine discourses within academia. In this endeavour, I am aware of constantly constructing myself in the role of transformative agent, cultural worker for self and social emancipation, and in doing so, acknowledging the important role that emotion, intuition, relationship, process, responsiveness, collaboration, cooperation and compassion play in my work. I have learned much from adopting the equine perspective and acknowledging the lost feminine and much of this knowledge informs my professional and personal identity. There remains the need to exhibit the ability to cultivate collaborative relationships as a source of power; and above all, to maintain the clarity of intention, courage and conviction to constantly disrupt and unsettle the stereotypical assumptions of a dominant masculine discourse in academia through alternative methodologies within a critical pedagogy

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