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FOREWORD

This guest-edited issue of the **MCGILL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION** focuses on themes and concerns in the education of girls, internationally and in Canada. The guest editors, Claudia Mitchell and Marilyn Blaeser, have brought together the work of researchers and administrators in sub-Saharan Africa and Canada to create a remarkable cross-cultural debate on this question of global significance: how girls fare in schools and what the consequences are for them and for their communities. As these articles vividly illustrate, educational opportunities – or the lack of them – lead to powerful differences in social and economic development. The education of girls in different societies has been recognized as being crucial to a nation's success because of the complex interrelationships between the knowledge, health, employment and income of girls and women and the well-being of their communities as a whole. These four articles – and the accompanying guest editorial – do much to make accessible such concerns of both policy and pedagogical practice. The articles invite comparisons and parallel studies from other countries and cultures to probe more deeply the issues of single-sex and co-education; gendered identity in post-colonial settings; safe schools; and gender issues in the social integration of minority students.

MCGILL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION NEWS

This issue completes volume 35 of the **MCGILL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION** in its redesigned format. I am delighted to report that it also announces a new annual prize made possible by the generosity of the Journal's founding editor, Margaret Gillett. This prize will honour the best article published in each volume, as judged by a jury drawn from the Editorial Board. Full details of the prize can be found on page 209 and 210.

Upcoming issues in volume 36 will include articles on evaluation, literacy, and educational policy in Canada, and an ethnographic study of teaching and learning in Cyprus. One major goal of our editorial policy is to balance Quebecois, Canadian, and international themes and voices, in order to allow cross-fertilization between these different educational communities.

A.B.

AVANT-PROPOS

Ce numéro de la REVUE DES SCIENCES DE L'ÉDUCATION DE MCGILL placé sous la direction de rédactrices invitées porte sur l'éducation des filles à l'échelle internationale et au Canada. Les rédactrices invitées, Claudia Mitchell et Marilyn Blaeser, ont réuni les travaux de chercheurs et d'administrateurs de l'Afrique sub-saharienne et du Canada pour susciter un débat transculturel remarquable sur cette question qui revêt une importance mondiale: comment les filles se débrouillent-elles à l'école et quelles conséquences cela a-t-il sur elles-mêmes et sur leurs collectivités. Comme ces articles en témoignent avec éloquence, les possibilités d'éducation (ou leur absence) se soldent par de profondes différences au niveau du développement social et économique. L'éducation des filles dans différentes sociétés revêt une importance cruciale pour la réussite d'un pays en raison des rapports d'interdépendance complexes entre le savoir, la santé, l'emploi et le revenu des filles et des femmes et le bien-être de leurs collectivités en général. Ces quatre articles (et l'éditorial qui les accompagne) aident à mieux comprendre les préoccupations suscitées par la pratique politique et pédagogique. Ces articles incitent à des comparaisons et à des études parallèles avec d'autres pays et cultures pour étudier plus à fond les questions de l'enseignement unisexe et de l'éducation mixte, de l'identité sexuelle dans les milieux post-coloniaux, de la sécurité dans les écoles et de la problématique hommes-femmes dans l'intégration sociale des étudiants des minorités.

NOUVELLES DE LA REVUE DES SCIENCES DE L'ÉDUCATION DE MCGILL

Ce numéro complète le volume 35 de la REVUE DES SCIENCES DE L'ÉDUCATION DE MCGILL sous sa nouvelle forme. Veuillez prendre note qu'il annonce également la création d'un nouveau prix annuel dû à la générosité de la rédactrice en chef fondatrice de la Revue, Margaret Gillett. Ce prix récompensera le meilleur article publié dans chaque volume, selon la décision d'un jury composé de membres du comité de rédaction. Vous trouverez plus de précisions sur ce prix aux pages 217 et 218.

Les numéros à paraître du volume 36 contiendront des articles sur l'évaluation, la littératie et la politique éducative du Canada, de même qu'une étude ethnographique de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage à Chypre. L'un des principaux objectifs de notre politique rédactionnelle est de trouver le juste équilibre entre les opinions et les thèmes québécois, canadiens et internationaux pour permettre la fertilisation croisée de ces différents milieux éducatifs.

A.B.

ÉDITORIAL

CLAUDIA MITCHELL *Université McGill*

MARILYN BLAESER *Agence canadienne de développement international*

LA SITUATION DES FILLES DANS LE MONDE : ENJEUX HOMMES-FEMMES ET ÉDUCATION EN TANT QUE PROGRAMME D'ACTION

Lorsque nous avons lancé un appel de communications sur le thème de la situation des filles dans le monde, nous sollicitons des articles sur une foule de questions liées à la condition des filles, et particulièrement à leur développement, et traitant aussi bien des expériences et de la situation matérielle des filles dans le processus d'éducation que des particularités de la recherche portant sur la condition des filles. Nous ne sommes pas les seules à nous intéresser à ces questions, car notre appel s'inscrivait dans la foulée d'une multitude de publications consacrées aux filles parmi lesquelles figurent *Millennium Girls: Today's Girls Around the World* de Sherrie Innes, *The Girl: Constructions of the Girl in Contemporary Fiction by Women*, de Ruth Saxton, *Growing up girls: Popular culture and the construction of identity* de Sharon Mazzarella et Norman Odom Pecora. Ces auteurs citent, dans l'introduction des ouvrages dont elles ont assuré la publication, des dizaines de titres de livres publiés au cours des 10 dernières années et consacrés aux approches psychologiques, sociologiques et littéraires de l'étude de la condition des filles. Elles font allusion à la masse de travaux de Carol Gilligan et de ses contemporains de l'Université Harvard, ainsi qu'aux travaux que Valerie Walkerdine a menés au Royaume-Uni, mais elles tiennent également compte de nouvelles études portant sur la condition des filles dans les cultures minoritaires de l'Amérique du Nord et d'ailleurs. Bien que ces ouvrages ne portent pas principalement sur la fille («girl-child» en anglais), terme désormais utilisé dans les publications consacrées au développement, et ne tiennent pas compte des travaux que Nellie Stromquist et d'autres chercheurs lui consacrent, il est clair que les questions de développement social et économique, de l'accès des filles à l'éducation et le reste – qui sont toutes au coeur du débat portant sur le développement international – présentent des liens avec la situation générale des filles.

Ensemble, ces ouvrages témoignent de l'émergence d'un domaine de recherche que l'on pourrait appeler *études sur les filles*. Ce terme ne modifie en rien l'importance des études portant sur les rapports entre les sexes ou des travaux consacrés aux types de masculinité et à l'enfance masculine, mais suggère plutôt que l'enfance féminine est plus qu'un stade de développement. C'est le lieu culturel des enjeux comme la race, la classe, le pouvoir, la domination, etc. On s'intéresse certes beaucoup au «pouvoir des filles,» expression qui désigne désormais la nouvelle affirmation de certaines cultures féminines en Occident, mais une grande partie des travaux consacrés

aux filles établissent clairement que le pouvoir est loin d'être une caractéristique essentielle de leur vie. Ce fait ne s'observe pas uniquement dans un village africain, mais partout dans le monde, dans les pays riches comme dans les pays pauvres. Les filles et les femmes continuent de figurer en très bonne place sur les palmarès dès lors que ceux-ci concernent les victimes de viol et de voies de fait. Le corps de la femme reste un lieu contesté, et les éducateurs s'interrogent sur les formes d'instruction à privilégier et se préoccupent toujours de la sempiternelle question de la grossesse. Comme en témoignent les données les plus récentes sur l'incidence du VIH/sida en Afrique du Sud, la prévention de la grossesse n'est plus la seule préoccupation. Compte tenu de la généralisation des comportements agressifs masculins, de l'incidence des rapports sexuels forcés et de la vulnérabilité biologique des filles, les nouveaux enjeux sont la prévention du VIH/sida et la survie.

Les quatre articles reproduits dans ce volume ont pour but de mettre en lumière les types de travaux auxquels, selon nous, les études sur les filles pourraient donner lieu. On peut certes lire chaque article séparément, même si nous croyons que ces articles sont une sorte de dialogue. Ainsi, le premier, que Robert Morrell consacre au vieux débat sur l'éducation des filles dans les écoles qui leur sont réservées et dans les écoles mixtes, puise dans les publications internationales, et particulièrement nord-américaines et australiennes, mais aussi dans les recherches qui portent plus directement sur l'importance que revêtent ces travaux pour le continent africain et l'Afrique du Sud, particulièrement en ce qui a trait à la violence sexospécifique. Morrell reprend dans son article plusieurs témoignages de femmes sud-africaines dont le «travail de mémoire» révèle les types de pathologies qui ont essentiellement marqué leur expérience scolaire. Bien que son article traite avant tout de la question globale de la condition des filles dans les écoles qui leur sont réservées, il démontre également qu'il faut veiller à ce que les chercheurs et décideurs examinent, dans une optique plus générale, la situation réelle des filles dans une culture donnée afin d'en distinguer les éléments significatifs.

Or c'est exactement ce que Mlamleli et ses collègues font dans l'article – qui peut servir de complément au précédent – qu'elles consacrent à la violence sexospécifique dans les écoles sud-africaines. Adoptant le point de vue des responsables de la conception et de l'application des politiques d'éducation, cet article «répond» en quelque sorte à celui de Morrell, car les auteurs y décrivent les stratégies mises en place pour s'attaquer précisément aux problèmes des jeunes Sud-Africaines que Morrell met en lumière. Ces deux articles prouvent, entre autres choses, que «l'action» et «la critique de l'action» doivent converger.

Ann Smith offre un autre point de vue sur les expériences vécues que décrivent Morrell et Mlamleli et ses collègues, car elle démontre comment

l'étude littéraire du thème de la fille en Afrique sub-saharienne (et particulièrement dans *Nervous Conditions* de Tsitsi Dangaremba) peut être considérée comme une étude ethnographique de l'éducation et du post-colonialisme. De fait, on peut considérer ces souvenirs fictifs de Dangaremba, dont l'héroïne Tambu se remémore son enfance en Rhodésie et l'instruction à laquelle elle n'a eu accès qu'à la suite du décès de son frère Nhamo, comme un exemple de recherche historico-personnelle. Le fait que ces représentations fictives de la condition des filles puissent être considérées dans une optique plus générale présente également de l'intérêt. Et *Nervous Conditions*, qui décrit une situation particulière, peut néanmoins être rangé avec les ouvrages littéraires comme ceux de Margaret Atwood, Jamaica Kincaid, Toni Morrison et quelques autres, dont les héroïnes illustrent de façon plus générale la condition des filles.

Ces trois articles, qui ont pour cadre l'Afrique sub-saharienne, démontrent que les différentes démarches adoptées pour l'étude de la situation des filles s'inscrivent toutes dans le cadre des études portant sur l'enfance féminine. Le quatrième article de Ratna Ghosh, intitulé *Identity and Social Integration: Girls From a Minority Ethno-cultural Group in Canada* révèle en quoi les questions soulevées dans les trois articles précédents sont véritablement celles qui ont une résonance plus générale. Cette étude décrit les tensions qui s'exercent sur les filles dans des domaines comme l'éducation, la culture de groupe, les relations avec les parents et les pratiques sexuelles. Bien que les données présentées par Ghosh concernent des filles issues de groupes minoritaires de quatre villes canadiennes, on croirait, à bien des égards, lire une autre version de la vie de Tambu dans *Nervous Conditions*.

Ensemble, ces articles font ressortir le caractère pluridisciplinaire des études sur l'enfance féminine, ainsi que l'importance que revêt la diversité des points de vue, même au sein d'une même discipline. Elle montre également qu'il faut voir dans toutes les frontières (géographiques et conceptuelles) des limites artificielles dès lors qu'il s'agit d'améliorer la situation des filles et des femmes. Dans les travaux que nous avons menés avec la collaboration de Jacqui Reid-Walsh et Ann Smith pour évaluer l'utilité de projets féministes de mise en correspondance ayant pour but de supprimer les frontières et de mieux comprendre la condition des filles, nous avons posé la question suivante: «Quelle utilité la pluridisciplinarité peut-elle avoir pour la fille?» Nous tentons d'y répondre en imaginant une nouvelle communauté où tous ceux qui travaillent auprès ou au profit des filles peuvent établir un dialogue par-delà les frontières et les barrières:

... une communauté qui jouit d'une continuité et d'une certaine permanence. Mais quel type de communauté? Une communauté imaginaire? Une communauté virtuelle? Pourquoi pas une communauté qui serait fondée, métaphoriquement parlant ou en réalité, sur *The Journal of Girlhood Studies: A Platform of Action*? Comment pouvons-nous contribuer et

nous abonner à ce journal «symbolique,» dont le comité de rédaction se composerait de spécialistes des études consacrées à l'enfance, à la culture populaire, au développement international et à la littérature, pour ne nommer que ces domaines, et qui comprendrait bien sûr des filles? Nonobstant la forme de la communauté, nous devons nous appuyer, pour bâtir la communauté que nous imaginons, sur une croyance commune dans une unité qui s'inscrit dans un lieu précis . . . qui est l'espace occupé par la fille. Nous devons nous efforcer de créer une communauté véritablement *intégrée* afin d'atteindre notre objectif, qui est de créer grâce à la coopération un féminisme agissant et intégré. (le soulignement est de nous, Mitchell et coll., 1998, p. 175)

Ce caractère intégré concerne en définitive la condition des hommes et des femmes. Exception faite des arguments sociaux et économiques probants invoqués à l'appui du slogan «éduquer une fille, éduquer une nation», l'accent mis sur le cadre éducatif sexospécifique dans lequel évoluent les filles justifie également que l'on pose la question : «Qu'en est-il des garçons?» comme on le fait de plus en plus en Occident. Bien que l'égalité d'accès à l'enseignement pour les filles et les garçons ne soit encore qu'un rêve dans de nombreuses régions du monde, la prise en compte de l'importance des réalités sexospécifiques en éducation peut délimiter un cadre d'action utile à tous ceux qui travaillent dans le secteur de l'éducation.

En préparant ce numéro, les auteurs, dont l'une est rattachée à une faculté des sciences de l'éducation et donc membre d'une communauté universitaire, et l'autre à l'Agence canadienne de développement international et donc membre de la communauté des donateurs, se sont efforcées d'amorcer leur propre processus de développement communautaire en ce qui a trait à la situation des filles dans le monde.

C.M. et M.B.

REMERCIEMENTS

Nous tenons à remercier Andrea Borrelli et Faith Butler de l'aide qu'elles nous ont apportée dans la préparation de ce numéro.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

GLOBAL GIRLS: GENDER AND EDUCATION AS A PLATFORM FOR ACTION

CLAUDIA MITCHELL *McGill University*

MARILYN BLAESER *Canadian International Development Agency*

When we issued the Call for Papers on the theme of Global Girls we were seeking articles on a variety of concerns related to the lives of girls, particularly in the context of development – ranging from those which would address directly the experiences and material conditions of girls' lives in relation to schooling, to those which might have something to do with the unique features of researching girls' lives. Our call is not one that should be regarded as a lone voice in the wilderness, for it follows closely on what might be described as a spate of publications on girlhood ranging from Sherrie Innes's volume *Millennium Girls: Today's Girls Around the World*, to Ruth Saxton's *The Girl: Constructions of the Girl in Contemporary Fiction by Women*, to Sharon Mazzarella and Norman Odom Pecora's *Growing up girls: Popular culture and the construction of identity*. These authors weave into the introductory essays of their edited books dozens of titles of books that have been published in the last 10 years that take up psychological, sociological and literary approaches to the study of girls' lives. They refer to the extensive body of work by Carol Gilligan and her contemporaries at Harvard University, and the work of Valerie Walkerdine in the UK, but they also include accounts from an emerging scholarship on girls' lives within minority cultures in North America and elsewhere. While these review volumes do not focus extensively on "the girl-child" as she has come to be called in the development literature, or include the work that Nellie Stromquist and others are doing in relation to the girl-child, clearly issues of social and economic development, girls' access to schooling, and so on – all central to the debates within international development – are not that far away from girls' lives more globally.

Taken together these works are indicative of the emergence of an area of research that could be called *girlhood studies*. Such a term is not meant to subvert the significance of gender studies or the emerging scholarship on masculinities and boyhood, but rather to suggest that girlhood is more than just a stage of development; it is a cultural site where issues of race, class, power, domination and so on are played out. While there is a great deal of interest in 'girl power,' as the new assertiveness of some girls' cultures in the

West has come to be called, it is clear in much of the scholarship related to girls that their lives are “anything but” powerful. This is not something that is only to be observed in a rural African village, but rather is the case globally, in rich countries as well as poor countries. Girls and women ‘score’ on the statistical charts as high achieving when it comes to being victims of cases of rape and assault. The female body remains a contested site, so that educators are concerned with appropriate forms of schooling, along with age-old issues of pregnancy. The latest data specifically in relation to prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa no longer looks at prevention of pregnancy as the sole concern. Rather, in recognition of a pervasive aggressive masculinity, the incidence of coercive sex and the biological vulnerability of girls, it is now the prevention of HIV/AIDS – and survival itself – that are at issue.

The four articles contained in this volume are meant to highlight the kind of work that we think that girlhood studies might encompass. While each article is, of course, meant to be read by itself, we also regard these articles as contributions that speak to each other. The lead article by Robert Morrell, for example, in taking up the longstanding debates about single-sex and mixed-sex schooling for girls, draws both on the international literature, particularly of North America and Australia, and on the research that looks more directly at the significance of this work on the African continent and in South Africa, specifically in relation to gender-based violence. Morrell includes in his article many narratives of black South African women who “in doing memory work” reveal the kinds of pathologies that have been central to their schooling experiences. While his work highlights the global girlhood issue in relation to single-sex schools, his work also demonstrates the need to ensure that researchers and policy makers look more globally in the context of the lives of girls within a particular culture to see what is significant.

Indeed, this is precisely what Mlamleli et al. do in their article – what might be read as a companion piece – on gender-based violence in South African schools. Written from the perspective of those charged with developing and implementing educational policy, their work in a sense “speaks back” to Morrell’s work in that they describe the strategies that are in place to address the very issues around girls’ lives in South Africa that Morrell is highlighting. As much as anything the two articles demonstrate the ways in which both the “doing” and the “critique of the doing” must come together.

Ann Smith provides yet another perspective on the lives that Morrell and Mlamleli et al. are describing in that she demonstrates the ways in which a literary investigation of the girl-child in Sub Saharan Africa (in this case Tsitsi Dangaremba’s *Nervous Conditions*) might be read as an ethnography of schooling and postcoloniality. In fact, Dangaremba’s fictional memory

work where her protagonist, Tambu, looks back on her life as a girl-child and the schooling that she was able to obtain in Rhodesia only by virtue of the death of her brother Nhamo, might be read as an example of life-history research. What is also of interest is the idea that fictional representations of girls' lives might be read in a more global way. Thus while *Nervous Conditions* describes one set of conditions, it joins a set of literary works such as those of Margaret Atwood, Jamaica Kincaid, Toni Morrison and others whose fictional girls speak to girlhood issues more generally.

These three articles, all set within Sub-Saharan Africa, show that a number of approaches to studying girls' lives all "map onto" girlhood studies. The fourth article in the series, by Ratna Ghosh, "Identity and Social Integration: Girls From a Minority Ethno-cultural Group in Canada" demonstrates the ways in which the issues raised in the previous three articles are in fact the very ones that resonate more globally. In this study we read about the tensions in girls' lives in relation to such areas as education, peer culture, parents and sexual practices. While Ghosh is presenting data from minority girls in four Canadian cities, we could, in many ways, be reading another version of Tambu's life in *Nervous Conditions*.

Taken as a group these articles point both to the interdisciplinarity of girlhood studies and to the significance of multiple perspectives even within one 'discipline.' They also point to the need to see all borders (both geographic as well as conceptual) as artificial when it comes to contributing to improving the lives of girls and women. In previous work that we carried out with Jacqui Reid-Walsh and Ann Smith in which we looked at the value of feminist mapping projects which seek to erase borders and boundaries in the service of understanding girls' lives, we have posed the question "what can inter-disciplinarity offer the girl child?" We try to answer it by raising the possibility of imagining a new community where all those who are working for and with the girl-child are able to have dialogues across borders and boundaries:

... a community that has continuity and some permanence. But what kind? An imaginary community? A virtual community? What about a community that is based, figuratively if not in reality on "The Journal of Girlhood Studies: A Platform of Action"? How might we all contribute and subscribe to this "symbolic" journal, where the editorial board would be made up of scholars from Childhood, Popular Culture, International Development and Literary Studies and many other areas – and which would, of course, include girls? Notwithstanding the form of the community, it is necessary to construct our imagined community around a shared belief in a unity within a specific place ... that is the space occupied by the girl child. We need to seek to make our community genuinely *inclusive* in order to achieve our aim of working cooperatively to achieve an integrated feminism-in-action. (our emphasis, Mitchell et al., 1998, p. 175)

This inclusivity, ultimately, refers to the lives of both males and females. Aside from the compelling social and economic arguments that are offered in support of "educate a girl, educate a nation," the focus on the gendered landscape of schooling vis-à-vis girls' lives also supports exploration of the question "what about the boys?" that is increasingly being raised in the Western world. While equal access to education for girls and boys is still only a dream in many parts of the world, attention to the significance of gender and schooling can offer all those working within education a framework for action.

In collaborating to put this issue together, one of us from a Faculty of Education and a member of the academic community, the other from the Canadian International Development Agency as a member of the donor community, we have tried to engage in our own community-building related to global girlhood.

C.M. and M.B.

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CONSIDERING THE CASE FOR SINGLE-SEX SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS IN SOUTH AFRICA¹

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ABSTRACT. This article considers current international debates about single-sex schooling. It examines the reasons for the recommendation of the South African Gender Equity Task Team that single-sex schools for girls be established. It argues that the specific circumstances of schooling in South Africa, particularly the violent conditions that prevail in many schools, require that the desirability of single-sex schooling for particular constituencies continually be debated.

RÉSUMÉ. Cet article traite du débat international actuel sur la scolarité unisexe. Il se penche sur les motifs de la recommandation du groupe de travail sud-africain sur l'équité entre les sexes préconisant la création d'écoles unisexes pour filles. L'auteur de l'article soutient que les conditions propres à la scolarité en Afrique du Sud, en particulier la violence qui prévaut dans de nombreuses écoles, commandent un débat ininterrompu sur le caractère souhaitable d'une scolarité unisexe dans certaines circonscriptions.

INTRODUCTION

Education for girls in South Africa has followed two racially distinct courses historically. For black, particularly African, girls, provision came in the form of state coeducational schools. For white girls, the experience was either of single-sex schools (state and private) or of coeducation. In the late 1990s the newly elected democratic government of South Africa appointed a Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) to make recommendations on the schooling of girls. Amongst these recommendations was that single-sex schools for girls be established.

Single-sex schools have historically been associated with elite education. British public schools (for boys and girls) were invariably single-sex. South Africa, as with most of Britain's colonies, developed its schools according to the British model in the mid to late nineteenth century. Effectively from inception, schools were racially segregated. In the first decade of the twentieth century, schooling for white children became compulsory. This meant that at Union (1910), the following situation pertained. English-speaking boys and girls in urban secondary schools undertook study in single-sex

environments. Afrikaans speakers were largely in coeducational schools. Few Africans were in school at all, but those that were (mostly boys in mission schools) were in coeducational institutions.

This situation changed little in the next half century. Most African children received little or no schooling. Of those that did, very few were in single-sex institutions. In 1953 the newly elected National party passed the Bantu Education Act, one of the many laws that were to contribute to apartheid. By this Act the state provided compulsory, ideologically loaded, schooling for all African children. This left Africans with virtually no choice in the type of schools they attended. Coeducation was the only form of education delivery for African children.

For forty years Bantu Education remained in place until in the 1990s the newly elected ANC government replaced it with an integrated education system via the 1996 South African Schools Act. A major aim of the new system was to address racial inequality. Even before the ANC came to power, attempts had been made to reduce inequalities in expenditure, which in 1975/6 saw only R42 spent on an African child while R644 was spent on a white child.

TABLE 1. *Per capita expenditure (all levels of education) (Rs)*

	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE
1987	444	1255	1763	2323
1991	1991	2416	3142	3961

While government continues to attack these racial inequalities, it has also begun to address gender inequalities. One of the measures advocated by GETT in 1997 was to establish single-sex schools for girls.

In recommending support for single sex schools for girls, this report is advocating that such schools be supported where there is an active policy for developing excellence in girls' education, provision for security for girls from harassment and violence and where such schooling provides affirmative programmes designed to equip girls with a high level of consciousness about women's and girl's human rights. (Wolpe, Quinlan and Martinez [for the Gender Equity Task Team, Pretoria, Department of Education], 1998, p. 91)

GETT's call was based on a position of gender equity and redress. It wanted to improve the prospects of African girls in the schooling system. Elsewhere, single-sex schooling is sometimes seen as conservative. It is often the means by which class, race or gender privilege is preserved. The call for single-sex schools for boys, for example, is made most stridently by the middle class

using 'crisis in masculinity' arguments as a justification. In South Africa this lobby also evokes 'dropping standards' in support of its call.

Not all educationists agreed with this recommendation. Many saw the retention and extension of single-sex schooling as a way of allowing the privileged middle-class, primarily white, elite to avoid change. There is no space in this article to examine the way in which gender, race and class have rivaled one another for attention on the policy agendas of the Department of Education. Suffice to say that thus far, no single-sex schools for African, township (working class) girls have been established, though a limited number of African middle class girls have gained access to existing single-sex, formerly white schools.

THE DEBATE

The debate about single-sex schooling remains undecided. While there are advocates for single-sex schools, both for boys and girls, critics are equally vocal. A roundtable workshop amongst educators in the US in 1997 (Office of Naval Research, 1998) came to the following conclusions:

- there is no evidence that single-sex education in general **works** or is **better** than coeducation;
- single-sex educational programs produce positive results for some students in some settings;
- the long-term impact of single-sex education on girls or boys is unknown;
- no learning environment, single-sex or coed, provides a sure escape from sexism.

These are not conclusions that have been arrived at lightly. Over the last thirty years feminists interested in promoting the interests of girls in schools have looked, from time to time and with varying degrees of optimism, at single-sex schools as one way of making a difference. But these conclusions do not close the debate. Before considering key areas of the debate, I briefly discuss how feminists came to be associated with the cause for single-sex girls' schools.

In Britain, the introduction of comprehensive schools effectively meant the extension of coeducation to girls. This development occurred "even though there had been no policy debate on the advantages of mixed as opposed to single-sex schools. The concern expressed by mainly women teachers about the possible negative effects on girls' education of mixed-sex schooling in the 1920s and thereafter had been ignored" (Arnot, David & Weiner, 1999, p. 69).

This was the backdrop to feminist agitation, spurred particularly by the encyclopedic survey of schooling conducted by Dale (1969, 1974). His con-

clusion that coeducational schooling was basically good for all, spurred feminists to take issue.

Four kinds of objection were made. Coeducational schools were boys' schools with girls in them and thus either ignored the interests of girls or forced them to conform to a masculinist ethos. Secondly, coed schools were characterized by high levels of sexual harassment. Thirdly, girls did not perform well academically in coed schools. They were disadvantaged in terms of subject choices. Particularly in the "boys" subjects – sciences and vocational subjects – timetabling and peer and teacher pressure discouraged them from participation. Feminists also argued that girls were domesticated and set on the path of marriage and motherhood, that they were denied the chance to experiment with forms of sexuality other than heterosexual ones and that their career opportunities were deleteriously affected (Arnot, 1983; Mahony, 1985; Sarah, Scott & Spender, 1989; Shaw, 1980; Shaw 1982; Spender, 1989).

In the US coeducation was and remains the predominant form of education. The popularity of single-sex institutions steadily waned in the twentieth century with only Catholic schools continuing to organize along single-sex lines. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the issue came to the fore with single-sex girls' colleges fighting for the right to retain their single-sex status (Mael, 1998). Although single-sex schooling was hereby brought into the arena of public debate, it remains a very small section of the US schooling system. Only 1.5% of students are in single-sex schools (Baker, Riordan & Schaub, 1995). In the last few years single-sex schools have been set up for disadvantaged minorities (e.g., inner city boys and girls) as a mechanism of redress, but such steps have been controversial. Even more controversial has been the continuing existence of boys' schools (e.g., military academies). These have in many instances been forced to accept girls.

Opposition to single-sex schools was, in another context, a reaction to the well-documented problems of single-sex schools for boys. In his prize-winning novel *The Ogre*, set in Europe during the rise of fascism, Michel Tournier gives these words to his central character, scarred by his experience of being educated in a boy's school:

It's impossible to express the harm done in our childhood by the segregation of boys and girls. Men and women are so foreign to each other, it's difficult for them to arrive at a life in common, that it's stupid and criminal not to accustom them to sharing everything from childhood. And yet it's well known that a cat and a dog will live together in peace only if they've been reared on the same bottle! (1997, p. 96)

The issue of masculinity in schooling has become a significant area of study. Some proclaim boys' schools as the answer to falling levels of academic performance and rising suicide rates (Biddulph, 1997). But feminists are critical and advocate engagement in integrated contexts that are not as

likely to generate misogynistic, hyper-masculinities (Connell, 1996; Epstein, Elwood, Hey, & Maw, 1998; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Mills, 1998).

By the 1990s important research was beginning to suggest that single-sex schools might not be the answer to feminist concerns. Findings suggested that the claims made for single-sex schooling were poorly founded. Ian Smith (1994), for example, examined two schools in Sydney, Australia, which had changed their status from single-sex to coed. His conclusion was that the form of schooling (single-sex or coeducational) did not negatively affect self-esteem, achievement or teachers' perceptions. A finding that came up with similar results was conducted by Harker and Nash (1997) in New Zealand. They found that where differences between coeducational and single-sex institutions did exist, these were due to class factors: middle class children attended the elite single-sex schools.

FOUR KEY AREAS

The value of single-sex schools in promoting the interests of girls can be measured by looking at four key areas: influence on academic performance and subject choice; the ethos of the school including staffing and decision-making processes; sexual harassment; and role models, the self-esteem of learners and post-school performance.

Academic performance and subject choice

Critiques of coeducational schools centre on the drop in academic performance by girls at secondary school level (compared with primary school level where girls tend to outperform boys). They show how gender-segregated curricula and the subject choices of girls meant that boys historically tended to take science and math in far greater numbers than girls do. In single-sex environments, girls tend to take "boys" subjects more readily and perform better. In Germany a study found that female students attending girls' schools more often go on to study natural and technical sciences while those in coeducational schools conformed to gender stereotypes in choosing subjects (Giesen et al., 1992). A comprehensive Irish study also found that in math and science, girls do better in single-sex schools and that their performance generally is better in single-sex than coed schools. However, the study also concluded that "the coed effect is substantively very small" and often is due to "differences in the social background and ability of their pupil intakes" (Hannan, Smyth, McCullagh, O'Leary, & McMahon, 1996, p. 196). Two studies conducted in the US concluded that single-sex schools were not successful in improving girls' academic performance. A study of Catholic single-sex schools found that they did not provide advantageous academic environments for girls (LePore & Warren, 1997) and a comparative study of girls in coed and single-sex schools found that there were no

significant differences in performance in math, science and English and in overall academic achievement (Shmurak, 1995).

Ethos of the school

Male teacher and boys in the student body dominate coed schools. The result is that coed schools generally have gender regimes which are characterized by misogyny, homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Men generally make decisions and the ethos of the school reflects this. This situation differs in single-sex girls' schools. In these schools the teacher body is predominantly female and women teachers consequently feel (and are) more influential (Lee et al., 1995). Moreover, the ethos of the school is more girl-friendly. Three studies (two in the US and one in Australia) found that classroom interaction was more cooperative, inclusive and caring and that "femaleness" was more esteemed in girls' schools (Bauch, 1989; Brody et al., 1998; Dorman, 1997).

Sexual harassment

Amongst the strongest motivations for single-sex schools was the aggressiveness of boys and the harassment of girls. This line of argument is seldom heard though there is no shortage of literature on the violence of schooling and the prevalence of sexual harassment (Stein, 1995). Mael's review (1998) of the US literature concluded that "single-sex schooling reduces options for such harassment; moreover, exposing adolescent males to female peers on a regular basis increases sexual tensions that many youth lack the maturity to control" (p. 115). In subsequent sections this will be considered in the South African context as a major consideration for developing single-sex schools.

Role models, self-esteem, and post-school achievement

Single-sex schools provide girls with positive role models (successful, autonomous, independent women), allow the development of healthy self-esteem away from the competitive and heterosexist environment of coeducational schools and result in more confident women entering and succeeding in the workplace (Lee & Bryk, 1986; Riordan, 1985). This justification for single-sex schools is not unanimously supported by research. One study found that girls actually disclaimed and devalued their achievements and learnt to be silent (Spalding & Ziff, 1997) while another found no difference in the career performance of girls in single-sex and coed schools (Shmurak, 1993).

THE DEBATE CONTINUES – THE CURRENT SITUATION

One of the reasons for an ongoing critique of coeducational schools is the slow pace of gender change. Despite the narrowing of the gender gap, the

world of work is still dominated by men. Feminists therefore are continuing to ask what can be done in education to promote the interests of girls.

In 1986, Lee and Bryk asked the question: "Is secondary education in America enriched or impoverished by the gradual disappearance of the single-sex school?" (p. 394). This remains an open question and continues to be debated. A number of studies show that the decline of single-sex schools has been to the detriment of girls (Bauch, 1989; Hanafin & ni Charthaigh, 1993). Others show that single-sex schools offer girls some market-place advantage (Ball & Gewirtz, 1997) but at some cost to their personal development. Similar complexities emerge where cultural and gender factors collide as with the demand by Muslims in Britain for single-sex schools (Haw, 1994). Single-sex schools are not a simple panacea and many factors have to be taken into account when considering their value in striving for gender equity. This being the case, it is not surprising that the borders of the debate have moved. Emphasis has recently shifted to examine the way in which gender inequalities occur within schooling generally and how better outcomes can be achieved (Baker, Riordan, Schaub, 1995; Connell, Kessler, & Dowsett, 1982; Hansot & Tyack, 1988). The understanding now is that monitoring and intervening in gender practices including the explicit and hidden curriculum may offer a better way of ensuring gender justice than packaging education into either a coeducational or single-sex format.

Yet some form of sex segregation remains an option exercised to achieve gender equity. In Denmark, for example, the strategy of (gender) polarization (single-sex classes) has been in use since the early 1980s. The rationale for this programme is that "a person is better qualified to participate on an equal footing with the opposite sex, if that person has had a chance to develop according to her/his own terms" (Kruse, 1996, p. 190). In Australia, however, this approach has been criticized. Confirming the finding of Baker and Davies (1989), Kenway and Willis (1998) argue that single-sex math classes for girls result in inadequately prepared teachers being part of the production of "new and unfortunate knowledge about gender relations" (p. 201). Segregated classes allowed boys to reinscribe girls "within traditional modes of femininity and sometimes girls used single-sex classes in this way too" (Kenway and Willis, 1998, p. 203). Overall, Kenway and Willis warn about the difficulties of gender reform and particularly about the dangers of any formulaic, quick-fix approach to gender equity.

SINGLE-SEX SCHOOLING IN AFRICA

Education on the continent of Africa is marked by low levels of access by girls. In attempting to address this, UNESCO in the early 1980s endorsed coeducation as a major instrument for gender equity.

Of all the factors contributing to the advancement of women's education and training and subsequent participation in economic and social development, co-education undoubtedly takes prides of place because. . . once boys and girls have been brought up together on an equal footing from a very early age, vocational training for girls cannot thereafter become a specific problem. In co-educational schools, moreover, there is a clear trend towards eliminating the differentiation of courses and options according to criteria based on sex. (UNESCO, 1983, p. 37)

The goal of providing education for equality, however, ignored what happened to girls inside schools. Despite UNESCO's emphasis on the importance of peace, its recommendations simply assumed that schools were themselves peaceful.

Schools are not infrequently unsafe and girls are frequently assaulted, raped and murdered. While no quantitative study exists on violence within schools in Africa, there are a number of studies that suggest that it is a widespread problem. Rebecca Hallam's (1994) study summarized this:

Many observers in Africa believe that recent years have indeed seen a sharp rise in sexual violence in educational institutions, reflecting a general rise in violence against women. This is not only a serious problem in its own right, but has very important implications for women's ability to pursue their studies. (p. 2)

In recent years a number of horrifying events and trends have emerged. The St Kizito mixed secondary school massacre in Kenya in 1991 saw boys attack a girls' dormitory, killing 19 girls and raping 71. A study of rape in Senegal found that 60% of rapes were inflicted on school girls with an average age of 15 years (Hallam, 1994). Hallam's study points out that youth clubs and cults are often responsible for group assaults on students, but that teachers are also culpable. Across the continent, male teachers use their positions of authority and material power to take sexual advantage of girls (Hallam, 1994). Recourse to the law or any form of redress is limited because of retaliation, victimization and further threats and acts of violence against those initially attacked. The level of violence goes far beyond the concerns of feminists about sexual harassment expressed above. Schools in Africa are dangerous places, particularly for girls. But it is not just a question of physical danger – schools in many instances are also places of intense sexual interaction. The problem of pregnancy is continent-wide. Frequently, pregnancy results in the termination of a girl's school career. In Kenya it is estimated that 10,000 girls drop out each year because of pregnancy (Hallam, 1994). There is, of course, a close connection between safety, stability and academic performance.

While single-sex secondary education may facilitate female achievement and promote greater female participation where adolescent physical safety is an issue, the evaluation of the relative effectiveness of coeducation

compared to single-sex schooling may be confounded by male-dominated school populations. (Lee & Lockheed, 1990, p. 210)

Existing research suggests that in Africa, single-sex schooling has many of the advantages which feminists hoped for in first world contexts. In Nigeria, for example, girls participate and perform significantly better in math than in coed schools (Lee and Lockheed, 1990; Mallam, 1993). In Nigeria too, single-sex schools appear to have played a significant role in promoting girls into science and technology professions (Erinosho, 1997). In the Muslim countries of North Africa, girls' schools have played a positive role under certain conditions. Female teachers and administrators have operated as positive role models and drop out levels and absenteeism have been below average (El-Sanabary, 1989).

In many parts of Africa, girls' schools, often set up by missionaries, continue to exist and to offer education that appears to better prepare girls for an independent life. It may be asked whether their success is due to the fact that they are single-sex institutions. A range of other factors might be important – calibre of intake, wealth, nature of the school's resources, support of the parents may all be significant. In the next section, the role of single-sex schools in South Africa is discussed.

Single-sex schools for girls in South Africa

The earliest schools for girls established in South Africa in the mid to late nineteenth century were by and large single-sex. Their position in colonial society and the racially exclusive nature of their student intake meant that they were elite schools from the start (Randall, 1982; Vietzen, 1980). With the elaboration of the education system, the numerical importance of these schools declined. Today, single-sex schools (for boys and girls) form a very small proportion of the 32,000 schools within the education system. In terms of overall numbers, single-sex schools provide education to only a very small percentage (probably between 1 and 2%) of the 12 million school-going population. Only 1996 figures (the most recent available) could be obtained for the two most populous provinces, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. In Gauteng, of the 1,528,371 pupils in school, only 34,874 were in single-sex institutions which equals 2.2% of the province's school-going population. Significantly, the percentage of matriculants in single-sex institutions was higher – around 5% for the province. In KwaZulu-Natal, only 1.2% of the 2.7 million pupils were in single-sex institutions. If anything, the percentages may be declining since most of the new schools established are coeducational and many of the former white single-sex schools are converting from single-sex to coeducation, following an international trend (M. Henning, personal communication, April 29, 1998; Walford, 1986).

The single-sex schools that do exist, for the most part continue to occupy elite positions within the education system. For example, in the survey of the top 100 schools in the country in 1999, 32 girls and 24 boys schools appear. This is a massive overrepresentation in terms of their limited presence in the schooling system as a whole (Edusource/Education Foundation, 1999).²

Up until 1990, with few exceptions, the elite single-sex schools were white schools. Since that time in a process of formal desegregation of the education system, a large number of black children have moved from township schools into formerly white schools, many of which are single-sex. By the end of 1995 there were approximately 200,000 African students in Coloured, Indian and formerly white schools (Naidoo, 1996). Yet the class feature of this migration is significant. The former white suburban schools charge relatively high fees (around R6,000 per annum compared to R100 for a township secondary school) and thus the black students who now enjoy single-sex education are by and large drawn from the new black middle classes. There is still effectively no public provision of single-sex schools for black working class girls.

Historically there have been very few single-sex schools for black girls. Most mission schools established in the nineteenth century were coeducational, although they had sex-segregated hostels and curricula. One of the few all-girl institutions was Inanda Seminary established in 1869 by American Board missionaries. Despite the argument that it produced girls ready for home-life (Hughes, 1990), it was an elite school and its alumni occupied and still occupy important and visible public positions (*Independent on Saturday*, 14 August 1999; MacDougall, 1990; *Natal Witness*, 18 November 1997). Amongst its old girls are famous author, Ellen Khuzwayo; Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri, former premier of the Free State; Barbara Masekela, South African ambassador to France; Baleka Kgositsile, deputy speaker of Parliament; Manto Shabalala-Msimang, Eileen Nkosi-Shandu, Stella Sigcau, and Nozizwe Rontledge-Madlala – all ministers or deputy ministers in provincial and national government. This is an astonishing list given that the school has only 450 students and historically has suffered from very limited resources. The independent and forceful nature of the school's products can be contrasted with those of a local neighbour, the renowned Adam's College established in 1853 just south of Durban. This coeducational institution was an elite school with a long list of famous alumni. But despite the mixed student body, the famous alumni are all men. Lily Moya, who attended Adams College in the early 1950s, offers some explanation for this stark difference. She described coeducation at Adams as "abominable" (Marks, 1987, p. 25) and was so unhappy that she ran away.

Despite policy recommendations to extend single-sex schooling to African girls, there are real dangers that existing institutions will close because of

financial pressure. Most single-sex schools for African girls were and remain independent (i.e., privately-funded) and many are faced with bankruptcy. It was only the intervention of Nelson Mandela who in 1999 helped raise R1 million that has ensured that Inanda Seminary will continue to function – and it is one of the better resourced schools of this kind.

In South Africa, the major gender challenge is not getting African girls into schools – they already attend in large numbers (Truscott, 1994; Unterhalter, 1990). The major challenge is to convert the comparative advantage that the access to schooling gives to girls into something palpable like an improvement in their earning capacity or greater independence and public visibility. One of the major obstacles, as already indicated, is the violence that girls face and the effect that this has on their ability to act autonomously.

The problem of violence in schools

Although Lily Moya never stated it explicitly, her experience at Adams College was made unbearable because of the sexual attentions of boys. In Shula Marks's commentary on Lily's sad life, she suggests that maybe it was Lily's naivete that was the cause of her unhappiness. While this may well have been the case, research and the testimony of my students are now suggesting that the problem was (and remains) systemic rather than personal (Morrell, 1998).

In Africa there is a growing literature on the effects of sexual harassment in school. Girls are frequently raped, assaulted or harassed, resulting in them becoming pregnant (and leaving school forever) or living in fear and leaving of their own volition. Little seems to have been done to stop this. Frequently, the offenders are teachers or fellow students (Hyde, 1997; Mudhai, 1997). If anything, the situation in South Africa is worse. The worsening economic conditions in the country have produced a horrifying organizational phenomenon, the South African Rapist Association, which parallels the organized jackrolling (gang raping women, frequently schoolgirls) campaigns by township gangs in the 1970s (Mokwena, 1991). A member of this association, a former "comrade" said, in 1994: "We rape women who need to be disciplined (those women who behave like snobs), they just do not want to talk to most people, they think they know better than most of us" (Goldblatt & Meintjes, 1997, p. 14). This is probably an extreme position but it should be seen against the backdrop of a large black urban youth population, parts of which historically have manifested an assertive, and at times aggressive, masculinity in relation to turf, authority, women and rival members of the group (Glaser, 1988/89; 1992, 1998). The feminist journal *Agenda* cites police figures to suggest that there were one million rapes in South Africa in 1995 – which works out to one rape every 35 seconds (*Agenda* fact sheet, 1998). In a study of 24 relationships between young

adults (many of whom were school-going) in a Cape Town township, Wood and Jewkes (1997) found that in 23 of these relationships assault was a regular feature. In a follow-up study by Jewkes, 45-67% of women surveyed spoke of themselves as "abused," economically, physically, emotionally, and sexually (cited in Bennett, 2000, p. 21).

In a 1998 survey, where 1500 youths (aged 12-22 years) in black residential areas of Johannesburg were interviewed, a quarter of the boys said that gang rape was "fun;" 16% said gang rape was "cool;" 43% of girls said that sexual violence was "very common," while 33% said that they had personally experienced it at school. In another study, 75% of all learners at 6 Soweto schools testified that they had had "direct experience of a rape attack" (Edusource, 1999b, p. 15) but only 36% had reported these attacks.

We do not have figures on levels of sexual violence in schools, but all indications are that such violence is widespread. In a recent review of relevant literature, Jane Bennett (2000) came to the following conclusions:

Interviews with nearly all organizations identified school environments as places in which girls are very vulnerable to gender-based violence from male peers and from men staff. Women and schoolgirls were also found, in KZN, to be the main victims of violence in areas where gangs operate. Women are "property" of men gang members, and are also targets of rapes and abductions. There are very few support services available in schools, and there remains a deep culture of gender inequality.

Girls, particularly in coeducational township schools, have to contend with the constant risk of sexual harassment (Truscott, 1994; Wolpe et al., 1997). This is one of the major reasons why parents over the last half century have chosen to remove their girl children from township schools and place them in rural boarding schools and single-sex schools like Inanda Seminary.

To give the reader some sense of this problem I include some extracts taken from African students at two Durban universities. These are not unusual testimonies:

We all knew that some girls had been taken advantage of, but I couldn't believe it when it actually happened to me. I felt so embarrassed and cried. I told one of my friends but I didn't want to report it at school out of fear of revenge. I think the teachers knew that those things happened frequently but they too were powerless. (Suransky-Dekker, 1996, p. 6)

I was at boarding school and some of the teachers lived in small rooms on the school property. We all knew that this teacher romanced some sweet-hearts. Some girls were honoured but others were embarrassed or scared to reject him. (Suransky-Dekker, 1996, p. 6)

Another Durban teacher working in a township school confirmed the above:

The corrupt teacher will send a girl to his cottage for any particular job. He will then follow the girl. . . will ask for sexual favours from that girl.

Others even grab and rape the girls. . . . This problem is endemic in such a way that it has even got a codename. . . . They call it 'send and follow method.' (Personal testimony, B.Ed student, University of Natal, Durban, 1998)

As a pupil herself, this teacher remembers:

I was proposed by an old boy of about 30 years. I was only 13 and doing std 6 and he was doing standard 10. He was older than my class teacher. He will threaten of raping me if I don't accept his proposal. I was afraid to report this to the teachers because they will make it a joke. During intervals he will not leave me alone. I was then forced to hide in the toilet so that he cannot find me. I was too young to take this and it affected me so much. My results in that year dropped down because I was always terrified and inconsistent. (Personal testimony, B.Ed student, University of Natal, Durban, 1998)

Sexual harassment by teachers is a particularly sensitive issue and there has been no survey of the problem. Only a few studies testify to its nature. In a recent study of schooling in schools for rural Africans, male teacher/female student sexual relations were found to be widespread as well as the source of violent contestation between male students and teachers. "Teachers regularly victimized the girls who refused to accept their proposals and the boys with whom they were involved. One teacher proposed love to Rose Khosa, but after she refused him, he started beating her whenever she could not reply to his difficult questions" (Niehaus, in press, p. 9). While male students contested the right of teachers to have sex with the female students, they also implicitly claimed these students as their own sexual property.

An exploratory study in Durban found high levels of sexual abuse by teachers in local schools. The researcher examined 25 cases of abuse which were actually reported. Despite the gravity of the charges, only 8% of the cases resulted in dismissal and 4% in criminal charges. To avoid embarrassment, the official position was normally to allow the teachers accused to transfer to another school (Pillay, 1992).

In Durban, Richard Griggs (1997) has shown that gang violence is widespread in schools; 90% of schools investigated experienced it. A local case study by Vusi Mahlobo (2000) confirmed these findings. Of all students interviewed, 80% had experienced violence on the way to or from school or in the school grounds.

Poverty, participation and performance

Around the world the issue of poverty strikes women hardest. In South Africa 56% of women over 15 years are without income of any sort. These are mostly black women (Taylor, 1997). Joblessness also falls more heavily on female-headed than male-headed households (EPU, 1996). When you

consider that there is a correlation between access to education, certification and earning power, the difficulty of girls getting quality education remains a problem, despite the relatively high proportion of African girls in school and their relatively high success rates. Explanations for this state of affairs can be found by examining the labour market. Historically, black men could escape poverty by seeking wage labour in the cities and in the mines, but these opportunities were denied to women who were prohibited from entering urban areas (Bozzoli, 1983). The difficulty women found accessing any but the most exploited and poorest paid unskilled jobs was paralleled in the higher echelons of the labour market where they were confined to nursing and teaching (Marks, 1994). Apartheid may have extended mass education to African girls, but the quality of education and the context of that education continue to prevent girls from converting this advantage into a major improvement in their positions and in gender relations more broadly (Unterhalter, 1990). While white English-speaking girls were learning in the privileged, protected and esteem-producing environments of single-sex schools, African girls were enduring the intimidatory and authoritarian teaching in coeducational schools. One possible consequence was that they did not develop the confidence to put themselves forward, to take the initiative, to challenge the gender prescriptions that required timidity and subservience.

In terms of girls' participation in school governance, the rise of Student Representative Councils (SRCs) and the emergence of democratic school governance have not afforded girls the opportunity to become more visible or involved in decision-making. Politics remains in schools primarily an area of male activity. Female students tend to be excluded or marginalized from participating in SRCs (Morrell, 1992).

The academic performance of girls, particularly African, still falls behind that of boys. In the 1998 matriculation examination, 52% of all girls failed, compared to 46% of boys (Edusource, 1999a, p. 5). Girls were outperformed by boys in math, physical science, biology and even English second language. In math, for example, 38% of girls who took the exam passed, compared to 47% of boys, in physical science the figures were 61%-70%; biology 55%-60% (Edusource, 1999a, p. 7). Interestingly, in absolute terms, more girls write "matric" and more girls than boys pass and get matriculation exemptions. Access therefore is not the problem. Rather the problem is one of achievement and this is one of the major arguments used to advocate single-sex schooling for girls.

Another striking difference lies in sports performance. In the last decade or two, the participation of African men in a range of sports has taken off. African men dominate distance running, boxing and soccer and they have a significant presence in many other sports. It is striking that the obsession with sport is confined to African boys and men. School sports facilities

generally cater for boys only. Soccer gets all the attention and support. Girls do play netball but this is not given much recognition within schools. It is the case that virtually no African woman has achieved success in sport at a national or international level. The nature of the current schooling system has much to do with this. Girls are not encouraged to compete or participate (Africa, 1998).

DISCUSSION

As already indicated, there is a need for the academic performance of girls to be raised. This is particularly the case with black African girls. Out of 10,000 black African students who enter the school system, only 27 will qualify for university acceptance and only one will qualify in either math or science according to 1997 figures. This figure, taken with gender skewed performances amongst Africans and the fact that in 1988 only 15% of the country's university population were female Africans, can be accepted *prima facie* as a reason for considering girls' schools for Africans (Financial and Fiscal Commission, 1998; Truscott, 1994).

In South Africa "gender bias in the curriculum is hard to see or collect data on" (Truscott, 1994, p. 44). Formally, there appear to be only small differences, for example, in the number of boys as compared to girls taking math. Beneath the surface, however, it is clear that subject choice in schools is not easily made. Girls are discouraged from doing "boys" subjects. The discriminatory nature of the situation is more evident when one exposes the processes associated with, and effects of, subject choice.

A 19 year-old young woman, Zodwa (pseudonym), who recently matriculated from a township school, was persuaded to take subjects that imposed domesticity on them [sic]. In 1997, three years after our historic non-racial democratic elections, Zodwa was cajoled by one of her high school teachers to enroll in a Home Economics class. The only students in the class were young women. These young women were taught how to cook, bake and look beautiful. Zodwa describes her typical day in school to have also involved sweeping the classrooms and cleaning the toilets. (Mthethwa-Sommers, 1999, p. 46)

The schools produced by Bantu Education were characterized by extremely authoritarian, patriarchal regimes (Morrell & Moletsane, 2000). The ethos of these schools encouraged girls not to participate or to compete. In schools where boys are either absent or in the minority, a far freer environment is visible. At Mvenyane, a century old mission school in rural KwaZulu-Natal, the closure of the boys' hostels has resulted in girls outnumbering boys by 3 to 1. On a recent research trip to this school with my colleague, Lebo Moletsane, it was striking how animated and confident the girls were. The heterosexist rhythms so common in the normal coeducational schools were absent. And sexual harassment was virtually non-existent. The headteacher

of the school was quite clear about the reasons for the successes of the school – the small number of boys allowed girls to assert themselves and made discipline and teaching much easier. A similar situation seems to prevail in an urban Soweto girls-only school. Orlando Girls' School continues to deliver good results and to have a healthy climate of learning, while all around, coeducational schools are dysfunctional (Edusource/Education Foundation, November 1998).

The violence in schools is a major reason why single-sex schools for girls should be considered. There is a growing recognition that violence is a problem for schools (Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997) but the literature which deals with this violence (in Australia, UK, and USA) by and large is dealing with a phenomenon which in terms of scale and intensity is very different from that in South Africa. In these cases, violence generally takes the form of feeling, swearing, touching and other types of invasive behaviour (AAUW, 1995; Jones, 1985). Strategies are devoted to dealing with these. But in South Africa the problem is a lot more serious and requires different measures. Of the overseas authors only Devine (1996) tackles the hard edge of "violence" – possession and use of guns and other weapons and the consequent development of a security mindset in schools. In South Africa, the prevalence of gangs and their brazen involvement in-schools, has prompted educators, parents and policy makers to advocate surveillance and security measures. Of course it is important that all schools be made safe, but keeping out the gangs is only one part of the problem. Cases of violence and sexual harassment continue to be common. There are many reasons for this, but the bottom line is that African, working class girls are being denied the chance to excel. Single-sex schools might be considered as one way in which this problem might be addressed.

The absence of research on the importance and effects of role models on the self-esteem of girls forces me to rely on anecdotal and impressionistic evidence. One of the few studies which makes any statement about this is the Masters thesis by Selma Nagan (1999). She found that in girls-only schools, headteachers were inspirational and encouraged girls to assume leadership positions. Whereas in coeducational schools, women teachers were made to feel unskilled and valueless, the girls-only environment allowed them to be more active and to offer a more purposeful role model. As already indicated, the limited evidence available also suggests that African girls stand a better chance in the world of work if they have passed through a single-sex school.

In the field of education, gender issues have remained visible despite a welter of pressing difficulties which have kept policy-makers and bureaucrats concentrated on other matters including bureaucratic rationalization, budget shortfalls, teacher militancy and low pass rates. Yet it should be added that gender has to fight for a place of priority with other agendas such

as nation-building and it is by no means guaranteed that gender equity will continue to be a major policy goal (Enslin, 1993/4). Even if there is agreement on the importance of gender, Anne McLennan warns that without tying educational gender commitments to a broader engagement with wider society on the basis of nonrepression and nondiscrimination, the impact of initiatives (particularly if they are conceived only in terms of distributive criteria) may be very limited (McLennan, 1993/4; Daniels, 1995). In some provinces there have been some steps taken to produce "girl-friendly school environments." Chisholm comments that these steps have involved banning violence, corporal punishment and sexual harassment, but she warns, "where teachers are not safe, and where methods of pupil motivation rely on punishment, there will be resistance amongst teachers to some of these measures" (Chisholm, 1996, p. 12).

Acknowledging the importance of safety in the education crisis, the COLTS (Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service) program was launched in 1998 by the National Department of Education. One of its projects was "Safer Learning Environments." It emphasised "increasing basic safety conditions at the school place and decreasing incidents of crime and violence in and around schools" (UNESCO et al., 1999, p. 20). There are many ways of achieving this, but single-sex schooling would be one of the logical options. In a study of a Durban school, attempts to deal with racial antagonism in a desegregating former white school demonstrated how single-sex schools were suited to this approach (Welgemoed, 1998).

Amongst African students whom I teach at the University of Natal, opinion on single-sex schools has been divided. Few have had direct experience of single-sex schooling and to some it seems "unnatural." Nevertheless there was a significant expression of support for this form of schooling. I quote two opinions expressed in September 1996 which argue in favour of single-sex schooling for girls:

I would have been a better person if I had been to a girls' school. At girls' schools you sort of have this identity – the role models are female and you get this encouragement that maybe one day you'll be somebody in power or *somebody*. Because there it was just like males all over the place and they ran the school – they did everything and we had to follow behind them. (Sinenhlanhla, a woman who attended an elite, coeducational, mission school)

I think single-sex schools are very good in a way for girls, I don't know about socially, but I think those girls who went to single-sex school they benefited out of it. They tend to be very confident, they do well, and they seem to take a good position in the community. I know some who went to Inanda or Montebello, some of them are doctors. But you hardly get any girl from a co-ed school going to those positions, but I don't know what it does for them socially, I mean in terms of relating to males. I've actually taught and I've seen this in the classes, the girls seem to be very passive

unless the class is dominated by girls, if there are many girls compared to boys, they – the girls – would be very active. But if maybe the number is half girls, half boys, or more boys, the girls tend to be very passive. (Nkanyezi, a man who attended a township coeducational school)

One of the dangers of introducing single-sex schooling for girls is the danger of a masculinist backlash. Examples cited above show that girls have been attacked while in their single-sex dormitories. The reasons for this are complex, but an important theme is “getting above their station.”

A particularly disturbing feature from research into violence against women is the possibility of a link between domestic violence and progress towards equality for women. The suspicion is that the risk of violence rises when male partners feel threatened that their traditional position of superiority and control is being threatened. Gender equity can evoke backlash unless accompanied by skills for both sexes in peaceful conflict resolution. (Davies, 1998, p. 100)

In Southern Africa, this conclusion is confirmed. Attempts to promote the interests of girls in school are seen as a direct challenge to the authority of African patriarchs. As a Zimbabwe school principal put it, “educated women in African society do not fare well in marriage” because “the emancipation of women through education has put African manhood in conflict with modern womanhood, tearing asunder African societies and leaving men and women confused on how to chart the future of their children” (Chiurayi, 1996, p. 2). This is not surprising, he argues, because rural women

... serve as labour force for their husbands or other men on the commercial farms, from whom they derive little benefit. Unfortunately in the majority of cases, men would like this situation to continue. (Women) receive very little support from their husbands who may have other wives, very often elsewhere, to maintain. (Chiurayi, 1996, p. 2)

A South African perspective is offered by Zondo who states simply that “the situation in rural areas is such that if you are a female, you do not play any role in the societal debates – the men represent families here” (Zondo, 1995, p. 23).

The intensification of poverty in the poorest sectors of South African society (women living in rural areas) has compounded the situation. It is not only upwardly mobile women who are in danger (for being ‘cheeky’) but it is the poorest that are also at risk. Attempts to escape poverty make women and young girls more vulnerable to being trapped within sexually abuse or harassing situations at home, within educational institutions, and within work places. (Bennett, 2000, p. 9)

Above I have tried to suggest that single-sex schools for girls might assist some to avoid the violent and repressive conditions which often exist in coeducational schools. But any attempt to implement the GETT recommendation must start from a position of humility and an acknowledgement of ignorance. In South Africa, we still know too little about the impact of

schools on girls. As Fred Mael comments, in the US most research “certainly shows a role for single-sex schools (as an option if not a norm) (but) much additional research is needed to clarify which individuals or target populations would gain most from such schooling” (Mael, 1998, p. 121). More sophisticated research is required to find out who would benefit and how. Research along these lines in Botswana has shown how important it is to have a detailed, context-specific knowledge before acting or run the risk of grand policy failing and of generating unwelcome and unintended results (Fuller, Singer & Keiley, 1999).

Single-sex schools are not the answer. They may, however, make an important contribution to transforming the SA education system which still is characterized by gender inequalities. In making this statement, it is important to see schools as having the potential to be sites of change. Despite Harber’s (1997) reservations that schools more often serve to promote stasis and the status quo, they can also make the difference. In the ideal world this would involve bringing both sexes together and working for peace and democracy. In South Africa it may take other, possibly temporary, measures to move towards gender equity.

For gender justice to be achieved, “the necessary conditions to ensure the development of individual capacity” (McLennan, 1993/4, p. 67) must be secured. Historically South African (coed) schools have prevented African girls from: participating actively in school life; breaking down the strict sexual division of labour and gendered patterns of subject choice; utilizing the education to free themselves from dependence on a male wage-earner and enter the labour market – in short, from realizing their capacity. Perhaps for some, single-sex schools could be the answer.

NOTES

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2. The schools are not specifically identified as coeducational or single-sex so it is possible that there are in fact MORE single-sex schools in the list than I have been able to identify from personal knowledge. Furthermore many of the elite private single-sex schools refused to participate in the survey and so were not considered. Schools were selected in terms of matric pass and exemption rates, math participation and pass rates, English pass rate, proportion of learners involved in extra-curricular activity and range of extra-curricular activities offered. Socio-economic contextual factors were taken into account in compiling the list.

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GIRL POWER IN NERVOUS CONDITIONS: FICTIONAL PRACTICE AS A RESEARCH SITE

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ABSTRACT. To see a fictional text not only as a literary investigation into issues of concern to its author but also as the site of educational research is a very liberating way of extending our understanding of what counts as research and of what counts as an appropriate site of research. As educators we are concerned to use our theoretical findings and newly acquired knowledge(s) in practical ways in our classrooms. If some kind of relevant knowledge can be acquired through the reading and investigation of a fictional text, and if it can be used to improve our classroom and pedagogic skills, should we not be rethinking the traditional boundaries of the 'research site'? This paper explores the use of a 1988 Zimbabwean novel, *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga as the site of research into gender and oppression in relation to postcolonial education.

RÉSUMÉ. Considérer le texte d'un roman non seulement comme une étude littéraire sur des questions qui intéressent son auteur mais également comme le site de recherches pédagogiques est une façon libératrice de mieux comprendre ce qui compte comme recherche et comme site de recherche adapté. En tant qu'éducateurs, nous nous intéressons à l'usage qui est fait des résultats théoriques et des connaissances nouvellement acquises sur les méthodes pratiques utilisées dans nos classes. S'il est possible d'acquérir certaines connaissances utiles par la lecture et l'étude d'un roman, et que cela contribue à améliorer nos techniques pédagogiques et de gestion d'une classe, ne devrions-nous pas dès lors repenser les frontières traditionnelles du «site de recherche»? Cet article analyse l'utilisation d'un roman du Zimbabwe, *Nervous Conditions*, écrit en 1988 par Tsitsi Dangarembga comme site d'une recherche sur les sexes et l'oppression par rapport à l'éducation post-coloniale.

INTRODUCTION

To close the gap between our research findings and our pedagogic practice could well be described as one of the aims of educational research, along with the application of what we read in theory-driven journals to such practice. What I want to suggest in this paper is the possibility of combining research and reading in the investigation of works of literature as possible sites of educational research. Seeing a novel as more than just a fictional

exploration of certain matters of concern to its author is highly liberating to an educational researcher who is schooled in the belief that to 'do research' is, for example, to investigate classroom practice or to account for levels of literacy in a given group, and that to read relevant material is to peruse journal articles on the theory of education. Seeing a literary text as a site of research – as more than just a literary space – can be a new and exciting way into the exploration of how the ideology of theory might intersect with some of the power differentials involved in the practical application of such theory in the classroom.

Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* lends itself admirably to an exploration of the relationship between ideology and power – between, in this case, education and the ways in which education serves not only as a means to the empowerment of the young female protagonist, Tambu, but also as a site of her oppression as a black girl in Southern Africa. This novel, set as it is in the pre-liberation years of Rhodesia, and first published in 1988, may well function as a way into understanding some aspects of this relationship in its investigation of how a young girl learns to deal with the traumatising events of her life as a colonised subject desperately seeking an education.¹ In addition to this, *Nervous Conditions* may offer us a way into researching the implications, for girls' education, of some of the complexities of benevolent patriarchy. In her novel Dangarembga presents us with her investigation into the colonial co-option, within the educational system, of the local community patriarch, Babamakuru, Tambu's uncle and school principal, and she offers some exploration of possible feminist strategies of coping with these complexities. It may also serve to offer a way of viewing the female adolescent as someone other than the 'Ophelia'² of much current thinking about young girls and their inevitable fall from innocence into inauthenticity; the benefits of this alone to educational research in relation to girls in school are enormous. The girls represented in this work, Tambu and her cousin, Babamakuru's daughter, Nyasha, are feisty young women who, in different ways and with different degrees of success, try to counter the oppression to which they are subjected. Reading the representation of adolescence – particularly when such representation refuses the stereotypical, if academic, portrayal of this period of teenage development – in a novel as more than just a literary space³ may enable us to 'do educational research' in a way that allows us to cross the apparent boundary between the so-called 'soft' knowledge of fictional explication and the 'hard' knowledge of theoretically based research findings. Such an approach may initiate a dialogue between the (perceived) luxury of reading a novel and the (perceived) solid work of collecting and collating data and of presenting pragmatic research findings.

Feminist fictional practice speaks back to patriarchal colonialism

Nervous Conditions, Tsitsi Dangarembga's literary, feminist investigation of girlhood in Zimbabwe in the late 1960s and early 70s, focuses on the

education of two young women, Tambu and Nyasha – cousins and friends – who struggle against the oppression of their situation within a deeply patriarchal society. One of the strategies that Dangarembga, as a feminist writer, employs to speak back to patriarchal colonialism is her use and subversion in her novel of two literary generic antecedents – the traditional bildungsroman, or novel of growth and development, and the traditional colonial novel. These genres are both based on the belief in the didactic significance of realism, which, to put it reductively and somewhat colloquially, suggests that in offering ‘a slice of life’ to his or her readers, the author, through the omniscient narrator, is enabled, also, to offer them a learning opportunity based on what happens to the characters depicted in the novel. Both genres have to do with cause and effect and, therefore, with the consequences of various actions performed by, and behaviours manifested in, the characters. Because of this didactic orientation, both genres exploit, to varying degrees, the significance of closure: in the bildungsroman the (usually male) hero achieves moral and chronological maturity while the protagonist (again, usually male) of the colonial novel suffers the torn consciousness of the educated person who, upon his return to his family, can no longer fit into the village community into which he was born. The morally (and, often, moralistic) didactic purpose of these realist narratives and the insistence on the power of the omniscient narrator to achieve this purpose, along with its linear (supposedly logical and rational) structure, has much in common with the patriarchal world view out of which realism grew.

Dangarembga's subversion of some of the conventions of these genres, the most obvious of which is, of course, her use of a female protagonist – in fact it can be argued that she uses two female protagonists, Tambu and Nyasha, thus further subverting this particular convention – is aimed at interrogating the hegemonic patriarchal assumptions behind them, those same assumptions which underlie the systemic oppression of women. We are, invited to see Tambu and Nyasha as representative of two different ways of dealing with aspects of this oppression.

In keeping with the conventions of realism, Dangarembga's depiction of Tambu as a young girl desperate to go to school is set against the backdrop of local traditional opinions and attitudes. Here we are presented with a belief – so typical of many Sub-Saharan African men – that women count for much less than they do. Near the start of the novel Tambu says: “The needs and sensibilities of the women in my family were not considered a priority or even legitimate” (p. 12). She goes on to tell us of her sense of injustice at the fact that her brother, Nhamo, as we have learned earlier, was sent to school so that he, “if given the chance . . . would distinguish himself academically, at least sufficiently to enter a decent profession” (p. 4). Because Nhamo's education was seen to be a way out of the poverty of the family, the cost of his education was deemed worthwhile. Tambu's father

voices the traditional point of view when he says to his daughter: "Can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables" (p. 15). Her mother's observation that "being black was a burden because it made you poor . . . [and] being a woman was a burden because you had to bear children and look after them and the husband" (p. 16) echoes what is generally held to be the case in Africa. But for Tambu this is reason enough to decide that she shall return to school to complete her education, disrupted because the family's financial precariousness did not allow sending her back to school past Standard Three. It is not only research in developing countries that turns up such beliefs in the superiority of boys over girls: the unequal power relations inherent in patriarchy are patent everywhere. As researchers the exploration of these issues in a novel provides us with a way into an examination of the sexist and heteronormative assumptions and practices we all encounter regardless of where we live and of where we engage in research.

Dear to the *bildungsroman* and to the colonial novel is the 'adoption' of the intellectually superior boy by a mysterious benefactor who makes his education possible and who gives him the chance to enter worlds previously denied to him.⁴ Dangarembga transfers that seeking after knowledge and improvement of the male hero of the *bildungsroman* and of the traditional colonial novel onto a young girl in whose community education is a male privilege, thus questioning the very patriarchal basis of the genres themselves. Her generically subversive narrative strategy speaks directly to the plot line and this provides us with an opportunity to investigate the orthodoxy and exclusivity of these male oriented genres. The gifted, traditionally male, protagonist of the colonial novel is replaced by a talented (but also diligent and hardworking) girl. The romanticised rites of male passage, necessary to the often disadvantaged male of the traditional *bildungsroman*, as he makes his way to success, are replaced by the practical markers of female development: Tambu deals with her first menstrual period. The growth of male confidence in the hero of the *bildungsroman* that allows him to face the world is replaced by Tambu's learning to use a knife and fork. That awakening into consciousness of the male hero of both genres is wittily and tellingly subverted into Tambu's growing realisation that the seductiveness of that very sought-after white privilege is difficult to resist, as she begins to challenge those markers of patriarchally endorsed success such as winning competitions to gain a place in an elite school. To extrapolate from these fictional manoeuvres into lived classroom experience in an attempt to match our reading to our pedagogic practice can only benefit our students. To use a classroom reading of this novel as a site of research is made easier for the researcher (and, where relevant) for his/her subjects by the distance, as it were, between fiction and life and by the literal geographic distance between Rhodesia, which no longer exists, and wherever it is that such research is taking place. The safety that such distance, in both senses, allows

can be reassuring to teacher researchers and students alike as they begin to see the parallels between their own situation and that of colonial Rhodesia.

Dangarembga's portrayal of Nyasha, daughter of Tambu's benefactor, Babamakuru, is an interesting variation on the colonial theme in that she has this young woman return from England to Zimbabwe – a movement which, while it parallels in geographic terms that of her father, whose higher education took place in England, could not be more different in effect: Babamakuru's patriarchal privilege has been endorsed and consolidated in the very place where Nyasha has been given the liberal education which has taught her to think freely and independently and which has taught her to question the very patriarchal ideology and practice which her father has been empowered to entrench back home in Rhodesia. Inevitably, her return is marked by the pain and ambivalence typical of that torn and unanchored consciousness of the colonised subject. We see, through her eating disorder, her attempt to regain control of her adolescent life. The memories of her freedom in Britain cannot be reconciled to the reality of her life in Rhodesia and we see adolescence for Nyasha in terms of both assertiveness and a kind of regression as she becomes dangerously undernourished and painfully thin – a shadow of her younger self.

While I agree that research into the connections between educational systems and adolescent eating disorders involves a multitude of complexities, Dangarembga's investigation of Nyasha's response to the pressures of her life can provide a useful starting point. Nyasha is oppressed not only by the sexism so entrenched in her community but also by her status as a postcolonial young woman thrust back into a colonial situation in which she is both daughter and student of the ruling patriarchal school principal.

In yet another act of narrative subversion, Dangarembga refuses her readers the comfort of closure, and in so doing, points to her conviction that process, not product, is the point of learning. She has Tambu say, in the final sentences of the novel:

It was a long and painful process for me, that process of expansion. It was a process whose events stretched over many years and would fill another volume. . . (p. 204)

The implications of this realization of the importance and value of process within an understanding of the educational goal of life-long learning are of great significance to educational research into, for example, forms of assessment which encourage an emphasis on the processes of learning in favour of some quantifiably measurable product such as a set of an examination answers. Here again, this novel provides us with a research space, as it were, and not just a space of literary investigation. Dangarembga's portrayal of the grade-obsessed Nyasha, at one point in the novel, points to the dangers, for a particular kind of girl, of a secondary school system in which success is

based on examination results. She also offers us a portrayal of a girl for whom it is strategically necessary to play this game by its own rules since this is the only way to the educational success she has decided will be hers as a means to reach at least some measure of independence. A feminist point arising from this has to do with the recognition that there can be no such thing as a post feminist world until there is equality between the sexes and that this requires continuous effort in a seemingly everlasting process. As researchers here we can establish or investigate possible links between reading and becoming aware of social feminist activism: to explore the difference between Nyasha's extreme 'all or nothing' response and Tambu's moderate 'roll with the punches' approach to solving problems is to advocate a feminist strategy based on the recognition that working towards change must take heed of one's goals as well as one's limitations, and that effecting change takes perseverance. It seems to me that to read about Nyasha's failure and Tambu's success in this novel is necessarily to be made aware of the extent to which the kind of colonial educational practice depicted in the book is amenable to a feminist activist research approach.

Girlpower, or the refusal of the 'Ophelia stereotype'

This novel of female empowerment can be characterized as the ultimate Southern African refusal of, or challenge to, what I would describe as the pervasive "Ophelia Myth" which would have us believe that female adolescence is "one long sad slide into the blighted second class citizenry of adult femininity."⁶ Through her representation of Tambu and Nyasha, the adolescent girls, who, in their defiance of the patriarchy, however ultimately successful or unsuccessful, actively refuse that 'long sad slide' into the oppressed adult femininity of their respective mothers, Dangarembga anticipates contemporary notions of 'girlpower.'

It is not merely the plot details of *Nervous Conditions* that illustrate this defiance of those beliefs about adolescent girls that underpin the 'Ophelia Myth;' the fictional strategy of Tambu's first person narration enables Dangarembga to explore the very processes of female self-empowerment as they occur in the protagonist. Tambu is telling the story as a first person memory piece: Dangarembga begins her novel by having her narrator, Tambu, explain that it was only because her brother died that she was able to go to school in the first place. However, not only does she explain this but she also refuses to indulge in guilt about how she was granted this chance to be educated.

I was not sorry when my brother died. Nor am I apologizing for my callousness, as you may define it, my lack of feeling. For it is not that at all. I feel many things these days, much more than I was able to feel in the days when I was young and my brother died, and there are reasons for this more than the mere consequence of age. Therefore I shall not apologize

but begin by recalling the facts as I remember them that led up to my brother's death, the events that put me in a position to write this account. (p. 1)

Dangarembga presents Tambu as actively remembering her girlhood and she has her offer her own perspective on how she came to terms with her childhood and early adolescent experience of being a girl for whom an education was not a given, but something to be sought after and fought for, often in apparently callous and in competitive ways which were alien to her personality.

For Tambu, early adolescence is not only a time which marks the inevitable growth into adulthood, it is also the space in which her memories of the totally naturalised patriarchal oppression of her childhood threaten to overwhelm her with a sense of her own unworthiness. That innocent eagerness of the child to return to school that drove Tambu to grow and sell mielies (maize) to raise the necessary money gives way to anxiety and despair. We are party to her thoughts on her way to her uncle and benefactor, Babamakuru's mission house:

Had I really thought . . . that these other-worldly relations of mine could live with anyone as ignorant and dirty as myself? I, who was so ignorant . . . deserved to suffer . . . for having been too proud to see that Babamakuru could only be so charitable to our branch of the family because we were so low. He was kind because of the difference. (p. 65)

For Tambu femaleness, poverty and lowliness are equated. It is not until she learns to recognise how powerful the processes of interpellation, or socialisation into prevailing dominant discourse, are that Tambu can deal with her sense of lowliness. Unlike the 'Ophelia-adolescent' for whom victimhood has so much appeal, she refuses such self-pitying inauthenticity and becomes determined to rise, again, above the conditions in which she finds herself. From sliding "into a swamp of self-pity" (p. 65) she becomes, ten pages later, "intrigued and fascinated with one part of [her] mind, the adventurous explorative part" (p. 75) as she becomes aware of the ways in which an education abroad has made Nyasha, her "Anglicised cousin" (p. 76) behave. A little later in the novel she admits, wryly, to being a "bit masochistic at that age, wallowing in [her] *imagined inadequacy* (my italics) a few lines before "reaffirm[ing] [her] vow to use the opportunity [her] uncle has given [her] to maximum advantage" (p. 89) and this self awareness finds full expression three pages later as she describes being at school with Nyasha and living in Babamakuru's home:

Thus began the period of my reincarnation. I like to think of my transfer to the mission as my reincarnation. With the egotistical faith of fourteen short years...I expected this era to be significantly profound and broadening in terms of adding wisdom to my nature, clarity to my vision, glamour to my person. In short, I expected my sojourn to fulfil all my fourteen year old fantasies, and on the whole I was not disappointed. (p. 93)

While patriarchy itself is transcultural and transhistorical, its manifestations are not: its power relations are complex, unfixed, highly nuanced and context based, often experienced in ways that are difficult, if not impossible, to articulate. The cultural assumptions behind the refusal to see girls as worthy of being educated finds many different forms of expression, however less extreme than this they might be, in our classrooms and our staff rooms. Of interest here to research into the ways in which young girls view themselves is the observation that Tambu, at first (in the extracts quoted above), speaks of herself as poor, female and dirty in relation to Babamakuru's wealthy maleness. The link between poverty and femaleness is so well documented internationally as to be a given and, here again, we see the workings of a nuanced patriarchy which validates the very wealth of the men, in relation to their poor female relatives, which is both the cause and the result of patriarchal oppression. For Tambu, a poverty over which she has no control is reason enough for her to feel, not only wholly inadequate but unworthy even of charitable handouts. That she rises above this is testimony to her own resilience and determination, and also to her recognition that obtaining an education is worth whatever it might cost. As educators we could use these sequences which demonstrate how subtly nuanced patriarchy actually is and how different kinds of feminist response might work in similar situations as fruitful sites of research. In such ways can novels like *Nervous Conditions* provide more than fictional diversion in opening up such space for investigation into the workings of gender relations in the field of education.

Although Dangarembga has Nyasha, through her anorexia and bulimia, fade from the text as she fades from vigorous protest against the strictures imposed by male hegemonic control in her family and social life, this is a function of her attempt to wrest control over her own life back from her father. In no way is her eating disorder an Ophelia-like response to approaching adulthood. Rather, in this overtly established connection between pathology and forms of narration we see the loss of a young woman to an eating disorder, not as metaphor of compliance to patriarchally determined norms of female beauty and attractiveness but to an illness which is metaphor for the inappropriateness of her excessive and unstrategic response to such oppression. Exerting control over what one eats is not the answer to the patriarchal control of women's access to learning and education in Southern Africa: to fade away is to give up and it is precisely this recognition which forces Tambu to pursue her education in preference to giving it up in order to look after Nyasha.

In this refusal of the adolescent Ophelia myth Dangarembga anticipates some of the more recent theorizing about "knowing childhood" that we see in the work of Anne Higonnet, author of *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood* or James Kincaid in his *Erotic Innocence: The*

Culture of Child Molestation. Arguing that the notion of childhood innocence is a social construction that is formulated by adults as a way of ensuring the vulnerability of children, these authors contest the validity of the category 'childhood innocence.' This is in no way to suggest some sort of moral binary: this is not about 'good innocence' as opposed to 'bad knowingness' but is, rather, about attributing active agency to the child instead of assuming some kind of blind passivity. If we refuse to see childhood only as innocence, then we refuse to see adolescence necessarily as fall. Instead, we are enabled to see adolescent girlhood as a productive time and as a space of positive agency. Tambu and Nyasha most certainly fall into the category of 'knowing children' in their quest for fairness in their lives. Educational research into what it means to be such an active agent of change as an adolescent girl struggling against entrenched sexism in the institutions of both family and education could, most usefully, begin with this novel. Tambu succeeds because she tempers this agency with common sense and moderation and Nyasha fails because she refuses to do so: for her no compromise is possible. Tambu, who at age eight or nine is determined to grow enough maize to sell in order to raise money to pay her school fees, is equally determined, years later, not to attend the wedding ceremony the Christianised Babamakuru insists upon to legalise the common law union of her parents. Nyasha's defiance of patriarchal oppression is equally apparent throughout the novel. As a child of nine or ten years of age we see her refusing to go along with her mother's conformity and this refusal to conform remains characteristic of her throughout the text. For neither of these feisty young women is adolescence that "long sad slide into the blighted second class citizenry of adult femininity" (McCarthy, p. 195). Not for them is Ophelia's pond or Alice's rabbit hole.

Postcolonialism, pathology and education

Dangarembga's use of the term 'nervous conditions' in the title of her novel, drawing as it does on Jean-Paul Sartre's observation in his Preface to Franz Fanon's (1963) *The Wretched of the Earth* that "[t]he status of 'native' is a nervous condition introduced and maintained by the settler among colonised people with their consent" (p. 20) carries with it an obvious post colonial referentiality. These 'nervous conditions' are generally thought to be manifested in the women of the novel – Nyasha's eating disorder, Lucia's sometime barrenness, Tambu's mother's lethargy etc. – but an interesting site of research into this novel might be to investigate how we could understand Babamakuru and Nhamo, Tambu's brother, as victims, too, of colonisation as well as recognising them as patriarchal oppressors.

Sartre's discussion of Fanon's observation that the postcolonial (vertical) violence against the coloniser is preceded by that (horizontal violence) perpetuated against those with whom one finds oneself as fellow colonised

subject is based on a similar point to that made by South African writer and journalist Antjie Krog in her (partly fictionalised) account of this country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Country of my Skull* (1998):

The hearings on human rights violations have forced the Truth Commission to formulate a different position on reconciliation – in a way which takes it out of the colour code and makes it available to all South Africans as a future guideline. The human rights of black people were violated by whites, but also by blacks at the instigation of whites. So the Truth Commission was forced to say: South Africa's shameful Apartheid past has made *people* lose their humanity. It dehumanized people to such an extent that they treated fellow human beings worse than animals. (p. 58, *her italics*)

Although we often fondly believe in the pervasive myth that suffering ennobles, that those who have suffered will automatically have become compassionate through such oppressive experience, it is a commonplace of psychological research that, for example, men who are brutalised in armed conflict against other men bring that violence back with them into their homes and the domestic abuse of women is often the result. It is the horizontal violence suffered by soldiers fighting other men much like themselves that turns downwards, as it were, into the vertical violence they use against women and children at home after their return from war. They suffer a process of dehumanisation that allows or enables them to dehumanise those weaker or more vulnerable than themselves. For Fanon, the processes of colonisation dehumanise the colonised and this allows them to turn on their colonisers with the violence which so often characterises such revolutions, but I want to suggest that using this model of horizontal and vertical violence in a different, though related way, will perhaps enable us to see that 'nervous condition' of the native being as manifest in Babamakuru, and the boy, Nhamo, for example, as it is in the women under patriarchal domination in Dangarembga's novel. It might also enable us, as teachers, to understand what is happening in our classrooms when we witness the various ways in which the oppressed oppress others. This model involves seeing Babamakuru as 'victim' (in however qualified or relative a sense) of the colonisers who have co-opted him, however eager and willing his own complicity in this, and this sort of horizontal violence perpetuated on him finds its vertical counterpoint in his excessive need to control the women in his community. As a site of research into the oppressive practices of colonial education this aspect of the novel could provide valuable material. It might also yield useful insights into the current debates around diversity management in the classroom, for example.

For Babamakuru's son, Nhamo the distancing function of disgust replaces the need to control: as Hershini Bhana (1999) in her aptly entitled article, "'The Condition of the Native': Autodestruction in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*" points out, Nhamo has so "internalised the collapsing of the

'blackness' of dirt with the 'blackness' of race ... [that] his ostensible disdain for dirt translates into a disdain for the black peasant" (p. 120). His internalisation of the beliefs and attitudes of the colonial mindset is obvious and here again we see the horizontal violence of co-option, of the internalisation of colonial cultural norms, justifying the vertical exercise of oppression. On the first page on the novel Dangarembga has Tambu describe her brother Nhamo's return trips from school to his village thus:

He did not like travelling by bus because, he said, it was too slow. Moreover, the women smelt of unhealthy reproductive odours, the children were inclined to relieve their upset bowels on the floor, and the men gave off strong odours of productive labour. (p. 1)

I want to suggest that education functions in this novel as the point of intersection where, in my new model, the horizontal meets, as it were, the vertical axis of oppression for the young girl Tambu, who, unlike the other women in the text, sees its potential to at least mitigate the oppression of women even if it cannot hope to obliterate it. Babamakuru, in his co-opted colonialism as headmaster of the mission school, directs his control, as educator, downwards through the educational system and as patriarchal paterfamilias, however benevolent, downwards through the institution of the family. Because Nyasha is his daughter and Tambu his niece and because they are both also his pupils, they are in line for this downward oppression twice over. But, through the depiction of these young girls and their response to this vertical oppression, I think that Dangarembga explores the possibility that if education can be made to function in its own right it may serve to move women, to however limited an extent, out of the way of some of this vertical patriarchal oppression. One of the ways in which this can be effected, she suggests in this novel, is through the act of storytelling. It has become a commonplace observation that storytelling – narrating the details of the tribulations and triumphs of one's life, detailing one's sorrow or grief or longing as well as the cost of one's successes – is a process which can help lead to the healing of the damaged or fragmented self. It is through Tambu's own narration of the story of the ambivalence of her life as a colonised subject in pursuit of an education, that Dangarembga offers this possibility of healing, and, through such healing, a way for Tambu to move out of the way of that vertical oppression. For Nyasha, there is no such possibility: her extreme response to patriarchal control causes her to fade from the novel and, presumably, from life.

In an interview with Rosemary Marangoly George and Helen Scott (1993), Tsitsi Dangarembga, in an interesting echo of William Blake's injunction to the Piper to record his songs for posterity, to "sit ... down and write/ In a book that all may read" (cited in Keynes, 1966, p. 111) spoke of the need "to write things about ourselves in our own voices which other people can pick up to read." She concludes: "And I do think that *Nervous Conditions* is

serving this purpose for young girls in Zimbabwe" (p. 310). Dangarembga's fictional practice in her novel implements exactly this theoretical observation. The author has her narrator, Tambu, speak her chosen life into existence while Nyasha, in becoming, as it were, disembodied through her eating disorder, loses her voice completely. Her adolescent protest is too extreme to result in change in her society and she fades from the novel as Tambu, her fragmented self well on the way to being healed, decides to return to school instead of choosing the traditional female role of staying to help look after her.

Educational research into adolescent responses to (colonial) oppression might fruitfully begin in the investigation of a novel such as this which deals with the interconnection between colonialism, education and pathology. From Babamakuru's obsessive need, as the co-opted colonist, to control his world and all its inhabitants, to his daughter, Nyasha's eating disorder, from Babamakuru's well educated wife, Maiguru's use of baby talk in her frustration at being prevented from using her M.A. in Philosophy, to Tambu's mother, Mainini's, inertia and her "unlocalised aches all over her body" (p. 57) her response to her belief that it was because of education that her son Nhamo died and her fear that the same fate will befall her daughter who is determined to go to school, various forms of pathology are seen to be attendant, in some way or other, upon education. As one of the most powerful tools or mechanisms of the colonising endeavour, colonial education could well stand in for colonialism itself, so that Fanon's 'nervous conditions,' or psychiatric disorders, can be seen to be the inevitable lot of those subjected to such education. In its investigation of these 'nervous conditions' of the colonised native, this novel can function as the site of important research into variations of such response in our own students who operate under different forms of the colonisation of patriarchy.

'Colonisation' is a site of ideological and semantic slippage, as Chandra Mohanty (1991) has pointed out. For her,

the term 'colonisation' has come to denote a variety of phenomena in recent feminist and left writing in general. From its analytic value as a category of exploitative economic exchange in both traditional and contemporary Marxisms ... to its use by feminist women of colour in the US, to describe the appropriation of their experiences and struggles by hegemonic white women's movements, the term 'colonisation' has been used to characterise everything from the most evident economic and political hierarchies to the production of a particular cultural discourse about what is called the 'Third World.' (p. 61)

In her analysis of the "production of the 'Third World Woman' as a singular monolithic subject in ... [western] feminist texts" she draws attention to the "implicit assumption of the west ... as the primary referent in theory and praxis." But even if I, as, unavoidably, a descendent of the "avaricious and

grasping . . . [white] wizards" described by the narrator's grandmother in *Nervous Conditions* (p. 18), a white middle class academic in South Africa, am guilty (and perhaps it is impossible not to be?) of such assumptions, does this, necessarily, condemn me to inertia? Can I not enact my belief, with Mohanty, that feminist scholarship "does not comprise merely 'objective knowledge' about a certain subject" but that it "is also a directly political and discursive practice insofar as it is purposeful and ideological" (pp. 61-62) by using such theory to try to effect social change in the classroom? What better way is there, for me as an educator in English literature and Gender Studies, to turn my work on feminist literary theory into such political and purposeful practice than to initiate a dialogue between the exploration and analysis of literary texts of colonised girls' education and development, on the one hand, and educational research into adolescent learning and female self empowerment on the other?

Dangarembga, like her narrator, Tambu, grew up in what was then the British colony of Rhodesia. Her standard of education was immensely higher than the national average for black women at the time. For this novelist the clash between her 'First World' education and her 'Third World' location finds some resolution in this novel in that it is her articulation of that consciousness of being a woman in Africa – with all that this means in terms of the 'double jeopardy' marginalisation of being both black and female – regardless of her superior education. At the risk of being labelled essentialist I wonder if perhaps women's research into girls' education is not often fuelled by a similar consciousness of what it means to be female, and, if this has been the impetus for a novel about girls and education, then surely such a novel is a good place to begin such research? For men researching such a subject, this novel could well present them with what they may not have experienced firsthand and thus provide a space in which to both learn about, and to investigate, oppressive educational or pedagogic practice.

For Dangarembga, I believe, the adolescence of these two female characters represents the potential movement of Zimbabwean society from the childhood of colonial submission to the ideal postcolonial status of full adulthood in which (feminist) equality can be pursued. Made explicit in the novel is the realisation that adolescence itself is the space in which the seeds of further change can germinate. Tambu's concluding observation reads thus:

I was young then and able to banish things, but seeds do grow. Although I was not aware of it then, no longer could I accept Sacred Heart [school] and what it represented as a sunrise on my horizon. Quietly, unobtrusively and extremely fitfully, something in my mind began to assert itself, to question things and refuse to be brainwashed, bringing me to this time when I can set down this story. . . . (p. 204)

Dangarembga's use of adolescence as trope, therefore, encourages an examination of how her work might be linked to other texts which concern

themselves with girlhood in the world – texts of, for example, Young Adult fiction, those of Development Education and those of feminist explorations of gender.

Discussion

Thus, while the representation of adolescence occurs in *Nervous Conditions* as a literary space of personal narration, it can also be seen as an exploratory space in which very specific issues of childhood and adolescence in relation to education can be investigated and understood, not only by the readers of this text as a work of fiction, but also by educators researching such issues. Literary space becomes conjoint with that of educational research and, possibly, feminist intervention. As Ruth Saxton observes in her Introduction to *The Girl: Constructions of the Girl in Contemporary Fiction by Women*:

... contemporary stories of girlhood constitute a new and generative lens for literary and cultural study. As they have in the past, girls remain fixtures in today's fiction, particularly in fiction by women; reverberations and dissonances between fictional visions of girlhood call attention to new texts and contexts as it simultaneously provides us a new lens through which to re-vision older and perhaps more familiar plots and tests of girlhood. (p. xiii)

This is something that I explore with my colleagues (Mitchell et al., 1998) in a recent paper on “mapping girlhood as a cultural space.” As we observe of fictional texts dealing with girlhood:

Such texts draw our attention to the significance of imagination in mapping out change, and the ways that literature/story-telling can impel people to action. *Nervous Conditions*, for example, can be thought of as a therapeutic space in which very specific issues of girlhood-in-the-world can be investigated, understood and, at least conceptually, dealt with by girls and young women themselves, as well as by those entrusted with their care and guidance. Similarly, this novel fits effortlessly into the range of works which can be seen to function as agents of social change. That this can be done against the backdrop of the patriarchally determined and maintained literary genres and generic conventions which, in their turn, are being interrogated by Dangarembga, speaks to the ways in which an example of literature can be mapped onto the texts from other disciplines which advocate and/or encourage change. In other words, the didactic (and originally paternalistic) impetus of Realism, in this and other novels such as Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye*, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Zee Edgell's *Beka Lamb* and Farida Karodia's *Daughters of the Twilight* is rechannelled – away from the patriarchal which gave it life towards the feminist which gives it new meaning.

Feminist Literary Criticism and Feminist Social Activism can both lay claim to such novels as *Nervous Conditions* in the investigation of its didactic agenda. Critical Literacy and Critical Pedagogy initiatives can draw from it in their addressing of feminist issues in Development Educa-

tion. Educational Psychologists could do worse than consider the fictionally represented responses of Nyasha and Tambu, the two girls in the novel, to what it actually means to be educated within the colonial framework – mind set as well as ideologically material reality – which is still so much a part of the developing world. (p. 174)

Using the representation of adolescence in *Nervous Conditions* as a site of research, therefore, we could do worse than consider the relationship between the fictionally represented responses of Nyasha and Tambu and what it actually means to be educated within a colonial framework, one which is still so much part of the developing world and not that removed, in many, if somewhat different, ways, from our own.

NOTES

1. I have co-taught this novel so many times over the past eight years with my friend and feminist colleague, Karen Lazar, that I have long forgotten where my insights into the text end and hers begin; some overlap is inevitable and for this valued result of our collaboration I am most grateful to her.
2. Pipher, M. (1994). *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the selves of adolescent girls*. New York: Putnam's.
3. Here I borrow a little from the title of an earlier paper on fiction for, and about, young adults (1998): "Reading Adolescence as (more than) a Literary Space in some Southern African Fiction."
4. In passing, it is interesting to note that the colonial novel has become known in South Africa as the 'Jim comes to Jo'burg' novel because of the social reality of so much migration to Johannesburg of young people in search of education, employment and a route out of the poverty of rural existence.
5. A useful example of a traditional colonial novel, and one which can, very profitably, be compared with *Nervous Conditions*, is Charles Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain*, which is also set in Rhodesia and which has the standard male protagonist described above.
6. McCarthy, M. (1998). Transforming visions: A French toast to American girlhood in Luc Besson's *The Professional*. In S. A. Inness (Ed.), *Millennium girls: Today's girls around the world*, p. 195. London: Rowman and Littlefield.

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CREATING PROGRAMS FOR SAFE SCHOOLS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN RELATION TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT. In this article we describe some of the strategies and initiatives within Departments of Education in South Africa to change attitudes and behaviours around gender-based violence and harassment and bring about systemic change. We look specifically at the role of the National Department of Education (NDoE), teachers, learners, and school policy. The areas selected reflect the work and interests of the National Department of Education's Gender Equity Directorate and the gender focal persons in three provincial Departments of Education: Free State, Gauteng, and Mpumalanga.

RÉSUMÉ. Dans cet article, nous décrivons certaines des stratégies et initiatives prises par les ministères de l'Éducation d'Afrique du Sud en vue de modifier les attitudes et les comportements qui entourent la violence sexospécifique et le harcèlement et de provoquer des changements d'ordre systémique. Nous nous penchons en particulier sur le rôle du ministère de l'Éducation nationale, des professeurs, des élèves et de la politique scolaire. Les domaines choisis reflètent les travaux et intérêts de la direction générale sur l'équité entre les sexes du ministère de l'Éducation nationale et des personnes-ressources de ministères de l'Éducation de trois provinces: Free State, Gauteng et Mpumalanga.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This article focuses on the problem of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in South African schools by presenting different perspectives of educational administrators from the national and provincial departments of education.¹ This provides a way of looking at the diverse challenges to ensuring learners have a safe learning environment as well as the variety of opportunities for bringing about change. Ntombi Sibiya, writing of the Gender Equity Directorate within the National Department of Education, describes an array of recent initiatives from reaching out to the media to forming partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), all with the aim of raising awareness about violence prevention and sexual harassment issues. Working in tandem with the Gender Equity Directorate are the nine gender focal persons within each of the nine provincial Departments of Education. The perspectives of three of these provincial gender

focal persons are represented here. Olly Mlamleli of the Free State Department of Education has worked to establish a district network equipped to tackle gender equity issues. She examines the context for teachers and outlines the types of activities they can undertake inside their classrooms. Pontsho Mabelane, the gender focal person with the Department of Education in Mpumalanga, presents key arguments for building the capacity of youth leadership. Vernet Napo, who recently helped to formulate the Gender Policy in the Gauteng Department of Education (1999), presents legislative aspects of developing a school policy on gender-based violence and harassment.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Gendered or sex-based violence, in the broader context of discrimination, constrains the freedom of movement, choices and activities of its victims. It frequently results in: intimidation; poor levels of participation in learning activities; forced isolation; low self-esteem or self-confidence; dropping out of education or from particular subjects; or other physical, sexual and/or psychological damage. It erodes the basis of equal opportunity realised through equal access to education. (Wolpe, Quinlan, & Martinez, 1997, p. 219)

QUESTIONS REGARDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. What do you think sexual harassment is?
2. These are some of the ways that learners get harassed elsewhere:
 - sexual comments, jokes or gestures
 - negative comments about being female or male
 - having sexual rumours spread around the school about you
 - being teased with sexually suggestive pictures from magazines
 - being forced to kiss someone
 - being teased about being gay or lesbian
 - being stared at in a sexual way
 - being insulted about having a male or female body
 - being pressured to go out on dates
 - being pressured to have sex
 - being sexually assaulted
3. Do you think any of this behaviour happens to girls in your school or other South African schools?
4. Do you think any of this behaviour happens to boys in your school or in other South African schools?
5. Can you think of an example of a girl/boy being sexually harassed?
6. Could you do a drawing of this?
7. How does sexual harassment make people feel?
8. Do you think sexual harassment is a problem in your school?
9. Who do you think does most of the harassing in a school setting?
10. Who is most likely to be harassed - girls or boys? Why?
11. What do learners do when they are sexually harassed?
12. What would you do if you were sexually harassed?

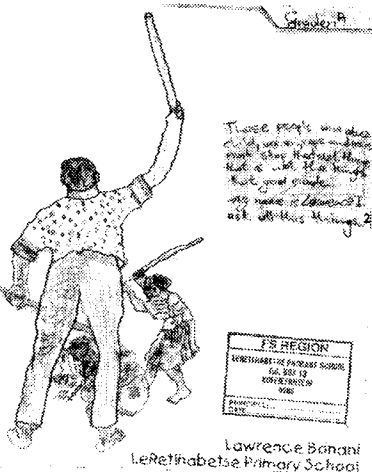
The questions in the box on the opposite page are all questions that groups of learners in several provinces discussed either directly or indirectly when they participated in workshops in May, 1999 with June Larkin, author of *Sexual harassment: High school girls speak out*. As must be evident in some of the examples of sexual harassment noted in question number two, many of the forms it takes are not always obvious. Out and out examples of physical abuse and sexual assault are also not always reported, but they are more likely to be taken as a crime.

Some of the learners' answers to question number six are represented throughout this paper. The fact that so many of the drawings showed physical abuse very graphically suggests that it is far easier to recognize and represent the extremes, while day-to-day behaviors such as being stared at in a sexual way or being teased with sexually suggestive pictures may simply be regarded as normalized activity. June Larkin (1994/97) reinforces this view that violence is not necessarily rooted in conflict. As she observes, when a young woman walks down a school hallway and demeaning comments are directed towards her, she is being singled out because she belongs to a specific group: she is female.

There is no shortage of reports, studies, personal anecdotes, newspaper accounts and the like to indicate that sexual harassment – sex-based and gender-based violence – is a key barrier to equality in schooling in South Africa. As is noted in the workshop on gendered violence contained within *A School-based module on managing sexual harassment and gender-based violence* (CSAEMP, forthcoming):

Based on the findings of a study conducted by the international NGO, Community Information, Empowerment and Transparency (CIET), in partnership with the Southern Council, one in three girls living in Johannesburg's Southern Council area have experienced violence in school. CIET Africa interviewed 1500 students of both sexes from grade eight to matric at schools in Soweto, Eldorado Park, Orange Farm and Lenasia. Almost half the boys said they had friends who were sexually violent and three in every ten males said they could be violent towards a girl. (Larkin, cited from Tabane, 1999)

"Jackrolling" is a growing form of gendered violence directed at schoolgirls. This practice is a ritualistic display of male power through the forceful abduction and gang rape of young women (Larkin, cited from Gouws & Kitzenger, 1995). On November 3, 1997, Cape Times education writer Troye Lunde reported on the horrific gang rape of a 17 year old at a South African school:



She was raped at gunpoint at school by four classmates. They dragged her into an empty classroom and barricaded the door. (Larkin, cited from Tabane, 1999)

She also includes in her background paper the following statistics: In South Africa, at least one woman is killed every six days by her male partner (femicide).

In a study involving interviews with 24 pregnant women (average age 16.4 years) in Khayelitsha, 23/34 described assault as a regular feature of their sexual relationship.

According to South African Police Services (SAPS), in 1995 there were 34, 783 reported rapes. SAPS estimates that only one in 35 rapes is reported.

SAPS estimates that a woman is raped every 35 seconds.

Rape has the lowest conviction of all crimes of assault. (Larkin, cited from ANC Women's Caucus, np)

It is important to note that males can also be victims of gendered violence, as can be seen in the incidence of gay-bashing and homophobia. Michael Goodman (1998), in his work on homophobia, has noted the ways in which heteronormativity has served to normalize gay-bashing within South African schools. Several other South African writers including Robert Morrell (1998) and Alan Thompson (1999) have pointed out that males who do not appear to subscribe to aggressive forms of masculinity are particularly at risk. In the CSAEMP module there is the report of a nineteen year old male student who was victimized and harassed for being gay:

At one stage we were put into a separate class because everyone knew we were gay and did not like us for that. Teachers told us they could not teach us because we were spirits of the devil and because they were Christians. Sometimes they would just ignore us if we wanted to contribute in class. Instead they would play practical jokes on us for everyone to laugh. (Bekizulu, 1997)

A key document which helped to publicize the impact of gender-based violence and create support for work in gender equity in education was the Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) Report published by the National Department of Education in 1997. The report helped to focus attention on the gender and power dynamics underlying the violence and sexual harassment prevalent in schools at a point when the Department of Education was starting to restructure the inequitable and unwieldy bureaucratic machinery inherited from the apartheid regime, and devising new policies and programs. The GETT Report also pointed out that the laudable goal of equal opportunity for both girls and boys in education is severely hampered by gender-based violence and harassment. The authors of the Report stress that child abuse, sexual harassment and violence "need to be acknowledged and

recognized. It is only when this is done that adequate ways of eliminating these social scourges will be able to be developed in the education system" (Wolpe et al., 1997, p. 93). More than anything though, a fundamental assumption of the GETT Report was that "the ways in which access to and outcomes of education are affected by sex and gender-based violence and harassment are often not considered in educational policy or planning" (Wolpe et al., 1997, p. 219). Thus strategies and initiatives described in the remainder of the paper all have the aim of drawing attention to the dire need to create an environment free from gender-based violence and harassment if we are to bring about opportunities for increasing access to and improving outcomes for all learners.

MANAGING SAFE SCHOOLS: A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE (*Ntombi Sibiya*)

The Constitution of South Africa confers certain legislative powers to the National and Provincial Departments of Education whereby the National Department is responsible for setting norms and standards and the Provincial Departments, guided by the national policy, are responsible for setting their own priorities and implementation strategies. This requires that a collaborative partnership framework based on theoretical and practical assumptions be developed by both parties.

When the National Department of Education (NDoE) was established in May 1994, it was faced with a number of challenges with respect to the absence of a culture of teaching and learning in the schools: a lack of discipline caused by crime, poverty, substance abuse; a lack of parental and community support; poor leadership and management, and a general lack of motivation, honesty and professionalism. There was also a marked absence of business and private sector involvement. Not the least of these challenges was the lack of teaching and learning resources.

In addition, recent developments show the national rate of HIV prevalence is at 22.8% (Anthropology News, 1999). The epidemic in South Africa is among the most severe in the world and it continues to increase at an alarming rate. Prevailing attitudes about sexuality and gender exacerbate the problem as Mitchell and Smith (2000) observe in a recent paper on the links between HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence. In that paper they note that "(g)ender-based violence directed towards girls and young women often finds lethal expression in the increasing rate of HIV/AIDS amongst this population" (p. 3). They go on to describe the ways in which aggressive masculinity as a feature of violence "subverts" popular messages about the "ABCs" of HIV/AIDS prevention. As they observe, "Young women who are being forced to engage in sex have no power and are hardly in a position to negotiate a non-sexual relationship or one in which the male partner uses a condom" (p. 5).

Opportunities for change: Creating safe schools and the call for action

The Minister of Education in his *Call to Action* statement and the National Department of Education Implementation Plan for *Tirisano* (2000) has called for Provincial Departments of Education and the Civil Society to join hands in establishing safe school environments free from gender-based and sex-based violence. Through the establishment of the COLTS (Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service) initiative, the NDoE embarked upon a number of programs in an effort to intensify the urgency and participation to its commitment to quality education, briefly outlined below:

- **Confronting School Based Obstacles to Learning and Teaching (Initiated 1997):** The NDoE in collaboration with the Joint Enrichment Project encouraged schools to explore non-threatening and creative ways to portray conditions in individual schools, particularly that made it difficult for effective learning and teaching to take place. Various activities in the form of drama were initiated. The drama presentations have served to provide an insight into what makes schools dysfunctional, as reflected from the perspective of school-based education stakeholders.

- **Yizo-Yizo (Initiated 1999):** The COLTS Directorate in conjunction with SABC (South African Broadcasting Commission) televised a 13 part drama series aimed at creating awareness on social and personal issues that affected learning and teaching, developing positive role models, and modeling the process of restoration in a typical secondary school. Modeled on the genre of the popular soap opera genre (Mitchell, 1999; 2000), a "second run" of the series is currently being developed by the South African Broadcasting Commission (in conjunction with the NdoE).

- **Miracles in Education Project (Initiated 1997):** The Sowetan newspaper, Read Education Trust, ISCOR, SABC and the NDoE initiated this project with an aim of identifying and publicizing role models for learners, educators and managers. The project encouraged communities to nominate individuals or schools that were making an effort in improving the quality of education. Winners on various categories were made public in the Sowetan as well as in other local newspapers.

A pillar of the COLTS Campaign is the Creating Safe Schools initiative which supports the development of crime – and violence free learning sites. Additionally, partnerships within government departments and the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) have been established with an aim of developing a comprehensive plan for addressing issues of violence in our societies. For example, the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) consists of a series of projects. COLTS has participated in the development of the NCPS and focused on three sub-projects: Public Awareness and Information, Victim Empowerment and School Safety.

Another collaborative project is the development of a school-based module on sex-based and gender-based violence developed under the auspices of the Canada-South Africa Education Management Program (CSAEMP). The module supports what the GETT Report has endorsed, namely that there is a need to develop a "whole institution" approach, led by management and within a legislative and policy framework.

The Gender Equity Directorate has also participated in various national activities aimed at reducing violence in the school communities. These include the 16 Days of Activism on Gender Violence held every December, the White Ribbon Campaign, and participating in the implementation strategy on the Domestic Violence Act of 1998. The Commission on Gender Equality and other Non-governmental organizations, such as the National Network on Violence Against Women (NNVAW), the Sexual Harassment Education Project (SHEP) and the Forum for African Women Educationalist South Africa (FAWESA) have formalized links with the National and Provincial Departments of Education in order to facilitate collaboration on the sexual harassment action.



The Ministry of Education has acknowledged the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and is committed to reducing the social, economic and developmental consequences of HIV/AIDS in the education system. The Ministry recently introduced the National Policy on HIV/AIDS for Learners and Educators, which seeks to promote effective preventative and curative measures on HIV/AIDS within the education system.

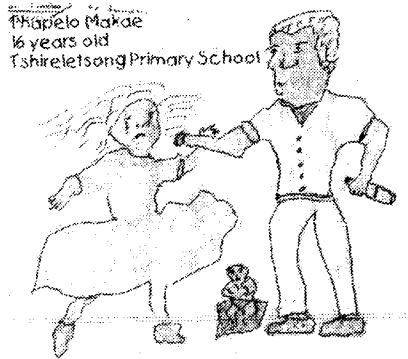
Challenges

Sex-based and gender-based violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS are the result of the socialization process and assigned roles, which determine how boys and girls experience reality and how they learn appropriate gender roles and stereotypes. Many challenges to creating safe schools have to do with creating a gender-sensitive environment which can change attitudes and behaviours. It is of course important to develop a school policy on sexual harassment and have action plans developed, as well as to have in place a

means of reporting and recording a system on incidences of violent behaviour in schools and the hired counselors to respond, yet a key starting point is changing a mind set that accepts violence as normal.

**MANAGING SAFE SCHOOLS:
PROVINCIAL PERSPECTIVES TEACHING FOR CHANGE (Olly Mlamleli)**

Millions of children and young adults in South Africa attend schools daily. Facilities available in these schools vary dramatically. For most South African learners, the guarantee of access is to poor facilities, overcrowded classes and almost no learning resources. The environment in schools lends itself to a situation where harassment thrives. The culture of human rights promotion of the child is absent and the prevalence of sexual harassment reflects the absence of a culture of learning, teaching and service (COLTS).



Challenges: Teachers and sexual harassment

It is important for teachers to help raise awareness of what is meant by sexual harassment and for males in particular to have opportunities to learn how it makes females feel to be harassed. Yet female teachers themselves are subjected to sexual harassment and have yet to speak out forcibly against it. A recent report by the Forum for African Women Educationalists South Africa (FAWESA, 1998) draws attention to research which shows that "male principals, teachers, students, and parents of students sexually harass women teachers" (p. 2, cited from Hercules, 1993). Wolpe et al. (1997) also describe a not uncommon practice by male teachers and others in schools who "put their hands up [girls'] skirts, touch their genitalia and sniff their fingers" (p. 51).

Some research suggests that the lack of strong concerted action is partly accounted for by the teachers' own perceptions of sexual harassment: it is regarded as simply the way that men naturally behave (FAWESA, p. 4, cited from Hercules, 1993). Teachers demonstrate a lack of understanding of gender and sexual harassment issues and are ill-equipped to educate children about these issues according to the FAWESA document, which reported on a sexual harassment project between two collaborating Departments of Education, the Western Cape and Gauteng. It became evident that teachers require training about gender issues before they approach learners about gender and sexual harassment and that without adequate teacher

training the success of school-based projects is severely constrained. While it is important for district employees to attend seminars on sexual harassment, they need first to familiarize themselves with basic theoretical and practical assumptions regarding gender.

Opportunities:

The role of educators to promote a conducive learning environment

As noted above, gender is poorly understood by the majority of educators. The following excerpt from the CSAEMP *School-based Module on Managing Gender-based Violence and Sexual Harassment* (forthcoming) stresses the importance of raising awareness about gender equity issues alongside sexual harassment:

In schools, the issue of harassment should never be separated from the larger issues of educational equity. Are we sending out messages that some learners are more valuable than others? Who takes up most verbal space in classroom discussions? What groups are highlighted in the curriculum? Do males and females have equal access to sports, computers and other resources? Do we communicate with all learners in a respectful way? (p. 26)

Teachers need to familiarize themselves with gender-sensitive teaching that empowers girls. Using gender sensitive language, for example, is an important strategy. Learners should also be introduced to people whom they look up to and who can serve as role models in pursuing education and employment opportunities. Gender-sensitive teaching empowers girls to see they can do things for themselves. Learners need to acknowledge the ways that both women and men contribute to the society, their families and the economy. They need to learn that biological differences between males and females should not dictate an individual's opportunities in life (Mlamleli, 1999). In becoming familiar with concepts of equity and democracy, learners are helped to become more conversant in thinking for themselves about what is meant by values such as personhood, justice, and freedom from violence.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP (*Pontsho Mabelane*)

Safe schools projects seek to ensure that interventions to prevent crime prevention in schools fit within the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS). Key messages of NCPS include the need to address crime in an effective and integrated way across government sectors and establish strategic partnerships between police, local communities, school and business (NCPS, 1998). Since this venture demands a holistic approach, it also demands that all possible people that can assist in achieving the ultimate goal of safe schools must be engaged. One key group in this holistic approach are the learners themselves.

Challenges: Lack of awareness

Unfortunately, youth leaders too live in communities, homes and schools that are violent and that often cause them to lack the knowledge that non-violence is a better action to take. Without downplaying the impact of violence on learners, there is frequently a connotation of despair which undermines the inner power of student leadership to contribute significantly towards attaining a learning environment free of violence and crime. Learners may contribute to violence by engaging in the following psychological defenses:

DENIAL:

We do not have a problem with violence, but that other school does.

MINIMIZATION:

Name-calling and pushing and shoving are just normal behaviour for kids. Kids will always be kids.

BLAME:

Teachers spend most of the time not attending to the learners.

AVOIDANCE:

Violence in the school is for the administration and the police to deal with, I am just a learner.

Since these defenses tend to cause violence to continue, some coping skills such as blaming, protecting bullies or perpetrators, hiding, ignoring and suppressing their feelings of anger, fear, frustration or guilt emerge. The victims believe they must be deserving of the mistreatment. When learners experience how violence is accepted, they assume it is "all right" and begin to think that they are entitled to engage in it or otherwise they will become victims themselves.

Opportunities: Proposed strategies for creating a learning environment conducive to effective learning

Creating razor security fences, installing metal detectors, hiring guards and searching lockers are very expensive measures that have not proved to be sufficient in stopping crime in schools. The important role of youth leadership can assist in curbing violence in school by shaping learner's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours before violence becomes an automatic manifestation of their anger.

Leadership by example is a powerful ingredient of youth leadership. The student leadership role will be exemplary in choosing nonviolent behaviours and assisting in spotting unacceptable behaviour because they are more exposed to other learners in the learning situation and other areas of

the school. Youth leadership could encourage learners in several ways. Learners could be encouraged to condemn violent practices by perpetrators. They could strengthen their relationships with the police stations that have adopted the schools. They could learn conflict handling skills and participate in workshops and groupings that seek to prevent violence at schools. One example – SHREWs (Sexual Harassment Resisters Everywhere) – seeks to enlighten learners about what sexual harassment entails and what a learner can do to stop a perpetrator.³ Learners could also participate in school drama festivals and debates which illustrate the detrimental effects of violence and how to stop them.

Involvement by all stakeholders is vital in cooperative governance of each school and here youth leadership can play an exemplary role too. The South African Council of Educators (SACE) specifies the functions of School Governing Bodies in Sections 20 and 21. The following are relevant functions in terms of formulating a sexual harassment policy:

- To develop a mission statement of the school. A gender perspective should be brought in and the school community should understand it.
- To adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school.

School governing bodies have been given powers to determine policy (in line with the National and Provincial policies). Section 8 (1) of the South African Schools Act (SASA) states that “a governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school” (SASA, 1996). A code of conduct is meant to ensure that all stakeholders in a public school agree to the establishment of a disciplined and purposeful school environment in order to achieve and maintain quality education in such a school. Youth leadership can play a vital and necessary part in implementing safety measures including actively contributing to a safety policy, development of the code of good conduct at school, and the implementation of school policies.

SAFE SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL POLICY (*Vernet Napo*)

The legislation which has been proposed is that of “vicarious liability.” It means “that all managers of organisations, or those with delegated responsibilities – which in this case includes teachers – are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to prevent harassment or discrimination from occurring. Where they are deemed to have done so, they cannot be held liable” (Wolpe et al, 1997, p. 221). This principle ensures the allocation of clear responsibility for preventative and proactive action. Such legislation should emphasise proactive responsibility on the part of education managers to take positive steps to create a positive human rights environment.

Opportunities: Policy considerations

There are numerous South African policies and Acts which can form the basis of formulating a school-based Safe Schools policy. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, with specific reference to clauses of the Bill of Rights, is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa (1996 Constitution). It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. The Human Rights Commission Act (no. 54 of 1994) promotes the observance of, respect for, and the protection of fundamental rights. The National Education Policy Act (no 27 of 1996) contains principles of particular relevance to the policy on safe schools in par. 4 (a):

Every person has a right to be protected against unfair discrimination within or by an education department or education institution on any ground whatsoever.

Every person has a right to basic education and to equal access to education institutions.

The South African Schools Act (SASA) (no. 84 of 1996) preamble states that "the country requires a new national system for schools. . . which will combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance. . . ." In so doing, SASA provides important backing as does the support of the South African Council of Educators (SACE) to take a firm stand against sexual harassment. The following paragraphs of Section 3 of the policy are worth noting:

Every educator should:

3.5 avoid any form of humiliation, and refrain from any form of child abuse, physical or psychological

3.6 promote gender equality and refrain from any form of sexual relationship with learners or sexual harassment (physical or otherwise) of learners

3.7 use appropriate language and behaviour in his or her interaction with learners, and act in such a way as to elicit respect from the learners.

3.8 Take reasonable steps to ensure safety of the learners (and should therefore participate in policy formulation and implementation of vicarious liability).

The policy also promotes gender equality amongst educators and takes strong exceptions toward educator-educator forms of sexual harassment and abuse.

It is important too when considering policy documents to take into account provincial legislation. The Gauteng Provincial Government for example as well as other Provincial Governments have formulated various sexual harassment policies which have a bearing on the workplace (but do not have a direct impact on learners), and the Gauteng Department of Education Gender Policy (1999) reinforces the elimination of sex-based and gender-

based violence from schools. (See Appendix A for further policy development considerations).

Challenges

A brief look at the recommendations from the GETT Report (Wolpe et. al, 1997) shows that many strides have already been taken. The National Department of Education, in collaboration with the Canada South Africa Education Management Programme, has started to develop clear definitions of all kinds of behaviour that constitute sexual harassment. However, clear definitions and examples of education specific, direct and indirect forms of discrimination still need to be developed. Yet it must be remembered that sexual harassment is complex and not always easily defined. What one individual in the city of Johannesburg may experience as degrading may not be considered such by a person in a rural area of the country. The following words from the CSAEMP *School-based Module on Managing Gender-based Violence and Sexual Harassment* emphasize the point that "no list of harassing behaviour can cover the complexity and range of social interactions that can be gender demeaning. The social and cultural influences supporting harassment are not easily captured in legal terms" (p. 73). We need to bear this in mind when considering relevant policies in the development of school policy on sexual harassment.

CONCLUSIONS

As we begin a journey of identifying gender-based and sex-based violent practices and the effects of HIV/AIDS in our schools, we open up a new chapter in creating safe schools and education institutions. In this article we have looked at the diverse ways of creating safe schools and increasing awareness about gender-based violence and harassment, ranging from a popular, nationally televised drama series, school dramatizations and a national crime prevention strategy to the role of teacher training, developing a code of conduct with learners' involvement, and the legislative considerations in developing school policy.

In this journey we need to acknowledge that the paths we follow may take different courses according to the different roles related to bringing about change. These roles should be unifying rather than separating. The roles should focus on all stakeholders as elements of a single process based on a single mission, namely the mission to create safe schools. The NDoE can assume the roles of policy maker, protector of professional conduct, supplier of resources and an advocate for change. The teacher can assume a role of an investigator, problem-solver and creator of learners' learning experiences. The need to provide intervention through parental and teachers' involvement in creating safe schools programs is essential. Learners and parents can assume the role of exploring and experimenting with effective

strategies of coping and dealing with violent behavior, including developing and implementing a code of conduct and policy on sexual harassment for their school. Each school's journey is likely to be unique in some ways in that the manifestation of violent behaviour differs from school to school.

An unfortunate reality is that many School Governing Bodies, School Management Teams, educators and learners may not have the resources or expertise to break the cycle of violence or to assess whether the programs they have chosen are appropriate. The key is to know which types of programs should be offered to whom by whom. Creating and maintaining safe schools can be brought about through systemic planning which includes multiple strategies aimed at ensuring that all stakeholders have a share in making the entire school a safe place. There is no one formula.

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NOTES

1. Additionally each of these individuals is working under the auspices of the Canada-South Africa Education Management Program (CSAEMP), a partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Faculty of Education at McGill University, and the National Department of Education in South Africa.
2. Those people who dose child, women, rape murder must stop those evil things . That is not the things that god made. My name is Lawrence. I ask all this things.
3. Here we are grateful to June Larkin for introducing us to the term SHREWS which has now come to be adopted in provincial programming around sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

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APPENDIX A POLICY DEVELOPMENT

An effective school policy should have the following characteristics:

- Include a clear set of expectations for all members of the school community. The behavior expected of all students, teachers, administrators, other staff members and visitors to the school should be explicitly stated.
- Be comprehensive and inclusive. All forms of violent behaviour (including extreme physical violence) should be addressed.
- Be proactive and not reactive. It should create expectations for a positive school climate.
- Emphasize prevention through the curriculum, programmes and practices.
- Include strategies to promote a secure and friendly climate. These include high visibility of administrators and staff and access to extra-curricular activities of students
- Provide intervention strategies, general guidelines for administrators and a range of consequences for infractions (SSTA, Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, p. 11, cited from MacDougall, 1993).

Stakeholders in education should be engaged throughout the process because they are the foundation of an effective policy in the community. In many instances, the development is led by a small representative working group of staff members, District and Head Office officials. The importance of a safe schools policy should be emphasized throughout the process. The following steps are important during the planning process:

- Identifying the need and develop a rationale for the policy.
- Consulting with other education departments or schools that have developed similar policies.
- Developing strategies for getting input from other stakeholder groups.
- Identifying strategies to keep the education department informed.
- Beginning developing the policy by getting inputs from other stakeholder groups.
- Preparing second and third drafts of the policy, getting inputs from stakeholder groups.
- Finalizing the policy.
- Using the policy as a springboard for ongoing discussions about the characteristics of safe schools and violence prevention (through e.g. lessons, workshops and seminars) about violence particularly about the less obvious types of violence such as sexual harassment, verbal abuse, bullying, etc. (SSTA, Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1994).

After the policy has been completed, it should be used as a foundation for ongoing public education about all forms of violence. Dialogue with the community should be continuous about the need of such a policy. There needs to be emphasized to the community that the responsibility for prevention of violent incidents and appropriate handling of those that do occur rests with everyone. Structures need to be created so that people with interest and concern in this area can learn from each other. This may include making the policy the focus of in-service seminars, staff meetings or conferences (SSTA, Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1994).

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IDENTITY AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION: GIRLS FROM A MINORITY ETHNO-CULTURAL GROUP IN CANADA¹

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"Identity . . . is a matter of becoming as well as of being"

Stuart Hall

ABSTRACT. This article looks at identity as an important factor in integration into society. Integration is not only a personal and individual process; it is also a dialectical one. It involves contradictions (conflicts) in individual self-construction (identity). It also implies construction and re-construction of social relationships related to an individual's experiences defined by their location in terms of gender, race, culture and class. This process of reconstruction of identity is what has been called "a process of 'becoming' and 'being'." Canadian girls of South Asian origin strive hard to live up to their parents' expectations and yet they do not possess culture in a form identical to their parents. They are creating a hybrid identity in a new context using part of the cultural capital from their parents and creating a "space" for themselves in Canadian society.

RÉSUMÉ. Cet article perçoit l'identité comme facteur important d'intégration dans la société. L'intégration n'est pas seulement un processus personnel et individuel, mais un processus dialectique. Il comprend des contradictions (conflits) dans la construction du moi (identité). Il présuppose également la construction et la reconstruction de rapports sociaux ayant un rapport avec les expériences des sujets définis par la place qu'ils occupent sur le plan du sexe, de la race, de la culture et de la classe. Ce processus de reconstruction identitaire est ce que l'on appelle «le processus du 'devenir' et de l'«être'». Les jeunes filles canadiennes originaires d'Asie du Sud s'évertuent à répondre aux attentes de leurs parents, même si elles ne possèdent pas une culture dont la forme est identique à celle de leurs parents. Elles créent donc une identité hybride dans un contexte nouveau en utilisant partiellement le capital culturel de leurs parents et en créant un «espace» pour elles-mêmes dans la société canadienne.

The politics of identity has implications for educational success. Therefore, as teachers we must understand identity as a concept and be aware of how it is constructed. Key issues relate, on the one hand, to the implications of

identity for self-esteem, empowerment and school achievement. On the other hand, because of the significance of identity in constructing political and social identities, teachers must concern themselves with identity construction in children from all minority cultures for integration and interaction with the dominant culture.

This article begins with three basic questions: What is the connection between the construction of identity and education? Why discuss minority children? Why focus on girls? The next section discusses the concept of identity construction and the issue of social integration with Canadian society. The paper ends with an analysis of identity issues in the process of integration in a multicultural society in the lives of girls from a visible minority² group who trace their origins to South Asia.³ Data was obtained in 1995 from a large study conducted in four cities across Canada, namely, Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa and Calgary.

Identity and education

Who we are and what we think locate us in the educational process (Mohanty, 1990). Knowledge is directly tied to people's differences (from the dominant group) in terms of race⁴ and ethnicity, gender and class (among other social constructions) because such differences locate and situate people in relation to the dominant group. By mediating knowledge, education links power and empowerment with inequalities in society.

Cultural reproduction theorists have analyzed the school's legitimizing function in reproducing social hierarchies through school knowledge. Those who do not have the "cultural capital"⁵ (Bourdieu, 1973) or the "language codes" (Bernstein, 1977) required for success in schools are alienated because of racial, ethnic, gender and class differences (Apple, 1979; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Cultural capital and language codes refer to the cultural and linguistic skills, and social values such as modes of thinking and speaking, particular meanings and styles of behaviour acquired from the family through socialization.

Identity is not merely a result of socialization. Rather, identities are formed in social processes and relationships. The differences in cultural capital that children possess, because of variance in minority cultures, result in differences in communication and interaction styles, cognitive and learning styles (Ghosh, 1996a). These differences make it necessary for the teacher, as mediator in the education process, to develop a knowledge base on which to build an understanding of the students they teach. Knowledge of students is imperative if teachers are to guide their learning experiences and help students to see the connections between what is learnt in schools and their lived experiences.

Education involves acquiring conceptual schemes. It is not merely collecting disjointed knowledge. To learn is to connect, and students must make meaning of new knowledge in relation to their experiences and what they know. Educators then, must understand student experiences and build on them. And because their experiences are different, their identities are produced differently. This understanding is essential if teachers are to provide students with the analytical tools to challenge negative experiences and deal with problems of unresolved identities.

Pedagogy should then be developed around identity and meaning for all students. Pedagogy, the process of knowledge production and reproduction (Lusted, 1986), is concerned with the content and methods of teaching. It involves the teaching process that encompasses interactive discourse as well as practice. Both educational discourse (what is said and written) and educational practice (what is done in terms of activities) are guided by ideologies of the dominant group. Pedagogy, therefore, mediates the organization of social reality and change through the language and signs of the majority culture. What effect does this have on minority group children? This question is particularly significant in immigrant countries that have a large diversity of minority ethno-cultural groups. Moreover, globalization has made international migration a necessity, resulting in multicultural societies in all countries. As educators, we must be aware that the injuries of racial, ethnic, gender, class and life-style discrimination are often hidden but they are nonetheless painful.

The important question for education is whether teacher education programs are responding to the needs of the changing societal and school demography in the preparation of teachers in a diverse society.

Minority children and the construction of identity

The term "minority group" is used in the sociological sense to refer to groups who are powerless in relation to the dominant group in society. The term, as used here, includes racial and ethno-cultural groups (particularly non-white people) and women, although there are other classifications based on class, religion, sexual orientation, special needs, and so on. Minority groups are defined by both objective and subjective criteria, that is, the fact of discrimination and the awareness of being disadvantaged. Their minority status is not based on numerical strength. It is the political position of a group, not the sophistication of its culture, that depicts it as "minor."

Individual and collective identities are constructed in three different areas: the biological, the social and the cultural (Aronowitz, 1992). Our biological attributes (such as race and gender) become meaningful when they are

defined in our interactions with people. While gender, race and ethnic identities are ascribed at birth and cannot be easily changed, class position is also assigned at birth but can be changed. The given characteristics do not have meaning in themselves. Concepts of race, ethnicity, gender and class are social constructions. Audre Lorde (1984) points out that it is not the differences in themselves but the social construction and *conceptualization* of these differences that provide meaning. As sociological ideas, these concepts have changed over time and are not fixed. For example, in contemporary Canada racism is seen as discrimination directed mainly at non-white groups. This was not always the case. Eastern Europeans were subjected to racism in Canada at the turn of the century when some white races were considered superior to others (Banks, 1995). The classifications of race, ethnicity and gender indicate changing power relations and are symbolic of underlying power struggles (Goldberg, 1992). Power relations invariably denote oppressive consequences, whether conscious (and obvious) or not.

In his powerful essay "The Politics of Recognition," Charles Taylor (1992) defines identity as a person's understanding of who s/he is, of her/his fundamental defining characteristics as a human being. And how one defines oneself is partly dependent on the recognition, mis-recognition, or absence of recognition by others. "Non-recognition or mis-recognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being" (Taylor, 1992, p. 25).

The experiences of children, particularly how they are perceived or identified in school and among their peers, have a direct impact on the construction of their identities. As organizations, schools are a system of shared experiences whose meanings are experienced by people (Ghosh, 1996a). All school personnel, such as administrators, teachers and support staff, are involved in influencing the construction of students' identities by the way they interact with them and the manner in which they deal with conflicts. What the teacher expects, the invisible biases and hidden inequalities in classroom interactions influence how a student perceives him/herself.

Cultural identities are based on how we identify ourselves as well as on our identification by others. How we identify ourselves is based on our experiences of the past and present social, cultural and economic relations. How others define us is influenced by the "dilemma of differences" (Minow, 1990), that is, how our differences from the "norm" are viewed and constructed. The norm is based on the physical, cultural and value attributes of the majority culture, that is the dominant group – the English in most of Canada (anglophone), or the French in the province of Quebec (francophone).

For South Asian (SA) girls, social distance or ranking is not only constructed on their gender and race/ethnicity, but also on the socio-economic, educational and occupational levels of their parents. Their parents' cultural

paradigms frame their identity to a large degree. The extent of the parents' integration into Canadian society varies considerably and their traditional attitudes range from very traditional to global values.

Girls and their identity

While women are a numerical majority in North America, they constitute a minority in terms of access to power, status and privilege in society. The daughters of South Asian Canadian women, like other girls, grow up in society with minority status as females and may experience discrimination. However, as minority feminist scholars have pointed out, the experiences of minority women are different from those of women from the majority culture. It is not only that they are potentially subject to two forms of oppression (sexism and racism), but that the combination of the two makes it *different*, not simply more acute. The multiple instances/levels of oppression may induce what Carty (1993) and Mohanty (1997) have called multi-layered marginalization in the lives of non-European women. Not to recognize this difference in experiences is to deny the differences in the sexism which black and white women experience, and the racism which men and women encounter. It also ignores the positive aspects of racial, gender and class identities (Spelman, 1982). Another reason for focusing on girls is to unmask the underlying power differentials in gender relations.

The experiences of girls of South Asian origin in Canada are different from those of other cultures and countries. This is because South Asian Canadians, particularly the women, have been seen to be at great variance not only in racial terms (i.e., biological characteristics) but also in ethnic terms (i.e., culturally different) especially in behaviour patterns and personal grooming (Buchignani, 1979; Naidoo, 1978). Girls, more than boys, usually face conflicts between the culture and values of home and those of their peers and the wider Canadian society. Confused mother-daughter identity issues (Guzder, 1991; 1992) underscore the generation gap.

The concept of identity

In feminist poststructuralist discourse, the struggle over identity within the subject is inseparable from the struggle over the meaning of identities and subject positions in the larger society. The positioning of girls in society is essential to the understanding of their experiences. To quote Stuart Hall:

Identities are different names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past . . . (identity) is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. . . far from being fixed in some essentialized past they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. (1990, p. 225)

Contemporary conceptions of identity are influenced by postmodern/poststructural / postcolonial writers who reject theoretical discourses which conceptualize identity as a state (which can be measured) rather than as process. Earlier discussions of identity were located in the area of personality as "a person's essential, continuous self, the internal, subjective concept of oneself as an individual" (Reber, 1985, p. 341). Social identity research challenged this individualistic frame and subjective definition of the notion of identity as a stabilized factor, an essential personality trait.

Identity is no longer seen as a static, unitary trait. Identity is now seen as being formed in social processes and is seen in terms of relations because human beings are always in the making. People construct their identities within the social framework. As such, identities are constantly shifting and renegotiable, and the search for new/modified identities, therefore, is a coping mechanism in the confusion caused by migration and global changes. At the individual level, those who identify with a group can redefine the meaning and norms of group identity.

Identity is formed along multiple axes such as race, gender, nationality, sexual preference, etc. Identity surfaces at the individual level but each person has many "social identities" such as ethnic, sexual, and class identities which develop meaning in people's lives both at the ideological/political and social/cultural level. People's multiple identities are not apparent in all contexts and represent different spheres of reality in everyday life. Different ones are important at different times.

Social integration in Canada

Canada was the first nation in the world with an official Multicultural Act (Bill C-93 – Canada, 1988). At first a policy declared by Prime Minister Trudeau in Parliament in 1971, multiculturalism was for a "just society." By encouraging the preservation of heritage cultures and languages, the implication was that ethno-cultural differences would not affect equality of opportunity in a "just" and integrated society. This was a radical change in political ideology from a policy of assimilation into the dominant English language and culture.

Multiculturalism has been defined in various ways in Canada and continues to be controversial. As a political ideology it has provided Canada with a national distinction from the U.S. and legitimated the place of ethno-cultural groups (along with the French and English) in Canadian society. Its first objective, to assist all cultural groups to develop a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada, was addressed to minority cultures rather than to both majority and minority groups. The second objective, assistance to minority groups in overcoming cultural barriers, was aimed at language learning. However, this objective implies cultural deficiency among minor-

ity groups rather than a need for adjustment (in both majority and minority cultures) and redefinition of majority culture. The third objective, that of promoting inter-group relations, was supposed to aim at reducing racial and ethnic discrimination. This was the weakest part of the policy until the Multiculturalism Act (Canada, 1988) and the recent establishment of the Race-Relations Directorate. *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, (Canada, 1982a) improved on previous constitutional guarantees which protect the individual rights of women and ethnic group members, and introduced legal provisions (or protections) to prevent discrimination on grounds of ethnicity or race.⁶

The concept of multiculturalism has changed over time with equity and anti-discrimination measures added in recent years to widen its meaning. Several policy initiatives and legislation have strengthened this. In its initial stages, multiculturalism was interpreted and implemented in a manner which stripped culture of its political aspect and implied consensus within the rhetoric of a "just" society. It focused almost exclusively on cultural pluralism (in terms of cultural retention) rather than on equity issues. The Multiculturalism Act of 1988 calls on the government to foster equality and access for all Canadians. This change in interpretation of multiculturalism from recognizing diversity to promoting full and equitable participation of Canadians of all origins is a crucial one. The objective of the new Race Relations and Cross-Cultural Understanding Program is to eliminate racial discrimination at the individual and institutional levels. The 1986 federal Employment Equity Act (Canada, 1986) involves removal of barriers that limit the participation and life chances of women and visible minorities (as well as native and disabled persons).

In *The Vertical Mosaic*, John Porter (1965) depicted Canadian society as one of hierarchy based principally on ethnicity and class. Those groups, which were seen to be at greatest variance from the Anglophone (English-speaking) and Francophone (French-speaking) majority cultures (in terms of social distance), were at the bottom of the hierarchy. Studies show that in 1986, after 15 years of Multicultural Policy, inequality in socio-economic status was more marked among ethnic groups than it was between genders (Lautard & Guppy, 1990). The penetration of ethnic group members into elite groups remains limited although certain visible minorities are "visible" in a number of professions (Lautard & Guppy, 1990), but this may be influenced by immigrations policies.

Some indicators of integration of girls of South Asian origin in mainstream Canadian society are to look at their friends, social activities, and whom they marry when they grow up, and their success in finding employment. Academic success is not necessarily a good indicator of integration into society. In general, South Asians value education very highly. However,

while the perception that South Asian students in North America are doing well academically has been supported by statistics, especially in the United States, there are several problems with this perception. Students who do not fall into this stereotype undergo tremendous pressure and their needs are not met. Students' experiences are of course, related to how they are positioned in terms of class and type of school. They may experience racial harassment such as racial slurs, jokes, name-calling, acts of physical violence (Talbani, 1991). Even when girls do well academically, their school experiences may be painful. If they resist, they may be singled out as troublemakers or ignored.

In the larger context, physical and behavioural differences with the majority group, and additional differences in personal appearance for women, make them "visible" (but invisible in terms of power). Within the group, heterogeneity in religion, language, class, education, language ability (English /French), socialization, knowledge of western social etiquette and values, all contribute to the construction of positive or negative experiences depending on how they are "located" in social situations. Significant class differences in women's lifestyles cut across religious and ethnic lines. Yet among Canadian women of South Asian origin these are less obvious and cannot be viewed here in Canada, in the same context as in the Indian subcontinent.

Still a small group, people of South Asian origin are among the fastest growing segments of the Canadian population due to the changes in immigration regulations. South Asian Canadians are a relatively new group, and the majority are first generation Canadians (except in the province of British Columbia) although their children are now getting married and producing second generation Canadians. There were 670,590 South Asians in Canada according to the 1996 Census (Canada, 1996) representing 2.2% of the total population (over half live in the province of Ontario). South Asians form 20% of the total visible minority population.

Some characteristics of the group of South Asian Canadians are contrary to the national average due to immigration patterns: a younger population, a larger proportion in the younger than older age groups and more males than females. After standardization for age differences, the 1996 census data indicates that South Asians have higher labour force participation rates (69% for all South Asians and 77% for men) than most non-visible minorities. While 22% are in professions and service industries, 19% are in manual work.

English and French (25%) are the two official languages at the federal level. Among SA Canadians, 86.5 % speak one of the two languages, 7.7 % are bilingual and 5.8 % do not speak either of these languages (D'Costa, 1992). A well-educated group (higher than national average of university degrees), their present occupational composition and median income do not vary significantly from the national figures; 75% of them are Canadian citizens (D'Costa, 1992).

Studies show that SA immigrants achieve economic security comparatively quickly (Canada, 1974).

The need for economic security leads to emphasis on adaptation to the economic structure. Studies indicate that around 60% SA Canadian women work and are able to secure at least minimally satisfactory jobs soon after arrival (Buchignani, 1979; Ghosh, 1981). The labor market situation has been unfavourable to women, even more so to visible minority women. For traditional SA Canadian women, the social distance caused by sex-specific behavior, dress and personal grooming (hair style, tikka), have not facilitated employment. Yet, South Asian Canadian women are at two ends of the employment scale – a minority at the top and the majority at the bottom.

The study

Data was gathered from 200 interviews⁷ of second-generation Canadian females aged 15-19 and whose parents had immigrated to Canada directly from South Asia (and not from places like Fiji, South Africa or the Caribbean where there are many people of South Asian origin). The girls were either in school or had begun their university education in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Calgary. They were either born in Canada or had emigrated very early in their lives and grew up in Canada. There were no significant regional differences in the data among the four cities.

The experiences of these girls were very varied according to the differences in the social, economic and educational backgrounds of their parents. There were also some variations due to religious differences as well as related to the country they came from in the South Asian region. Geographical dislocation, the need to obtain jobs and economic security, for professionals to get qualifications accredited and requirements of writing exams, make all immigrant parents prone to stress. Additional factors such as differences in terms of race, culture and dependent status, the absence of close kinship ties, extreme weather conditions, all interrelate to make the experiences of South Asians complex. The mothers of the girls interviewed have often been expected to forego desires for career, take up part-time employment or have career interruptions. Professional fields like medicine involve writing qualifying exams, teachers and engineers require re-certification and upgrading of qualifications. Women's needs have tended to be secondary to the similar needs of their husbands.

In general, the parents who had emigrated from South Asia had been socialized in the traditional values of a hierarchical society, which, at the time of their growing up had not been influenced by globalization. Immigrants tend to preserve the values of the society they leave, and have difficulty in acknowledging that values and norms are not static and are changing considerably in their home countries (Ghosh, 1996b). So, when their girls are growing up in Canada they tend to frame their child-rearing practices by the traditional family and

cultural paradigms. The system of beliefs developed during their earlier years influences the lives of their daughters. The shaping of identities of the girls must be analyzed against this background.

There were some girls in this study who were not facing culture clash and conflicts to the extent that some others were experiencing. Several girls were very focused and doing very well in school, and their parents were supportive of them in their academic as well as social lives. However, many others faced conflict and identity crises.

EDUCATION: For all parents, education is the most important issue for both their boys and girls. Marriage for girls is of great significance to both parents but more so, for mothers. Parents leave education to the teachers. They tend to stay away from school activity except in cases where the parents (one or both) are professionals. Mothers, and sometimes fathers help the girls with their homework. The girls generally feel a lot of pressure to excel in school and often feel pressured due to a collective community orientation to high achievement in school and value for traditional subject areas for study. Parents are vulnerable to gossip and ridicule in the community if their children do not perform well in school or if their girls are considered too brash in their dress or conduct. For the girls, school problems are initially associated with differences in cultural content and practices. In addition, difficulties are related with primary cultural differences such as interpersonal and inter-group relations because they may have started school with different cultural assumptions, language problems and differences in behavioral and cognitive styles.⁸ Girls tend to successfully cross the cultural boundaries and ultimately the majority perform above average in schools.

RACISM: Even when they are high achievers, the school experience of girls may not have always been a positive one. This was usually so when they experienced racial harassment: "Being a racial minority in grade school was hard. . . . sometimes I went home and prayed that I was White. In high school it was better . . . I did not experience racism from teachers – either that or I was blind to it Now I am proud to be different." In grade school racist name-calling is more common. By the time they reach university they experience a more subtle form of racism. Their self-confidence is directly proportional to their academic achievement. A large majority of the girls feel that they perform better than the class average.

CAREERS: One source of conflict is parents' aspirations that limit options for their daughters. Increasingly, parents want their daughters to have careers, but possibilities are solidified within a narrow range of traditional middle-class career options (and subjects or fields of study). Often with considerable resistance, second generation SA Canadian girls now tend to approximate the diversity of career options and life styles of the majority culture.

SOCIALIZATION: There are significant differences in the socialization patterns of females in South Asia and in the western world. In South Asia, the cultural context mitigates against strong feminine identifications, and conflicts are averted through socialization into obedient cultural acceptance of familial will in marriage, and denial of sexuality (Guzder, 1991). Sexuality is still one of the most difficult issues to discuss publicly in India (Omvedt, 1990). From the psychological perspective, Guzder (1991; 1992) points out that the idealized feminine-maternal has profound social and psychological implications as a powerful organizer of intra-psychic and socio-cultural processes relevant to many South Asian Canadian women who live with the new dynamics of migration and culture change. Canadian society offers greater potential for independence by presenting a contrasting paradigm, that of a mature woman, independently facing identity and sexuality issues (Ghosh, 1994).

Having been either born or brought up here, the girls face very different situations. On the one hand, they are more comfortable with their surroundings. On the other hand, their parents' experiences and values influence their possibilities and interactions. The ability of the girls to cope with culture clash is linked to the extent to which their parents have been able to work out their location in Canadian society, and how they convey a sense of ethnic identity to their daughters. The majority of girls say that they are constantly aware of their origins: "visible differences cannot be wished away." Some respond to questions about their origins confidently: "being different is also part of being Canadian." Some others deal with their difference uncomfortably: "questions about one's origin seem to define a separateness. Although I have internalized Canadian values, I always feel like a minority within the culture."

What is perhaps more difficult to cope with is that, while they feel "Canadian," they may experience prejudice, discrimination and sexism. Several girls asked: "Who am I?" They may feel Canadian and speak with Canadian accents, but others' perception of who they are, their experience of discrimination based on the social construction of ethnicity, race, and gender by others threaten a positive concept of self.

In their private lives girls face conflicts at various levels. The family generally offers a secure and protective environment, which is characterized by dependence and cohesiveness. Conflicts arise because of clash with western Canadian values of individuation and autonomous functioning, independence in family and social situations, and expressions of sexuality, especially among the daughters. Individuation and independence are usually viewed as disrespect. Often, values regarding child upbringing are frozen in time for first generation parents so that they tend to be more South Asian than their friends and relatives in the home country. Many girls who had traveled to their home countries realize that the fashions and activities of girls there are more universal than traditional, contrary to their parent's projection of their country values. In many ways their

friends and relatives are less restricted than they are. The media revolution has brought globalization to their countries of origin. Yet, their intellectual independence and critical thinking make them uncomfortable in social situations with seniors where such factors are still seen as disrespectful.

CLASH OF HOME AND PEER CULTURES: The conflict between peer and family pressures can cause tremendous confusion for girls. Problems are related mainly to dating and dress. Girls are precariously positioned in the overly protective environment and strongly resent double standards for boys and girls. Differential treatment given to girls as compared to their male siblings tend to cause sibling rivalries. Parent leniency with boys is experienced not only in socializing situations, and choice of field of study and careers. About 40% of the girls interviewed said that they also noticed differential expectations with regard to household chores. Their resentment comes out strongly when they feel their parents do not trust their ability to take care of themselves as much as they have confidence in their sons. Brothers are interrogated less about where and with whom they are going out and when they will come home. A few girls feel that their parents are right to be concerned about their safety while others feel discriminated against. For girls, sexuality is still one of the most difficult issues for parents (especially for fathers) to cope with. Consequently, dating and dress are the most controversial issues for girls and cause considerable stress, friction and guilt (Ghosh, 1996b).

DRESS: Most young SA Canadian girls feel totally restricted socially. According to them, girls often have conflicts over dress: "skirts are too short, tops are too low." Even a strapless evening gown worn for a school dance or prom is contentious: "bells go off in my dad's head!" On special community functions they will wear sarees (once or twice a year): "I just find it cumbersome and very inconvenient."

FRIENDS: Till middle school most girls do not have problems with having friends from school. Parents encourage extra-curricula activities for their girls along with other Canadian kids. Most of the girls interviewed have been to public schools, so they have had boys as classmates. In high school and university they tend to be with South Asian students as much as possible. They are often not allowed to "hang out in malls" as their peers do, and consequently they cannot make friends easily. Often they felt that they are left with the "geeks and losers" and "because of that I grew up like feeling such a loser – in the social sense . . . I was socially retarded, so I made blunders, which have affected me badly." Another girl said that not being able to do things with others made her "feel like a loser, a geek and an introvert – to be non-geek I had to be wholly Canadian."

DATING: Dating for girls is of course, the most difficult to cope with. Parents "cannot possibly understand the boy-girl relationship . . . When guys call they find it difficult to deal with it, more so my father than my mother." They are

often not allowed to go out with mixed groups: "the word 'bar' unnerves them . . . I am 20, but "drinking" for me is not accepted."

Most girls said that their parents feel very uncomfortable about them dating boys of other cultures. This restriction is partly based on the fear that mixed marriages will not last. But the issue of dating is related to the thought of physical intimacy – the biggest fear (especially among mothers) is about "loss of reputation" and gossip within the community. Added to these factors there is the lack of confidence in the girls' ability to protect themselves.

The parents not only discourage dating in general, they seek other solutions. Some who can afford to, send their girls to private girls' schools in Canada. In extreme cases, they send their girls to expensive single-sex schools in the home country (some to Europe) to avoid being in contact with boys in the school environment. Many of those parents have been shocked that their girls are meeting boys in school dances in their home country.

COPING MECHANISMS: How do the girls who grow up in Canada cope? "Second generation SA Canadian kids learn to become very good liars . . . they have to cover their tracks." Many lead double lives: "I have a boyfriend but my parents don't know . . . my friend went away to university. She has been going out with the same guy for two years and her parents don't know. They are practically living together and they (the parents) have NO idea."

If they do tell their parents, it is "a major trauma for them" and the girls feel hassled and harassed – "it is not worth telling them." Mothers are seen as being more sympathetic and understanding than the fathers. If the relationship is a serious one, "mother will keep it a secret from my father" or even "be comfortably blind." But she will not approve of her dating because she sees it as a "revolving door" which conjures up images of "a physical relationship."

Many would rather not hurt their parents: "I pray that I never hurt my parents again," but what parents don't know will not hurt them. Individuation is viewed as abandonment of family: "If I stand up for myself and won't let them push me around they feel I am disrespecting them but I am not." Guilt is often used as control.

While parents have experienced each culture separately (in South Asia and then in Canada), children who grow up in Canada experience both simultaneously (at home and in the wider society), so they improvise and attempt to create a world more suitable to their situation. Some parents insist their daughters learn classical Indian dancing or music (there are half a dozen such schools in Montreal alone, many more in Toronto, some of which are helped by funds from the Department of Multiculturalism). Some girls whose parents have not insisted on language, religion or dance and music feel "that I do not know enough about my heritage and now I am ready to find out." Others have "romantic notions of being Indian . . . so what I want to do is reconstruction."

They resent their parents for the pressures put on them but come to the realization that "they just don't know better" and are motivated by "what is best for us."

Some students are known, for example, to skip school in Toronto and go to "day dances" (less hassle with parents who are unaware of their whereabouts during the day, and would not let them go at night). They dance to "Bhangra rock" or the songs of "Apache Indian" (a British youth of South Asian origin who sings Bhangra lyrics in English to the reggae beat).

Those who cannot manage to stride the two cultures move out: "When I moved out I went wild because I had been so restricted . . . it was like a culture shock . . . I was out partying till 3 or 4 in the morning for the first three weeks . . . I had to get it out of my system." As a result "my school suffered and I had to go to summer school to make up for bad grades."

MARRIAGE: Conflicts at home are averted through acceptance of parental authority in choice of field of study, differential treatment of boys and girls (parents are more protective of girls and boys have greater freedom). This extends to dating and socializing more freely for males, and even marrying white (not black) Canadians. While first generation women tend to view marriage as a life-long commitment regardless of problems, there are, nevertheless, an increasing number of divorces (largely initiated by women of both generations).

Occasionally, parents who are more integrated themselves are happy with their daughters marrying into the majority cultures or to other minority groups. Increasingly, a substantial number of second-generation South Asian women are marrying or living with people (males and females) of their choice. This usually causes conflict and trauma in the family, but their expectation is that their parents will "come to terms with it." They are well aware of whom their parents will approve of as a husband if they choose: "Black is out, Eastern European is not good, nor are East Asians. North American whites are preferred to Europeans." One girl's grandmother gave her an analogy: "Getting married is like baking bread – if you burn it, it gets black; if you keep it raw, it is white; the perfect bread is when it is a nice brown."

Parents encourage attendance of their children but especially their daughters in ethnic functions in the hope that they will socialize with their friends' children. Among them the parents are willing to concede to their daughters marrying from other linguistic groups and castes. However, they still tend to be rigid about crossing religious boundaries. Over half the girls said that their parents, whether they were Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims or Christians, would not agree to inter-religious liaisons. Some knew that no matter what, their parents would not agree to their marrying on their own. One engineering student who had a boyfriend from her class with the same religious and linguistic background faced opposition from her mother. She felt that this opposition was because the

mother did not trust her judgement and also was more ambitious about her marriage prospects (Som, 1998).

The trend now is for girls to agree to "assisted marriages." Both the parents and the girls accept this arrangement. The parents introduce the girls to suitable partners whom they are able to locate by word of mouth or through newspaper ads (more recently, the Internet). The girls get to know their prospective partners and both the men and women have to agree to get married. Parents usually take care of the wedding arrangements.

Girls of South Asian origin potentially face conflicts. Although they are more prone to depression than men, females seldom express familial conflict. There is still a denial or neglect of their health concerns, particularly if they are psychological. Girls are more likely to somatize⁹ or express (often in nonverbal ways) conflict to people outside the family and community. However, some cases of suicide attempts, school problems, depression, under-achievement, and elective mutism by children and adolescents are occasionally observed (Guzder, 1992).

Conclusion

Generally, Canadian girls of South Asian origin exhibit considerable ability to construct a complementary situation rooted in traditional values of family and home together with a greater range of freedoms. This we can see in the ways that the girls managed to negotiate spaces for themselves within a somewhat "shifting landscape" in relation to the culture of their parents and a contemporary culture. The policy of multiculturalism has certainly contributed to greater opportunities for minority girls. The Multicultural Act (Canada, 1988) and the Employment Equity Act (Canada, 1986) have changed the focus from an apolitical depiction of culture to eliminating barriers and conflicts in society (racism, sexism).

The problem remains, however, that despite the emphasis on democratic principles, emancipatory elements and cultural equity, culture is still an organizing principle, which creates borders around ethnicity and race (as well as gender and class). For SA Canadian girls in contemporary Canada, this can lead to identity problems and conflicts in the private as well as public spheres. Girls strive hard to live up to their parents' expectations and yet they do not possess culture in a form identical to their parents. But because cultural change is NOT an uni-dimensional process, they are creating culture in a new context using part of the cultural capital from their parents rather than "thingifying" their parents' culture and adopting that undiluted. Michael Taussig (1992) uses the word "thingification" to mean the making of culture into possessable commodities. They are exploring and redefining what it means to be Canadian women of South Asian background. This process of reconstruction of identity is what Stuart Hall calls a process of "becoming" and "being." South Asian girls in

Canada often do this by leading dual lives to create a "space" for themselves. The process of identity construction, especially in immigrants, involves "an ambivalent and antagonistic process" (Bhabha and Parekh, 1989, p. 25). Strong ethnic identification with one's own ethnic culture as well as with the dominant culture is the ideal way to integrate because one needs to know where one is coming from in order to know where one is going. Parents are uncomfortable because they do not have points of reference from which to evaluate the new behaviour. A few who cannot reconcile the two cultures experience severe psychological stress and go into depression. Some even attempt suicide.

Integration into society is not only a personal and individual process; it is also a dialectical one. It involves contradictions (conflicts) in individual self-construction (identity), in the construction and re-construction of social relationships, and in the experiences defined by their location in terms of gender, race, culture and class. Although integration is an individual process, girls are often seen as members of a group (and stereotyped) rather than on an individual basis. This paper has looked at identity as an important factor in integration, and the conflicts faced by the girls in terms of the individual's ability to stride several cultures in their interactions with the cultures of home, school and the larger society. Canadian girls of South Asian origin must seize the opportunity to transform their present reality and definition, and establish a new direction with confidence within the politics of possibility in Canadian society.

NOTES

1. Some of the issues discussed in this paper have been reported upon previously by the author.
2. The official designation used to describe non-white groups in Canada is "visible minorities"-distinguished by skin colour in a society where "whiteness" is taken to be the norm. Some people in this group may be recent immigrants, were born in Canada are now second and third generation Canadians, while others are the original Canadians.
3. The term "South Asian" refers to a broad category of people originating in the subcontinent of Asia, namely, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Although they are heterogeneous in language and religion, they share a common history and socio-cultural heritage.
4. Race is used here as a social category and not in the biological sense. While there is no scientific basis for categorizing people into races, the concept of "race" is very real in social consciousness in North America. It has derived its meaning over time through social construction. "Black" and "white" do not represent skin colour (they are inaccurate descriptions). Being black or white expresses personal and group experiences in social interaction, and in the economic and political sphere.
5. Cultural capital is used by Bourdieu to refer to the linguistic and cultural skills, and social values, such as modes of thinking and speaking, particular meanings and styles of behaviour acquired from the family through socialization.
6. Multiculturalism is vaguely mentioned in Section 27.

The Constitution Act says that the Charter shall be interpreted in a manner which shall be consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians (Canada, 1982b). This has only adjectival relevance because it merely implies ethno-cultural group rights. The Equality Rights in Section 15 of the Charter, which became law

in 1985, guarantee individuals protection against overt forms of discrimination and permit but do not require protections for collective rights of ethnic groups. Section 15(1) of the Charter prohibits discrimination based on gender and race, and section 28 guarantees gender equality. Section 15(2) permits the establishment of affirmative action programs for women even if they contravene section 15(1). Section 2 guarantees fundamental freedoms, also at the individual level.

7. This project, which ended in 1995, was made possible by a grant from the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, Canada. Thanks are due to Dr. Reba Som and Ms. Urmil Chugh for collecting the data in Ottawa/ Toronto and Calgary. The preliminary data from Ottawa was published by Reba Som in 1998.
8. According to John Ogbu (1978), the initial difficulties of children of voluntary minorities (who voluntarily are in this country as opposed to minorities who were either here or brought here) in school are related to different cultural assumptions, language problems and differences in behavioral and cognitive styles. But, because they do not necessarily give up their own cultural values they tend to adopt a strategy of accommodation. The initial differences are seen as barriers to be overcome in order to achieve their ultimate goals of good education and employment (Ghosh, 1996b).
9. Express or experience distress through bodily symptoms.

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BOOK REVIEW

ANGELA THODY & ELEANOR STELLA MKAABWE. *Educating Tomorrow: Lessons from Managing Girls' Education in Africa*. Cape Town, South Africa: Juta (2000). 266 pp. R99.00. (ISBN 0 7021 5209 9).

Over the past decade, gender issues have found a firm place on the agendas of many developing countries and donor agencies. The traditional campaign for female empowerment has matured into a movement for gender equality that examines the social and structural relationships between men and women and proposes strategies for moving towards greater equality. In Africa, the gender equality movement has made significant strides through the development of gender policies and action plans which aim to provide equal employment opportunities, increased awareness of gender relations within social sectors and mainstreaming of gender issues in all social programs.

Many African education systems are now promoting the socialization and future development of girls and boys and are therefore well positioned to lead the way in adopting strategic interventions that favour gender equality. *Educating Tomorrow: Lessons from Managing Girls' Education in Africa* provides concrete examples of the key role the education sector plays in making progress towards gender equality. This compilation of fourteen case studies, written by practitioners and researchers from Commonwealth Africa, deals with education management issues that range from the positive effects of gender mainstreaming in Malawian primary-level math and science classes, to developing holistic community processes in Zimbabwe that address cultural barriers to girls' access to education. Local voices describe and analyze different approaches for improving gender equity in the access, retention and achievement of girls in school. These professionals offer management insights and best practices that can be transferred to other African educational contexts.

Educating Tomorrow reports from a wide variety of contexts and targets a wide audience that includes: principals, teachers, school counselors, inspectors and local, regional and national government administrators. Each case looks at a different level of the education system from the classroom and

school right up to the community, donor agency and government. While this range of perspectives provides a solid base, it does not necessarily offer a definitive evaluation of what is best practice, rather it serves "to illuminate the tensions, contradictions and ambiguities that underlie the production of educational reform" (p. 5).

In the first section of *Education Tomorrow*, the editors describe the analytic framework and methodology through which the cases were researched and presented. Overall, the book is set within the context of **school effectiveness studies** with specific emphasis placed on evaluating the effectiveness of equal opportunities for both males and females. School effectiveness studies, which began in the late 1960's, have reached no common conclusions on whether or not it is the school or the community that has the most influence on a child's performance in formal education (Jansen, 1995). In support of Jansen's theory, the editors suggest that the level of effectiveness of a particular school is associated with a critical mix of management variables. The cases presented evaluate both the internal and external factors (school climate and community), which have an impact on the effectiveness of the school and on student performance. This evaluative framework flows from Hopkins's (Hopkins *et al*, 1994) definition of school improvement:

... schools, in an era of change, can use the impetus of external reform to improve or develop themselves, while also focusing on internal reform of teaching, learning and management processes. (p. 2)

In addition to emphasizing school effectiveness, *Educating Tomorrow* frames each of its case studies within a management focus. The editors offer the rationale that there have been few studies in developing countries on the management of educational change and that their book is a contribution to school and program studies with a management focus.

What about a feminist or "gender and development" framework for analysis? Although the authors acknowledge that their work could be critiqued for using the theory of management as a framework for analysis or "a reactive accommodation to maleness, rather than producing a feminist perspective" (p. 10) they appear a bit too comfortable in their dismissal of theories of gender and power. While chapter two presents a broad overview of gender issues in Africa and how they relate to girls' educational access and achievement, it also emphasizes that the main focus of the book is not to deconstruct the implications of gender roles in African society, but more to offer techniques for how women and men can better operate and manage within existing power structures.

Feminist approaches to management and organizational development do exist and could be further consulted to strengthen efforts at improving girls' access to and attainment in education. For example, reference could be

made to Jane Parpart and Marianne Marchand's (1995) theoretical work linking feminism, postmodernism and development; Cecile Jackson and Ruth Pearson's (1998) feminist critiques of development, policy making and education programs; and Anne Marie Goetz's (1997) work entitled *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development* which examines the gendered dynamics that structure all organizations in the development field and offers alternative models for project implementation (government, NGOs, multi-lateral organizations).

Despite the editors' decision not to use an explicit feminist framework, a number of management lessons can be learned from the cases presented throughout the book (South Africa, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, Botswana, Tanzania). The editors summarize the learnings under four main educational categories: girls' **access**, **attainment**, **achievement** and **accomplishment**. Data uncovered in each case lends increasing support for the research being conducted throughout Africa on girls' education issues. General conclusions include:

Girls' enrollment at primary is effectively equal to that of boys and, in some cases, exceeds boys' enrolment. Fewer girls, however, than boys proceed to secondary or tertiary education. Key indicators affecting girls' **access** to education include: poverty, distance from school, early marriage or pregnancy, low value placed on girls' education, low socio-economic status of the family, parents' own education (p. 244).

Drop-out rates for both girls and boys are generally decreasing; more boys than girls drop out of primary overall, more girls than boys drop out of secondary education. Rates of **attainment** are affected by the same features as those related to access, yet they are also influenced by the number of schools available and perceptions of the quality of schooling (especially staffing) amongst parents and the community (p. 245).

There is evidence that the gap between boys' and girls' **achievement** at the primary level is narrowing. In fact, there is no consistent evidence to suggest that boys outperform girls. Girls may not perform as well as boys in "traditional" masculine subjects such as math, science and technology; however programs aimed to make these subjects more accessible to girls and to reduce the gender discrepancies in how these subjects are taught, have contributed to improved performance for girls. Nonetheless, gender disparity in academic achievement is linked to teachers' and community expectations of how girls will perform, girls being expected to do housework rather than to complete their homework, and girls' perceptions of their abilities in particular (p. 244).

The majority of teachers at the primary level are female; however there are more male than female teachers overall. There are fewer female than male teachers in poor and rural areas. In terms of management positions, there are

significantly fewer women than men in senior posts in primary and in secondary schools, at universities and in educational administration and policy leadership. This gender disparity in academic **accomplishments** is mainly a result of male, female and community perceptions that men should be in superior positions and generally that women have lower qualifications than men (p. 245).

The final chapter of the book summarizes the major areas of “change management” that educators and administrators should focus on to continue closing the gender gap in the formal school system. These areas are discussed within a management framework that includes: strategic and operational planning, monitoring and evaluation, financial, physical and material resource management, human resource management, training and communications and pedagogy, classroom and curriculum management and managing school climate and ethos (parents and communities). Thody and Kaabwe conclude that in order for gender-based interventions in education to be successful, change needs to be managed both within and outside schools. Although forging change in community attitudes requires patience and skill, the editors strongly believe that it is both possible and necessary. They also stress the important role that schools play in affecting these changes in attitude and emphasize the need for teachers, head teachers and administrators to take strong leadership in motivating these changes. To ensure that the “change process” is manageable, the editors recommend separating broad educational management issues into smaller parts and developing focused plans to address each issue. Although many recommendations are put forward, two of the most salient “change areas” discussed were management planning (preliminary information gathering and strategic visioning) and pedagogy, classroom and curriculum management. These recommendations are nicely juxtaposed – on the one hand, they emphasize the need to develop a long-term, strategic vision in order for projects to be sustainable, while on the other they highlight the need for taking immediate action to improve the day-to-day management of classrooms, pedagogy and curriculum.

For example, Thody and Kaabwe identify the need for **preliminary information gathering** as an essential precursor to developing appropriate gender equity interventions and for ensuring that baseline data is generated to help track project results and guide mid-project adjustments where required. Up-front data collection can also act as a valuable planning tool that ensures adequate-resource allocation, political support and the necessary infrastructure and funds for project sustainability. Two projects in Botswana, a teen mother project and a peer counseling initiative, continuously faced challenges in securing extended funding for their work. More careful presentation of changes to the baseline and improved use of data in project planning could have led to greater self-sustainability of the project. A positive model

for formative planning and information gathering is the joint-planning approach adopted by the Ministry of Education in Malawi, USAID and the local Malawian community in the implementation of the Girls' Attainment of Basic Literacy and Education program (GABLE). Although time-consuming, this joint-planning approach ensured that there was government commitment and ownership of the program and that long-term planning, data collection and monitoring capacity was built in key government agencies to ensure sustainability (p. 246).

Another recommendation, determining the **strategic vision** of girls' education projects from the outset, helps assure that they have realistic long-term goals that are achievable and sustainable within the social, economic and political contexts in which they are operating. Irish Aid's work in resuscitating primary school education in Zambia demonstrates how adopting a participatory approach to vision setting, program design and planning through active consultation with community and government stakeholders can empower local communities to take on decision-making power and long-term ownership of their project. Similarly, CamFed's (Cambridge Female Education Trust Program) program in Zimbabwe initiated a problem-solving approach to help determine the long-term vision for how to increase girls' access to education. CamFed brings together all the individuals and groups who influence girls' lives in Zimbabwe, including parents and guardians, school staff, traditional leaders and local administrative officials. Together they articulate the major barriers to improving girls' education and examine how they can collectively enhance girls' educational opportunities. The editors of *Educating Tomorrow* suggest that most important principle for developing a strategic vision is to ensure that activities are kept to a scale that is within local management capacity and that can be readily institutionalized to ensure sustainability (p. 247).

The editors highlight **pedagogy, classroom and curriculum management** as key "change areas" where significant gender equity results can emerge. Studies in Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Zambia demonstrated that girls' self-esteem in the classroom was raised by increased participation in their learning and through the use of less didactic teaching methods. A case study of a school in Uganda demonstrated that girls were hesitant to assume class leadership positions because rigid teaching methods had decreased their self-confidence. There is also need for improved teaching of traditional male subjects (science, math, technology – SMT). In Ghana, SMT clinics provided an original method for encouraging girls to continue learning and succeeding in these areas; research in Malawi demonstrated that gender mainstreaming in primary science and math brought about positive results for girls (p. 256).

Educating Tomorrow: Lessons from Managing Girls' Education in Africa presents a useful comparative perspective on some of the management strategies

being employed to close the gender gap in education in Commonwealth Africa. Reports on gender-based interventions are thoroughly critiqued and analyzed to ensure maximum learning by the reader and appropriate transferability to other educational contexts. This collection of project successes and challenges demonstrates that educational change must be managed at multiple levels in order to be effective – from the classroom and school, right up to the community, donor agencies and various levels of government. The cases reveal that significant progress has been made not only in the design and delivery of successful gender-based interventions in education, but also in the evaluation and improvement of these interventions for the future. The cases presented in *Educating Tomorrow* should provoke teachers, principals and government administrators to reflect on how well gender-based initiatives in Africa have been designed, managed and modified over the past decade. It will be up to this same group to learn from these stories so they can improve their management practices and ensure continued progress in providing equal access and attainment in education for Africa's boys and girls.

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ANNONCE

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