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TEACHING ACTIVIST INTELLIGENCE:

FEMINISM, THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE &

THE APPLIED WOMEN'S STUDIES DEPARTMENT AT CGU

By
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Presented to the Graduate Faculty of Claremont Graduate University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Cultural Studies

We certify that we have read this document and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree of Master of Arts

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Spring 2006

Date

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- - PREFACE - -

The need to teach students how to be community activists becomes increasingly relevant as women's studies continues to evolve from its activist roots. Living in a culture that discourages activist work, many women's studies students feel passionately about activist issues, but with frustrating paralysis. For this reason, many of them pursue graduate degrees to equip themselves for an activist-oriented life, since they are not sure how to do this themselves. Without the presence of a concrete social movement, women's studies students need activist behavior and community modeled for them through the institution of the university. Teaching feminist activism to women's studies students will not only provide them with a context in which to discuss women's issues but should also provide tools for a feminist way of life—whether it be deconstructing institutions, feminist networking, policy making or grant writing.

Taking a closer look at how our women's studies departments are limiting or supporting our ability to learn feminist activism, the following chapters attempt to continue a process started by a small group of sociology, English, and women's studies scholars in Teaching Feminist Activism, in which Karen Bojar and Nancy A. Naples write: "Missing in this rich literature on women's studies teaching and feminist activism is a volume focused exclusively on linking scholarship on feminist activism with experiential projects" (2). This work will take the specific aim to assist my own graduate women's studies program achieve more of its original activist-based goals through assessment and suggested practical applications.

- - CHAPTER I - -

DEFINING ACTIVIST INTELLIGENCE:

FEMINISM & THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

"The real portrait of an activist, after all, is just a mirror"
(Baumgardner, xxv)

The practice of teaching application-based or activist-based women's studies, a primary goal of the Applied Women's Studies (AWS) program, contradicts in many ways the larger aim of Claremont Graduate School (CGU) to prepare academic professionals. In graduate school, advanced degrees are earned by excelling in academic writing and researching abilities, speaking eloquently and intelligently, and mastering a canon (or, in the case of women's or cultural studies, a method of critical intellectual pursuit). Many believe that, with its academic institutionalization, women's studies has become divorced from its activist roots, ensconced instead within the university, no longer impacting larger social movements.

However, many AWS students are headed towards advocacy, non-profit or grassroots activist work, with their academic pursuits usually leading them outside of the university setting. As a result, AWS students face a difficult transition from academia to professional life. Many women's studies programs, CGU's included, are now focused on methods to reincorporate activism, in part to address student concern. For example, the AWS department has restructured "Feminist Research Epistemologies," the department's only truly applied course, to incorporate activist

professional speakers in an effort to re-activate women's studies. But empowering students to become activists can be a challenge in the graduate environment; while successfully practiced by many feminist teachers throughout the nation, the notion of academic intelligence has long been premised on detachment, whereas activism is premised on engagement and community involvement. Why would we think that the same mechanism which works for shaping students into good academics would likewise be appropriate for producing effective activists?

The field of education studies has realized the importance of developing emotional intelligence in students. Emotion has traditionally been conceived as the opposite of logic and thus devalued in the university setting. But with the introduction of the Emotional Intelligence theory (usually attributed to Daniel Goldman in his 1995 book Emotional Intelligence), teachers, scholars and other intellectuals began to see emotion as an essential element to intellectual and logical pursuits. As professors of education Richard J. Bodine and Donna K. Crawford put it: "Emotional competence is a critical, if not *the* critical, basis for intellectual pursuits" (3).

Our emotions determine how we behave, react, interpret situations that arise, what topics of scholarship interest us and even what methodology we employ. If a topic of inquiry does not peak our emotional interest, chances are that we will abandon it. In this way, emotional engagement is the most important prerequisite for sustained intellectual pursuit. By drawing from elements of this Emotional Intelligence theory, I will establish a context for an Activist Intelligence. Like the theory of Emotional Intelligence, which addresses a lack of student ability to appropriately deal with

emotions and conflict, this Activist Intelligence theory outlines the qualities, characteristics and skills necessary for students to be prepared for life-long activist work.

Empowering students towards activism conflicts with the goals of the graduate academic institution, since it is the activist's role to attack and sometimes dismantle institutions founded on power hierarchies, including those in academia. As sociologist Francesca M. Cancian writes:

> Activist research is "for" women and other disadvantaged people and often involves close social ties and cooperation with the disadvantaged. In contrast, academic research aims at increasing knowledge about questions that are theoretically or socially significant. Academic research is primarily "for" colleagues. It involves close ties with faculty and students and emotional detachment from the people being studied. (187)

Women's studies, much like Cancian's activist research, is situated as an academic discipline within the university, simultaneously accepting and rejecting its institutional status because of its driving purpose—social activism. The tenuous position of women's studies within the larger capitalist institution of the university is likewise troubled. In the case of CGU, AWS has long lacked the institutional, administrative and financial support required to help it achieve its goals. For example, the head of AWS holds joint appointments, but receives no extra compensation or course release in exchange for her weighty responsibilities as department head. In the same way that women's studies strives to incorporate activism within its curriculum, it must strive to incorporate and revalue women's studies within the university. One way to begin this process of improving the visibility of women's studies within the university starts with the incorporation of activist techniques on a course and departmental level. Once fully

integrated, women's studies departments will have stronger community alliances and a potential donor fund base, both which establish it as a stronger presence within the university.

SECTION 1: METHODOLOGY

By talking to activist professional speakers, the professor, T.A. and students in the Fall 2005 AWS 300 class, I have attempted to explore the realm of emotional experience in a course premised on activism and empowerment. This can help shed light on how we can combat the difficulties arising from teaching application or activist-based women's studies at CGU, which should also be resonant with other women's studies programs experiencing similar tensions.

The results of this case study represent the first part of my research on this topic, and are more complicated than I originally predicted. I had anticipated some variation among student enjoyment and some valuable ideas based on personal experience for improving it, but what I had not expected to find were tangible and widely-felt tensions and conflicts. Both of my speaker and teacher respondents mentioned that the AWS 300 class was "quiet" and expressed concerns that the students in the class were not "engaged" or "interested" in the elements or level of activism at hand. Nevertheless, my student respondents strongly and explicitly expressed a high level of investment in the class. While the practice of bringing in activist professionals as speakers appeared to result in student engagement, it did not resolve the conflict inherent in working towards academic goals as a means of preparing oneself for activist work.

My AWS classmates complain that their degrees are "smoke and mirrors." Some of them go on to other academic programs just so they can feel like they will earn a "real degree." Others are disillusioned and spiteful because they feel their efforts and money have been wasted. These students feel fooled—and lacking in "expertise." I probably would have felt that same way if I hadn't become more involved with the department. When I took the AWS 300 class in the fall of 2004, I was excited to experience the applied part of Applied Women's Studies. I was eager to learn how to use my theoretical women's studies interests as a bridge to professional women's issues. Instead, I found the class disappointing, lacking in organization, cohesion and support from the department.

Stung by the class's unfulfilled promises, a colleague and I began to imagine a version of the class that would meet our expectations. We were not alone in our disappointment and anger, and saw the potential to inspire and empower other students. We brought a proposal to redesign the course to the dean of the program. She encouraged us to take on the project, and we spent the summer of 2005 arranging to have professional activists come into the classroom to engage the students in dialogue, imparting their real-world experiences as a way to teach students that activism is not limited to protests or heroes. With my colleague serving as the T.A. for this class, the new curriculum was taught in the fall of 2005.

Ironically, the original, failed AWS 300 course had exactly the intended effect on me—leading me into an application of women's studies which has been validating and empowering beyond anything else in my graduate education. My role as co-creator of its

new incarnation offered me an opportunity to turn anger into creative, activist energy. This chapter details an interview-based case study of the restructured course, with its attendant difficulties and issues, as a way to help ground my intentions to provide narrative and textual-based recommendations for improving the AWS department's ability to foster activism in its students.

I chose to interview a selection of those involved—two recruited speakers, the professor, my colleague (who designed the curriculum with me), and two students from different departments. I chose not to attend the class sessions to avoid having to contend with another level of my personal involvement in this research. Instead, I rely heavily upon their perspectives and personal experience, as expressed to me. By relying on my interviews with these six women, I intend to facilitate their reflection of an experimental educational experience, so that I can learn more about teaching feminist activism at CGU. I offer this method and the information gained from these interviews to other professors, students and activists who are looking for ways to use self-reflection to measure the value of a program by its participants' emotional engagement.

My interview participants cannot be fully or accurately represented from decontextualized quotations, or from my descriptions and interpretations of them. For this reason, I have chosen to rename all of them in this case study. While it is true that their real names may be discerned through examination of course materials or other means, I am not trying to protect their identities in the usual sense. Instead, my renaming is intended to distance and distinguish my interpretation of their experience from their own. As sociologist and professor of Chicano studies Jose Calderon writes: "I

have had to resolve the issue that my data were collected in the dual roles of researcher and participant" (81). For me, this resolution comes through the act of renaming. (Chapters II and III take a different method, as I believe it important to connect the knowledge shared by the three professors interviewed therein with their living identities and work, their names and known experiences, in my attempt to add their narratives to the somewhat limited canon of texts addressing feminist pedagogical techniques.)

However, for the purposes of this case study, part of my desire to rename is to take a stand alongside other feminist academics rejecting the practice of presenting research as fact, and instead work towards transforming hierarchal research strategies. An alternative and feminist approach ensures that my study is in no way premised on objectivity. More narrative in character, my research comes as much from myself as it does from the experiences my subjects have shared with me. In composing this study in this non-objective, anti-data, narrative, interpretive, renaming, performative way, I am trying to practice what I preach. It is my hope that this approach will encourage others to abandon more traditional modes of presenting research data in exchange for a more radical kind of subjectivity.

There is much feminist literature debating the divide between objectivity and subjectivity. In her book Is Science Multicultural?, philosopher and women's studies professor Sandra Harding attempts to strengthen the modern understanding of objectivity by introducing the concept of "weak objectivity" (3). Harding critiques the idea that "one should try to produce scientific information in which one can find no culturally distinctive interests or discursive resources of the societies that have produced

the research" (3). Harding argues that objectivity is difficult to define because it has historically been used in a multitude of ways (127). Firstly, certain groups of people (namely women, feminists, African Americans, Asians, Marxists) are historically seen as incapable of practicing objectivity due to a presumed heightened emotionality (either political or otherwise) (Harding, 127). Secondly, objectivity is understood as a "claim . . . that is better supported by evidence—more accurate, closer to the truth—than its competitors" (Harding, 127). Thirdly, "the notion is also attributed to methods or procedures that are thought to be fair: statistical, experimental, or repeated procedures (in the law, ones appealing to precedents) are more objective because they maximize standardization" (Harding, 127). Lastly, Harding notes that objectivity is often assigned to certain privileged "knowledge-seeking communities" that are "characteristic of modern natural science" (127). In this way, objectivity offers an exclusive framework for science—one that privileges certain communities over others and likewise privileges certain methods and evidence over others. Harding's concept that the weak objectivity of science is andocentric and eurocentric leads her to a critique of the relationship between objectivity and neutrality.

Neutrality is a way of standardizing biased ideas and positing them as universal truths. In this way, according to Harding, neutrality is a way of masking certain values:

> Objectivism defends and legitimates the institutions and practices through which the distortions and their often exploitative consequences are generated. It certifies as value neutral, normal, natural, and therefore not political at all the policies and practices through which powerful groups can gain the information and explanations that they need to advance only their priorities—ones that usually conflict with others'. (132)

Neutrality is a way of hiding the fact that objectivity is not, in fact, objective, but instead is coded as male. The male standard is not seen as subjective—rather, we are taught, it is through this standard and method that ultimate universal truths can be found. As Harding summarizes: "Objectivity has been thought to require neutrality; neutrality is coded masculine; and masculinity as individual identity and as symbolic meaning is culturally formed in opposition to the 'feminine' and is continuously so maintained" (137-138). Harding advocates for a new conception of objectivity that will "enable scientific projects to escape containment by the values, interests, discursive resources, and ways of organizing the production of knowledge" (133). Accordingly, Harding argues that our concept of objectivity must be divorced from neutrality in order to break down the power relations inherent in weak objectivity (140). Strong objectivity would bring value and appreciation for "embodied knowledge that develops through daily activities" and would no longer deny perspectives different from the rational model of weak objectivity (Harding, 115). If academic knowledge is based on weak objectivity, and women cannot, by its common definition, possess this kind of objectivity, Harding's argument for a strong objectivity is pertinent. In this way, this work is premised on embracing a strong objectivity, one which is not opposed to subjectivity. This does not mean that the creation of academic knowledge is solely the product of emotional whims, but it does not dismiss emotionality, revaluing it as a kind of intellectual logic, which shapes and informs methods of study.

SECTION 2: DEFINING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional Intelligence, often abbreviated EI, "refers to the competence to identify and express emotions, understand emotions, assimilate emotions in thought, and regulate both positive and negative emotions in the self and in others" (Crawford, 3). EI subverts previous notions that emotion is not related to intellect. The EI theory splits knowledge and intelligence into two valid factions: emotional *and* intellectual, asserting that you cannot have one without the other. Additionally, "in a culture where knowledge equates with status, if intelligence is taken to mean 'the ability to learn and know; understanding; intellect; mind,' then to be labeled intelligent is highly desirable" (Crawford, 86). EI theory has successfully revalued emotional life as being as important as logical knowledge. Furthermore, inherent in the EI theory is a critique of the traditional American education system, a pertinent critique for women's studies programs to consider.

If education fails to encourage students to value their emotional engagement in intellectual pursuits (the reason EI was originally developed), we will inevitably end up with students who fail to connect their personal emotional experiences with their intellect. This does not provide students with an empowering education. Instead, it encourages detached scholarship premised on objectivity, which fails to teach students how to use academic knowledge in the real world. Furthermore, it strips students of the richness of academic study that comes with exploring a passionate and personal issue from a new perspective. "Education is living, not just the preparation for living. Students must be involved in dealing with real problems in order to learn what they

need to know now and later. The fact is, students are involved with real problems constantly" (Bodine, 5). EI provides a framework for reimagining what we as a society believe is important for students to learn.

For AWS students, emotional intelligence is extremely important. Women's studies students follow their academic interests because they realize that social injustices are both worth studying and also potentially addressable. Fully grasping the potential for change and feeling equipped to facilitate it leads to a growth in emotional intelligence:

> People 'grow into' their emotions which they construct in their attempts to be agents. In their appraisals of the situations in which they find themselves they appropriate the cultural rules and norms, but not in a passive way. They reflect in order to resolve contradiction and to produce intelligibility as they construct their identities. Individuals reproduce the social structure because they have freedom of action. In addition, as members of collectives, they have the chance to transform the social structures. Emotions are the markers of agency. (Crawford, 126)

Although the theory of EI has enabled some professors and teachers to encourage emotional growth in their students, on the whole, the academy continues to have a difficult time with this, often erroneously equating emotional growth with intellectual growth.

As previously discussed, the term "objectivity" continues to be touted in more traditional disciplines (such as science, psychology, history) and in approaches used by newer disciplines such as cultural studies and women's studies. Instead of urging students to be completely objective, it has been my experience that we are urged to have "some objectivity"—to maintain distance because, we are told, one observes more from

a distance. As someone with an increasingly distracting case of nearsightedness, I can attest to being able to see sharpest those things closest to myself. Although I encountered some resistance and confusion from my advisors in my desire to pursue a case study of a course I helped to create, I feel my experience of layered involvement gives me the unique opportunity to take a deeper look and provide better insight than I could if I were working from the outside. This layered involvement makes me uniquely engaged in the topic, in a sustained way. Because we are taught that we cannot be fully objective (although this still seems to be preferable to full subjectivity), we are told that we need to admit our bias. Psychologist Erica Burman writes: "The positivist, empiricist view of scholarship and research treats emotion as that which should be excluded or avoided—as 'bias'" (Burman). Even though the academy has attempted to relax its views of an intelligence based solely on objectivity, negative connotations (like the above commonly used context for the word "bias") continue to survive.

My experience in the fall 2005 "Field Study Research in Cultural Studies" course, for which this case study was a partial fulfillment of my academic requirements, has provided me with plenty of grist for the mill where this continuing conflict is concerned. Throughout the semester, I felt that my project was not sufficiently exotic to elicit interest from those involved in the class, with the professor setting the example. Those students who conducted more traditional ethnographies where the researcher entered a foreign community received more questions, comments and discussion during class. This resulted in my feeling marginalized, a position which challenged me in new ways. While my classmates struggled with the idea that they were ultimately required to insert

themselves into their papers (as if this were something that happens apart from writing up the data), I (owing to my women's studies background) had begun my research by critiquing my own role as a researcher. Their struggle often felt like an indictment of my decision to start with my own experience. This also made it difficult to relate to other projects since we approached our ethnographies from such different standpoints. Although fostering a dialogue on these issues was something I did not feel that I could do at the time, we all could have benefited from this.

In graduate school, no matter how progressive or post-modern the course may be, there is still a greater premium on research that looks more like traditional forms of data, affording little justification for beginning research with one's self. I believe this has something to do with the idea that assuming one's self would be worthy enough of study is too "touchy feely." This relates to our assumptions that emotion on the part of the researcher is illegitimate. More dialogue around how our education shapes our interests—a more critical look at the educational experience—while in the classroom could have very freeing results. Known for his radical studies in the philosophy of education, Paolo Freire writes:

> Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators. In this way, the presence of the oppressed in the struggle for their liberation will be what it should be: not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement. (51)

Embracing our subjectivity in the classroom by positioning ourselves as more than learners of completed canons and techniques of knowledge would make both students and teachers feel like they had more control over their (classroom) environment, empowering them to see themselves instituting change. Without recognizing our own assumptions—the motives lurking behind what we choose to study and how this differs from what our other classmates choose to study—we present students with a paradox, instructing them that one cannot say one is completely objective, but instead must present oneself as if one were mostly objective (in Harding's "weak objectivity" sense) in order to gain credibility.

The theory of Emotional Intelligence—a theory which empowers the emotional experience in the classroom—can provide us with a way to talk about how to change the environment and focus of our graduate classrooms. In order to start seeing academic work as an integral part of a living community, we must start with the experiences of people involved in the classroom environment. We must figure out how to help them enrich their understanding of their own emotional experience in that environment. The classroom does not have to be divorced from reality. Because of its selective and privileged nature, the character of the graduate classroom may be foreign to some, but is nonetheless related to the general assumptions and valuations of society at large. AWS students interested in social activism as a profession and who have rejected more lucrative educational training opportunities (such as business or law school) in order to pursue this must to be equipped with the tools required to see themselves as active

participants agents of societal change. Professors in women's studies, Donna M. Bickford and Nedra Reynolds write about service learning:

> There are plenty of opportunities for students to experience geographies of exclusion right on campus. . . . When we ask students to go into the community either for a service-learning experience or for a community service internship, we underscore the separation of campus from community rather than emphasize the interconnectedness and mutual dependence. . . . Students do not need to leave the college or university to engage in acts of dissent. (Bickford, 244)

In this way, we need to help AWS students to develop their Activist Intelligence, starting with their educational experiences.

SECTION 3: DEFINING ACTIVIST INTELLIGENCE

Like Emotional Intelligence, Activist Intelligence (which I will abbreviate as AI) can be a way of revaluing and reinforcing activism through education. It is also a tool that can be used to rethink the pedagogy of women's studies to ensure that our teaching practices lead more effectively to student empowerment, and provide students with bridging ability (from pursuits in the academy to community-based activism). AI is a reaction to what I see as a crisis among women's studies students, but it has practical implications for other kinds of students as well—the ability to self-empower is vital to many disciplines. To promote AI, the following skills and senses need to be encouraged and nurtured in students: (1) activist potential (being able to see oneself as an active individual, capable of enacting change through self-reflection and critical consciousness), (2) sustained emotional engagement eventually pursued through action (the ability to bridge between academic and professional environments), (3)

empowerment (feeling that one is equipped with tools, or when one doesn't have the tools, feeling that one possesses the leadership required to develop tools, as well as being able to provide oneself with validation in a world where one will run up against many roadblocks) and (4) community (and the ability to re-create it). Discussing these categories as they relate to each of my interview respondents helps me to ground the recommendations in chapter III in the specific experiences of CGU students.

- ELANA: SPEAKER -

Elana is of Mexican heritage, in her mid thirties and has worked for many years with a downtown Los Angeles non-profit providing services to the homeless. My relationship with her began when she trained me as a volunteer case manager, and has transformed over the years to its present incarnation working together on her organization's Programs and Policy Committee. Her organization specializes in direct services for homeless women. Well-spoken, promoting and practicing an ethic of self-care, Elana is one of the most validating people I know (one cannot leave a meeting with her without receiving a compliment on something one did or said). With the executive director of her organization, Elana came to speak to the AWS 300 class about how to sustain a successful non-profit.

She told me, "On the most basic level, being a guest speaker speaking on the topic you asked us to, I felt like we had the assignment (laughing). . . . I kind of felt like it was my role . . . to try to give some tangible ways to—to try to make the talk tangible" ("Elana"). When Elana talked about making her topic tangible, I understood that she

wanted to provide students with a bridge between the academic world and her own. This assumes that a substantial gap exists between the way she and her colleagues understand running a nonprofit and the ways graduate students would. Aimed at engaging the students and helping them to understand the issues involved with sustaining a nonprofit organization, Elana told me that this speaking opportunity offered her and the executive director a unique opportunity to examine their organization in a new light, mentioning the benefits for reflection repeatedly throughout our conversation. Elana said,

> [This experience was] a little different than how I normally perceive my role when I go out and do things like that. A lot of times it's really raising awareness around women's homelessness . . . or how people can help with the center. So I did feel a difference in my role there. ("Elana")

Elana's participation in AWS 300 required her to take on a different kind of speaking role, but despite the personal benefits, this rather uncharted territory contributed to her ambiguous feelings about the way she was received by the students.

When I asked Elana how she found the tone of the classroom, she told me that she felt "self conscious" answering that question on tape ("Elana"). When I asked her why, she said, "I couldn't really read the group well. And usually, I feel like I do better at reading the group . . . and people seemed kind of quiet" ("Elana"). I reassured her by telling her, "You're not the first person to say that." This was part of my role as researcher—to make my interview participants feel comfortable, even when talking about uncomfortable things. After telling her that she was not the first, she was more willing and interested in discussing her experience. She talked about introducing herself

to students and not feeling any friendly reciprocity. She also mentioned qualms about the level of student engagement:

> Truthfully, I felt like they were more engaged and interested in asking questions about the center specifically. . . . But I didn't really—they didn't seem so interested in running the nonprofit aspect of things. . . . It seemed like there was some sort of a barrier. ("Elana")

Because I know Elana to be a very self-assured person, I was surprised to hear her question her performance. She assessed the success of her presentation by gauging student interest through their level of vocal involvement in her presentation. The students were not as involved and talkative as Elana expected, so she concluded that her presentation was not effective or interesting enough.

During our interview, I recalled Elana telling me previously about an experience she had while taking a UCLA course and asked her how it compared. She said:

> We were in that class because we had a particular kind of community work that related to the class whereas the [other, traditional] students who were in there . . . it seems like they just didn't have a lot of interest in the topic, which I felt was disheartening because I felt like there was a lot to discuss. ("Elana")

Thus, Elana's experience of students in graduate level classes has been disappointing, and different than what she expected on a number of occasions. Although she was a student in the UCLA class and a speaker for AWS 300, her experiences in both classes seem strikingly similar. Elana theorized that this barrier has something to do with age:

> When you're a student, you feel like it's your job to get good grades and that you want to do well, people want to do well. . . . To be completely honest with you, I think the graduate level has to do with students who are very young, even though they are in graduate school, and have been students for much of their lives, are very smart people who feel like they need to be smart, who haven't worked a lot. ("Elana")

The lack of personal and professional investment in class issues made Elana feel that the UCLA students held a lesser degree of interest than she. Likewise, regarding the AWS 300 students, Elana said they seemed interested in her nonprofit but asked questions that anyone new to the nonprofit would ask—more superficial in nature than she expected. She had been looking to engage them on a deeper level, and for some reason, the students seemed unwilling or unable.

While discussing the students in the classroom, Elana also described her own experience as a student as a passive one—saying that students are generally concerned with getting good grades and that this preoccupation "inhibits" them from being more actively engaged ("Elana"). Illustrating the rift between the academic environment and the professional nonprofit world, Elana's inability to comfortably transition from a professional nonprofit environment to the classroom reaffirms that the academic environment is not configured to teach activism. If activists (repeatedly, in Elana's case) leave the academic environment feeling like students are too young, inexperienced and not really interested in the issues so central to community-based action (as Elana repeatedly did), one may conclude the graduate environment is hostile towards activism. Elana's experience in the graduate classroom illustrates a need for AWS to provide more support and practical encouragement to develop the deeper emotional and community-based engagement required to bridge academic and professional environments.

- VALERIE: SPEAKER -

While Valerie's and Elana's roles in the AWS 300 class were very similar, their reactions to their experiences were overwhelmingly different. Nevertheless, Valerie, like Elana, characterized the students as passive.

Valerie works for the Los Angeles Unified School District in a department dealing primarily with diversity and gay, lesbian, transgender, and bisexual issues among LAUSD youths. She is also a Ph.D. candidate at CGU who was due to finish her dissertation in 2005. She is Caucasian, a lesbian, has two daughters in college, lives in a small house in the San Fernando Valley, and is a math teacher by training. She tutors junior high students in math in her living room on the weekends and she runs a grassroots organization which goes into LAUSD high schools and performs student diversity trainings. Unlike Elana, Valerie has copious experience in the classroom, as a graduate student, a facilitator of diversity training and a teacher of math. She told me she was "honored and very flattered" by being asked to speak. She also mentioned more than once that she "took it very seriously" ("Valerie"). By serious, Valerie meant that she was nervous beforehand, which surprised her. She said that she prepared two completely separate presentations, which she identified as "experiential" and "professorial." She decided to employ the "experiential" presentation because she realized that her "unique skill was facilitating the experience" and thus described her role as a "facilitator rather than a lecturer" ("Valerie").

Valerie associated facilitation with experience and professorial (or scholarly) interaction with lecture. This divide reinforces the notion that the academy tends to

value scholarly lecture-oriented research and presentation, which is not necessarily related to lived experience. However, when I referred to her presentation as "experience-based" (articulating my interpretation of what she meant by "experiential"), she surprised me by responding, "It wasn't my personal experience. The only time that I tell a personal experience is to illustrate a point" ("Valerie"). When I relayed this exchange to the course's professor during our subsequent interview, she told me that Valerie's presentation did indeed include a lot of Valerie's experience. But Valerie's insistence that experience should only underline an abstract point was an important distinction to her. She did not want me to think that her presentation, although "experiential," was not serious or scholarly.

In retrospect, this semantic distinction reflects the pressure that Valerie, as a student and teacher, felt about valuing personal, lived and emotional experience in a classroom setting. This misunderstanding makes me recall how Elana mentioned that students want to feel smart which, in the graduate environment, is achieved by getting good grades and conforming to the research and behavioral standards of the academy. Valerie may have also meant that her "experiential" presentation focused more on student experience of her facilitation and less on her own narratives.

Unlike Elana, who was disappointed by the shallowness of her dialogue with the students, Valerie's description was overwhelmingly positive. She said:

> It was very exhilarating. It was fun. It was just fun. I was having a great time. I loved it. You know, people were talking. People were quiet at first, but then they got talking. You know, people participating and that felt really good. That's—for teachers, teachers feed off of that. They love it. ("Valerie")

This heightened emotional response—the achievement that Valerie felt when she got the students talking, rousing them from a quiet state—was something that Elana, unfortunately did not get to experience.

Valerie's interpretation of her role as an active facilitator whose unique quality was her ability to facilitate a certain kind of dialogue, highlighted the passivity she described in students:

> Being a student there—you know, a lot of it is very passive learning. . . . And the irony of it is that when I first came to CGU I was kind of closeted. I didn't come out in class. I didn't make a point of bringing queer issues onto the table. ("Valerie")

As a student, Valerie felt passive when choosing not to raise queer issues, including her own identification as a lesbian. Her personal experience was neither invited nor promoted in the classroom and thus she remained closeted, either feeling without power or without desire to act otherwise. No longer a student, Valerie's comfort level with being an activist is now much higher. It also seems as if her experience of being closeted has led to her interest in pursuing diversity trainings within the educational system. If students are understood by activists to be passive, as Elana and Valerie both described them, how can we teach them to act otherwise? Without a conscious change in pedagogy, we ignore how our educational system trains students to be passive members of a classroom, thus preventing them from having a meaningful dialogue, even when professional activists come into the classroom.

By fulfilling this need for a facilitator, Valerie was able to come away from the experience feeling empowered and excited. Although Elana did not end up expressly

feeling empowered, she did feel challenged and valued the opportunity to reflect and take on new roles. The commonality between Elana and Valerie's experiences hinges upon their shared observation of the AWS 300 students as "quiet." As it turns out, this issue of quietness was raised by my other interview subjects, in various ways. The level of quietness seems to have been interpreted by all interview participants as a way to gauge the level of engagement of the students in the class. It is worth noting, however, that these two things do not necessarily have to be related, as the following students' perspectives show.

- IVY: AWS STUDENT -

Ivy is a Caucasian second semester AWS student, in her late twenties, who is also a new mother. When I asked her about her role in the classroom, she said,

> [It was] unique to any classroom experience, because I feel like I have responsibility to feel more engaged. It's not just about talking about like, coming and talking about readings. . . . I feel more responsible for what I'm getting out of the class. . . . You're not having somebody talk about what somebody else wrote about. You have the actual person there saying this is my experience with this aspect of activism. So, I feel like my role is to be engaged with the speaker and try to pull something from her experience and relate it to what I want to do. You know? So, I feel really comfortable in the class, which is not typical for me. ("Ivy")

In light of Valerie and Elana's description of the students as passive, I was pleasantly surprised and perplexed by Ivy's perspective. How could she feel so engaged, yet be interpreted in the opposite way by speakers? She illustrated this contradiction:

> I don't know if I participate enough for [the T.A.'s] taste. I think she would like a little bit more participation. I try to say what's on my mind. I don't sit there all balled up. But I'm more just in it to kind of experience

> what you guys have put together. I don't feel like I need to pull a lot out of these women. They're just giving so much when they're up there. ("Ivy")

Even though Ivy describes herself as "engaged," her characterization of her role in the class as being there "to experience" it indicates passivity—as if the class were complete without the students' participation. It is worth considering the possibility that this response is related to constructed gender roles in the classroom, where women are reluctant to speak forcefully or experientially for fear of being perceived as too outspoken, too critical, or even too feminist. Ivy's description of the speakers as "giving so much" and requiring no effort to draw out information highlights the rift between the speakers and the students that Elana described. Elana said in our interview:

> A stumbling block in learning about activism is that these people become our heroes and that makes it hard to see them as real people, as someone who started out in humble ways, whether that was just working on one project or what have you. What I really think activism is, is making change in your daily life and living your life the way that you see is right. I feel like that sometimes it can feel like too big of a gulf, when really we all have the power to make changes every single day. ("Elana")

Although the course was designed to bring community activists into the classroom to overcome this hero complex, Elana's description of the rift between learning about activist heroes and our own lived experience explains Ivy's view of the activist professionals who visited the class. Ivy's awe of their ability and accomplishments—her identification of speakers as semi-heroes—enabled her to be a passive participant, following the lead of the speakers. The students may have felt awe and inspiration by the speakers' professionalism and activist work, but could have felt further removed from them for those same reasons.

As third-wave feminists Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards write:

> If you are a women's studies major, you don't have to get a job at NOW or Planned Parenthood to prove your degree worthwhile. Many feminist and activist types have a hard time seeing their mainstream job prospectus as anything other than a giant detour from their values. It's important to recognize that any location where an activist finds himself or herself has the potential to become an activist space. (123)

Developing this sense of activist space is contingent on students feeling that they are activists. Yet our internalized positionality as students in the classroom (being somewhat passive) prohibits us from engaging with activists who cross that boundary.

- TRACEY: CULTURAL STUDIES STUDENT -

Tracey is in her mid-twenties, a Caucasian woman who lives in Santa Monica and recently began teaching high school full time. Like Ivy, Tracey described her role in the AWS 300 classroom as actively engaged. She said, "I tend to be very talkative so my role tends to be . . . if there are some questions to be asked, I tend to be the one who asks them. . . . We need to be on the ball with speakers and be prepared to ask them questions. I always have a question I can ask" ("Tracey"). Like Ivy, Tracey valued the presence of the speakers in the classroom: "Actually seeing the speakers and hearing from them—just getting the vibe from them. That's how you inspire people to get active is to have speakers . . . more so than sitting there talking about readings for three hours" ("Tracey"). When I asked Tracey to describe the tone of the classroom, however, her response contrasted this description:

> It's 7:00 at night. Most of us have jobs. But it's laid-back in that sense and [the professor] is really laid-back as well. The speakers come in and most

> of them seem to have planned it out, you know, which is very appreciated when you're the listener. ("Tracey")

Much like Ivy, Tracey describes the speakers' role as being more important and active than her own. The image of the ideal AWS classroom as an active environment for dialogue is complicated by Tracey's definition of it as "laid-back" as well as her appreciation for "planned" speaker presentations, both which contribute to a classroom environment less concerned with active dialogue and participation and more concerned with "listening" and "exposure."

Tracey talked in depth about various speakers who had incited or "lit fires" for her. She expressed to me that with each speaker, she felt exposed to an entirely new world of issues, and felt totally engaged in that world—but only until the next class, when her attention would be captured by something else. In response, I asked her if she felt like the class hadn't gone into depth enough. She replied:

> No. I don't think as an intro class it should go in depth. I think this is the point of it, to show you, in women's studies, how to add praxis to what you want to do and give you all the options, some options that are out there for you to choose to find your niche because you can't do everything. And you really do have to find something that you can specialize in and that you are really passionate about. ("Tracey")

Tracey's complex understanding of the purpose of the course to simultaneously "light fires" and shallowly survey activist options relates to the students being perceived as "quiet." Not every student is equally interested in every subject. With the speakers coming from organizations dealing with issues across the board, the students in the class, as their own interests vary, will inevitably have varying levels of emotional involvement and response. Perhaps this accounts for the relative "quietness"—not every

student felt themselves engaged in the particular field of every speaker and so would not always be invested in having deep dialogue. If the goal is to expose students to options, maybe deep dialogue is not the right aim.

When I asked Tracey about the class's overall effect on her, she said:

> I think it's a great class in enabling someone to find the tools, if only the beginning tools, and to do something community-based. Absolutely. And I think it's a really interesting class. . . . It's not about the reading. It's about, you know, just the things that you are learning about your world and I think that makes you a more whole person. And then you can expend that upon everyone else you meet. It's kind of like a trickle—the trickle effect. ("Tracey")

Both Tracey and Ivy expressed positive feelings towards the AWS 300 class. Understanding their own position in the classroom as more "laid-back" yet "active" listeners may explain why the speakers found the students to be a little "quiet," but this does not appear to correlate with reduction in emotional engagement, inspiration, growth and empowerment.

In many ways, this case study cannot resolve this distinction between actual engagement of students versus perceived engagement. My information—narratives which I have interpreted—is divorced from the context and ultimately inadequate in gauging actual versus perceived engagement of students. Furthermore, in both Ivy and Tracey's case, engagement seems to be conceived as an internal process, one where taking responsibility for gaining knowledge comes from mental linkages between personal interests and speakers' interests, but not necessarily relating on an interpersonal level with the speakers about those linkages. This unwillingness or inability to engage in interpersonal dialogue is really the problematic issue. I do not

contend that the students were not engaged. However, the evidence does seem to support the contention that students were not actively engaging with the speakers, as influenced by a variety of organizational and social factors.

The ability of this class to promote activist empowerment of its students was further complicated by a real conflict, which five of the six people I interviewed discussed. This conflict illustrates the difficulty of creating and fostering a community environment in this particular classroom.

CHRISTINA: T.A., CO-DESIGNER OF THE CLASS, AND AWS STUDENT

Christina is of Mexican heritage, grew up in Ventura, is in her late twenties, works for Planned Parenthood, lives with her husband in Culver City, and is pursuing a dual degree in Education and Applied Women's Studies at CGU. As I previously mentioned, she and I restructured the AWS 300 class together and are close friends and colleagues. Although I had heard bits and pieces about the course's progress from her, our formal interview was one of the first chances for her to give me an in-depth reflection on her experience. She described her role to me, saying, "Co-facilitator is a good term to use. I basically help run the class with [the professor] and in general, we do fifty-fifty of the talking, or I end up instructing more" ("Christina"). Although this responsibility unnerved her a little at the beginning of the semester, she seemed to be more comfortable with it by the time of our interview. When I asked her about the role speakers play, she said, "That's interesting. I think they are speakers. They do their temporary thing. They try to engage the class" ("Christina"). She also said, "Some of

them are more like presenters. Some of them are there not just to present but to become a part of the class" ("Christina"). When I asked if this impacted the level of engagement of the students, she said, "I think it has to a little bit. It always does. When you're in a classroom and the teacher is a good teacher and they're interested and excited and engaged, that always helps me personally" ("Christina"). From this context, Christina's definition of a good teacher is one that is interesting, excited and engaged—a teacher who impacts you and invests you in the class and its topics. As a T.A., Christina (unlike the two students I interviewed) was more concerned with pedagogical issues. She correlated the level of engagement of the speakers to the level of engagement of the students. She also told me that she was "disappointed with the participation of the students" ("Christina").

When I asked Christina if she had experienced any surprising moments in class, she said:

> There are a couple of girls in there; . . . they snicker and do this thing where she writes a note, and she turns it, and that one giggles, and writes another note, and turns it and the other one giggles. . . . [They're] sitting there like five year olds who are giggling and snickering and rolling their eyes. ("Christina")

This pair of snickering students were Ph.D. students in psychology and reacted this way whenever one of the older returning AWS M.A. students spoke. Christina said that she found their behavior disrespectful and believed that they would not act like this in a psychology course—that their disrespectful behavior was partially fueled by a lack of respect for the women's studies department. Christina elaborated, "This is a graduate level course. They're Ph.D. people—what do you do, do you take them aside and say

you're being really rude and having a negative effect on the class?" ("Christina"). The snickering—the negation of a sense of classroom unity, fractioning the class into AWS students and others who mock AWS students—also hurt Christina's own sense of community in the classroom. She said:

> But I think, honestly, they're having a negative impact on the class. If other people are noticing them snickering, it's not just me. It makes me, as the co-facilitator . . . wanting to kind of disengage—like I don't want to be engaged and have them over there in the corner, snickering. ("Christina")

When I asked Christina about the tone of the classroom, she said, "Not warm. That's the first way I would describe it. It is not a warm classroom. . . . I think it's because they don't have time to interact with each other" ("Christina"). The reliance on speaker engagement did not leave time for student discussion, bonding and interaction. In Christina's experience, there has been no real classroom community.

Tracey also mentioned this issue to me, saying, "There's really not a lot of class interaction" ("Tracey"). But at the same time, both Tracey and Ivy seemed to experience community in a way Christina did not. Tracey said, "I think the tone has been—it's been very inviting. . . . We're all Master's students and we're all women, and you know, we just kind of all—we just understand that we all have good ideas. It's just a matter of letting them all shine through" ("Tracey"). Ivy also expressed similar feelings when she said, "I feel like I'm in a room with a lot of smart women and I really like the way that feels. And I like hearing [thoughts that I have] come out of other people's mouths. . . . I just feel like we're all on the same level. We're all looking at things critically" ("Ivy"). Ivy's positive feelings about being collective critical are common among women's

studies students in (specifically) women's studies classes. In this kind of environment, students who examine gender hierarchies as a first step to any kind of academic inquiry are faced with welcoming classmates who follow the same method, unlike in more traditional classes. Ivy's experience in this classroom was comforting and even though there was not a lot of time for class interaction, both Tracey and Ivy experienced some level of community in the classroom, despite the snickering conflict (which they both mentioned as well).

When I asked Tracey about the issue of students being "quiet", she said she thought that if the co-facilitators wanted more questions asked and more dialogue, they should take it upon themselves to bring that about: "So, if there are [more questions], then [Christina] is not acting upon that to foster more conversation, to bring things up. So I haven't felt that way. I think [the professor] gets a little bored sometimes" ("Tracey"). Tracey's perception that the professor had a different level of involvement than Christina was corroborated by the co-facilitators themselves.

- AILEEN: PROFESSOR -

Aileen is African American, in her fifties, holds an interdisciplinary appointment in AWS, Education Studies and History and is the relatively new head of the AWS department. She describes herself as overworked but is committed to improving the AWS department. She is able to see its limitations and wants to work with students to use their ideas for improving it. She describes her role in the classroom: "I don't really teach this class. I am more like a facilitator. . . . This is a very unique class. It is totally

driven by outside expertise. This is nothing I could teach myself" ("Aileen"). She elaborated, "It's not my class, this AWS class. I am just facilitating. 'Cause anybody else could do it too. You know what I'm saying? I mean, really, because I'm not teaching it. . . . It's not negative, it's just a reality—it's a different kind of class" ("Aileen"). Embracing her role as a co-facilitator, Aileen resisted ownership of the class and saw herself more as someone who could add occasional insight, provide introductions and context, etc., but not as someone who was in charge of determining and structuring the experience for the students. This is consistent with what speakers, students and Christina have said. But how does this impact connectedness and community?

Aileen said of the students, "I've been disappointed with student participation. They've been extremely quiet. A few people talk, but there are a lot of people who don't or have very little to say and I'm not sure why" ("Aileen"). She elaborated, "I would like more dialogue. But also, the class is such that we don't have a lot of time for dialogue, you know, because of the visitors" ("Aileen"). Aileen was disappointed that there wasn't more student participation, but also admitted that part of the reason for this problem comes from being so dependent on outside speakers for structure. She also noted that this limited her own ability to bond with students, saying, "I guess I really interact not that much with the students except maybe when they're sending me papers and proposals. I guess, in the course of the class, we don't get a chance to talk that much" ("Aileen"). Even so, when she revisited this topic later in our interview, she said, "I think I've bonded with them. . . . It's given me an opportunity to learn and to get to know them and try to create some kind of bond" ("Aileen"). Something about the

environment of this particular AWS 300 classroom transformed "professor" into "co-facilitator" and thus "co-learner." This harkens back to Paulo Friere's idea that teachers and students must "co-intent" on reality together, where teachers abandon their position of power and join the students as learners. Helping to equalize the power dynamic in the classroom, this has the potential to foster a greater sense of community.

Regarding the snickering conflict, Aileen said:

> There's the one student in the class. She's older. . . . She has grown children and she always talks about that. Somebody pointed out that whenever she starts talking that a couple of women in the class start rolling their eyes. Her spiel . . . about her life. I guess for somebody it was like a broken record. ("Aileen")

While Aileen described not noticing this problem until other students mentioned it to her, it was more obvious to most of my other interview participants. Ivy said, "Sometimes certain students will respond to other students and it's really, like, kind of catty. It's really, like, weird. . . . It creates a tension in the room that I can feel" ("Ivy"). Ivy found this behavior of the psychology students to be "uncomfortable," "childish," and something she couldn't "understand" ("Ivy"). However, Tracey had a slightly different perspective:

> Honestly, I have rolled my eyes. I have. Not directly towards her, . . .but also, there's differences. I'm twenty six and she's probably forty-six, . . . so there's a huge difference in how you learn and what grad school is for you. . . . To be honest, I think that she overvalues what she is doing. . . . It's her [delivery] too. She speaks very slowly. ("Tracey")

Although Tracey could identify with the psychology students who snicker more than Aileen, Christina or Ivy, the fact that five out of the six women I interviewed cited it as a major part of the class experience suggests that it impacted the class's ability to bond

and create a community atmosphere. These two students continued this behavior throughout the semester without intervention. Incorporation of relevant course materials highlighting this dynamic could provide an opportunity for self-reflection (for example, addressing the rifts between older and younger students, the traditional psychology department and interdisciplinary women's studies, Ph.D. students and M.A. students or facilitators and students). In this particular case, I believe the students and teachers missed an opportunity to critique the power relationships which were actively influencing their educational experience.

In the following chapters, I will present research to broaden this inquiry—looking at what feminist pedagogy is and what it tries to teach, and how this knowledge could usefully be employed by CGU's AWS department.

- - CHAPTER II - -

TEACHING FEMINIST ACTIVISM

> *Feminist pedagogy is recognized as a unique and distinct pedagogy with a defined set of principles and values, instructional techniques, and a political standpoint. . . . Feminist educators attempt to challenge, interrupt, and change the nature of higher education . . . while at the same time empowering students to make changes in their personal and social lives. . . . To this end, educators apply feminist theories to course content and pedagogical strategies. (Sinacore, 109)*

During the course of restructuring of AWS 300 and conducting the case study in chapter I, I could not escape the realization that further improvements to the course syllabus without departmental transformation would continue to leave students without a network of institutional support. A more radical transformation, at the departmental level, would be necessary to foster a truly engaged and applied pedagogy.

In the following chapters, I will provide a literature review of materials that address this issue. Written by feminist professors, these works explain how the authors have worked to create and inspire the activist spirit in their women's studies students. In addition to these texts, I will employ portions of three interviews conducted with local activist professors from the Southern California area (Pitzer College, Claremont Graduate University and California State University at Northridge) on the same subject. Starting with broader definitions of feminist pedagogy, I will move to addressing what qualities feminist professors want to teach their students and then how they accomplish this task from a practical standpoint. Using this knowledge, in chapter III, I will conclude with some practical recommendations for CGU's AWS Department based on

these gathered narratives, my case study of AWS 300 and my personal experiences as an AWS graduate student.

SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS OF FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

- A POLITICAL PROJECT -

Professor of Education Kathleen Weiler states: "I would like to suggest that feminist pedagogy, like feminism itself, is ultimately a political project" (67). Most feminist professors writing about feminist pedagogy have a similar appreciation for the intrinsically political nature of feminist pedagogy. Weiler describes the role feminist pedagogy plays in the field of education:

> In terms of education, feminists have been influential in challenging the structure of the traditional canon and in suggesting alternative classroom practices; both of these interventions have been included in the broad term *feminist pedagogy*. . . . What distinguishes feminist pedagogy from these other approaches, of course, is its analysis of patriarchy and attempts to develop an education appropriate for women. (68)

As this description shows, feminist pedagogy is not only teaching about feminism; it simultaneously mandates a feminist critique of the educational process, as well as implementation of anti-hierarchal techniques in the classroom. This practice helps to reeducate students holistically, enabling them to become empowered, active learners and assisting them with using their educational experience as a means of social justice.

This empowerment however, must overcome a "hidden curriculum" lurking within the university system (Boyer and Larson, 168-169). According to psychologists Boyer and Larson, this "hidden curriculum" is composed of rules for advancement and

success, messages regarding who belongs in the university and who is outside it and, "institutionalized monocultural androcentrism" which demands cultural transformation of anyone from "outside" the university—all forcing minorities (including women) to abandon their cultural uniqueness in exchange for academic success (168-169). In order to overcome these problems, feminist pedagogy strives to create a space and a method for its students to unlearn these rules and arm themselves with theory that supports their self-rediscovery, so that they can better cope in more traditional university courses. Professor of English Magda Gere Lewis explains:

> Women often come away from the experience of the feminist classroom not only with new understandings both of history and of possible futures—the wish for a feminist utopia embedded in practice rather than the death wish for a perfect world—but, as well, prepared to articulate practical strategies for critique which challenge the androcentric biases of their other courses. This does not always gain them favor. Their experiences reflect how difficult this is to do in the face of resistance and the determined power of the status quo to hold firm its privilege to articulate our collective meaning. (67)

According to professor of women's studies Jean Fox O'Barr, preparation for a lifestyle of resistance to the mainstream is needed by women's studies graduate students, in particular, given that their academic department is not only their "social" but their "professional" world as well (117). Women's studies graduate students often choose to merge their extracurricular social justice work with their professional work, making their professions a site of cultural resistance. As a result, this double identification with their department ensures that women's studies graduate students "experience the issue of isolation more intensely" (O'Barr, 117). For many, the women's studies method is something to be feared:

> Graduate students often find explorations into the history of feminist scholarship both critical and frightening. They know that without this material they cannot get the full benefit of their disciplinary journeys. Yet gaining a feminist perspective makes them angry, frustrated, and sometimes discouraged with how much remains to be done. . . . Graduate students face another reality: that learning this new material requires them to unlearn some of their collegiate knowledge they have mastered and to which they cling when so many previous foundations are being shaken. (O'Barr, 117-118)

Conversely, if students are willing to enter into an uncomfortable critique, unlearn cherished knowledge and be filled with anger and frustration, the payoffs can be as intense as the difficult process of feminist exploration.

In Teaching to Transgress, English and women's studies professor bell hooks describes this transformation:

> The feminist classroom was the one space where students could raise critical questions about the pedagogical process. These critiques were not always encouraged or well received, but they were allowed. That small acceptance of critical interrogation was a crucial challenge inviting us as students to think seriously about pedagogy in relation to the practice of freedom. (6)

For bell hooks, being free begins with learning how to think critically: "In our society, which is so fundamentally anti-intellectual, critical thinking is not encouraged. . . . Conditions of radical openness exist in any learning situation where students and teachers celebrate their abilities to think critically, to engage in pedagogical praxis" (Teaching to Transgress, 202). Many feminist scholars insist that teaching students to think critically must serve as the foundation to feminist pedagogy. Professors of English Amy Spanger Gerald, Kathleen McEvoy and Pamela Whitfield write: "Critical thinking, as manifested in the ability to resist accepted truths about literature, traditional modes of writing, and stereotypical ideas about speaking, is a feminist approach because it fights

limiting and inherently patriarchal educational practices" (48). Feminist teachers want students to learn how to be comfortable being uncomfortable and want to provide them with experience and skills (partially through the use of alternative classroom techniques) to deal with this lifestyle of constant confrontation.

But in addition to all of this, a larger goal—one very complicated to measure in any traditional or quantitative way—is for women's studies students to become social activists. Psychologists and professors of women's studies Carolyn Zerbe Enns and Linda M. Forrest describe this ideal: "Critical and feminist pedagogies view education as a political act and view empowerment and social activism as important outcomes of education" (17). Thus, a feminist pedagogy must: (1) provide analyses of patriarchal and hierarchical structures, (2) implement alternative anti-hierarchal educational strategies, (3) teach critical thinking abilities, (4) equip students with coping skills including persuasive articulation of feminist theory and methods, (5) teach students to value their intellectual discomfort, and (6) result in empowerment and social activism of its participants. In the next section, I will go more in depth into the skills and qualities feminist teachers, in particular, look to foster in their students.

- AS A FEMINIST TEACHER -

Professors who practice feminist pedagogy face numerous challenges. Many feminist professors write about coping with the academy's rejection of activism as legitimate scholarly work, which requires them to use feminist theory as a tool to defend themselves and their alternative teaching methods. In her article "Practicing What We

Teach," Professor English Julia Balén explains that feminist teachers "teach about oppression in the midst of privilege, fight for greater recognition even as it often means greater co-optation" (272). Feminist professors find themselves situated at the center of the paradoxes of teaching activism, and in Balén's words, "while thinking paradox might feel enlightening, living paradox often produces discomfort" (272). This discomfort that feminist pedagogy requires should not be underestimated. Professors of English and education, Janice Jipson and Petra Munro explain that, "teaching is also a trauma. It requires the abandonment of completion and closure, a resistance to the myth of progress or the romanticization of the past" (Jipson and Munro, 123).

In addition to teaching classes, participating in administrative duties, and publishing regularly, transforming the educational institution requires extra, unpaid labor for feminist professors. Balén concludes:

> Women's studies programs and departments face particular challenges in the increasingly corporatized university environment. Interdisciplinarity within highly discipline-oriented structures requires extra labor. . . . In this context, the pressure to identify with the powers that be can seem overwhelming. If we have critiques of power in the classroom that are not applied in the faculty meetings, on committees, in departmental processes, or in the vision and goals of the department, then the disconnect is bound to produce anxieties in ourselves and our students. From my experience, employing feminist knowledge as represented by the concepts discussed above can help us improve our institutions and avoid becoming another set of cogs in machines that oppress us all. (Balén, 283)

The complicated and sometimes troubled relationship between women's studies departments and their universities can negatively impact the ability of women's studies departments to embrace fully feminist pedagogical practices. This also means that, like

their students, feminist teachers face the challenge of becoming comfortable being uncomfortable—bringing up the elephant in the room, speaking up when departmental injustices occur and making sure to always model feminist pedagogy, in and outside of the classroom. For example, they must work to persuade colleagues to reconsider activist work as scholarly contribution for the purposes of the tenure process.

One suggested way of dealing with this extra labor is by changing one's outlook on teaching overall; in an article for Feminist Teacher, philosopher Cathryn Bailey explains: "The development of the idea of a teacher/activist identity may also be helpfully constructed by thinking of teaching as a vocation, or 'calling,' rather than as a profession" (130). This conceptualization requires feminist teachers to live by the theories they teach. Bailey challenges professors who consider teaching "to be an extension of [their] social and political activism" to "remain self-critical" (125). Of utmost importance to feminist professors is the ability to continue to analyze one's position of relative power. Providing teachers with tactics to remain self-critical over the years, Bailey lists three techniques: (1) maintain integrity by consolidating personal and professional identity, (2) develop courses that take advantage of and embrace real life issues (as opposed to theoretically abstract ones), and (3) remain committed to a teaching style that models "liberatory values" (130-131). Remaining self-critical also ensures that feminist professors will continue to do their part in transforming the larger educational system.

bell hooks's concept of "engaged pedagogy" addresses many of these same issues and offers a critique of women's studies:

> Progressive, holistic education, 'engaged pedagogy' is more demanding than conventional critical or feminist pedagogy. For, unlike these two teaching practices, it emphasizes well-being. That means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students. (Teaching to Transgress, 15)

While bell hooks makes a distinction between feminist pedagogy and "engaged pedagogy," one of the aims of women's studies is to empower its students towards activist means; I contend that practicing a fully realized activist-focused feminist pedagogy is in fact the same as practicing an "engaged pedagogy."[1] This kind of teaching, which focuses on integrating beliefs with practice, requires feminist teachers to be creative, inventive and daring in their leadership styles. As professors of English and education Dale Bauer and Katherine Rhoades write:

> Feminist teachers are invested in another sort of power: persuasive power, an exchange model of teaching allied with an ethics. . . . The early models of feminist decentering of power in the classroom have also failed. Feminist teachers who decentered all authority found that they were undermining themselves: students had trouble granting authority to women when their education had not generally shown women as authorities. Yet relaxing classroom authority is not the same as transforming it. (101-102)

Instead, Bauer and Rhoades suggest that teachers need to practice a "dialogic model of authority," which gives students and teachers a "constructive" role in the process of creating authority (102). For feminist professors, the wish to decenter their own authority in the classroom can end up undermining their position as a teacher; if they do

[1] While this has not always been achieved in a historical sense, for the purposes of this critically constructive study, I will err on the side of focusing too strongly on the affirmative: when it went right and how it was done. The assumption I make is that feminist pedagogy can be engaged pedagogy. I will provide examples supporting this assumption in the following sections.

not employ another method to transform traditional professorial authority, then they will not be engaged in a process of self-actualization that promotes their well-being (and, by extension, the well-being of their students).

In summary, many of the issues facing feminist professors mirror those facing their students. There is the paradox of learning about activism in the university, where activism is not typically considered scholarly. This causes a discomfort and requires the teacher to take risks in order to change her institution's processes. Conceiving of one's position as a "calling" instead of a job can help. (This parallels the need for women's studies students not only to learn about social justice, but to become social justice advocates). The acceptance of this often contentious role needs to be balanced by embracing an "engaged pedagogy" which focuses on the well-being and growth of the teacher as much as the student.

- THE QUALITIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE -

Of all the values which describe feminist pedagogy, its transformative quality is perhaps the most intriguing and widely discussed. Psychologists Ada L. Sinacore and Karyn J. Boatwright explain: "The most predominant [principle of pedagogy] is that feminist pedagogy seeks to transform and create teaching and learning experiences that do not reproduce the status quo" (109). In addition: "Feminists argue that teaching is to be transformative, bringing about social action and change" (Sinacore and Boatwright, 109). For this reason, I will outline a view of social justice within a feminist pedagogical framework, as it relates to the educational system and everyday life.

Feminist teachers often provide service learning or community-based projects for their students as partial requirement for course completions. This kind of exercise ensures that students engage in a kind of direct activism during the semester, with the underlying hope that students will embrace activism beyond the requirements of the classroom, for the rest of their lives. Philosopher Bailey explains:

> There are all kinds of actions and activisms, only some of which are potentially revolutionary. For example, activism which can be expressed to come to fruition in the long-term, such as the "seed planting process" of consciousness raising in the classroom, can be distinguished from activism which has more immediate effects, such as a student's service learning in a battered women's shelter. (130)

As Bailey's concept of "seed planting process" shows, there is a real distinction between service learning projects for school and becoming a social activist when no one is grading you.

As editors and contributors to Teaching and Social Justice: Integrating Multicultural and Feminist Theories in the Classroom, Carolyn Zerbe Enns and Ada L. Sinacore explain in their "Preface" that the term *social justice* highlights "the importance of infusing scholarship and practice relevant to diversity in both the process and the content of education" (vii). In addition, they outline the definitions of *social justice* education as (1) revaluing traditionally marginalized perspectives, (2) transforming the way education is practiced by leveling power differences between students and teachers, (3) promoting equal participation among students and teachers and (4) reconceptualizing the educational institution (Enns and Sinacore, "Preface," vii). While this practice of social justice in education is slightly broader than feminist pedagogy,

they share many of the same goals and methods. In fact, the kind of social activism promoted by women's studies programs is broad, for women's studies students become a variety of social activists. The difference is that they possess particular sensitivity to the social injustice to which women are subject.

This knowledge is, in part, gained through self-exploration and reflection. Psychologists and professors of women's studies Carolyn Zerbe Enns and Linda M. Forrest summarize multicultural feminist pedagogies as including (1) holistic learning based on consciousness-raising and the exploration of personal experience as political, (2) democratic techniques of "self-reflection, dialogue, the coconstruction of knowledge, and participatory methods of learning," and (3) strong efforts to identify and "equalize dynamics of power and privilege as they influence individuals and groups, the dynamics of classroom interaction" and other broader social institutional structures (21). Enns and Forrest outline the empowerment process originally identified by Paulo Friere. This process starts with "listening to the needs and perspectives of those who are oppressed," then employs a "problem-posing participatory dialogue to draw out the knowledge and build the confidence of participants" (6). Finally, empowerment is obtained by "building on the knowledge acquired from this questioning and dialogue process to engage in positive changes and action" (6). By building knowledge based on everyday experience, not only is educational social justice practiced, but its application can extend more broadly to practicing social justice in other environments.

According to bell hooks, "Any theory that cannot be shared in everyday conversation cannot be used to educate the public" (Teaching to Transgress, 64). Those

practicing educational social justice must realize that the educational realm experiences and interprets social justice "through a particular location and point of view—through, in other words, an academic lens" (Orr, Teaching Feminist Activism, 37). Thus, feminist teachers have a special responsibility to show their students how to interpret their educational life as a part of the "real world." Professor of women's studies Catherine M. Orr explains:

> I think it crucial that we see the academy as an institution that is very much part of the "real world" as demonstrated by a number of issues: the increasing corporatization of colleges and universities, the related tendency to see students (and encouraging them to see themselves) as consumers and/or products of the academic industry, the ways in which academic careers are made and perhaps unmade by the promotion and fetishization of certain theoretical discourses and research foci, and questions about what colleges and universities can offer and can take from the communities in which they are located . . . the institutions in which we are located are part of a much larger economic new world order, one that is wreaking havoc for already impoverished communities around the corner and around the globe. (Teaching Feminist Activism, 37)

The fact that students learning about activism in the academy need to be reminded of the political nature of their academic experience illustrates a tangible tension around the academic/activist split. This tension results from the conflict between "the presence of women's studies in the academy, a primary site of professional socialization" and "its emergence from a social movement that was highly suspicious of institutionalized knowledge production" (Orr, Women's Studies Quarterly, 225). Widely written about by feminist teachers, this inherent tension is part of the revolutionary potential of women's studies and social justice education. This is the uncomfortable conflict—the paradox between knowledge systems and praxis—that provides the method for dialogue and

equality in construction of new knowledge and the undermining of traditional structures.

This difficult and constant negotiation can only be practiced by a community of scholar/activists. As professor of English Magda Gere Lewis writes, "The liberating potential of community, vision, hope and laughter (of which there is a great deal) are the positive moments of our collective struggle" (147). The collective-based learning required for an engaged, social justice-focused feminist pedagogy asks students and teachers to do the uncomfortable work. But the difficult nature of this work does not mean it cannot be fun. There is a lot of pleasure to be found through collaborative struggle. As bell hooks writes, "Excitement is generated through collective effort" (Teaching to Transgress, 8).

As Enns et al. state in their final, collectively-written chapter in Teaching and Social Justice, "The authors of this book share the belief that integrating multicultural and feminist perspectives is challenging but rewarding" (177). For teacher and student alike, participating in a social-justice based feminist pedagogy can be difficult, uncomfortable, exciting, but rewarding.

SECTION 2: WHAT WE TEACH

Starting with narratives from Lourdes Arguelles, Alex Juhasz and Marta Lopez-Garza, I will discuss what teachers of feminist pedagogy want their students to learn through their classes and activist-based programs. Moving to a survey of written

materials on the same topic, I will then transition to the next section, which deals with the practical side—*how* feminist teachers teach these qualities to their students.

- LOURDES ARGUELLES -

Lourdes Arguelles, Claremont Graduate School Professor of Education, community leader and activist, Buddhist and self-described "holistic" teacher, is known among CGU students for going against the grain. For example, as a panelist speaking on "leadership" during a recent CGU conference entitled "Social Justice in Challenging Times," Arguelles ended her talk with an anti-leadership Chinese poem. Arguelles frequently brings former students into her classes to speak about the activist projects they continue to be involved in. One of these students, while in school, began working with teenage prisoners at detention centers. At the young age of thirteen or fourteen, these male prisoners are already registered sex offenders. Now the director of a fledging non-profit organization, Arguelles's former student continues to go into detention centers, using poetry as a way to reach these troubled young men.

During our brief eight minute interview, Arguelles talked to me about how she teaches activism. She told me, "The professor who teaches from an activist perspective needs to have a thick skin because academia is becoming even more traditional than it was twenty years ago" (Arguelles). When I inquired about the most important aspects of activism to teach students, Arguelles responded:

> The connection between scholarship and activism, the connection between scholarship and communities. The whole notion that knowledge is not produced only in the academy. It is produced everywhere. And

> that knowledge that is produced that is non-academic in nature needs to be respected, critically examined—not necessarily accepted—but critically examined with the same kind of respect. (Arguelles)

The wish to teach students how their own scholarship relates to activism and real life community requires self-awareness and reflection, respect for non-traditional "knowledge" and the ability to hold equal traditionally academic and community-based knowledge. When students learn how to reconceptualize education by revaluing non-traditional knowledge, they can then link their scholarship with activism, eventually becoming educational activists who question and transform what is and what isn't "knowledge."

- ALEX JUHASZ -

A Pitzer professor of media studies and feminist documentarian (Video Remains, 2005; Dear Gabe, 2003; The Watermelon Woman, 1997), as well as standing head of CGU's Cultural Studies Department, Alex Juhasz is known by students as someone who asks the uncomfortable questions. Having taught a series of courses at Pitzer with service learning or community-based projects in their curricula, Juhasz objected to the AWS 300 case study (in chapter I), which I presented at a student conference. In my talk, I asserted that it was "difficult to teach activism." Afterwards, Juhasz approached me and remarked, "No it's not. It's not difficult to teach activism. I do it all the time. In fact, we feminist professors have been doing it successfully for a long time." This comment caused me to rethink my case study, making it more specific to CGU's AWS program so as to avoid over-generalizing. In our interview, I asked Juhasz how she teaches activism

in the classroom. She replied, "You don't teach activism in the classroom, although there are things you do in the classroom before you leave" (Juhasz). Juhasz emphasized an important distinction by mentioning repeatedly the tension between being a classroom activist and being an activist "in your own life" (Juhasz). To her, the most important aspects of activism to teach students are ethics and context. She told me,

> [I spend] some real time talking to students about the ethics of relationships that are set up with power hierarchies, which will always be the case when students go work in communities—they will always be in a position of privilege, unless they are volunteering or doing activism within the university. (Juhasz)

Juhasz's concept of ethics relates closely to Arguelles's link between scholarship and activism. Contextualizing activism—teaching and learning about activism in a historical context—is an important way to solidify for students the tangible link between scholarship and activism. Juhasz explained,

> [Teachers must contextualize activism] into both a historical and social and cultural context so that [students] can learn the history of this kind of work and then a theoretical tradition as well, so that they understand that there is a theoretical imperative to moving outside the walls of academia—that people have been talking about it for a long time, that people have been thoughtful about it and that I'm not inventing something, so you use the classroom to set up those structures. And then you leave the classroom. (Juhasz)

For Juhasz, this action of extending beyond the classroom walls is central to learning activism.

Nevertheless, pure action does not necessarily result in learning. Juhasz mentioned that she asks students to "engage in some sort of journal project or self-reflective project where they're required to be self-conscious of what they're doing" and that her ultimate expectation for them is "not that they'll succeed but that they'll be

reflective about what worked and what didn't work and what they learned" (Juhasz). Without this kind of reflection, it is unlikely that students will become activists in their own lives: "Being an activist in your own life. That's very different than being an activist in the classroom. Being an activist in the classroom is someone is asking you to be an activist. It's not activism. . . . One is an activist because one is driven to be an activist. One is driven to act" (Juhasz). But that doesn't mean that service learning is unimportant. For example, Juhasz mentioned that she wanted students to learn "that they are accountable and responsible but also that when you learn from doing something and when you see the things that you believe in or are thinking through enacted through the practices of real human beings with real feelings, they stick harder. It's just a different kind of learning" (Juhasz).

Service learning opportunities can provide students with a way to practice the ethics learned in the activist-focused classroom. Learning the importance of following through on a task "because you're promising it to a group of human beings who are outside of this class" teaches students to practice accountable behavior in a practical way (Juhasz). Modeling appropriate behavior for students, a pedagogical technique essential to service learning, starts with creating the right atmosphere:

> I think of the dynamic of the classroom often as a place of practice. So, I am very committed to creating that as an extremely lively, engaged, ethical space. And I do that a lot by example. Part of that example is to expect everyone to be as committed and engaged and enthusiastic as I am. . . . And then you name the class as a place where things are happening. (Juhasz)

Using the environment of the classroom to model behavior can be very effective in helping students to conceptualize themselves as active participants in the classroom first, then real life by extension. Students who learn to be accountable in service-learning projects are more likely to be accountable members of a classroom community.

- MARTA LOPEZ-GARZA -

Marta Cristina Lopez-Garza holds a joint appointment at California State University at Northridge (CSUN) in the undergraduate Chicana/o Studies and Women's Studies programs. A devoted community activist working with grassroots organizations for 10-15 years in south and east Los Angeles, Lopez-Garza serves on the board of Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment in south Los Angeles. Lopez-Garza talked to me about the challenges of integrating her activist and scholarly work. She mentioned how at CSUN (unlike CGU, where the AWS 300 class is one of the only classes which aspire to teach activism), her activist focus "permeates throughout [all] the classes that I teach" (Lopez-Garza). A professor in women's studies at CSUN since 1997, Lopez-Garza has an interesting perspective on what it takes to build an activist-based women's studies program (see chapter III). When she spoke about what she wanted students to learn about activism, she said that they need to understand how "to learn the rules to break the rules" (Lopez-Garza). She starts with "reframing the gaze" to teach students "that you can incorporate that which has been historically been a contradiction in the academic world—that scholarship is not about activism" (Lopez-

Garza). Part of this process, as mentioned in the previous section, is difficult and uncomfortable:

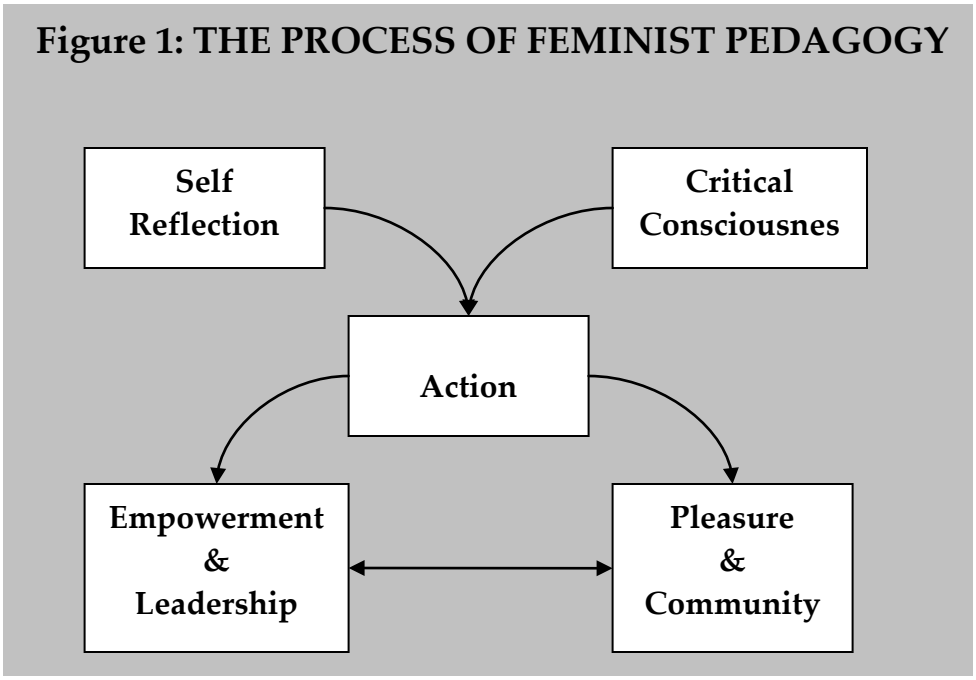
> I think it's very important to make people uncomfortable, whatever that is. Because we live, for the most part, very comfortable lives, while the rest of the world is falling apart. How do we take us into that place of discomfort so that it becomes something that gnaws at us, so that we don't just walk away and say, I'm just going to get a nice job, write scholarly pieces and live in the ivory tower? (Lopez-Garza)

Part of this process means encouraging people to reflect on themselves and their experience being uncomfortable. Lopez-Garza, like Juhasz, mentioned that self-reflection as a course requirement (and, by extension, an activist requirement), has a very important role in teaching theoretical and practical applications for activism. Lopez-Garza elaborated on how students become active learners by embracing public speaking, a requirement in most of her courses:

> And I'll have students come up to me and say, I'm a quiet person. That's true. And I go, you know, there are people in here who don't write as well, but that doesn't mean they don't take essay exams. So we all speak in class and I know you're quiet, but if you don't speak now, when are you going to speak? Every occupation (unless you're going to become a cloistered nun) will entail some kind of speaking in front of people. So you have to do it. And you have to take an active part in your learning. (Lopez-Garza)

In this way, students become activists in their own lives.

Activist-based feminist pedagogy is a progression within and without the classroom, which can be summarized by the figure 1, a visual representation of my understanding of this process (and an outline for the remainder of this section).



Self-reflection and critical consciousness are the first steps in an activist-directed pedagogy. Uniting self-reflection and critical consciousness inspires students and teachers to be social actors in their education and communities. The skills gained through this thoughtful union will be employed by students in future steps (activism, empowerment and community-building). In this way, students' and teachers' knowledge and critical skills will continue expanding to inform everything they do. As participants in this exciting and pleasurable process, they recreate community and enhance their empowerment and leadership skills.

- CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS & SELF-REFLECTION -

Many writers on feminist pedagogy stress the importance of using consciousness-raising as a classroom technique. This emphasis on self-reflection as inspiration and preparation for activism is aptly described by Enns and Forrest:

> An action-reflection-action cycle is supported by a variety of self-reflection activities, challenges of traditional knowledge, and involvement in activism. Tools that facilitate self-reflection and praxis include journals, reflections about readings and experience, and autobiographical writing. (8)

Furthermore, Enns and Forrest describe the stages of self-reflection through which students develop critical consciousness:

> (a) [A]n intransitive stage, at which time individuals have no sense of their capacity to influence the environment; (b) a semi-intransitive stage, at which time students see their sphere of influence as limited to basic survival needs; (c) a naïve transitive phase, at which time persons develop an expanded worldview, but tend to oversimplify problems, be susceptible to slogans, and engage in polemical dialogue rather than authentic dialogue; and (d) a critically transitive phase, at which time individuals examine issues with greater depth and show the ability to reflect on, test, and modify their perspectives. (8)

Uniting self-reflection and critical-thinking abilities aids in the development of the ability and inclination to "act." Professors of English Bell, Marrow and Tastsoglou write: "Critical thinking skills also help students move from reflection to action, toward participating in emancipatory social change" (23-24). When self-reflection, critical thinking and service learning or community-based projects are combined in a program or a class, the potential for students to become social actors increases.

- ACTION -

Professor of English Tamara Agha-Jaffar defines service learning as "a combination of community service with academic instruction that focuses on critical, reflective thinking, and civic responsibility," with an emphasis on the mutual exchange that takes place between the student and the community organization involved (4).

Service learning differs from volunteerism or the "do-gooder" syndrome by virtue of its self-reflective practices and ethics—its examination of power relationships, beginning with the relationship between the student and "service" location or people. Agha-Jaffar asserts:

> Service-learning is, ultimately, a very effective pedagogy for empowering students to become more knowledgeable and more actively involved in their own communities. Furthermore, it provides them with the opportunity to perceive themselves as agents of social change. (4)

Service learning or community-based projects can provide students with the practical experience of applying academic knowledge to real world actions and experiences. Reflecting on these experiences can lead students to increased self-esteem and can help to move them through Enns and Forrest's stages of self-reflection (Enns and Forrest, 8). As bell hooks affirms, "No matter what one's class, race, gender, or social standing, I shared my beliefs that without the capacity to think critically about our selves and our lives, none of us would be able to move forward, to change, to grow" (Teaching to Transgress, 202).

- EMPOWERMENT & LEADERSHIP -

bell hooks warns that classrooms practicing engaged pedagogy should aim to empower not only their students: "Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process. That empowerment cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks" (Teaching to Transgress, 21). To be holistically engaged, feminist

pedagogy needs to seek to pressure and challenge teachers as much as it does students. Never becoming too comfortable is key to this challenge. Critical analysis of one's own perceptions is something that students and teachers need to embrace as a way of life—a transitive way of life, welcoming and causing constant change.

By being committed to providing "multiple locations where personal stories and other insights may shift collective meanings in productive ways," we can inspire personal growth in students through increasing their self-awareness, critical abilities and community involvement (Rhoades, Statham and Schleiter, 233). Providing skills such as the ability to speak publicly and write eloquently further enhances this effect. The life-lessons and skills students gain through active community involvement are attested to by education and sociology professors Rhoades, Statham and Schleiter: "[The students] have learned about speaking effectively to different audiences, the power of telling one's story, various ways to confront authority, methods of mediating conflict, strategies of lowering backlash and resistance, and the importance of dealing with fatigue and burnout" (224). To learn to be a leader requires leadership experience. This transformative process, although difficult and uncomfortable, is often simultaneously pleasurable.

- PLEASURE THROUGH COMMUNITY -

Collective learning provides not only intellectual stimulation, but can also allow close bonds to develop between students and teachers through mutual disclosure and respect of personal truth and experience. The professor is largely responsible for

creating this sort of atmosphere. As bell hooks writes, "To restore passion to the classroom or to excite it in classrooms where it has never been, professors must find again the place of eros within ourselves and together allow the mind and body to feel and know desire" (Teaching to Transgress, 199). While pleasure in the classroom is a highly taboo subject, bell hooks is a proponent of allowing yourself and your students to feel and express affection for each other. The scandalous nature in which most would interpret her suggestion illustrates how emotion is feared in the classroom. While some of this is founded on not wanting teacher/student relationships to become sexual and not wanting teachers to abuse their institutional power, defining education as pleasurable and fun will better induce students to practice activism. If students enjoy activism, rather than treating it as something they do to obtain a good grade, they will be more likely to continue doing it. One of the primary reasons people volunteer in non-profits is to feel good about themselves. While the concept of volunteerism is complex, it is always true that on some basic level, women's studies students practice social justice work because they enjoy it. Maintaining one's own passionate involvement in feminist and activist work—the ability to reverse stagnant tendencies—can ensure that teachers and students hold fast to the idea of education as a transformative and passionate pursuit.

In conclusion, feminist pedagogy strives to create an environment where teacher and student alike can practice self-reflection, critical consciousness, praxis through community-based involvement, personal growth, leadership and empowerment, as well

as the pleasure derived from a community of people coming together to explore and learn and fight for social justice.

SECTION 3: HOW WE TEACH

In section 1, I outlined what feminist pedagogy looks like; in section 2, what feminist pedagogy tries to teach it students. In this section, I will investigate what techniques feminist teachers employ to enable their students to engage in this transformative process. Psychologists Sinacore and Boatwright outline some of these instructional techniques, including autobiographical accounts, non-traditional literature, writings on personal experience, group projects that promote cooperation, small group sharing of subjective experiences that facilitate the integration of personal experience with classroom content, listserv discussions, journaling, and cooperative evaluation systems (119). Many feminist scholars also cite guest speakers and service learning as important parts of an activist pedagogy (Agha-Jaffar, 2). As bell hooks writes, "Making the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute is a central goal of transformative pedagogy" (Teaching to Transgress, 39). Creating this democratic setting in the classroom requires professors to "genuinely *value* everyone's presence" by making sure everyone has equal opportunity to express voice and experience (bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress, 8). In addition to insisting on small classes, bell hooks asserts, "Teaching is a performative act"—not in the sense of spectacle but in the sense that teachers need to "serve as a catalyst that calls everyone to become

more and more engaged, to become active participants in learning" (Teaching to Transgress, 11). This is impossible if traditional grading structures remain intact:

> Many professors are afraid of allowing nondirected thought in the classroom for fear that deviation from a set agenda will interfere with the grading process. A more flexible grading process must go hand in hand with a transformed classroom. Standards must always be high. Excellence must be valued, but standards cannot be absolute and fixed. (bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress, 157)

Because transformative teaching differs in practice and technique from more traditional pedagogies, this section will focus on exploring the transformative techniques employed by Lourdes Arguelles, Alex Juhasz and Marta Lopez-Garza. From there, I will move to an exploration of feminist pedagogical techniques for teaching self-reflection, critical consciousness, action, empowerment and leadership, and community and pleasure, as outlined in section 2.

- LOURDES ARGUELLES: HOW -

Practicing a two-part strategy, Arguelles teaches activism in the classroom through activist narratives and community-based projects. She told me:

> I teach [activism] in several ways. One, through narratives of my own activism, collecting narratives of the activism my students have engaged in, asking them to collect narratives from activists. That's one way. The second is through carefully designed community-based experiences, which could be organizing experiences, research experiences, community-based research experiences, through classroom-based exercises where the emphasis is on problem-based work. (Arguelles)

In addition to sharing inspiring activist narratives, her community-based projects appear in almost every course she teaches. This is highly unusual for a professor since these kinds of projects tend to be more time consuming to organize. However, they allow her

to model the community-based activist behavior she teaches. She explained that her internships are "not necessarily traditional ones but ones that will give students the opportunity to deal with issues. . . . Internships that really will present students with challenges. Not your typical agency-type internships" (Arguelles). This sometimes can result in students going "nuts" because the projects are so open-ended, self-driven and even self-defined, but Arguelles wants students to be challenged in the same way that they would in "the real world" (Arguelles). And her grading philosophy represents this open-ended understanding.

Arguelles described how she evaluates whether or not she is successful in preparing her students to be activists:

> [It comes from] evaluating whether or not the students become activists and what they do after graduation or even during their tenure at the institution. It's not an evaluation that can be standardized. It's a different kind of assessment. It's more holistic. And in a sense, you are never happy. But, you know, that's how I assess—in a non-standardized, holistic, anarchistic, free-floating way and never being happy with the results of my assessments. (Arguelles)

Abandoning traditional ways of monitoring and assessing the classroom requires embracing a pedagogy premised not on finite assignments but on various forms of engagement, dialogue and action. Arguelles explains that she creates "as much of a safe space as possible through a combination of humor and self-deprecation" (Arguelles). In addition to using humor as a pedagogical tool, she summarizes her philosophy of pedagogy as "a pedagogy of imperfection that I'm not perfect, neither are the students, neither are the community members—we're all just human beings trying to cope with a very difficult world" (Arguelles). With her human-centered approach, Arguelles resists

and reacts against traditional modes of teaching which reproduce the status quo and attendant power hierarchies.

- ALEX JUHASZ: HOW -

Putting ideas into practice drives Juhasz's teaching techniques for service or community-based learning:

> I'm not interested in ideas that are abstracted from practice, from the way people live, what people do. When you can chew on a set of ideas and then put them into practice or see them in practice or engage in them in relation to other human beings who are engaging in them, another kind of learning occurs which is very profound for people. So I want then to have that kind of learning. (Juhasz)

Undertaking a community-based project provides students with this engaged type of experience. But without reflection, it would inevitably be less profound. For this reason, Juhasz requires students to keep a journal, in which students set goals that they can then reflect upon at the end of the class (Juhasz). Although the students generally fall short of meeting these goals, this experience promotes a thoughtful perspective on the project (Juhasz). For this reason, Juhasz practices "self-grading": "Typically, I'm not grading with a letter grade or I'm asking them to self-grade, or some combination between the two" (Juhasz). In addition to self-grading techniques which give students a role in assessing their own engagement, Juhasz, like Arguelles, told me, "You can't monitor whether somebody has transformed. You can't give them a grade for partial transformation, full transformation. You just expect them to engage in the experience and to be in the classroom, reflecting on it together" (Juhasz). This kind of flexible

grading also opens the doors for group work, an essential part of these kinds of classes, since class members working in groups build solidarity and community. One of Juhasz's most innovative techniques is laying out her expectation for engagement at the beginning of the course:

> So you want to say to people at the beginning: what we're doing is something really serious and exciting together. And it depends on all of us, and our relationship with each other, and a responsibility to this class and that responsibility is to come prepared, to engage and to be active and to be respectful—to be all those things. (Juhasz)

Setting the stage in this way can help to create a more democratic environment. Students thrive on a combination of structure and inspiration.

- MARTA LOPEZ-GARZA : HOW-

Likewise, Lopez-Garza's teaching techniques start with a philosophy: "If we implement [a course] with an activist agenda, it could essentially lie dead in the water, but if it's also embedded in the structure, then it becomes part of the culture. . . . How does it get embedded, and organically become a part of what you do?" (Lopez-Garza). Having a strong praxis-based vision is the only way to ensure that all courses, professors and students will practice and commit to an activist-based goal. Like Arguelles and Juhasz, Lopez-Garza uses reflection assignments to help students to make personal the issues studied in class: "You ask them to reflect on that week's readings or that guest lecturer or what they saw when they went to skid row, reflect on that. Ask, how will they live their lives from here on out given that experience?" (Lopez-Garza). Exercises like this, which challenge students to commit to living their lives according to their

beliefs, hold the potential to be more intensely meaningful. Another idea Lopez-Garza had for engaging students in the classroom is to give them some problem-solving exercises:

> [Students] have to read some materials . . . on housing and homeless and I brought in a speaker talking about very real issues. . . . You give people a set of situations. Like they've run into a homeless person or they've been asked to be in charge of a nonprofit organization to create a homeless shelter. . . . Give them different scenarios . . . and then, add more tools. (Lopez-Garza)

Combining text-based knowledge with lived knowledge (through speakers or direct action experience) in an exercise like Lopez-Garza describes can give students the opportunity to experience and brainstorm beyond the walls of the classroom. I will now turn to brief survey of some of the most interesting ways other teachers practically apply feminist pedagogy.

- SELF-REFLECTION & CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS-

As I described in section 2, most feminist teachers teach self-reflective practices in the classroom. Professor of English, Sally Chandler, establishes the classroom as a site of self-reflection through ethnography:

> Ethnographic writing requires students to participate in interactions with classmates, to take notes on their participation, and then to create written accounts of their experiences in rich, descriptive, narrative form. Combining ethnographic writing with in-class interactions was what made assignments . . . both extra frightening and analytically powerful. (24)

Students can be encouraged to focus their studies on the immediate classroom community of which they are already a part, where students are already embodying and

acting out intersections between confluences of social factors. Age, race, gender roles, sexual orientation, class background, departmental association, level and quality of previous education, citizenship status, linguistic and cultural background, satisfaction level of comfort with current education—all these factors are present in every graduate classroom, defining the ways students and teachers interact. Being able to critically examine how these factors influence personal interactions in the classroom environment will give students and teachers the key to unlocking larger social issues. In addition, through using the classroom as a site for critical reflexive interrogation, the ethical conflicts in service learning projects where a power hierarchy exists between students of prestigious universities and the communities they "serve" are resolved. This interrogation also has the advantage of concretely teaching students that although the classroom is a place for scholarly introspection, community can and does take place there. bell hooks comments, "Most progressive professors are more comfortable striving to challenge class biases through the material studied than they are with interrogating how class biases shape conduct in the classroom and transforming their pedagogical process" (Teaching to Transgress, 187). In order to practice and teach self-reflection, we must therefore treat the classroom environment as ground zero for understanding these biases. Establishing the classroom as a cultural site promotes the development of critical consciousness in students.

This kind of self-reflection should begin with critical self-interrogation. Being able to critically interrogate your own biases must happen before you can successfully participate in critical reflection of the classroom environment. As members of the

classroom, our own experiences interact with those of other class members, contributing to the creation of a classroom community rich with varying experiential standpoints.

The development of critical consciousness is one of the university's traditional functions. In feminist pedagogy, this means understanding the historical context of activism. As an example of the practical applications of this, women's studies professor Catherine Orr recounts a class where she "wanted students to regard their own experiences as 'texts' to be unpacked and revealed as part of larger historical and cultural trajectories," but ended up being disappointed with the shallowness of the reflection pieces she received from her students (Teaching Feminist Activism, 39). To deepen the students' engagement in their self-reflection, Orr graded the papers harshly and used the next class period to review some passages which she felt illustrated the depth of interrogation she sought from her students (Teaching Feminist Activism, 39-40). Through conversation, the students came to a collective agreement that in order to prepare themselves for off-campus community work, a deeper look was necessary (Orr, Teaching Feminist Activism, 39-40). Orr states that as a result, the next round of papers satisfied her expectations. This is just one example of the ways in which teachers can work with their students to deepen their level of critical consciousness so as to prepare them better for community involvement.

- ACTION -

Service learning projects have obvious benefits for students, but require increased responsibility and effort on the part of the professor. Teachers must develop

ongoing relationships with community organizations or people with whom students can gain real life activist experience. Without these ongoing alliances, a professor runs the risk of encouraging students to build relationships only to break them at the semester's end. Since students graduate and often leave the local community, professors have the ethical burden of continuing these relationships. This is a difficult task, and professors should not feel as if they must develop long-term relationships with every organization or community group.

Instead, as professor of social work Patricia Washington describes, developing "short-term, low-intensity" relationships with a number of community agencies enabled her "to assess the likelihood that various agencies or agency representatives would be good contacts for future partnerships, particularly for negotiating service learning placements for students enrolled in future courses" (23). The value of providing action-based projects is summarized by professors of social work and women's studies Melissa Peet and Beth Glover Reed:

> In fact, the preliminary evidence suggests that presenting materials that challenge students' worldview and assumptions *without* creating opportunities for them to apply this knowledge may create conflict and discomfort for the students. The students' new knowledge, self-insights, and critical analysis skills that they learn in women's studies classes can lead to increased frustration, and even despair, if they have no way of channeling their knowledge into constructive actions. These reactions can be barriers to current and future learning and certainly to taking action toward social justice goals. (33-34)

While the nature of specific community-based projects varies widely from professor to professor, the overall value of combining ethical action projects with reflection remains relatively undisputed.

Resolving potential ethical dilemmas related to scholastic activism is another way to involve students in this transformative process. For example, Orr recounted an instance where her class was studying a local living-wage campaign (Teaching Feminist Activism, 52). At first, the students were planning to approach janitors and food service workers on campus to ask them questions about their personal wages and working conditions. The students eventually came to realize that this would be a very intrusive process, taking advantage of their position as students of a prestigious university (Orr, Teaching Feminist Activism, 52). Instead, they collectively decided to work with a local union organization already fighting the same issue. The union requested that the students, in addition to doing research on the topic, could (and were encouraged to) attend city council meetings and speak up publicly on their behalf, leveraging the university's political clout (Orr, Teaching Feminist Activism, 52). In this case, students were able to practice activism ethically, giving back to the organization helping them with their research. This practical action project turned its students into social actors.

- EMPOWERMENT & LEADERSHIP

As established in previous sections, part of the purpose of performing community-based projects is to empower students and teachers. When students perform community-based projects, in-class presentations should be a part of the reflection process. Agha-Jaffar explains:

> Class presentations are an important component of service-learning as well as of feminist pedagogy. . . . Class presentations are a way of empowering students: it places them in the role of knowledgeable guides

> in relation to their peers, and it reinforces the fact that their experiences and insights are valuable and worthy of discussion. Students perceive themselves as agents of knowledge. This generates a corresponding increase in their self-esteem. (5-6)

This practice helps students to become more self-assured and capable spokespeople and leaders; when experience combines with scholarly knowledge, a process which bell hooks describes as a "unique mixture of experiential and analytic ways of knowing," the result, "a privileged standpoint," has far more persuasive power than one without the other (Teaching to Transgress, 90).

Additionally, teaching students how to be ethical, power-critical leaders can be achieved when professors model this behavior in the classroom. By practicing a "dialogical model of authority" in the classroom, which moves from a "monologic model of authoritarian voice" to "an authority in flux," the traditional professor/student hierarchy is transformed, making everyone's voice equally important and valued, a version of authority that is multi-faceted and non-deterministic (Bauer and Rhoades, 102). This philosophy has the potential of teaching students how to negotiate their future professional lives in accordance with social justice values.

Many of these techniques are somewhat abstract; their practical application varies according to specific students, professors, programs and universities. For this reason, I have found that sharing the practical philosophies of how to teach feminist activism in the classroom more useful than enumerating all the examples which have worked in past classrooms.

- COMMUNITY & PLEASURE -

Fostering a feeling of community among students and teachers in women's studies programs can happen both inside and outside of the classroom. Inside, equitable teaching practices are employed to transform the traditional teacher/student hierarchy to a relationship based on equal exchange and engagement. Outside, mentorship relationships serve the same purpose. Psychologists Ruth Fassinger and Nancy Hensler-McGinnis write:

> In graduate students, mentoring outcomes reported include development of professional skills, attitudes, and identity; enhanced productivity and academic and career success; satisfaction with one's program or career; greater income and faster promotion; and willingness to mentor others. (149)

These many positive outcomes help to create a culture of empowered graduate students who will continue to contribute to the field of women's studies by becoming mentors themselves.

In addition to mentorship, students should be encouraged to develop feminist alliances necessary for survival in an anti-feminist society. Professor of English Shirley Nelson Garner explains:

> Graduate students are especially vulnerable when they are alone on the receiving end of antifeminist attacks. It is important for them to seek the support of their peers and, if possible, to organize a graduate students' organization, so that its officers can express concerns of the group. As a faculty member, I often counsel students as to ways they can best deal with a situation in which they or their work is regarded with antifeminist prejudice. Most often, they can negotiate their own difficulties, but occasionally I intercede by talking to someone on their behalf or going with them to see an administrator. (207)

The kind of support students organizations can provide is valuable on many levels. One of its most important aspects is that students feel that they are part of a larger community of activists, all working for the same social justice causes. We need to learn how to constantly recreate this sense of community by using anger and passion as its basis, as a strategic tactic to protect and nourish ourselves throughout our careers. For example, establishing feminist events where women can feel part of a larger network can provide this sustenance (Hercus, 48). Setting up institutional support for each other will help us to practice an ethic of self-care, to emotionally refresh ourselves to continue social justice work. Using feminist forums to discuss these issues will help to better prepare students to pursue graduate work in this increasingly important field. Women's studies students need to know that they are not alone in doubting the scholarly value of women's studies knowledge and instead realize that there is context and history for these feelings, as well as well-practiced solutions and tactics to help overcome them.

Incorporating lessons learned from chapter I and II, the following will make some practical recommendations for how the AWS department at CGU in particular can apply principals of feminist pedagogy to help increase student solidarity, skill development, sense of community and empowerment, as well as overall satisfaction with degree and program.

- - CHAPTER III - -

RECOMMENDATIONS & APPLICATIONS

On 17 April 2005, I began my research on feminist pedagogy with an AWS community meeting. In this meeting of current students and alumni, I facilitated an appreciative inquiry exercise, asking the questions listed in Appendix A. One of the concerns raised by a program alumnus was that a more activist-oriented AWS department could be alienating to the purely "academic" women's studies students. She recalled how her own class seemed to be split—some students identified as activists (moving towards a career in the nonprofit sector) and others as academics (ready to pursue Ph.D.s in related fields). For the "academics," learning grant writing would be of less importance than learning how to write a dissertation proposal. This distinction deeply concerned me. If the Applied Women's Studies department is concerned with being "too activist"—where could women's studies students go to learn how to be activists? There are very few women's studies graduate programs in existence and in my experience most are geared towards training students to become professors of women's studies. The alumnus's comment underscores the need to struggle hard against the temptation to live safely as an established discipline within academia. Women's studies should not be mere academic inquiry—it must always gain its inspiration from social justice and orient itself towards preparing its students for activist applications.

At this community meeting, students listed positive aspects of the AWS department, including program length, flexibility, commitment to interdisciplinarity,

notion of the "applied," the "idea" of the internship (but not the application), tenacity, attempts to unite feminist activists together, relationships with activists and organizations, and, most of all, its potential. They believed that the conditions contributing to these qualities were the participation of working students, the need for activists in a feminist community to get the skills and tools to produce social change, and the overall need for feminism to extend its reach into the real world. Imagining the ideal incarnation of the AWS program, they toyed collectively with the idea of a "Feminist Lab" which would be a counterpart to AWS 300, going more in-depth for specific skill-building, the nature of which would be determined by class members. Other ideas included an internship coordinator to help with placements, as well as enhanced academic and career guidance.

In this chapter, I will return to some of the issues raised in the case study of AWS 300 in chapter I, providing suggestions for improved ways of dealing with those problems, including passivity on the part of students, rifts between community leaders and students, and overt tension between students. From there, I will conclude more broadly and address the overall issue of AWS students feeling fooled or disempowered by our program, as well as providing some ideas for how we can improve our students' development of activist intelligence and their ability to experience the transformative process of feminist pedagogy.

SECTION ONE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWS 300

As discussed in chapter I, a lower-than-expected level of student participation in class discussion does not always mean that students are not engaged in classroom goings-on. When I queried Lourdes Arguelles about this issue, she suggested:

> Being quiet in class doesn't mean that they're not engaged. I think that sometimes you have radical silence as much as you have radical voice. I think this quest for voice is important, but it is not the only thing. I think we need to value silence and then, if a person is silent, try to engage that person in conversations outside of class. Maybe that person is not comfortable speaking in class or is afraid of speaking in class because that person might be engaged in some kind of activity they do not want to share. (Arguelles)

Encouraging a more complex understanding of the reasons why students may not be speaking in class, Arguelles's concept of "radical silence" is an important one. Being quiet, instead of connoting disengagement and disinterest, can often be an expression of dissent, representative of feelings of difference or discomfort.

One set of tactics for building classroom community is summarized by sociologists Gilbert, Holdt and Christophersen as a processing beginning with (1) student reflection on "life experiences, knowledge, and skills", which helps them to understand what their unique class contributions are, then (2) utilizing discussion and small groups to understand and appreciate the unique contributions of all classmates, and finally (3) structuring the class project so that students use each other as resources and support (325-329). Specifically:

> Building community means creating a network of support. We created two forms of support networks in the classroom. We assigned each student to a mentor with whom they could work through theoretically problematic issues in a one-on-one setting. Second, we created collaborative learning

> groups as a setting in which students could share the workload, communicate their accomplishments and frustrations, and critique each other's work. (Gilbert, Holdt and Christophersen, 329)

Collaborative learning groups also extended to the entire class—this was facilitated by providing students with contact information for each other. As a result, their students came to "depend on each other a great deal," according to their journal entries and class comments (Gilbert, Holdt and Christophersen, 330).

The potential quietness of students can be addressed by promoting dialogue through modeling, rather than making it a stated requirement. bell hooks explains:

> I could never say that I have no idea of the ways students respond to my pedagogy; they give me constant feedback. When I teach, I encourage them to critique, evaluate, make suggestions and interventions as we go along. Evaluations at the end of a course rarely help us improve the learning experience we share together. When students see themselves as mutually responsible for the development of a learning community, they offer constructive input. (Teaching to Transgress, 205-206)

Encouraging students to be involved in creating the classroom environment by critiquing it is one way to help them take a more active role. Likewise, the structure of the class must be set up with the intention of maximizing student involvement.

When I spoke with Lopez-Garza about the passivity issue in the AWS 300 class, she suggested: "You just put the speakers at the end of the class. And when you have them at the end of the class, you can have a little reception so if it spills over, it becomes a social interaction so that [students] can actually talk to [speakers]" (Lopez-Garza). Changing the structure in this way would place a premium on the time students have to discuss issues together. As described in chapter II, classroom activities to promote active engagement can include situation-based exercises. Lopez-Garza suggested giving

students some scenarios relevant to readings or speakers and allowing them, in groups, to brainstorm on how to proceed, so that they experience the problem or issue more in-depth. While structuring these kinds of activities may be more time-intensive, speakers can also be encouraged to participate in their development. Instead of asking speakers to bring a polished presentation to class, we should help them to provide more of a workshop-type experience, allowing students to participate in and even lead exercises. When speakers participate in exercises themselves, this can work to level their relationship with students, while giving them a chance to model the appropriate depth of engagement required for their kind of professional social justice work.

In Alex Juhasz's experience, excited and heightened emotional engagement was an important characteristic of activist or community-based classes:

> I don't teach classes where students don't talk. . . . Students get really excited. They have to. They're spending a lot of time together, they're forming bonds together, they're having a full lively experience outside of the class and it's outside of my experience where they're going to come in and sit like lumps on a log and not say anything. It just doesn't make sense. . . . You get invested. (Juhasz)

In her experience, activity-based learning fosters a communal environment where students are excited, full of things to share, and forming bonds with each other. In this case, group projects are key to building community in the classroom. Nevertheless, if students do not seem engaged, the professor can initiate a dialogue about this:

> I often come into the class and say 'I've really been thinking about this a lot and only a few people are talking in this class and that's really problematic to me, especially since this is a feminist classroom and we're talking about x, y and z. I'd like you all to take more responsibility for talking.' (Juhasz)

If that doesn't work, Juhasz suggested other techniques for getting students to talk more: going around the circle, breaking into small groups and reporting back, or asking students to write about the classroom dynamic as it relates to the topic of study (Juhasz).

Making the students' behavior a topic of class discussion does not have to be an admonishment. In fact, it can be very constructive. bell hooks recounts:

> There are times when I walk into my class and the students seem absolutely bored out of their minds. And I say to them, "What's up? Everybody seems to be really bored today. There seems to be a lack of energy. What should we do? What can we do?". . . My intent is to engage them more fully. Often students want to deny that they are collectively bored. They want to please me. Or they don't want to be critical. At such times I must stress that, "I'm not taking this personally. It's not just my job to make this class work. It's everyone's responsibility." They might reply, "Well it's exam time," or "It's this kind of time," or "It's the beginning of spring," or "We just don't want to be sitting here." And then I try to say, "Well, then, what can we do? How can we approach our subject to make it more interesting?" (Teaching to Transgress, 155)

This kind of critical dialogue, while possessing the potential of being extremely uncomfortable, can help to save a class gone wrong. While engaging students in an active critique of the class environment does mean a shift in structure, it is not necessarily a negation of all structure. As professors of English Amy Spangler Gerald, Kathleen McEvoy and Pamela Whitfield recount:

> Initially, many of these students were resistant to my open-ended approach . . . and my insistence on hearing everyone's voice. But after they grew accustomed to the inclusive, collaborative atmosphere, to the idea that there is not one authoritative "right" answer, and to my genuine interest in their individual stories, our discussions became very successful. (52)

In this example, Gerald's students were resistant to a different kind of classroom approach, more premised on feminist and engaged pedagogy than they were used to.

Ultimately they were able to step up to the task, after thorough modeling. This kind of integrative learning can help students and professors to overcome the type of rift experienced in AWS 300.

As chapter I recounts, Elana, the representative from the homeless organization, perceived a substantial discrepancy between her own engagement in the topic of sustaining a nonprofit and the engagements of students. bell hooks writes:

> Women and men outside the academic domain were no longer considered an important audience. Feminist thinking and theory were no longer tied to feminist movement. Academic politics and careerism overshadowed feminist politics. . . . Work was and is produced in the academy that is oftentimes visionary, but these insights rarely reach many people. (Feminism is for Everybody, 22)

Thus, this rift is not unique to CGU's AWS 300 class, but is a larger problem for many women's studies departments. Without developing relationships with community organizations, women's studies risks teaching its students that activists are not important audiences for academic work. As a solution, bell hooks proposes a large outreach effort:

> Without abandoning women's studies programs which are already at risk at colleges and universities as conservatives seek to undo the changes created by struggles for gender justice, we need feminist studies that is community-based. Imagine a mass-based feminist movement where folks go door to door passing out literature, taking the time (as do religious groups) to explain to people what feminism is all about. . . . By failing to create a mass-based educational movement to teach everyone about feminism we allow mainstream patriarchal mass media to remain the primary place where folks learn about feminism, and most of what they learn is negative. Teaching feminist thought and theory to everyone means that we have to reach beyond the academic and even the written word. (Feminism is for Everybody, 23)

Recontextualizing our overall goal in this way, bell hooks insists that we need feminist grassroots, television and radio networks to help us broaden our outreach (Feminism is for Everybody, 23-24). Union organizer Siobhan Ring agrees:

> The first step for women's studies programs to become more useful to activism is choosing to support transformative social change work . . . the next step is to do something about it. To bridge the gap between academia and activism, women's studies programs must identify activist groups and begin to form relationships as allies to aid in social change efforts. By *ally*, I mean a person or group that is not directly affected by an issue but chooses to support those who are directly affected in their organizing efforts. . . . By being identified as allies, women's studies programs could begin to develop a relationship with activists and create a useful role for the program in supporting activist work. By envisioning themselves as supporters of the work, students and professors alike could learn a great deal. (234-235)

Establishing long-term ally relationships with community groups can only be accomplished as part of the framework of an activist-based women's studies program. Once these relationships are incorporated, there will no longer be a rift between students and activists, since students will be taught that activists are their primary audience, and will learn through experience how to interact thoughtfully. Not only are these relationships important for women's studies students, community organizations and professors, but they may determine the future of women's studies programs. Professor of politics and women's studies Penny Welch writes: "Without a certain level of visible feminist campaigning for social, economic, or political change, the ability of women's studies to maintain its place in the academy may be compromised" (74). A deeper commitment to its political role will help to keep women's studies strong and effective—

providing it with a structure that promotes pushing the envelope into uncomfortable territory. It is also a way to address tensions, and to teach its students to do the same.

As discussed in chapter I, AWS 300 experienced tension between students of different ages, departments and levels of graduate degree—all things to be expected from an interdisciplinary class, but troubling nonetheless. I queried Arguelles, Lopez-Garza and Juhasz about ways to link inter-classroom relations with the gender justice issues studied in class.

When I asked Arguelles what she does if there are tensions between students in the classroom, she said, "I try to address it, but sometimes the tensions are not evident and so I cannot claim that I address them. I address the ones that I am aware of" (Arguelles). Arguelles said that one of the ways she would address the tension described in chapter I would be to add impromptu readings on ageism, hoping that the students would realize the additional material was commenting on what was happening in the classroom. Similarly, Lopez-Garza noted that if tensions aren't addressed right away, they tend to escalate: "So we have to address [the tensions]. It's applying that which we are talking about. We're talking about activists. So how do activists act? You don't do that kind of stuff" (Lopez-Garza). Lopez-Garza continued:

> It breaks down to how to reflect on these things and learn within the classroom and come to terms with them. Are we willing to make ourselves uncomfortable? Because we're actually making somebody uncomfortable and let's all be made uncomfortable and look at this issue. We're always afraid of being uncomfortable and we have to because the world will not change if we continue. (Lopez-Garza)

As uncomfortable as it may be to call attention to bad behavior through exercises or reflection pieces, it should be standard practice in women's studies programs.

Juhasz outlined a more direct approach to solving these tensions:

> You can call them on it. You can say, 'I think you're being disrespectful.' Especially with graduate students, I don't see any reason why you couldn't [do that]. I think that it's one's responsibility as a teacher and also one's stake as a student to be thoughtful about the dynamic of the classroom as part of the experiences. (Juhasz)

In cases where this direct classroom confrontation doesn't seem appropriate, Juhasz suggested bringing students into the professor's office and talking about it privately with them, saying "Did you notice what happened? This is really upsetting to me, to your friends. Why is this happening?" (Juhasz). Juhasz also mentioned that she might even talk to the person who was being made fun of. When I told Juhasz that I thought it was a missed opportunity to address an enacted power struggle, she said, "It is. And it isn't like people aren't talking about it when they leave" (Juhasz).

Professor of women's studies Mary Wilson Carpenter writes: "The intersections of ageism and antifeminism and feminism, and feminism and ageism, as they structure academic relations today, are . . . far from simple or one-dimensional" (142). Carpenter defines ageism as "discrimination against 'older' people in favor of youth," adding that youth "has traditionally been accepted as natural, inevitable, and justifiable in academia" (142). Arguing that anti-ageism and feminism are natural allies, Carpenter asserts that women in particular "are vulnerable to ageism at many stages of the academic career path" (143). Carpenter assigns a specific term for particular kind of ageism experienced by women: "sexagism" (148). This perspective seems particularly

relevant to the conflict occurring in AWS 300 between the two younger psychology students and the older returning AWS student and could provide the theory to contextualize that conflict for a classroom discussion or reflection on intra-class relations.

Another theory offered by Aileen, the professor of the course, was that the two younger psychology students identified as lesbians and were irritated with the consistent heterosexual nature of the comments made by the older returning AWS student. This perspective highlights a challenge inherent in my role as researcher of solutions for problems I did not experience firsthand. Even if I had had firsthand experience in this situation, my conclusions may not have aligned with Alieen's understanding of the situation. While this is a limitation of my research, the issue of the tension itself was corroborated by multiple interview participants. How the tension should be addressed depends on the context, but the question of whether it should be addressed is central to feminist pedagogy.

Since AWS 300 cannot truly succeed as action-based pedagogy in and of itself, the next section will attempt to deal with broader issues for the AWS department as a whole. The AWS department is currently transitioning from CGU's School of Religion to the School of Arts and Humanities and is ripe with flexibility and possibility for change.

SECTION TWO: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWS PROGRAM

- FOOLED AND DISEMPOWERED -

This work is not intended as an admonishment of the AWS department for reducing its students to victimhood. Our program, only five years old, is relatively new and still in an experimental stage. The students who have graduated from this program, on the whole, are interesting, committed and confident women. Nonetheless, in my time there, I have seen a crisis developing among some fellow students, whose sense of paralysis can result in a disengagement from the department, the graduate school, and, I fear, the field of women's studies. I believe this problem can be mitigated by presenting the AWS department to students as a work in progress that needs their help to improve, thus emphasizing that they as students are primarily responsible for the quality of their own education. As Catherine Orr mentioned, education is more and more a business with students as consumers and administrators and teachers as sellers of the product of education (Teaching Feminist Activism, 37). Thus, students come to graduate school asking themselves, "Am I getting what I am paying for?" and in the case of AWS, "Why should I pay CGU to help improve their academic department?" We need to contextualize the benefits of this kind of environment in a more community-oriented way, helping students to realize why they have those thoughts, how it relates to the construction of our educational institutions in a capitalist environment, and why their education needs to be in their own hands. Through these efforts, larger social change can be enacted within their very own academic department.

As sociologist Jane A. Rinehart writes, "Learning communities and collaborative learning methods empower students. Both take the position that learning is an opportunity for discovering the value and efficacy of one's own resources and abilities" (73). Empowered, ethical students are engaged and dependent on one another for personal growth. In this way, methods of empowerment hold the potential to be collective in nature. For professors of education and sociology Rhoades, Statham and Schleiter, collective empowerment is a hope:

> Locating audiences in classrooms and in activist organizations . . . can provide a turning point in one's perception of empowerment. When synchronism evolves between the speaker's needs and an audience's goals, a fragile hope for collective empowerment arises. We hope that this approach will make for more fruitful and successful efforts at grassroots policy creation. (232)

But before empowerment can become collective, students must learn the coping mechanisms required to provide themselves with individual empowerment. Like the process of feminist pedagogy, these coping mechanisms—the healthy ways we structure our environment so that we can refresh ourselves through collaborative experiences with other women—must be taught through modeling and institutional structure.

The kinds of feminist pedagogical teaching strategies described herein can provide the basis for stronger women's studies departments. For department heads, organizing around promoting a faculty who practice engaged pedagogy spurred by activism will inevitably lead to forming community alliances, fostering an environment where students and teachers participate in the feminist pedagogical process.

Lopez-Garza discussed the necessity of this institutional structure for an empowering education at length:

> What you're doing now is good because you're not just trying to fit something into something that's already in place and it's not willing to change. You are in the process of transformation, which I think will allow for that to happen. What we've done is created a department that incorporates activism, just as it incorporates the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality—that it's not like we have one class where we teach race—it's embedded in all courses. And I think by the same token, this sense of social activism is also delivered and the message is there, and in the way we talk about it. . . . One, it needs to be embedded in the structure. It can't be just this one class. Although in this one class, you may emphasize a part of it more, so how do you incorporate that into everything that you do? That's a discussion that needs to take place with the faculty there. As you come and go, the faculty stays there. (Lopez-Garza)

If we want our Applied Women's Studies department to fulfill the promises implied by its title, we need to embed those promises within the structure of the entire department, from AWS 300 throughout all other courses and activities. This should be the responsibility of the faculty, but at CGU, the women's studies faculty are all borrowed from other departments. What needs to be developed is a stronger network of feminist professors who strongly support the activist missions and goals of the department. One way of doing this would be to effect a community-building project to generate alliances with professors from other departments, who would not only agree to teach courses incorporating women's issues, but who would actually incorporate feminist pedagogical practices.

Having a strong vision will help to attract allies. As Lopez-Garza noted:

> I think it's important to have a vision, you know? What it is you want. The assumption is that we're all intelligent in the university. That's not the question. But when you're talking about how you incorporate it, the whole notion of praxis has to be established in the onset of an organization, or in your case, the reconstruction, so that it becomes a part of everything you do. (Lopez-Garza)

In CSUN's particular case, the spread-out nature of their women's studies faculty, located in a multitude of departments, worked to their advantage—everywhere they turned, they had allies. But finding the right college or program to host a women's studies program, according to Lopez-Garza, is essential. You must have a department or school compatible with your vision that will provide you with the ability to achieve it. With our impending move to Arts & Humanities, I am hopeful that AWS will get more institutional support.

Institutional support can be an abstract concept. However, as Arguelles illustrates, it can help women's studies faculty to pursue activist means:

> Sometimes when professors are overwhelmed by demands inside the institution, it is very difficult for them to [teach from an activist perspective], particularly when the institutions don't provide the infrastructure, so it is dependent on the professor to not only do his or her job within the school but to be available to the students for the internships and the risks that involves. So I think one of the key issues is for institutions to provide some kind of infrastructure. The Pitzer people have developed a center for the study of California issues, so a professor who wants to develop a community-based course will have institutional support to do so. (Arguelles)

Since activist-oriented courses tend to be more time consuming, institutional support can help make these pursuits more viable. Juhasz concurred: "The conflict for me would just be about the intensity of that kind of [activist-based course] experience and how

often you can manage it. And at Pitzer we have an infrastructure that helps to support us in that kind of teaching that makes it a lot easier" (Juhasz).

Another kind of institutional support is the development of committees and networks. As professors of English and library sciences Gloria DeSole and Meredith A. Butler discuss, "The agenda for women in higher education and in society in general has not been met and . . . the needs, concerns, and issues of women and other historically underrepresented groups in higher education are often low on the priority of most institutions" (218). This results in a great difficulty among women in higher education to "develop their own collective sense of vision and to articulate and attend to their own needs" (DeSole and Butler, 218). In order to counteract these conditions, DeSole and Butler suggest "creating a strong, carefully constructed, and integrated institutional network of women's committees as one way to foster institutional change and create more diverse and responsive educational and work environments that actively support, nurture, and empower women" (218). They point to working models, including their own State University of New York at Albany, where such a network of committees "serves as an effective vehicle for social change" and is the foundation for a strong community of women (DeSole and Butler, 219). The purpose of these committees includes giving every woman a "committee base where she feels that her voice can be heard on the issues of importance to her," practicing affirmative action in the committee groups and presenting a "clear and coherent collective voice to the larger institution on issues of importance" (DeSole and Butler, 228). In the case of CGU, developing a variety of women's committee groups, each tackling a different area of interest, could (1) foster

a sense of strong women's community, (2) provide a common ground between various issues of interest, (3) provide a framework for professors, students and administrators to work collaboratively on projects outside of the classroom, (4) enable AWS to conduct outreach to more potential women's studies professors, (5) provide a foundation for collaborative feminist events, and (6) provide students, in particular, with tangible action-related experience at the site of the university itself.

A dedicated physical space can help such communities to flourish. In the case of Portland State University's (PSU) Women's Studies program, this location is the In Other Words bookstore (Gilbert and Sameh, 186). Providing the physical "bridge" from university to community, In Other Words has a sister organization, the Women's Community Education Project (WCEP), both of which have developed a strong partnership with PSU's women's studies program (Gilbert and Sameh, 187). WCEP was developed as a non-profit, since the founders realized that book sales alone could not support all the outreach and programming they had in mind (Gilbert and Sameh, 187). Instead of opening the doors of the bookstore with the goal of running a business:

> [We intended to] create a lasting community space where all women and their friends could discover the rich world of women's community, literature, and culture. We wanted the bookstore to be the place to go after leaving the university, or for those who never had access to the university. (Gilbert and Sameh, 188)

A unique collaboration between university, non-profit and for-profit business, this model is a testament to the strength that comes from an alliance based on a single vision. A grant to develop "long-term partnerships with area women's organizations that would provide experiential learning environments" for their students helped them to

"meet the economic, health, literary, cultural and educational needs of [Portland's] women and girls" (Gilbert and Sameh, 188). Building sustainable relationships with a variety of community organizations helps to increase the clout of a women's studies department in the community, aids its students in facilitating action-based learning and their consequent development of Activist Intelligence, intertwines academic and community work through its very structure and leads to a long-term network of people organized around social justice issues—all of which are central to developing and sustaining Activist Intelligence.

In addition to building these kinds of innovative networks, to achieve its goals the AWS department needs to be supported in its pursuit of an endowment fund. Women's studies professor Jean Fox O'Barr writes extensively on "the politics of influence and fundraising for women's studies" in her book Feminism in Action (219). A professor at Duke University, O'Barr witnessed firsthand the benefits of endowing a women's studies program. From 1986 to 1991, Duke raised a million-dollar endowment for women's studies from individual donors (O'Barr, 219). In order to begin fundraising for an academic program, O'Barr warns that:

> [M]oney is given and received through an interpersonal network. Without that network, fundraising cannot occur. Donors give money to support their values. An institution is influenced by receiving monies. . . . The institution receives their ideas about what it should emphasize along with their money in the fundraising process. (219)

Thus, creating community relationships is not only necessary to model activist behavior for a program's students, but is also a means to secure an endowment which will bring even more institutional support, interest and freedom—all which will help women's

studies programs to transform the educational system. We must realize that our women's studies departments must learn to play better by the rules in order to, in the long run, effect major disruptions and overhauls. Building Activist Intelligence, enacting the process of feminist pedagogy, and raising funds must come hand in hand.

- - APPENDIX A- -

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY EXERCISE

AWS community meeting, Sunday, April 17, 2005

1. Please identify and discuss the accomplishments of the AWS program.

2. What were the conditions that led to these accomplishments?

3. DREAM: Envision what the AWS program could be and what you would like it to be.

4. DESIGN: Create a strategy to carry out the dreams that the group has identified. What can be done to build on the current assets of the program and what aspects of those assets need to be strengthened in order to achieve your dream?

5. DOING: Identify the specific steps that you think the AWS program would need to take to put your dreams into action. What innovations/experimentations will your group undertake to reach this dream?

- - APPENDIX B - -

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