Notes towards the articulation of a passionate pedagogy

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Abstract
What happens when education-for-liberation discourses of the 1960s intersect with radical feminist discourses of 1970s to meet with poststructuralist discourses of the 1990s in a feminist classroom of the early 21st century? Using reflections on the impact of these discourses in my work as a feminist academic as its starting point, this paper draws on the work of thinkers as diverse as Paolo Freire, Adrienne Rich, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Renee Descartes, Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous, Jan Fook, Carlina Rinaldi, and Chris Cuomo to articulate the dimensions of what I have come to call a passionate pedagogy. In recognition of the endless oscillation and fluctuation from theory to practice and back, the outlining of each cluster of pedagogical concepts includes a discussion of the relevant teaching practices I have adopted to create and sustain these ways of working.

Keywords: passionate pedagogy, wonder, generosity, love, feminist activism, imagination, higher education, educational philosophy and theory.

Key Phrase: educational philosophy and theory

But if inquiry is to transcend the destructive circumstances of our lifeworlds, if its purpose is to make a difference not make a career, we cannot avoid using words such as vision, spirit, humanity, soul. How can we deny the metaphysics of the work we do? (Lorri Neilsen, 1998: 280).

This paper outlines some dimensions of a passionate pedagogy which has emerged in conjunction with the teaching practices I have adopted over more than a decade of preparing undergraduates to work with women in Australian community-based agencies such as women’s health centres, sexual assault centres, refuges and neighbourhood centres. On reflection I see that the suite of ideas and practices creating this pedagogical approach has in turn been shaped by the intersection of three powerful underpinning and overarching discourses: the education-for-liberation discourses of the 1960s that challenged many of the assumptions of mainstream education; the radical feminism of the 1970s that challenged every dimension of life as it was then lived, including understandings of the very processes of knowledgemaking; and the poststructuralist discourses of the 1980s and 1990s, that challenged the master narratives, causing a radical re-think of personal, political and cultural assumptions about the workings of subjectivity and power, and an equally radical rethink of the possibilities of feminist activism.

The paper begins with a sketch of these three discourses and an outline of their implications for my work as a feminist academic. It draws then on the work of thinkers as diverse as Trinh T. Minh-ha, Descartes, Luce Irigaray, Jan Fook, Carlina Rinaldi, Erica McWilliam and Chris Cuomo to articulate three dimensions of what I have come to call a passionate pedagogy. In recognition of the endless oscillation and fluctuation from theory to practice and back, the outlining of each cluster of pedagogical concepts includes a discussion of the relevant teaching practices I have
adopted to create and sustain these ways of working.

**Radical discourses of the 1960s, 1970s and 1990s**

I begin with a sketch of each of the intersecting discourses underpinning this discussion, and an outline of its impact on my emerging pedagogical practices. When I speak of education-for-liberation discourses of the 1960s I refer specifically to the thinking surrounding the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, (1972) and the alternative education practices adopted by English educator A.S. Neill (1968) of *Summerhill* fame. Each in their different ways imagined learning to be an intrinsically satisfying, ever-expanding process, as opposed to the extrinsically motivated, examination-based mastery of specific bodies of knowledge characteristic of much mid-twentieth century education; further, each drew attention to the politics of the teacher-student interaction by positioning the teacher as empowering facilitator rather than as all-knowing instructor. As a young secondary school teacher in the 1970s I took from the work of Friere and A.S. Neill a fascination with the exchange of energies embedded in the teaching-learning process, and wrestled with ways to negotiate appropriate boundaries between the self and the other in what had become a newly conceptualised relationship between teacher/s and student/s. At that time, too, I became attentive to the art and craft of teaching and developed a fascination with the notion of teaching as performance (xxx 2006).

When I speak of the radical feminist discourses of the 1970s in this context I refer specifically to the separatist feminist analyses of patriarchy, which drew on the slogan “the personal is political” to launch savage attacks on all existing social, sexual, political and cultural systems and institutions (Tong 1992), advocating, in particular, the application of non-hierarchical, networked modes of co-operative, relational engagement to everything from interpersonal decision-making processes to corporate leadership and administrative processes (Ferguson 1984). The focus on process and exchange of energies which had begun for me with the thinking of the alternative educators of the 1960s was enlivened by my engagement with the cooperative, relational radical feminist activist practices to emerge in conjunction with these 1970s discourses.

In addition, when I speak of the radical feminist discourses of the 1970s I refer to the thinking emerging from the work of poet, philosopher and radical feminist activist Adrienne Rich who, in her 1976 text *Of Woman Born* celebrated women’s powerful biological, emotional, intellectual and psychic capacities, urging every woman to become the presiding genius of her own body, to think through the body so that we can begin to use our great mental capacities, our highly developed tactile sense; our genius for close observation; and our complicated, multi-pleasured physicality….. For in such a world women will truly create new life, bringing forth not only children (if and when we choose) but the visions, and the thinking, necessary to sustain, console, and alter human existence: a new relationship to the universe. Sexuality, politics, intelligence, power, motherhood, work, community, intimacy, will develop new meanings (Rich, 1976: 285).

Drawing on this thinking and, later, that of Trinh T Minh-ha (1989, 1993) I became enchanted by the notion of embodied learning, the inseparability of rationality, the passions and the life force, and the uses of the imagination in coming to know. When I speak of poststructuralist discourses of the 1990s I refer to those discourses spawned by the relativism of postmodernism that challenged master narratives, foregrounding the politics of knowledge construction, and drawing attention, in particular, to alternative views of power as fleeting and fluid, and subjectivity as fragmented, slippery, unstable and only momentarily coherent (Davies *et al*, 2006). My fascination with poststructuralist discourses, interwoven with the insights I had
gleaned from exposure to the alternative education and radical feminist discourses of the 1960s and 1970s outlined above, impacted significantly on the ways in which I engaged with students as well as on what I taught them. In 1990 I had taken up a position as a women’s studies academic at a university in Western Australia. The teaching programme I inherited was informed by philosophies based, predictably enough, on the modernist egalitarian, socialist and radical feminisms of the 1970s and 1980s. Without wanting to obliterate the political impulse to social change embedded in the politics of opposition that emerged from these philosophies, I wanted to explore the potential of poststructuralist understandings of subjectivity and power to construct new knowledges about how to enact activist practice. In 1994, with a colleague whose expertise lay in community development and feminist policy, I introduced a full undergraduate degree whose emphasis lay in preparing students to work in a range of women’s services. At a time when many women’s studies programmes in Australia were becoming increasingly theoretically sophisticated and simultaneously apparently removed from their activist base (Sheridan, 1998) we set ourselves the challenge of finding ways to apply poststructuralist theorising to community based activist practice. In the following section I briefly discuss the thinking that lies behind the practices we adopted to straddle the theory-practice divide.

Straddling the theory-practice divide
There are many ways to story the challenges we faced. Put simply, our dilemma was this: doing away with the conception of the stable, coherent, fixed subject of modernist thinking and adopting instead the poststructuralist acknowledgment of the subject as discursively constructed, unstable, fluid, fragmented and only momentarily coherent meant also thinking about politically activist collectives of women differently. Feminist activist practice had always drawn on social movement theories for its impulse to change. We all knew that the strength of women’s activist practice lay in its collective, shared nature. Conceptually speaking, at its most coherent this was an oppositional politics with a common, shared adversary. However, the new thinking we were adopting required that we re-think the nature of any collective, and hence of how to go about creating political change: instead of conceptualising women as a group with shared oppressions and a stable group identity on whose behalf activists could lobby, act, speak and intervene, the identity of any collection of people would now be seen to be as slippery, as unstable and as fragmented as individual subjectivities might be. How, then, could one acknowledge the differences between individuals and still mobilise such fragmented clusters of people for political action? How could one represent such a clearly disparate collection of people? These conundrums were exacerbated by new conceptions of power itself as an entity that is discursively constructed, simultaneously being embedded in cultural institutions and manifesting as a quicksilver, fluid, fleeting force in interactions between people and institutional practices. In my search for ways to prepare aspiring activists for contemporary professional practice using poststructuralist discourses of subjectivity and power I turned to the work of feminist scholars Rosi Braidotti (1991), Lois McNay (1992), Susan Stanford Friedman (1989, 1998), Allison Weir (1996), Elspeth Probyn (1993) and Luce Irigaray (1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1995, 2004) to explore the conditions of emergence of female subjectivity. I turned, too, to the work of Karen Healy (1999), Nira Yuval-Davis (1993), and Jan Fook (1996, 1999) for discussions of creating a woman-to-woman connection to mobilise for political action. I drew additionally on the work of Drusilla Modjeska (1990) and Susan Stanford Friedman (1998) for discussions of the recent focus on narrative processes in articulating the creation of the poststructuralist feminist activist self; and, finally, I grafted the narrative
understandings of Friedman onto the work of Healy and Fook, to explicate an ongoing process of re-storying the contemporary feminist activist self who is able to align and re-align with significant others to enact an activist practice (Hopkins 2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006, 2009).

Ultimately, interweaving poststructuralist understandings of subjectivity and power with contemporary feminist understandings of difference and knowledge construction, we found ways to move with our students away from working with a politics of opposition and into what feminist philosopher and activist Chris Cuomo calls a politics of complexity (Cuomo 2003). Such a manoeuvre has meant understanding that political alignments will be strategic and temporary, based in shared understandings of particular issues, and underpinned by an ongoing allegiance to a feminist ethic. It has meant, too, understanding the social as the site of the emergence of female subjectivity; and it has meant understanding that a reciprocal emphasis on differences and similarities within and between subjects is a crucial element of contemporary feminist political practice. In relation to our pedagogical practices, the shift from working with a politics of opposition to a working with a politics of complexity has meant working with students to develop specific capacities: the ability to think beyond the either/or thinking of binary opposition into the both-and conceptual territory of poststructuralist thought; the ability to work across difference with respect and reciprocity; the ability to do theory on the run; and the ability to re-story the self (xxx 2005b). It has meant, too, working with students to develop a deep understanding of the self, which, as Elspeth Probyn (1993) argues, incorporates body, mind, imagination, love, care, hope and passion, and which becomes political (speaks) at the interstices of the ontological and epistemological expressions of the self.

In other words, in order to become politically activist, students need skills with which to read webs of power, whether from margin, or centre, or both/neither. They need to be able to read and understand relationships, energies and interpersonal connections: for this they need access to the uses of the imagination, and to highly developed empathic capacities and listening skills in aligning and re-aligning with others. The discourses on which I have drawn suggest that such experiential learning involves a combination of intellectual, emotional and bodily ways of coming to knowledge. Finally, aspiring activists need to be able to negotiate their ways through the complex suite of philosophies, political insights, intuition, emotions, rational thinking and bodily ways of knowing to arrive at a place where they can speak.

Notes towards the articulation of a passionate pedagogy

Out of thinking that has emerged from this conjunction of discourses from the 1960s, 1970s and 1990s, then, I have crafted an approach to teaching that I have come to call a passionate pedagogy. Crucial dimensions of this suite of practices include mutual respect between teacher/s and student/s, and the enlivening of all the senses in the learning process that Patti Lather describes as a three-way dance between the knowledge, the knowers and the known (Lather 1991). This combination of experiences in turn allows for personal expansion towards embodying what we might call a condition of flourishing.

Notes towards the articulation of a passionate pedagogy

I use the term passionate deliberately to distinguish this suite of pedagogical practices from the lifeless, disembodied practices of much contemporary education. The term passionate draws attention to the kind of sensuous energy and desire which accompanies the embodied, intellectual, imaginative, emotional, spirited connection with the other(s), which is so much part of this engaged (feminist) pedagogical experience. Such a description draws on Descartes’ notion that the full range of passions
includes passions of the soul (emotions based in the six primary passions of wonder, desire, hate, love, sadness and joy) and passions of the body (perceptions and sensations) (Descartes, 1989: 56, 32 – 34, cited in La Caze, 2002:1). This is a pedagogy that brings together passions of the soul with passions of the body. In attempting to articulate its qualities I uncover three intertwining dimensions: First, it is a pedagogy that draws on passions of the soul: it begins with love; it is fuelled by wonder and generosity; it has a political edge driven by respect for the self and respect for the difference and similarity of the other; and in its embracing of poststructuralist thinking it remains fluid and open to growth.

Second, it is a pedagogy that draws on passions of the body: it understands that to know is to be, not to have; it engages the imagination and the senses in learning; it acknowledges the intersections of epistemology and ontology.

Third, in its movement backwards and forwards between passions of the body and passions of the soul, it is a pedagogy that allows us to be, and to become, in a continual process of storying and re-storying the self in response to new knowledges, experiences and insights. It is a pedagogy that leads simultaneously inwards and outwards towards a condition of flourishing.

I turn now to an elaboration of each of these three dimensions of the passionate pedagogy I practice. In recognition of the endless oscillation and fluctuation from theory to practice and back, the outlining of each cluster of pedagogical concepts includes a discussion of the relevant teaching practices I have adopted to create and sustain these ways of working.

**The first dimension of a passionate pedagogy: Passions of the soul**

This is a pedagogy that begins with love, is fuelled by wonder and generosity, and has a political edge driven by respect for the self and respect for the difference and similarity of the other. In its embracing of poststructuralist thinking it remains fluid and open to growth.

Notes towards the articulation of a passionate pedagogy

6

Key concepts: respect, reciprocity, difference.

Passions: passions of the soul (love, wonder, generosity)

• Love

For Irigaray, it is love which leads to knowledge: contrary to the usual methods of dialectic, love should not have to be abandoned in order to become wise or learned. It is love which leads the way and is the path, both. A mediator par excellence (Irigaray, 1993a: 21).

I did not consciously set out to create a pedagogy that begins with love. What I did set out to do is to create a classroom climate where students felt safe. Many of our students are mature aged women for whom the university environment can be daunting. My own experience of new learning situations suggested that until I felt relaxed, connected, respected and safe in that space, I could not focus on what was being discussed. Consequently, I actively set out at the beginning of each semester to create a classroom that was a welcoming, friendly space, where students quickly got to know each other so that lines of communication travelled clearly from student to student as well as from student to teacher. These interactive processes were fortuitously helped by the institutional structures that organised weekly teaching into one three hour block of time per class. In each three hour session I could schedule lectures, workshops, roleplays, discussions, films, writing, reflections, student presentations, activities that involved moving around or sitting still, working in groups or working alone: the possibilities were limited only by our own imaginations and the requirement that we leave the space ready for occupation by another group at the end of the three hours.

Another strategy I consciously adopted from the beginning, clearly emulating the radical feminist discourses of the 1970s, was to emphasize co-operation and sharing rather than competition and withholding, so that students quickly experience the
pleasures of feeling part of a shared endeavour. In this environment students are encouraged to share resources, to exchange ideas, to listen to and value each other’s learning journey. A significant dimension of this approach is the acknowledgement that the student’s own life experience is a valuable resource and provides the context within which their new learning can occur. This approach ensures that students feel supported by belonging to a community of scholars who are each on parallel but different learning journeys. It also aligns neatly, I discover, with contemporary feminist thinking about the collective nature of the emergence of female subjectivity.

Feminist poststructuralist theorists including Rosi Braidotti, Lois McNay (1994), Allison Weir (1996) and Elspeth Probyn (1993) have long argued that strong woman-to-woman relationships are crucial to women’s emergence as feminist subjects. Irigaray’s conception that the subject-in-process is a subject in dialogue, engaged with the other (Irigaray, in Whitford, 1991a: 48) similarly emphasises the centrality of relationship in the emergence of the feminine/feminist activist self. Irigaray is quite specific about the value and necessity of the woman-to-woman connection. She writes of love between women as being one of the conditions of emergence of female subjectivity (Irigaray, in Whitford, 1991a: 48).

Notes towards the articulation of a passionate pedagogy

Acting on these theories in the pedagogical sphere means creating the conditions where it is possible for the development of relationships between teacher/s and student/s that are complex and supportive. Reflection suggests that instead of a singular kind of connection, there are multiple kinds of connections in that space between teacher/s and student/s: friend, mentor, mother, sister, colleague interact in a complex swirl of exchanges which ensure that the emerging feminist subject is not alone in her coming to voice. The Italian feminist notion of affidamento (Cicioni 1989) sits alongside the more intimate friend-to-friend connection; the maternal and the sisterly overlap. What seems to me most significant now is not how we label the relationships, but what qualities characterise them. For Sandy, a former student asked to reflect on her experience of being a part of this programme, the teacherstudent relationship meant feeling held, trusted. Well, loved, really. Yes, I’d say I felt loved by you both. If there is one principle that characterises the pedagogical encounters to which I refer, it is that respect and reciprocity underpin them all.

• Wonder and generosity

One of our central tasks in preparing students to work with women in the community is to develop the skills to connect with others across the differences between the self and the other. A central tenet to our teaching has been that we develop respect for the self and respect for the other. This notion underpins the assertiveness training we teach in an introductory unit called Interpersonal Skills; it is taken up again in another skills based unit called Working with Groups, and is embedded in a third unit called Working Across Difference. And as we have seen already, it is consciously modelled in classroom interactions between teacher/s and student/s. Underpinning the process of connecting with respect is the skill of active listening, evoking in turn the pedagogy of listening articulated by Rinaldi (2006) out of her lively and respectful engagement with very young children.

Developing the capacity to work with respect for the self and respect for the other requires ways of knowing that are both conceptual and experiential. For insight into how to communicate the complexity of this process to students I have turned to Trinh and Irigaray.

Trinh uses a maternal metaphor to illuminate the processes of connecting across the space between the self and the other:

In her maternal love, she is neither possessed nor possessive; neither
binding nor detached nor neutral. For a life to maintain another life, the touch has to be infinitely delicate: precise, attentive and swift, so as not to pull, track, rush, crush or smother (Trinh, 1989: 38).

I am struck by Trinh’s eloquence: the touch has to be infinitely delicate. The key to this delicate manoeuvre, I feel certain, is imagination: if we can fly on the wings of our own imaginations, then surely we can bridge the gaps between our own embodied suite of memories, dreams and reflections and those of the other, to glimpse, if only fleetingly, the sensory register which will allow us to empathise without ever claiming to know the experience as our own.

For Irigaray, the notion of reciprocity offers one of the most fruitful dimensions of intersubjective bonds. As Irigaray states so eloquently, “I don’t dominate or consume you. I respect you (as irreducible) (Irigaray, I Love to You, 1995: 171).

Recently I have come to understand through the work of Australian feminist philosopher Marguerite La Caze (2002) that the passion of wonder and the virtue of generosity can be seen to underpin these ways of working. La Caze explains that Irigaray, following Descartes, has argued that wonder is the first of all the passions, and provides the basis for an ethics of sexual difference. One of the challenges facing our students, though, is that they will be required to connect across many differences beyond sexual difference. La Caze elegantly argues that generosity and wonder are both needed in the development of an ethics of respect for difference:

Notes towards the articulation of a passionate pedagogy

We should respond to other differences beyond sexual difference with wonder... The passions of generosity and wonder need to be brought together to ground an ethics; ... wonder and generosity must be understood as attitudes that we can cultivate in ourselves (2002: 1).

In thinking through ways to respond to differences between the self and the other, and to connect with respect and reciprocity across those differences, La Caze argues that we need to mobilize both wonder and generosity in order to recognize similarities and differences. Wonder, she argues, involves recognizing others as different from ourselves. We are drawn by curiosity, by wonder, to something new precisely because of its difference. Generosity, by contrast, involves seeing others as essentially similar to ourselves: unlike its present meaning, La Caze explains, generosity for Descartes is a kind of wonder combined with love, which involves having proper pride or rightful self-regard (Descartes, 1989: 103, in La Caze, 2002: 6).

In summary, then, La Caze argues that generosity appears to be the converse of wonder, in the sense that it is regarding others as like ourselves and looking for similarity, whereas wonder involves regarding others as very different from ourselves in their needs, desires and interests (2002: 6). Having wonder and generosity counterbalancing each other in these ways also prevents the danger to which Iris Marion Young (1997) has alluded, that in our desire to acknowledge difference we may begin to exoticize it, or view it as alien.

Mobilising love, wonder and generosity to create and sustain respectful and reciprocal connections across the boundary between the self and the other are simultaneously practices that students will take into their professional lives, and practices that underpin classroom interactions.

A pedagogy informed by poststructuralist thinking demands a conscious focus on developing the ability to think beyond the either/or of oppositional thought, into the both-and territory of poststructuralist thought. Ideally such conceptual acrobatics involves the ability to think both oppositionally, and poststructurally, and to move back and forth from one to the other. This complicated conceptual manoeuvre I call thinking in threes. It is to an exploration of thinking beyond the mind/body split of the dichotomous conceptual order into an experience of learning that intertwines rationality, the sensory passions and the life force that I now turn in the articulation of
the second dimension of a passionate pedagogy.

**The second dimension of a passionate pedagogy: Passions of the body**

This is a pedagogy that engages the imagination and the senses in learning. It understands that to know is to be, not to have; it acknowledges the intersections of epistemology and ontology. It is a pedagogy that acknowledges the intuition and artistry of professional practice.

Key concepts: embodied learning; imagination; the senses; thinking in threes; intuition and artistry

Passions: passions of the body (senses, perceptions)

Just as I did not set out to create a pedagogy that begins with love, neither did I set out to create a pedagogy that consciously foregrounds embodied learning. However, I have long been interested in what I observed to be, in the 1970s, the energy of a classroom. This, I find so many decades later, has bodily resonances. I am fascinated with the impact of energy (positive, negative, lively, dull) on the ways people learn. Ideally, the classroom becomes a space that is buzzing with energetic interaction, curiosity, aspiration and desire to learn. One of the strategies I adopt to ensure that students are inspired to learn is to remain attentive to the art and craft of teaching. I apply a range of insights from all previous teaching experiences to my current teaching practices. In particular, I am attentive to issues of performance: I work with awareness of the timing and shape of lectures and workshops; I am attentive to the need to create appropriate pace, rhythm, and tone of each class; I understand the value of spontaneity, and the need for creativity in finding ways to illustrate difficult concepts. There is much movement in these classes. Discussion groups and writing groups form and disband; sometimes students will act, or dance, or make art to illustrate difficult concepts. And sometimes students sit still, listening, watching, reflecting, writing. Bodies are enlivened in these classes; teaching and learning become seductive pleasures.

Erica McWilliam (1995) writes provocatively of the seductive pleasures of teaching and learning. Deliberately drawing on feminist discourses about the body and sexuality, she writes of the reciprocal desire of the teacher to teach, and the student to be taught by the teacher. She carefully unpicks the ways in which the teacher’s desire to teach requires a kind of enticement or seduction of the student into being willing to become engaged in the pedagogical process, to be taught. Drawing on the work of Unger (1986: 85, cited in McWilliam, 1995: 20), she explores pedagogy as a *lived relation of power and knowledge*, by focussing on the teacher as performing what it means to know. Performance lies at the centre of her investigation of the seductive nature of pedagogy, whether as text, utterance or bodily gesture.

McWilliam cites Deutscher (1994: 36) who writes of *that moment of exhilaration when knowing and learning come together in the body of the performing teacher*. Such focus on the embodied and pleasurable dimensions of the pedagogical encounter resonates now with my own experience in performing as a feminist academic. The emphasis on performance highlights, too, the ever-present politics of the teacherstudent encounter. In particular it foregrounds the infinitessimal but necessary distancing that I find must occur in the space between teacher and student in order for professional responsibility to be acknowledged and mutual respect to be enacted.

Poststructuralist discourses that challenge the conventional Western notion of an oppositional split between mind and body have their roots in philosophies that are far from contemporary. For example, in arguing for the embodied nature of learning, Moira Gatens (1996) draws on the rather remote figure of the philosopher Spinoza who acknowledges the intersection of ontology and epistemology in arguing that *to know is to be, not to have*. In other words, knowing is not merely cerebral: when we
know something different, we are different.

A further example of a far-from-contemporary discourse challenging the Western notion of such a split comes from ancient Eastern philosophies. Feminist philosopher and activist Trinh T. Minh-ha draws on her experience of Eastern philosophies to argue that thought is as much a product of the eye, the finger, and the foot as it is of the brain (1989: 28). Trinh also refers to the procedures which in Asia postulate not one, not two, but three centres in the human being: the intellectual (the path, connected with reason), the emotional (the oth, connected with the heart), and the vital (the kath, located below the navel, which radiates life. It directs vital movement and allows one to relate to the world with instinctual immediacy). But, says Trinh, instinct(ual) immediacy here is not opposed to reason, for it lies outside the classical realm of duality assigned to the sensible and the intelligible. So does certain

Notes towards the articulation of a passionate pedagogy

women’s womb writing, which neither separates the body from the mind nor sets the latter against the heart ... but allows each part of the body to become infused with consciousness (Trinh, 1989: 40).

One of the ways we work with students to foster an awareness of embodied knowledges is to adopt a practice of writing from the body. This practice is inspired by the work of Bronwyn Davies (2006), whose embodied collective biography writing practices draw in turn on the original collective biography practices of Frigga Haug (1989). The practice of writing from the body is explored in particular in a unit called Sex, Bodies, Narratives and Selves. Students begin with an assignment asking them to write about their earliest memory, as a story that they might tell now to one of their peers. Next they are to write of this same memory as if thinking from the body, without rational or contextual explanation. The focus is to be on feelings, sights, smells, sounds, tastes, touches - what we might call bodily ways of knowing. They then interweave both versions, and reflect on the process. Because they are working with personal experiences and remembered bodily sensations, this assignment appears to provide a powerful learning experience which opens the door to the processes of integrating rationality, the passions and the life force.

A second, related assignment draws on the original thinking of Jane Gallop (1988) and the corporeal feminism of Elizabeth Grosz (1994), exploring the part played by the imaginary body in shaping, controlling, and disciplining the material body. This assignment requires students to write two letters: the first is from their imaginary body to their material body, issuing instructions, making demands, stating desires, letting it know how they want it to be. The second letter requires students to write a letter from their mindandbody to their bodyandmind, celebrating it for its abilities, apologising for any neglect, letting it know your plans for bodyandmind care for the future. Finally, students are asked to reflect on their experience of writing in these two contrasting ways. In particular, they are asked to reflect on questions of identity, and whether writing from these different points of view to different audiences caused them to think about who they are and/or about who they might become, in different ways.

A third, related assignment invites students to work with Irigaray’s notions of ecriture feminine (Irigaray, 1991). In particular, it invites students to consider issues of teleology and narrative structure in attempting to write contrasting accounts of a day at the beach, first using what Irigaray calls a feminine libidinal economy, then using a masculine libidinal economy. Such tasks alert students to the embodied resonances of knowledge-making practices.

In reflecting on these teaching practices I acknowledge that each student encountering feminist knowledges will take them up in her own way, according to her own suite of historical, geographical and political locations. At the same time, I suggest that the process of engaging with knowledges so that one comes to understand, through the body, the irreducibility of the self and the other, may well
enable activists to understand and adopt ways of working with others which are respectful of difference, attentive to oscillations and fluctuations of power, and simultaneously informed by a desire to change discriminatory and oppressive practices. Such attention to reflective practices emphasize and recognize what Jan Fook calls *the intuition and artistry of professional practice* (Fook, 1999: 199). The pleasures of working in these ways are immense, for teacher/s and student/s. There is a lot of joy here. However, one of the dangers of creating a classroom space infused with joy is that the ongoing pain and uncertainty of many women’s lives beyond the classroom means that such a space can appear disorienting and disconnected from daily life and from the politics of making social change.

Conceptual and experiential tussles between pleasure and pain alert us all to the politics of ways of reading experience, and, in particular, to the seductive power of the oppositional thinking of the dichotomous conceptual order. As we have noted earlier, a pedagogy informed by poststructuralist thinking demands the capacity to think in threes, that is, a conscious focus on developing the ability to think beyond the *either/or* of oppositional thought, into the *both-and* territory of poststructuralist thought. Ideally such conceptual acrobatics involves the ability to think *both* oppositionally, *and* poststructurally, and to move back and forth from one to the other. Such thinking allows the classroom itself to be read as a space that is both comforting and challenging. It allows for the acknowledgment of the co-existence of joy and pain, certainty and uncertainty. This in turn demands a delicate manoeuvre, a shift of attention from compensating for a lack of joy, to an acceptance of the coexistence of joy and pain (Cixous, 1991: 166). One of the strategies I have adopted to develop such fluid thinking capacities in students occurs in relation to the narrative trajectories of their own life histories: it is a process I have called *re-storying the self* (Hopkins 2005b; 2009). I illuminate this strategy further in uncovering the third dimension of a passionate pedagogy below.

**The third dimension of passionate pedagogy: movement between passions of the soul and passions of the body**

*In its movement backwards and forwards between passions of the body and passions of the soul, it is a pedagogy that allows us to be, and to become, in a continual process of storying and re-storying the self in response to new knowledges, experiences and insights. It is a pedagogy that allows us to enact a politics of complexity. And it is a pedagogy that leads simultaneously inwards and outwards towards a condition of flourishing.*

As I read back over the paper for glimpses of pedagogical practices we might call passionate, I see that the story I wish to tell is the story of the ways in which the pedagogical encounter is implicated in creating the conditions of possibility for students (and teachers) to embark on the process of *re-storying* their lives, and of learning then to connect across sites of difference with others, strategically and with awareness of the dangers and the pleasures of doing so. It is the story, too, of the movement towards enacting a politics of complexity, of *doing theory on the run*. It is the story of the birth of the activist, speaking self. I find it impossible to tell this story pedagogically without acknowledging the intermingling of the passions of the soul and passions of the body.

The third dimension of a passionate pedagogy, then, is the space where the other two dimensions interact. It is here, in the movement across the space where love, wonder and generosity mingle with bodily passions, that the activist, speaking self is born. It is here that aspiring activists find voice.

The question of voice is not untroubled in feminist circles, raising as it does the politics of representation, audience, identity, the politics of activism and the politics of the construction of knowledges. Ultimately, Drusilla Modjeska’s notion that voice is
born of the movement implicit in giving \textit{life to a story and story to a life} (Modjeska 1990: 72) is perhaps the most significant theoretical notion with which I work in bringing students to activism. This intersects with Elspeth Probyn’s (1993) understanding that voice comes from the interstices of knowledge and experience. It meets precisely with Pam Morris’s (1993) call for a theory of the subject that will allow for political agency and the production of voice, through a strategic process of self-narration which is historically, culturally and sexually contingent. Perhaps most significantly for my research, Drusilla Modjeska’s focus on the processes of narration meets with Susan Stanford Friedman’s (1998: 9) call for feminists at the dawn of the new millennium to become more literate in narrative theory in order to investigate more fully a feminist politics of location, which will allow for a mapping of the performances and negotiations which occur in the hybridity of the space between a number of sites of difference (Hopkins 2009).

Re-storying the self is a process that draws on Drusilla Modjeska’s notion that to find voice one gives life to a story and story to a life. Working with students to re-story the self means actively and deliberately creating classroom spaces where story, especially autobiographical story, becomes a crucial part of the learning process. Reflection on life experience has been embedded in all units we teach. Following Probyn’s notion that voice comes from the interstices of knowledge and experience, the capacity to read and re-read that experience in the light of new and former ways of knowing becomes part of the suite of personal political skills students develop. In particular, in a unit called Working With Difference, students give seminar presentations that re-read their own experiences of marginalisation in the light of contemporary insights into the politics of marginalisation to devise ways to work with marginalised groups. My research suggests that for some students this has been lifechanging (xxx 2005b).

One of my crucial teaching strategies is to work with students to recognise that, whether she speaks in opposition to a prevailing discourse, or in affinity with one or with many, \textit{every woman sits in the centre of her own story at the moment of utterance}. Such conceptual location, I find, creates the conditions of possibility for the speaker to recognise the reciprocally central location of even that other with or against whom she speaks. Or, to adapt the terminology Yuval-Davis (1993:9) has borrowed from Lamberti, it facilitates the capacity to understand and use the positions implicit in the notions of \textit{taking root} in a feminist ethics and \textit{shifting} to form temporary alliances while engaging in a politics of coalition. I suggest that the crucial skills to read webs of power, whether from margin or centre, develop as the restorying process occurs.

Such processes demand care of the self. Elspeth Probyn advocates a care of the self which involves a simultaneous inward and outward stroke, and argues that being occupied with oneself can become a crucial part of political activity: \textit{The self is not an end in itself, it is the opening of a perspective, one which allows us to conceive of transforming our selves with the aid of others. Far from being a self-centred action, this is to de-centre my self, to work at the extremity where my self can be made to touch hers} (Probyn, 1993: 169).

Probyn’s work brings together a suite of attitudes that underpin the practices we use: the need to hold hope; the need to think through what is, into the possible, via imagination; the need to connect with others, to recognise difference and similarities, to make space for others to speak; that is, to recognise that, ontologically, every woman sits at the centre of her own story, even as she acts to work from the limits of her own self.
A politics of complexity, informed by both-and thinking, celebrates difference as well as sameness; a politics of opposition informed by either/or thinking celebrates sameness but finds difference hard to accommodate. Under a politics of complexity the ways we engage with oppressive discourses, people and practices are more fluid, more mobile, more attentive to the infinitesimal plays of power that they ever could be if we stuck to being fixedly oppositional. For women, enacting a politics of complexity allows for the celebration of the positive dimensions of womanhood as well as for the strident opposition to discriminations that continue to be experienced by women. Crucially, it allows for different kinds of experiences among women, and allows for specificities like class, age, location, educational status, race, to affect those experiences.

**Towards a condition of flourishing**

Flourish: grow vigorously; thrive. From the Latin *florere*, flower.

Working with love, wonder and generosity in ways that manifest respect for the self and respect for the other are among the principles of a passionate pedagogy. Working with the intuition and artistry of professional practice, drawing on the bodily, sensory passions to engage with others are similarly among the principles of a passionate pedagogy. These principles provide the stability and certainty of my pedagogical practices. But in order to allow for the kind of openness to growth, to flourishing that Probyn suggests when she writes of *working at the extremity where my self can touch hers*, there is a doubled manoeuvre necessary here. Stabilities and instabilities sit side by side. Just as we recognise the need in the classroom to allow the coexistence of joy and pain, so we recognise the need to allow in individuals in pedagogical environments the co-existence of certainties and uncertainties. Alongside the certainties born of commitment to working with passions of the soul and of the body, I uncover more than ever an awareness of the need to be open to making that delicate manoeuvre, that letting go, that shift of attention from certainty to a profound uncertainty inherent in the realm of what is possible. In this articulation of the dimensions of a passionate pedagogy, then, my focus is yet again on movement: this time I foreground the complex doubleness of the need to move between the certainties underpinning passion and commitment, and the fluidity and willingness to move which accompanies the kind of radical openness necessary to engage in contemporary feminist praxis. Such capacity to move from the stillness of certainty to the movement of letting go echoes, in intrasubjective terms, the stillness of being and the movement of becoming.

In writing of passionate pedagogies, I write not just of working practices but of a practice of living. The connections between the imagination, love, desire, knowledge, power and the creation of the activist feminist self, which I have begun to articulate here, bring together many ethical principles: care of the self, and the care of the other; the need to hold hope; the need to think through what is, into the possible, via imagination; the need to make space for others to speak; the need to underpin one’s actions with a commitment to respect and reciprocity; the need to learn to be, with awareness. These principles, in combination with a capacity to allow for the unexpected, the uncertain, the new and the possible, create conditions for being, and for becoming. A passionate pedagogy, then, leads both inwards and outwards towards a condition of flourishing.

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Notes towards the articulation of a passionate pedagogy

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Notes towards the articulation of a passionate pedagogy 16