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ABSTRACT

Feminist pedagogical aims and strategies have been discussed in a variety of articles and essays and in a few recent books. This thesis explores feminist discourse on pedagogies and attempts to reconstruct the development of these discourses historically. Early writings on feminist pedagogies were the product of the action-oriented feminism of the 1970s and focused on classroom practices, while recent works, rooted in the larger framework of poststructuralist feminism, engage in a complex theoretical dialogue with the philosophical narratives and counternarratives that oriented emancipatory pedagogies and problematized the boundaries between feminist and other emancipatory pedagogies.

The thesis comprises an analysis of the historical and theoretical implications of the literature on feminist pedagogies, and an ethnographic part based on six interviews with Professors of Women's Studies at the University of Arizona, who were asked to discuss the meanings, possibilities and predicaments of feminist teaching in a large research University.
Introduction

*I'm in the middle of my life— and I'm not talking about midlife—
I'm in the middle of it, just like you're in the middle of yours. So
I'm constantly shifting and learning.*

Mona Phillips, quoted in *The Feminist Classroom*

For a variety of reasons, the classroom (in its institutionalized, but also, to some extent, in its de-institutionalized forms), is a challenging site for testing the limitations and the potentials of the impact of feminist theories on social reality. First, it is a locus of validation and circulation of knowledge, which involves crucial implications for power structures. Second, it is a crossroads of hierarchies and differences, which can be (and historically have been) articulated, interpreted and theorized according to very different ideological models. Third, it is the place in which there are enacted educational projects whose philosophical roots are grounded in some of the grand narratives of our culture. Feminist discourses and critiques have engaged with philosophical narratives and counternarratives on all these themes and knots, and contemporary feminist theorists are working to redefine the boundaries between feminist pedagogy, or pedagogies, and the philosophical, ideological and political perspectives that have influenced them.

This is an interesting time to observe how feminist theories and action in this country are challenging the educational scene and are challenged by it. After two decades of their existence, Women's Studies programs and departments have grown and matured into a recognized - and more "respectable" - presence in academia and offer a broad
variety of programs and courses in the U.S., while they are becoming an increasingly significant international reality. Literature on the Women's Studies experiences, identities, aims and accomplishments has grown at increased rate during the last few years; it forms a precious material, I believe, for women of other countries in which, because of a variety of social and political factors, the feminist movement has not yet inspired, created and supported formal Women's Studies programs. Now that a new generation of feminist scholars has joined the "historical" founders of Women's Studies as academic researchers and college educators, the sets of aims, expectations and questions that have characterized feminist academic life may be changing, as feminism itself has changed over the last twenty years.

The struggle for visibility and voice—crucial words for feminism—that had characterized early feminist challenges to the traditional content and context of education, from curricula to class dynamics, has been framed in new ways, as contemporary feminist discourses have engaged with the poststructural debate that has characterized so much of the feminist theoretical work since the late 1980s. Current issues in feminist discussions on education problematize feminist pedagogical aims and practices as they question the theoretical alliances with other emancipatory pedagogies, the political roots of which are grounded in the same climate of the 1960s and 1970s that was so crucial to the development of the feminist movement. At the same time, feminist teachers in higher education are still negotiating their identities and are carrying out their projects in classrooms that are the historical product of social changes that have affected the schooling system deeply over the past twenty years, shaping students' identities,
expectations and attitudes in some crucial ways.

It is my aim in this project to explore what American feminists have written on teaching, how a feminist discourse—or, more accurately, feminist discourses—have been constructed around what are now currently called "feminist pedagogies," and how the theoretical knots discussed in the literature are reflected in the classroom experiences of feminist professors. This work comprises a theoretical part that provides a critical reading of feminist pedagogies, particularly as they engage both with modernist theories of liberatory education and with the ongoing debate on post-modernist counternarratives—and an ethnographic part—consisting of in-depth interviews with professors of the Department of Women's Studies at the University of Arizona. Theory and experience interact, shaping and challenging each other: reading the theoretical analyses of feminist pedagogies and asking questions on teaching experiences have been part of the same process, an exploration of what has been done, what can be done, and what is difficult to do in the feminist classroom. Before becoming research questions, the questions that have oriented my project had been part of my own "personal" struggle for meaning.
Positioning myself.

*Our identities are multiple, yet enmeshed with each other in a chaotic balance of life choices and struggles for the self.*

Becky Ropers-Huilman

In the chaotic balance of my own life, an interest in education forms perhaps some sort of core. As a graduate student in an American research university, in a nationally known Women's Studies department, I have had the unusual opportunity, for an Italian woman who was a university student during the Vietnam war, to meet and confront ideas and practices from a vantage point that I consider quite fortunate. Feminist epistemology has taught me to situate myself, poststructural feminist theories have convinced me to question my identity. So has my life experience: being a Master's student in a Women's Studies is a part of an identity that would have not been possible in the same country where I was a student, a graduate and a high-school teacher. The very structures that my fellow students take for granted, "graduate school" and "Women's Studies" do not exist in my country, so that it is technically impossible to say what I am doing—therefore, to a certain extent, what I am—in my own language. And how can I define my previous identity? My curriculum vitae—this petrified truth about one's identity—qualifies me as a teacher and (in a more volatile way) as a feminist. Was I ever a feminist teacher? Did my honest efforts to fight against a very conservative and very androcentric school system to make room for women's visibility in history and to challenge male biases in the class
dynamics and attitudes allow me to claim the label of feminist teacher? Was that historically possible in the given set of social and cultural circumstances I came to work in? Did I really desire to be identified as a feminist teacher and, when that happened, what did I do to negotiate, let us say, my 'respectability' and my 'popularity' with the commitment to feminist aims and values?

Writing this thesis is probably part of my struggle for the integrity of my self. Feminism has taught me to listen to the voices of women, including my own. As a teacher I learned to consider questions as relevant, sometimes more relevant that answers. This project is, more than anything, the result of trusting my questions much more than I was ever encouraged to do as a student. Whatever their value may be to the construction of Knowledge, these are the questions I have asked myself, an educated woman in the middle of mid-life evaluation and experimenting. I know this could have not happened twenty-one years ago when I wrote my thesis in Italian literature criticizing an Italian avant-guard male fascist writer, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. I am fully aware that the changes and choices that have characterized the "chaotic balance" of my life are not so much the result of mere individual growth as they are a product of a historical process that has taken place over the two decades that separate my two theses.

Even if my questions focus on the contradictions and the predicaments of feminist teaching, I consider that the hard work that feminist scholars and educators have done in this period of time has made academia a better place for a female student to be. It is only from this perspective of validation and trust that I suggest that feminist women working in education have to face some disappointments and some new challenges in order to
maintain their promises to new generations of women (and men) in this age of change and anxieties.
What are feminist pedagogies?

*Women's minds and experiences are intrinsically valuable and indispensable to any civilization worth the name.*

Adrienne Rich

Twenty years after Adrienne Rich's passionate and now famous intervention for global changes in academia (Rich 237-45) involving both content and context of teaching and learning. This globality has characterized feminist approaches to educational issues and therefore the development of "feminist pedagogy" or "pedagogies".

What might be included under the rubric "feminist pedagogies" is not quite clear. One may argue that it is precisely their unsettled character—at the intersection of philosophy of education, classroom methodologies, cultural criticism and feminist practices—that makes these pedagogies feminist, and transgressive, in the sense used by bell hooks: they seem to transgress the boundaries of educational strategies and to reach feminist epistemology and feminist theories of power in a broad questioning and countering of dominant culture.

Frances Maher and Mary Kay Tetreault in their ethnographic work on "the feminist classroom" recognize "most academics' lack of familiarity with pedagogical theory," and observe and describe "feminist pedagogies" without specific distinction between practices and philosophy of feminist teaching. Feminist pedagogy seems to be, in their perspective, a variety of practices and beliefs oriented by feminist epistemological and political tenets. "Feminist pedagogies" is, in their words, the complex of new teaching
approaches developed and explored by feminist teachers and professors, evolved from many different sources: the consciousness-raising practices derived from the women's movement and other movements of the 1960s, the progressive tradition in American education created by John Dewey, and the more general forms of "liberatory teaching" espoused by Paulo Freire and others. What has made feminist pedagogy unique, however, has been its attention to the particular needs of women students and its grounding in feminist theory as the basis for its multidimensional and positional view of the construction of classroom knowledge" (9). The term "pedagogy" means, traditionally, "teaching methods", intended to transmit the content of knowledge. In the feminist discourse, however, it means "the entire process of creating knowledge, involving the innumerable ways in which students, teachers, and academic disciplines interact and redefine each other in the classroom, the educational institution, and the larger society" (Maher and Tetreault 57). Feminist pedagogies also acknowledge the non-rational aspects of knowing, "the pedagogical unconscious" and how unconscious dynamics affect conscious discourses (Maher and Tetreault 58).

Jane Kenway and Helen Modra, in their introduction to the field of feminist pedagogy to "the naive spectator," to whom they mean to offer "a general sense of the ways in which feminists have addressed matters of pedagogy" (138), argue for the theoretical value of the term "pedagogy" to feminist discourses. They claim that it "can bear, better than can 'teaching', the burdens of possibility as well as of critique" (140). In order to bear such a burden—and therefore be consistent with feminist visions of critique and change—"pedagogy" is to be understood in a broad and critical sense, not according to
the common conception relating to "the components of the act of classroom teaching."

They emphasize a problematized understanding of the concept of "pedagogy," which can therefore be useful for describing and theorizing the interaction between text, learner and teacher: "feminist pedagogy" can, accordingly, describe and theorize the pattern of interactions and the relevant meaning as they have been contested in "feminist classrooms." Their "ultimate concern" is to present feminist pedagogy as "a discourse of possibility." In order to make feminist "dreams" possible and practical, feminist educational project needs to "be directed towards ending education complicity in reproducing the complex, intersecting social relationships which are class and gender" (Kenway and Modra 139) and should be concerned with the nature of learning and knowledge, with the ways "knowledge is produced, negotiated, transformed and realized in the interaction between the teacher, the learner and the knowledge itself" (Kenway and Modra 140). Understood and framed in these terms the word "pedagogy" becomes meaningful in feminist discourses focusing on the construction of knowledge in culture and education and is recognized as the appropriate name to define the variety of feminist projects and writings concerned "with all the dimensions of the teacher/learning process."

The purposes of gender and schooling literature, with prominent discussion on the curriculum, problematization of the learner, and emphasis "on powerfully learning powerful knowledge" (Kenway and Modra 144) fall within the scope of "pedagogy". This theorization supports the increasingly common use of the term, rarely used in earlier gender and schooling literature.

Carolyn Shrewsbury identifies three central concepts that characterize feminist
pedagogy: empowerment, community and leadership. According to Shrewsbury, feminist pedagogy "begins with a vision of what education might be like but frequently is not . . . a vision of the classroom as a liberatory environment in which we, teacher-student and student-teacher, act as subjects, not objects" (166). Further:

By focusing on empowerment, feminist pedagogy embodies a concept of power as energy, capacity, and potential rather than as domination . . . The personal can be recognized as political in a classroom with some sense of mutual community . . . Leadership is the embodiment of our ability and our willingness to act on our beliefs . . . (168-171).

These pages communicate the political energy that has indeed characterized feminist work in the classroom. There is no trace here of the problematization of the notion of empowerment that has been discussed in recent literature—as I will mention later—, which causes this article to appear a little obsolete. However, in the rather skeptical scene that characterizes contemporary criticism and self-reflexion, it seems to be useful to remember the idea that feminist pedagogical projects have to be understood as a political project to build "a community of learners where there is both autonomy of self and mutuality with others" (170), in connection with the larger vision of a collective work towards justice. Interestingly, Shrewsbury's article ends with a sentence and a word that have a taste of "the way we were:" "[Feminist pedagogy] is a crucial component of a feminist revolution" (173).

Starting from these premises, feminist work in the classroom in the last two decades, especially through the activity and development of Women's Studies, has grown
and matured, since the first pioneering projects, into a large variety of programs, courses, strategies. For many years, emphasis has been on educational practices intended to change both the content of studies and the teaching-learning context, rather than on theorization of discursive moves and critical positioning with respect to other strands of theories of education. Part of this work has been documented in scholarly writings — journal articles, essays, conference papers — which have not yet been systematically collected. Pedagogical theorizing about who teaches and how, and critical examining of the theoretical premises and predicaments of feminist educational practices, instead, are relatively newer to the feminist debate. While a number of teachers and professors were engaging academic structures and schooling policies to change the curriculum and to create a different learning place in their classroom since the late 1960s, theoretical approaches to the moves and critiques that "the feminist classroom" involves have emerged in the 1980s, and have flourished in the last few years, within the larger framework of critical reformulation of feminist beliefs, discourses and strategies that has been significantly influenced by the poststructural wave. The term "pedagogy," which was only sporadically used in feminist writings before the late 1980s, and which did not clearly define a set of goals, practices, strategies, theoretical references, has during the current decade become a well-recognized definition of a "field" of feminist scholarship, quoted in titles of books and calls for papers. Tracing the origins and the development of "feminist pedagogies" is a challenging and intriguing task, as it confront the researcher with the richness of ideas, passion and experiences, as well as with the lack of systematization that characterizes a great deal of feminist work carried out in areas where no specific feminist scholarship was established.
Feminist work on teaching—even if we limit our investigation, as I have, to college education—has been done, in a way or another, by feminist professors working in all kinds of disciplines and struggling to break the borders between disciplines. Feminist teachers struggled over new ways of organizing their classrooms, their curricula, their relations with students: feminist pedagogy, or pedagogies, are the fruit of the action-oriented restructuring of academic goals and environment that characterizes so much of the history of Women's Studies. Even if some authors did use the word "pedagogy" in an article to describe their goals or strategies, the "pedagogical" work was so much part of the general, political process of changing the academic structure, that it is not surprising that there is little evidence, in the literature of the late 1960s and 1970s, of theoretical discussions of philosophical approaches to education or of the theories of education taught in courses on professional education. The disdain of academia for pedagogy is perhaps another reason why there is little scholarly literature on early feminist pedagogical debates: "method"-based pedagogical issues were considered aspects of "activism," not of scholarship. As feminist scholarship has expanded and challenged the traditional boundaries of academic fields, at the same time emphasizing the importance of confronting locations and dynamics relevant to the production and circulation of knowledge, pedagogical questions have been increasingly approached as academic topics.

It has been noted in the literature that very little work has been done together by education feminists and academic feminists. As most of the early work on education done by feminists was not a product of colleges of education, but rather of the activity of feminist professors working within new Women's Studies programs and projects, the
language and the tone of the variety of writings on teaching, teachers and schooling are not uniform, as they reflect the historical reality of the way in which feminist ideas on education have been shaped by the larger framework of feminist movement and debates, rather than by more specific and "disciplined" discourses internal to the academic structures designed to develop theories and methods of education. Theoretical feminist discussions of the interconnections between feminist positions of the teaching/learning processes and other theories of so-called emancipatory pedagogies have emerged at a later time. These theorists, whose works have been published since the late 1980s, have undertaken the task of examining critically the theoretical links between feminist and other philosophies of education and the positioning of such philosophies in the modernist/postmodernist theoretical drama. As this more sophisticated feminist work matures, one may feel tempted to see earlier positions expressed by feminist activist/scholars as more common-sense and almost naive in their somewhat simpler enthusiasm for changes in the classroom. Earlier writings, however, can be read also with a different attitude: a subtle feeling of nostalgia for a time of groundbreaking changes and challenges, when discourses were framed in the same language as that of a larger movement, active outside American campuses.

Reviewing the literature on or behind feminist pedagogies, mostly scattered in journal articles and essays, rarely condensed in books, much less in solo-author books, is in fact also a journey across a variety of tones, styles and languages, which reflect, I believe, not only the variety of individual contributions and disciplinary interests converging to the common "pedagogical" focus, but also the cultural and political changes
that feminism—or feminisms—has or have gone through during the last two decades. A historical perspective is valuable, I think, to situate and understand the various positions and moves in the broader context that has always characterized any feminist discourse. Though a comprehensive reconstruction of the history of feminist perspectives on pedagogy or education is well beyond the scope and the limitations of this project, I think it is important to consider the literature diachronically, even if there is no linear progression in the development of a unitary discourse, but, rather, a multiplicity of interventions.

Feminist literature—articles and essays—of the 1970s challenged gender biases in the disciplines that are taught, as they traditionally exclude women from their subject matter and "distort the female according to the male image of her; and . . . deny the feminine by forcing women into a masculine world" (J.Martin 105). "Equality of representation and treatment of women in academic knowledge itself" (J.Martin 105) was the basic aim for feminist scholars who were committed to reshape disciplines and curricula by introducing the category of gender as a primary lens for reading the word. A variety of contributions were produced on gender issues in education, on difference and inequality in the schooling system and in the classroom. An analysis of the various projects and writings on these issues would lead into the broader literature on the history of Women's Studies; as it is not within the scope of this work to examine the goals and accomplishments of Women's Studies and feminist scholarship, I will limit my discussion to educational/pedagogical issues, focusing more on the "how" of the teaching/learning process than on the "what." However, the two aspects can be kept separate only in a sort
of artificial way, as it has been consistently stressed by feminists that "curriculum" and "pedagogy" are strictly interrelated. As British author Gaby Weiner notes, "the curriculum marks the point where ideas and practice come together within educational institutions" (4). "Feminists, among others, have been more likely to see the curriculum as a site of struggle and contestation, and have therefore been active in developing alternative meanings which point up over relations and inequalities that suffuse curriculum formations and relations. . . "(32). Innovative work on curriculum transformation was the prominent contribution of Women's Studies professors at the University of Arizona: the article by Susan Hardy Aiken, Karen Anderson, Myra Dinnerstein, Judy Lensink, and Patricia McCorquodale, "Trying Transformations: Curriculum Integration and the Problem of Resistance"(1987) and the subsequent book Changing Our Minds: Feminist Transformations of Knowledge describe the challenge of "using precisely the same tools of scholarly discourse . . . to undermine the very tradition that had developed and valorized those tools." To acknowledge such work (the analysis of which would require a separate study) within a discussion of feminist pedagogies is important in order to emphasize that a significant part of feminist work in the academy focused on building ways of changing both the content and the context of higher education and emphasized the epistemological implications of these transformations (Aiken et al. 1987, 260).

Various authors (Weiner, Culley and Portugues, Lewis, Stone, Maher and Tetreault) throughout their work note that feminist pedagogy emerges as a specific form of feminist praxis. It has been a substantial aspect of this praxis to consider issues relating to gender, curriculum, pedagogy and practice as interrelated. This is perhaps the main
reason why early feminist writings on education are not strictly pedagogical, as they are not exclusively concerned with teaching methods and strategies, and tend to cross disciplinary boundaries between sociology of education, cultural criticism and pedagogy. Early feminist work in the American universities was action-oriented. Pedagogical aspects of the feminist revolution in academia involved restructuring the physical and symbolic space of the classroom, countering hierarchical positioning, emphasizing supportive, validating relations with students; the strategies apt to carry out these goals were introduced in the classroom as a result of feminist visions and political practices before being elaborated as theoretical models of construction of situated knowledge. Writings of the 1970s and early 1980s reflect the action-oriented, often passionate mode of approaching feminist issues, both curricular and pedagogical, in the academy. Subtle theoretical distinctions and references to traditional and innovative theories of education did not seem to be the focus of these combative times.

The tone of that age, marked by "the challenge and exhilaration of teaching and learning about women" (Culley, Introduction 1), is expressed in an article originally published in 1976, in which the argument for a different way of teaching—specifically, teaching Black women—is constructed through a series of passionate imperatives, rather than through analyses and theoretical distinctions. The tone is exhortative, the article is written in a language of possibility, emphasis is on political action and experience. The pedagogical is political:

Give political value to daily life. Take aspects of what they already celebrate and enrich its meaning . . . . Don't stop there. Go from their bodies to their heads . . . .
Go beyond what is represented in class . . . . Use everything. Especially, use the physical space of the classroom to illustrate the effects of environment on consciousness . . . . Be concrete. In every way possible, take a material approach to the issue of black women's structural place in America . . . Have a dream . . . (Russel 152-59).

Early writings do not seem to be preoccupied with the definition of the connections and differences between this praxis and the other radical approaches to the problems of education which were emerging during the same period of time that saw the emerging of Women's Studies. The 1970s, in fact, produced a large variety of criticisms of schooling, and some classical works were published on theories of class cultural control and the social reproduction of class relations, the most influential of which in the United States was Bowles and Gintis's *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976).¹ In 1967 Paulo Freire had published his now famous *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. I will revert to the relevance of his work later, when I discuss feminist critiques of this progressive pedagogical theories. What I am pointing out here is that within feminism, analyses and critiques to this literature are the product of a later historical time. In the action-oriented pedagogical ferment of the ground-breaking projects of the 1970s, little if any attention was given to the theoretical boundaries or the possible critical dialogue between the work feminists were doing to transform the university and what radical theorists were writing or to the potentials and limitations of the Marxist tradition on education that underlies radical pedagogies. The mapping of *feminist pedagogies* as a terrain distinct from that traced by fathers or brothers had to wait. In the meanwhile feminist scholars and teachers were
inventing what was to be described as the feminist classroom.

In the 1980s there was an emerging literature—still mostly in the form of essays and articles—which engaged with theoretical thought on education. An article by Linda Nicholson, Women and Schooling, of 1980, has been identified (Stone, Introduction 9) as the first journal article on education feminism, a term that has been used only recently as "a neologism to identify various feminist approach to professional education" (Stone, Introduction 8); this approach involved feminist questioning around the issues of the self, redefinition of epistemological and ethical perspectives and reconceptualization of curriculum. Once again, the feminist perspective undermines the disciplinary boundaries between pedagogical practices, pedagogical methodologies, the sociology of education and the philosophy of education: this complicates the research on feminist pedagogies, but is a crucial aspect of feminist scholarship itself that cannot be neglected. The education problem in feminism "includes but extends far beyond professional education" (Stone Introduction 8) as it concerns the relationships of girls and women to the educational process and to the values and theories upon which the schooling system is built.

As more theoretical writings came to enrich and complicate the scene of "educational feminism" it becomes possible to map some distinct discourses addressing different aspects of feminism and schooling. Some essays pointed to the critique of philosophical roots of perspectives on education and suggested moves from a feminist standpoint. Jane Roland Martin (Excluding Women from the Educational Realm) discussed the place of women in the philosophy of education. Her analysis moves from the consideration that "while certain aspects of philosophy have been subjected to feminine
Martin's argument for a re-reading of classical texts in philosophy of education, from Plato
to Rousseau, pointing to distortions and omissions which result in the exclusion of women, still belongs to the "remedial" aspects of feminist interventions. As she approaches directly the field of education, however, her perspective opens further space for theoretical discussions.

By the mid-1980s feminist pedagogy had become a reality that has been described and articulated in a rich production of articles and essays. *Gendered Subjects*, the anthology edited in 1985 by Margo Culley, Arlyn Diamond, Lee Edwards, Sara Lennox and Catherine Portuges, is one of the first volumes on feminist teaching. The book acknowledges that "learned-centered and learner-active education became the focus of various experiments with humanistic, experiential, and psychological approaches to pedagogy in the USA and Europe" during the 1960s and 1970s (3). Particularly, the authors recognize Freire's influential work, as "the text most often referred to" by the writers in the volume. They point out, however, that "little has been done to bring theories of teaching and learning together with a heightened consciousness of gender (3)." The various essays collected in the volume (originally written between 1973 and 1985, mostly after 1980) address a variety of issues related to feminist teaching, from definitions of the basics of feminist pedagogy: to critical examination of classroom dynamics (Culley and Portuges 3-6; Hoffman 147-154), the problematic questions of authority (Friedman 203-208; Culley 209-218), of interaction between experience and theory (Cocks 171-182), and of teachers' and students' "otherness" due to their ethnic background or the sexual identity (Stetson 127-129; McDaniel 130-135; Spelman 240-244; Davis 245-252). The various contributions of this volume explore from several angles the richness, but also the
difficulties and predicaments experience in feminist teaching. In their collective essay "The politics of nurturance," the editors elaborate on the contradictions entailed in the recognition of *nurturance* as a crucial aspect of the feminist classroom (it may be noted that the feminist debate of the early 1980s was largely affected by the works of Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan (the latter more controversially), and focused on the meaning and value of nurturance and on the impact of parenting on gender roles, which had been approached a little earlier by Dorothy Dinnerstein):

Being what we are, doing what we do, enmeshes us (and our students) in contradictions, contradictions potentially generative of change in our educational system, perhaps even in the deepest structures of our gender arrangements. (11)

They suggest that women teachers in Women's Studies classrooms "are both our fathers' daughters and our daughters' mothers" (12) and are expected, as nurturers and as intellectuals, to be both mothers and fathers to their students. By connecting the nurturing aspects and expectations of teaching to parental figures, this analysis risks to be trapped in gender dichotomies. However, it has the merit of acknowledging the fact that "the feminist intellectual in the classroom is indeed in a position of impermanent imbalance and endless debate" (12), and it contributes an interesting reading of the psychological aspects of this unstable position as well by suggesting the significance of the notions of *transference* and *countertransference* to the classroom (11-20). This dynamic not only accounts for students' expectations and fantasies, but also for the less explored area of teachers' own expectations and fantasies:

The feminist classroom is thus transformed into a privileged space, the *locus*
desperatus of reenacting, and perhaps examining for the first time, both threatening and joyous psychic events at a telling moment in the students' developmental life. We can begin to learn how to gather this material into new wholes, but only is we drop the masks of our own non-involvement. Our detached wish merely to help our students to become better learners, more competent female adults, is only part of the story, for it omits the intensity of our own emotional involvement. We must not confuse our projected wishes and fears with the students' real identities. (17)

Feminist theories on the teaching/learning process, even if they can be categorized as feminist pedagogies, are not strictly "pedagogical" in the traditional sense of teaching methodologies intended to transmit effectively knowledge and cultural models, but rather engage with models of education very radically, by questioning not only the ways in which knowledge can be validated and circulated in the classroom, but also the ways knowledge is constructed in cultural systems at large. Feminist pedagogies, therefore, seem to be situated at the edge between "pedagogical" concerns and the challenge to epistemological paradigms moved by feminist epistemology, as the feminist classroom is meant to be a site where knowledge is not transmitted, but rather constructed, and deconstructed.

Pedagogies reflect both epistemological premises and political visions. The antihierarchical, interactive, relational character of feminist teaching can be described as a result of the rejection of universal and objective knowledge and of the valorization of women's experiences and connections. While the ground for such approach was originally political, the epistemological implications of feminist pedagogies connect these practices
postmodern critiques of universal knowledge. The close connection between feminist pedagogy and feminist epistemology --between discourses on the communication/validation/circulation of knowledge and on the construction of knowledge—may account for the expansion of theoretical writings on feminist pedagogies in the last decade, in parallel with that of feminist epistemological discourses that called attention to women's different ways of experiencing and being positioned in society as a source of legitimate and alternative knowledge. Feminist epistemologies emphasize relation and positionality as crucial aspects of the construction of knowledge, and challenge the subject-object dichotomy that characterizes mainstream, male-centered approaches to knowledge. The theoretical development and dissemination of feminist epistemologies has added philosophical strength to feminist critiques of universality and objectivity and to feminist educational practices, connecting them to the complex terrain of postmodern and poststructural inquiries. In this perspective, Maher and Tetreault described the feminist classroom as a sort of postmodern laboratory in which "people are defined not in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships, which can be analysed and changed" (Maher and Tetreault 164). The aims and practices that have animated feminist projects of changing the teaching-learning process are thus redefined within the conceptual and linguistic framework provided by the epistemological/poststructural debate.

The 1990s have seen the flourishing of publications on feminism in education and the development of theorizing about feminist pedagogies. This literature can be situated
within the larger framework of contemporary feminist theorizing, characterized by a

critical, problematic approach to the philosophical and epistemological roots of feminist

ideas and discourses. Crucially shaped by the influence of the poststructural wave that

reached American universities in the mid-eighties with the translation and dissemination of

Derrida's and Foucault's work, contemporary feminist theorizing is re-framing and re-

addressing feminist issues in new terms. It is within this theoretical framework, constituted

by feminist epistemology and poststructural thought, and the evolution of feminist analyses

of philosophies of education, that feminist pedagogies have been constructed as a

complex, varied, but coherent discourse. I suggest that there may be three aspects of this

re-formulation: first, it gives new theoretical strength to some fundamental feminist

stances and to the very notion of feminist pedagogies; second, it tends to clarify the links

with and the borders between other Weltanschauungen, defining more accurately the

boundaries of feminist goals and accomplishments; and, third, it contributes to the

problematization of some feminist concepts. Feminist political, theoretical and educational

perspectives—which have always questioned and challenged universality as a male-

centered, male-biased construct derived from a system of domination and have

consistently emphasized relation and positionality as relevant to knowledges—should

perhaps be acknowledged as an original, early contribution to the postmodern debate. The

contemporary theoretical crucible of the relationship between feminism and

poststructuralism, which emerges as the filigrane design hidden in a banknote in any updated

feminist discussion, is too broad of an issue to be addressed in this work. I think, however,

that it is relevant to this exploration to note that while the reframing of feminist ideas in
poststructural terms has gained theoretical complexity and richness to feminist critical thinking in general and on pedagogies in particular, it may risk overemphasizing the value of poststructural reconceptualization and to obscure or underplay the theoretical and political relevance of feminist projects that have been undertaken prior to the emergence of the postmodern-feminist debate. In her examination of feminist interventions in education, Weiner claims a sort of avant-guard role for feminism in the postmodern challenge to universality: "I wish it were more acknowledged that feminists were way ahead of postmodernism in critiquing the structures and universalities of modernity" (24). And Teresa De Lauretis, in her critical analysis of the relation between poststructuralism and feminism and in particular in her critique to Chris Weedon's thesis that "poststructuralism is the theory and feminism is just a practice" (De Lauretis 261), emphasizes, that "the notion of experience in relation both to social-material practices and to the formation and processes of subjectivity is a feminist concept, not a poststructuralist one" (De Lauretis 260). De Lauretis, however, recognizes that "experience is a difficult, ambiguous and often oversimplified term, and that feminist theory needs to elaborate further 'the relationship between experience, social power and resistance'" (De Lauretis 262). The problematization of the key-notion of experience, crucial to postructural feminism, is particularly relevant to the redefinitions of goals and strategies of feminist pedagogies that have been the object of analysis and theorization in the last years. Located at the complex cultural intersection where political projects are negotiated with poststructural critiques of modernist narratives, these studies re-examine the expectations, models and fantasies that have shaped feminist educational agendas.
The earlier feminist pedagogical projects of making room for "experience" and "subjectivity" in the learning process, and to illuminate the "Real" of women's presence in cultures and societies, are confronted with some unsettling theoretical caveats: "the Real is mediated through discourse" (Friedman 15) and its accessibility is questionable, while the quest for identity has to face the "irreducibly complex and paradoxical status of identity" (B.Martin 35). Not only have contemporary feminist pedagogies objected to the idea that there can be one pedagogical strategy (as feminist history and feminist epistemology have emphasized that there can be no one history of women), but they also struggle to redefine an emancipatory space that Elizabeth Ellsworth calls "a pedagogy of the unknowable" (110). The redefinition and problematization of feminist pedagogies is the aim of two books, the collection edited by Australian scholars Carmen Luke and Jennifer Gore, *Feminism and critical pedagogy* and Gore's dense book, *The Struggle for Pedagogy*. A new aspect of the work of these theorists is the positioning feminist discourses on pedagogy with respect to other progressive pedagogies, one of the main aims of recent writings. As they engage with this critique, this group of theorists reviews the broad premises on which the complex and in some respects fragile building of emancipatory pedagogies is based.

Feminist pedagogy shares with critical and radical pedagogies the central idea that teaching, and education in general, affect and can promote social change. However, it differs from them both as to the kind of changes that are envisioned and—perhaps with a less sharp distinction—as to the processes that are deemed necessary to affect change. Contemporary feminist work on pedagogy has problematized the emancipatory space
of radical/critical pedagogies. Contemporary feminist critiques of the tradition of emancipatory pedagogies reproduce earlier feminist contestation of various disciplinary discourses: the critique of gender-blind perspectives, of the inadequacy of add-on-tactics provided to "make room" for women in such perspectives and, more radically, of underlying epistemological assumptions, Luke and Gore argue for the need for a critical re-examination of the relationship between feminist and emancipatory pedagogies, and consider their "poststructuralist feminist task . . . to go beyond the deconstruction of the normative masculine subject valorized as the benchmark against which all others are measured, and to examine how and where the feminine is positioned in contemporary emancipatory discourses." (Luke and Gore 7). They identify in the development of feminist discourses on pedagogies two parallel processes: first the emergence of feminist work, throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, that they characterize as "'gender and education' research." (Luke and Gore 8; Kenway and Modra 140), and, second, "other feminist educational work done during the same period (primarily in the United States) [that] concerned itself with the construction of 'feminist pedagogy'" (Luke and Gore 8). The latter is identified as the work that "emerged from a growing discontent with the patriarchy of schooling and pointed to the absence of gender as a category of interest or analysis in most pedagogical theory, including those discourses which proclaimed themselves as progressive and critical" (Gore What Can We Do 55; Gore Struggle 44). She provides a more detailed characterization of the different strands that emerged both from Women's Studies departments and from schools of education and can be identified in the complex and fragmented fields of critical and feminist pedagogies. Her clarification of
the formation of these various strands is useful for approaching the articulated terrain of emancipatory discourses on education and the specific contribution of feminist work in different academic locations. (It would constitute a significant ground for the historical reconstruction of the relationship between pedagogical discourses and practices developed in Women's Studies and pedagogical discourses and practices produced and circulated in Colleges of Education, a complex project that would shed some light on a significant aspect of the American academic scenario and of the feminist presence in it, but that is far beyond the scope of this work.)

But the main and most interesting aspect of these works is the critical—and self-critical—approach to the concepts that are central to emancipatory perspectives, discourses and visions of education, included the feminist ones. The basis for such problematization is the "political and pedagogical 'dissonance' with what the 'founding fathers' had conceptualized as a pedagogy for self- and social empowerment" (Luke and Gore 1). The perception of this "dissonance" has urged to examine where feminist educational work stands in relation to male-authored critical pedagogy and to deconstruct many unexamined assumptions underling the discourse of progressive pedagogy. The authors emphasize the failure of these pedagogies "to critique masculinist theoretical narratives" (Luke and Gore 35) and the "add-on tactics of incorporation," but also question "the liberal individualistic ethic (that) is written into the pedagogical agenda" (Luke and Gore 36). Drawing on the Foucauldian notion of power-knowledge they re-examine the assumed meanings that support critical pedagogy and take issue "with the technology of control, the silent regulation, deployed by signifiers such as 'power,' 'voice,' 'democratic freedoms' and the
'class, race, gender' triplet. (Luke and Gore 4). Different analyses converge to the conclusion that no single-strategy pedagogies of empowerment, emancipation, and liberation can be claimed and emphasize that feminist pedagogy needs not only to differentiate itself from other emancipatory projects on the basis of an emancipatory agenda for gender issues, but to develop a new understanding of pedagogy itself, that should problematize knowledge (Lusted 140) and deconstruct the crucial notions of power and empowerment.

The issue of empowerment is approached from various angles: Gore argues that the language of empowerment, largely used in critical pedagogy literature, should be used, it is argued, "more cautiously and reflexively" (Gore What Can We Do 11). Elizabeth Ellsworth (90-118) takes quite seriously the disturbing question that more than one progressive educator has asked herself, or himself--"Why doesn't this feel empowering?"--and drawing on her own attempts to practice "anti-racist" pedagogy in college classes argues that the discourse of critical pedagogy continues to perpetuate relations of domination in the classroom, and to be unhelpful and disruptive if the assumptions and the power dynamics that underlie it remain unexamined. Mimi Orner's critique focuses on the notion of student voice, as she deconstructs it in relation to classroom practices, in which she identifies repressive potentials. She raises some challenging questions about demands "by academics and other powerful groups" (Orner 76) for student voice, as well as for "an 'authentic' people's voice or culture": "What are the sins of imposition we commit in the name of liberation?" (Orner 77). "Why must the 'oppressed' speak? For whose benefit do we/do they speak?" Orner's equation of educators/professors with "powerful groups" and
of students with "'oppressed'" (even if in quotes in her essay) is arguable, as it does not necessarily reflect all the range of positions in terms of class, status, gender and possibly race and the way teachers or professors and students experience power differentials are likely to be subtler and non-univocal, as it cannot be reduced to the mere hierarchical differences, crucial as these are in the educational context. However, her shifting the attention to the possible repressive or authoritarian implications of em-powering practices and theories is an interesting argument, which points to the larger issue on the political and ethical predicaments of any approach to 'others' as the recipients of a certain 'liberating' program; an issue that involve the (re)discussion of em-powerment in contexts quite different from the classroom, from the therapist's room to post-colonial work in development.

Patti Lather points to the re-emergence of relations of dominance in emancipatory education and examines the problems entailed in a perspective that both problematizes and promotes emancipatory pedagogies. Magda Lewis examines "the violence/negotiation dichotomy environment as a feature of women's educational experience" (Lewis 170) and its impact of the specific "resistance" that feminist educators have to face in their teaching feminist issues. Drawing on the idea of the dichotomy that women experience between desire and threat, she inquiries into the complexities of student resistance and focuses on the "difficult emotional work" that characterizes teaching and learning in the 'feminist classroom':

... the feminist classroom can be a deeply emotional experience for many women, offering the opportunity to claim relevance for the lives they live as the source of
legitimate knowledge. On the other hand, I also hear the young woman who speaks to me in anger, who derides me for being the bearer of 'bad news', and who wants to believe that our oppression/subordination is something we create in our own heads (Lewis 187).

The critique of the notion of empowerment is more radical in Gore's work, in which she analyses the concept of power as property and looks critically into the relationship between the agent of empowerment and those who should be empowered. Drawing on Foucault's notions of power-knowledge, she argues that emancipatory discourses can function as regimes of truth. This preoccupation is at the center of the broader analysis that she develops in her book.

These authors, who have developed these critiques on the basis of poststructuralist or postmodern theoretical tenets, are explicitly concerned with the risk of serious political consequences entrenched in the rejection of the subject and of abandonment of struggles for identity and maintain that they "adamantly resist the hidden agenda of erasure that drives much of current postmodernist theory and analysis" (Luke and Gore 5). This double awareness—of the need to rethink subjectivity, identity, agency and pedagogical (and political) action in "anti-foundational" terms, and of the importance of holding the "feminist foundation" that risks to be undermined by postmodern theorizing—sets the stage for the "struggle" for feminist pedagogies that Gore describes in her books. In this area as in other ones of feminist thought, the effect of poststructuralist deconstruction is as intriguing as destabilizing. The problems discussed in contemporary feminist writings on pedagogical work reflect the major predicaments that contemporary feminist
Weltanschaung has to face; the rejection of a fixed identity ("women") and the problematic need of mapping an agentive subject; the commitment to counter hegemonic discourses and power dynamics and the opportunity of organizing counter-hegemonic, progressive practices within institutional apparatuses; the challenge to go against the grain of hierarchical, individualist ideologies and relations without denying individual differences, goals and desires, and hidden power dynamics.

Part of this challenge is for feminist discourses to maintain the level of theoretical complexity that they have reached without losing the radical standpoint from which they originated. It has been consistently recognized that "feminist pedagogies" are grounded in the political, collective experience of feminist forms of aggregation and movement since the 1960s. The implication of this, however, has perhaps been undertheorized. While the crucible of the theory / politics relationship is a common object of discussion among feminists, the effects of the transformations and shifts that have characterized the history of feminist projects on the meaning of "feminist pedagogies," of being or becoming a feminist teacher or professor in an educational institution in the 1990s, have not been fully taken into consideration. The existing literature on "feminist pedagogies" can be read in two ways: synchronically, focusing on the tension between the aims and strategies that characterize the feminist experiences in the classroom and the theoretical contradictions or predicaments that underlie them; or diachronically, focusing on the historical development of feminist discourses on pedagogies and on the theoretical and discursive shifts that occurred in the course of this development. My own reading of the fragmented reality of "feminist pedagogies" has been an attempt to keep both these perspectives in mind. The
former suggests that the complex fabric of experiences, expectations, projects, relations, philosophical concepts that can be analyzed in pedagogical activity is open to investigations the meaning and scope of which extend well beyond the classroom. The latter suggests that no investigation about meanings is exonerated from historical inquiry, and any deconstruction of synchronic dynamics benefits from the reconstruction of diachronical developments. Most of the recent theoretical work on feminist pedagogical work has been done in a postructuralist framework. This entails the prevalence of a synchronic perspective over a diachronical one. A critical analysis of feminist work and predicaments in pedagogies (and in other fields) from a diachronic, historical perspective would shed some light, I suggest, on other aspects of the same work and the same predicaments or, at least, would raise some different questions: how do younger feminist professors perceive and conceive their political involvement and their academic research? How have political action and professional work been theorized across time by feminists working in Womens' Studies? How does the debate about institutional and anti-institutional work affect pedagogical discourses and practice, and shape the identities of teachers? How have economic and cultural changes transformed university classrooms? Have patterns of resistance remained constant across time or how have they been transformed by historical modifications?

A historical outline of the changes that have characterized feminist pedagogical experiences in a specific area—to maintain the location in which this analysis and most of the literature I have examined have been produced, the United States—would explore the relevance of economic and cultural, and perhaps demographic, transformations that have
affected not only the pedagogical setting, especially in higher education, but also the production and modifications of feminist pedagogical discourses and practices. The weakening of the original connection and sense of belonging to a political movement that has been the dark side of the story of feminist development and growth in academic and cultural settings has to be taken into account when we analyze issues of identities and empowerment, central to pedagogical discourses. A pedagogical relation that takes place—or is experienced as taking place—within the larger network of a political movement is quite different from the a pedagogical relation that is framed as a personal exchange or as an institutionalized instructional relationship. While a critical analysis of emancipatory discourses as "regimes of truth" can reveal the hidden power dynamics, the hierarchical differential and the fantasies from which feminist practices are far from being immune, some attention should be called to the different meanings that "empowerment" may have if it is a collective aim and work-in-progress reflected in pedagogical relations, or if it pursued as the result of a master-pupil relationship.

To force the critical examination of emancipatory projects into the framework of pedagogical dynamics, obscuring the significance of the political connections that shaped those projects, may well be a result of a "regime of truth" operating subtly within a hegemonic power system that is already celebrating the demise of the counter-narratives (Marxism first) on which hopes of resistance and social change were based. A historical reading of feminist pedagogies reveals, first of all, their political matrix. Radical and critical pedagogies are also connected to a political vision, but in a more mediated way, as they were not directly originating from a movement in the relatively non-mediated way in
which feminist pedagogical praxis had its origin in the getting together of women educators who were active within the feminist movement.

Historically, the rise of early feminist pedagogical projects was consistent with the general aims of the coeval pedagogies that developed within the liberationist social and intellectual movements that began in the mid-1960s; these were grounded in Marxist and neo-Marxist theories of oppression and emancipation. It is within this tradition that the possibility of learning, particularly of learning about one's own individual and collective identity and history, entailed a crucial potential for a political struggle for social justice and liberation. Contemporary critiques of the "fathers" of radical and critical pedagogies recall earlier feminist critiques of Marx and Freud, as Freire and Giroux are to emancipatory education as Marx and Freud are to modern theories of social and individual dynamics. However, it is interesting that feminist critiques of emancipatory pedagogies have not addressed directly the Marxist ideas to which both radical and critical pedagogies are so explicitly indebted. The "happiness" of the marriage between Marxism and feminism has been debated in the extensive literature by and about Marxist feminists, and socialist or materialist feminist theorists have engaged critically (Arnot 89-93) with the reproduction theory, emphasizing the lack of explanations for gender inequality. However, I suggest that the Marxist premises to the construction of discourses on education may still contribute some ground for investigation of the meanings and predicaments of emancipatory pedagogies. The "concept of education as an instrument for liberation" brought to development in Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed—admittedly the most influential work of emancipatory pedagogy even for feminists—
resulted from the central Marxist notion of oppression as constitutive of the social reality, approached with the revolutionary trust that the contradiction between the oppressors and the oppressed could be overthrown and that education could be "an instrument for liberation," and therefore was a potentially subversive force. Freire's engagement in the struggle for liberation, and the projects of changing the object/subject dialectics, derived from a combination of philosophical positions (in his words "Sartre and Mounier, Eric Fromm and Louis Althusser, Ortega y Gasset and Mao, Martin Luther King and Che Guevara, Unamuno and Marcuse" (Freire 11), the central focus of his project on the notions of oppression and liberation, and his explicit references to Marx's texts reproposed some basic tenets of Marx's philosophy and the relevant implications for emancipatory pedagogical projects, which can be generally linked to the declaration of the Manifesto: "The Communists (..) Do seek to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class." Even if specific statements on education are sparse in Marx's work, the "educational implications" of other aspects of Marx's and Engels's writings have provided significant theoretical ground for Marxist philosophical perspectives on education, and influential guidelines for generations of educators animated by Marxist ideas and ideals. Because of the relatively scarce textual basis that can be derived directly from Marxist theoretical opus magnum, Marxist approaches to education vary, depending on which aspect of Marxist theory have been emphasized and applied. Marx viewed education as both a form of mental and material production and there seems to be a tension between the two levels of interpretation. Freire emphasized Marx's humanism ("an animal's product belongs immediately to its physical body, whilst man freely confronts his
product") and particularly a notion of man as "project" in the Marxist conception of
desire: "There would be no human action if there were no objective reality, no world to
be the 'not I' of man and to challenge him; just as there would be no human action if man
were not a 'project,' if he were not able to transcend himself, to perceive his reality and
understand it in order to transform it." (Freire 38). The space in which human beings
perceive the reality in which they live and understand it in order to transform it is the
space for education; the very existence of the possibility to understand reality in order to
transform it (specifically, the possibility for the oppressed to understand their oppression
in order to change it) makes education a liberating one. Crucial to the emancipatory
character of such an educational approach was, in this perspective, the shift from the
valorization of knowledge to that of conscientizacao, consciousness-raising. This shift—
relevant to comparative analyses of feminist projects and other emancipatory projects—
resulted from a theoretical move from the narrative of Enlightenment, focused on
knowledge as the instrument of (individual) emancipation, to the Marxist one, that
emphasizes class-consciousness as a necessary factor of the revolutionary process. To
discuss the philosophical connections between Marxist theories of class-consciousness, the
role of theory in the revolutionary process and the ideas derived from the Enlightenment
on the knowledge/power knot would lead into the broad and controversial terrain of
Marxist political theory, which is not relevant to this project. The awareness that such
terrain is peripheral to the map of theories and practices that constituted emancipatory
pedagogies suggests to question, however, the critical readings of these pedagogies in
connection with the modernist narrative of the Enlightenment that is often at the center of
postmodern critiques. The fact that Marxist discourses on cultural and educational practices are either neglected or subsumed under the generic label of modernist grand narratives obscures the struggle for problematization and redefinition of theory and culture in Marxist thought and calls for attention to the possible reading of poststructuralism and posmodernism as a "situated knowledge" with its own political agenda.

Even if Freire's work was situated in the specific context of Brazilian "oppressed"--which has to be taken into the picture when we apply it to the Western college classroom--his emphasis on the idea that "liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferral of information" (Freire 67) and on the participation of the oppressed in the elaboration of a liberating pedagogy, was very influential for libertarian projects of the 1970s, and his valorization of emancipatory practices as opposed to institutionalized, traditional ones had a large resonance, acknowledged in most feminist work on pedagogies. Freire was explicit on the critique of education as an instrument of reproduction of domination, to which an alterative oppositional model need to be created in view of liberating strategies: "Cultural action either serves domination (consciously or unconsciously) or serves the liberation of men." (Freire 180) Is it possible to generalize the project and terms of a liberatory pedagogy to educational strategies implemented within a capitalistic society? Freire himself problematized education, and in discussing the problems involved in the implementation of a liberating education (Freire 39) made a distinction between "systematic education, which can only be changed by political power, and educational projects." Such distinction--significant also for feminist educators committed to identify a space for radical projects within the conservative structure of systematic
education—can be seen in connection with the complex character of educational processes and relations in Marxist theory.

The debate of the relation between theory and praxis is one of the Marxist areas of analysis closest to the experience of political movements, feminism included, which have sought to define a connection between the interpretation of the world and the action to change it. It has never been a smooth debate. Gramsci’s thought, which has gained a respectability and a prestige among American liberal scholars that could have not been expected for the founder of the biggest Western communist party, is indeed the product of an endless struggle with the identification of that connection. The Gramscian notion of hegemonic intellectuals is crucial to critical pedagogy, as a description of the primary role of intellectuals—educators included—in promoting social change. Stressing the relevance of this role glossing over the problematic relationship of the structure / superstructure, however, may result in a liberal reading of Gramsci, who was indeed preoccupied with the problem of combining "doctrine; the 'physical' composition of the organization of a specific, historically determined personnel; real historical movement." (56-57) The idea that "the intellectual struggle is sterile if it is conducted without a real struggle aimed at overturning" the historical situation (8) remained a basic tenet of Gramsci’s political view of the world, that seems to be sometimes forgotten in contemporary readings of his work that translate his revolutionary passion into an agenda shaped by the liberal ideology of change.

Two perspectives on knowledge and education derive from Marx’s fundamental ideas, and develop in very different directions: one is the discourse on education as
reproduction of labor and ideological apparatus, the other is that on education as an instrument for liberation or emancipation. On the one hand, Marx's views on education are inseparable from the corpus of his economic theory and in *Capital* education in capitalism is seen as it relates to labor-power, the labor-process, the value of labor and the reproduction and social-production of labor-power. Marxist reproduction theories and analyses focused more directly on the educational processes as they are organized within an institutionalized school system and, therefore, on the critique of such an institution derive from this perspective (Althusser, Bowles and Gintis).

Althusser's critical idea that "every social formation must reproduce the conditions of its production at the same time as it produces, and in order to be able to produce" (Althusser 124) supports his analysis of the role of the school system in reproducing the ideology of a society, namely the capitalist society. Althusser's reading of the Ideological Apparatuses that "function 'by ideology' instead of 'by violence'" (Althusser 152) has been neglected in poststructuralist discourses that privilege Foucault's notion of pervasive power (which is actually indebted to the Althusserian analysis). However, the Foucauldian analysis of pervasive power and of the regimes of truth that can be detected in virtually any discursive practice risks to render undecipherable or meaningless the difference between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic strategies and discourses, undermining the possibility of working at any alternative strategy at all. The classical analysis of school as an ideological apparatus provides an interpretation of the problematic position of the radical or feminist educator who works in a school system the role of which is to teach "know-how, but in a form which ensures subjection to the ruling ideology by reinforcing
the ideological superstructure that secures 'the reproduction of the relations of production' (Althusser 128). This interpretation of the education system may be discouraging as it does not allow for a reading of the schooling system as a terrain open to emancipatory practices and struggles for social change. However, it promotes the disturbing but necessary awareness of the political/economic ("structural" in Marxist terms) of the institution in which radical and feminist educators attempt to articulate discourses that counter the dominant ideology and have to confront the predicament of their working at subversive projects from a location that is a site of reproduction of power structures, in which emancipatory space has to be reinvented and negotiated constantly. This is relevant also to feminist work in Women's Studies; as Gore pointed out, "despite any differences related to 'feminist process' or 'feminist pedagogy', or to a student population consisting primarily of women, teaching feminism in a Women's Studies classroom remains an act of pedagogy in an educational institutions" (Gore 1992, 61). It is crucial to remember the economic and political role of these institutions in order to avoid the risk, or temptation, of an "idealistic" theorization or interpretation of educational practices as liberatory or empowering per se, and not in connection with the political positioning and struggles the interconnection with which support and identify those practices. In orthodox Marxist terms, this would be the risk of thinking that superstructure can generate superstructure and change the structure, that cultural arrangements, and not transformations of the political-economic relations, can generate cultural change and affect social relations. In feminist terms, this risk can be reframed as that of accepting to criticize and problematize feminist discourses and practices on issues of power, dominance and agency within a
theoretical framework according to which the interpretation of systems of power and
domination tend to fail to address the significance of material differences and the economic
aspects of power relations. The canonization of Foucault's theorization of power and the
dissemination of poststructuralist analyses of power dynamics in the classroom risk to
obscure the fact that the feminist classroom is, first of all, an aspect of a larger effort to
criticize and counter the power dynamics that rule the world.

It is only if it is dialectically linked to the first perspective that I have discussed,
that the second perspective originated by Marx's work can be understood in all its
meaning. This second perspective, to which radical and critical projects focused on culture
and education belong, emphasizes education as a significant aspect of social change (and
ultimately of revolution) and cultural agents (activists, political leaders, ideological guides,
teachers, intellectuals) can have an active role in view of a social transformation. Marx's
work is animated by an underlying humanism, which involves a consistent preoccupation
with the meaning and potential of culture, consistently with the meaning and potentials of
education rooted in the ancient humanistic conception of knowledge as valuable per se,
transmittable and empowering. Marx himself seemed to share a fundamental trust in the
emancipatory character of education. His famous eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach assumes
that "philosophy," redefined in materialistic terms, can have a role in the changing of the
social world.9

The unhappy consciousness of the paradox represented by the double identification
of education—as a potential instrument of consciousness-raising and as a process of
reproduction of domination and alienation—is relevant to the feminist "struggle for
pedagogies”, for the political space feminist scholars and educators have strived to obtain and invent within the educational institution. Does the awareness of the paradox of working at emancipatory or subversive projects within a system designed to maintain and reproduce a certain social-economic model and a certain ideology suggest the dead end of a hopeless skepticism, and erase the trust in any possibility of agency? Or does it suggest that, no matter how successful a liberatory project may be in gaining political space within an institution, it maintains its vitality and its meaning only in connection with the larger political action that challenges the dominating ideological and economic system?

Deconstructing the contradictions entailed in the various aspects of education in our complex society is the complex project at which poststructuralist feminists are at work in pedagogies. The flourishing of a theoretical literature on pedagogies in the last few years is a result both of a change in the history of feminism and of a development of the feminist experience. It could be seen as a reflexion both of an involution and of an evolution of the feminist movement: a sign that feminism has entered its own "age of criticism," marked by an increase theoretical production and a decrease of political energy, or a sign of maturation, of the beginning of a phase in which experiences can be observed, analyzed and read critically. A critical understanding of the inheritance of ideals, hopes, disappointment and perhaps confusion on the ambiguous status of radical educators in capitalist society--peripheral intellectuals engages, promoters of social change, agents of domination, alienated laborers--can be an aspect of the deconstructive work of contemporary feminist theorists, as they depart from the modernist grounds of revolutionary optimism and enter the uncertain terrain of the postmodern condition.
In everyday reality, feminist educators deal with outdated epistemologies and petrified ideologies, with the multilayered reality of students' resistance, with the rules of the institution from which their work depends and with the awareness of their complex positioning in multiple sets of power dynamics and in the increasingly problematic interface between intellectual and political work. The tendency, apparent in some contemporary writings on feminist pedagogies, to question conceptual frameworks in view of a sharper understanding of hidden dynamics of control and regulation, may result in further difficulty for feminist educators who find themselves navigating between advanced theoretical skepticism and regressive institutionalized codes. Feminist professors in their classroom struggle perhaps not so much to define the difference of their own work from Freire's or Giroux's, as to reinvent daily the meaning and possibility of the "emancipatory" space of which they are responsible and to which they are committed. They are experiencing a time of accomplishment, even of triumph, and at the same time a time of disappointment. Only through a constant problematization of both the material and the imaginary relations that underly their work an oppositional agenda can be reformulated. They need to "work through questions of disappointment to build resistance."

From the fragmented, but rich work of the many women who have worked to envision, develop, articulate, theorize and redefine the potentials, aims, features of feminist teaching and teaching feminism--two aspects that have sustained the "struggle for pedagogies" of many feminists in the academy--a fine mesh of theoretical analyses and critiques, political concerns and pragmatic experiences emerges. The core questions about the meaning and perspectives of feminist pedagogical experiences and agenda arise from
the situation of feminist teaching, at the cutting edge between institutionalized roles and
subversive agenda, and between political action and academic investigations on the
founding principles for action. It may be difficult to identify the meaning and potential of
"feminist pedagogy" if they are searched within the horizon of the teaching/learning
processes and strategies and of the theoretical models that support them. Learning, un-
learning and challenging ways and contents of learnt knowledge have been a significant
part of feminism as a collective movement aiming to social and cultural change. Feminist
work in the schooling system, and specifically in the academy, derived from and was
shaped by a larger political experience and agenda. Out of this larger context, "feminist
pedagogy" seems to lose its authentic meaning. The central issue of empowerment is
emblematic of the need of a larger political context in which to contextualize feminist
pedagogical work: if em-powerment becomes an exchange between an agent (professor or
teacher) who _has_ the, or some, power and a recipient (the students) who do not have but
need it, the notion of empowerment seems to be open to the critique that focuses on the
notion of power as a possession; if the scene is reduced to the interaction between
individuals who rank differently in an institutionalized learning environment, then the
attempt to think empowerment as a collective movement to collective enact a different
form of power is obscured. On the other hand, the pedagogical situation _does_ have to do
with the interaction between individuals who are positioned differently in a power
structure and this has to be acknowledged and is not easy to negotiate. In the second part
of this paper I mean to interrogate some aspects of this negotiation.
Threading through theory and experience: themes and voices

Was there ever a life more riddled with self-doubt than that of a Female professor?

May Sarton, The Small Room

The time has come to listen to those who have been asking others to speak.

Mimi Omer, Interrupting the Calls for Student Voice

It has been my aim in this project to explore the meanings and possibilities of feminist pedagogical strategies and goals. With the second part of this project I meant to re-approach feminist beliefs, struggles and predicaments on "pedagogy" from a perspective different from that of theoretical analysis. I interviewed six core faculty member of the Women's Studies department at the University of Arizona and asked them some questions about their teaching experiences. The Women's Studies program at the University of Arizona—a large State research University—offers several undergraduate and graduate courses; the Women's Studies faculty, therefore, deal with a broad variety of teaching environments, from large General Education classes—with 50-60 students—, to graduate seminars. The interviewees are at different stages of their academic careers, entered the academy in different periods of time, and participate in Women's Studies interdisciplinary projects coming from different areas of interest. Even if I by no means pretended to select a statistical significant sample, I think these professors "represent" in
some way the variety of feminist presences that characterize Women's Studies in the 1990s. My questions on the "struggle for pedagogy" that these scholars and educators experience in their daily activity in "the feminist classroom" originated from the complex theoretical framework that I have taken into account as well as from my own observations as a participant, in my role of graduate student, of the Women's Studies learning environment. What are the recurrent themes discussed in the theoretical literature on feminist pedagogies and struggled over in feminist practices in the Women's Studies classroom? What is the relevance of this literature on the practices? What problems are open to re-examination, marked by disappointment, suggesting further moves? What ideas have been more effectively translated into successful strategies and practices? What is the impact of feminist theorizing on pedagogies on the classroom experience? Are the predicaments, disappointments and hopes experienced by feminist professors mirrored fully in the theoretical debates? I identified a few themes that I consider significant and problematic for feminist pedagogical praxis—the interrelated questions of care and authority in the feminist teaching/learning environment; the ways knowledge-power is structured in such environment; the teaching strategies that the professors I interviewed consider effective to empower their students—and I have tried to open a sort of dialogue between the literature and my understanding of it, and the answers I collected from the interviews.

With this part of my work I have not attempted to obtain a significant study of "the feminist professor." I had, rather, the opportunity of listening to the voices of some feminist professors about their teaching experiences. The fact that these communications
have been collected in the course of interviews motivated by my graduate project suggests some methodological consideration to the issues of voice, representation and the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. The theoretical discussions about the value of oral histories and about the position of the researcher-participant in ethnographic work can be seen as the larger frameworks in which these considerations are contained. I followed the basics of qualitative research involving interviews: I asked each interviewee a limited number of open-ended questions, in order to let them express their ideas and elaborate on the discussed issue as freely as possible; I tape-recorded the interviews after asking permission to do so. I submitted the transcripts of the parts of the interviews that I am using for this paper to each interviewee for approval. In the course of this work I have been fully aware of the ethical aspects of doing qualitative analysis as a researcher-participant, since as a graduate student I participate in the teaching/learning environment of which I attempt to describe some aspects. The environment in which I have found myself as a student these two years has allowed me to feel comfortable with this project as a feminist apprentice scholar; I regard this as an effect of the successful implementation of "feminist pedagogies."

The answers I collected confirm the complexity of feminist college teaching, situated at the intersection of power dynamics, epistemological challenges, institutional predicaments and political hopes. They also suggest that if the is something like "the feminist classroom" it is not a reality structured once and for all, but a work in progress supported by a vision, and that the struggle over the meaning of "teaching," "learning" and knowledge is an ongoing one for feminists. My questions focused on some aspects of
teaching that I perceive as problematic; the voices I have listened to offer a richness of perspectives on the problems I approached and also a living evidence of the vitality of feminist teaching.

*Teaching and teaching strategies*

Notwithstanding the differences in generational and disciplinary backgrounds and the individual approaches to teaching, my interviewees, requested to describe the interface between their research and their teaching, expressed some substantially similar ideas about the significance of teaching and about the basics of feminist pedagogical strategies. Adriana Estill—a young assistant professor whose primary research interests are Chicano/United States Latino literatures and cultures and who has taught undergraduate and graduate classes on gender issues in Mexican and Chicana cultural expressions for the last two years—emphasizes the importance of this interface in her work:

> There is something I find in teaching that is not beneficial to those I teach and how I respond to students, but to my work, because I can leave the classroom and feel not just that I taught them to understand something, but that they taught me reach certain understanding. So on the level of interaction, I think there is an extremely important link.

Julia Balén, whose background is in cultural studies with a focus on embodiment and power, has been the associate director of the Women's Studies program since 1995 and is both an administrator and a teacher; she points out that there are several levels on which
this link could be described, a part from incorporating the research into the teaching:

The other level is how my research affects the actual act or style of teaching, and in this sense I would say that they are mutually informative, because my research has been on embodiment, intersection of mind, body, ways of knowing, and I tend to try to incorporate experiential realm of some sort in my teaching. I tend to draw attention to physical reality, rather than encouraging what I would call escape into idealism, in the sense of being only in the realm of thought rather than in realm of connection of thought to lived experience. On a further level, I like to be teaching classes where the experiential learning is a stated part of the experience. These are the kind of things that do not often get emphasis in our teaching processes and I think are important to a feminist consciousness.

In describing their teaching strategies, this group of professors emphasizes the importance of the basics of feminist pedagogy: focusing on interaction, facilitating students' responses rather than lecturing, working in small groups, promoting communication and connections among students. Rather than calling for univocal definitions of "feminist strategies," they suggest that a variety of approaches, attempts and experiences exist. The use of class discussions, students' presentations, the attempts to translate theoretical learning into activist project—that Jakobsen emphasizes as a significant strategy, together with the sharing of writing among students—, or the use of new computer tools like the listserv—which could be the object of an entire paper or thesis on Women's Studies contemporary teaching, are perceived as different means that can be used in order to achieve the goal of interaction. Estill said:
I don't see myself as doing anything revolutionary in my teaching. In the graduate classes I tend to encourage people to lead classes and then I find myself inevitably jumping in and kind of ruining that... the de-centering of authority, because it's very hard for me to let go. In undergraduate classes, again, what I like to do is try and give authority to the students, so they are responsible for leading classes, for doing presentations. I think that using Kari McBride's idea of using the listserv has really changed my teaching here at the U of A. All my students are supposed to use the listserv at least once a week in both my classes, both undergraduates and graduates, and what I find is that it prompts better discussions and that people feel they can say things on the listserv they might not feel comfortable to bring up in class. It is the form in which I am most absent, and so it is really the perfect cyberteaching tool, because as an authority figure I am effaced.

Janet Jakobsen has been associated with the department since 1992 as assistant professor and teaches mainly theory classes; her area of research is religious studies and gay and lesbian studies. She so described a specific aspect of her researching and teaching experiences:

Part of what I write on is feminist movements and possibilities for radical democracies, so part of what I try to do in the classroom is think how to make the classroom situation through my pedagogy reflect those possibilities. I teach most courses called "theories" and so we go through theoretical material and out of that they develop an activist project. And when I get the students to participate in class, this is a way for them to experience what participation in what in Women's Studies...
is called the public sphere is.

As to the relevance of theoretical discourses on feminism and pedagogies and of the evolution of such discourses in the last two decades to feminist teaching practices, there seems to be some uncertainty. The need to redefine the boundaries between feminist and other emancipatory pedagogies may not be a priority in the lived experience of feminist professors. A more compelling issue could be that of examining the different ways in which theories and practices of teaching have influenced one another, and what it may mean in terms of collective work. The sense that there is a disjunction between theorizing feminist pedagogies and "doing" feminist pedagogy, that emerges from a diachronical reading of the literature, finds confirmation in these narratives. Myra Dinnerstein, one of the authors of the pioneering work on curriculum integration, is a research professor and the founder of the Women's Studies program at the University of Arizona, which she directed for fourteen years. Her approach is historical:

When you came to feminist pedagogy in the early days, and really it was like in the early '80s, late '70s, I think we were very action-oriented, and what we wanted to do was to get history to integrate women, English to integrate women, so that the kind of approaches we made were to have seminars with teachers, and this was done in every scholarly organization... so we were very action-oriented and I think the theory comes partly, I would say, because there is not much action going on, there are not huge numbers of projects... it is not as much of a movement as it once was and so you don't have the practitioners, so say people can look back and theorize and I think the theory comes from both the successes and failures of what
we did. By the successes means that there is much more attention to gender, generally in history... The failure is, there is not as much as there should be. So that we have high hopes and I think they are only partially met.

Estill admitted that she finds "no way to separate liberatory theories, critical theories, from feminist theories," even if she emphasized that "any time we deal with race, with any kind of liberatory, critical theory, in some way, even if we do not acknowledge it, and we should, but even if we do not, it is also about feminism and the key is to understand those links and to emphasize them." Balen noted that she has found "for better or for worse that teachers have the tendency to replicate the ways in which they best learnt" and that "this has nothing to do with feminism, Freire, or anybody else."

As to the possible impact of feminist pedagogies theorized in the 1990s, which emphasize tensions and differences between feminist pedagogies and other liberatory pedagogies, on the work in the classroom, Jakobsen noted:

I think that one big break is between the writing on pedagogies and our doing stuff. We used to have feminist pedagogy lunches and people did not really come. My sense is that there was really a time when people were really interested in this, but then feminist pedagogies became normalized, there was a sense that there were feminists in all departments, Women's Studies was stronger, so there was no need to continue to focus on pedagogy. So it is not clear to me that as the literature on pedagogies has changed, we are focusing so much on pedagogy.

Kari Mac Bride has been a lecturer in this department since 1994, and has translated her expertise in Medieval history and early modern English into innovating teaching of
General Education courses; she points out that the relative scarce feminist literature on pedagogies in the 1970s, during the rise of discourses on emancipatory pedagogies, is to be seen also a result of a gendered disjunction:

The big revelation that came out of the 1970s was, in a way, male authors taking over strategies and space, teaching space, that had been constructed female and that was seen as some kind of great revolution for men. On the other side, I think that at the same time women wanted to damp those categories that had been essentialized as being female... Probably that is why you do not have a big production of scholarship on teaching out of a feminist perspective in the 1970s, because women wanted to talk about women getting into spaces where they had not been before, not rehashing where they had been stuck.

Care: a feminist issue?

A discourse that has circulated in the last few years among educators, included feminist ones, focuses on the idea that a climate of care is an essential part of a learning environment. The theme of care is a significant one in the feminist educational agenda. It is also a problematic one, as it is located at the intersection of feminist and non-feminist—even anti-feminist—constructs, and it involves ongoing struggles over meanings: it involves "disentangling feminine and feminist aspects of caring" (Tronto 173), disentangling the womanly from the maternal and, perhaps, rediscussing the maternal itself.
After the publication of Carol Gilligan's influential and controversial book, *In a Different Voice* in 1982, which has popularized the notions of connectedness and nurturance associated with women's psychological development, the "ethic of care" has become a popular theme in scholarly and non-scholarly writings and debates, from feminist and non-feminist perspectives. While other feminist critiques of institutions and social patterns are still far from being accepted or heard, feminist discussions of the significance of relations and connectedness have been often subsumed as the feminist contribution to a contemporary debate on the need and value of relations and care in social contexts that are increasingly characterized by solitude and lack of communication.

The philosophical background in which discourses on the ethic of care in general and of care in the classroom in particular are rooted does not coincide totally, however, with the defence of the ethic of care as framed in Gilligan's work, which is based on psychological more than on philosophical concepts. Nel Noddings, instead, mainly on existentialist notions emphasizes the key-notion of "encounter" that points to the two poles of the existential situation, solitude and relation. I suggest that feminists could derive from this perspective--emphasizing the value of an "encounter" with the other woman--some theoretical ground in which to re-frame "care" in terms different from the mother-daughter model. In Nodding's words:

But we must keep in mind that the basic caring relation is an encounter. My description of a caring relation does not entail that carer and cared-for are permanent labels for individuals. Mature relationships are characterized by mutuality. They are made up of strings of encounters in which the parties exchange
places; both members are carers and cared-for as the opportunity arises. (16)

The emphasis on relation and empathy is a crucial idea in feminist epistemologies, which stresses the value of connectedness and what Evelyn Fox Keller calls "a feeling for the organism." But is the fact that feminist epistemologies and the argument of cultural feminism from the re-evaluation of nurturance and connectedness are acknowledged in recent discourses on the importance of "care" a sufficient ground for discussing "care" as a feminist issue? To which extent is the discourse on the classroom as a site of care a feminist discourse? I suggest that this theme is relevant to an analysis of feminist pedagogies because it is relevant to the historical development of the "feminist classroom" as a political project. The value of nurturance and care has historically been a tenet of feminist ethical/relational perspectives on interpersonal relations, namely among women.

I asked my interviewees to express their ideas about the ethic of care, the idea that the classroom is a site of care, and whether this is an issue for feminist teaching. Their answers point to the complexity of this notion, from various points of view. They all recognize that women professors are expected to care and describe the contradictory aspects of the experiential level of being in the classroom, namely in "the feminist classroom", and the discomfort of living the disjunction between the choice of being a caring teacher as a result of the project of going against the grain of the dominant ideology, and the experience of being perceived in the given role of the caregiver that such ideology imposes on women. As McBride pointed out clearly:

Women still continue to be perceived as caregivers in the classroom. A man becomes the caregiver in the classroom and he gets all the respect, plus he is a
wonderful guy. The woman tends not to get that kind of respect in the classroom and she is treated as if she is a mother.

Dinnerstein deconstructs the ethic of care with a frank acknowledgement of some well-known, but not so often theorized, aspects of the educator's life:

I think that one of the worst aspects of the ethic of care, to be perfectly honest, is that you want the students to like you, honestly. And it is pretty dangerous and I have to say that I am wary about that. I want to be in a classroom where we are together as a group and I find it very difficult... So all of these things... "I want to be loved, I want to love you.." I realized I was not loving them, they were taking advantage of me.

Judy Temple, professor of Women's Studies and English, was one of the authors of the works on curriculum transformation and has been the Director of the Program since 1995; she agrees that there is a need for balance, and notes that some situations are different from others:

I think I have always been wary of caring, particularly as a junior person. I have come to the conclusion that you must care in the class, but I think you also care with limits. And what I try to do now is to balance my care. If I find someone who is going to, in some way, lay herself out and totally be self-referential about her life, I usually will choose caring for the whole class, for other people who are being silenced, people who are not having time or access, and that was particularly difficult in a class I recently taught on journals, because as Thomas Mallon says, the journal is the feeding ground of the Ego and two students of mine were lifelong
journalists, they constantly referred to their own texts, which in theory I agree that
is important as any other text in the book, and yet we have no access to it, so it
became very much like a private conversation. So probably because of my
background in traditional academia I am a little nervous about open emotions and
"care" in the classroom.

She also pointed out that the Women's Studies class can present the professor with
particular challenges:

In the feminist classroom, especially in the general education classroom, you are
bringing up things that students had not thought about, their families, their gender
identities, rape situations that they have repressed, so there is a lot of territories
that could become really emotional, you don't know about, and you have to deal
with that.

The comments on the different teaching situations, definitely undertheorized or non-
theorized in the literature I have reviewed, call for some re-definition of the power
dynamics in the classrooms—perhaps it is time to begin to pluralize this term, and the de-
idealize it, in the sense Balén talked about (de)ideal-ization:

I would bring us back to a realistic approach: to idealize anything—labeled feminist,
feminine or, for that matters, masculine or dominant—to ideal-ize any of those I
think is fallacy. Idealizing care—we have Madonna images—and I think that is a real
danger to women in particular. For myself, I probably fall in that caring model
more than I should. Again, it is about balance. I think that encouraging women to
use that model as some ideal is asking them to serve as ground for a million kids.
rather than having one you have a million... thanks, but, no thanks! On the other hand, I think throwing it out is just buying into a patriarchal system at large or to end up being maternalistic or paternalistic in a power-driven way. I think there are models of caring that offer a critique for patriarchal models. I do not think very many have been well done.

Mc Bride sees the issue of care as linked to the question of authority for the female professor:

The issue of care in the classroom has to be seen in interrelation with the question of authority, and in connection with the expectations, fantasies and roles that are at play in the classroom. It is important to position the professor and the pedagogical exchange.

Adriana Estill approached the issue of care from her position as a Chicana scholar, with a special investment in the position of minority students:

It is a really difficult question. I have two answers based on the level I am teaching. At the graduate level I am really not a partisan of any kind of discourse of care. I do not believe in sheltering students at all. I believe in helping people and when people come to see me I do everything in my power to help them understand what they are studying, but I see that as my job, that is not done in any particularly nurturing way. In my undergraduate classes I have a greater investment in certain types of care and as a Chicana scholar I find that I am especially invested in ensuring that Chicano-Chicana students of mine survive the University--who have very complicated lives, children, you know, difficult family situations, that is not to
say... "Oh you poor thing, that happened to you, don't worry about the paper." I expect a lot from my students but if they make an effort then I will also make an effort to ensure the classroom is a safe place for them, there is respect, both between me and them and between themselves. So it is a complicated position that I find myself in—that really speaks to the way in general it is very difficult for minority students to survive in the University atmosphere, which tends to see them either as unprivileged and therefore unworthy of attention, or themselves internalizing those feelings so that they will abstain from contact with professors. It is a kind of remedial work that I do: "You are smart enough, you are good enough, do the work."

Jakobsen said that to address the issue of care from a feminist perspective means to look at a larger theoretical set of problems, involving assumptions and projects with respect to the public/private, justice/care debate:

I think that it is a complicated question. I do think as it was first articulated by Carol Gilligan is very tied to the traditionally feminine. What Gilligan believes is that making the traditionally feminine public is revolutionary—and in some sense that is so. But I argue that in the justice/care debate neither position is either as coherent as it thinks it is; they are in fact complementary positions that work together. For feminists it is not just a question of rejecting either one, you cannot give up on justice and you cannot give up on care, but you have to redo them somehow in order to make them feminist, in order not to be something we are to do in a traditional "feminine" way.
With specific reference to the classroom, she notes:

We are here in a State university, so this is literally the public sphere. I do not think the classroom is precisely either the site of justice or of care, because there are some complicated power dynamics going on. It is not public in the sense of a group of equals working together, and I think that the sense that because I am a woman in the classroom I enact care is not fully accurate, even if I think it does matter that I am a woman in the classroom.

It seems that if care is theorized in feminist terms, we have to break through conservative constructs to which the notion of care is associated, and to challenge the dichotomy between private and public, care and justice. Countering the tendency to define the classroom "as a site of care" in terms of an almost private carer-cared for relationship is the important character of this challenge and is connected to a larger feminist ethical and political view. As Balén summarized:

The bottom line in terms of feminism is where do you find justice and what creates justice, how can one work for justice, and there is an ethic of caring in the sense of being conscious that one's own actions affect other people, of not wanting to erase the self, nor having that self be one that defines itself as against others, but as a self that can see that there are things to be gained from working with other people, because it seems to me that is a more hopeful place to be coming from in terms of creating justice.

The theme of caring in the class seems to be at the intersection of two levels of discourse: first, the political and moral basis for feminist re-invention of a construction of knowledge
alternative to the one rooted in a patriarchal power/knowledge structure. Mutual support
and care have been seen as constituent aspects of the foundation of a different community
of learners, teachers and scholars. Feminist emphasis on the value of personal experience
also reinforces the attitude of respect both for what the other woman can contribute to the
communal debate and process, and for the emotions that such contribution entails. Even if
it is open to critiques on the ground of possible generalizations and essentializations, this
emphasis has historically formed a significant part of feminist identities. A second type of
discourse relates to the revaluation of traditionally feminine activities and attitudes, that
has characterized cultural feminism and emerged first as a challenge to the devaluation of
women's activities that results from traditional gender segregation. Discourses on care and
revaluation of care often adopt the maternal as the assumed model for caring attitudes and
roles, so that feminist projects involving care risk being pushed back into a scenario in
which women are, first of all and above all, mothers.

As Joan Tronto emphasized, "embedded in our notions of caring we can see some
of the deepest dimensions of traditional gender differentiation in our society" (172). A
feminist discourse on caring needs to question such notions whenever they emerge,
whether in theoretical narratives or in social practices. And the construction of "the
feminist classroom" involves both. There is a script according to which when women teach,
even in college, they are expected to care for their students in a way men are not expected
to. This script is so rooted in our culture that it is hard not to play it even when the explicit
aim of a woman's activity goes against it. As Tronto writes: "The task of disentangling
feminine and feminist aspects of caring is not simple. First, we must clarify the nature of
caring as understood today in the West. Then we will be in a position to evaluate how caring challenges contemporary notions in moral theory of what is desirable and virtuous. In both regards, feminine and feminist analyses of caring may overlap." (172)

In constructing a learning environment, feminist teachers and professors had clearly in mind these ethical premises, as part of the passionate rejection of the patterns of domination and inequality reflected in personal relations. However, care in the classroom can be thematized by relying on conservative, if not anti-feminist, association of the feminist with the feminine, via the crucible of the conscious or unconscious association of the feminine with the maternal. This makes the problem of care a complex one for feminists.

In an essay published in Gendered Subjects, but originally written as a conference paper in 1979, Culley et al. wrote:

The feminist classroom is the place to use what we know as women to appropriate and transform, totally, a domain which has been men's . . . And for all its irrational dimensions, the demand for nurturance and support is finally a rational one, and we must dare to embody and empower the vision of a supportive an nurturant community of women. (19)

The italics in this quote, mine, point to an important aspect of the feminist idea of the classroom as a site of care: such a site is perceived as a community. Nurturance and support come from a community, are not confined to isolated, private—much less essentialized—characters of individual women. It is the central idea of the need for a
different community of teachers/learners, for a different approach to knowledge, that has motivated and guided the development of Women's Studies. If the importance of caring is isolated from the political context and associated with the essentialized qualities of the individual teacher, namely of the female teacher as a nurturing figure, the meanings that discourses on care produce and circulate come to differ dramatically from the political meanings of "the feminist classroom."

Authority and power

The notion of power and the critical analysis of power structures and relations is a crucial one in any feminist discourses, either they are framed in a Foucauldian mode or they rely (as they did for at least a decade) on pre-poststructural critiques of patriarchal injustice. In feminist discourses on education, as we move from the general critique of male-centered, male-biased construction/transmission of knowledge to the analyses of the dynamics involved in the classroom in which construction/reconstruction/deconstruction of knowledge is struggled upon, the issue of power becomes rather complex. The concept of authority in the classroom, that involves both a position in a hierarchical structure and a position resulting from knowledge cannot be separated by the analysis of the complex power dynamics that exist in an institutionalized teaching-learning environment.

If we know that knowledge is power—to state it in a perhaps too succinct of a way—what are the power dynamics at play in a "feminist classroom?" To which extent can these dynamics be controlled and directed by the "feminist teacher?" What are the ways in
which students and teacher negotiate their power relations in the presence of a hierarchical
structure that unavoidably shapes their roles and marks their difference within a power
structure that can not be negotiated in toto? What is the level of awareness, acceptance or
denial of the locations of the individuals in the power structure, which is a vertical one,
even if the classroom ecology is shaped as much as possible so as to suggest a horizontal,
equalitarian one? The feminist response to the problem of authority is the anti-hierarchical,
empowering strategy of sharing it, of going against the grain of patriarchal, individualistic,
dominating notions of knowledge and mastery. This strategy, grounded in emancipatory
pedagogies, feminist epistemology and feminist activism, is not enacted in the classroom
without problems and contradictions.

Friedman addresses the uneasy issue of "authority in the feminist classroom," a
well-known problem for feminist university teachers who have based their pedagogy on
rejection of hierarchies and validation of students' experience and expertise. She argues that
to the principles of feminist pedagogy there needs to be added a "recognition" that "both
our students and ourselves have been socialized to believe (frequently at a non-conscious
level) that any kind of authority is incompatible with the feminine" (206), and "a
celebration of women's intellectual potential" (208). Students have--she points out
reporting discussions among Women's Studies teachers, "subtle desires to find in their
teachers a nurturing mother-figure" (205). A familiar experience for feminist educators is
"the clashes at grading time" and "the hostile challenge" to their "authority to know": the
italics, mine, emphasize that Friedman identifies the specific kind of authority that women
are denied:
That, fundamentally, is what patriarchy does in its definition of woman: deny women the authority of their experiences, perspectives, emotions and minds. The denial of intellect is particularly crucial for the scholar and educator who happens to be female. (206)

Friedman describes feminist pedagogy as "the fusion on my professional life of feminism and radical pedagogy", but she points out that the radical pedagogy that influenced her and "a generation of feminist teachers" had "emerged as a critique of male authority as it manifested itself in the classroom" (207). She argues that both masculine authority, based on oppression, and "the feminine (based as it iss on the absence of any authority" (207) are inadequate. Pedagogy for the feminist classroom, "the cornerstone" of which has been the validation of experience, needs the kind of authority that counters the existing:

Feminist pedagogy now needs to base the classroom more completely on the accomplishments of the movement. In our eagerness to be non-hierarchical and supportive instead of tyrannical and ruthless critical, we have sometimes participated in the patriarchal denial of the mind to women. In our radical and necessary assertion that the feminist teacher must validate the personal and the emotional, we have sometimes ignored the equally necessary validation of the intellect. In our sensitivity to the psychology of oppression in our students' lives, we have often denied ourselves the authority we seek to nurture in our students. (207)

The paradox described in this paragraph is still a challenging aspect of feminist teaching; an aspect of a narrative of disappointment that contemporary elaboration of
feminist experiences need to be taken into account and emerged also from the narratives I collected. The professors I listened to talked about a variety of aspects of the question of authority. Why all agreed that they look for, in Estill's words "an interactive kind of authority." McBride expressed a positive approach to the potentials of deconstructing authority in class:

If I teach my students to be critical thinkers I empower them in some sense against the dominant ideology or at least to see it as a construct constantly being produced. So I think one can use that notion of knowledge as power in a very deconstructive way. And once you start to give students the tools to deconstruct hegemony, you also have given them the power to deconstruct your own authority and then your authority has to rest on something else besides your being in the position of a professor.

However, the choice of an interactive, or shared authority is not immune from predicaments. Asked whether they ever felt that their authority was problematic for the students or for themselves, my interviewees identified various levels of problems. At the experiential level, there seems to be a diffused acknowledgement that for a woman professor a first difficulty is not in giving up authority but in being recognized as a legitimate authority figure within an institution that legitimizes, per se, professors' authority. McBride emphasized that the issue of care needs to be looked at in connection with the problem of authority for female and feminist professors, especially in the college classroom as it is constructed now.
For one thing I think that authority is a bigger issue for women in the classroom and all this discourse about giving up authority is really great for men, for white, middle class, privileged, educated men; it is revolutionary for them to look at strategies, share power, but I think a woman still has got to struggle to establish power. All of the discourses now of students as consumers, as customers, just evacuate authority, and it is hard for a woman, who is not granted "natural" authority.

Janet Jakobsen recalled an episode emblematic of the unsecure way a woman professor (or a feminist professor, or a woman professor who is anti-authoritarian and "nice" and also a feminist) is granted authority:

One day in my first year of teaching I had listened to a talk about the ways men are used to dealing with women in social situations and it is hard for them to treat them as professionals. The talk mentioned something that a student had actually done to me that day, and it was striking to me because I had not really noticed it. We were talking about an assignment and what he said to me in the end was "I'll do this because you are a nice person." And I said, "No, you'll do it because I am the professor and I assigned it." But that sense was that I was nice and the reason he would interact with me was a social reason, not because I had a PhD and an institutional position. So, even if I was there in public it did not matter, he still interacted with me as if it was private.

This answer suggests that it is neither obvious nor easy, for a feminist who is also a professor, to say: "I am the professor here," therefore making clear that the source of her
authority is indeed her institutional role. Balén addressed this uncomfortable issue (the 
analysis of which would lead into the huge debate on the meanings and contradictions of 
the feminist presence in the academy) arguing that women professors do have a position of 
power in the system and need to acknowledge it:

First of all acknowledging our own position within the system and acknowledging 
we are part of the system, as professors. It is important and we are so often in 
denial about that, at the emotional level, because as feminists we are always 
critiquing power, so we are not supposed to have it. In effect we do have it 
 provisionally, in small ways, and understanding our own power is the key to 
negotiating the larger power system.

Dinnerstein recalls that the awareness of being part of a power structure was part of the 
early experience of feminist scholars and admits the difficulty of evading power dynamics:

I think that we did understand, we came to understand is that at the University 
there is a power dynamic and that it is impossible ever to get away from it. I 
always feel that my students welcome me until I give back their first exams or their 
first papers. So maybe the theorizing also comes from the disappointment of the 
utopian classroom where things would be different and there would be liberation...

In order to approach this "disappointment" it seems to be useful to address a problem 
mentioned by Temple in her interview:

I would argue that one can have graduated authority, depending on the setting. I 
think that in a large classroom, where there can be hostility, which may come from 
male or female students, like it or not, you respond with more authority. There is
something about facing sixty people after a female student has opened a conversation saying: "I find Medea the ultimate bitch." There is a difference between facing sixty people and a seminar with seven students. I mostly use my authority in the college classroom, again, to give access to those who need to speak. I am very concerned with silences and the fact that an angry male may take up more time than the most articulate graduate student who has a lineage of readings.

Joan Pagano noted that the terrain of women's relationship to authority in the social world "has always been perplexing" due to historical reasons:

Authority in all of its meaning refers to some sort of power or right. When teaching is considered to be the enactment of narrative, authority refers to the power to represent reality, to signify, and to command compliance with one's acts of signification. Even in this context, though, authority eludes women, or at least makes them uncomfortable. Reading feminist philosophy and literary criticism leads us to suspect that our discomfort may have something to do with women's peculiar relationship to language and to art. Women exercise powers of rights to represent reality only as surrogates for men. Only by proxy we have the right to command, to enforce obedience to the father's law. (253)

The question of authority is inextricably linked to that of power, of institutionalized power hierarchies, of the notion of the education system as an apparatus. However, the concept of authority also involves the idea of a differentiated position in the process of learning and knowing, the honoring of an individual—or, potentially, a
collective—progress along a path of knowledge in which not everybody is situated at the same point, due to differences in interests, efforts, experience and skills. It seems to me that there should be some healthy way to acknowledge the authority of the other—particularly of the other woman—without falling into the conservative observance of hierarchical differences. I wonder, and I asked my interviewees, whether it is possible for feminists to envision and accept a form of authority that is seen as a result of work, interests, experience, "mastery" in a non-authoritarian way. I also wonder whether the framing of any discourse on "knowledge" in terms of Foucauldian knowledge-power prevents from finding more creative ways of defining the various relationships that can be constructed around the complex notion of "knowledge."

McBride observed:

We are in an institution where people come to learn and research and study, therefore we honor those who have studied and achieved and continued to study. It would be, it is, hypocritical not to honor that here, when that is, at least supposedly, what we are all here to do, to learn and study and think. So we have a system that honors that. I do not think it needs to be a destructive hierarchy. And here I think is where some of the notions or insights of liberatory pedagogies become significant, when the attempt to expand our notion of what is learning, what is research, what is knowledge, what is poetry, what is literature... and insofar as feminist critiques of the academy have encouraged us to expand the canon, so that we see that not only one privileged group produced anything of value, and to deconstruct the notion of literature and high culture, then we can
expand the idea of what can be honored, I think that is where the critique needs to come in.

The fact that in an institutionalized situation the person who has more authority in an area of knowledge or research is also the person, as the script should go, that is entitled with the authority or power to rank, grade, affect, in the long run, others' social and economic positions, renders the whole issue more complicated and makes it perhaps impossible to discuss authority as disengaged from power. However, the self-perception of a professor who is committed to her work as part of a larger commitment to a view of the world and an intellectual passion clearly does not coincide with her prescribed inscription in a power system and the "struggle for authority" is a struggle for the respect of an integrity rather than a claim of status. I think that redefining authority and the possibility of assigning a non power-driven authority to another woman—the woman who may be ahead of me in some area of learning—is a feminist project that is still undertheorized. When Janet Jakobsen told her student to do his or her work "Because I am the professor," she was in fact claiming visibility for her intellectual work, the passion and vision that sustain it, and ultimately her identity. Ironically, Adrienne Rich's words may be paraphrased as: "Taking women professors seriously." For feminist professors, in "feminist classrooms," this seems, paradoxically, more problematic. Myra Dinnerstein offered an interesting description of a feminist professor's predicament that calls for further reflection on the issue of experience and its problematization as a feminist theme:

I have always felt that not that we are not learning together, but that... "Your knowledge is equal to my knowledge..." and in fact I spend a lot of time explaining
to them that it is not true, because they are talking from individual experience and I am talking from a research base, which is really hard to explain in Women's Studies. But I do have this problem here which we in Women's Studies and the women's movement have valorized, have privileged experience, so that I think that it is a very tricky thing to say to the students: "Your experience does not matter, it is what the research is, and I think going down that road is very tricky and I do not think I have ever done it successfully. I mean I do not want to say, it does not matter that, you know, you have a sister who did something or this happened to you in life, because clearly it does matter and because as feminists we say, an individual experience does count, but on the other hand, as I told you one of my aims is to get them away from this individualistic idea of knowledge and to explain to them that there is something beyond their experience that they have to know about. That where I have the most difficulty, not saying to them, your experience does not count, here is what is really happening or, you are just an individual and that is an exception, you cannot have exceptional history or sociology. And I think that is really hard, because the feminist part of me wants to say, yes, everybody's experience is valid, and so I try to negotiate that, but I never feel successful in it.

This predicament—aggravated by the lack of habit of thinking historically of American students for whom, in Dinnerstein's words, "everything starts today"—points to a tension between two feminist tenets: the valorization of personal experience and the contestation of individualism. Once again, the solution of the riddle is dialectical: we cannot give up either personal experiences or the need to overcome individualism, but we need a
redefinition of the personal and the political, the pivot of feminist theorizing.

Balán reframes "mastery" in terms of "comfort", thus suggesting a possible way of bypassing the knowledge-power knot and rethinking authority differently:

When I talk about what most people call "mastery of the topic," I like to think in terms of comfort. I am uncomfortable with something I do not know much about. Rather than speaking of mastery—which obviously is a dominating model—I look for student discomfort with a topic, I look for the place that we need to explicate and develop. Now, if I work in an area, my comfort with a topic is going to be much broader than my students', theoretically, and by large it is. So what I have to offer students is a sense for developing their own comfort in the topic. The ones from whom I get the most resistance tend to be the ones who have bought into the larger system and just want the bottom line; they want to know that they are secure with the system. I disrupt the system, therefore I am particularly uncomfortable from them, because I am not willing to pretend that I have no intention other than disrupting their comfort with that.

This seems to call attention to an aspect of feminist teaching that does not always emerge in the theoretical literature I have reviewed: the fact that feminist teaching in Women's Studies is about deconstructing and make students un-learn what the dominant culture has made them believed as valid and in many regards reassuring. It seems to me that this is a major difference between the consciousness-raising process promoted by Freirean pedagogy among the oppressed—who have no reason to feel unsettled by learning about their own oppression—and the un-learning process promoted by feminist analyses of
sexuality, gender inequalities, gendered and sexed bodies and identities and power
dynamics in relations: this process is much more destabilizing and "uncomfortable" and it
is much more likely to find resistance, a specific kind of resistance that cannot be address
by only questioning the remainders of dominating attituded in feminist pedagogy. Not
only, as Temple mentioned, does the Women's Studies class bring up "things that students
had not thought about" and that do not make them feel comfortable at least in the
beginning, but the general setting in which a feminist professor attempts to perform her
anti-authoritarian role needs further analysis. McBride distinguishes it from the
environment that originated radical pedagogy:

The attempt to break down that distance....all this comes out of liberatory
pedagogies. But, you know, what is the situation in which I teach/ we teach? What
classroom, when, where, what students, what subjects, is the class required, is it
majors? For one thing, we are co-opting Freire's theories of teaching, but what was
the situation in which he was doing that? It isn't the same situation in which I am
teaching, it isn't the same situation at all.

Temple questions the notion of "feminist classroom":

One needs to examine the nuances between authority and responsibility. I like a
class in which everyone is responsible for teaching each other, and in fact one of
the things that my graduate students in English most like is that each of them
presents his or her paper in a shortened version about three weeks before it is due
and they do not get my comments but each other's. I think that there is authority
based on different things, and that is when you really have to negotiate between
the authority of reading, the authority of articulate voice, and try to strike the common ground. You keep saying "the feminist classroom": and how many feminists does it take to fill the classroom? If you are the only feminist in a group of general education students, it is very different.

The model of mentorship and leadership as an alternative way of framing authority finds a resistent obstacle in the model of mothering that keeps jumping back as a jack-in-the-box. Interestingly, when I was discussing this paper—particularly the issue of care—in a peer group, the other students insisted on the value of relations modeled in ways alternative to the mother-daughter paradigm. They encouraged me to look at peer relations, forms of students' connections and mutual care. However, the professors repeatedly mentioned their struggle with that paradigm in their everyday experiences, and suggested me to look more into the question of mothering as it is enmeshed in the roles professors play and embody in the class. In Temple's words:

But all older women basically are the mothers. How can you mentor if you are the mother? One of the shocking experiences of my adult life was to find out that my PhD director, who I considered very tough, who was very authoritarian and disciplinarian, is only five years older than I am. In my mind, this woman was twenty years older than I am, and she was this "mother" for whom I would never be good enough. And to find out that we were almost peers shows how my perception of power was turned into not mentor but mothering.

She concludes:

I think that the mentor-mother thing is really loaded and very difficult to unpack,
and there are the slippages just between them, and isn't it possible to be both?

There is a lot of slippage, and it can be simultaneous, so you are mentoring and all of a sudden you are mothering. An entire culture speaks this way.

This suggests two considerations: first, that feminist teaching could be an interesting site from which to re-open a feminist discourse on mothers and the need for women to redefine politically what a feminist mother is, what expectations and what boundaries are appropriate and fair to her. Second, that feminist pedagogies still need to redefine a model of mutual relations—allowing for care and authority—that is alternative to the fantasies about the good or bad mother that the female professor brings with herself in the classroom.
Conclusions, provisional

As I take leave of this work—an act dictated by the expiration of the time at my disposal to conclude my project much more than by the sense of having arrived at the end of my exploration—I realize that the material I gathered, the analyses I engaged with, the critiques I sometimes ventured, have not provided me, rather than with a clear answer of what feminist pedagogy or pedagogies exactly is, with a rich textures of thoughts, questions and searches about the meaning of engaging with a pedagogical process with a feminist perspecion, that is with a vision of justice, a need to unlearn dominating narratives about the world, and a quest for identities. Even if the area of exploration has been limited to higher education, I believe that many of the questions and answers I collected and traced could be elaborated in connection with other levels of teaching, as they ultimately point to the very relationships between political vision, knowledge, the social world and the individual.

Organizing the sort of ideal roundtable with my interviewees, after the sometimes discouraging task of making sense of a literature fragmented and scattered, has been, I have to admit, the most pleasurable part of this work, and has suggested to me a variety of perspectives grounded in the lived experience—problematic as this notion may be. The teaching experiences of Women's Studies professors provide an interesting reality-test for the intriguing but volatile notion of "feminist classroom": classes listed as Women's Studies courses range from General Education classes—which undergraduate of all backgrounds may attend for very different reasons, and with very different levels of
resistance to feminist perspectives—to intermediate courses attended by Women's Studies majors, to graduate seminars. As the participants in this study pointed out, the whole sets of power dynamics, personal interactions, expectations and motivations are radically different in these types of classes, and the possibility for a feminist professor to implement the various aspects of feminist pedagogies is not always the same. The very term "feminist classroom" has to be questioned and problematized in relation with class participants, composition, and purposes.

Another interesting aspect of the narratives I collected, that also points to the complexity and diversity of the Women's Studies presence in academia, is the fact that each professor has brought more or less explicitly into the discussion a different angle of view, which reflects her commitment to a communal project but also her passion for an area of research. Passion for a topic that requires individual work, and passion for a political vision that cannot be pursued through individual work only: these are perhaps the basic elements of feminist pedagogies, which attempt to create a place where both those passions can be available choices for women entering the contradictory world of the academy.
Notes:


2. Even if Bowles and Gintis' perspective has recently been criticized as part of the "old paradigm" of Marxist social reproduction/resistance theory within the theoretical debate about Marxism and education, it still provides and interesting critique of the education system in this country (and it is in fact still largely used in college courses on education). While the guidelines that they offer "toward a socialist strategy for education" (287) sound rather outdated in the current political scene, their description of education as "the new frontier" ("Go West, young man!" advised Horatio Grail in 1851. A century later, he might have said: 'Go to college!' [3]) and of the American educational system as it has "become the laboratory in which competing solutions to the problems of personal liberation and social equality are tested and the arena in which social struggles are fought out" (5), the book still offers some ground for reflection to anyone involved in the functioning of such a "laboratory", with the pressures that it causes, the gratifications it provides, the contradictory messages that it sends out to young people ("be cooperative", but "be a winner"), and the patterns of power relations that it constructs. Their standpoint that "the school system is a monument to the capacity of the advanced corporate economy to accomodate and deflect thrusts away from its foundations" (5) is based on the premise that education is part of the social process and that, in the capitalist society, its role consists in "legitimizing the class structure and in fostering forms of consciousness consistent with its reproduction"(147). An analysis that shares some ground with Althusser's theory of school as apparatus.

3. It may be interesting to note the difference between Gerda Lemer's idea of the "history of the untold" (166) and this "pedagogy of the unknowable" (italics mine). One may wonder if it suggests a shift from a language of possibility to a language of skepticism in feminist theorizing.


5. I am borrowing the metaphor from Heidi Hartmann, *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism*.

6. "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it." (145)

7. It has to be recognized that the American ideology of education is an ideology of change, which supports the idea of the possibility of individual promotion, crucial to liberal democracy. The conception of an educational system that allows individuals to overcome social-economic constraints is rooted in the American culture; central to this conception is the Jeffersonian idea of
education for democracy. From the perspective of such ideology, therefore, there is no conflict between working at emancipatory projects and working within the institutionalized educational system. If emancipatory projects aim to question some aspects of the very ideology that support the idea that there can be individual changes within the given social-economic and cultural system, however, the conflict emerges. What is at stake is the meaning of "emancipation" and "change."


9. The meanings and results of the use of on-line syllabi and electronic listservs as tools to encourage interactive learning and interactions among students, introduced in several Women's Studies undergraduate and graduate classes, could be discussed in a separate paper. I will just note here that various professors consider them as effective means for constructing a teaching-learning environment consistent with the objectives of feminist pedagogies.

10. Gilligan's work arose a large debate within feminists. For an outline of various interventions about her perspective and the implications for feminist theories, see Tong (161-67)

11. She draws on Heidegger's description of "care as the very Being of human life ... the deepest existential longings" (15) and on Martin Buber's notion of "confirmation as an act of affirming and encouraging the best in others." (25) The philosophical connections between feminism and existentialism, notwithstanding the pioneering work of Simone de Beauvoir (or also because of the need to differentiate her work as a feminist from her cooperation with Sartre?) are a territory that has not been investigated as it could.
References


---. "What is Feminist Pedagogy?" Women's Studies Quarterly. 15(3,4): 6-14, 1987


