EQUITY AND POWER IN CLASSROOM DISCOURSE: HOW ISSUES OF EQUITY

AND POWER ARE PLAYED OUT IN THE LANGUAGE OF NINTH GRADE

ENGLISH CLASSROOMS

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the way in which two ninth grade English Honors teachers discussed the same literary textbook, their beliefs about gender, how their students responded to the discussion about the text, and some of the ways in which the classroom discourse positioned students in a classroom. Data collection involved: textual analysis, observation of two English classrooms, and teacher interviews. My analysis revealed that the teachers taught the text in very different ways and in a manner that tended to reflect their beliefs about gender. Also, the students in both classes failed to recognize gender bias except regarding rape and infidelity. While the boys in both classes were generally placed in a more powerful position than were the girls, when the conversation involved rape, the girls were positioned more powerfully than were the boys. Further research might include observing teachers with similar views on gender, and including student interviews.

DEDICATION

To My Parents, Phyliss and Desmond King, and My Children Kyle, Sarah and Ryan.

To Phyliss, for her constant encouragement,

and Desmond, for his wonderfully optimistic outlook.

To Kyle, Sarah and Ryan who endured, without complaints, my many hours devoted to

learning, and who are my greatest source of joy.

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encouraged me every step of the way. Without them, this work would not have been

possible.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Gender equity has been a concern of education for some time. Since the passage of Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in all educational institutions that receive government financial assistance, feminist scholars have examined educational practices to determine to what extent gender bias in education has existed (Weiler, 1992). Issues of inequality were examined in areas such as classroom discourse and curriculum.

This law, along with an increased focus on gender in education, has not, however, necessarily resulted in equal opportunities or outcomes for girls and boys. The American Association of University Women (2000) asserts that some of the areas in which gender bias is still prevalent are in standardized testing, admissions, classroom discussion, discipline, sexual harassment, and the curriculum. This inequality is perhaps most evident in the textbooks used in the classroom and, most significantly, the discussion about the text. While more women are represented in texts than in the past, they still usually occupy domestic roles and almost never are presented as leaders (Frederickson, 2004). This is significant because girls need to be presented with strong role models in the texts they read in order for them to be able to envision all of their potential (Gilligan, 2006). While there has been a somewhat substantial amount of research conducted on sexism in textbooks, there has been far less research conducted on the discussion about texts and the majority of research has been conducted on literacy in the lower grades. This is significant because, as researchers (Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, et al., 2001) have suggested, it is important for the self-esteem of girls and boys that the discussion about a text be bias free. Researchers (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994; Baxter, 2003;

Sunderland, Corlwy, Fauziah, Leontzakou, and Shattuck, 2001; Wortham, 2006) have emphasized the significance of teacher 'talk around text,' and student discussion about a text, yet virtually no research has been conducted in this area.

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which teachers discuss gendered characters in a textbook in order to discover, in the interest of equality, whether the discoursal treatment of a text can be predicted by the text itself, and to discover the way in which teachers and students respond to the text and the talk around text. Sunderland (Sunderland, et al., 2001) researched teacher discourse about a textbook as it related to gender. The results indicated that in both a progressive text (text in which gender roles are represented saliently so as to extend the range of activities traditionally available to women and men, and girls and boys), and a traditional text (the text is gender biased in some ways in that they exaggerate or maintain traditional gender roles), teachers often subverted, endorsed or ignored gender representation. Researchers (Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, et al., 2001; Wortham, 2006) emphasized that the discoursal treatment of a text by teachers is diverse and can't be predicted by the text itself. Hence, in addition to examining a textbook for gender bias, observing teacher discourse about the text is necessary to determine whose interest the textbook, and the talk about text, serves.

Recently, educators have foregrounded the literacy needs of boys (Sanford, 2005), while the literacy (and educational) needs of girls are generally viewed without concern. This suggests that boys' needs and interests continue to privilege those of girls. As mentioned, the purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which teachers discussed the gendered characters in a textbook in order to discover, in the interest of equality, whether the discoursal treatment of a text can be predicted by the text itself. I

also wanted to examine the manner in which teachers' talk about the characters in the text serves to position girls and boys.   Further, I wanted to discover the way in which students respond to both the text, and the discourse about the text: I wished to explore what sense they made of the gendered characters and also, to examine the ways the students' discussion about the text served to position themselves and others. The notion of positioning ties in with poststructuralism's emphasis on discovering whose interest language serves, and Fairclough's (1989) Critical Discourse Analysis which posits that power is exercised and enacted through language and discourse. To add depth to the study, I also investigated the teachers' attitudes and beliefs about literacy and gender in order to formulate an understanding of the teachers' response to gendered characters in a text.   The three research questions guiding this study were:

1.   What are some different ways English teachers talk about a gendered text in a classroom?

      a). In what way does the teachers' discussion about the gendered characters serve to ignore, subvert or endorse the gendered message in the text?

      b). In what way does the teachers' discussion about the gendered characters serve to position girls and boys?

2.   How do students discuss the gendered characters in a text in a classroom?

      a.   What sense do students make of the gendered characters in the text?

b. In what ways do the students' discussion about the gendered characters in the text serve to position themselves and other students?

3. What are teachers' beliefs and attitudes with regards to gender and literacy?

My motivation for exploring gender bias in classroom discourse about a text was a result of my dismay at reading my daughter's eighth grade English textbook and noticing that women were rarely present in the text, and when they were, they were portrayed in stereotypical ways. I wondered if this was an isolated incident, or if it was common in educational literacy practice. Through my investigation of gender bias in texts, I discovered the important role classroom discourse plays in either perpetuating gender bias, or in assisting students to recognize bias in the textbooks they've read. In this vein, it is important for teachers to draw attention to the positions that males and females are relegated to in textbooks, especially for those who have traditionally been marginalized (girls). Regarding my own role as interpreter, I approached this study from a feminist perspective, and as such, do not assume my interpretation to be universally self-evident. My analysis involved utilizing a feminist poststructuralist framework while utilizing discourse analysis, a method that emphasizes the need to investigate power and equity in language.

Moving Forward

Even though there exists a somewhat substantial amount of research on sexism in texts, what is missing from the literature is a lack of research on discussion about texts by both teachers and students as it relates to the gendered characters in the text (Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, et al., 2001). The vast majority of research conducted about classroom

discourse investigated talk about the text in general rather than the gendered characters. Significantly, it is imperative, to ensure equality for both girls and boys, that a text, whether traditional or progressive, be discussed in a manner that highlights inequality and supports equality for both genders (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994; Gilligan, 2006). This study is unique - and significant - because it investigates the manner in which teachers discuss a gendered text, the way the students respond to the teachers' discussion about the gendered characters, and the students' comments about the characters. Additionally, researchers have emphasized the significance of teachers' beliefs about gender and literacy and how those attitudes affect their teaching methods. Few studies have been conducted that investigate teachers' attitudes about gender and literacy and the manner in which they discuss gendered characters in a text (Sunderland, et al., 2001; Wortham, 2006). This study expands on prior research (Sanford, 2005; Wortham, 2006) on teachers' beliefs about literacy in that it investigates teachers' attitudes about literacy and gender and explores these beliefs in relation to their discussion about the gendered characters in the text. This study provides an opportunity to learn more about the connection between teachers' attitudes and their discussion about text, and also, about students' and teachers' response to the text and each other where issues of gender and literacy are concerned.

The following chapters describe in detail the manner in which I designed, conducted and analyzed my research. In Chapter 2, I offer an in-depth look at the literature which acted as a foundation for my research. In this chapter, I provide a view of the background for research and gender inequities in a school setting. I then explore Critical Discourse Analysis, the methodology that I utilize for my study, and it's significance regarding issues of power and inequity. My discussion then focuses on

feminist poststructuralism, the framework with which I viewed my study. The conversation then turns to literature involving gender bias in textbooks and teachers' attitudes and beliefs about gender. Finally, I offer a discussion about research still needed with regards to gender and literacy in a classroom setting.

The methodology I used in this study is discussed in Chapter 3. In this chapter I introduce the context of the study and the methods I used. I describe the research participants and discuss my data collection methods. My focus then turns to the manner in which I analyzed my data. Finally, the conversation turns to the validity procedures I used in data analysis.

The findings of the study are covered in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. These chapters are broken down logically by research question. In these chapters I revisit the study's research questions and describe the results of my analysis. In Chapter 4, I begin by discussing, in detail, the context, beginning with the text used. The conversation then turns to the results of the interview with the two teachers, which serve to answer my third research question. I felt that discussing the interviews (in Chapter 4) before I address the other research questions would serve to familiarize the reader with the teachers' views prior to exploring the way in which the teachers discuss the text. Following the teachers' interviews, my focus turns to the teachers' discussion about the text, which serves to answer part one of my first research question. Chapter 5 focuses on part one of research question number two as I discuss the students' discourse about the text. In Chapter 6, I explore the issue of power and positioning in the classroom which serves to answer part two of research questions one and two.

      In Chapter 7, I revisit key terms and provide an overview of the findings. The discussion then focuses on the pedagogical implications of the findings, followed by a discussion about the significance for future research.

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CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

To provide a context for my study, I begin my discussion by providing a brief history of research on the impact of gender inequality in education. My discussion then turns to Critical Discourse Analysis, which focuses on texts and power and positioning, the methodological framework that I used for my analysis, which draws on poststructuralist discourse theories. Feminist Poststructuralism, like Critical Discourse Analysis, emphasizes issues of power, positioning and gender equity, and is the framework with which my research is being conducted. After providing a brief overview of the history of feminists' use of poststructuralism, the discussion explores issues related to gender, discourse and textbooks.   Critical Discourse Analysis and Feminist Poststructuralism both focus on gender bias in texts, positioning, and power, and my discussion then shifts to an exploration of these areas. The conversation then turns to educators' beliefs and attitudes, since these issues affect the way a text is discussed in the classroom. Finally, the discussion focuses on research still needed with regards to discourse and gender bias.

Background

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s gave voice to the oppressed and spawned other movements, including the Women's Rights Movement. Many white women volunteering for the Civil Rights Movement envisioned a world of equality for all (Brownmiller, 1999); what they realized, while being employed as social workers, was their status as second-class citizens as they encountered sexism first hand with a variety of slights. Brownmiller (1999) asserts that, "white women were reminded of their

second-class status as movement workers" as they were refused certain assignments deemed more appropriate for men (p. 13). Further, when men and women volunteered for the same assignment, men were almost always chosen.

On January 31, 1970, a historic class action suit was filed by Women's Equity Action League against the University of Maryland. The lawsuit was the result of sex discrimination against Bernice Sandler, a teacher at the University of Maryland. After being turned down for numerous jobs, despite her excellent qualifications, she inquired of a faculty member as to why she was continuously rejected. He told her that, despite her exemplary qualifications, she came on too strong for a woman (Sandler, 1997). Sandler, after enduring other similar rejections, investigated sex discrimination laws and realized that none of them covered the education field. Working under the auspices of the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), Sandler began a mission to end discrimination in education. The Complaint charged "'an industry-wide pattern' of discrimination against women in the academic community" (Sandler, 1997, p. 2). Other women in the academic community, hearing of the lawsuit, began contacting Sandler with complaints about discrimination. Approximately 250 institutions had charges filed against them. Further, women who had suffered discrimination began writing to Congress, and, in March, 1970, Martha Griffiths, of WEAL's national advisory board, "gave the first speech in the U.S. Congress on discrimination against women in education" (Sandler, 1997, p. 3). Shirley Chisholm, an advisory board member of Weal, testified that her sex had been "a far greater handicap than her skin pigmentation" (Sandler, 1997, p. 4). The hearings lasted for seven days and resulted in a two-volume set of 1300 pages. In 1972, after two years of hearings, the bill became law.

In 1973, Title IX was passed providing equality in all areas of education. This federal law applies to all levels of schooling and prohibits sex discrimination in all educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance. Further, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in all areas of education including educational programs, recruiting, facilities and housing, health insurance, counseling, course offerings, athletics, and scholarships. Title IX also applies not only to schools, but to other institutions such as libraries, vocational schools, and museums (Sandler, 1997).

Title IX served to draw attention to inequities in the curriculum and encouraged future studies on gender and equality. In the interest of equality, my study seeks to understand the way teachers and students discuss a text in relation to gender, and how the discussion positions students in terms of power. Further, through my research I attempt to shed light on issues of equity and gender in two high school classrooms.

Research on the Impact of Gender Inequities in Schooling

As mentioned, Title IX was influential in enlightening educators and researchers about inequities in the school system and the need for research on gender equity.   In the same time period as Title IX was passed, critical studies of education emerged, in the 1970s, and argued that "schools served the primary role of reproducing an unequal and oppressive social system" (Weiler, 1992, p. 2) under capitalism. These early concerns about the curriculum and the reproduction of oppressive social relationships caused educators to reexamine the curriculum.   This critical theory, however, was grounded in Marxist and neo-Marxist thought and therefore concentrated on class (Weiler, 1992). Marxism is an ideology and socioeconomic theory developed by Karl Marx. Marx believed that all people should be allowed to enjoy the fruits of their labor, but are prevented from doing so in a capitalist society which is divided into two classes:

nonworking owners, and non-owning workers. Marx believed that when workers repossessed the fruits of their labors, class divisions would cease. Neo-Marxism was a 20th century philosophy based on early Marxist writings that added social inequality, such as status and power, to Marxist theory. Kathleen Weiler (1992) asserts that critical studies of education, which were interested in class oppression, provoked criticism from feminists who challenged the exclusive focus of the theory and its failure to address issues of gender. Weiler (1992) criticized cultural theory arguing that it "fails to analyze the power basis which has kept alive the arbitrary construction of gender and the maintenance of gender inequalities in education" (p. 29).

Feminists' influence forced critical theorists to reexamine their practices, which in turn led to a reexamination of the education system. Additionally, feminists, during the second wave of feminism (in the late 1960s and early 1970s), became concerned with language and the images of women that language imparted and began studying the use, and influences, of language (discourse) (Cameron, 1993). Feminists asserted that language is a medium of representation, and as such, can serve to perpetuate stereotypically gendered ideas. Further, through language one makes sense of the world and one's place in the world. This concern about language and gender caused feminists to turn to linguistic theory to discover how language worked in an effort to understand whose interest it serves. Feminist researchers (Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, et al., 2001) emphasize that, as Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on discourse, language, and power, it is an effective methodology to utilize when researching issues of language and gender.

Other researchers explored gender bias in classroom discourse (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994), and the way gender bias in schools negatively impacts girls' identity

(Pipher, 1994). Teachers' beliefs and attitudes have a strong impact on students' ability to achieve, and their opinions and actions affect students' belief in their own abilities and their sense of identity. Pipher (1994) observed that girls' lack of self-esteem hinders their ability to do well in subjects that require confidence. Girls tend to give up easily when frustrated because they lack the self-assurance to proceed whereas boys persist because they believe they will succeed. Further, in the case of girls, adolescence is the time when the battle for identity is won and lost (Pipher, 1994). The influence of peers, teachers and school plays a key role in this struggle to maintain identity (Pipher, 1994). It is important, therefore, that girls be given positive reinforcement in all aspects of education, and offered encouragement with regards to their abilities. Researchers (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Sanford, 2005) suggest that girls need strong role models in the stories they read, and teacher discourse needs to address issues of inequities in textbooks in order for girls to achieve a strong sense of identity. It is imperative that, in the interest of equity and girls' self-esteem, that textbooks contain equitable gender representation, and talk around text be conducted with issues of gender equality in mind.

My study seeks to explore the way teachers and students discuss a gendered text with regards to issues of equity and gender. It also examines teachers' attitudes as they relate to literacy and gender with the intention of gaining insight into the connection between teachers' beliefs and their pedagogical practices. As researchers (Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, et al., 2001) have emphasized, Critical Discourse Analysis is an effective tool for analyzing issues of discourse and equity; my study, therefore, utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an effective method with which to investigate issues of discourse, power and equity, and the methodology I employed when analyzing my research data. Critical Discourse Analysis begins with the assumption that there exists systematic asymmetries of power and resources between both speakers and listeners, writers and readers, and that this unequal access to power can be linked to unequal access to linguistic and social recourses. To familiarize the reader with the concepts of CDA, I begin my discussion by providing an overview of Critical Discourse analysis. My discussion then moves to the use of CDA in research and provides a more detailed description of the concepts of Critical Discourse Analysis.

CDA overview. Discourse analysis consists of an interdisciplinary group of approaches and methodologies to the study of language and text which draws upon literary theory, linguistics, cultural studies, sociology, psychology and philosophy of language. The term was initially used in the 1950s to describe linguistic analysis of semantic structures considered above the level of the sentence. In the 1960s and 1970s, English teachers applied discourse analysis to the error patterns of second language learners' written and spoken texts; educational psychologists used this method to develop cognitive text processing models (Luke, 2007).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a contemporary approach to studying discourse and language in social institutions that draws on poststructuralist discourse theories and critical linguistics. CDA focuses on how identity, social relations, power and knowledge are constructed through spoken and written texts in schools, classrooms and communities (Luke, 2007). The term "critical" refers to the fact that the approach is

explicitly directed at revealing how language is used for the exercise of socio-political control. As van Dijk (2001) explains,

> Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research
> that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality
> are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and
> political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts
> take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist
> social inequality. (p. 352)

The principal unit of analysis for CDA researchers is the text. Texts are considered to be social actions, coherent and meaningful instances of written and spoken language use and include written texts (textbooks, letters), face-to-face conversations (classroom discourse), and electronic and multimodal texts (Internet).   Texts can be analyzed in terms of how classroom talk can shape what counts as knowledge, subjectivity and legitimate textual practices and social relations (Luke, 2002). Fairclough (1992) emphasizes the significance of textual analysis in discourse analysis and offers what he refers to as "a framework for analyzing texts,"

> Text analysis can be organized under four main headings: vocabulary,''grammar,'
> 'cohesion', and 'text structure.' These can be thought of as ascending in scale
> vocabulary deals mainly with individual words, grammar deals with words
> combined into clauses and sentences, cohesion deals with how clauses and
> sentences are linked together, and text structure deals with large-scale main
> headings which will be used in analysis of discursive practices rather than text
> analysis, though they certainly involve formal features of texts. (p. 75)

Fairclough's (1992) view corresponds to that which Halliday (1994) proposed in that the first four headings ('vocabulary,' 'grammar,' 'cohesion,' and 'text structure') have to do with text-internal properties the analysis of which, according to Halliday (1994), yields "understanding" (xxii).

CDA in practice.   Widdowson (2004) refers to Norman Fairclough as the most influential and impressive practitioner of CDA. Fairclough (1993) offers a three-tiered analytical framework to every discursive event ("instance of language use, analysed as a

text, discursive practice, social practice") (p. 138). This includes the text, discursive

practice (which includes the production and interpretation of texts), and social practice

(Fairclough, 1993). Fairclough (1989) refers to the levels of the three-tiered analytical

framework as description, interpretation, and explanation.

Textual description involves the use of texts, or parts of texts. At this level, texts'

content and form are analyzed (Titscher, et al, 2000). Textual analysis, of whole texts or

parts of texts, can be performed in this step in order to uncover emerging themes (Clarke,

2006). Discourse analysis involves carefully reading texts (conversations, interviews,

documents, textbooks or general social practices) with the intention of discerning

discursive patterns of meaning. Discourse analysis does not operate under the

assumption that these processes are fixed or static but rather inconsistent and

contradictory. Potter, Stringer, and Wetherell (1984) explain,

> there is no method to discourse analysis in the way we traditionally think
> of an experimental method or content analysis method. What we have is a
> broad theoretical framework concerning the nature of discourse and its
> role in social life, along with a set of suggestions about how discourse
> can best be studied.   Description is "the stage which is concerned with the
> formal properties of the text." (pp.175).

For Fairclough (1989), linguistic analysis of a text refers to phonology, grammar,

semantics and vocabulary. Since social control is frequently exercised by means of texts,

textual analysis is a significant aspect of critical discourse analysis (Titscher, et al.,

2000). Further, Fairclough (1989) recognizes the significance of textual organization

such as cohesion and turn-taking, and emphasizes that turn-taking is managed by the

participants on a turn-by-turn basis and in a "our class-divided and power-riven society

where dialogue often occurs between unequals, then turn-taking rights will be unequal"

(p. 134).

The next step of Fairclough's (1989) analysis, interpretation, involves the relationship between text and interaction. Interpretation is generated through what is in the text, and what is in the interpreter. This discursive level is "the link between text and social practice" (Titscher, et al., 2000).   Fairclough (1989) emphasizes that the way in which analysts interpret a text is based on members' resources (MR), or background knowledge. For Fairclough (1989), this is where the analyst examines the relationship between the text and larger discourse processes. Fairclough (1989) provided a summary of the process of interpretation. The first level of text interpretation, "surface of utterance," refers to the process by which interpreters convert strings of sounds (or marks on paper) into recognizable words, sentences or phrases. In this level, interpreters need to draw upon their aspect of MR which is referred to as their "knowledge of the language" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 143). The second level of interpretation, meaning of utterance, involves assigning meanings to the constituent part of a text (utterances). Interpreters draw upon semantic aspects of their MR for this level (e.g. their ability to combine grammatical information and word-meanings to arrive at implicit meanings). The third level of interpretation in which the analyst draws on her/his knowledge of language involves cohesion. Text structure at level four is the process of working out how a whole text hangs together (a text's global coherence). This involves connecting the text with one of a group of schemata (representations of patterns of organization, associated with diverse types of discourse). For example, if a person is involved in a telephone conversation she/he knows to expect certain things to happen in a particular order (greetings, establishing a conversational topic, changing topics, farewells) (Fairclough, 1989, p. 144).   Researchers (Clark, 2006; Sunderland, et al., 2001; Widdowson, 2004) have asserted that Fairclough's method is a highly appropriate tool for investigating

issues involving gender and discourse. Widdowson (2004) asserted that Norman Fairclough's discourse analysis was the most impressive CDA methodology.

As part of interpretation, Fairclough (1989) also emphasizes the importance of intertextuality, as discourses and texts that occur within them, have histories and presuppositions and are an aspect of the text producers' interpretations of intertextual context.   This notion ties in with   Barthes' (1977) assertion that a text gathers meaning because it is woven entirely with citations, references, echoes and cultural languages. The notion of intertextuality requires the interpreter to view texts and discourses from a historical perspective.

In this third level of analysis, the final tier of a discursive event – that of social practice – is explained. Explanation involves analyzing the relationship of the text, within the social context in which it is imbedded (Clarke, 2006). Fairclough (1989) emphasizes that the objective of this stage is "to portray a discourse as a part of a social process, as a social practice, showing how it is determined by social structures, and what reproductive effects discourses can cumulatively have on those structures, sustaining them or changing them" (p. 163). These social effects and determinations are 'mediated' by MR: social structures shape MR, which in turn shape discourse; discourse then, shape or sustain MR, which in turn, change or shape structures. The social structures which are in focus are relations of power, and the social practices and processes that are in focus are practices and processes of social struggle.

 Explanation can have two dimensions, depending on whether one is emphasizing process or structure (upon processes of struggle, or, upon relations of power). With processes of struggle, the analyst may see discourses as parts of social struggles and hence contextualize them in terms of these broader non-discoursal (non-language)

struggles, and, the effects of these struggles on structure. Or, one may show which power relationships determine discourses. These relationships are, themselves, the outcome of struggles and are established by those who hold power. Fairclough (1989) stresses the importance of investigating both social determinants of discourse and social effects of discourse at three levels of social organization: the societal level, the institutional level, and the situational level. For example, one studying classroom discourse might wish to investigate the classroom pedagogical practices as they relate to the research questions (situational level). This could be followed by an exploration of the school itself (institutional level) and how school policy may affect classroom discourse. Finally, the researcher might examine the effect of societal practices and beliefs on classroom discourse (societal level). For example, one might investigate the way popular culture, or historical events, influence classroom discourse.

Given CDA's interest in equality and its emancipatory aim, researchers (Clark, 2006; Sunderland, et al., 2001; Widdowson, 2004) view this method as a highly appropriate and effective tool for investigating issues involving gender and discourse. As such, my research drew on Fairclough's (1989) framework because it emphasizes the need to analyze issues of power and equity in situated speech. Specifically, I utilized Fairclough's (1989) three-tiered approach (text, interpretation and explanation) as I was interested exploring the language of the text, the manner in which it is discussed, the way in which the discussion is a reflection of the institutional setting in which it is discussed, and finally, how issues of power are played out in language, and society in general.

CDA and self-reflexivity. As mentioned, CDA asserts that subjectivities become imbedded in language and the interpreter comes to understand these subjectivities. Also as mentioned, Fairclough (1989) asserted that an analyst brings her own background

knowledge to the interpretation. Further, as self-reflexivity is an essential element to CDA and poststructuralism, practitioners of this method need to make their theoretical positions clear, and researchers' bias needs to be declared up front (Baxter, 2003). With regards to my own role as interpreter, I approached this study from a feminist perspective and as such, did not assume my interpretation to be universally self-evident. My own subjectivities and discourses from which I operate were brought to my analysis. Specifically, I believe that, as we live in a patriarchal society, there exists a discourse of gender differentiation whereby girls and boys, and women and men are treated in a different manner based on their sex. From a personal perspective, I approached this study from a feminist, poststructuralist discourse utilizing CDA as my method of analysis. As such, I critiqued classroom discourse to discover whose interest the discussion serves and which voices were afforded power and which were marginalized. I explored the language used to understand how it positioned the boys and girls in the class and how this positioning afforded or denied power. As poststructualism has influenced the development of CDA, and as utilizing a poststructuralist framework with CDA is an effectual method for textual inquiry, my study utilized a poststructrualist framework.

Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism is an approach to research based on the work of a variety of theorists and one that has influenced methodological approaches such as Critical Discourse Analysis. A poststructuralism approach might examine the relation between language, subjectivity, power and social organization, and as such, is an effective tool for exploring issues of inequality (Weedon, 2004). In this section, I examine feminist poststructuralism to provide insight into the appropriateness of using this framework

when exploring issues of gender equity in the classroom. My discussion then focuses on poststructuralism, texts and discourse analysis to offer a view of the effectiveness of utilizing a poststructuralist framework with discourse analysis for textual inquiry.

　　Feminist poststructuralism. Poststructuralist theories question how and where knowledge is produced, and by whom. Feminist researchers are interested in the manner in which women and men are positioned in a patriarchal society (Weedon, 2004). Patriarchy suggests an organization of power on the basis of biological sex; this organization is socially produced rather than natural. In conducting research from a feminist perspective, issues of gender inequality are placed at the forefront of analysis. Feminist poststructuralists question the assumptions about women which social theories, and patriarchy, posit as true, and emphasize that the ways in which women are marginalized are so pervasive they go unnoticed (Weedon, 2004). Feminists are careful to point out however, that men are also victims in that the options available to both genders are limited.

　　Feminist poststructuralists assert that meaning is not fixed and that social meanings are produced within social practices and institutions. Feminists, utilizing poststructuralist methodology, focus on women's subordination to men.   Further, socialization and education constitute a belief in differences in skills and strength between boys and girls, bestowing on individuals specific perceptions of their potential and identity which may appear natural, but which are "the product of diffuse forms of power" (Weedon, 2004, p.118).   Feminist poststructuralist theory also argues that women have agency depending on the discourse one occupies. Poststructuralists (Baxter, 2003; Davies & Banks, 1992; Walkerdine, 1990) have argued that individuals' relations to power are constantly shifting within discourses, making them at times powerful and other times

powerless. For example, women homemakers may have power in the home; however, typically, those spaces in which women have power (the home) often render them powerless in other discourses because of lack of income, lack of access to the public discourse, etc. (Daly, 1973). Through politics, or education, alternative ways of constituting meaning may address the interests of the oppressed (women) more directly.

A feminist poststructuralist might question what messages are embedded in school textbooks that reinforce stereotypical gender roles. What are the assumptions that teacher 'talk about text' reinforces? (Sunderland, et al., 2001). While patriarchal discourse is so prevalent as to be invisible (Cameron, 1993; Spender, 1990), social institutions, such as schools, can make students aware of gendered language in the curriculum and suggest more equitable discourse. Teachers and educators can work to disrupt the notion of "male-as-norm" with discourse aimed at presenting woman and men in a less sexist, gendered manner.   Further, many feminists emphasize the importance of cultural representations of gender as they appear (or don't appear) in newspaper, textbooks and scholarly articles, and the way the discourse about gender in society and the practices institutions have of perpetuating sexist stereotyping.

Researchers (Baxter, 2003; Gavey, 1989; Isenberg, 1992; Weedon, 2004) suggest that poststructuralist theories of language, subjectivity and power are an effective perspective for issues involving language, texts and gender. Poststructuralist theory asserts that individuals are never outside of the discursive or cultural practices, but rather, are always 'subject' to them. Their identities are determined by a range of 'subject positions' approved by their culture, and available to them by means of the particular discourses that are operating within a given discursive context (Baxter, 2003). For example, in the classroom, students are subject to a range of discourses offering

knowledge of 'approved ways to be.' Resistant or competing discourses constituted by peer value systems will partly govern peer relationships and identities. Walkerdine (1990) has illustrated how relations of power are constantly shifting, rendering individuals at times powerful and at other times powerless.

Poststructuralism, texts and discourse analysis. Postructuralists believe that meaning is constituted within language and are particularly interested in the language of texts, and the discourse involving texts. Feminist poststructuralists (Baxter, 2003; Gavey, 1989; Sunderland, et al., 2001) have noted the absence, in texts, of the female perspective and the privileging of the masculine gender by many authors. Researchers have also noted the androcentric language used in classroom practice that reproduces gendered stereotypical roles and limits the perceived roles available to girls and boys. Poststructuralists regard texts as an embodiment of various discourse available in the historical, cultural, and social context of the author. Textbooks provide an important example of various discourses in circulation at any given time and in any given culture; however, poststructuralism emphasizes that in the practice of reading, numerous different readings of a text are possible.

The meaning one brings to a text is significant regarding the manner in which she/he discusses the text. This is especially significant in classroom settings as teachers' discourse about a text could serve to either confirm or disrupt sexist notions. Through the mediation of a textbook, a teacher could develop more equitable literacy pedagogy (Baxter, 2003; Hinchman & Payton Young, 2001; Sunderland, et al., 2001).

Baxter (2003) emphasizes that feminist poststructural discourse analysis, in keeping with a poststructural position, has a transformative quest: to represent the ambiguities of female experience, and to give space to female voices who are either

marginalized or silenced by dominant discourses. Further, it is critical to investigate issues involving language and texts, in classroom practice, with regards to the production and reproduction of gendered stereotypical ideologies (Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, et al., 2001). This is especially significant as the stereotypical perspectives that the language encodes often go unnoticed partially because they are so pervasive in society. Irigaray (Martin, 1998) claimed, "language is the key to repositioning women in culture" (p. 208). In this vein, my research utilized a poststructuralist framework and involved studying language and texts in order to discover whether equitable pedagogical practices are being practiced in ninth grade literacy classrooms. Since both the content of textbooks, and the way they are discussed, play an important role in what and how information is imparted to girls and boys, my study explored the discourse about a text in classroom settings.

Gender Bias in Textbooks

In the classroom setting, textbooks are the main mode through which information is disseminated. It is, therefore, significant that, in the interest of equality, textbooks be free of bias and sexism. To explore the significance of gender bias in texts, my discussion first focuses on gender bias in texts, self-esteem and identity. My discussion then examines research on inequitable gender representation in texts, followed by Gender bias and basal readers. Finally, I discuss the manner in which texts serve to perpetuate gender bias.

Gender bias in texts, self-esteem and identity. Following the passage of Title IX, numerous studies were conducted on textbooks to determine the presence of gender bias. The majority of these studies however, have been conducted on history textbooks; other textbooks in areas such as sociology, psychology and language arts were also surveyed, but to a lesser degree. Earlier education researchers Myra and David Sadker (1977)

surveyed reading and language arts texts, and discovered that not only had girls' unequal presence been ignored, but one text noted it has been found that boys will not read 'girl' books; therefore the ratio of boy books should be two to one in the classroom library. They further contend that the loss of potential and confidence that girls experience around adolescence is in part caused by the stereotyping throughout classrooms. Sadker and Sadker (1977) point out that in textbooks, men tend to be portrayed in the public sphere, whereas women are portrayed as working in the house. While men venture out of the home and have adventures, women are confined to the home. Men are often portrayed as doers, whereas women wait at home for their mates to return. Mary Pipher (1994) concluded that these biases in education are key to girls' low self-esteem. Pipher (1994) based her assertion on her experience as a therapist for adolescent girls. Many girls she analyzed, as they grew closer to adolescence, began to lose self-esteem. In order for girls to have a strong sense of self-worth, they need strong role models in the curriculum. Why do we learn about Socrates, but not Aspasia, "the great woman scholar" (Steinem, 1992) whom Socrates referred to as "my teacher" (p. 119)?

Carol Gilligan (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) conducted a study of nearly 100 girls aged 7 to 18 years old aimed at discovering the point at which girls begin to lose their voice. This study was a follow up to an earlier study that Gilligan (1983) conducted on women who seemed to have lost their confidence and abandoned themselves. Gilligan's (1992) later study attempted to discover when and why females lose confidence. Gilligan (1992) asserts that girls' voices have been undervalued in the academic world, and their confidence starts to decline when they approach adolescence.

Brown and Gilligan (1992) noticed that younger girls spoke with confidence when they described their friendships and views. As these girls grew older, they became less

sure of themselves and their views. For example, one girl, Netti, at age 11, was able to speak openly and honestly about her relationships with her friends. By age 13, her language revealed that she was attempting to be a "good" girl as she couldn't end a relationship which she no longer desired. Netti asked, "Who am I," and realized that, as someone fascinated with being "the perfect girl," she didn't recognize who she had become. The researchers (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) describe the pattern as self-silencing:

> Specifically we are referring to encouragement of self-sacrifice or self-silencing and the holding out of purity and perfection as conditions for relationships and the mark of good women, in the case of the feminine ideal, and, in the case of the masculine ideal, the encouragement of self-aggrandizement and the desire to be in the dominant position, to be in control. (p. 30).

Brown and Gilligan (1992) emphasize that this self-silencing pattern is a reflection of a male-voiced culture which encourages women's subservience. Brown and Gilligan (1992) suggest that equitable gender representation in the curriculum is key to students' positive sense of self.

The impact of discourse on student identity and the mediation of texts was explored by Wortham (2006). The study dealt with the way social identification and academic learning depend on each other, and how students' identities emerged in substantial part because of curricular themes, and the manner in which teachers discuss these themes in relation to specific students. Wortham's (2006) study revealed that a teacher's treatment of students, and the way students are positioned through a teacher's discourse about the text, affects their sense of identity and place in the classroom. Further, the study revealed the connection between talk about text and the manner in which teachers position their students in relation to the textbook. For example, two students, Maurice and Tyisha, were in precarious social positions at the start of the semester. Instead of encouraging the students, the teacher's language positioned them as

"disruptive," or "unpromising," which in turn affected their identity and positioning in the classroom.

Wortham (2006) noticed repeated instances of negative positioning of marginalized students with textbook characters, causing them to become further marginalized. Further, the students' attitudes toward Maurice changed with time in response to the teacher's positioning of Maurice. Wortham (2006) suggests that Maurice, an African American male, was being positioned as a stereotypical black male in that he was being presented, by the teacher, as one who has a precarious position in society because of his behavior. Females also suffered marginalization as was the case with Tyisha who was initially viewed as a promising female student; however, after she proved to be a vocal and independent thinker, often taking an opposing view of the text than that of the teacher, was considered "disruptive," and her identity was that of a social outcast.

Sanford (2005) asserts that educators' different expectations for boys and girls impact girls' self-esteem and their ability to view themselves as capable individuals. A study by the American Association of University Women (1992) pointed out that in class boys are twice as likely to be seen as role models, twelve times as likely to speak up in class, and five times as likely to receive teachers' attention. Some of this attention was for disciplinary reasons, and some for academic teaching and learning. Pipher (1994) observed that boys are praised for intellectual work and academics and girls are praised for their clothing, obeying rules and behaving properly. Boys are criticized more for their behavior, and girls for their intellectual inadequacy. The message imparted to boys is that they are smart, if they'd just settle down and concentrate on work. The message sent

to girls is "perhaps you're just not good at this. You've followed the rule and haven't succeeded" (p. 63).

 Inequitable gender representation in texts. Equitable gender representation in school texts has remained unrealized as textbooks continued to perpetuate the "social construction of gender" (Commeyras & Alverman, 1996, p. 2). This term refers to power differentials related to the cultural and social meanings attributed to being female or male.

 As mentioned, with the passage of Title IX attention was drawn to the inequities in education. Even so, progress toward equality was slow as researchers discovered an attitude that placed blame on the victims.   Jean Anyon (1977) examined history textbooks that "are thought to serve students of all interests equally well" (p. 362). Anyon wanted to discover if the ideology of the texts might privilege the interests of some groups over others.   Her examination of seventeen widely used secondary school history textbooks revealed an attitude of "blame the victim," and evidence that "not only textbooks, but other aspects of education" serve the "interests of powerful groups" (Anyon, 1977, p. 380) traditionally headed by white-males.

  This "blame the victim" attitude was also noticed by Ferree and Hall (1996) whose qualitative study analyzed the coverage of gender, race and class in texts, pictures, captions and indexes in 35 mainstream introductory textbooks used from 1983 through 1988. This study was in response to earlier findings by Stacey and Thorne (1985) who concluded that sociology had not undergone a transformation that integrated feminist scholarship. Ferree and Hall's (1996) study examined the indexing to discover which chapters focused on gender. They then analyzed those relevant chapters in detail, searching for gender bias, victim blaming, etc. Their results indicated the privileged

status that males hold in society was ignored, whereas the economics of women-headed families was treated as a product of her "deviant" household type. Additionally, women were "blamed" for the fact that they could not acquire the same jobs as men. Women's lack of personality traits is used to explain the disparities in public office holding and male dominated professions, between men and women. For example, the researchers found that one text claimed that because women shy away from computers, they lack appropriate computer knowledge that results in disadvantages with regards to employment opportunities. Another text, which depicted a woman lawyer, asserted that because women were not aggressive, a trait needed for a profession such as law, there were more men, than women, in the profession. Gender bias was not presented as a possible reason for this disparity. Commeyras and Alvermann's (1996) study revealed that the texts had a patriarchal focus: women were merely added as a paragraph or subsection, whereas men were the dominant subject matter of the texts. Current studies (Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, et al., 2001; Weedon, 2004), like those from ten years earlier, indicate that texts continue to perpetuate gender bias.

Gender bias and basal readers. Studies have also been conducted to determine the manner in which gender is portrayed in basal readers.   Evans and Davies (2000) surveyed elementary school reading textbooks, by two publishers, to determine the manner in which masculinity is represented in basal readers. Surveying 1st, 3rd, and 5th grade texts, the authors used the Bem Sex Role Inventory as an evaluative instrument.   In past studies on males, most were portrayed in a stereotypical manner, aggressive, competitive and non-nurturing, whereas females were presented as being passive and nurturing (Evans & Davies, 2000). Evans and Davies (2000) explored whether males were portrayed in a manner in which they cross what is considered traditional boundaries

of masculinity. The researchers analyzed the written fiction stories to determine how femininity and masculinity are introduced to readers. To accomplish this they formulated an instrument to calculate personality traits of the main characters using the Bem Sex Role Inventory. Evans and Davies (2000) analyzed one hundred and thirty-two characters in 82 stories. Their findings overall indicated that males were portrayed significantly more often with masculine characteristics than were females. Further, males were portrayed as significantly more argumentative, competitive and aggressive than females. Females, by contrast, were portrayed as significantly more affectionate, emotional and passive. This was generally true for both publishers.

Christy Foley (1990), in discussing sex equity in basal readers, asserts that students' fears, self-esteem and aspirations are influenced by the extent to which they relate to a character and become emotionally involved with that character. She contends that basal readers shape not only reading skills, but the value systems and beliefs of readers. Foley (1990) discusses a study in which three popular seventh-grade basal textbooks were examined. Of the 415 characters appearing in the three basal readers, 70 percent of the characters were male. Also, the vast majority of the protagonists were male – only 19 percent of the main characters in the current readers were females.   Foley (1990) claims that while some progress has been made in the last decade, gender bias is still present in texts.

The way in which texts perpetuate gender bias. The manner in which texts perpetuate gender bias is another area researchers explored. Commeyras and Alverman's (1996) microanalysis examined the language and content of three world history textbooks used in high schools to determine how the texts perpetuate bias toward women.   Using a feminist perspective, their study involved "recursively reading, coding and interpreting"

(p. 1) the content that pertained to women across the three texts. In the first phase the authors read each textbook for the content on women and entered appropriate information into Ethnograph, a computer program designed to make the analysis of data collected during qualitative research easier, more efficient and more effective. In the second phase the authors read the computer printouts of two of the textbooks, and developed a coding system from them. The third textbook the authors coded to check the comprehensiveness and appropriateness of their scheme. In phase three the authors reread the content on women in all three textbooks and applied the revised coding system. In their microanalysis on language, the authors conducted a two-phase study, again using Ethnograph. Then upon re-examination of the texts, the authors noticed that women who reached positions of power were described with words such as "crafty," "cupidity" and "insecurity." Alternatively, women were depicted as using their seductive powers to achieve their power and influence. The authors noted that the language in these textbooks serves to present women in stereotypical ways or serves to "obfuscate the patriarchal system that accounts for women's demeaning experiences" (Commeyras and Alverman's, 1996, p. 10) and treatment throughout history.

Ferree and Hall (1996) also examined the manner in which texts perpetuate gender bias. The authors examined pictures in the texts for evidence of bias. Their examination revealed that boys are very often depicted in traditional masculine roles, whereas girls are usually relegated to traditionally feminine roles. In one picture, boys were shown playing with a motorcycle whereas little girls with fake breasts were depicted as imitating adult women. Further, preschool girls were depicted as participating in a beauty contest and were described as "learning to display femininity" (Ferree & Hall, 1996, p. 938). Additionally, teenage girls were depicted as learning to

use makeup. There is no such equivalent behavior by boys. Further, when girls and boys are depicted in the same picture, girls are always displaying passivity compared to boys. For example, one illustration showed a girl passively watching a boy play with a car. Additionally, the texts surveyed stressed that women acquired low-self esteem, and developed prejudice against other women. There was no mention of men's acquiring misogynistic attitudes against women, but rather, discussed the burdens of being a male: pressured to be competitive, assertive and in control (Ferree & Hall, 1996).

The conclusion reached by researchers (Commeyras and Alvermann's, 1996, Sunderland, et al., 2001) is that textbooks represent a gender biased view. My study l expands on Sunderland's (2001) study by exploring whether a ninth grade English text represents an androcentric viewpoint, and whether the discussion about the text subverts, ignores or endorses the gendered message in the textbook. While there exists a somewhat substantial amount of research on sexism in texts, what's missing from the literature is a lack of research on talk around text by both teachers and students as it relates to the gendered characters in the text (Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, et al., 2001).

This study is unique because it investigates the way in which teachers discuss a gendered text, and also, the way the students respond to the teachers' discussion about the gendered characters, and the students' comments about the characters. Further, few studies have investigated teachers' attitudes about gender and literacy, and the manner in which they discuss gendered characters in a text (Sunderland, et al., 2001, Wortham, 2006). This study expands on prior research (Sanford, 2005; Wortham, 2006) on teachers' beliefs about literacy in that it investigates teachers' attitudes about literacy and gender, and explores these beliefs in relation to their discussion about the gendered characters in the text. This study offers an opportunity to learn more about the connection

between teachers' attitudes and their discussion about a text, and also about students' and teachers' response to the text and each other where issues of gender and literacy are concerned.

Discourse and Gender

As it is significant that, in the interest of equality, the discourse about a text be conducted in an equitable manner with regards to issues of gender, my discussion now turns to research conducted on gender and 'talk around text.'

Alvermann and Commeyras (1994) explored gender-related issues regarding classroom talk and text. They asserted that discussion around a text could serve to change ingrained, gendered ways of thinking and could expand gender role possibilities. This gendered way of thinking is imbedded in stories children read in school. Exposing the power differentials related to being male or female will assist students to envision broader roles for females and males. Alvermann and Commeyras' (1994) concern for the male/female dualism in the classroom ties in with Davies' (1989, 1990a, 1990b) studies on the discursive production of male/female dualism in school and the way it positions young children. Davies (1989, 1990a, 1990b) also analyzed the way stories children hear and read in classrooms become a reality for them. Gilbert (1989) emphasized that discussions in classrooms need to include opportunities for students to query texts that relegate men and women to specific gendered positions.

Other researchers (Alvermann and Commeyras, 1994) were interested in text-based classroom discussion, specifically how gendered discursive practices are manifested in the language of the classroom, and the language of the text. Alvermann and Commeyras (1994) claim that teachers' different gender expectations for students result in gender inequalities based on power differentials that emanate from society at

large. Pam Gilbert (1989), like Davies (1989), acknowledges that teachers contribute to the stereotypical views of gender to which children are subjected. She contends that language practices, both spoken and written, are key factors that contribute to the construction of women as an oppressed and dominated group. Gilbert (1989) contends that many of the classroom activities girls will participate in will be misogynistic and will affirm patriarchal patterns of domination and control.

Recently, Sunderland, et al., (2001) pointed out that even if a textbook is progressive, the discoursal treatment of the text cannot be predicted by merely examining the textbook. The study (2001) suggested that rather than just focusing on a textbook to determine if gender bias exists, researchers need to focus on the manner in which texts are mediated by teachers and students.

In a recent pilot study, Sunderland, et al., (2001), using discourse analysis and a feminist framework, investigated issues of gender and discourse in relation to textbooks. Sunderland, et al., (2001) was interested in the manner in which a teacher mediates - the way the teacher communicates the meaning of - the textbook. The study involved observing the talk by three teachers as they discussed the characters in either a progressive (a text that situates both genders in non-sexist roles), or traditional (a text in which characters are positioned in traditionally gendered roles) textbook.   For example, in an instance where a text was considered progressive, the teacher, confused as to why a student did not like the blond woman in the picture, subverted the text's progressive message by claiming "blond is a beautiful trait for women and is supposed to be preferred by males" (p. 270). In another instance, a teacher, in her discussion about a text, ignored the fact that the protagonist had nine wives and promoted a gender-biased view of marriage in her summary of the story. The results of the study revealed that the

discoursal treatment of the text cannot be predicted by merely examining the textbook. The study (2001) suggested that rather than just focusing on a textbook to determine if gender bias exists, researchers need to focus on the discourse related to the textbook to understand whether students are receiving a gender equitable message about the textbook. My study expands on Sunderland's (Sunderland, et al., 2001) study that was a pilot and was limited in scope. Further, that study (Sunderland, et al., 2001) looked at the discoursal treatment of three distinct, foreign language texts, whereas my study explores the discussion of two teachers about the same literary text, *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996). Sunderland, et al., concluded that a future study examining the discussion about the same text by different teachers is necessary. My study aims to accomplish this.

Alvermann (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994) stresses the importance of teacher discourse in textual analysis. Her study (1994) involved observing eleventh grade English students discussing their worksheet exercise. Alvermann (1994), observing the sexist, bias language used in the discussion going unnoticed, stresses that it is necessary for the teacher, who legitimizes the authority of the text and who is considered to have superior knowledge of the text, to draw attention to bias imbedded in texts. Commeyras and Alvermann (1994) believe that rather than promoting a uni-reading of the text, teachers need to encourage multiple readings of texts, and need to encourage discussing texts from different viewpoints. Alvermann's (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994) study focused on a classroom worksheet rather than a large textbook, and occurred fourteen years ago. My study focuses on the manner in which a highly popular textbook is discussed, and offers a fresh view of talk around text.

In order to disrupt sexist attitudes in the curriculum, teachers need to encourage dialogue about gender bias (Bronwyn Davies, 1989; Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994;

Sunderland, et al., 2001; Wortham, 2006). Davies (1989) conducted a study with children in which she read a story, *The Paper Bag Princess* (Munsch, 2002), in which the hero is a female who tricks the dragon and saves the prince. After the prince has been rescued he tells her to clean up so she can look like a princess. She then proceeds to tell him, "you are a bum," and skips off happily. The final words of the story are, "They didn't get married after all" (Davies 1989). When questioned about the story, most of the children, both boys and girls, were unable to view the princess as the hero and instead read the prince as the hero of the story. The dragon was viewed as the powerful male whose power Elizabeth could not defeat. Further, the majority of the children believed that Elizabeth should have cleaned up her act and married the prince. Davies (1989) argues that the children's interpretation of the text precludes a feminist reading because of the dualistic, sexist narrative structures that inform their lives. From the texts they read in school to the language and attitudes of their teachers, these children are infused with images of what is appropriate and "natural" for males and females in society.

Davies (1989) contends that the discursive practices of teachers position girls such that the beliefs about male-female dualism embedded in stories become a lived reality in classrooms. Davies (1989) observed the narratives and images through which femaleness and maleness are constituted in teacher's talk. A teacher, in discussing with a brother and sister a trip they took to Sydney, ignored the fact that the girl was part of the discussion. Further, he referred to the boy as "mate," claimed that the trip must have been a "bit of a thrill," and asked if the flight attendant was "good looking." When he finally noticed the girl he asked if the flight attendant had taken care of her. In this instance, the boy is positioned as the teacher's "mate," whereas the girl is on the peripheral. Further, the teacher, who is only interested in the flight attendant's

appearance, is objectifying females. Davies' (1989) point is that the gender-bias in texts is perpetuated in classroom discourse. The message is that boys can have adventures and meet pretty women whereas girls are needy and dependent. Is it any wonder that the children in Davies' (1989) study involving *The Paper Bag Princess*, couldn't envision the girl as being the independent one who rescued the prince? It is imperative, therefore, that teachers bring to light gender bias in texts. My study explored the manner in which teachers discussed a gendered text to discover whether the teachers' discourse enlightened students about inequities in the textual representation of females and males. In Davies' study (1989), girls and boys were positioned differently through classroom discourse. My study also investigated how classroom discourse positions girls and boys since language serves to either afford or deny power to students.

Power and Positioning

In the interest of gender equity, my research explores power relations by examining turn-taking in the classroom. I wish to discover when the teachers afford girls and boys access to the floor, how students position each other, as either powerful or powerless, by their interruptions, and who controls the topic of conversation during talk about text.

Davies and Harre (1990) assert that the positions that we occupy within a discursive event, are similar to the roles played by actors; further, they emphasize that there are two types of positioning that may occur within any discursive event: interactive and reflexive. Interactive positioning occurs when one person positions another; by contrast, reflexive positioning is when one positions oneself within a discussion. Researchers (Clarke, 2006; Davies & Harre, 1990) have explored issues of gender and positioning to determine in what way positioning is indicative of power relations. For

example, one person may relegate another to a powerless position by interrupting her/his discussion.

Discourse and positioning in literature circles and discussion groups were investigated by researchers (Clark, 2006; Evans, 1996) interested in the role of peer-influence and gender in literary discussions. Clark (2006) explored how gender, as it intersects with social class, influences the manner in which fifth grade students discuss texts in literature circles. Her qualitative study revealed the manner in which positioning worked to an advantage for the girls, who dominated the discussion group, and marginalized the boys. Previous studies mainly concentrated on the way literature circle discussion groups marginalize girls (Cherland, 1994; Evans, 1996). Cherland's (1994) study emphasized the way, in mixed-gender groups, boys spoke longer, engaged in more teasing of girls and displayed more contradictions. The discursive practices of the boys enabled them to achieve symbolic power in the group. Clark's (2006) study revealed that girls achieved power in the literacy classroom by being keepers of the rules. By being nice, kind, and helpful girls imitate the expectations society imposes on girls (Walkerdine, 1990).

Positioning was also investigated by Evans (1996) who asserted that, "literature discussions are complex social, cultural, and intellectual contexts. Moreover, their conversations revealed to me that gender s an integral part of that complexity" (p. 183). Evans' (1996) research was conducted on two multi-cultural fifth grade classrooms and, what emerged when the study was viewed through a lens of gender, was the ways boys and girls are positioned by classroom discourse. The study revealed that, while literature discussion groups are often formulated to encourage equality of voice to all participants, the boys used teasing and challenging to relegate the girls to positions of powerlessness.

Further, the talk about text served to reinforce sexist stereotypes that the discussions are meant to interrupt.

Maarit Lindroos' (1995) study revealed that teachers interrupt girls much more than boys hence compromising the girls' power in the classroom discussion. Additionally, while presenting their work, boys talked more and used longer turns than did girls, and the boys were allowed to tell their stories almost without interruption. The teacher and the rest of the class, by contrast, interrupted girls frequently during their presentations. Lindroos (1995) asserts that the boys' presentations appeared to be complete and whole whereas the girls' stories couldn't get started. When girls presented their stories to the class, the teacher invited the rest of the class (the boys?) to interact with the presenter, suggesting that there might be alternatives to the girls' stories. By contrast, the boys were allowed to present their stories almost uninterrupted, thus confirming the quality of their work. Additionally, during the girls' presentations the teacher frequently spoke with the boys. At the end of the lesson, the teacher allowed the boys to take over the girls' turn. Lindroos (1995) noticed almost no resistance on the part of the girls as females are given the message that their voices are insignificant (Lafrance, 1991).

Baxter (2003), utilizing feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis, noticed gender differentiation (different expectations for boys and girls, with respect to expected modes of behavior) in a classroom. She observed that girls obeyed rules in the classroom by raising their hands to speak more often than boys, yet boys were granted far more speaking turns. This ties in with researchers' (Fairclough, 1989; Sunderland, et al., 2001; Baxter 2003) suggestion that investigating who has access to the floor (whose voice gets the privilege of discussing the text) is another appropriate method a feminist

poststructuralist researcher might employ to analyze issues involving gender and discourse

Fairclough (1989), discussing positioning and power, suggests that one way to examine power relations is to examine turn-taking: who has access to the floor, who controls the topic, and who interrupts whom. These devices serve to either afford or deny power.   This is important because men and boys tend to not only have more frequent access to the floor but also because they are more actively attended to; teachers spend more time conversing with boys than with girls.

In the interest of equality, my research involves power relations by examining turn-taking. I wish to discover when girls and boys are afforded access to the floor, how students position each other as powerful/powerless by their interruptions, and who controls the topic of conversation.

Educators' Beliefs and Attitudes

Educators' beliefs and attitudes impact the manner in which they teach; this is significant in regards to issues of gender equity. One question guiding my study involves exploring teachers' attitudes and beliefs with regards to literacy and gender. My discussion, therefore, now focuses on the suggestion that currently, boys' literacy needs are foregrounded. My discussion then concentrates on research exploring educators' attitudes about gender and finally, I focus on research still needed regarding discourse and gender bias.

Boys' literacy needs foregrounded. Recently, the literacy needs of boys have been brought to the foreground.   A report by the International Reading Association (McFann, 2004) asserted that, with regards to fourth grade children, boys lagged behind girls in reading ability. One reason given for this discrepancy was that boys and girls differ as to

the type of texts they enjoy reading. While boys prefer informational texts, magazines, and graphic novels, girls prefer narrative and expository texts (those used most frequently in schools). Further, it was suggested that while girls willingly read texts containing a male protagonist, boys tend to resist reading a text with a female protagonist (McFann, 2004). An additional point that was emphasized was that books are chosen with girls in mind because "girls are more vocal about what they want," and "teachers are predominantly women" (McFann, 2004, p. 20).   It is suggested that "the male perspective needs to be considered" (McFann, 2004, p. 20) when selecting classroom reading material.

Sanford (2005) emphasizes that there is a moral panic about boys' lack of literacy skills, and in some cases girls are blamed for this occurrence because they are said to "siphon off the resources and attention that boys should have" (p. 303).   Sanford's (2005) assertions are based on a yearlong study she conducted involving two classrooms in a suburban middle school. Two teachers supported her and she interviewed six boys, six girls, and school administrators. Sanford (2005) also participated in three meetings of the school's "Gender Committee" in the hopes of understanding issues of literacy perception, in the school, with regards to girls and boys.   Sanford (2005) discovered that the administrators and teachers were mainly concerned with issues of boys' literacy – their lack of success on large-scale examinations of writing and reading. Further, they viewed girls as no longer having literacy issues and believed that girls no longer had any important problems relating to any areas of education. I wish, therefore, to explore issues involving literacy and gender to ensure that both girls and boys have equal access to participating in classroom discussion.

Educators' attitudes about gender. Researchers (Davies, 1989; Gilbert, 1989; Pipher, 1994) have argued that teachers' attitudes and actions influence the way children view themselves and their world. These attitudes can contribute to sexist attitudes and beliefs in children. Bronwyn Davies (1989) asserts that teachers' attitudes perpetuate gender bias. Davies (Baker & Davies, 1989) participated in a study that involved observing a lesson in which an educator attempted to teach children a lesson on sex roles and instead provided a lesson that confirmed gender inequality. The teacher asked the class to define maternal instinct (not paternal instinct), and then proceeded to explain that women are probably more capable of staying at home and taking care of children than are men.

Kathy Sanford (2005) claims that teachers' expectations often draw on stereotypical beliefs about gender, thus limiting the options available for students, particularly girls. Teachers in Sanford's (2005) study asserted that boys were more willing to take risks, and girls read more than boys. Further, teachers characterized girls as being more talkative than boys; the reality is that boys (and men) in classrooms speak much more than girls (and women) speak, and tend to dominate classroom discourse (Lafrance, 1991). Sadker and Sadker (1985) conducted a study in which teachers were shown a film of a classroom discussion and asked them who spoke more, the boys or the girls. The teachers overwhelmingly said the girls did, but in reality the boys out-talked the girls at a ratio of 3:1. Maarit Lindroos' (1995) study of classroom discourse revealed that boys spoke 39% of the time, the teacher spoke 43% of the time, and girls spoke 18% of the time. Additionally, teachers often make excuses as to why boys don't perform as well as girls. Boys' attitude is often blamed on their inability to succeed, as teachers

assert that they don't "try as hard" as girls (Sanford, 2005). When girls don't succeed, teachers place the blame on their lack of ability.

Alvermann & Commeyras (1994) emphasize that being aware of the power differentials in texts requires a certain amount of complicity on the reader's part. If readers are not encouraged to discuss the way the language of texts socially constructs gender, stereotypes will go unnoticed and unexamined and will be reconstituted with each reading. Alvermann and Commeyras (1994) echo Davies' (1989) assertion that it is the responsibility of teachers to awaken in students an awareness of gender bias in the language of texts.

Recent studies (Sanford, 2005; Sunderland et al., 2001) revealed that teachers still held sexist beliefs and these attitudes were reflected in their discussion about texts in the classroom. By interviewing the ninth grade teachers, my study explored the attitudes and beliefs teachers hold in relation to gender and literacy in an attempt to discover how their attitudes may be reflected in their teaching practices.

Research Still Needed on Discourse and Gender Bias

Researchers (Alvermann, 1994; Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, et al., 2001; Wortham, 2006) emphasize the lack of, and need for, research based on discourse and textbooks. Vygotsky (1978) asserted that talk is the basis for the development of thinking, and the creative construction of ideas. Despite studies (Alvermann, 1994; Lindroos, 1995; Lloyd, 1998; Sanford, 2005; Sunderland, et al., 2001; Wortham, 2006) on discourse and gender, there is still much research needed with regards to talk about text.

While earlier researchers (Alvermann, 1996; Horowitz, 1994; Lloyd, 1998) emphasized the need for research on gender, discourse, and curriculum issues, contemporary researchers (Sanford, 2005; Sunderland, et al., 2001; Wortham, 2006)

still claim that there exists very little research in this area, especially related to discourse and texts.   Sunderland's (2001) pilot study suggests that the contents of a textbook does not determine if that text will be discussed in a gender equitable manner, and illustrated the way a teacher's discourse can undermine the progressive messages in a textbook. Sunderland, et al., (2001) asserts

> We hope, however, that we have shown that for those engaged in research
> on gender in the…classroom, rather than looking "in the text" for
> bias, or even looking diachronically for improvements in textual representa-
> tions of gender, a more relevant and fruitful focus in terms of both language
> learning and gender identity may be the mediation of gender representation in
> textbook texts by teachers, through their discourse on those texts. (p. 283)

Sunderland et al., (2001) further emphasized the lack of research about, and need for, analysis of student responses to teacher discourse about texts.

Wortham (2006) suggests that more analysis is needed with regards to teacher talk about text and the impact of classroom talk on student identity. While Pipher (1994) suggests that girls' sense of self is jeopardized by pedagogical practices, Wortham's (2006) study shows the ways that both girls and boys are negatively affected by classroom discourse. Wortham (2006) noted that the teachers should have noticed the manner in which their examples had serious negative implications for students' own identities. The results of the case study (and the absence of research in this area), which revealed the manner in which classroom discussion situates boys and girls in certain gendered ways and the impact this has on students' identity and positioning within the classroom, suggests more research is needed.

Carol Gilligan (2006) explains, "both sexes suffer when one is not understood" (p. 53). Gilligan (2006) emphasizes that gender equity is still an issue in pedagogical practices and now we have the time to redress a system of gender relationships that endanger both sexes.

>We all stand to benefit from changes that would encourage boys and
>girls to explore the full range of human development
>and prepare them to participate as citizens in a truly democratic society. (p. 53)

Gilligan (1983), whose earlier work depicted the manner in which girls lose their voices as they approach adolescence, asserts that women's voices are still underrepresented as men still outnumber women in the highest levels of academia, as well as in government and business. Further, girls' voices still need to be encouraged in academia as girls are still hesitant to express themselves. Gilligan (2006) discusses a seventeen year old valedictorian who explains, "If I were to say what I was thinking and feeling, no one would want to be with me; my voice would be too loud" (p. 53). Gilligan (2006) is careful to emphasize that we must encourage, in the interest of equality, boys' voices also. Cameron (1993) emphasized that the study of discourse and gender is crucial for equality: for assertions of women's difference from men are the implicit and often, the explicit, foundations on which inequality and sexism rest. Current research on discourse about texts and gender is crucial to ensure equitable pedagogy.

Just as Gilbert and Gilbert (1998), claimed, nine years ago, that schools privilege male interests over those of females, current researchers (Sunderland, 2001; Baxter, 2003; Sanford, 2005) assert that schools still shortchange girls. Just as Pipher (1994) voiced concern about the damage educational practices have on girls' self-esteem, current studies (Osler & Vincent, 2003; Sanford, 2005) suggest that teachers, curriculum, and literacy practices continue to pay little attention to girls to the detriment of their self-esteem. Researchers (Gilligan, 2006; Sanford, 2005) argue that it is important not lose sight of the fact that while girls have made strides in areas of equality in schools, there is still a considerable amount of work to be done to ensure equality of opportunity and equal access for all students.

As I proceed to the next chapter, my discussion turns to the methodology used in the study. I revisit the research questions guiding my study, describe the settings and participants, data collection methods, data analysis and validity procedures.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which teachers discuss

gendered characters in a textbook in order to discover, in the interest of equality, whether

the discoursal treatment of a text can be predicted by the text itself. That is, whether

analysis of a text can determine the way in which the text will be discussed. I also wanted

to examine the manner in which teachers' talk about the characters in the text serves to

position girls and boys.   Further, I wanted to discover the way students respond to both

the text, and the discourse about the text: I wished to explore what sense they make of the

gendered characters, and to examine the ways the students' discussion about the text

served to position themselves and others. The notion of positioning ties in with

poststructuralism's emphasis on discovering whose interest language serves, and

Fairclough's (1989) Critical Discourse Analysis which posits that power is exercised and

enacted through language and discourse. To discover how teachers' beliefs about gender

were reflected in their teaching method, I also investigated the teachers' attitudes and

beliefs about literacy and gender. This helped me to formulate an understanding of the

teachers' response to gendered characters in a text.   The three research questions guiding

this study were:

1. What are some different ways English teachers talk about a gendered

   text in a classroom?

   a). In what way does the teachers' discussion about the gendered

   characters serve to ignore, subvert or endorse the gendered

   message in the text?

b). In what way does the teachers' discussion about the gendered characters serve to position girls and boys?

2. How do students discuss the gendered characters in a text in a classroom?

a. What sense do students make of the gendered characters in the text?

b. In what ways do the students' discussion about the gendered characters in the text serve to position themselves and other students?

3. What are teachers' beliefs and attitudes with regards to gender and literacy?

Much of the classroom research that has been conducted on gender bias in classrooms has focused on sexism in textbooks. Despite researchers' (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994; Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, Corlwy, Fauziah, Leontzakou, and Shattuck, 2001; Wortham, 2006) emphasis on the need for research on talk about text, far less research is available on discourse about texts. The language of a textbook is not an indicator that the textbook will be treated in an equitable manner, and teacher talk about a text cannot be predicted merely by examining the textbook. It is imperative, therefore, that in addition to examining a textbook for gender bias, observing teacher talk about the text be conducted. It is necessary to determine whose interest the textbook, and the talk about text serves. My study analyzed the manner in which two teachers, one male, one female, discussed a traditional text, and also the way their students responded to the gendered characters. It should be noted that it was imperative that the text that was being discussed be gendered in some way. For example, a text about winemaking would not,

for my purposes, be considered gendered. I also analyzed the manner in which the discussion about the text positioned students in relation to power, as positioning through language is significant with regards to language and power (Fairclough, 1989). Since teachers' attitudes and beliefs also affect gender equity in classroom discourse (Baker & Davies, 1989; Lafrance, 1991; Sanford, 2005), this study examined teachers' attitudes and beliefs in relation to literacy and gender.

Overall, the study asked, whose interest does the classroom discourse serve? The study also sought a subjective view about gender and literacy by seeking the perspective of the two teachers. This chapter, in discussing the methodology used, will begin the discussion by introducing the setting and participants. A conversation about data collection will then be presented, followed by a discussion about data analysis. Finally, the validity procedures used in the study are explored.

Setting and Participants

The setting of my research was a high school in my hometown, and the participants were teachers and students of two ninth grade English Honors classes.

Setting.   The research was conducted at Oram[1] High School, which is situated in a small suburban middle class town with approximately 20,000 residents, in New Jersey. While the majority of the residents are white, there is nevertheless a somewhat diverse population in the city (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). The median family income of Aurora is $117,000, sixty-one percent of the population is married couples living together, and 27% of residents are under 18. This school was chosen because it is a relatively highly rated school system (out of 1200 schools, Oram High School was rated between 200 and 300 by Newsweek), and was named a Benchmark School (by the Business Coalition for Educational Excellence) for the fourth consecutive year. I was

curious about whether, since this school is a highly regarded school system (academically), an awareness of issues of gender equity were being demonstrated in the English classes. Additionally, Oram High School is located Aurora, the town in which I reside; as such, I had a personal connection and easy access to the school. Further, since I had two children who were attending Oram High School, I knew the principal and some of the teachers.

Participants. As mentioned, the majority of the population in the town in which the school was located was mainly white, and middle/upper middle class. The majority of students of Oram High School were white, and came from middle/upper middle class families (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). None of the teachers in the study resided in the town in which the school was situated.   The participants of this study were the students and teachers of two ninth grade English honors classes. I chose ninth grade because my pilot study was conducted on eight graders. Also, as I observed from my own high school children's work, and discussions with high school teachers at Aurora High School, ninth grade English classes have a more literary focus than do eighth grade classes. Logically, I could have just as easily chosen tenth, eleventh or twelfth graders to observe, but I wished to explore the discussion of students and teachers the first year of high school. I chose to observe English classrooms rather than those of other subjects because of my interest in literature and literacy.

To obtain the names of teaches who might be interested in participating in the study, I initially met, in June, with the Principal of the high school who assured me that he was confident that some teachers would be interested - and that I could begin my research the following September. The Principal asked the ninth grade English teachers if they'd be interested in participating in the study. After receiving positive responses

[1]Pseudonym

from two teachers, the Principal called me at home to inform me that he had found two ninth grade teachers interested in participating in the study. Later, the principal informed me that he had a third teacher interested in participating. I chose Donna and Gerard because they both were both teaching the same textbook. This was significant as Sunderland (Sunderland, et al., 2001), whose pilot study was a model for my study, suggested than an important follow-up study would involve investigating discourse involving identical texts. Further, Donna and Gerard were working closely together to coordinate their teaching methods. Donna is Latina, in her late 20s, and has been teaching for five years. Gerard is white, in his early 30s, and has been teaching for eight years. Laura, the third teacher, taught a different text. Also, due to a conflict in schedules, it was difficult to include her in the study.

Once I had decided to include Donna and Gerard in my study, I called them at school and arranged a meeting with them to explain how I planned to observe their classroom. I also hand delivered to them consent forms seeking their permission to observe their class and to interview them (see Attachment 3). Additionally, I received permission to visit their classrooms a few days before my official observations began to introduce myself to the students (see Attachment 5). I wanted the students to become accustomed to my being in the classroom. At this time I sent home a permission form to the parents asking permission to observe their child (see Attachment 1), and I provided each student with a consent form (see Attachment 2).

Data Collection

Since the purpose of this study was to examine the manner in which two teachers discuss a literary textbook, how students respond to the discussion about the text, and teachers' views about literacy and gender, three forms of data were collected: the text,

The Odyssey (Fagles, 1996), observations of two ninth grade English classrooms, and interviews with the teachers (see Appendix E). In turning to my discussion about data collection, I begin by discussing the text used, followed by a conversation about classroom observation and teacher interviews.

Text used. Both of the classes that I observed used the same textbook for their discussion, The *Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996). The teachers were under constraints since they were teaching an Honors English class, and the Administration decided which books were taught. The teachers, however, worked closely in deciding which version of *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996) they would use. Ultimately, they chose Fagles' (1996) version because they believed the language made the text easily accessible to students.

Classroom observations. My observation involved sitting in on two ninth grade English honors classes when they discussed the text I analyzed. Observations took place over the course of six weeks on those days in which the teachers discussed *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996). During observations, I sat at different desks depending on availability; this allowed me close access, at some point, to all of the students. This was highly advantageous as it afforded me access to conversations that I otherwise might have missed. For example, in Donna's class I was sitting directly behind three girls who, after a discussion about rape had ceased, continued to discuss the topic in a rather passionate manner.

Every day I brought my laptop to class on which I recorded notes such as when someone raised her/his hand, etc. It was not possible to record every movement that occurred in the class; instead, I recorded atypical occurrences or something which stood out as unusual. These occurrences included the girls jumping up and down in their seat attempting to get floor time during a discussion about rape; also, when it appeared that

the girls and boys were on opposite sides during the discussions about rape. Additionally, I brought a journal as I found writing, very often, was faster for me than typing. For seating charts and students' names, I found the journal to be highly effective. I also audio recorded class discussions. The audio recorder was placed on a desk in the center of the room and was highly effective in capturing the students' conversation. During the six weeks of my observation, I spent between 4 and 5 days a week in the class. On occasion, the students had an abbreviated schedule and the English class did not meet. As mentioned, I observed for six weeks; this was the amount of time both teachers spent discussing *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996). In total, I observed the classes for 24 days with the number of hours of observation totaling 22. Further, I spent equal time in both classrooms. Using Fairclough's (1989) three-tiered approach, this discussion about the textbook was another "text" to be analyzed.

The data from the observations of the two classrooms were transcribed, and I created one Microsoft Word file (which houses the transcriptions) for each class that I observed for a total of two Microsoft Word files. The notes that I had recorded on my laptop I placed on each teacher's corresponding file (See Appendix D).

One point that should be made is that, during my observations, after each class, I usually had about five minutes to chat with the teachers before their next class arrived. It was during these times that the teachers and I really got to know each other and where some interesting information regarding their teaching styles, beliefs, background, family life, etc., was discussed.   I made sure to record the information in my journal as soon as I reached my car to minimize any discrepancy between the information I received from the teacher, and the information I was recording in my journal.

Teacher interviews. Since one of the purposes of this study was to discover teachers' beliefs and attitudes with regards to gender and literacy, I conducted one interview with each teacher to explore the way the teachers view gender and literacy. Typically, qualitative interviews are more like conversations in which the researcher will explore "a few general topics to help uncover the participant's views" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 108). For this study, I conducted an informal conversational interview. Creswell (1998) asserts that, in a qualitative study, questions are often open-ended and evolving. I asked specific questions but left them open-ended, allowing for flexibility (see Appendix A). An interview guide (Seidman, 1998) was the format of my interview. I had a list of questions, but nonetheless remained flexible and open in my conversation with the teachers, allowing them flexibility to explore their thoughts.

I interviewed teachers on different days. The interviews, which were conducted in a conference room, lasted approximately fifty minutes. They were scheduled at a time convenient for the teachers and were audio recorded. Further, the interviews were conducted after I had completed all of my observations so as not to bias teaching methods. When an interview was completed, the information was transcribed and placed on the Microsoft Word File that corresponded to each teacher [e.g. Microsoft Word file #1 corresponds to teacher #1 (see Appendix D)]. Additionally, I brought a journal to the interviews to record nonverbal actions such as body language.

Data Analysis

My focus now turns to the manner in which I analyzed my data. I begin by discussing the methodology used, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The conversation then focuses on the analysis of the text, *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1999), the teachers' discourse about the text, and the students' discussion about the text. The discussion then

concentrates on the way students were relegated to a powerful/powerless position during the classroom discussions. Finally, the conversation turns to the validity procedures I utilized during data analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis. Fairclough (1995) believed in the multifunctionality of language in texts and felt that language is both socially constitutive and socially determined (Titscher, et al., 2000). Specifically, my research drew on Fairclough's (1989) three-tiered framework of text (description), interpretation, and explanation (see Appendix C). I chose Fairclough's (1995) method of analysis because it emphasizes the need to analyze issues of power and equity in situated speech. Further, Fairclough (1980) emphasizes that in discourse, relations of power and language are played out. He further claims that the interpreter can't look at discourse without looking at power relations, as power is central to all language interactions. Fairclough's (1989) three-tiered approach (text, interpretation and explanation) was an appropriate method for my purposes as I am interested in the language of the text, how it is discussed, and where that discussion fits in with regards to the institutional setting in which it is discussed, and how issues of power are played out in language, and society in general (see Appendix C).

My discussion now focuses on my analysis of *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1999), the teachers' discourse about the text, and the students' discussion about the text. Finally, the conversation turns to students' relegation to powerful/powerless positions through the classroom discourse.

Textual analysis. Since reading texts is a mainstay of the curriculum, and since my study revolves around the discourse about the gendered characters in the text, my first phase of analysis involved analyzing the text used by Donna and Gerard. The purpose of a textual analysis is to "draw a picture of the presuppositions and meanings that constitute

the cultural world of which the textual material is a specimen (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 870). Qualitative researchers who analyze texts often do not follow any predefined protocol when executing their analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Often they read and reread their material to determine key themes and to draw a picture of meanings in the text.

In this phase of my analysis, I utilized the first level, description (text), of the three-tiered approach (Fairclough, 1989). Since I am utilizing Fairclough's (1989) three-tiered approach, it is important to mention that the text, *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1999), is the description (first level of analysis), and the interpretation (the second level of analysis). Textual analysis serves to discover key themes in a text. My research concentrated on examining the English textbook used by the two ninth grade classes that I observed. Since both classes used the same textbook, I examined only one text. Drawing on my feminist critical perspective, I sought to determine the manner in which males and females are represented. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explain that critical discourse analysts are interested in the ways texts reproduce power and inequalities in society. Fairclough's (1989) emphasizes that researchers bring their own MR (member resources) that they draw upon when they conduct analysis. These MR are generated from the social relations and struggles one experiences.

Data analysis began when, using Sunderland, et al. (2001) as a model, I conducted a textual analysis to determine whether the text was "progressive," with roles of males and females moving beyond the traditional gendered roles, or "traditional," with males and females assigned traditional gendered roles. The texts could have appeared gender-biased in some way in that they exaggerate or maintain traditional gender roles, or they might have been "progressive," representing gender roles broadened so as to extend

the range of activities traditionally available to women or men. For example, traditional roles might place the woman in the private sphere and the man in the public sphere. This textual analysis, the first step in my three-tiered approach, represents "the stage which is concerned with the formal properties of the text" (Fairclough, 1998, p. 26).

Specifically, I obtained a copy of the text that was being used during the time I observed the classroom discussion. I read the textbook to determine if each unit of analysis represented gender roles in a "traditional," or "progressive" manner. A unit of analysis for my purposes was at the sentence level of the text. I chose a sentence as my unit of analysis because Fairclough (1989) refers to these units (sentences) as sequential parts and considers the sentence level an effective means in which to analyze a text. I looked for language that may have positioned women and men in either a traditional or progressive manner. I also analyzed each sentence, however, in relation to the text as a whole to discover the coherence of the text (the meaning of the text as a whole when all the sequential parts (sentences) come together as a whole text) (Fairclough, 1989). For example, a sentence such as "Father took the crying baby out of the crib," takes on a whole different meaning when followed by the sentence, "He handed the baby to mother explaining that she needed her diaper changed." Alone, the first sentence suggests that the father is cognizant of the baby's needs and is attending to them; however, that sentence, coupled with the second sentence, indicates that he expects the baby's mother to tend to the baby's needs. Essentially, I read a sentence to discover its meaning; I then read the subsequent sentence(s) to discover whether the meaning changed when the sentences were put together. For instance, the sentence, "Odysseus and his men abandoned the ship" takes on a different meaning when coupled with the next sentence, "they then killed the men, took the women and shared them for their use." In this case I

did not place a code after the first sentence but rather after the second, because together they make a coherent unit (Fairclough, 1989). A coherent unit are sentences that are logically connected. For example, the sentence which followed the two mentioned above, "Odysseus and his men set sail," was not determined to be logically connected to the prior sentences and therefore it was considered the start of another coherent unit. At the end of that coherent unit I coded once again. Essentially, I was attempting to discover a coherent unit of text by looking at the logical connection between the sentences. I then sought to discover if this unit was progressive or traditional (Sunderland, et al., 2001).

During my analysis stage I read each unit of analysis (each sentence) in each Book of *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1999) to determine whether the gendered characters were being represented in either a "progressive" or a "traditional" manner. *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1999) is an epic poem with logical breaks occurring at each Book, rather than each chapter, as might be the case with a novel. My analysis involved only looking at those Books that were being discussed by Donna and Gerard. Specifically, while reading through the unit of analysis, I color coded each instance when a character was mentioned. For example, I coded a "P" (in green) in the text's margins beside the character if that character was presented in a progressive manner, and with a "T" (in blue) if the character was presented in a traditional manner (see Appendix F). As mentioned, I was also looking at the text as a whole to determine how all the sentences came together (Fairclough, 1989) as a coherent text (in relation to gender). After completing this process I determined if, overall, the unit of analysis represented the gendered characters in a progressive or traditional manner. I decided this by reviewing how the characters were represented. If the characters were mainly represented as traditional throughout the Book, I wrote a "Traditional" at the top of the first page of that Book. If they were

represented in a progressive manner, I wrote "Progressive" at the top of the first page of that Book. In this vein, after I had coded either "Progressive" or "Traditional" at the top of the first page of each Book, I compared the number of "Progressive" Books to the number of "Traditional" Books to determine if, overall, *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1999) was a traditional or a progressive text. This textual analysis involved the first level of my three-tiered CDA approach and represents "the stage which is concerned with the formal properties of the text" (Fairclough, 1998, p. 26).

Teachers' discoursal treatment of a text. After analyzing and coding the textbook (at each point where a gendered character is referenced, either a "P" or a "T" was coded), and transcribing the classroom discussion (as described above), I analyzed the data. My analysis at this point moved to Faircloughs' (1989) second stage of the three-tiered approach to analysis. This is where I was interested in "the relationship between text and interaction" (p. 26).

The first research question my analysis addressed is: in what way does the teacher's discourse ignore, subvert or endorse the gendered message in the text? In this interpretation phase of CDA (Fairclough, 1989), I utilized Sunderland's (Sunderland, et al., 2001) model to address the question. First, I looked at the transcribed data of the first classroom discussion of the first teacher and the corresponding unit of analysis that I had coded. Looking at the coded textbook (with "P" for progressive and "T" for traditional) I compared the discussion about the gendered characters that corresponded to the text. I was interested in determining whether the teacher's language served to endorse, subvert or ignore the gender representation in the text. Endorsement and subversion may be unintentional or intentional on the part of the teacher (see Appendix B).

Endorsement means that the teacher is broadly supporting the gendered discourse of the text. A gendered text in which there is "maintenance of traditional roles" can be endorsed through explicit positive comment, extension, enthusiasm, or is being used as a springboard from which to launch gender-stereotypical observations (Sunderland, et al., 2001). It can also be endorsed through being dealt with uncritically, or through simply being taught. Endorsement of a text which goes beyond traditional roles can be done similarly, though if used as a "springboard" would be for discussion of gender equality. For example, in Sunderland's (Sunderland, et al., 2001) pilot study the text discussed a man with nine wives. The teacher endorsed polygamy by adopting the gender-biased views of marriage while sharing her summary of the article's content. I coded "TE" in the transcript when a teacher endorses a gendered message (see Appendix H).

Subversion indicates that the teacher is undermining the gendered discourse. This can be done through the teacher's, either implicitly or explicitly, confronting a particular representation (traditional or progressive) of gender roles. For example, showing a lack of enthusiasm for, or simply ignoring aspects of it. A text that maintains a "traditional representation of gender roles" can be subverted by being treated in a way that encourages rather than discourages gender equity; for example, by discussion, criticism, reversal of roles in dialogues, jokes or supplementary comment. A text that "goes beyond traditional gender roles" can be undermined by, for example, the teacher ridiculing the ideas. For example, in Sunderland's (Sunderland, et al., 2001) pilot study a teacher discussed a "progressive" text (progressive because it associated beauty with both sexes and used an equal number of pictures of women and men).The teacher subverted the progressive message by implying that a boy should like the picture of the blond woman

(as blond is a beautiful trait for women). I coded "TS" in the transcription every time a teacher subverts the gendered message.

Ignoring gender representation could logically be interpreted as endorsing that representation. For example, referring to a previous example, a teacher endorsed polygamy by ignoring (not mentioning) the fact that the man had more than one spouse. For my purposes, I will report ignoring to distinguish between endorsing and ignoring because the teacher could, for pedagogical reasons, be intentionally ignoring certain parts of the text that has nothing to do with gender representation. I coded "TI" in the transcription every time a teacher ignores the gendered message.

There were also times when the teachers' discussion was neutral and unrelated to the text. For instance, on one particular day a girl in Gerard's class broke a bottle of soda, and for approximately ten minutes Gerard's discussion centered on the liquid that was slowly making its way to other students' backpacks. I coded Gerard's discussion with a "TN." There were other instances when I coded a "TN;" for example, when the teachers responded to students' request to go to leave the room I coded a "TN."

While conducting the analysis, I kept a tally of each time the teacher ignored, subverted or endorsed the gendered representation in the textbook. This total I kept on the Microsoft Word File (see Appendix D) that corresponded to each respective teacher. The file contains three categories (ignore, subvert, endorse); after each classroom discussion I analyzed, I added to the tally for that teacher. This analysis was repeated for all of the days of the classroom observation for both of the teachers.

During this phase of analysis of teacher discourse, I examined the number of times the teachers had ignored, subverted or endorsed the gendered message to determine whether the teacher had taught the text in a traditional or a progressive manner. I

determined this by comparing the tally with the type of text used. In this case, the text was "traditional;" therefore, if the teacher ignored or endorsed the gendered message more than she/he subverted it, then the teacher taught in a "traditional" manner. Essentially, using Sunderland's (Sunderland, et al., 2001) model, I counted each code. It should be mentioned that when I coded, in a manner similar to that which I used for coding the textbook, a unit of analysis was at the sentence level. I examined each sentence that the teacher uttered as it related to the gendered characters. Essentially, I read a sentence to discover the meaning; I then read subsequent sentence(s) to discover whether the meaning changed when the sentences were put together. I was attempting to identify a coherent unit (Fairclough, 1989). As in my textual analysis, a coherent unit was a single sentence, or sentences that were logically connected. When I discovered a coherent unit, I coded it. I repeated this for the entire transcript.

My next step was to look at the transcript again to determine in what way the teacher had discussed the gendered characters. It was important to keep a count of whether the teacher ignored or subverted the gendered message in the text in order to determine whether she/he taught the text traditionally or progressively. It also was necessary to explore what the teachers were saying about the text in order to get a comprehensive and in-depth look at how the teachers discussed the text. I first looked at all the times that the teacher had ignored, or endorsed ("TI" or "TE") the gendered message. I was interested in exploring the way she/he responded to the text and to the students. For example, when Donna discussed the characters Calypso or Circe, she continually used gender bias language with words such as "temptress," "sensual" or "alluring." This suggested that her response was sexist in nature. After I looked at all the instances where the teachers ignored or endorsed the gendered representation, I then

looked at the way they subverted the gendered message. For example, in one instance

when Gerard subverted ("TS") the gendered message, he did so by pointing out that

while the men were encouraged to take multiple lovers, the women were called "sluts"

when they took a lover. My interpretation in this case is that Gerard is enlightening

students about sexism in the text. To get a more in-depth view of the way the teachers

taught the text, it was important to triangulate the data; therefore, I also looked at the

teachers' responses to my interview with regards to gender and literacy. I was interested

in exploring whether their attitudes about literacy and gender were reflected in their

teaching methods. For instance, Gerard's responses to my questions about gender and

literacy revealed that he was a progressive thinker with regards to issues of gender equity.

His teaching of the text confirmed these results as he taught the text in a gender equitable

manner.

To recap, this analysis involved comparing the classroom discussion with the

corresponding coded area in the text. I explored whether the teachers ignored, subverted

or endorsed the characters' gender representation in the text.   This information was

stored on the Microsoft Word file (see Appendix I) that corresponded to the appropriate

teacher. The purpose of counting the number of times the teachers ignored, subverted or

endorsed the gendered message was twofold; to offer a comparison of both teachers'

handling of the text, and to ascertain whether they had taught the text in a traditional or a

progressive manner. The counts were used with regards to the total number of times each

teacher ignored, subverted and endorsed the text. Once this was determined, I was

interested in discovering in what way the teachers' discussion served to ignore, subvert or

endorse the gendered characters. I was interested in discovering the language that the

teachers' used and how they discussed the gendered characters. For instance, on one

occasion Donna was discussing the fact that a twelve year old girl was offered to Odysseus as a gift. Donna endorsed the gendered representation by claiming, when the students protested this act, "that doesn't matter."

Students' discussion about a text's gendered characters. My analysis continued as I addressed my second research question: in what ways do students discuss the gendered characters with regards to the way in which they are portrayed (either in a "progressive" or a "traditional" manner)? Specifically, I was interested in the students' reaction to the portrayal of the gendered characters.

Utilizing my members' resources, or background knowledge when I interpreted the data, my analysis continued (Fairclough, 1989). To answer my research question, I initially looked at the transcribed data of the first classroom discussion of the first teacher and the corresponding unit of analysis that I had coded. Looking at the coded textbook (with "P" for progressive and "T" for traditional) (see Appendix F), I compared the discussion about the gendered characters that corresponded to the text. I was interested in determining whether the students' language about the gendered characters served to question or subvert the manner in which the characters were portrayed. When I found an instance where a student was questioning or subverting the gendered character, I coded on the transcript an "SQB" for student questioning boy ("SQG" for student questioning girl), or "SSB" for student subverting boy ("SSG" for students subverting girl). For example, in the text, Odysseus attempts to elude blame for his extramarital affairs by explaining that as a man, he could not help it. On one occasion a boy student subverted this gendered message by arguing that this is merely an excuse for his affairs and he did have a choice as to whether or not he slept with these women. In the textbook I had coded a "T" because Odysseus is represented in a traditional manner. When I compared

the text ("T") with the students' response, I coded an "SSB" on the transcript because, as mentioned, the boy's discussion served to subvert the gendered message (see Appendix G).

To triangulate the data, I was also looking at the notes I had taken in my journal which described body language, etc., and served to add depth to my study. For example, during one of the discussions about rape, a topic the girls were particularly passionate about, I note in my journal that "two girls are waving [to get floor time] and chatting about rape – really want floor time." This information suggests that rape is a topic that the girls were anxious to discuss. Details such as this were noted in my journal and included in my analysis. These entries were coded to reflect their content. For instance, the above entry about the girls "waving and chatting about rape" was coded as "GW" for girls waving. Later, I would compare this note to their discussion about rape to triangulate my data. All of the notes taken were saved on the Microsoft Word file that corresponded to each respective teacher.

My analysis then moved to a deeper level as I explored in more depth the way in which students subverted the gendered message. Rereading the coded transcript, I began to notice patterns in the students' responses. What stood out was that the students seemed to only subvert ("SSG," "SSB") the gendered message when issues of infidelity and rape were discussed. Noticing this, I went back and coded the text again. I now coded for instances when the girls and boys discussed infidelity and rape. I coded a "BDI" or "GDI" for instances when the boys and girls discussed infidelity; I coded a "BDR" or "GDR" each time the boys or girls discussed rape, respectively. For instance, on one occasion the text mentioned that Odysseus "had taken the women" and shared them among the men. Initially, I had coded ("SSG") the text indicating that a girl had

subverted the gendered message because she indicated that the women were raped and she began a discussion about Odysseus' character. When I read through the text again, I coded ("GSR") whenever I noticed a girl had subverted the representation when the issue involved rape. I proceeded to code the entire transcript in this manner. I was consistently coding at the sentence level. There were no occasions when I did not code. There were occasions when I coded the discussion as neutral "GDN" or "BDN." For instance, if a student asked to use the restroom or leave the room, or engaged in a conversation not involving the gendered text, I coded a "GDN," or "BDN." For example, on one occasion a student discussed the fact that his father had read the Odyssey in college, "my father read this in college so they think it's good now like that we're reading this already." This sentence I coded as "BDN" because I determined that the statement did not reflect on his view of the gendered characters in the text. Essentially, I was interested in the way the students discussed the gendered characters. If their discussion centered on a topic unrelated to the text, I coded it as a neutral discussion.

My analysis then moved to the next level as I examined the transcript again to determine when and by whom the subversions occurred in relation to rape and infidelity. To triangulate my data, I also looked at my notes to determine how the students' body language, expressions, etc. might add to my understanding of the students' discussion. These notes were usually quite valuable in that they added to the understanding of how the students were responding. For instance, when the girls and boys seemed to be on opposing sides during the discussion about rape, during one observation I noted, "The girls keep looking around at other girls almost for support." There were other days, however, when the notes were merely anecdotal and didn't really add anything to my understanding of the classroom discourse. For instance, on one occasion a girl in

Gerard's class broke a bottle of juice. The class proceeded to discuss, for ten minutes, the liquid that was slowly making its way across the room. In my notes I had written, "almost ten minutes. When will discussion ever begin again." My notes somewhat reflected my disbelief that this much time (out of a 40 minute class) could be spent discussing the fact that feet were getting wet. This information, however, did not aid in my understanding of the discussion about the text's characters.

To recap, this analysis involved my looking at the classroom discussion and the corresponding unit of analysis (the text). I was looking for signs of students' discussion as subverting or questioning the gendered characters in the text. This information was stored on a Microsoft Word file (See Appendix D).

Students' relegation to powerful/powerless position through classroom discourse. In this phase of analysis, I was interested in discovering whose interest the discussion serves, and which voices are afforded power and which are marginalized. As such, I explored the language used in the classroom in an attempt to understand how it may have positioned girls and boys and how this positioning served to afford or deny power. My analysis then sought to answer the following two research questions: In what way does the teachers' discussion about the gendered characters serve to relegate girls and boys to a powerful/powerless position? In what ways do the students' discussion about the gendered characters in the text serve to relegate themselves and other students to a powerful/powerless position?

My analysis utilized Fairclough's (1989) idea about power: there is no single source of power but rather power relations are dynamic and shifting. This ties in with my poststructuralist view that each of us occupies at times a powerful, at other times a powerless, position. One way to determine who is afforded power is through looking at

turn-taking systems. My analysis of turn-taking will involve using the following devices:

which students are afforded a chance to speak, interruptions and controlling topic

(Fairclough, 1989). These devices serve to either afford or deny power.

For this phase of my analysis, I first turned to the transcript of observation of the

first teacher (Donna). Starting with the transcript of the first teacher, I examined the

transcription (looking at turn-taking) to determine when a student was given access to the

floor (a speaking turn). This may have happened when a student raised her/his hand,

when a teacher volunteered a student for an answer, or when a student began speaking

without being called on.   I recorded whether the student chosen was a boy or a girl by

coding a "BAF" or "GAF." The assertion is that the student speaking is being relegated

to a more powerful position.

Once I read through the entire transcript of the observation of the first teacher and

coded it with a "BAF" or "GAF," I read through the transcript again. This time I coded

for interruptions. I coded an "TIB," or a "TIG" when the teacher interrupted a boy or

girl, respectively. I considered an interruption a break in one's discourse caused by

another speaker before the original speaker had completed her/his thought (Fairclough,

1989). The interruption may have included overlapped speech. For instance, in the

following example, Gerard's discourse overlaps Cindy's.

Gerard: OK. Let's discuss Circe and Calypso once again.

Cindy: Well they were both had islands and were similar because[

Gerard: [Well also I'd
                        like you to remember in what ways they may be different.

In the above exchange, I coded brackets because Gerard's speech overlapped that of

Cindy. I also code "TIG" beside Cindy's name because Cindy was interrupted before she

had completed her thought. In the following example, Donna interrupts Dora without overlapped speech.

Donna: Ok. Good. Now, let's discuss what Circe was like. Dora.

Dora: Well she was living on this and she was

Donna: Let's remember that Circe was the one who lured Odysseus onto the island.

In the above exchange, Dora is interrupted by Donna before she completes her thought. I therefore coded a "TIG" beside Dora's name. I did not code brackets because there was no overlap in speech. Despite the fact that Gerard's speech had overlapped Cindy's, and Donna's speech had not overlapped Dora's, in both cases the students were interrupted and the transcript was coded as such (Fairclough, 1989).   I coded the entire transcript in this manner (see Appendix G).   I was interested in investigating interruptions as they can act as a form of social control. This is significant in the classroom where issues of inequity often go unnoticed.

It was also important to determine when one participant initiated a topic, or changed or interrupted a topic initiated by another student or the teacher; therefore, once I completed coding the transcript for interruptions, I again read through the transcript of the observation of the first teacher in order to determine when students controlled the topic. Topic control "represents a speaker's position as the authority to set the topic" (Remlinger, 2005). Topic control is relinquished when one student changes a topic initiated by another student or the teacher, before discussion about that topic is completed. If after the participant changes the topic, discussion continues about the new topic, I coded a "GCT" (girl changing topic), or a "BCT" (boy changing topic). If, however, the new topic was not further discussed, I coded a "GIT" (girl interrupted topic)

or "BIT" (boy interrupted topic), whether discussion resumed about the first topic or not. Also, it was important to examine who was the initiator of the topic; therefore, when a new topic was introduced (without interrupting or changing the discussion about an already existing topic) I coded a "GINT" or a "BINT."

When I completed the coding of the transcript of the first teacher in this manner, I tallied how many times boys and girls were given access to the floor by a speaking turn (see Appendix D). I then tallied how many times boys and girls were interrupted by counting the interruption codes for boys and girls; finally, I counted the number of times the girls and boys controlled the topic. The totals were recorded on Microsoft Word File that corresponded to the relevant teacher (see Appendix I). This procedure was repeated for both teachers. These tallies gave me a quantitative look at who was afforded power. While this information was significant, I was interested also, however, in discovering what was being said and by whom. I therefore examined the data in order to discover what was being discussed, when interruptions occurred and how issues of power were played out during these discussions. Essentially, I was interested in the ways in which the discussion positioned girls and boys. To discover this, I examined how the language was used during interruptions, etc.

By tallying the number of times girls and boys were interrupted, etc., I was able to get a quantitative look at power and positioning. Since I also wanted to discover in what way the students' discussion served to deny or afford power, I then returned to my coded transcript and examined the codes corresponding to turn-taking (speaking turns, controlling topic and interruptions). I was interested in discovering whether there was a particular pattern as to when students were placed in a more powerful position, or when they were relegated to a less powerful position. For example, when I reread the transcript I

noticed that when the discussions turned to rape, the girls were placed in a more powerful

position than were the boys because of the amount of speaking turns they were afforded

and by interrupting the boys.

To triangulate my data, I also turned to my classroom journal to explore the ways

in which the students' non-verbal language might have contributed to their negotiation of

power. When I discovered that there was a pattern as to when a student was afforded

power, I explored the conversation further. For example, during the discussions about

rape, I examined in what way the students discussed the topic; I was interested in

discovering which students were interrupted, who controlled the topic and how the use of

non-verbal language reflected the nature of the discussion. For instance, the girls'

assertiveness during the conversation, coupled with their frequent hand waving and

interrupting of the boys suggested that they were highly passionate about the subject.

From the discussions about rape, new codes emerged. For instance, when I first coded the

text, I didn't have a code for rape. However, when I repeatedly read the transcript I

noticed a pattern in the way the students were discussing rape. For example, when I

looked at the way students discussed Agamemnon's offering his daughter to Odysseus, or

"maids being "taken," I noticed that the conversations had in common a discussion about

rape. I then created a code indicating that the discussion was about rape, "BDR," "GDR."

I then proceeded to reread the transcript and code for all occurrences of discussions about

rape. Other than the codes for rape and infidelity, no other new codes emerged.

Teachers' interviews. As researchers (Alvermann, 1994; Lindroos, 1995; Lloyd,

1998; Sanford, 2005; Sunderland, et al., 2001; Wortham, 2006) emphasize, teachers'

attitudes and beliefs affect their pedagogical practices; therefore, I was interested in

exploring, through my research question, what teachers' beliefs and attitudes were in

relation to gender and literacy. I turned to my interview data in an attempt to discover the ways in which both teachers viewed these areas.

Since my study deals with issues of equality and equity, it was important to discover whether the teachers' attitudes reflect a "traditional" or a "progressive" (more equitable) view. At this point I was taking a qualitative, descriptive approach to analyzing the data. I began analyzing the interview data by reading through the file, one teacher at a time, to determine if a pattern was developing with regards to whether the teacher's views were "traditional" or "progressive" with regards to gender and literacy. For example, in an interview I conducted with Donna, she explained that the boys' literacy needs were her main concern. The girls, she explained, "will do just fine if let be," because they "cooperate;" This comment I coded as "traditional" as it is sexist in that the needs of the boys are taking precedence over those of the girls. Further, the girls are expected to act in a traditional, and passive (to cooperate) manner, while no such demands (or constraints) are placed on the boys. I coded a "T1T" (teacher one traditional) or "T1P" (teacher one progressive), on the transcription interview, depending on the results of my analysis.

In my next phase of analysis, I triangulated the data by looking at the teacher's and students' discourse. I also turned to my journal and the notes I had taken during the interview to examine body language, etc. As previously mentioned, I was attempting to understand how the teacher's beliefs and attitudes might be reflected in their teaching methods. At this point I attempted to examine the way teachers' responses reflected their teaching methods. Therefore, I read through the transcript of the first teacher looking at the coding for the interviews (e.g. "T1P"). I compared the coding on the transcript for the teacher's discoursal treatment of the text (e.g. ""P or "T"), with the codes for the

teacher's response to a question (e.g. "T1T"). I was attempting to determine if a pattern

existed between a teacher's attitude about gender and literacy and her/his discussion

about gendered characters in the text (See Appendix G). Sometimes it is also necessary

to look at data even where no patterns exist. Stake (1995) refers to this type of analysis

as direction interpretation; a researcher "looks at a single instance an draws meaning

from it" (Creswell, 1998, p. 154). I analyzed the interview data that did not adhere to a

certain pattern to determine if the data were relevant with regards to the gendered

meaning the teacher assigned to boys and girls. For instance, despite Gerard's

progressive teaching of the text, and also his progressive responses during his interview,

at times he surprised me with a response that seemed somewhat inconsistent with his

teaching methods and beliefs about gender. For example, Gerard claimed, "girls seem to

really run class conversation or class discussions" which is a rather stereotypical

response. In reality, the boys in his class actually spoke more than did the girls. Gerard

made a number of such remarks that were at odds with his seemingly progressive

attitude.

     Situational, institutional and societal social structures. In this phase of analysis,

I address the final level in Fairclough's (1989) three-tiered approach (explanation) by

exploring how sociocultural practice may have influenced the results of this study. The

point of this phase of analysis is to explore ways in which social structures (situational,

institutional and societal) may have influenced classroom discourse.

     During this phase, I explored the impact of classroom, institutional (school

system) and societal issues on the classroom discourse. I was interested in exploring

issues specific to the classroom such as the number of boys and girls, seating

arrangement, etc., that may have affected the outcome. I was also interested in closely

looking at the teacher and text she/he was discussing, why that text was chosen, and why it was taught in the manner in which it was taught. For example, the two teachers worked jointly in deciding which Books of the Odyssey would be taught and how they would teach them. I wished to learn how they decided which Books to teach and why. As my analysis moved outward, I was interested in the institutional impact on the classroom discourse. For instance, I examined how the teachers' schooling may have affected her/his response. During my interviews, I had asked the teachers to describe their education and whether they had taken any classes in gender studies. I compared these answers with the manner in which they taught. For example, Gerard had taken classes in gender studies and he was very aware of issues involving gender inequity. His teaching methods reflected this fact.

I was also interested in investigating how institutional policies at Oram High School may have affected the manner in which the teachers responded to the text. For example, the school disseminated information about boys' brains in an effort to educate teachers about the most effective way to approach boys' literacy needs. I asked the teachers if, and how, this and similar information may or may not have affected their pedagogical practices. I looked at how their responses were or were not reflected in their teaching methods. As my explanation again moved outward, I explored how societal issues may have affected classroom discourse. For example, I examined the sociocultural environment that both teachers grew up in. I wished to determine whether aspects of their cultural upbringing were reflected in their teaching methods. I wished to determine if their upbringing had an affect on how they taught. I looked at their responses and compared those to way in which they taught, and also to their responses about gender and literacy.

I also explored other sociocultural factors that may have influenced classroom discourse by examining how, for example, the views of family or friends may have affected the teachers' attitudes. For instance, according to Gerard, his wife's interest in issues of gender equality was the impetus for his acquisition of knowledge about gender equity; therefore, I looked at how, from his responses, his wife's views, and subsequently his views, were reflected in his teaching practices. For example, Gerard told me that because of his wife's influence he was very aware of gender inequity in education. Her influence also affected his views about inequity in the classroom, the curriculum and texts used in the classroom. He also told me that because of this knowledge he attempted to enlighten students about inequities in teaching materials. I then compared his interview responses with his teaching practices. This triangulation of data added validity to my study. It should be noted that the majority of information for this analysis was based on teacher self-report. I took the interview data and, as mentioned, compared them with each teacher's pedagogical practices.

V*alidity procedures.* To add validity to my study, I held shared conversations with faculty members on my committee, especially my chair. I also utilized member checking by asking for feedback from the teachers whom I had interviewed and observed. At the end of each class observation, I had approximately five minutes with each teacher at which time I looked at my journal notes and reviewed with them any questions that may have occurred, or any issue that may need clarifying. For example, during one discussion with Gerard he discussed the use of the term "sluts" in the text. He explained that, because of his education in issues of gender inequity, he realized the double standard associated with that term. He explained that he makes it a point whenever that word is

used in a text to enlighten the students about the inequity in that term. I added these notes to my journal.

Also, it should be noted that much of the information that I analyzed with regards to situational/institutional influence was based on teachers' self-report. This limitation needs to be acknowledged due to the subjective nature of self-reporting.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the role of the peer reviewer as that of "devil's advocate." To add validity to my study, a peer, who has a Ph.D. in English Education, analyzed a portion of my transcribed data to determine if he agreed with the manner in which I coded my data. Any discrepancy was discussed and the data adjusted accordingly.

As mentioned above, my research is being viewed from a feminist lens, as one of the discourses from which I operate is that of a feminist. My highest priority is equitable treatment of girls and women and boys and men. I should, however, note that it is my belief that women and girls have been, and continue to be, an oppressed group. It is also my belief that in most aspects of society, including education, the interests of females are secondary to those of males. I entered this study with my own perspective which was, I suspected, that the needs of boys were a priority. I also suspected, from experience with examining my children's texts, that at least some of the texts used in high schools are gender biased in some manner. This could have influenced my study in terms of my examination of the textbook. After close analysis of the textbook it was relatively clear to me that the textbook was gender biased. There were challenges when approaching the study from this perspective. I was very aware of my own subjective views and therefore had to be very careful not to let them influence my analysis. I can, however, also say that while my own perspective may have influenced my textual (and other) analysis, I also

need to note that much of the language that I felt was bias in the textbook was the same language that Gerard pointed out as being sexist in his discussion about the text. Creswell (1998) asserts that, from the beginning, it is important to state bias so the reader understands the researcher's position and any assumptions and biases that might impact the analysis. In this regard, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) stress that it's important to be cognizant of the lens with which you view your information.   Revealing this personal bias may assist readers in assessing the validity of the study.

As my discussion continues with the next chapter, the conversation turns to my study's findings in relation to teachers' discourse. I begin the discussion by describing the results of my analysis of the school textbook. My focus then turns to the teachers' beliefs about gender and literacy; finally, the conversation reveals the teachers' discourse about the gendered characters in the textbook.

CHAPTER 4

Findings – Context, Text and Teachers' Discourse

To address my research questions, my first step is to discuss the context of the

study, including the school text in which I describe the manner in which the gendered

characters in the textbook are presented (in a progressive or a traditional manner); to

answer my third research question, what are teachers' beliefs and attitudes with regards to

gender and literacy, I turn to a discussion about the two teachers, Donna and Gerard. I

felt that, by introducing the teachers first and providing insight into their beliefs about

literacy and gender, this would assist the reader in discovering who the teachers are. My

focus then turns to the teachers' discourse in the classroom to answer the question, in

what way does the teachers' discussion about the gendered characters serve to ignore,

subvert or endorse the gendered message in the text.

Context

My discussion begins with a look at the textbook used by Donna and Gerard.

Enlightening the reader about the overall themes of the text and especially, the gendered

characters, provides a context for the discourse about the gendered characters. The first

logical step in my analysis was to discover whether the textbook was progressive or

traditional. I could then look at the discourse about the textbook. Therefore, it is logical

to begin my discussion with a look at the textbook *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996) being

used. My discussion then focuses on the participants in the study. Finally, the

conversation turns to Donna and Gerard's discussion about the gendered characters.

Curriculum

The book, *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996), which was the text used in this study, is

taught each year by Denise and Gerard in their ninth grade English Honors class. While

the school district dictates which book should be taught, the teachers had control over which translation they used. Both teachers worked together in choosing this particular version, with both agreeing that, of the texts they'd analyzed, this was the most accessible one for the students.   They both asserted that this text was the easiest for students to understand in terms of the language of the text.

Textual Analysis

My analysis of *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996), an epic poem based on Greek mythology, reveals that the text is "traditional;" that is, the text is gender biased in some way in that it exaggerates or maintains traditional gender roles. While occasionally both women and men characters are afforded the opportunity to move beyond traditional gender representations, overall the characters embody those traits that are stereotypically assigned to females and males.

The plot of *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996) revolves around the adventures of Odysseus and his men who, having set sail after attacking Troy, are attempting to make their way home. The protagonist of the story, Odysseus, is depicted as an assertive warrior who tortures, murders and pillages. The men in story are depicted as leaders and, at times, as brutal, heartless combatants, "Odysseus, fighting at close quarters, ran Agelaus\Through with a long lance -- Telemachus speared Leocritus" (Book 22, 307-308).   This quote typifies the stereotypical manner in which the men are typically represented in the text, as brutal and violent warriors. Further, Odysseus' character, referred to as "the battle master," embodies the tough, macho male who is an expert in matters of war (Book 22, 64). Telemachus, Odysseus' son, is expected, in becoming a man, to also embody brutality and strength. He tells his father, "'Soon enough father, you'll sense the courage inside me that I know --\I'm hardly a flighty, weak-willed boy these days" (Book 16, 341-343). Telemachus then proceeds to help his father slaughter

the suitors, "Telemachus – too quick – stabbed the man from behind, plunging his bronze spear between the suitor's shoulders" (Book 22, 97-98). Telemachus' language suggests that a man is one who embodies strength and brutality. Occasionally, however, the men characters are presented in a more progressive manner, and are allowed to exhibit emotions traditionally reserved for women, "And with those words Odysseus kissed his son\And the tears streamed down his cheeks and wet the ground" (Book 16, 213-214). Odysseus, in a rare moment, displays tenderness when reunited with his son.

Odysseus is characterized as the hero of the text, and the action revolves around him and the other male characters. By contrast, there are few women in the text. Those with a significant presence are merely additions to the main plot where they act as foils to the males. Further, the women characters are mainly depicted as temptresses, whores, maids, monsters, or subservient wives. As Odysseus attempts to make his way home, seductive women, and female monsters, repeatedly are obstacles for him and his men on their journey home. For example, the lovely, sensual temptress Calypso, who is possessed by love for him, traps him on her island until a stronger male, Hermes, convinces her to let Odysseus leave thereby usurping her power. Calypso is the stereotypical needy female who ensnares males. Further, Calypso, like the other female characters, is constantly referred to by her appearance. For example, Calypso is described as "the nymph with lovely braids," "lustrous goddess," "beautiful goddess." When Odysseus discusses Penelope with Calypso, he tells Calypso, "she falls short of you, your beauty, stature" (Book 5, 235-236). Gloria Steinem (1995) asserts that in a patriarchal society, women's worth is based on their beauty rather than intellect. This type of sexist attitude suggests a traditional representation of women (Sunderland, et al., 2001).

Circe, the other main female character in the text, is another "beautiful" female who is described by her physical characteristics, "loveliest of goddesses, " "lustrous goddess," "dire beauty." Further, she, like Calypso, is a temptress who traps Odysseus and she, like Calypso, is depicted as needy and dangerous; she also uses her powers of seduction to entrap men. Further, while the men are depicted as being trapped by the women, the females, nonetheless, embody servitude as they offer their bodies and services (they bathe, clothe, feed and wash the men) to the men "the lovely goddess launched him from her island/once she had bathed him out and decked him in fragrant clothes." (Book 5, 289-290).

The women and men are depicted in very different ways as the men in the text are predominantly depicted as outgoing, adventurous, and often brutal warriors who frequently murder townsmen and kidnap and rape their wives. For example, Odysseus and his men pillage a town and plunder the "objects" (the women) of their enemies,

> … There I sacked the city,
> killed the men but as for the wives and plunder
> … We shared it…so no one, not on my account,
> Would go deprived of his fair share of spoils (Book 9, 44-49).

The men are depicted stereotypically as strong and brutal warriors. The women are depicted as their husband's possession to be taken in battle, shared, and used as the men see fit. Odysseus ensures that none of his warriors are deprived of one of these "objects." The women characters are considered as belonging to males, and the men frequently offer "their women" to other men as gifts. For example, King Alcinous is given a chambermaid by the Apiraeans, "the country picked her out as Alcinous' prize" (Book 7, 11). On another occasion, King Alcinous offers his twelve year old daughter to Odysseus as a gift, "you could wed my daughter…I'd give you a house\And great wealth (Book 7, 356-

360). Alcinous' daughter is her father's possession as Alcinous offers Odysseus a dowry if he'll wed her, which suggests her lack of worth.

Sexuality is presented as being viewed differently for female and male characters as men are afforded sexual freedom, while women are sexually restricted. The males in the text repeatedly take lovers, and when Odysseus is unfaithful (repeatedly), he blames his infidelity on either his lover, or his gender, "She holds him there by force," "Now being a man, I could not help consenting" (Book 10, 452).   The women's sexual freedom is limited in that those who take a lover are accused of being "whores," or "sluts," and are at times murdered for taking a lover (or being raped). Also, while Odysseus is raping women, Penelope is a stereotypical needy wife who is hopeless without her husband, and who remains in her chamber and pines away for him for twenty years.

> Now my life is torment…
> Look at the grief the god has loosed on me!
> I yearn for Odysseus, always, my heart pines away…
> My parents urge me to tie the knot (Book 19, 143-177).

Penelope does not have a life without her husband. Since her husband has disappeared and she is a female without a mate, she is expected to remarry. This suggests that it is unacceptable for a woman to be without a mate. Sadker and Sadker (1977), thirty years ago, asserted that in textbooks, men venture into the public sphere and have adventures while women remain needy and homebound. Girls are boys are still exposed to texts that present women as being dependent on men, as Penelope is helpless without Odysseus.

While females are occasionally afforded certain powers, their strength is limited and based on either their ability to seduce, or their desire to destroy. Even when female characters are afforded power, males most often usurp it. For instance, when Circe attempts to trick Odysseus into staying on her island, Odysseus drew his "sharpened

sword\and in one bound held it against her throat. She cried out, then slid under to take

his knees" (Book 10, 361-363). The powerful male prevails as Circe drops to the ground

and embraces Odysseus' knees in an act of subservience. Despite Circe's power over

Odysseus, she nonetheless is intimidated by him, "she will cower and yield her bed"

(Book 10, 37). This also suggests that perhaps Circe had sex with Odysseus by force.

While there does exist a relatively powerful female deity, Athena, her power is limited as

she is subservient to the powerful male deities. Athena cannot make decisions without

seeking the permission of Zeus. On one occasion, desiring to help Odysseus, she first

had to beg Zeus for permission to intervene, "Father Zeus – you other happy gods who

never die -\…Remember Odysseus now (Book 5, 8-12). Athena, throughout the text, is

not independent in her decision making as she must always answer to a higher power (the

male deities).

My analysis revealed that the text is very traditionally gendered and is infused

with stereotypically gendered characters, both female and male; these characters rarely

move beyond the traditional representation for that gender. Men are associated with

power and brutality and are portrayed as leaders, rapists and murders. Women, by

contrast, are relegated to a position subservient to men and frequently to one of

helplessness; further, women are portrayed as temptresses, whores, sluts or needy wives.

Additionally, men are afforded more sexual freedom than women as they are encouraged

to have many lovers, even if that means taking them by force. A woman, by contrast,

who takes a lover is considered a "whore." The position the characters occupy, however,

is fluid and subject to change. For example, while the majority of time the men are

depicted as strong and powerful, there are (rare) times when they are portrayed in a

moment of tenderness (when Odysseus is reunited with his son). Likewise, while Athena

usually occupies a position of female power when interacting with mortals, she also, when interacting with the gods, occupies a role of female subservience. As mentioned, she is powerless to make decisions without the permission of the male deities.

My analysis supports researchers' (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1996; Sunderland, et al., 2001) assertions that school textbooks present characters in a gender-biased manner. Commeyras & Alvermann (1996, p. 2) asserted, more than ten years ago, that texts used in school continued to perpetuate the "social construction of gender." That is, texts perpetuate the power differentials related to the social and cultural meanings attributed to being female or male. My study revealed that the textbook used in two ninth grade honors' classrooms encourages the social construction of gender.

Essentially, the text is highly traditional as both female and male characters in *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1995) are depicted in a traditionally gendered manner. Additionally, the characters are rarely afforded an opportunity to move beyond the stereotypically gendered roles they occupy. It is also important to look at teaches' views and attitudes about gender and literacy (Sanford, 2005; Wortham, 2006). My discussion now turns to Donna and Gerard, and the results of my discussions and observations with them about literacy and gender.

Participants

My discussion now turns to the participants of the study, Donna, Gerard and their students. During this conversation I provide a view of the classroom setting, describe the students and explore Donna and Gerard's attitudes and beliefs about gender and literacy.

Donna. Donna is an Hispanic American teacher in her late 20s who has been teaching for five years. Donna is extremely animated during classroom discussion, and

the tone and loudness of her voice modulates frequently when she speaks. Donna is very

frequently in motion during the classroom discussion, and she sometimes walks around

the room. She told me that she tends to speak loudly because of her slight stature (she

stands at around five feet tall). She also tends to speak very fast during classroom

discussions; this created the need for me to replay much of her discussion during

transcription. In my journal on numerous occasions I have noted, "can't understand her,"

"speaks unbelievably fast." In fact, on a number of occasions the students asked her to

repeat herself because they didn't comprehend her. One student felt, "you're speaking

too fast. I can't get what you're saying."

The physical layout of Donna's classroom is non-traditional. Donna's desk was

located at the front of the room while the students sat at small tables that held two

students. The tables were placed one beside the other in a semi-circle two rows deep.

Donna explained that while she was assigned this classroom and did not have input into

the way the desks were arranged, she "much preferred" this layout as she felt it was

more conducive to discussions. Donna's classroom had a friendly appearance and

contains many posters of writers and poets, past and present. Donna explained that,

since many teachers used this room, other teachers hung most of the posters. The

classroom is painted white; while it may appear a little sterile, the posters add enough

color and life to make the classroom welcoming.

Donna's students consisted of eleven boys and eleven girls who usually sat in

the same place; occasionally they switched when, it seemed, they felt like chatting with a

different student. There was no pattern, as far as gender is concerned, as to whom the

students sat beside. The students for the most part seemed to get along very well with

each other and frequently joked with other students across the room. Iin general, the mood among the students was friendly, and at times jocular.

My discussion will now focus on the results of my interview with Donna, and then Gerard, which served to answer my research question, what are teachers' beliefs and attitudes with regards to gender and literacy.

Donna was brought up in a "traditionally Hispanic" household where her father was the head of the house. While both parents worked, out of necessity, her father nonetheless handled the finances while her mother handled the domestic chores (cooking, cleaning, childcare). Donna's father doesn't have an education past the second grade, and her mother never completed high school.   When I asked Donna if she was a feminist, she hesitated. After a long pause she said, "maybe, I'm not sure." Then, after another long pause, she said, "I guess maybe I hold some feminist ideals, but I think my views could be considered more traditional."

The focus of our discussion then turned to the literacy needs of girls and boys, with Donna explaining that she was very concerned about the literacy needs of boys; when she introduces a book she's always concerned about how boys will react as she feels that girls connect more with a text than do boys. Donna explained, "Girls connect more readily with words. I'm always concerned when I introduce a book how are the boys going to feel about this." She also felt that girls adapt much better than boys do to new texts and therefore they are not as much of a concern. Donna felt that the other activities in boys' life tends to distract them from reading.

> Trying to get them to engage with words as opposed to everything
> else they're always around which is media and sports and video games
> and all that so I try to make sure they're reading books of interest to
> them and I feel like girls are more easily that they just adapt to it.
> You know they'll just take what they're given and the boys seem
> a little more standoff with it. So I try to find the right titles that

interest the boys (Donna V., personal communication, November 2007).

Donna was concerned about the myriad activities that boys engage in and how it will affect their desire to read. Also, she was attempting to design the curriculum based on the needs of the boys. The fact that girls engage in many extracurricular activities is ignored as they are expected to conform to the textbooks used. Donna's responses support research (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994; Sanford, 2005) that contends that teachers privilege the needs of boys over those of girls. Sanford (2005) suggests that this type of positioning of girls impacts their self-esteem as their needs are secondary to those of boys. Donna also explained that the "girls tend to focus on things that are not as important" in a text. She claimed, "they pick up on the little details so having them kinda seeing the big picture is sometimes I think a problem when it comes to their reading and their literacy comprehension." While Donna perceives an area in which girls may struggle regarding their reading comprehension, she nonetheless claims that her curriculum is "based on the boys" because they "need to be engaged."

Institutional attitudes also influenced what Donna taught and how she teaches it, as Donna explained that the District feels strongly about addressing the needs of boys. I was not afforded access to a representative at the District administrative offices, therefore my information about District policies are based on interviews with Donna and Gerard. Donna felt that boys' literacy needs are a lot more urgent than those of girls. The District emphasized that girls will do just fine if let be. Boys, Donna claimed (and the District asserts), need direction whereas girls manage independently. Donna explained, "The District is very concerned with boys' literacy needs. A year or two ago they came up with a new reading list to interest the boys. They are looking at the boys' brain and literacy learning. Most books are male centered." I asked Donna if she felt that the District's

views influenced her teaching methods. She said that the District administrators had made her aware that the literary needs of boys were not being met. The administrators were disseminating information about boys' brain size, how their brains work, etc. The boys had been a concern for quite a while, and this caused Donna to reconsider her teaching methods. She also said that perhaps she readjusted her methods to suit the needs of the boys.

I wondered how Donna taught before the District had emphasized boys' needs. Donna claimed that the District's emphasis on boys made her question why boys are not as literate as girls. Donna also felt that boys needed more attention because girls just do as you ask and girls have always had strong literacy skills. Donna believes that the District enlightened her about the fact that boys' literacy needs are significant; therefore, in some way the boys are her priority, as she's "always kinda watching for the boys. Are they engaged, happy, participating?" Gilbert (1989) asserted that language and literacy practices in the classroom are key factors in the construction of girls' self-esteem as their needs are considered as secondary to those of boys. Almost twenty years after Gilbert's assertion that girls' literacy needs are secondary to boys, Donna's teaching method suggests that this is still the case.

While the District made book suggestions, Donna and Gerard could choose from those titles. Donna explained that the list "was male centered," and that she and Gerard chose from the list which book to teach. "On the freshman level it's all about the like the personal journey, growing, the rights of passage loss of innocence so we do *A Separate Peace* and *All Quiet on the Western Front* to cover that theme." The protagonists of both of these texts are males and the stories revolve around the coming of age of boys.

The fact that the literacy needs of boys are being foregrounded by the District coincides with research that asserts that boys' literacy needs are a key concern to educators (Booth, 2002; Connell, 1996). Booth (2002) explains that in families with high income, boys are performing strongly in areas related to literacy. It is in lower income families that boys struggle with literacy. This is also true, however, of girls. In general, children from low-income homes lag behind those from advantaged families. Connell (1996, p. 222) explains that some educators claim that boys are a disadvantaged group, and that this "is not a credible argument." Connell believes that "On almost any measure of resources…in all parts of the world, men are the advantaged group in gender relations." Connell agrees with Booth (2002) that it is low-income children who are disadvantaged, and rather than concentrating on gender difference in literacy education, teachers should be concerned with low income struggling students.

My discussion with Donna then turned to the books that boys and girls like to read. Donna felt that boys gravitated to adventure stories like *Harry Potter*, and girls preferred books like *Speak, "*Now the girls are going to do *Gossip Girl* and *Nanny Diaries*. The guys are going to come in with they're more likely to do the *Harry Potter* books*."* I asked if she believed that this had anything to do with the fact that in *Harry Potter* the protagonist was male, whereas in *Speak* it was a female. Donna responded, "That hadn't occurred to me but yeah that could be the case." I also asked which books were being taught. Last semester the students had read *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Julius Caesar* and *A Separate Peace*. When I pointed out that the protagonists in all three books are males, she reiterated again that girls adapt better than boys. She felt that the girls will "read what you give them. The boys may protest." She also said that, when teaching a text, she tried to emphasize certain aspects of the text that would get students'

attention, especially in the case of the boys who "at times, experience a lack of concentration" when reading.

From a sociocultural viewpoint, Donna was raised in a family in which "the men are the leaders, the women the nurturers. And it worked well." Further, there is possibly an institutional influence (the Board) reflected in Donna's responses. The District's emphasis on the necessity of focusing the curriculum on the needs of the boys influenced, she feels, her thinking and teaching methods. Further, Donna explained that the vast majority of knowledge that she had obtained about issues of gender and literacy was acquired by information disseminated by the Board - which made boys' literacy needs a top priority. Donna had not taken any formal classes related to gender and literacy. Interestingly, last semester Donna told Gerard "that I was so tired of these male subjects and discussing only things about males and that interested males." She also told him she was "desperate for a book with a female voice," and that this year a change was needed. The curriculum, however, went unchanged and remains very "male centered." Donna also commented, toward the latter part of the interview, that "the girls' needs are being ignored. Their needs are left out." In viewing these comments, there appears to be some tension between Donna's teaching methods and her views. While she appears to have a highly traditional perspective, she nonetheless acknowledges that the girls' needs are being ignored. Interestingly, despite these comments, Donna's teaching methods, which I will describe in detail at a later point, were highly inequitable.

Gerard. Gerard is a white male teacher in his early 30s who has been teaching for eight years. When I asked him if he was a feminist, without hesitation, he answered "yes." Gerard spoke in a very slow, low tone and had a very gentle manner. He spent about five minutes each day asking the students how their day was going. Gerard was

not very animated when he spoke, and at times he walked slowly around the room during discussions. His very slow manner of speaking made transcription rather easy. There were some days in which Gerard spent a considerable amount of time, ten minutes or so, just chatting with the students. In my journal I noted, "I wish the lesson would start," "So slow – need some data," "wish the lesson would begin."

The physical layout of Gerard's classroom is rather traditional with Gerard's desk at the front of the room and the students sitting in rows at their tables (with two students per table) facing the teacher. Gerard explained that while he was assigned this classroom and did not have input into the way the desks were arranged, he "manages fine" with them arranged in this manner. He also felt that if he had less students (he has twenty two), then he'd like the students' desks to be arranged in a circle with his desk situated in the same circle as those of the students. He felt having the desks in a circular fashion made the classroom appear "less formal" and might encourage conversation.

Gerard's classroom has a friendly appearance and like Donna's, contains many posters of writers and poets, past and present. Gerard explained that he shares the room with other teachers and therefore, that frequently prevents him from displaying the students' work. Occasionally his students will display their work at the beginning of class, but they generally take it down when class is over. This occurred numerous times during my observation. On one occasion, the students had a shield on which they wrote scenes from the book. The shields were hung throughout the classroom during the lesson and taken down when the bell rang.

Gerard's students consisted of eleven girls and eleven boys who always sat in the same place and who were always paired according to gender (two boys to a desk or two girls to a desk), as was the choice of the students.   This was very different from the

setup in Donna's room where boys and girls very frequently sat side by side. The students frequently chatted amongst themselves and occasionally yelled across the room to one another. Overall the mood in the classroom was lively as the students frequently spoke to one another.

My interview with Gerard was conducted after I had observed the conversations in the classroom so as to not bias the discussion. In analyzing Gerard's responses from a feminist perspective, overall I view them as progressive. Gerard's background and current relationship perhaps explains, at least in part, his views and teaching methods. Gerard was raised in a traditional household in which his father was considered the head of the house. Gerard's father was a doctor and his mother was a stay-at-home mom and "housewife," and, according to Gerard, his parents held traditional beliefs regarding women's and men's roles. Gerard's father handled the finances, while his mother handled the domestic chores (cooking, cleaning, childcare). Gerard claimed that while growing up in this type of environment he was ignorant of issues of gender equity.

Gerard also discussed sociocultural influences that enlightened him about issues involving gender equity. Fairclough (1989) asserts that societal influences affect the sense we make of texts and the manner in which we approach discourse. Gerard explained that his wife, who attended a women's college and who majored in gender studies, had taught him about feminism and equality. "My wife graduated from a women's college and is very aware of issues of gender equity. She pretty much introduced me to issues regarding gender and equality." The college courses that Gerard's wife had taken had broadened her mind regarding inequality and equal rights for women and men. When she met Gerard, she began sharing her ideas with him. Gerard said, "it was really very enlightening. I really was very unaware of issues regarding

gender before that. It just didn't hadn't really occurred to me. It's just a different way of thinking." When they had children, they have two daughters, Gerard and his wife made a conscious effort to ensure that their daughters were brought up in a "neutral" household. The girls were given trucks and dolls and their rooms are painted a neutral color (green).

Gerard explained that he still has a lot to learn about feminism and his wife is constantly "teaching me when I slip up" about equality. Gerard also explained that, "I try to incorporate these the things I learned about equality into my classroom teaching." Gerard's responses, and his teaching methods (which will be discussed in detail later), support Fairclough's (1989) contention that societal influences affect the way a text is approached and taught by educators. Vygotsky believed that discourse is influenced by the structure and beliefs of society (Lee, 2000). Gerard's exposure to issues of gender equity was reflected in his discussions. While Gerard was brought up in a "traditional" household, Gerard adopted his wife's beliefs, which were influenced by her education (institutional influence).

In his interview responses, Gerard demonstrated that he has a strong awareness of issues of gender inequities. When I asked Gerard how he chooses which texts to teach, he claimed that he was greatly influenced, or rather "pressured," by the Board as to what to include in the curriculum. Gerard believes that the girls are being shortchanged because "so much of the curriculum is in the male voice." He believed that, because of the "panic" over boys' literacy skills, the scale has now been tipped in favor of the boys. In fact, Gerard felt that traditionally the boys have always had an advantage. Further, Gerard believed that boys show a strong interest in books about adventure and a great majority of the texts read in class are geared toward boys' interest. Gerard also

repeatedly emphasized that the curriculum is heavily "from the male voice. It's heavily male narrated, male authors, male characters. The girls just they don't get a lot of consideration. I think maybe because they cooperate. They sort of read everything." When I asked Gerard if he believed the boys or girls were more vocal, he said "I've seen enough boys be active so I don't worry about it although I would probably lean more towards the girls regarding the class discussion."

Also interesting was that when I asked him what type of texts girls and boys like to read, he responded in a manner similar to that of Donna. Gerard said that girls like books that are more emotional like *Speak, The Secret Life of Bees*, *Lovely Bones* and *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*. Boys like Steven King and Michael Crichton books. Gerard explained, "I guess it becomes stereotypical boy things and girl things where books like *Speak* and *Lovely Bones*. Those kinds of things are very popular. *The Secret Life of Bees* and *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*…boys choose Steven King and you know Michael Crichton." I remarked that in all of the books that he mentioned that the girls liked the protagonists were female, and the protagonists in the books the boys liked were males. I asked if that could possibly explain, at least in part, the choice of books. He responded, "That's an excellent point. I don't know how I didn't think of that myself." Even though Gerard appeared to be a progressive thinker in many ways, he still on occasion expressed some sexist views. For instance, he believed that girls spoke more in class than did boys, and that boys at times needed a little prodding to speak up. He also explained that "I get the sense it's a very obvious distinction where the girls seem to really run class conversation."

Our interview ended with Gerard explaining that the Board has greatly emphasized the needs of boys in the last few years and that he had seen a change in the

curriculum. While the curriculum was always "mainly from a male voice" (male authors, male protagonists), now the Board dictates, to a large extent, which books are read to ensure that the boys are reading texts of interest to them. He also believes that the girls are not really a consideration when the Board sets the curriculum because the girls are considered to be achieving at an appropriate level. Gerard explained, "Boys are definitely the concern and the curriculum is most definitely from the male voice. Girls are somewhat being ignored. They're scoring well on tests." Gerard feels a certain amount of concern about the fact that the girls are being somewhat "ignored," and attempts to point out gender differences in the text in the hope that students will recognize inequity.

Looking again at Fairclough's (1989) three-tiered approach to analysis, in particular the third level (institutional influence), Gerard claimed that his wife's views about gender equity were shaped by her college experiences. This, in turn, influenced Gerard's views as he claimed that he acquired his knowledge of gender studies and inequality "from my wife's influence," and formulated some of his pedagogical methods and views based on these ideas. Further, after being made aware of issues of gender equity, Gerard also took classes in gender studies. Herein lies the sociocultural connection to Gerard's teaching methods. Further, the Board (institutional influence) also affected Gerard's pedagogical methods, as he had to abide by the Administration's teaching recommendations. Despite Gerard's progressive teaching methods and views, he nonetheless made a few comments, which were stereotypically traditional such as "girls sort of read everything," and girls tend to speak more than boys. Researchers (Lindroos, 1995; Sanford, 2005) have repeatedly demonstrated that this is false and it was, in fact, untrue in Gerard's class as the boys spoke more than did the girls.

Teachers' Discourse

In order to answer the first part of my first research question, In what way does the teachers' discussion about the gendered characters serve to ignore, subvert or endorse the gendered message in the text, I explored the manner in which both Donna and Gerard discuss the gendered characters in the text. In turning to my data, certain themes kept recurring in relation to the gendered characters. These themes were those of the female temptress, the objectification of women, manliness/manhood, needy powerless female, and vulnerable male. Naomi Rockler-Gladen (2008, p. 1) explains that objectification involves portraying "women as physical objects that can be looked at and acted upon – and fail to portray women as subjective beings with thoughts, histories, and emotions." The manner in which the recurring themes were discussed by Donna and Gerard are explored below in a representative sample of the discussion about each main character.

Overall, my analysis revealed that the two teachers, Donna and Gerard, dealt with the text in very different ways. Using Fairclough's (1989) three-tiered approach and incorporating my members' resources, I viewed Donna and Gerard's talk around text from a feminist perspective.

Donna's discourse, for the most part, ignored the gendered references in the textbook; for example, Donna failed to enlighten the students about the sexism and inequity in the fact that a girl was objectified (given to Odysseus as a gift). Donna also failed to point out the very limited way in which male characters were portrayed. On occasion, Donna endorsed or exaggerated the gendered reference; for example, Donna frequently spoke about the women characters in terms of their ability to seduce the men and used sexually suggestive language such as "seductress," "temptress," "sensual," when referring to the women. When Donna spoke about the male characters, her language suggested sexism as she constantly associated manhood and manliness with

brutality, strength and adventure. Viewing Donna's teaching methods from a feminist perspective reveals that she taught the text in a traditional manner.

Overall, Gerard's discussion tended to subvert the gendered message. For instance, Gerard made it a point to enlighten the students as to the "double standard" in the text regarding men's sexual freedom and women's lack thereof. He also, however, was careful to point out inequities when it affected males. For example, he pointed out that, in the text, the males were represented emotionally in "a very limited manner," "a very sexist manner." Analyzing Gerard's talk around text from a feminist perspective suggests that he taught the text in a progressive manner.

Teachers' Reactions to the Female Temptress

When the few female characters that appear in the text are not depicted as either needy or subservient, they are depicted as sensual and dangerous with the women (stereotypically) using their sexuality to achieve their goals. The discussions about these temptresses by Donna and Gerard are markedly different. While Donna repeatedly endorses the gendered representation by emphasizing the characters' powers as seductresses, Gerard points out the inherent sexism in the characters' representation. The following exchange illustrates this point.

On the first day of observation, Donna began her discussion about the women characters by introducing Calypso and Circe, both of whom are depicted in a traditionally gendered manner (Sunderland, et al., 2001). Calypso is considered a "temptress" who seduces Odysseus and entraps him on her island for years. Donna, in discussing Calypso, emphasizes her role as temptress.

> Calypso was alluring, a temptress, sensual.
> Odysseus has met with women who were real, hmm, temptresses, right?
> Hmm. Very seductive. Sexy Women who were trying to seduce him. A
> Temptress. Very seductive. Very alluring.

Calypso, in the text, is represented in a gender-biased manner as a sensual female

desperate for a mate. In my journal, I have noted, "Donna emphasizes certain words like

alluring, temptress and seductive. Her voice sounds seductive. She's really emphasizing

Calypso's sexuality." Donna stresses that Calypso and the other women were

temptresses intending to seduce Odysseus. Donna's language, with words such as

"temptress, sensual, seductive, alluring" suggests that the women are alluring, beguiling

and bewitching. Rather than challenge or subvert the gendered roles these female

characters are relegated to, Donna endorses their positions by emphasizing rather than

questioning them.   Similarly, when Donna spoke about Circe, she endorsed the gendered

representation by emphasizing Circe's ability to seduce.

> Donna: Circe. Let's discuss Circe. She's um she's a lot like Calypso.
>
> Pete: What's her story like? Didn't she have an island like Calypso?
>
> Alex: Wasn't she the one who turned them into pigs?
>
> Donna: Yeah, Circe is she has trapped Odysseus and his men. Remember
> she seduces him, another powerful seductress. Also, she bathes him,
> she takes care of him, she gives him clothes.

In the above exchange, Donna is once again endorsing the gendered representation.

Initially, she makes a comparison between Circe and Calypso. Pete responds to this

comparison by making a connection between the fact that they both inhabit an island, and

Donna again emphasizes the fact that Circe is a seductress. Donna fails to point out that

while Circe operates within a discourse of power (as she traps the men,), Circe's power

lies, stereotypically, in her ability to seduce. Rather, Donna emphasizes Circe's power to

seduce ("another powerful seductress").   Further, Donna also describes Circe's position

of servitude as she "takes care of" Odysseus without pointing out the inherent sexism in

these actions.   Donna's discussions about Circe and Calypso never subverted the stereotypical manner in which the characters were presented in the text.

On one of my first days of observation, Gerard began the discussion by focusing on Calypso, and by asking students to describe Odysseus' situation with, and relationship to, Calypso. The students focus on Odysseus' infidelity and their discussion serves to subvert the text's gendered message (that Odysseus is a loving, caring husband).

Gerard: What's going on with the relationship with Odysseus and Calypso?

Lisa: Wait. She traps him on the island

Gerard: Ok. Yeah, it doesn't seem like Odysseus is tortured though, right.

Mary: Yeah, and like he doesn't really try to get away.

Gerard: Yeah, I mean, he always goes with her. Does he complain?
           But I want to look at Calypso for a minute. How is
           she represented how is she portrayed in the text?

Lisa: She's like she tries to keep him there and she takes care
           of him and gives him and serves him.

Gerard: Good. That's accurate. But I need to make a point clear to
          to clarify. I need to say that look how she is portrayed. Right?
          It's that double standard again. She is she's this temptress
          who just wants to seduce him. Right? She's portrayed in
          in a very sexist manner. She's trying to trap him by
          tempting him with her bed. This is very sexist. Using her bed to
          try to get him to stay.

The discussion above illustrates Gerard's discussion about Calypso and the manner in which he subverts the gendered message by illuminating the fact that Calypso is depicted in a sexist manner. While the students merely explain what is happening in the text (she traps him on the island), Gerard points out that it is pleasurable for him, suggesting that he is complicit in the relationship. Gerard also tries to push the students to understand that Calypso is represented in a sexist manner.   Finally, Gerard makes it clear that

Calypso is being portrayed as a temptress, and significantly, points out that this is a

"sexist" representation. He emphasizes that her attempts at trapping him by seducing her

are "very sexist." Gerard's discourse serves to subvert the gendered message (women as

temptresses) and to point out the inherent sexism in the text's representation of Calypso.

Gerard's talk about Circe was similar to his discussion about Calypso in that he pointed

out the sexist way that Circe was represented.

> Gerard: Ok. We've been discussing Circe but I need to point out
> something. She the text makes she is similar to Calypso
> in the text. Why?
>
> Joe: She has her own island.
>
> Gerard: Right. Ok. Good. They both have islands. But also, how does
> what does she do that might be similar to Calypso? Like how
> to Odysseus. What does she do?
>
> Mary: She shares her bed.
>
> Gerard: Right. Exactly. Now this means again she's there's that
> idea that she's tempting him. She's the one who is seducing him
> but he's still enjoying it. She's seen as a seductress. Right? Again, we
> see a difference in the way men and women are portrayed in the
> text. It's very a very sexist portrayal. Right. Because she's again using
> her bed to try to get what she wants. Right?

In the above discussion, Gerard makes a connection between the way both Calypso and

Circe are portrayed. While Donna also made the connection, she did so stereotypically, in

terms of their ability to seduce. Gerard uses the gendered representation (seductress) to

enlighten students about the inherent sexism that this implies. He also points out the

inequity in the gender representation by illuminating the fact that men and women are

portrayed differently. He makes it a point to explain that while she's the seductress,

Odysseus is enjoying it, suggesting that Odysseus was complicit in the act. Further,

Gerard mentions that the portrayal is "sexist," because of Circe's use of her body to get

what she desires. Gerard, then, unlike Donna, has intentionally focused the discussion on

the sexism in the way Circe is portrayed and points out the unequal manner in which

women and men are portrayed in the text.

Teachers' Responses to the Objectification of Women – Women as Men's Property

As previously mentioned, the women and girls in *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996)

are often objectified as they are considered the property of men. These "objects" are

either taken and shared for men's sexual pleasure, or they are given to men as gifts. The

manner in which Donna and Gerard discussed the characters and this objectification was

markedly different. Donna was dismissive of the fact that Odysseus and his men were

taking women and using them for sexual pleasure even when a student repeatedly

attempted to discuss the event. Gerard's discussion focused on the fact that the women

were helpless and were being taken, and he repeatedly asked if everyone understood this.

Donna's discussion about women used as "objects" served to endorse the

gendered representation as she at times made light of, or was dismissive of, issues

involving women or girls given away as gifts to men. This point is demonstrated when

King Alcinous offers his twelve year old daughter, Nausicca, to Odysseus as a gift.

> Donna: There's something about this man. It's kinda building up the presence
> that Odysseus has and they decide that you know what, we'll help you
> out. But how about we give you our daughter? And, um, negative, I'll
> pass. Because why would you pass on that?
>
> Mary: He's married! Ooh. They'd have they'd share
> the bed. She's only twelve. Gross.
>
> Lisa: Yeah, they're offering him another wife. But then he'll have two wives.
> Ooh . And she's a girl.
>
> Donna: Yeah, it's a tough life, isn't it? It's about reputation. He was da
> man. He[
>
> Lisa: [But he's giving away his daughter!

Mary: Ooh gross. How can he?

Matt: Does he tell her that he has a wife or is he like, he just doesn't tell her?

Donna: Again, he eludes the question and he's like, let's just throw a party.

Phil: Why can't he just be like yeah I'm married and my name is Odysseus.

Donna: The King says what's this guy's problem? He won't take my daughter. He won't accept this gift? What's his problem? Odysseus thinks, are you questioning my manhood?

Griffith: But there's a huge age difference.

Donna: That doesn't matter. Women were married off at 12. It doesn't matter.

Lori: Ooh. Gross. ooh, she'd ooh, have sex.

Donna: Ok. Let's talk about manhood.

Griffith: Isn't he like – old. How old is he anyway? Isn't[

Lori: [She's twelve! Ooh.
            And she'd have to have sex with him

Terrance: Were they like rivals or something, Odysseus and the King?

Donna: No these were good people. Ok. Let's discuss manhood.

In the above exchange, Donna's discussion serves to endorse the gendered message (that girls are objects to be given away). Donna begins the discussion by explaining that the King wants to give his daughter to Odysseus and questions why Odysseus would decline the offer "why would you pass on that?" By not pointing out the inherent sexism in the King's offer, Donna is ignoring the gendered message. While the students question the gendered representation, Donna jokes about it as she sarcastically, and laughingly, claims, "It's a tough life, isn't it?" Donna, therefore, not only ignores the text's objectification of women (and girls), but also ignores the fact that the "object" is a child. Additionally, she endorses the fact that girls were married off young "it doesn't matter,"

and ignores the students' protests about the King's action. She also endorses the notion
that Odysseus deserved this gift, and elevated Odysseus' status ("da man"). Donna's
claim that "it's about reputation," implies that Odysseus' reputation in some way is
dependent on being offered a female as a gift. This also suggests that Odysseus'
reputation is more important than girls being given away. Donna once again endorses the
objectification of women as she claims that Odysseus and the King "are good people,"
suggesting that it was appropriate for the King to offer his daughter to Odysseus. In my
journal I noted that, after Donna's "good people" comment, three girls raised their hands
and began waving them.

Donna's comments, "that doesn't matter. Women were married off at 12," serves
to endorse the gendered message in the text (that girls are subservient to, and the property
of, men). It should be noted, however, that Donna is attempting to put the situation into
a social/historical context ("were married off at 12"). Viewing this discussion from a
feminist perspective, this would have been a key time to discuss historically, the limited
rights women were afforded. Bonnie Smith (1998) explains that historically, women were
treated as men's property and even if they were allowed employment, often they could
not keep their earnings. Donna's discourse failed to point out the sexism in the text and
the objectification of women (the King's daughter used as an object to be disposed of)
and instead served to endorse the notion that this objectification is acceptable as "good
people" (King Alcinous) give away their daughters. Gilbert (1989) contends that
classroom discourse often affirms patriarchal patters of domination and control. This
research is supported by Donna's discourse. A number of other discussions occurred
about King Alcinous and his daughter and Donna's discourse served to ignore the

gendered representation. On another occasion when the girls attempted to initiate a

discussion about the King's action, Donna said, "let it go. It's not important."

> Danielle: The King when he wanted to give away his daughter. Can we discuss
> this?

> Donna: Let's move on. Let it go. It's not important. '

> Dora: Yeah that bothered me. He's giving away his own daughter!

> Donna: We're moving on it's not important. Now let's just drop it.

While Danielle and Dora attempt to discuss the King's attempts to give away his

daughter, Donna is dismissive. Even when Dora explains that it disturbed her, Donna

again emphasizes that it's insignificant. Gilbert (1984) emphasized that classroom

discussions need to include the chance for students to query texts that relegate women

and men to specific gendered positions. Donna is preventing the students from querying

the treatment of the King's daughter by repeatedly attempting to move along the

conversation.

Women characters are also objectified and treated as men's property (to be taken

by other men). When Odysseus and his men raid the village, they kill the men and take

"their women." While discussing Odysseus' taking of women, Donna's discourse served

to endorse the gendered representation of the women characters in the text. One strategy

that Donna used to do this was to ignore certain questions from students or particular

events in the text as in the following excerpt.

> Danielle: But he raped women. He just took them.

> Donna: Let's move on. It's not important.

> Danielle: But he raided. They took the women and gave them out.

> Donna: Not that important. Let's just move on.

Despite the fact that Danielle wants to discuss Odysseus' rape of the women, Donna
made various attempts to move the conversation along. Further, not only does she fail to
point out that women are being used as objects, but her language when discussing
Odysseus' actions, "not important," "not that important," serves to minimize the
significance of Odysseus' rape of the women.   Donna, then, used various strategies to
objectify women.

In Gerard's discussion about the text, he very frequently referred to the "double
standard" that exists for men and women. In a conversation that touched on the use of
women as men's property, Gerard's discussion served to enlighten students about the
gendered message: that women are men's property. Gloria Steinem (1992) explains that
women's objectification entails disregarding women as independent, intelligent people;
rather, it reduces women to a status of dependence, and one in which women are often
viewed as men's property, or used for men's purposes (frequently sexual).

> Gerard: OK. Let's discuss what was happening when the raiding
> took place. What was Odysseus and his men doing?
>
> Lisa: They'd set the place on fire and kill the men.
>
> Gerard: Good. But what now what happened the women? What else?
>
> Lora: They were raiding and pillaging and kill the men and then
> they'd take the women.
>
> Mary: Yeah, they'd take they'd kidnap and share the women.
> It says they made sure everyone got their share.
>
> Cindy: Yeah. They shared them like for sex.
>
> Gerard: Good. So does everyone understand? I just want to make it
> clear this double standard. Odysseus and his men are just
> killing the men and taking the women and sharing them, as
> mentioned, for their sexual or other pleasure. Sometimes the
> women were used as servants, but it was for the use of men.
> OK. You understand? See that double standard again. Men can
> be brutal in the text and take women. The women are just there

helpless.

The above discussion illustrates Gerard's attempts to highlight the gendered

message in the text as he points out that the women were used by men in any way the

men chose. He begins the discussion by attempting to get the students to realize the

position the women are being relegated to in the text. Gerard's discussion pushes the

students to investigate what was happening to the women and the role the men played.

Further, he makes sure that everyone is clear that there is a double standard; that is, the

women and men are being positioned differently in the text. He also wants to make sure

his point is understood by the students ("you understand?"). Additionally, he also points

out the brutal manner in which the men are represented and his language, "take," and

"helpless," highlights the position the women are relegated to.

Shortly after the above-mentioned discussion, Gerard returned to the notion of a

double standard and elaborated on what he meant by the term.

> Ok. So I just want to discuss to make sure you all know what I
> mean by the double standard. I just want to be clear. I just want to
> make sure you know what I mean. Double standard in within this
> context would be that certain standards are different for men and
> women. Men are more privileged and have more power. Right?
> It's a very unfair and unequal representation of men and women
> in the text. And this is especially true you'll notice as far as sex
> is concerned. Because men have sex with are actually expected to
> have sex with many women whereas women are expected not
> to have lovers. So this is very unfair. Actually also
> very sexist for both men and women. Right?   Different standards
> for men and women.

In the above discussion, Gerard carefully explains what he means by the double standard

as he points out that the text presents different opportunities for men and women. He

also discusses the fact that men have more power than women and the unfairness of this

situation. Gerard also explains the fact that men are expected to have multiple lovers and

women are not supposed to take a lover. Also important is the fact that Gerard explains

that this treatment is sexist for both women and men. Gerard had backtracked to ensure

that his students understand the unequal treatment of men and women in the text.

In another typical discussion about women's representation as men's property,

Gerard again is careful to point out the role women are relegated to.

> Gerard: OK. Now let's look at Penelope and the suitors. What's happening?
>
> Cindy: They're fighting so they can marry her.
>
> Nat: Yeah. They want to take her for their wife and then they can
>   become the ruler. She was Odysseus' mate but then since
>   he's gone they can try to marry her and get the kingdom.
>
> Mary: Well, they're all like rivals of each other and the winner will I
>   guess like get Penelope.
>
> Gerard: OK. Good. You have all touched on some important points.
>   There is one thing I need I'd like to point out. Nat you said that
>   they want to take her for their wife. I think take is probably
>   key here. They want to they are treating her like she's first
>   she's treated like she belongs to Odysseus. Right? Because
>   she's married to him and also though because she's a woman
>   she's treated like someone who that they can take. Right? She has
>   do you see how she has no say in any of this. Now I want
>   you all to keep this in mind when you read further.

In the above exchange, Gerard's students discuss the suitors who are competing to wed

Penelope. While the students are reporting on what is occurring, they are failing to

subvert the gendered representation, that Penelope is being treated as an object. She's

considered Odysseus' wife available for the taking since he's disappeared. Gerard is

careful to point out that Penelope is initially treated as Odysseus' property ("belongs to

Odysseus"). When Odysseus is presumed dead, Penelope still does not gain her

independence. Gerard enlightens the students that Penelope is being treated in such a

manner because of her gender ("because she's a woman") as he subverts the text's

gendered message. In every discussion about women who were represented as "objects," in the text, Gerard pointed out the subservient manner in which women were presented.

The above exchanges illustrate the different ways that Donna and Gerard treated the text regarding the objectification of women. Donna's discourse served to ignore or minimize the implications of girls' treatment as objects, and her discussion elevated the status of men ("da man," "good people") who treated girls are objects. Gerard's discourse served to explicitly enlighten the students about the "sexism" in portraying women as objects and servants. Further, his discussion directly addressed the helpless manner in which females are portrayed and made repeated attempts to inform the students of the role that women were relegated to in the text. Researchers (Cameron, 1993; Sanford, 2005) emphasize that social institutions need to make students aware of gendered language in order to ensure more equitable pedagogy. In looking at the discussion from a feminist perspective, Gerard could have carried the discussions a bit further by possibly conversing about the complexities of the gendered relationships. However, he, unlike Donna, demonstrated an attempt, on each occasion when the gendered characters were treated in an inequitable manner, to enlighten students about the text's gender bias.

Teachers' Reaction to the Needy, Powerless Female

As previously mentioned, in the text Penelope is portrayed as the quintessential needy female who waits for Odysseus to rescue her. Richard Heitman (2008) explains that Penelope embodies the needy, passive female who is dependent on her husband to take care of her. In their discussions about Penelope, Donna and Gerard deal with the text in very different ways.

Donna's discussions about Penelope, who is portrayed as a helpless wife, served to endorse the gendered representation, that a woman is helpless without a man and, powerless to save herself, needs a man to do so.

Donna: Let's discuss Penelope. The poor woman. She can't
                 she's hopeless without Odysseus.

Griffith: I said she she just sits in her room and cries.

Donna: Yeah. This woman with the veil over her head. She
                 locks herself up in her chamber and doesn't come out. For
                 twenty years she's she just sits there crying. She
                 just, she's hopeless she needs Odysseus.

Gabby: She just like cries and waits for him?

Donna: Yeah. She's just like poor me, oh I don't have a life Odysseus is gone.
                 It's been twenty years since I've seen your face.   She really needs him.
                 She needs to be for him to save her. And he will, right?

In the text, Penelope is depicted in a traditional manner as a tearful, faithful wife who remains at home, mainly in her chamber, for twenty years pining away for Odysseus. Penelope is the quintessential subservient, needy wife, "I yearn for Odysseus, always, my heart pines away" (Book 19, 145). Richard Heitman (2008) describes Penelope as embodying the pathetic, passive women as she is capable of little more than crying as she awaits her husband's return. In the above discussion, Donna's language endorses the gendered representation, "She's hopeless without Odysseus," and serves to ignore the fact that Penelope embodies the stereotypically needy, helpless women.

Viewing this from a feminist perspective, this would have been a perfect opportunity for Donna to subvert the gendered message by pointing out that Penelope is subservient and needy and unable to proceed with her life without Odysseus. Instead, her language serves to endorse (and at times exaggerate) the gendered message. Donna stresses that Penelope has been "hopeless," for "twenty years," and that "she needs

Odysseus," yet she fails to explore the implications of a woman unable to proceed with her life without her mate. Rather, Donna drives the point home that she's needy by emphasizing that she needs to be rescued by Odysseus. In my journal I wrote, "this sounds like Cinderella – waiting for her prince." The text has positioned Penelope as a needy, helpless female, and Donna's discourse serves to either ignore this positioning, or at times to endorse it.

Donna employed a similar discourse (in relation to that about Penelope) of the needy female bereft of male help when she discussed other characters as well, such as the following conversation about Circe.

Donna: Circe is needy right?

Joe: But she has her own island. Doesn't she have some power?

Donna: She's a needy woman. She needs Odysseus. She traps him. She's very alluring.

Donna's discourse serves to emphasize Circe's neediness and her power to attract men, and in doing so, she endorses the gendered message (that Circe is a needy temptress). Even when Joe sees her as having some type of power ("she has her own island"), Donna emphasizes that she's needy. Not only does Donna fail to point out the sexism in the gendered representation, but her language is sexually suggestive as she emphasizes Circe's ability to ensnare men with her sexuality. Donna has endorsed and emphasized the gendered representation. There was one instance when Donna discussed Circe and the fact that there are few female characters in the text. When I heard her mention this, I thought she might delve further into the fact that the text is very much presented from the male point of view.

Donna: Circe is a female character. We don't have many female characters in the text. OK and those that we do have. We've seen Penelope.

We know about Calypso. And now we have Circe. What is being said?

Mike: She's like a goddess.

Donna: Yeah, and she plays this role very well. She's turning men into animals. She has this power and not just any animal but one with hooves. It's very interesting look considering there are not a lot of female characters in the book. I want to discuss more of the females and males later.

While Donna began to discuss the fact that women are very underrepresented in the text, this was as far as the conversation went. She does mention in this exchange that Circe has power. She fails to take the conversation further or to explain that she uses this power for reasons that are very stereotypically gendered: Circe is a needy female who turns the men into swine in order to get them to stay with her.

In a discussion about Penelope similar to that of Donna's, Gerard's talk focuses on the gendered message in the text, that Penelope is a needy "good wife" who is completely helpless without her mate.

Gerard: OK. Let's look let's see Odysseus is returning home. What's going on with Penelope at this point in the text? How is she presented in the text?

Peter: Well, she's like still waiting in her room, crying, and remaining She's a good wife. She's trying to stay away from the suitors.

Mary: Yeah, she's like she's really devoted. She's waiting for Odysseus to come and save her. Like she's a good wife.

Alex: She likes she really wants to know if he's still alive. She just like stays in her chamber and is still crying for him.

Meghan: She can't really do anything because he's still away so like she just stays in her bedroom. She's this like really devoted wife. Like she needs him there.

Mary: Yeah. She just needs him back and so she stays in her chamber.

Gerard: Ok. Good. Now. I just need perhaps I just want to point something out to you. That is that here again we see the somewhat sexism here. Penelope is pretty needy and can't really she's

> not at all independent. We see the double standard. Odysseus
> can have adventures without her, but she can only cry. OK. So we have
> a needy female here. Right? Do you see the difference in the way the
> two are presented here?

The students above discuss the notion of Penelope as a "good wife" and fail to question

or subvert the gendered message (that Penelope is a devoted, needy wife incapable of

living without Odysseus). The students are discussing Penelope in terms of the way she

is presented in the text, in a traditional, rather sexist manner. Gerard's discourse serves to

illuminate the fact that while Odysseus can resume his life without Penelope, she, by

contrast, can't live without him as she hides in her chamber waiting to be rescued.

Gerard also explicitly claims that this type of representation is sexist, which serves to

suggest inequality and bias in the text. As he frequently does in his discussion about

inequality in the text, Gerard also mentions the "double standard," and makes sure the

students understand that the characters (Penelope and Odysseus) are presented

differently. He emphasizes the sexist way both are presented, (Odysseus having

adventures, and Penelope weepy and helpless) and makes it a point to determine if the

students understand this ("Right?"). Likewise, when Gerard discusses Circe and

Calypso, he is careful to point out the needy manner in which she is portrayed.

> Gerard: Now if you think about Circe and actually also Calypso. I
> just want to make it a point to I want to show you that they
> are actually portrayed in a rather needy way. They're presented
> as being rather as women who are trying to trap men.   So there
> again is the double standard in the way they are portrayed. Not
> at all positive. They do have some power though. Right? But
> overall they are portrayed as needy as being very needy, right? They
> need men. So they lack a certain independence. Do you understand?

In Gerard's discussion about Circe and Calypso he is pointing out that the two women are

being portrayed in a negative light. He also emphasizes that they're "portrayed" as

attempting to ensnare men and again points to the double standard. His discussion also

serves to show that the women are not completely without power, "she does have some power though." He repeatedly mentions that their powerlessness lies in their neediness for men. Viewing Gerard's comments from a feminist perspective (Baxter, 2003), he could have taken the discussion further than he did in illustrating the fact that the women did hold some power. However, despite their ability to own and control their islands, they still had a great emotional need for men. Significantly, Gerard did emphasize that their powerlessness lay in their need for men and as a result, they lacked independence. Gerard's above-mentioned discussions illustrate the typical manner in which he discussed Circe and Calypso. During each conversation about the characters, Gerard was careful to point out the inequitable, sexist manner in which they are portrayed.

Upon reflection, one could possibly argue that Gerard was ignoring or endorsing the meaning by merely pointing out that women are needy. An argument could possibly be made the Gerard is merely pointing out that women and men are treated differently in the text. However, one must also view this discussion overall from the context of other classroom discussions. Fairclough (1989) describes the manner that the whole text (or discourse) hangs together as global coherence. Prior to this discussion, Gerard described in detail, numerous times, what he meant by double standard. In those conversations he discussed the unequal treatment of women and men in the text and the way men were afforded power and women were denied it. He also pointed out that this was unfair and unequal treatment of the genders, "this was just very unfair and we see the inequality in this type of representation. Just a real double standard. Different treatment for each." Further, in the above conversation, when Gerard mentions the double standard he also asserts that it's "not at all positive" which reinforces the unfairness of the representation. Perhaps in this discussion he could have taken the conversation further and given

examples of powerful women. However, as Sunderland (Sunderland, et al., 2001)

explains, subversion by a teacher can be explicit or implicit. A traditional text can be

subverted by being treated - through discussion, criticism, etc. - in a way that encourages

gender equity. In the above discussion, Gerard subverts the representation by

emphasizing the fact that this is not a positive representation, and his mention of the

double standard.

In another discussion about Circe and Calypso, Gerard elaborates on their source

of power and their powerlessness.

> Ok. So let's just look at Circe again. We mentioned that she trapped the
> men. Right? So. But she has power right? But look at where her power lies.
> Ok? She's Calypso is similar. They have power because they trap the men
> with sex. Right? They need the men and use sex to trap them. But that power is
> very sexist. Right? They don't they're not independently powerful like the men
> are. Their power depends on men or sex. This is very sexist. Does everyone
> understand this?

In the above discussion, Gerard illuminates the fact that while Circe and Calypso have

some power, their power is stereotypically sexist. He also emphasizes that the women's

power, unlike that of the men, is dependent on their sexuality. Further, Gerard

distinguishes between women's and men's power (in the text) by highlighting the

difference: the men are independently powerful, while the women's power is based on

men. Gerard also repeatedly refers to this representation as "sexist," thus exposing the

bias in the text.

Gerard's discussions are in stark contrast to those of Donna. While they both

discussed the same dialog in the text, their discussion was strikingly different. Gerard, as

he so often did, pointed out the double standard as the female is portrayed as needy,

helpless and homebound. Heitman (2008) explains that the marriage of Odysseus and

Penelope serves to perpetuate the notion that women are subordinate to, and dependent

on, men's actions. Since she is passive and submissive, Penelope represents the perfect

wife. While the part of the text the class discussed only referred to Penelope, Gerard was

careful to point out the sexist manner in which she and Odysseus are portrayed; while

Penelope was confined to her room, Odysseus was having adventures "without her."

While she pines away after him, remaining chaste locked in her room, Odysseus is having

adventures (and sex). Gerard makes repeated attempts to make sure the students

comprehend the difference in the way the characters are presented. Donna's discussion,

by contrast, serves to endorse the text's stereotypical representation of a female – one

who is helpless and needy. Donna, in fact, emphasizes Penelope's neediness as she

claims that she "needs" to be rescued. The text doesn't explicitly say she needs to be

rescued but Donna's language serves to place Penelope in a position of helplessness.

What's interesting is the language difference in the way that Gerard and Donna

discuss Circe and Calypso. While Donna claims the Circe "is" needy, Gerard claims that

the women are "portrayed" as needy.   Also, while Donna claims that Circe "traps men,"

Gerard asserts that the women are "presented," as attempting to trap men. Donna's

language confirms the gendered representation, Gerard's questions it, and ultimately

subverts it by pointing out the double standard in this portrayal. Vygotsky (1987)

believed that language was the most important mediator of knowledge, and that

children's thinking will be shaped by classroom discourse.   While Gerard's students are

being made aware of the sexist manner in which males and females are being portrayed

in the text, Donna's language fails to enlighten students about the gender bias in the text.

Teachers' Responses to Manliness/Manhood

The gendered representation of maleness in *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996) was

depicted in a highly sexist manner, with manhood representing brutality, strength and

adventure. On numerous occasions in both Donna and Gerard's class, the notion of what it means to be a male was discussed. There were numerous discussions in both teachers' classrooms about manhood, and in all cases Donna endorsed the gendered message by associating manhood with brutality. Gerard's discussion, by contrast, served to highlight the bias associated with this type of representation

R. W. Connell (1996) claims that the education system produces multiple forms of masculinity. Schools, Connell (1996) asserts, play an active role in the formation of masculinities and typically reinforce gender dichotomy. Schools, then, are agents in the making of masculinities. In some areas of school life, masculinizing practices are rather conspicuous, and in other areas more subtle. For example, the "America ritual," football reinforces the notion of the dominating male (Connell, 1996, p. 217). Other, subtler ways that schools shape masculinity is through textbooks or classroom discussion. Donna's discourse repeatedly endorsed the gendered representation of manhood as the following exchange illustrates.

Donna begins the discussion by focusing on Odysseus and the notion of manhood with Donna (and her students) viewing Odysseus as manly thereby endorsing the traditional gendered representation.

Donna: Let's discuss manhood, manliness what it's like to be a male in the text.

Lisa: Manhood comes up with Eurelocus and Odysseus fighting because Odysseus was like, he was strong and brave.

Max: He was a fighter, he was tough and like he had strength.

Donna: OK. He was manly. He was acting manly. He proved his manhood. He was brave, strong, fighting, tough. Yeah.

Mike: He was strong as a fighter. He showed his manhood. He was fighting and he was a good he was a strong fighter.

> Donna: Ok. Good. Yeah. Strong, brave. Dora.
>
> Dora: He proved his manhood by beating all the suitors. He was tough.
>
> Phil: He was like tough. He was like really manly.
>
> Donna: Good. Yeah. He proved his manhood. Yeah. You used words
>   like brave, tough. Yeah. Ok. Good.

In the above conversation, Donna initiates the conversation about manhood. The students

are all associating manliness with brutality and strength, the way Odysseus is portrayed in

the text. Donna's discussion expands on Max's idea of manhood and manliness by

suggesting Odysseus proved his manliness by fighting. Donna's discourse suggests that

manhood embodies strength, bravery, fighting and toughness. Further, Donna agrees

with the students' assessment that manhood is about strength and brutality. Donna claims

that Odysseus "proved his manhood" reinforcing the gendered message that one's

manliness depends on his strength and brutality. Donna not only fails to point out the

inherent sexism in the text and the students' idea about what it means to be a man, but

she endorses the gendered representation that manliness is associated with brutality,

strength, bravery and toughness. Numerous discussions about manliness and manhood

occurred in Donna's class and each time Donna endorsed the gendered message by

emphasizing that manliness represents brutality and strength. The following conversation

is another example of the language Donna used when discussing manliness.

> Donna: OK. I want to talk a little again about man the notion of
>   what it is to be a man. Of manhood and manliness.
>
> Meghan: They the men like fight and start wars and stuff.
>
> Donna: They plunder the land and plague the women. Right?

In the above exchange, Donna returns again to the notion of manhood. Meghan discusses

manhood and manliness in the same manner as it is represented in the text. Donna's

discourse indicates that a "man" is one who plunders the land and plagues women.

Viewing this exchange from a feminist perspective, Donna's discourse is highly sexist.

This would have been an excellent opportunity to point out that the males in the story are

portrayed in a very limited and sexist manner. Instead, she reinforces the notion that to be

a man, one needs to rob others and torment women.

Gerard's discussion subverted the gendered message in the text with issues

concerning manhood. As he had done with other gendered issues in the text, he was

careful to point out the limitations placed on males by the way manhood was represented.

> Gerard: OK everyone. In the story the issues of manhood and manliness
> appear there. So, let's see. Can someone just tell me what manliness
> might be? What describe manliness? Mary.

> Mary: Well, it says, Odysseus says he feels he wonders if they are
> like questioning his manhood because he won't compete in the
> games. He needs to prove he's a man by competing.

> Gerard: Ok. Good. And what is the story with manhood? How does this
> relate to Odysseus? Mary.

> Mary: He was manly because he did eventually compete.

> Henry: Well I said it was strong body, strong mind. Odysseus is a good fighter
> and a warrior.

> Lisa: I said like he is brave and courageous and like he fights
> the Cyclops.

> Ann: He like has lots of adventures and pillages and stuff.

> Gerard: Ok. But again, here we have the men are supposed to be
> strong, courageous, and a brutal sometimes. This is how
> manhood is represented right. So again we see some kind
> of double standard. And to be a man you have to have those
> characteristics or else.

In the above conversation, the focus turns to manliness and manhood. While the students

are reiterating the gendered representation in the text, that manliness represents brutality,

and strength, Gerard's discussion serves to subvert the message. Further, he discusses the "double standard" in the text and emphasizes that if you don't embody those characteristics you're not considered a man. While Gerard had repeatedly mentioned the "double standard" with issues that referred to women, here he does the same with inequities involving men. As mentioned, prior to this conversation Gerard was careful to point out, numerous times, the different ways in which women and men are represented in the text. He had pointed out the unfairness and inequality (for both sexes) of this representation. Looking closely at Gerard's language - "again we see some kind of double standard" - serves to draw a comparison with past discussions about the double standard and this discussion. Further, words such as "supposed," "have," highlights the expectations that the text is placing on what it means to be a man. Also, Gerard highlights the limitations of manliness in the text, and exposes the text's sexist positioning of men.

Gerard repeatedly exposed the sexist way the male characters are treated. On another occasion, when Gerard was discussing the violent acts that the male characters repeatedly engage in, Gerard explained "this is the representation for men is very limiting." On another occasion, Gerard discussed that "It's very a very narrow depiction," when exploring the role of men in the text. In the following exchange, Gerard again highlighted the limits placed on males in the text.

> Now we actually need to see how men are represented. They are mainly brutal warriors and are generally mainly associated with violence. This is very negative and stereotypical and also very a very limited and sexist representation. Men really are presented as in a rather sexist and limited way.

In the above conversation, Gerard subverts the gendered representation as he pointed out the limited way that men are represented. His language, including words such as

"stereotypical" and "sexist," emphasizes the negative way in which men are portrayed.

Gerard also is careful to point out that this is a negative portrayal of men.

The following example again illustrates a typical conversation that Gerard

initiated about manhood.

> Gerard:　Let's perhaps again just talk a little about manhood and how
> men are represented in the text?
>
> Cindy:　Brutal and remember that guy they hack off his hands and feet.
>
> Max:　Oh my God.
>
> Gerard:　Right so. Who is really the hero here?　Men are Odysseus is
> the hero but he's a man who is very brutal and he tortures these
> people.　This is a very limited portrayal for men and very violent.

Gerard makes a number of interesting points in the above discussion.　A close reading of

his language illustrates the way he subverts the text's gendered representation, that

Odysseus (the story's hero) is a brutal, violent male. After a student points out Odysseus'

brutality, Gerard's question – who is really the hero here – suggests that perhaps

Odysseus is not heroic. Further, when he points out that Odysseus is the hero, he follows

this with "but" (a transition word) "he's a man who is very brutal." This serves to call

into question whether Odysseus is in fact a hero.　Significantly, by pointing out that the

portrayal is limiting for men, Gerard is enlightening students about the narrow range men

are afforded in the text. As the conversation continued, Gerard took the notion of

manhood's association with brutality a little further.

> Max:　They were brutal.　They were especially near the end.
>
> Gerard:　Right. And again, this is as I mentioned this is a very limited and
> negative portrayal of manhood. They are also Odysseus is presented
> as a hero but he's brutal so you have brutality and violence and so this
> suggests that this is what　manhood should be. But and also that this is
> what how a hero should act.　So again this is very sexist and negative.
> Instead of something positive some positive representation.　Perhaps

> some tenderness there. But this here is as we've seen before just brutality and violence. Very negative. Very sexist.

Gerard is careful to reiterate that the text associates manhood with brutality and violence. He also explores the text's suggestion that a hero is one who embodies brutality. Gerard is careful to point out that associating brutality and violence with manhood and heroism is negative and sexist. He suggests that a different "something positive" representation of manhood is more appropriate, and suggests "tenderness" as an alternative (Sunderland, et al., 2001) explains that subversion of a traditional text's message can include enlightening students about the sexist portrayal of a character. Subversion also includes criticisms or comments about a text's sexism (Sunderland, et al., 2001). Gerard subverts the text's representation by illuminating the fact that associating manhood with brutality and violence is negative and sexist, and also by offering a nonsexist alternative "tenderness."

Once again, there is a stark difference in the way Donna and Gerard discussed Odysseus and the way in which he embodies manhood and manliness. Donna repeatedly endorsed the stereotypical representation by emphasizing Odysseus' strength and brutality, while Gerard's discussion served to point out the gender inequity in the text and, once again, the double standard in this type of representation. But also, Gerard not only drew the students' attention to this representation, he also described it as being sexist and negative. Gerard was careful to point out that if men don't embody these stereotypical qualities, they are not considered a man. Connell (2002) asserts that sex roles are acquired through socialization, notably the school, the family and the mass media.   While Gerard's discussion served to enlighten students about the gender bias in the representation, Donna endorsed the sexism. When boys are presented in a stereotypical ways in texts, it is important for teachers to illuminate the sexism inherent

in this type of representation (Sunderland, et al., 2001). In the interest of equality,

teachers need to ensure that boys and girls are encouraged to explore their full range of

development (Gilligan, 2006). Gerard's teaching methods attempted to do this.

Teachers' Discussion about the Vulnerable Male

While the male characters are mainly presented, and therefore discussed, in terms

of their adventures, strength and brutality, occasionally they are discussed in terms of

their emotional vulnerability. One such discussion involved Odysseus' being reunited

with his son after twenty years. While Donna's discussion served to suggest the

existence of a "male" way of weeping and subverts the gendered message (that men can

also experience tender emotions), Gerard's conversation served to point out that this was

an atypical representation of men in the text and one which broadened the way men are

portrayed.

> Donna: Ok. Let's discuss again when Odysseus and Telemachus are
>   reunited. What's the story?
>
> Griffith: Well, they're like finally together after like 20 years or
>   something.
>
> Dora: Yeah. Telemachus didn't even know his father was alive.
>   No one knew that Odysseus was still alive and out at sea.
>
> Pete: Right. And the book says something about taloned hawks.
>   And they are like hugging and crying.
>
> Donna: Right but look at their crying. I mean strong cries.
>   Right? Just like manly type crying. Just picture this
>   this strong, heavy really manly type sobbing really
>   deep strong sobs. Can you just envision this?
>
> Lisa: Manly sobs?

 Donna's discussions about the gendered characters suggested gender differentiation in

the way one sobs. Further, her repeated emphasis on "manly," coupled with the word

"strong," and "heavy" stereotypically suggests that men's cries contain strength. In my

journal I noted, "Donna – used deep voice for strong and heavy." Donna is endorsing the view that even when men are emotional, they do so in a way specific to their gender. That way is suggestive of a stereotypical representation of men (strong) and as such, she subverts the text's gendered representation (just as women can cry, so too can men, and not in a manner specific to gender). Pete's description of their crying is non-gendered, but Donna's response ("right but look at their crying. I mean strong cries") serves to focus the conversation on the gendered way that men cry as she repeatedly discusses the men's crying in a stereotypical manner. Finally, she makes sure the students can picture this. Lisa questions Donna's assertion ("Manly sobs?"). I noted in my journal that Lisa "seems baffled about what a manly sob is. Looks around at others for clarity." While it appears that Lisa doesn't associate a particular manner of sobbing with gender, Donna clearly does as it serves to confuse (and amuse) students. I noted in my journal that they found the notion of manly sobs to be amusing as they giggled and discussed it among themselves. Connell (2002) asserts that becoming a man is not a fixed state, but rather, one that is socially constructed. Institutions, such as schools, contribute to the social construction of gender (and manhood). Donna's responses stereotypically suggest that manhood involves strength even in moments of tenderness.

In all the conversation involving Odysseus and Telemachus' weeping, Donna referred to their crying in terms of their gender. The conversation turned to Telemachus' return home and his recognition that his father is still alive.

> Donna: OK. Now. Let's look at Telemachus. Remember when he learns of his father's that he's still alive.
>
> Dora: He was really emotional. He cries for his father.
>
> Griffith: Yeah. He's just like really happy to see him. And he he just cries cause he's just so happy.

> Donna: Telemachus is so surprised. He's just so overcome with
> emotion. He is weeping just like strong weeping. Right?
> You can picture it. These really manly weeps. Deep
> strong cries.

In a manner similar to the above-mentioned discussion in which Donna discussed

Telemachs and Odysseus' reunion, Donna discusses Telemachus' weeping in terms of

strength. Further, she again associates the manner in which he weeps with his gender,

suggesting that the way one weeps is gender dependent. Researchers (Hinchman &

Payton Young, 2001) suggest that teachers' discourse about a text could either confirm or

disrupt sexist notions. Donna's discussions about men's weeping serve to confirm sexist

attitudes about male vulnerability. Connell (2002) asserts that institutions, such as

schools, encourage male/female dualism and teach gender-appropriate behavior. As

children grow they eventually internalize the norms, and in turn, when adults, pass the

norms on to the next generation. Donna's teaching suggests male/female dualism as, in

the above example, she emphasizes a male way of crying.

Gerard's conversation focuses on the same textual dialogue as Donna's, and once

again his discussion about the text was handled in a very different manner that that of

Donna.

> Gerard: Ok. What happens when Odysseus and Telemachus are
> reunited? What does the text say? How do they react?
>
> Cindy: Well, it says they embrace and weep like birds with talons whose
> claws or something like that.
>
> Laura: Yeah, like they embrace and they weep.
>
> Joe: It's been like twenty years or something and they're so happy
> to be reunited. They're like just weeping and hugging.
>
> Gerard: Ok. Good. Yeah. Now. I want to just emphasize that the text
> suggests that this was an unusual way for Odysseus
> to behave. But it's a different manner because it shows
> his gentle side. Right? Unfortunately, it's probably the only time in the

> text that you see this. He's gently weeping with his son.
> It's sort of a welcome change from all the brutality. Right?
> It gives allows more range for his character emotionally and
> Telemachus also. For the men.

Gerard's discussion serves to highlight the unusual way that Odysseus is being

represented. While Donna used the word "strong" to emphasizes the way Odysseus and

Telemachus cried, Gerard used "gentle." Gerard also is suggesting that this

representation is positive ("welcome change") and that it broadens the options available

to men. Further, Gerard's tone (in my journal I noted that "he emphasizes gentle and

gently weeping") further stresses the text's message – that men can also embody softness

and tenderness. Gerard's discussion also suggests that men are not presented enough in

the text, in this type of manner. As he's done in prior discussions, Gerard indicates that

this type of positive representation emotionally broadens the range of emotions of men.

So essentially, Gerard is pointing out the narrow manner in which Odysseus (and his

men) are represented in the text and indicating that presenting him with a fuller range of

emotions, specifically emotions that suggest gentleness, are necessary. Gerard's above

conversation was typical of those in which he discussed the men weeping. In another

similar discussion about Telemachus and Odysseus' weeping, Gerard again points out the

positive aspects of the men being represented in this way.

> Gerard: OK. Let's discuss Telemachus and his father reunited. What was
>   happening? How were they presented?
>
> Janie: They were crying and hugging and Telemachus was really
>   really happy his father was alive.
>
> Mark: Yeah they were just really joyful and crying because they were
>   Telemachus was reunited with Odysseus.
>
> Gerard: The two of them are crying and hugging each other. They have
>   an emotional meeting. Again so this is this allows the men
>   more range emotionally for their character. It's very unusual
>   in the story. It's extending the characters which is a good thing.

Right?

Gerard is again pointing out the rather limited way in which men are usually portrayed. Further, he discusses the fact that this type of representation is positive and allows more range to the male characters. As a feminist poststructuralist, I'm interested in what assumptions the teachers' talk around text reinforces (Sunderland, et al., 2001). Gerard's discussion serves to illuminate the typically narrow, sexist manner in which men are usually presented in the text. He also makes sure that the students realize that this representation is an unusual one for the men characters and makes sure ("Right?") the students understand it's a positive representation.

Again, Donna and Gerard have discussed the same characters, and once again they've talked about them in very different manners. Donna's discussion served to emphasize that there is a gendered way of crying, and for Odysseus, that way is connected to stereotypical male qualities (strength). Gerard viewed Odysseus' representation in this manner as refreshing and a welcome change. He also emphasized the limitations that are usually placed on the male characters in the text and that this type of representation affords male characters a broader range emotionally. Donna has taken a progressive representation of males and subverted it, while Gerard has endorsed it while explaining the positive nature, for men, of this type of representation. Rosenblatt (1995) believed that adults impart social values to children through language, and this discourse helps shape students' beliefs and attitudes. Connell (1999) asserted that students' knowledge is mediated by artifacts given to them by parents and teachers. Gerard's discourse attempted to highlight the bias in the way men were portrayed in the text, and to broader the perspective on acceptable male roles. Donna's discussion served to present men in the same limiting manner in which they were represented in the text.

To recap, my textual analysis revealed that *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996) was a traditionally gendered text. My subsequent analysis of the teachers' discussion about the text revealed that Donna taught the text in a highly traditional manner, while Gerard taught the text progressively. As my discussion continues with Chapter 5, the conversation turns to my study's findings in relation to students' discourse. My discussion involves looking at students' typical responses to the gendered characters and also the exceptions.

CHAPTER 5

Findings - Students' Discourse

In order to answer the first part of my second research question, "What sense do students make of the gendered characters in the text," I explored the manner in which Donna and Gerard's students discuss the gendered characters in the text. What my analysis revealed was that in both classes, the students failed to question or subvert the gendered message except with regards to issues of rape and infidelity. Further, it was only the girls, in both classes, who questioned or subverted the gendered message where issues of rape were concerned. During discussions about other topics in the text, the students either ignored or endorsed the gendered representation. For example, when manhood was discussed, the students endorsed the text's representation by agreeing with the text (that manhood represents brutality and strength).

To revisit, Donna students consisted of eleven girls and eleven boys with no pattern, as far as gender is concerned, as to whom each student sat beside. Gerard's students consisted of eleven girls and eleven boys who always sat in the same place and who were always paired according to gender (two boys to a desk or two girls to a desk). The students had chosen this seating arrangement at the beginning of the term. This was in contrast to the seating arrangement in Donna's room where boys and girls very frequently sat side by side.

My discussion now turns to the manner in which the students discussed the gendered characters in the textbook. As mentioned, my analysis revealed that there was a similarity in the way the students, in both Gerard and Donna's classrooms, responded to the textbook. This was quite interesting considering the teachers taught in very different ways. Both girls and boys questioned or subverted the men's excuses for infidelity, while

only the girls subverted the gendered representation when issues of rape were involved. Interestingly, the boys (in both classes) didn't seem to recognize that rape had occurred in the textbook, while all the girls who spoke agreed that it the women were indeed raped.

I begin the conversation by discussing the "typical manner" in which students responded to the gendered characters. I start by exploring students' discussion about the powerless female, followed by a conversation about students' discourse about manhood, and students' discourse about male vulnerability. My focus then turns to the atypical manner in which students discussed the characters. I begin by exploring the students' discourse about the objectification of women, followed by the students' discussion about the female temptress. In the former discussion, the focus turns to rape; in the latter, the students explore infidelity.

Students' Typical Responses

Students' response to the needy, powerless female. As was previously mentioned, the typical responses from students were to ignore or endorse the gendered message in the text. These occurred when the representations did not involve infidelity or rape (which were the exceptions). The following conversation illustrates the "typical" responses of the students as they discuss how they described Penelope in their homework assignment.

> Donna: Let's discuss Penelope. The poor woman. She can't
> she's hopeless without Odysseus.
>
> Griffith: I said she she just sits in her room and cries.
>
> Donna: Yeah. This woman with the veil over her head. She
> locks herself up in her chamber and doesn't come out. For
> twenty years she's she just sits there crying. She
> just, she's hopeless she needs Odysseus.
>
> Gabby: She just like cries and waits for him.

Donna: Yeah. She's just like poor me, oh I don't have a life Odysseus is gone.
          It's been twenty years since I've seen your face.   She really needs him.
          She needs to be for him to save her. And he will, right?

Mary: I said she's just like so sad he's away and she doesn't want to
          take a suitor. She's been faithful. She just waits for him. It's
          like she's not really interested in anything else she misses him
          so much. She really needs him.

In the above conversation, the students fail to question the fact that this woman is totally

dependent on Odysseus. While they acknowledge that she's distraught and essentially

does nothing for twenty years while he's away, they fail to comment on the fact that she

is represented in a sexist manner as a needy, dependent female. Further, infidelity again

surfaces in the discussion as Mary mentions that she has been faithful. Despite the fact

that Penelope embodies a needy female, and the students recognize this, they fail to

mention this in their discussion. They also fail to discuss a connection between Penelope

and the stereotypical way in which she is portrayed. The above discussion was typical of

the manner in which Donna's students discussed Penelope. In the next exchange, a

similar conversation occurs.

Giselle: It's like Penelope is sitting in her room for twenty years.
           She's just waiting.

Donna: Yeah, well she really loves Odysseus.

Griffith: She just waits for him to return.

Chris: Yeah, she just needs him to come back.

Giselle: Yeah and at the end they like are united again.

In the above exchange, Donna's students are again discussing Penelope's waiting for

Odysseus. Neither the girls nor the boys question the fact that Penelope is completely

helpless without her husband. While they view her as needy, they don't mention that this

is a very passive, helpless representation. Researchers (Sanford, 2005; Wortham, 2006)

have emphasized the need for teachers to make students aware of inequities in characters'

gendered representation in texts. Taking a look at Gerard's students (below) indicates

that they, like Donna's students, repeatedly failed to recognize the biased manner in

which Penelope was represented.

In Gerard's class, a discussion occurs about Penelope with the students focusing

on the gendered message in the text, that Penelope is a needy "good wife" waiting to be

rescued; the students discuss the fact that she is helpless without her mate as she stays in

her chamber for twenty years weeping.

> Gerard: OK. Let's look let's see Odysseus is returning home. What's
> going on with Penelope at this point in the text? How is she
> presented in the text?
>
> Peter: Well, she's like still waiting in her room, crying, and remaining
> She's a good wife. She's trying to stay away from the suitors.
>
> Mary: Yeah, she's like she's really devoted. She's waiting for
> Odysseus to come and save her. Like she's a good wife.
>
> Alex: She likes she really wants to know if he's still alive. She
> just like stays in her chamber and is still crying for him.
>
> Meghan: She can't really do anything because he's still away so like
> she just stays in her bedroom. She's this like really devoted wife.
> Like she needs him there.
>
> Mary: Yeah. She just needs him back and so she stays in her chamber.
>
> Gerard: Ok. Good. Now. I just need perhaps I just want to point
> something out to you. That is that here again we see the somewhat
> sexism here. Penelope is pretty needy and can't really she's
> not at all independent. We see the double standard. Odysseus
> can have adventures without her, but she can only cry. OK. So we have
> a needy female here. Right? Do you see the difference in the way the
> two are presented here?

The students above discuss the notion of Penelope as a "good wife," and they fail to

question or subvert the gendered message, that Penelope is a devoted, needy wife

incapable of living without Odysseus. They do, however, recognize that she is needy and

incapable of living without her husband, "Like she needs him there." They also believe that she is a "good wife." Their understanding of a good wife appears to be based on the traditional representation in the text, "she's waiting for Odysseus." The students understand a "good wife," to be one who is needy (she's incapable of having a life without Odysseus), powerless (she waits to be rescued), and devoted. Also, however, she is a "good wife" because she has not been unfaithful. The students praise her for her fidelity but fail to mention the fact that her husband is having sex (at times because he has committed rape) with other women. The students recognize that Penelope does not have a life without Odysseus (she's been crying in her chamber for twenty years), yet not only fail to question this very traditionally gendered representation, but feel it contributes to Penelope's status as "good wife."

Both Donna and Gerard's students respond to Penelope's neediness in a similar manner. The students recognize her neediness and feel she's a "good wife" for pining after Odysseus. None of them mention the fact that Odysseus is out having adventures for twenty years while she's rendered helpless because he's not at her side. Significantly, despite the fact that Donna and Gerard discussed the text in very different ways, the students responded in a very similar manner. Davies (1989) asserted that gender bias in texts is often reflected and perpetuated in classroom discourse. In the above discussions, the text's representation of Penelope is reflected in the discussion as the students fail to subvert the gendered message – that she is a needy, helpless female. Research (Baber & Tucker, 2006; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Oswald, & Lindstedt, 2006; Robinson & Johnson, 2007) suggests that females and males still hold certain stereotypical views about gender. Women are still perceived as being emotional, dependent, talkative, motherly and weak. My study supports this research as the students

in both Donna and Gerard's class perceived Penelope as passive and needy, the gendered

manner in which her character was presented.

Students' conversation about manliness/manhood. Taking a look at the students'

discussion about Odysseus and manliness again reveals the "typical" way the girls and

boys discussed the textbook. The students endorse the gendered representation, that

manliness represents strength, brutality, bravery and adventure. This was the case during

every discussion about manliness and manhood. In Donna's class the following

conversation occurred.

Donna: Let's again look at manhood. Someone.

Lisa: Manhood comes up with Eurelocus and Odysseus fighting because
Odysseus was like, he was strong and brave.

Max: He was a fighter, he was tough and like he had strength.

Mike: He was like tough mind tough body. He was heroic and
he killed his enemies and proved his manhood.

Griffith: Yeah, he like was a fighter and a warrior.

In the above conversation, all of the students associate manliness with brutality, fighting

and strength (similar to Donna's portrayal), the way Odysseus and his men are portrayed

in the text. As the conversation continues Mike explains that Odysseus proved his

manhood by killing his enemies. Mike also associates Odysseus' heroism with violence.

As was typically the case in Donna's class, the students agreed with the text's

representation of manhood and manliness as they associated it with strength and brutality.

In another such conversation about manliness, the following discussion occurred.

Donna: OK. Let's again look at the text. Let's talk about manhood.

Mike: He was tough and he slaughtered everyone. He was like
really tough and acting like bravely and manly.

Danielle: Yeah, he was killing everyone who dishonored him and he

was brutal and manly.

Lori: Yeah, he was setting traps and killing everyone.

Joe: Odysseus made sure he killed most everyone. He was strong and
          brutal.

As in the previous conversation, all of the students are associating manliness with

brutality, strength and violence. Every one of the students associates manhood with

murder.   Mike felt that Odysseus' killing indicated he was brave. Connell (1996)

explains that the gender structures of society define certain patterns of conduct as

"masculine" and others as "feminine." Further, video games circulate stereotyped images

of violent masculinity and often require players to symbolically enact this masculinity.

This view of masculinity affects the way males and females view gender. Connell's

(1996) views tie in with Fairclough's (1989) point that societal influences affect the sense

one makes of texts. Further, Connell (1996) asserts that masculinities are ways in which

society interprets and employs male bodies. The boys and girls in the above conversation

are interpreting masculinity as that which involves violence, strength and brutality.

In Gerard's class, there were times when the gendered representation was

completely ignored by the students. Looking at the students' discussion about Odysseus

and manhood reveals that, as was the case in Donna's class, each time the students

discussed manhood they failed to subvert the gendered norms in the text.

Mary: Well, it says, Odysseus says he feels he wonders if they are
        like questioning his manhood because he won't compete in the
        games. He needs to prove he's a man by competing.

Gerard: Ok. Good. And what is the story with manhood? How does this
         relate to Odysseus. Mary.

Mary: He was manly because he did eventually compete.

> Henry: Well I said it was strong body, strong mind. Odysseus is a good fighter and a warrior.
>
> Lisa: I said like he is brave and courageous and like he fights the the Cyclops.
>
> Ann: He like has lots of adventures and pillages and stuff.

In the above conversation, the focus turns to Odysseus and the notion of manliness. The students are connecting manliness with the representation in the text; that is, they believe that manliness equates to strength, bravery, brutality and competition (Mary believes Odysseus was "manly" because he was competitive). The students also connect manliness with fighting and war (Odysseus was a "good fighter") as they repeatedly mention that he proved his manliness by fighting. I wondered if that implied that Odysseus would not be a man if he did not fight. The students also feel that manliness equates to having a strong mind (although they don't indicate exactly what this means). The students' discussion viewed manliness in a stereotypical way, the same manner as the representation in the text. On another occasion, despite the fact the Gerard had pointed out the inherent sexism in the way men were presented, his students still referred to manhood in a similar manner, as did the text.

> Mark: He has to prove he's manly. He's like going to slaughter all the suitors.
>
> Peter: He needs to regain his honor. He needs to keep his honor.
>
> Lora: Yeah, like he's this brave strong warrior. He needs to prove he's tough and manly.

The students are again equating manliness and manhood with violence, honor and bravery. They also associate manliness with the fact that Odysseus needs to regain his honor (through violent means), and his need to prove that he's tough. Researchers (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994; Sunderland, et al., 2001; Wortham, 2006) have

asserted that it is important for teachers to expose sexist attitudes in the text in order for

students to recognize it. In the above example, Gerard had repeatedly pointed out the

sexist manner in which men are represented, and yet following his discussions, his

students still associated manliness with violence (the same way in which it was described

in the text).

Once again, Donna's and Gerard's students responded in a similar manner; that is,

none of the students questioned the gendered representation. All of them appeared to

view Odysseus as being manly which they equated, stereotypically, to brutality, strength

and bravery. This pattern appeared throughout the classroom discussion about manliness

between both Donna and Gerard's students. Christine Skelton (2001) explains that

hegemonic masculinity defines what it is to be a "real" boy or man. Kenway and

Fitzclarence (1997) assert that hegemonic masculinity mobilizes around assertiveness,

control, competitiveness and physical strength. This view of masculinity is often played

out in the academic environment (Connell, 1996). The students' responses, at least in

part, suggest that the hegemonic masculinities that Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997)

defined as being played out in society, are at play in Gerard and Donna's classrooms.

Students' response to the vulnerable male.   In taking a look at a rare moment

when a male exhibits tenderness, Donna's students' discourse tends to endorse the text's

message, that Odysseus is displaying gentleness and tenderness. The students' gendered

understandings were in contrast to Donna's. Unlike Donna, they did not associate men's

way of crying with their gender. While Donna claims that Telemachus' and Odysseus'

sobs are "manly," the students react with questions and giggles.

Donna: Again we see that the men, Odysseus and his son are
         sobbing these manly sobs. Right? These strong, manly sobs.

Lisa: Manly sobs?

Joe: Manly sobs?

Lisa: Manly sobs? They're sobbing; weeping.

Griffith: They're crying together.

Donna's discussion about the gendered characters serves to suggest gender differentiation in the way one sobs, and therefore subverts the text's message. The text presents the men as sobbing but does not suggest that there is a gendered component to the way they weep. For example, language such as "helplessly they weep," "weeping until sundown," does not hint that there is a certain gendered way in which the men weep. The students react to Donna's comments and wonder what could be meant by manly sobs. In my journal I wrote, "students think manly sobs funny. Seem to question the meaning." Lisa reinforces the text's message that they are weeping, with no mention of a gendered connection. In my journal I noted, "Dora and Griffith still discussing what manly sobs could mean – laughing, joking." The students, then, are viewing Odysseus' act in a non-specific gendered manner – just as the text is. That is, they do not view Odysseus as crying in a male specific manner, despite the fact that Donna does. On another occasion a similar event occurs when Odysseus sobs when he thinks of his son.

Donna: OK. Now what is Odysseus doing?

Dora: He cries for Telemachus.

Griffin: Yeah, he wants to get to his son.

Donna: Yes. He's crying those strong, deep type sobs.

Dora: He cries because it's been almost twenty years since he's
         seen him.

In this discussion the students describe Odysseus as crying for Telemachus, but unlike Donna, they fail to make a connection between "manly" qualities (such as strength) and

the way he cried. Rather, they merely explain why he's crying. This is another example

of the students discussing the text in a manner that is different than the way their teacher

discusses it.

Gerard's students had a number of discussions about Odysseus and the rare

occasions in which he is emotionally vulnerable. In all of these discussions, the students'

discourse supported the gendered message (that Odysseus was displaying tenderness).

Gerard: So for the most part Odysseus is usually a brutal warrior. Let's
                discuss a time when he is depicted differently.

Pete: When he thinks of Telemachus.

Joe: He weeps.

Laura: Also when he was reunited with his son. He just gets
                really emotional.

Mary: He's really vulnerable. He's just he hasn't seen his
                son in a long time.

Pete: Yeah. He was missing him while he was out on his ship.

In the above exchange, the girls and boys all recognize that Odysseus is showing

tenderness and vulnerability. They also recognize that Odysseus is acting in a vulnerable

manner and associate his weeping with his missing his son.   In other discussions about

Odysseus' vulnerability, Gerard's students repeatedly discussed him in the same terms as

the text. Their language, "gentleness," and "crying," "emotional," "weeping," supported

the representation in the text. They, like Donna's students, emphasize that Odysseus was

weeping, but unlike Donna, do not make a connection between his crying and his gender.

Interestingly, the above discussion refers to an instance in which Odysseus is presented

in an atypical way in the text, as he is almost always associated with brutality and

violence. Despite this, the students failed to comment on this very atypical representation

of Odysseus.

The students in both Gerard and Donna's class have reacted to the progressive gendered representation in the text by essentially endorsing the representation. I found it very interesting that despite the fact that Donna repeatedly suggested that gender played a role in the way Odysseus cried, her students ignored or questioned her interpretation and responded in the same manner as Gerard's students. This led me to wonder how much influence a teacher's discourse has on students' understanding of a text. Researchers (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994) emphasize the influence that teachers' discourse has on the sense that students make of a text. In the discussions about Odysseus' weeping, Donna's students discussed the text in a very different way than Donna. Further, they also questioned her interpretation ("manly sobs?"). On each occasion, when Donna discussed a textual reference to Odysseus' crying she, unlike the text, connected a stereotypically gendered attribute to his emotions.

Davies (1989) asserted that teachers' attitudes often perpetuate gender bias in the classroom and this, in turn, is reflected in classroom discourse. Researchers (Cameron, 1993; Spender, 1990) claim that teachers should work to disrupt discourse that presents women and men in a sexist manner. Despite Donna's very biased language, her students' discourse reflected the non-stereotypical message that the text imparted. Her students, then, were in agreement with the text's representation of the gendered characters, rather than with her interpretation of the characters. Fairclough (1989) emphasizes that the way a reader interprets a text is based on her/his members' resources (MR). This speaks to Barthes' (1977) assertion that the meaning one brings to a text is woven with citations of former experiences. I wondered what members' resources the students were utilizing in their interpretation of the text.

Students' Atypical Responses

Students' reaction to the objectification of women – women as men's property.

In the text the women are frequently viewed as men's property, as men kidnap, rape and share women as the following quotes illustrate, "killed the men but as for the wives and plunder/…We shared it" (Book 9, 44-49), "Men dragging the serving-women through the noble house, exploiting them all, no shame" (Book 16, 120-121). As was previously mentioned, only the girls subverted the message when the topic of discussion was rape. Below is a discussion about an atypical response to the gendered characters as the girls and boys disagree as to whether the women characters were raped.

In a discussion about women being "taken," Donna's students discussed women in terms of them being u sed by men. The students' conversation turned to the suitors who were attempting to wed, and bed, Penelope. The suitors also "took" the maids while Odysseus was away. The following example illustrates a typical discussion about rape and one in which only the girls subverted the gendered message (that women are property to be taken and used by men).

Donna: OK. Let's discuss the revenge.

Mark: Like Odysseus is getting revenge on the suitors and maids.

Donna: OK. Good. Now so what happened.

Danielle: He killed the suitors and the maids. But the maids also had to clean
           the blood and stuff. Ooh.

Donna: Yeah. Because the maids betrayed Penelope by being with
           the suitors. Right?

Giselle: Yeah, but the maids were taken by the suitors. He kills them
           because they were taken? They were that's not fair.

Mike: He killed them because they were in bed with the suitors. They
           betrayed him.

Danielle: The suitors took them. They just took the maids. It says that.
           so they were killed for that? Like they didn't even have a say.

> They were just taken.

> Dora: They were taken and so they were then supposed to be killed?
> Who's who is the victim here?

In the above exchange, the students discuss the revenge Odysseus enacted on the suitors and maids whom he felt betrayed him. While Mike and Donna assert that the suitors and maids betrayed Odysseus by sleeping together, the girls, Danielle and Giselle recognize that the maids were actually "taken" by the suitors. The girls also feel that it's not "fair" that they should be killed. Danielle recognizes that they didn't have a choice in the matter.   The girls are adamant that the women were taken (raped), while Mike claims that the women are guilty for being in bed with the women. Interestingly, Dora hints that the women are "victims." This type of conversation occurred in both classes and I wondered why the girls and boys seemed to have such a different way of viewing what was happening. While teachers can influence the manner in which a text is interpreted and the meaning students glean from the text (Baxter, 2003), in this case the girls were in disagreement with Donna.

On another occasion, the students again discuss the fact that the men are abusing women sexually. In the following discussion, the girls and boys are clearly in disagreement about whether rape has occurred.

> Donna: OK. So let's discuss what's happening when Odysseus and
> Telemachus arrive at the house? What does Odysseus do?

> Danielle: They kill the maids which is that was just so unfair.

> Dora: I know right. It was they were killed because the men the
> suitors took them. It was not like they did anything.

> Griffith: Yes they did. They slept with the suitors.

> Chris: Yeah that's why Odyssus said they disrespected his house and
> so he killed them.

> Giselle: What? It was unfair that he killed them. They didn't do anything.
>
> Mary: The men sort of dragged them through the house I think it says or something. They took the women.
>
> Joe: The women consented. They went with the suitors so they disrepcted Odysseus' house.
>
> Danielle: They were raped. How do you not get that?
>
> Joe: They slept with them. They went. They were guilty.
>
> Giselle: What? Because they were taken they were guilty? How exactly is that fair?
>
> Mike: They disrespected his house.
>
> Dora: What? The suitors did it.

The above exchange is a typical discussion about rape. Danielle's comment, "How do you not get that" seems to sum up the discussions about rape that occurred (in both classes). The girls interpreted the text in a very different way than did the boys. The girls kept reiterating that the slaughter of the maids was wrong. More importantly, the girls repeatedly claimed that the maids were forced to have sex and at one point Danielle calls it rape. By contrast, the boys believed that because the women were in bed with the men, the sex was consensual. Dora felt "they didn't do anything" wrong, while Griffith felt "yes they did" because they were in bed with the suitors. Chris, Mike and Joe felt that the women had disrespected Odysseus' house (by sleeping with the suitors), and therefore were guilty. The boys didn't seem to consider the fact that the women may have been raped. Further, the language (the girls claimed the maids were "raped" and it was "unfair;" the boys claimed the maids are "guilty") used by the students indicates the dichotomous way the boys and girls view the text.

A similar conversation occurred on another day when the conversation resumes about the suitors and the maids. In this discussion, Dora recognizes that the women were treated like men's property "like they own them or something."

Danielle: This like remember the suitors who took the women.

Dora: Yeah. Like who are the guys [the suitors] to take them. Like
          they own them or something. Like it's OK just to take a woman?

Joe: The women went to bed with the suitors.

Lisa: No the women were taken they were sexually taken.

Danielle: Yeah. They were raped. They were killed by Odyssues because
          they were like taken like that?

Dora: Is that fair?

Lisa: Yeah like they were killed because they were raped?

In this exchange, the girls again recognize that the women are treated like objects "like it's OK to take a woman."   Joe doesn't agree with the girls as he hints that the sex was consensual. I noted in my journal "Griffith and Chris nod yes at Joe's comment. Mumble agreement. Agree with Joe."   The boys are asserting that the women were not raped as they "went to bed with" the men. The girls repeatedly mention the unfairness of the punishment Odysseus meted out on them. A number of points are being made by the girls in the above exchange. The girls claim that women are being treated as men's property ("like they own them"). They also believe that the sex between the maids and suitors was not consensual, and therefore they were raped. The girls also recognize the unfairness in the fact that Odysseus essentially punishes the maids for being raped. The only boy who spoke felt that the women were complicit in the betrayal of Odysseus. His response was immediately countered by Lisa who disagreed with him and asserted that the women were "sexually taken." In my journal I wrote, "The girls are pretty assertive. Control

conversation." I also noted that when the discussion ended some of the boys continued to discuss, among themselves, the fact that the women were guilty. In my journal I wrote, "Griffith, Chris, Joe still chatting. Think the women are guilty because they went to bed with the suitors. Repeatedly mention this. Another boy nods agreeing." The boys don't seem to consider the fact that the men forcibly took the women; instead, they feel the women must be guilty because they were in bed with the men. None of the girls seemed to even consider the fact that the women may be "guilty."

Poststructuralists assert that individuals are never outside of cultural practices and beliefs but are always 'subject' to them (Baxter, 2003). I wondered what cultural influences might have been at play in the responses of the girls and boys. Studies (Clark & Carroll, 2007; Cowan & Campbell, 1995) about gender differences regarding rape indicate that males and females view rape in very different ways. When presented with situations which suggested that females had sex forcibly, women were more likely to explicitly claim that rape had occurred, while men frequently asserted that the woman was not raped but rather, that she had made a false accusation. The men often took a blame the victim attitude. My research supports these studies as boy students felt the women were at fault for having sex with the men, and never recognized that the women had been forced into having sex. The girls, by contrast, in every discussion about the women being taken, argued that the women were raped and often called them "victims."

In a similar discussion about women being "taken," Gerard's students discuss women being "taken" and used by men. The students' conversation focuses on the suitors who were attempting to wed, and bed, Penelope. As the conversation progresses, the discussion focuses on the rape by the suitors of the women.

> Gerard: Ok. Let's discuss the suitors and what's happening when Odysseus is away. Someone. Meghan

Meghan: It said about how the suitors who were trying to get Penelope into bed, how they were using the women who worked there so wouldn't it be rape?

Cindy: Yeah. Good. That was good.

Lora: My God!

Mary: Oh yeah. Gross. Ick. It would. They were raped. Ooh, violent.

Gerard OK. Good.

Harry: He kills the suitors and the servants so they must have consented. They were guilty of sleeping with these guys.

Lora: Rape is occurring!

Mary: Like, I don't understand these men think like that it's OK just to take women? Like they don't matter?

Peter: But they were in bed with the suitors so they obviously consented.

Lisa: What! They were raped!

Peter: But they consented.

Lisa: They were raped!

Justine: Some of them may have been raped.

Lisa: They were taken. It says they were taken!

Gerard: Absolutely. I mean they were literally taken. They took the women. It was rape. Also, again we see the double standard that I've mentioned. The men the suitors were killed because they had disrespected Odysseus by invading his house, but the women, who were taken, they were killed because they had sex. So men can have sex and it's ok. But women are "sluts," even if they when they are raped. Good. Good conversation.

The above conversation represents the girls subverting the gendered representation in the text, and there is a clear disagreement among girls and boys, as to what occurred in the text. I wondered if this was due, at least partially, to the fact that females

overwhelmingly tend to be victims of rape, and it is men who are the perpetrators (Rozee & Koss, 2001). Further, research indicates that females and males have very different societal experiences and thought processes that they draw upon in their conceptualization of rape (Clark & Carrol, 2007). This holds true even where adolescents are concerned with boys "more accepting of rape and rape myths" (such as, the female was at fault because she seduced her rapist by wearing sexually suggestive attire) than girls (Cowan & Campbell, 1995). My results supports prior research as the heinousness of the act seems to be more apparent to the girls in Gerard's class who used language such as "ick" and "gross" to represent their disgust. Meghan begins the discussion by pointing out that since the text stated that the women were taken, this must mean they were raped. Lora's exclamation, "My God!" indicates her disgust at the rape. Also, my notes indicated that as she made this remark she put her head on her desk "and bounced her feet up and down looking distressed." Clearly, the issue of rape was a much more sensitive issue with the girls than the boys. Harry felt that because Odysseus killed the women they must be "guilty of sleeping with these guys." There was a very clear difference in the manner in which the girls and boys were viewing the situation.

I wondered if sociocultural factors may have affected Mary's response as she felt that rape represented violence (rape is considered an act of violence) (Fairclough, 1989). Also, Mary's response indicates that she recognizes that the women are treated as objects (they think it's "OK just to take women? Like they don't matter?") The girls' responses subverted the gendered representation by defending the women and illuminating, over and over, the fact that the women were raped. Even Justine, who for the most part was a student who very rarely spoke, chimes in, "Some of them may have been raped." In my journal I noted that Justine "spoke so quietly. Can hardly hear her." Though I had never

witnessed Justine speaking before, she obviously felt this subject warranted input.   Peter, by contrast, believes that because the women were in bed with the suitors, it meant that they had sex voluntarily. He seems unable to recognize that this could indicate that rape had occurred. Lisa appears flabbergasted with his response as she loudly exclaims, "What!" The girls collectively believe that this was, in fact, rape.   Finally, Lisa rather loudly asserts, "It says they were taken!"

While the boys don't agree that the women have been raped, the girls are adamant that rape has occurred and hence questioned the text's message (that women are objects for men's consumption). Researchers (Goodchilds and Zellman, 1984; Hutchinson, Tess, Gleckman, Hagans, 1994) found that adolescent boys were far more likely than adolescent girls to accept perceived sexual aggression by men against women. In a sample of 432 adolescents, Goodchilds and Zellman (1984) reported that only 21% of the students, two thirds of whom were girls, found it was unacceptable for a guy to hold down a girl and force her to have intercourse. This forced sexual act was, for the most part, not recognized by most of the boys as rape.   This research speaks to my study in which the boys can't seem to connect the forced sexual acts the women characters were subjected to, with rape.

On another day, a discussion occurs in Gerard's class about Alcinous giving his daughter away.

> Peter: Wasn't Alcinous like that guy the King who offered his
>   daughter to Odysseus?
>
> Gerard: Good. That's right. Now say more.
>
> Mary: He gave away his daughter. Like he owned her or something.
>
> Meghan: Like as a gift to Odysseus. Like she wasn't a person. He just
>   said something like I'll give you my daughter. She didn't
>   even have a say in it.

Mary: That is just like so unfair.

In this exchange, the girls recognize that King Alcinous is treating his daughter like an object ("like she wasn't a person"). They also recognize that she was being treated as if she was her father's property ("like he owned her") and recognize the unfairness in it ("like so unfair"). Meghan's comment "she didn't even have a say in it" suggests she, like Mary, felt that Nausicaa (the King's daughter) was being treated unfairly.

I found it quite interesting that Donna and Gerard's students reacted similarly to the women characters who were being raped, especially in light of the fact that Donna and Gerard taught the text in such a different manner. The girls in both classes are expressing their disgust at the fact that females will be raped. Interestingly, in both classes the girls are acting unusually assertive in the discussion and in an atypical manner as they control the discussion through more speaking turns. Researchers' (Bronwyn Davies, 1989; Commeyras & Alvermann; Sunderland, et al., 2001; Wortham, 2006) suggest that it is important for teachers to make students aware of gender bias, in order for students to recognize sexism in the text. Donna's students were clearly not being made aware of gender bias by Donna, and yet they subverted the gendered message (that rape is acceptable) just as Gerard's students had.

Students' reaction to the female temptress. One representation in the text that appeared to grab the attention of the students in both classes was the fact that Circe (and at times, Calypso) was being blamed for Odysseus' infidelity, while Odysseus used his gender as an excuse for bedding women. As previously mentioned, when the discussion focused on infidelity, the students' discussion served to subvert the gendered message (that Odysseus was not to blame for his infidelity because of his gender). Also as

previously mentioned, infidelity was the exception in discussions about gendered

representation. That is, it was the only time the girls and boys subverted the gendered

representation. I wondered why infidelity was something that grabbed the students'

attention. When analyzing my data, I realized that there were sociocultural connections

the students were making between Odysseus (and Penelope), and social/historical issues.

The conversation below was one of the first I recorded, and was initiated prior to any

discussion about infidelity in the class. It seemed to trigger a connection between pop

culture and the text.

> Donna: OK. Let's discuss Circe and Odysseus.
>
> Dora: Like she was sleeping with Odysseus.
>
> Danielle: Yeah, it was like *Desperate Housewives*. This so reminded me of *Desperate Housewives*.
>
> Dora: I love that show. Yeah. That's like it.
>
> Danielle: I mean it's like did you see the one where that her husband was sleeping with the neighbor and like he said it wasn't my fault she was so sexy I couldn't help myself. This was so like that.
>
> Dora: Oh yeah. It's like he's Odysseus. Can't blame me. Just like Odysseus says.
>
> Griffith: Yeah, like I couldn't help it.
>
> Danielle: Yeah, blame her. She's like this sexy lady so I had to have sex with her.

In the above conversation, the students begin by discussing the fact that Circe and

Odysseus are having sex. A conversation about *Desperate Housewives*, a television show

in which infidelity is frequently a theme, follows which elicits a conversation comparing

a male character on the show with Odysseus. The students are making a clear

comparison between the fact that both Odysseus and his television counterpart make

excuses for their infidelity. The students associate Odysseus' "excuse" for his infidelity

with the *Desperate Housewives'* character's excuse. They also criticize the fact that the blame is being placed on the female ("blame her"). This draws on a number of Fairclough's (1989) points. The students were bringing their member resources (background knowledge) into the discussion. Further, the students' discussion reflected the social context in which it was embedded (a society in which a popular television show influenced their interpretation of the text). On another occasion, *Desperate Housewives* was again mentioned.

> Griffith: That was like when he said I couldn't help it I was a man.
>
> Danielle: *Desperate Housewives* all over again.
>
> Dora: Yeah. I can't help it. It was her fault. I slept with these ladies but I couldn't help myself. That really bothered me.

The students again are discussing the fact the Odysseus couldn't help sleeping with his lovers. Danielle again makes the connection to *Desperate Housewives*, as again there exists a sociocultural connection with the classroom discussion (Fairclough, 1989). It is not clear how much of a connection the students made to the television show, but it was mentioned numerous times. Also, the show consists of characters who frequently have affairs, and the students seemed to connect this aspect of the show with Odysseus' excuses for his infidelity. Dora's comment "that really bothered me," was especially significant as she repeated it (see below) on another occasion when discussing Odysseus' infidelity. Her comment also seems to describe the way the students felt about Odysseus infidelity. The students are again subverting the gendered representation, that because Odysseus was a male he couldn't help having affairs.

Subsequent to the above discussion, there were a number of discussions about Odysseus' infidelity and each time the students' discourse served to subvert the gendered

representation (that, as a man, he could not help being unfaithful). The conversation

below illustrates this point.

> Donna: OK. Now. Let's discuss manhood again.
>
> Dora: Now can we please talk about manhood and about the now being a man I
> could not help it.
>
> Joe: Yeah.
>
> Alex: Like it's really he wants it to seem that like Circe that she like offers and
> tempts him with her body. He's trying to say that it's her.
>
> Joe: Yeah.
>
> Dora: That really bothered me.
>
> Robbie: That's just any excuse.
>
> Donna: Dora, can you point us in that direction?
>
> Dora: It's on line 452 on page 77 and it says she had been talking to him she
> says. She's like, so bring your men you may as well come here and
> stay with me and he says being a man I could not help consenting.
>
> Donna: Right. What's he saying?
>
> Dora: That he just couldn't say no. That because he's a man he could not resist
> her. He could not help himself.
>
> Donna: Right. Being a man I couldn't help it.
>
> Robbie: Yeah, like he's married to Penelope and sleeps with Circe. He's making
> excuses.

The students illuminate a number of points as they subvert the gendered message (that

Odysseus was not to blame when he slept with Circe). Despite the fact that, in the text,

Circe is discussed in terms of her beauty, her ability to tempt men, and her alluring

qualities, the students don't recognize Circe in these terms. They feel that Odysseus is

claiming she has the power to tempt, and uses this as an excuse to sleep with Circe. Also,

they believe that Odysseus is attempting to escape blame for sleeping with Circe, and that

he's blaming his gender on this act. Their language "excuse," "really bothered me,"

indicates that the students don't accept Odysseus' excuse for his infidelity. Further, the

students realize he's making excuses for his infidelity. As the conversation continued,

the students continue to question the gendered message and mention the fact that

Odysseus has been unfaithful and is attempting to elude blame.

> Danielle: He could have very easily rounded them up [his men] and said no and left very easily.
>
> Dora: On page 179 she's like, you've had such a rough time. Stay with me. I'll make your life OK. She's saying to all of his men, and him, and again he goes, we're men we cannot help it.
>
> Donna: OK. Again, what's the incentive? Mary.
>
> Mary: I think he's trying to make it seem right about staying there but he knows he's doing wrong and he just wants to make it seem like he's a gentleman.
>
> Dora: He's kinda like making excuses for himself for why he's betraying Penelope. In a way like sleeping with this lady. Not even trying to get home. All his resolve is totally out the window and he's like, oh well it's not my fault. I'm a man, she's a woman, so.
>
> Mary: Yeah.
>
> Donna: That's very interesting.

The students continue to emphasize that Odysseus is blaming his gender on the fact that

he slept with Circe. The students repeatedly emphasize that he's making excuses and

betraying Penelope.   A similar conversation occurs numerous times in the class with the

students repeatedly discussing the fact that Odysseus is making excuses for betraying

Penelope. Interestingly, in the next conversation the notion of manhood, as presented in

the text (brutal, strong, brave), is used by the students to subvert the gendered message

(that Odysseus is not to blame for his infidelity).

> Dora: He's this strong man and brave and he can kill men but he can't

escape from Circe?

Mary: Yeah. He's big and brutal and that's an that's just an excuse that he couldn't help it?

Donna: So what happens on the island?

Mike: He takes her to bed.

Danielle: Yeah he goes to bed with her. What about Penelope?

In the above exchange, the students again question the fact that Odysseus couldn't help sleeping with Circe because of his gender. Interestingly, they use the representation of manhood (big and brutal) as evidence that he's making excuses. Also, they again hint that he's cheating on Penelope as they're suggesting that with Odysseus' strength, he should have been able to escape Circe's power. Further, the students mention that "he" takes her to bed, not that she is the initiator. Essentially, in the above conversations the students are not connecting Circe's power to seduce (as she's represented in the text) with Odysseus's infidelity. This has once again has again played a role in the students' subverting the gendered message.

When Gerard's students discussed Circe and the talk turned to Odysseus' sleeping with her (infidelity), the students subverted the gendered message - that Circe's ability to seduce caused Odysseus to sleep with her. What's most interesting is that Gerard's students, like Donna's, make a sociocultural connection to the text. The following conversation is the first time that students discussed Odysseus' infidelity.

Gerard: Ok. Can we, shall we begin with Circe. What's going on?

Pete: Well, Odysseus is sleeping with her.

Mary: Like this kinda reminded me of my mother told me about when we were discussing Hillary how she might be President. We were talking about President Clinton and how he like had this thing with this woman when he was President.

> Phil: Oh yeah, like first he said he didn't do it. Right?
>
> Lisa: His poor wife. Did she like.
>
> Pete: yeah, like how humiliating.
>
> Lisa: Did she like was she staying at the White House?
>
> Mary: Kinda like Penelope

The above conversation illustrates the sociocultural/historical connection that the students are making with the text as they are identifying a commonality between Odysseus' infidelity and Bill Clinton's. Further, they also realize that President Clinton was making excuses (lying) as he first claimed that he didn't have an affair. Interestingly, they call Hillary a "poor wife" which they later will call Penelope. They also wonder if she was staying at the White House while this was happening. It's not clear if the comment was questioning whether she was there while he was having an affair, or whether the White House was her home at that point. In this regard, a connection is made between Hillary Clinton and Penelope, who stayed at home while Odysseus was having affairs. Rosenblatt (1995, p. 210) claimed that texts do not "function in a vacuum, and their influence is always part of a network of social factors." This was clearly the case as the students make a connection between the text's characters and social historical events. This connection between the conversation and Clinton occurred on another occasion when the class was discussing Odysseus and the women he slept with.

> Pete: He's like with all these women. Like Clinton again.
>
> Cindy: Yeah. Poor Penelope. She has no idea about Odysseus and Circe.
>
> Mike: Yeah and all the other women.

In this conversation about Odysseus and the fact that he's sleeping with women other than Penelope, there again occurs a sociocultural connection to the text as Clinton is

mentioned again. Cindy picks up on this connection and asserts that Penelope is unaware

of Odysseus and Circe. Mike's comment about "all the other women" could possibly

refer not only to Odysseus' lovers, but President Clinton's also. The point is that the

students are again connecting their textual discussion to a historical and cultural event.

In the next conversation about Circe, Gerard's students initiate a conversation

about Odysseus' excuses as to why he slept with Circe. What's interesting is that, despite

the fact that Gerard began a conversation about Circe, the conversation focuses on

Odysseus and the excuses he makes as to why he didn't leave the island. Also, just as

they showed sympathy for Hillary, so too do they show sympathy for Penelope.

> Gerard: OK. Let's talk about Circe. What's happening?
>
> Phil: They're on this island. Circe turns the men into pigs.
>
> Mike: Well, he's like on her island. She traps him. And he's there and he
>   can't get to Penelope.
>
> Mary: Yeah. But he likes keep making excuses and saying that trying
>   to make it Circe's fault because she like takes him to bed. But he
>   doesn't even try to get away. He tries to say he sleeps with
>   these women and he can't help it. Like.
>
> Joe: I'd try harder if I really wanted to leave. He doesn't try. He's like
>   getting waited on and everything.
>
> Mary: It doesn't seem like he wants to leave. He says oh I miss
>   Penelope but he still goes to Circe's bed.
>
> Gerard: Good. And you touched on something. Good. That line that he
>   keeps saying, that he couldn't help it. Good. You point out that
>   he is choosing to sleep with her. Right. He's enjoying himself. But
>   as you all nicely pointed out, it's blamed on Circe. Right?

When Penelope is mentioned, in the above discussion, the students begin to discuss the

fact that Odysseus is attempting to blame Circe for his infidelity. The students illuminate

the fact that Odysseus is blaming his gender on the fact that he can't help sleeping with

her. Interestingly, Joe mentions Circe's position of servitude and associates that with

Odysseus' unwillingness to leave. The students cannot accept that he wants to leave yet remains with Circe. They also take issue with the fact that he seems to be enjoying sexual relations with Circe yet claims he misses Penelope. Their discussion serves to subvert the message that the temptress (Circe) is responsible for Odysseus' infidelity.   In a discussion similar to that in Donna's class, the students use the gendered representation of Odysseus (big, brutal) to subvert the text's message.

> Pete: Ok. So, here he is. Stuck on this island missing Penelope. He says.
>
> Cindy: Yeah. He says. Like this guy who's like strong and raided and pillaged and stuff and he can't restrain, like he can't help himself?
>
> Mike: Yeah. Like he's he just doesn't want to.

In the above exchange, the students again are questioning Odysseus' excuse as to why he sleeps with Circe (he can't help himself). They also use the gendered representation of manhood (strong, brutal) to question how Circe can force this man to bed with him.

Interestingly, again the students in both classes responded in a similar manner as they verbalized their distrust of Odysseus' excuse for sleeping with Penelope. Both Donna and Gerard's students (girls and boys) felt that Odysseus was merely making excuses (using his gender) as to why he was unfaithful. Also interesting is that in both classes the students use the text's representation of manhood to question the gendered message. Skelton (2001) suggests that there are certain acceptable ways of doing masculinity. This ties in with Connell's (1996) assertion that certain masculinities are acceptable (heterosexual), and others may not be (homosexual). What seemed to disturb the students the most in the discussions about Odysseus' sleeping with women, was the fact that he repeatedly used his gender as an excuse. Odysseus repeatedly asserts that, "As I man I could not help consenting." In this case, Odysseus' way of doing masculinity (infidelity) was unacceptable to the students. Buss, D.M., Larsen, R.J., Westen, D. &

Semmelroth, J. (1992) suggest that females are more critical of emotional infidelity than sexual infidelity. Other researchers (Brogden, Fitzwater, Johnson, 2008; Cann, Mangum, Wells, 2001; Sabini & Silver, 2005) claim that both males and females view sexual infidelity in an equally negative light. My study indicated that both girls and boys were disturbed by Odysseus' "excuse" for his infidelity.

My discussion now turns to Chapter 6, as I discuss the results of my viewing the data from a different angle to determine how power is afforded or denied during classroom discourse.   During the conversation, the focus revolves around turn-taking strategies: speaking turns, topic control and interruptions.

CHAPTER 6

Findings – Power and Positioning

In order to answer my research questions, "In what way does the teachers' discussion about the gendered characters serve to position girls and boys," and, "In what ways do the students' discussion about the gendered characters in the text serve to position themselves and other students," I now explore the ways in which students are relegated to a powerful/powerless position through classroom discourse.

I viewed my data through a feminist poststructuralist lens with an awareness that power relations are dynamic and shifting; this was proven to be the case in both Donna's and Gerard's class. While the majority of the time the boys were positioned more powerfully than were the girls, the power shifted in the girls favor when the discussion turned to rape. Analysis of my data revealed three main turn-taking strategies that both permitted and limited student agency: speaking turns, interruptions and topic control. To recap, a speaking turn represents which student is afforded a chance to speak; an interruption represents a break in one's discourse caused by another speaker before the original speaker has completed her/his thought; topic control represents the speaker's position as the authority to set the topic. Three strategies are explored with which a speaker attempts to control the topic: initiated, changed, and interrupted. "Initiated" refers to the act of beginning a discussion about a particular topic. "Changed" refers to the initiation, and continued discussion, of a topic by a student before discussion about the prior topic is completed. "Interrupted" refers to the initiation, without continued discussion, of a topic by a student before discussion about the prior topic is completed.

My discussion will now focus on turn-taking strategies: speaking turns, interruptions and topic control as I revisit the data, viewing it from a different angle. It is

important to view the data in this manner because, as Nancy Naples (2003) explained, gender and race, among other patterns of inequality, shape whose voice is heard, and therefore, who is afforded power. Naples (2003) emphasized the need to investigate the ways in which discourse affords or denies power. As will be discussed, my findings suggest that boys are still afforded more power during classroom discourse than are girls. What is new and significant about my findings is that they illustrate how girls can achieve power during classroom conversations when the topic is one that impassions them. Also new and important is that, as the data suggests, despite the fact that teachers taught in very different ways (with regards to gender), the students from both classes were afforded or denied power in a similar manner. Naples (2003) explains that there are different ways, whether consciously or not, in which those who are marginalized display resistance to their subordination. My study reveals that the girls' response to the rape of the female characters positioned them in a highly advantageous position.

I begin the conversation by examining the way in which students were typically positioned by speaking turns, followed by the positioning of students by speaking turns during rape discussions. My focus then turns to interruptions as I first discuss interruptions during a typical conversation, and then during conversations involving rape. Finally, I explore topic control strategies during a typical conversation, followed by topic control strategies in discussions about rape. It is important to examine the rape discussions because, as mentioned, during these exchanges the power shifted from the boys to the girls.

Power Relations During Discourse

My analysis of both Donna and Gerard's classroom discourse revealed power inequity as, overall, the boys were afforded more speaking turns, and were interrupted on

fewer occasions than were the girls. It should be noted, however, that the girls in Gerard's class were afforded more speaking turns than were those in Donna's class thereby resulting in more equitable discourse.

Speaking turns typical discussion. In Donna's class the boys, overall, took more speaking turns than did the girls; the boys spoke 58% of the time, and the girls, 42% (See Figure 1). The person who is granted more speaking turns is relegated to a more powerful position than those who are denied it (Fairclough, 1989). Likewise, in Gerard's class inequity occurred despite his pedagogical stance that it is important to address issues of gender inequity in the classroom. The boys, overall, took more speaking turns than did the girls; the boys spoke 54% of the time, and the girls, 46% (See Figure 1). Interestingly, despite the fact that Gerard and Donna have very different attitudes about gender and literacy, and have very different teaching styles, the boys in both of their classes were afforded more speaking turns than were the girls. As mentioned, however, students in Gerard's class were treated more equitably than were those in Donna's.

The following conversation illustrates a typical discussion in Donna's class. The discussion depicts the manner in which the students are positioned by both Donna and other students, and the way in which power is obtained, by examining the number of times each student is afforded a chance to speak.

Donna: Ok. So let's talk about Calypso's island. Oogygia. That's her Island. So after Ismarose where did they go? Raise your hands.

Joe: I don't I forget the name of it.

Mike: Island of Lotus Eaters.

Donna: Yes. Island of Lotus Eaters. And what happens to someone who eats lotus?

James: They don't want to go back.

Donna: Yes. Those who eat lotus lose their vision of home. And a few
             Of Odysseus' men actually eat the lotus. What happens?

James: Don't they doesn't he tie them up and drags then back.

Donna: Yeah, so he pretty much ties them up and drags them back and
             ties them down. So we end up at the island of the Cyclops.
             Can someone explain what kind of people the Cyclops are?
             Hands?

Griffith: They it's kinda a paradise and the Cyclops are actually
             uncivilized people.

Donna: Yes. They are very uncivilized. Tell me why. Raise hands.

Larry: They eat humans.

Emily: When it says they eat kids, is that the goats?

Griffith: Yeah.

Donna: What else?

Emily: Live by themselves.

Perry: Don't the Cyclops have their own home?

Donna: No. They live in caves.

Emily: But by themselves. Right? Don't they live alone?

Donna: They do. Ok. Let's move on.

The above conversation illustrates the different ways the students achieve power. When

Donna initiates the conversation about the Cyclops, she asks for students to "raise your

hands" to respond. Joe begins speaking, which is followed by Mike's comments. Both

boys were placed in a position of power yet neither one raised their hands for permission

to speak. As the conversation continues, various boys are granted power, as they are

afforded speaking turns. Interestingly, while Donna repeatedly asks for raised hands, the

boys speak without doing so. In my journal I noted, "Emily's hand has been raised for a

while." At another point during the conversation I wrote in my journal, "Dora's hand

went up in response to Donna's - raise hands. No boys have raised their hands yet." At one point during the discussion Emily manages to enter the conversation and she did so without raising her hand. She has managed to obtain power, as the boys had, by not obeying the rules (raising hand). In reflecting on this conversation, it was as if Emily learned how to obtain power, by blurting out her answer.   When Emily first responded, her power was limited as Perry, rather than Donna, responded to her comment. Emily again, however, gains a speaking turn without raising her hand. As she again makes the same point, this time Donna responds and agrees with her thereby enhancing Emily's power. Donna's next response, "let's move on," however, indicates Donna's desire to end the discussion and thereby limits Emily's chance to further explore the topic.

What was demonstrated in the above conversation was that the boys, overall, were placed in a more powerful position as they had more speaking turns (Fairclough, 1989). The conversation also suggests that the boys gained some of this power by not following the rule set by Donna (raise hands). Donna, not enforcing this rule, helps the boys achieve power. The above conversation reflects Lindros' (1995) assertion that while girls tend to be the keeper of the rules in a classroom, boys often achieve power in classroom discourse by breaking rules.

To further illustrate a normal or typical conversation as it occurred in Donna's class, below is another discussion between Donna and her students.

Donna: …we are going to see a movie…I actually really enjoyed it.

Mike: Is it in color?

Joe: How long is it?

Donna: It's made for television…in '97 so it's not like very old.

Mike: Did they have TVs back then?

Donna: Get out of here. What are you crazy [laughing]? . What do we write
           in the center?   James.

James: Odysseus Book 9.

Donna: Ok so let's characterize him in Book 9 while I'm rewinding the film.

Jay: Can we watch this [the movie] for a few minutes?

Donna: Negative. Are you working on your web?

Larry: Yeah.

Donna: I gave you an extra minute. I am so nice.

Joe: You are so nice.

Donna: I am aren't I? So good [laughs]. What are some of the words we
           said that defines Odysseus. Danielle?

Danielle: Egocentric.

Joe: Isn't it egotistical?

Donna: Yeah. We said egotistical. Egocentric is the same. It's like all about
            me.

Chris: Determined.

Donna: Why?

Malcolm: Because he thought of a plan when things seemed hopeless.

Michael: Reckless.

Donna: And why did you say reckless?

Michael: He like risked his lives just like so they would give him gifts.

Joe: Is that [spelled] with a W?

Donna: It is with a W.

Malcolm: No it isn't.

Joe: Yeah.

In the conversation above, the boys again control the conversation. After Donna explains that the students are going to watch a film based on the Odyssey, Mike, and then Joe, immediately take control (and gain power) with their questions. This is followed by bantering by Donna and Mike, which places Mike in a position of privilege. As he and Donna exchange jibes he is, to a certain extent, positioned as Donna's buddy. The boys remain in control of the conversation and subsequently Donna and Joe exchange banter. When a girl finally enters the conversation (Danielle), her answer is disputed by Joe. After the dispute, Donna places Danielle in a position of power by explaining that her definition and Joe's are the same. For the remainder of the discussion, the boys were afforded power in the conversation as they and Donna continued conversing. It was as if the girls were on the periphery of the conversation. At one point, Donna's spelling was challenged by Joe [when she spelled reckless – wreckless]. Subsequently, Malcolm agreed with Joe, and Joe's position of power was enhanced. Davies (1989) suggests that the discursive practices of teachers often position girls and boys differently and often to the advantage of the boys. This was clearly the case as the boys (as was typical in both classes), were placed in a highly powerful position while only one girl (Danielle) briefly held power. It is important to note that in my journal I wrote, "three girls and one boy have hands raised. Girls waving. Gabby has hand up a long time. Looks like she's getting tired. Holding her right arm up with her left hand for support. Looks a bit bored - looking around and at her desk." While some of the girls were attempting to break into the conversation they were not afforded floor time and therefore denied power. Two of the three girls kept their hands raised until the end of the discussion. The boys managed to obtain floor time because they spoke without raising their hand.

In my interview with Donna, she said she believed that overall girls speak more. She also felt that "I try to make sure that everyone's raising their hand and I try to make sure that I have both guys and girls [participating] cause I know that's a big focus for one of our administrators." The typical discussions in Donna's classes, however, suggests that the boys overall occupy a more powerful position through discourse.

My discussion now turns to the way in which students in Gerard's class achieved power through speaking turns. As previously mentioned, the boys overall achieved more power during classroom discussions as they were afforded more speaking turns than were girls. The following discussion, about the Cyclops and Greek customs, illustrates a typical discussion in Gerard's classroom and the way in which the students were positioned, in relation to power, by other students and Gerard.

> Gerard: It seems that since he's [Cyclops] using some terminology that The author would be familiar with. You know so that it kinda goes along with saying I don't need to follow the law. That you're convinced I don't need to be afraid of Zeus. I don't need to follow don't need to follow customs. I don't need to be a good host and I don't need to do any of this stuff.
>
> Mike: How good to do the gifts have to be?
>
> Gerard: They should be useful. They don't have to be anything extravagant as long as they are of practical use to the person. But remember they have an incentive to give the best that they can give. Even if it was gold or the best that they could pass along because they believe so much in the importance of spreading fame throughout their culture. But that was a very good thoughtful question Mike.
>
> Joe: But what if like they have guests every night and they get so poor.
>
> Gerard: Well then you can say that the guest is starting to take advantage of them.
>
> Pete: No. I mean a new guest every night.
>
> Gerard: Well I guess you run that possibility but people should not take take advantage of others because we know the form of justice that the Greeks have. Don't we. But you raise a good point.

      Pete: No. I know they're not taking advantage. A new person comes
                       every night.

      Gerard: It's not likely to happen. It really doesn't work that way. But they
                       would give the best that they could give you know with the
                       hope that wherever they go next they are now going to spread
                       the fame of this person. What a great person Odysseus is
                       because he gave me a bag of gold when he left and that
                       really helped me out on my journey so now everyone starts
                       to know who Odysseus is. That's what they want. That
                       was good though. Good question. Good line of thinking.

      Cindy: They are offering their home.

      Mike: They want to make sure he's comfortable.

      Gerard: Right. Nice point. Because if Polythemus has his slightly more
                       comfortable bed while everyone is sleepin in the rocks you know
                       so that was a very good example. Yeah. He needs to make
                       sure that he's comfortable. What I want you to think of next is
                       strong mind and strong body. The strategy of getting Polythemus
                       drunk and injuring him while he's passed out. So for this assignment
                       we're going to work on something called a character shield.
                       Work on something called a character shield.

In the above discussion, the boys are overall afforded a more powerful position. Once

Gerard had initiated the discussion about the Greek customs of Odyssues' time, the boys

took control of the discussion. After Gerard's initial comment, I noted in my journal,

"Joe, Kate, Lora and Cindy raise their hands." Mike, who did not raise his hand,

immediately gains power by speaking, and his power is further enhanced by Gerard's

response to his comment and his conclusion that Mike's question was "very good,

thoughtful." At this point Joe acquires power by speaking (without being called on), and

by Gerard's response to his comment. In my journal I noted, "Two students raise hands

- Kate and Lora." Pete speaks next and achieves power by having his opinion heard and

acknowledged by Gerard. Pete's power is also enhanced by Gerard's praise "good

point," "good line of thinking." Finally, a girl, Cindy, jumps in to the discussion. In my

journal I had noted that Cindy was, "probably the most talkative girl in class. Also one of the most assertive." Cindy temporarily has power by obtaining a speaking turn; however, her power is limited as her comment is ignored by Gerard who does not respond to her, but rather to Mike's comment. At this point I noted in my journal that Kate and Lora were discussing a point, amongst themselves, about Greek customs. The two girls had raised their hands twice during the discussion in an attempt to speak but were not acknowledged and therefore were not afforded power. One of the ways that the students, mainly boys, achieved power during the discussion was by being assertive, by speaking without raising their hands. Their assertiveness was also rewarded, on numerous occasions, by praise from Gerard. Further, the significance of their comments was emphasized as Gerard frequently went into great detail to elaborate on, or further explain, their comments. By contrast, Gerard did not acknowledge Cindy's comment, which was the only input by a girl during the discussion. The above conversation speaks to Baxter's(2003) study which claimed that boys spoke more often than did girls despite the fact that girls raised their hands to speak more often.

As was mentioned, while the students in Gerard's were treated more equitably than were the students in Donna's class, overall the boys, nonetheless, were positioned more powerfully than were the girls. Following is another typical conversation that occurred in Gerard's class.

Gerard: Ok. Let's begin. What is your assignment?   Hands please.

Dan: Ok. There's a section called detailed information so we provide the name of the character and provide a description of the personality and five passages from *The Odyssey* and write a paragraph for each passage explaining the personality trait.

Gerard: Good. Nice. Write out a paragraph.

Joe: So would it be like my first character is this guy?

Gerard: Correct. So you need support from your text and you get into
            the body of your paragraphs and develop and analyze it. Any
            questions?

Mike: Is that like, if you create it from your book. Like use pie for pi.

Gerard: Yes. That's great. Nice example...Let's take a few minutes
            to work from the text. [Students write
            for twenty minutes]. Ok. Let's start. Raise your hands please.

Matt: I said on the island on page 227.

Gerard: Ithaca with the Cyclops. Cyclops if anyone on the face of the earth
            should ask me…shame yourself say Odysseus has gouged out
            your eyes who makes his home in Ithaca. Lisa.

Lisa: I said that Odysseus should not have said his name. He made a
            mistake by giving his name.

Mike: I said he would have had more men. This was an error on Odysseus'
            part.

Gerard: Good. Nice job.   It was an error on his part. He could have saved
            his men. Why is this a big mistake for him?

James: Because then he was like he was Poseidon's son and then like
            he shouldn't let Odysseus go home.

Gerard: Good. Again nice. You're showing a good understanding
            of the text with examples.

Dan: I said because he was Poseidon just defending his son.

Gerard: Good job. Yes. Definitely. He was. His [Poseidon's] response
            was not unreasonable. Let's try to move onto the next section.

The above example illustrates a conversation in which the boys were again in a more a

powerful position because of speaking turns, than were the girls. Gerard initially poses a

question. In my journal I noted that four students raised their hands (three girls, one boy)

when Gerard said, "hands please." Dan, who did not have his hand raised, immediately

began speaking, placing himself in a position of power. Further, Gerard praises his

response "good," "nice," which positions Dan more powerfully.   Joe then gains power

by taking a turn speaking and by Gerard's response to his question. When Gerard asks if anyone has questions, Lisa raises her hand; this seems to go unnoticed. Instead, Mike proceeds to ask a question without being called on. Mike is positioned powerfully by Gerard as he [Gerard] responds to Matt with praise "Nice. Great example."

At the same time, Lisa is denied power, by Gerard, as she attempted to enter the discussion but was ignored.   Gerard then instructs the students to begin writing. I noted in my journal that Lisa, whose raised hand was not acknowledged, asked Cindy, who sat beside her, for clarification on the assignment.   The questioning of Cindy by Lisa illustrates the lack of power that Lisa held in the above conversation. Because Lisa did not have access to the floor (a speaking turn), her understanding of the assignment will be based on the opinion of a classmate. When the discussion resumes, Gerard asks for raised hands. Matt, who did not raise his hand, is positioned powerfully as he voices his view and is acknowledged by Gerard. Lisa, whose hand has been raised numerous times during the above conversation, finally gets a speaking turn as Gerard calls on her. Lisa has gained power but that power is limited as Gerard has not responded to her statement. Instead, Mike's comment immediately follows Lisa's, and he is praised by Gerard, "Good." The remainder of the conversation is a series of exchanges between Gerard and the boys.

The above conversation illustrates that the boys, by being assertive and with the help of Gerard, are positioned in a more powerful position than are the girls. While the girls at various times attempted to enter the conversation, they were denied access (and therefore power) either because the boys had "taken" a speaking turn, or because Gerard has ignored their raised hand. What was most interesting and important is that Gerard was very conscious of gender inequity and claimed he made a strong effort to ensure

equitable pedagogical practices in the classroom. Nonetheless, his students were still afforded power unequally.

Baxter (2003), using a feminist poststructuralist approach, observed that girls observed the rules more in class by raising their hands to speak more often than did the boys. Nonetheless, boys were granted far more speaking turns. This is important because, according to Lindroos (1995), boys overall tend to have more access to floor time, and teachers spend more time conversing with them rather than with the girls. My analysis on high school students supports research (Cherland, 1994; Lindroos, 1995) on younger children that suggests that the discursive practices of boys often enable them to achieve symbolic power during classroom discussions.

Figure 1 Students' Speaking Turns
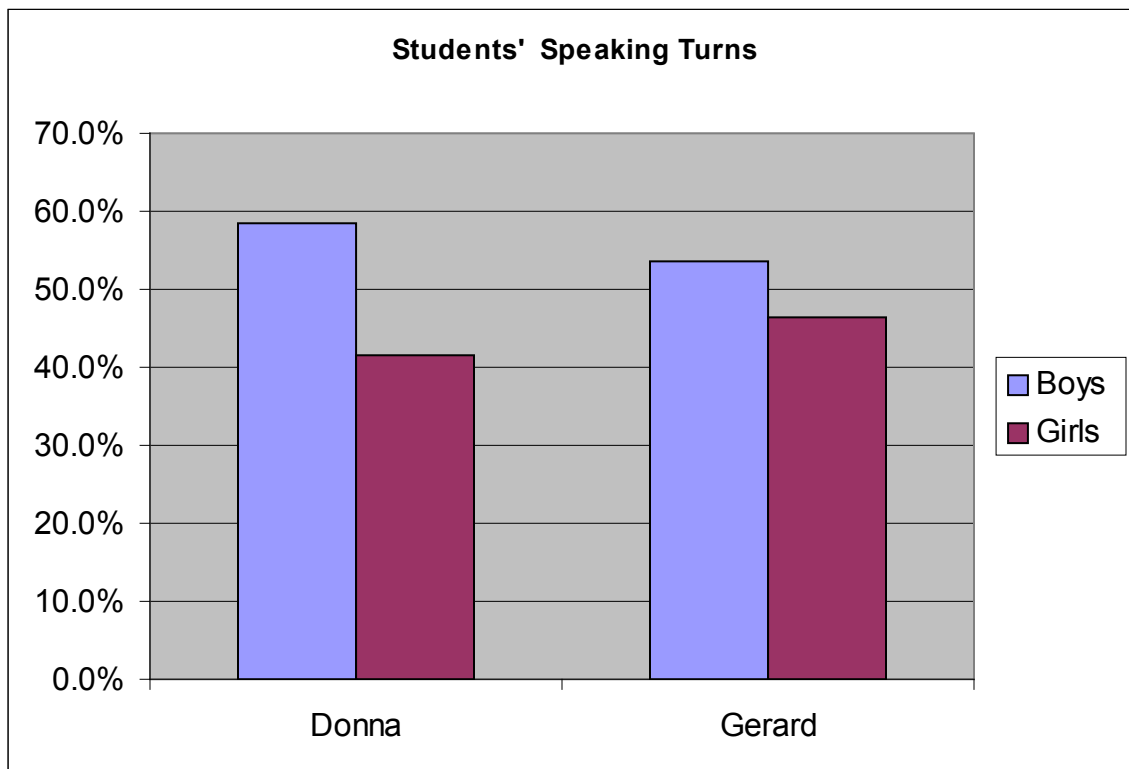
Speaking turns during rape discussions. While typically the boys were afforded more speaking turns than were the girls, as mentioned, there was an exception. Since I am interested in gender equity, I recognize, as a poststructuralist researcher, that power is dynamic and shifting (Baxter, 2003; Weedon, 2004). In this regard, I noticed that there was one topic of discussion in which the girls took more speaking turns, were in agreement with each other, and in which the boys were relegated to a less powerful position.   It was the only time that the discussion about a particular topic, in this case rape, was gender dominant; that is, the girls all seemed to be in agreement and the boys' views were discounted by the girls (see Figure 2).

Interestingly, while the boys overall held more power in class discussions (more speaking turns, interrupted less by both teachers and students), the boys never collectively took a stand on an issue as the girls did in the discussions about rape, illustrated below. In viewing the positions of power the students held in the following conversation, the girls were positioned far more powerfully than were the boys due to the number of speaking turns they acquired.

Donna:	Ok. So let's talk about Odysseus. He was on the island. What did he do? .
Griffith:	Yeah. She was, he stayed with her [Circe].
Dora:	Ooh. But he had slept with her, and Calypso, and now he's with his wife? Ooh. Poor Penelope. Ooh. How does how can he be with love her?
Danielle:	He raped women and now he's like all like lovey with Penelope. Does he just forget that?
Mark:	It says he took the women. Is that, does that mean rape?
Dora:	He raped them.
Danielle:	Yeah.

Mary: It was rape all right.

Tom: It says]

Danielle: [It was rape

Donna: OK let's move on.

Dora: He is and his men are just like raping these women.

Griffith: Yeah, but[

Danielle: [He raped them. It says so.

Dora: Yeah.

Donna: OK. Let's move on. It's not worth further discussion. It's not a
            main point.

The above conversation illustrates the atypical manner in which students were positioned,

relative to power, during the discussion about rape. It also depicts the way girls achieved

power from speaking turns and their agreement about the fact that rape had occurred.

Initially, Griffith is placed in a powerful position by initiating a conversation about Circe.

His power is usurped as Danielle then places herself in a powerful position by changing

the topic when she initiates a discussion about rape. Also interesting is the fact that this

was the first time that rape was mentioned in a class discussion. When women in the text

are raped, they are discussed as "being taken," or they are kidnapped and "shared."

While the text implies they are taken for sexual pleasure, it never explicitly states this.

Danielle recognizes that this being "taken," indicates the women are raped. When

Danielle initially mentioned rape, I noted that "Dora and Mary nodded in agreement."

The girls clearly are in agreement that rape occurred and barely allow the boys a chance

to contribute to the conversation. When Mark attempts to question whether rape

occurred, Dora responds with "he raped them;" further, the girls act as a support system

for each other as Danielle and Mary support Dora's view ("yeah," "it was rape alright")

enhancing Dora's (and their own) power. The girls now, collectively, are placed in the

position of power. When Donna attempted to move the conversation along, which would

usurp the girls' power, Dora refuses to let it rest placing her in a powerful position.

Again there occurs an exchange in which Griffith gains power as he questions whether

the women were raped, "but." Danielle, however, usurps his power with her insistence

that "he raped them." Dora is then placed in a powerful position as she agrees with

Danielle, thereby enhancing Danielle's power also. When comparing this atypical

conversation to a typical conversation in Donna's class, it is clear that the girls were in a

more powerful position during this discussion. The girls not only had more speaking

turns, but as I noted in my journal "none of the girls raised their hands during discussion

– unusual." The girls "took" their speaking turns rather than raising their hands to obtain

permission to speak. The girls also were positioned more powerfully than they typically

were because their responses served to support the other girls.

Analyzing the rape discussions from a feminist perspective reveals that despite

Donna's attempts to move along the discussion, the girls were positioned powerfully

because of their interest in the topic. This topic is obviously one that elicited passion

from the girls, possibly because those who were raped in the text were women, and also,

women are raped much more frequently than are men in society. In my journal I noted

that, "the girls are really excited." The girls were attempting to get their point across that

the women were raped, and Donna repeatedly attempted to move along the topic.

Nonetheless, the girls were in a highly powerful position in the exchange as they took

more speaking turns than did the boys, and more speaking turns than in a typical

discussion. Researchers (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994; Davies, 1989; Sunderland, et

al., 2001; Wortham, 2006) have emphasized the importance of teachers' discourse in making students aware of issues of gender inequity. The discussion about rape suggests that this is not necessarily the case. Donna never was involved in the discussions about rape, and it was the girls who named "the women being taken," as "rape."

On another occasion, a similar conversation occurs in Donna's class about King Alcinous' giving away his daughter and the girls recognize the sexual implications of this act. Again the girls repeatedly take control of the conversation and are placed in a position of power as they take more speaking turns than do the boys. Also, it is again the girls who react to the fact that rape will occur. The boys are more interested in the age difference between the King and the girl, and the fact the Odysseus already has a wife.

Donna: There's something about this man. It's kinda building up the presence
        that Odysseus has and they decide that you know what, we'll help you
        out. But how about we give you our daughter? And, um, negative, I'll
        pass. Because why would you pass on that?

Mary: He's married! Ooh. They'd have they'd share
        the bed. She's only twelve. Gross.

Lisa: Yeah, they're offering him another wife. But then he'll have two wives.
        Ooh. And she's a girl.

Donna: Yeah, it's a tough life, isn't it? It's about reputation. He was da
        man. He[

Lisa: [But he's giving away his daughter!

Mary: Ooh gross. How can he?

Matt: Does he tell her that he has a wife or is he like, he just doesn't tell her?

Donna: Again, he eludes the question and he's like, let's just throw a party.

Phil: Why can't he just be like yeah I'm married and my name is Odysseus.

Donna: The King says what's this guy's problem? He won't take my daughter.
        He won't accept this gift? What's his problem? Odysseus thinks, are you
        questioning my manhood?

Griffith: But there's a huge age difference.

Donna: That doesn't matter. Women were married off at 12. It doesn't matter.

Lori: Ooh. Gross. ooh, she'd ooh, have sex.

Donna: Ok. Let's talk about manhood.

Griffith: Isn't he like – old. How old is he anyway? Isn't[

Lori: [She's twelve! Ooh.
            And she'd have to have sex with him.

Terrance: Were they like rivals or something, Odysseus and the King?

Donna: No these were good people. OK. Let's discuss manhood

As in the prior discussion about rape, the above conversation illustrates one of the few

times the girls controlled the conversation and took more speaking turns during a

discussion than did the boys. This placed them in a more powerful position than they

usually occupied. During the conversation, the girls repeatedly indicate that they are

distraught about the fact that the girl is given away, and that the girl would "have" to

have sex with Odysseus. It is important to discover the manner in which teachers position

students in classroom discussions (Fairclough, 1989). Even though Donna's discourse

served to disrupt the girls' power in numerous ways as she flippantly laughs about the

girl's situation ("it's a tough life, isn't it?"), the girls nonetheless take the act seriously as

is evident from their responses. Following Donna's response "tough life," I noted, "some

of the girls seemed distressed at this comment. Sighing." Lisa's response served to

position her in a powerful position, and Mary's subsequent agreement with Lisa places

her in a position of power and enhances that of Lisa. This is followed by Matt and Phil

taking speaking turns and being placed in a position of power by Donna who responds to

them.   When Donna claims that the age difference "doesn't matter," this clearly disturbs

the girls who take turns showing their disgust that she'd "have to have sex with him,"

"gross." Donna consistently ignores this issue and usurps the girls' power. Even

though Donna doesn't seem to agree with the girls, the girls nonetheless repeatedly gain

power with their speaking turns and by their agreeing with each other. When Donna

attempts to discuss manhood and Griffith responds to her, Lori again takes a speaking

turn as she shows her disgust at the fact that the girl is only twelve. This again places her

in a position of power. Finally, after Donna's comment "these were good people," three

girls attempt to gain control of the conversation again as they raise their hands; Donna

ignores them "let's discuss manhood." In my journal I made a note, "the girls continue to

discuss the rape of the girl and how gross the act is" even as Donna moves onto the

discussion about manhood.

Essentially, the above conversations suggest that, despite the fact that the text

represented females and males in a traditional manner (Sunderland, et al., 2001), the girls

nonetheless managed to identify a theme of interest to them and which they were

passionate about. And because of this, the power shifted in favor of the girls resulting in

the girls taking more speaking turns than they would in a typical conversation (see figure

2). This speaks to issues that researchers (Gilligan, 1992; Sadker & Sadker, 1977;

Sanford, 2005; Wortham, 2006) have suggested that girls need equitable texts in order to

ensure gender equity. This is perhaps true in the overall scheme of things considering

that the boys, overall, in the course of the six weeks of observation were afforded more

floor time; however, the discussions about rape are contrary to those studies and indicate

that when the girls managed to find a topic they were highly passionate about, they

latched onto it and were afforded more power as a result.

Looking at the conversation above and the typical classroom discussion, there is a

clear difference in the positioning of the students and the power they are afforded. In the

rape discussion, the girls are actively involved in the discussion and are rather assertive – so much so that the boys' conversation is being limited and they are relegated to a less powerful position than are the girls. In the typical class discussion, the power shifts back and forth between the boys with less input from the girls. The point is that when presented with a topic that they were passionate about and which personally got them fired up, the girls became more actively involved in the conversation and were positioned more powerfully.

In Gerard's class, as was the case in Donna's class, there was one topic of discussion in which the girls were positioned more powerfully than in a typical conversation, with regards to turn-taking. As was the case in Donna's class, this occurred when the subject turned to rape. Also, as was the case in Donna's class, the girls were all in agreement that rape had occurred, and their discourse and actions acted as a support system for each other as the boys' views were discounted. While the boys overall held more power in class discussions regarding turn-taking (see Figure 1), during rape discussions their power was limited as they were afforded fewer speaking turn (see Figure 2). In Gerard's class, as was the case in Donna's class, the boys never collectively took a stand on an issue as the girls did in the rape discussions, as illustrated below.

Gerard: Ok. Let's discuss the suitors and what's happening when Odysseus is away. Someone. Meghan

Meghan: It said about how the suitors who were trying to get Penelope into bed, how they were using the women who worked there so wouldn't it be rape?

Cindy: Yeah. Good. That was good.

Lora: My God!

Mary: Oh yeah. Gross. Ick. It would. They were raped. Ooh, violent.

Gerard   OK. Good.

Harry: He kills the suitors and the servants so they must have consented. They were guilty of sleeping with these guys.

Lora: Rape is occurring!

Mary: Like, I don't understand these men think like that it's OK just to take women? Like they don't matter?

Peter: But they were in bed with the suitors so they obviously consented.

Lisa: What! They were raped!

Peter: But they consented.

Lisa: They were raped!

Justine: Some of them may have been raped.

Lisa: They were taken. It says they were taken!

Gerard: Absolutely. I mean they were literally taken. They took the women. It was rape. Also, again we see the double standard that I've mentioned. The men the suitors were killed because they had disrespected Odysseus by invading his house, but the women, who were taken, they were killed because they had sex. So men can have sex and it's ok. But women are "sluts," even if they when they are raped. Good. Good conversation.

While overall during classroom discussions the boys occupied a more powerful position than did the girls, during the discussions about rape the power shifted and the girls were positioned more powerfully as they were afforded more speaking turns. Further, as mentioned, it appeared that the girls worked together as a support system for each other further enhancing their power. When Meghan initially mentions that "rape" is occurring, Cindy immediately supports her contention, "Good. That was good." In my journal I noted that "Cindy looked at Meghan – nodded in agreement," as Cindy said "good." Both Cindy and Meghan are placed in a powerful position due to their speaking turn, and their agreement with – support for – each other. Lora is then positioned powerfully with her

(shocked) response "My God!" Mary's turn enhances Lora's as she agrees with her assessment and further recognizes the violence inherent in rape. The point is that the girls were afforded power by their turn-taking activities and also, due to their agreement that rape had occurred. Interestingly, in the above discussion the boys in Gerard's class are asserting that rape did not occur; their logic is that since the women went to bed with the men, then the sex must have been consensual. When Harry is afforded a speaking turn and gains power, he claims that the sex must have been consensual. His power is immediately usurped by Lora by her speaking turn and her claim that rape is occurring. Peter's response serves to empower both himself and Harry as he agrees with Harry that the sex was consensual. What follows is turn-taking between Peter, Lisa and Justine with the girls taking turns arguing that the women were raped. Again, the girls are empowered as they are afforded more speaking turns than are the boys but also, because of the support system they have created. The final three speaking turns belong to Lisa and Justine who each take turns insisting that the women were raped. The conversation suggests that the girls clearly controlled the power as the boys' claim that rape did not occur repeatedly gets rebuked by the girls. Even Justine, who was a very quiet student who rarely spoke in the six weeks of my observations claimed, "some of may have been raped." In my journal I noted, "I don't think I've ever heard Justine speak before," possibly suggesting this was an issue passionate to Justine. It could also suggest that Justine was comfortable speaking up because it was obvious that the girls would support her views in this case. Finally, Lisa ends the discussion by loudly claiming (in my journal I wrote, "Lisa was indeed loud!") that the women were raped.

Gerard also played a role in the girls' achieving power in the discussions about rape. When the girls initially claimed it was rape, Gerard agrees, "Good," suggesting that

the girls' view about rape is accurate. Further, after Lisa's rather loud, "they were taken," Gerard proceeds to position himself on the side of the girls by claiming, as they had, that "it was rape." This statement invalidates any protests that the boys had that rape hadn't occurred and Gerard is clearly aligned on the side of the girls.

Researchers (Clarke, 2006; Davies & Harre, 1990) have emphasized the importance of exploring issues of gender and positioning to determine in what way positioning is indicative of power relations. As mentioned, the topic of discussion seemed to place the girls in an advantageous position as they took more speaking turns than did the boys. The girls, then, in a manner that was atypical during classroom discussion, held the majority of the power with their speaking turns during the above conversations about rape.

On another occasion in Gerard's class when the discussion turned to rape, the girls again had a view that opposed that of the boys, with the girls once again acting as a support system for each other to help make their point. The girls again were positioned in a more powerful position than were the boys as they took more speaking turns than did the boys.

> Gerard: OK. So what's going on with the suitors and Odysseus? Shall we perhaps revisit this.
>
> Joe: That was kinda like when Odysseus killed the suitors and then the maids because they slept with them.
>
> Meghan: They were taken. We already said that.
>
> Mike: I don't think we agreed.
>
> Lisa: Taken. Did you ever have something taken stolen? They were taken. Like that.
>
> Mary: Definitely.
>
> Cindy: Yeah.

> Milly: The maids were not going like volunteering to go with them.
>
> Lori: They the men the suitors like I think somewhere it says
> they like dragged them through the house or something.
>
> Cindy: Yeah. They were taken and forced raped.

In the above illustration, the girls are afforded more speaking turns and therefore are placed in a more powerful position than are the boys. Joe initially is afforded power as he responds to Gerard and takes a speaking turn and asserts that the maids' sex was consensual. In my journal I noted that "a few boys nodded" after Joe's remark. This acknowledgement adds power to Joe's position. His power is usurped by Meghan who, during her speaking turn, invokes a past conversation to support her contention that the women were raped. Mike's speaking turn serves to afford both himself and Joe power as he questions whether it had been agreed upon that rape had occurred. The next six speaking turns are taken by the girls who, one after another, insist that the women were raped. Interestingly, Lisa is comparing the women being taken by the suitors to the idea of someone stealing something. She's making the sociocultural connection between the theft of an object, and the kidnapping and raping of women. This is interesting because Lisa's remark suggests that the women were treated as objects. Cindy's speaking turn serves to support Lisa and agree with her analogy. Milly speaks next and explains that the women were not going voluntarily. In my journal I noted that "Lori nodded" at Milly's remark. Lori then takes a speaking turn and uses textual evidence to prove that the women were raped. Cindy's response enhances Lori's power and her language, "taken," "forced," "raped," suggests the involuntary nature, on the part of maids, of the act. The point is that the girls were afforded more power during rape discussions than were the boys because, it appears, of their passionate attitudes about the subject matter.

What was probably most interesting about the above exchanges in which the girls achieved power, in both Donna and Gerard's class, is that while Donna and Gerard were clearly positioning the girls in different ways (Donna's attempting to move along the conversation, Gerard's elevating the girls' power) the results were very similar. Research (Clark & Carroll, 2007; Cowan & Campbell, 1995) indicates that males and females have very different views of rape with males often taking a blame the victim attitude. Adolescent boys and girls also differ in their views of rape with boys often blaming the female victim; girls, by contrast, tend to assign blame to the attacker. This appeared to be the case in both Donna and Gerard's class and seemed to present an advantage for the girls who support each other during the discussions.

Figure 2 Students' Speaking Turns During Rape Discussions
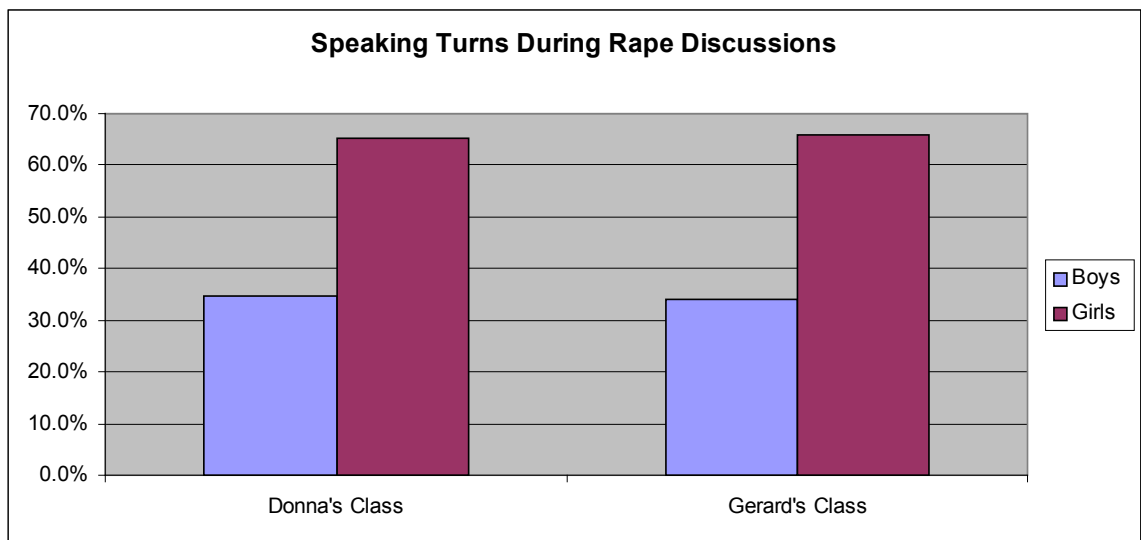
Interruptions typical discussions. Power and positioning is also affected by interruptions caused either by a teacher, or by other students. To reiterate, an interruption represents a break in one's discourse caused by another speaker before the original speaker has completed her/his thought. The idea of positioning ties in with poststructuralism's emphasis on discovering whose interest language serves (Baxter,

2003).   As Figure 3 illustrates, Donna afforded the boys more opportunity to speak than

the girls; she interrupted the girls more than twice as many times as the boys. The boys

were interrupted by Donna 2.8% of the time they spoke, and the girls were interrupted

6.5% of the time.   In Donna's class, the boys also placed themselves in a more powerful

position than did the girls by controlling the conversation through their interruptions.

During the course of the six weeks of observation, the boys interrupted the girls four

times more than the girls interrupted the boys. The boys disrupted the girls' conversation

8.8% of the time they spoke; the girls, by contrast, interrupted the boys 2% of the time.

The boys interrupted other boys half as many times as they interrupted girls (when boys

spoke they interrupted other boys 3.9% of the time). Girls interrupted other girls 1.4% of

the time (almost as many times as they had interrupted the boys) (See Figure 3).

In Gerard's class, as in Donna's, the boys were afforded more opportunity to

speak than were the girls as Gerard interrupted the girls more than the boys (the boys

were interrupted by Gerard 2% of the time they spoke, and the girls were interrupted

3.2% of the time). My results support research (Baxter 2003; Lindroos, 1995) that

suggested that girls are interrupted more during classroom discourse, and that boys are

afforded a more powerful position during classroom discussions.   In Gerard's class, the

boys overall were afforded more power partly because of interruptions on the part of the

students and the teachers. The boys in Gerard's class, as was the case in Donna's class,

placed themselves in a more powerful position than did the girls by controlling the

conversation through their interruptions. As Figure 3 reveals, during the course of the six

weeks of observation, the boys interrupted the girls' conversation 5.6% of the time they

spoke; the girls, by contrast, interrupted the boys 4% of the time. The boys interrupted

other boys less than they interrupted girls (when boys spoke they interrupted other boys

3.8% of the time). Girls, in Gerard's class, interrupted other girls 2% of the time. The

girls in Gerard's class, like those in Donna's, were interrupted more than were the boys.

This speaks to researchers' (Baxter, 2003; Lindroos, 1995) contention that boys are

placed in a more powerful position because of classroom talk. It should be noted,

however, that Gerard's class was more gender equitable than was Donna's in this regard.

Both students and teacher interrupted the girls many more times in Donna's class than in

Gerard's class. This perhaps speaks to the notion that teachers need to be aware of

gender inequity in order to conduct more equitable classroom discourse (Sanford, 2005;

Wortham, 2006). Gerard's interview responses indicate that he is very aware of gender

inequity and attempts, in his teaching practices, to ensure equitable pedagogical practices.

The following exchange illustrates a discussion in Donna's classroom in which

interruptions occurred, and in which power was achieved or denied because of these

interruptions.

Donna: OK. These men are going to the land of the dead with bitter sword
            with dread upon it. Give me words of mood. Develop or draw
            a mood. Ok. Danielle.

Danielle: They are scared because they're going to a place where not many
            men[

Donna: [People who go there are dead. They don't come back.
            So the mood is somber and dark.

Griffith: Did they say a ram or ewe like barked the ram and ewe in tears.

Donna: Why did they have these animals?

Michael: For sacrificing.

Donna: Good. Dora what else?

Dora: I actually had a question. Did they actually[

Pete   [I think there

was a portal or like something.

Dora: But wait can just backup I have a question about did they actually go to the underworld or[

Donna: [There was a portal but they were actually inside it.

Dora: But why[

Pete: [They were actually inside it?

Donna: Yes.

Joe: Did they go by that dog with the three big heads?

Channel: They were the spirits.

Griffith: The spirits came up.

Donna: Yes. Lisa.

Lisa: Is heaven like underground or is it on top of a[

Matt: [Well it's more than they just had the heavens side. The Greeks believed that everyone went to the underworld.

Meghan: Ok. I just wanted to make a point[

Donna: [Ok. Why is it important to note that there are angels on the heaven side?

Matt: The Christians believed that if you're good you go to heaven. If you're bad you went to hell.

Donna: Everyone went to the underworld. The underworld is not hell. Meghan you just said something to Dora.

Meghan: Yeah. I thought that when people die you go[

Mike: [it's gloomy dark there.

Meghan: When people die they go there when[

Donna: [People go there when

they're dead. Ok. Let's move on.

In the above conversation, as Donna attempted to discuss the mood of the text, Danielle

is given a speaking turn thereby positioning her powerfully. Danielle's power, however,

is usurped by Donna who not only interrupts Danielle's attempts at answering the

question, but answers the question herself. After various exchanges between Donna and

the boys, who are positioned powerfully by Donna because of the exchanges, Dora gains

power as she is afforded a speaking turn by Donna.   Dora attempts to ask a question but

Pete interrupts thereby placing himself in a position of power and Dora in a powerless

position. This is followed by Dora's persistent attempts to ask her question, with each

time being interrupted by either Donna or Pete and therefore denied power. While Dora

managed to position herself with some power by gaining a speaking turn, her power was

extremely limted as she was interrupted on each of those turns. Further, she never

received an answer to her question because, as mentioned, she could not speak without

being interrupted. Dora was repeatedly placed in a powerless position by both Donna

and other students. In my journal I had noted that after Dora was interrupted the second

time, her hand shot up and she "waved it back and forth" in an attempt to gain a speaking

turn. When she finally spoke she merely managed "but" before she was interrupted. In

my journal I noted that Dora's, "Shoulders seem to droop after last interruption. Sits

back in her seat." Interruptions greatly limited Dora's power, her ability to articulate her

point, and her ability to have her question answered. Dora's body language, waving hand,

suggests the urgency with which she wished to express her views; her slumped shoulders

perhaps suggests her frustration at not being able to articulate her point. As the

conversation continued, interruptions again served to deny power to various students.

Lisa is positioned powerfully as she is given a speaking turn by Donna. Matt, however,

gains power as he interrupts Lisa and gets to make his point without interruption. Meghan gains power by gaining a speaking turn but she is interrupted by Donna's question. Meghan's power, like that of Lisa, was very limited as she never had the opportunity to complete her thought. Meghan attempts to make her point on two more occasions; on both tries her power is usurped. First Matt interrupts her speech, and then Donna completes her thought for her. Meghan's repeated attempts to articulate her point, despite interruptions, illustrate her desire to have her voice heard. The interruptions she suffered placed her in a powerless position within the classroom discourse. Additionally, interruptions serve to impart the message that one's voice is not significant. Donna not only ignored the interruptions that the girls were subjected to, but she herself either interrupted students, or in Meghan's case, finished her thought for her.

The above exchange illustrates the way that interruptions serve to limit the power of those whose voice is interrupted, and the manner in which those who interrupt are positioned powerfully in classroom discourse. Fairclough (1989) asserts that interruptions can serve to silence a speaker and thereby position her/him in a powerless position. This was clearly the case with the girls in Donna's class who, after suffering numerous interruptions, were eventually silenced and therefore, denied power.

The following discussion about Odysseus' being betrayed by one of his men, further illustrates a typical conversation in Donna's class, in which interruptions occurred.

Donna: How does he betray him. Dora.

Dora: Not following[

Mike: [He doesn't.

Dora: He doesn't follow him.

Donna: He doesn't follow him.

Dora: To go back to[

Joe: [He told him it.

Donna: He told him about it.

Dora: But he said I'm not going no way I'm going[

Pete: [But he didn't want
            to kill a pig.

The above conversation illustrates a discussion in which a lot of interruptions served to deny power to those who were interrupted, girls. Initially, Donna gives Dora floor time. Before she finishes her thought, Mike interrupts and the power shifts in his favor. Dora then gets to finish her statement and regains power. Dora again attempts to make a point and is then interrupted by Joe. Donna responds to Joe (rather than Dora) thereby placing him in an advantageous position and denying Dora power. Dora again attempts to make a point (the word "but," a transition word, suggests she has an objection to Donna's prior comment) but is once again interrupted. In the above exchange despite repeated attempts to gain floor time, and hence power, Dora's discourse is constantly interrupted making it highly difficult for her to complete her thought. I noted in my journal that, after Pete's final interruption, Dora raised her hand and waived to get attention. Donna at this point moved the conversation along.   Because of the constant interruptions, Dora faced competing discourse when she attempted to articulate her point. During the exchange, Dora's power was limited as she was never actually able to complete her thought.

My research agrees with that of Marjorie Devault (2004) who asserts that in mixed-sex groups, females are less listened to, interrupted more, and the topics they introduce are less taken up by others. Lindroos' (1995) research on younger students

suggests that teachers interrupt girls more than boys and thereby compromise the girls'

power during classroom discourse. As was mentioned, this was also the case in Donna's

class. What's important is that interruptions cause a break in one's thought, interferes

with the flow of one's discourse and denies power.

The discussion now turns to typical examples of interruptions in Gerard's class,

and the way those interruptions served to afford or deny power. As previously

mentioned, in Gerard's class the girls were interrupted more than were the boys (by both

Gerard and other students). Below is a typical conversation that occurred in Gerard's

class in which interruptions occurred.

Gerard: Well to some extent Homer as the storyteller has to make some
            part of the story fit together and make it easy…Does anyone
            remember what dass es machina means?

Lora: Means[

Matt: [Om when the gods like help people

Gerard: You have the idea. You want to add to that.

Joe: The god out of the machine or something.

Gerard: Yes. The god out of the machine…Hillary you want to add to it?

Hillary: It's about making the story line complete.

Gerard: Usually it's about making dass es machina complete…What's
            the next question?

Kate: Why is Telemachus announcing his homecoming?

Gerard: So we've already answered this a number of times. So what is the
            wisdom in his homecoming?

Lisa: He's[

Matt: [He's protecting his life.

Gerard: So he's protecting his own life by doing so. Good.

Gerard initiates the above conversation with a question for the class. Lora begins to respond but is interrupted by Matt. Lora was positioned in a powerful position very briefly but then Matt usurped her power by interrupting her. Also, Matt, unlike Lora, was able to complete his thought uninterrupted. Matt has gained a position of power by having the floor, and this power is enhanced by Gerard's response to him "you have the idea." Further, Gerard ignored the fact that Lora's response was never articulated because of the interruption. As the conversation continues, the power shifts back and forth between boys and girls until Gerard poses a question. Lisa, like Lora, attempts to respond but only manages to utter one word before Matt interrupts, who is positioned powerfully by the interruption. Lisa's power is limited as a result of Matt's interruption as her though is never articulated. Matt has now taken power away from Lisa. His position is further enhanced when Gerard responds to his answer and claims it was "good." Gerard has ignored the fact that Lisa's attempt to enter the conversation was preempted by Matt. Lafrance (1991) suggests that inequitable access to discourse imparts the message that one's voice is insignificant. Poststructuralists (Baxter, 2003; Davies & Banks, 1992; Walkerdine, 1990) suggest that individuals' power is constantly shifting within discourses, which result in individuals being positioned in powerful and powerless positions. This is clearly the case in the above discussion with the girls, overall, being relegated to a less powerful position than the boys.

The discussion below illustrates another example of a typical conversation with interruptions, in Gerard's class, and the way students are positioned because of these interruptions.

Gerard: Ok. He says something really specific at the top of the next page.

Matt: He's going to get the suitors.

Gerard: And what does that mean?

Matt: It means fighting.

Joe: He's going to make them fight.

Gerard: He'll daze their wits. What are their wits?

Joe: Their courage.

Lisa: No their brains and[

Peter: [Their intelligence.

Gerard: All right. Their intelligence, their brains.

Allen: Intelligence.

Cindy: Their[

John: [They'll be stunned.

Gerard: Yeah, they'll be stunned.

Laura: Couldn't you also maybe say his he's going to win because[

Peter: [but
            no because not necessarily.

Laura: But if he's courageous and he'll daze them can't you say he'll
            probably[

Mike: [He'll make them fight.

Gerard: Yeah. He'll force them into battle.

The above conversation illustrates the way the students are positioned in relation to

power, because of interruptions. Initially, there is an exchange between Matt, Joe and

Gerard in which power shifted between the three. Gerard then poses a question which

Joe answers. Lisa, disputing Joe's response, loses her position when Peter interrupts her.

As the conversation continues, Allen gains floor time and is placed in a position of power

as he makes his point. Cindy then enters the conversation but is only partially successful

as John interrupts her. Cindy is unsuccessful in her attempts to make her point, unlike

John, whose thought is uninterrupted. As a result, Cindy is positioned in a less powerful

position than is John.   John's power is further enhanced when Gerard acknowledges –

and agrees – with John. Gerard has failed to encourage Cindy to reenter the conversation

to complete her thought. Similarly, when Laura positions herself powerfully by entering

the conversation, her thought remains incomplete as Peter interrupts her and usurps her

power. When she again attempts to make her argument, Mike interrupts her and thereby

places himself in a powerful position. Gerard's agreeing with him, and reiterating Mike's

comment further enhance his power. Laura, by contrast, has repeatedly been denied

power because of her inability to complete her thoughts due to interruptions she suffered.

Researchers (Clarke, 2006; Davies & Harre, 1990) have explored issues of gender

and positioning to determine in what way positioning is indicative of power relations.

Participants in a conversation may relegate others to a powerless position by interrupting

her/his discussion.   In both Donna and Gerard's class, the girls were positioned in a less

powerful manner than were the boys due to the interruptions they suffered (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Interruptions

**Interruptions
(as a Percentage of Speaking Turns)**
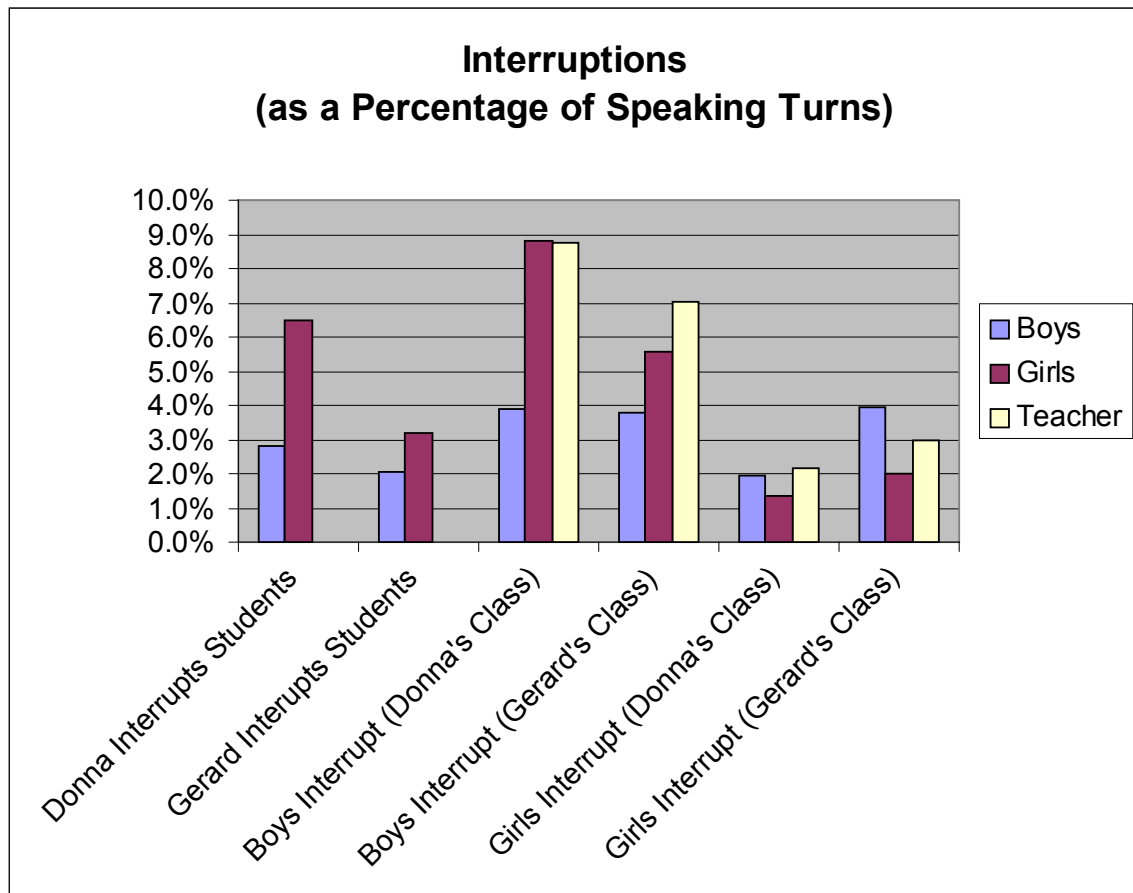
Interruptions during rape discussion. As mentioned, and as Figure 3 illustrates, during a typical discussion in both Donna and Gerard's classroom, the boys were placed in a more powerful position during discourse because of interruptions. During the discussions about rape, however, the girls were positioned in a more powerful position (see Figure 4) in both classes than were the boys as their interruptions served to afford them power during classroom conversations.

The following exchange illustrates a discussion about rape in Donna's classroom in which interruptions occurred, and in which power was achieved by the girls because of these interruptions.

Donna: Ok. So let's talk again about the island when Odysseus lands and what he's wearing? Can you describe his[

Danielle: [Ooh. That was where the King's daughter was going to be given away. Gross.

Donna: Well, Ok let's get focused on the question that[

Chenelle: [Wasn't that gross?

Danielle: That part really bothered me.

Donna: What was Odysseus wearing?

Mike: He was naked.

Donna: Good. So what does that suggest?

James: Like innocence or newborn or something I think rebirth[.

Danielle: [That annoyed me. How innocent is he? He's like meets this girl when he's naked and then is offered to take her and she's like twelve or something and he's going to have sex with her and [

Chenelle: [Yeah that was really ironic in a way.

Donna: Let's focus ladies and gentlemen on[

Dora: [He was offered this gift.

Chenelle: Gross right?

Donna: Once again ladies and gentlemen. We're losing focus. Remember, yes, the King offers a gift of his daughter. He's very impressed with Odysseus. His daughter would be sleeping with Odysseus, yes, if he accepted the gift.

The above conversation illustrates the way in which girls were placed in a more powerful position than were the boys, because of interruptions. In the above discussion, the girls atypically interrupt the boys, each other and Donna placing them in a position of power. Donna initiates the conversation about Odysseus' landing on the island and is interrupted by Danielle who gains power as she mentions the King's daughter who was offered as a gift to Odysseus. Donna attempts to return to the discussion about Odysseus' attire and is interrupted by Chenelle. Chenelle and Danielle are subsequently placed in positions of power as they converse about the "gross," act of offering the King's daughter as a gift. Further in the conversation, when James attempts to answer Donna's question, his power is usurped as Danielle interrupts him. Chenelle then interrupts Danielle but her interruption affords Danielle power as she is agreeing with her opinion. Finally, as Donna again attempts to get the students focused on the topic at hand, Dora again achieves power as she interrupts Donna. Chenelle again agrees with Dora thus enhancing both their positions of power. Finally, Donna joins the discussion about rape which enhances the girls' power as they've managed, through interruptions, to redirect the discussion to a topic of their choosing. The point is, as Fairclough (1989) noted, interruptions serve to afford or deny power. In the discussions about rape, the girls were positioned more powerfully because of the atypical manner in which they responded – with interruptions (see Figure 4).

The following exchange in Donna's class again illustrates the way in which interruptions served to limit the boys' ability to make their point during a discussion about rape. While only two interruptions occurred, it is nonetheless important to examine the conversation as the interruptions highlight the powerless position that the boys were relegated to during the discussion.

Donna: Ok. So let's talk about Odysseus. He was on the island. What
            did he do?   .

Griffith: Yeah. She was, he stayed with her [Circe].

Dora: Ooh. But he had slept with her, and Calypso, and now
            he's with his wife? Ooh. Poor Penelope. Ooh. How does
            how can he be with love her?

Danielle: He raped women and now he's like all like lovey with Penelope. Does
            he just forget that?

Mark: It says he took the women. Is that, does that mean rape?

Dora: He raped them.

Danielle: Yeah.

Mary: It was rape all right.

Tom: It says]

Danielle: [It was rape

Donna: OK let's move on.

Dora: He is and his men are just like raping these women.

Griffith: Yeah, but[

Danielle: [He raped them. It says so.

Dora: Yeah.

Donna: OK. Let's move on. It's not worth further discussion. It's not a
            main point.

 In the above conversation, the girls are making a point that rape occurred. When Tom

attempts to make a point, he is immediately interrupted by Daniel who insists that "it was

rape." While Tom may have agreed with Mary that rape was occurring, he never had the

opportunity to complete his thought. Danielle's interruption served to empower her and

deny Tom power. A similar situation occurs when Griffith attempts to make a point.

Before Griffith is afforded a chance to complete his thought, Danielle interrupts him and

asserts that it was rape. In my journal I noted that Griffith attempted to get back in the conversation by raising his hand, but was not afforded a speaking turn. The interruptions by Danielle illustrate her refusal to consider any other point other than the fact that rape had occurred. This afforded her power, as did the fact that after she interrupted Griffth's thought, Dora voiced her agreement that rape occurred. Again, the point is to illustrate that the girls typically, during classroom discourse, were relegated to a less powerful position than were the boys due to interruptions. When a topic that impassioned them was raised, the power shifted as their interruptions placed them in a more powerful position than during a typical conversation.

The discussion now turns to examples of interruptions in Gerard's class during conversations about rape, and the way those interruptions served to afford or deny power. As was the case in Donna's class, in Gerard's class during rape discussions the girls were placed in a position of power because of their interruptions. The conversations, however, were more equitable than the discussions about rape in Donna's class in which the boys were interrupted on more occasions than were the boys in Gerard's class. The following discussion depicts a conversation that occurred about rape in which the girls had argued that rape had occurred. The conversation picks up at the point in which Gerard is defending the girls' previous contention that rape had occurred.

> Gerard: I mean literally during war. People were spoils of war. This was the Greek way of thinking. Remember our discussion. This was part of their culture. They took whatever they wanted. Again, the men may be killed or used as slaves but they also would take the women and they'd be used in any way they chose so rape[
>
> Mary: [Wow. Ooh.
>
> Gerard: Rape is occurring.
>
> Lora: Gross.

Gerard: Absolutely.

Pete: I think they were invited[

Lisa: [they were raped.

Nancy: They were taken.

The above conversation illustrates the way that girls were afforded power, due to

interruptions, during a typical discussion about rape. In the above conversation, in one of

the rare times when a girl interrupted Gerard, Mary interrupts his comment to show her

disgust at the fact that rape was occurring. This affords Mary power. Subsequently,

when Pete attempts to make a point, he is interrupted by Lisa who insists that the women

were raped. Mary's interruption denied Pete power as her interruption prevented him

from completing his thought. While his comment may or may not have had anything to

do with rape, Lisa's interruption served to prevent him from expressing his view. Lisa's

power was further enhanced by Nancy's agreement with Lisa.   What the above

discussion illustrates was the way in which the girls were atypically positioned during a

classroom discussion. As a poststructuralist it is important to recognize the fluidity of

power and the way it shifts during classroom discussions (Baxter, 2003).

The following discussion again illustrates a typical discussion about rape, in

Gerard's class, in which the girls are again positioned more powerfully because of

interruptions.

Gerard: Ok. So let's pick up again when the suitors were in the house. What's
                going on with Telemachus?

Joe: Well, can we just talk again about trespassing in Odysseus' house.
                I don't think it would have trespassing because Telemachus didn't'
                really mind if they were in the house. They weren't like really
                doing anything destroying anything at this[

Mary: [The women were raped

Joe: But I think they weren't really trespassing they were just having
          dinner and so why would Telemachus he was just letting them
          stay in the house and [

Lisa: [the women were raped

Lora: They were doing something they were the women were like
          ragged through the house I think it said.

Gerard: Yeah. I mean they were raped alright. So let's again what did
          Odysseus do to the women?

Mike: But with Telemachus, didn't he not really mind?

Cindy: Odysseus ends up killing these women who were raped.

Lora: Yeah.

In the above conversation, Joe attempts to answer Gerard's question which places him in

a position of power. His power is limited as he never actually gets to complete his

thought because of Mary's interruption. Further, the interruption affords Mary power in

a number of ways. Not only does she usurp Joe's floor time, but Lisa and Lora voice

their agreement with her view thereby enhancing her power and that of Lisa and Lora.

Subsequently, Joe's power is again usurped, this time by Lisa, when she interrupts his

thought and he is once again unable to make his point. The power shifts again in the girls'

favor as Gerard ignores the comments that Joe made, thereby positioning Joe in a

powerless position, and instead responds to the girls' conversation. What the discussion

illustrates is the way the girls gained power by their interruptions and their support for

each other. As mentioned, despite the fact that the girls overall were positioned less

powerfully than were the boys in classroom discussions because of interruptions, during

the discussion about rape the power shifted in their favor and the boys were relegated to a

less powerful position.

Figure 4 Interruptions During Rape Discussions
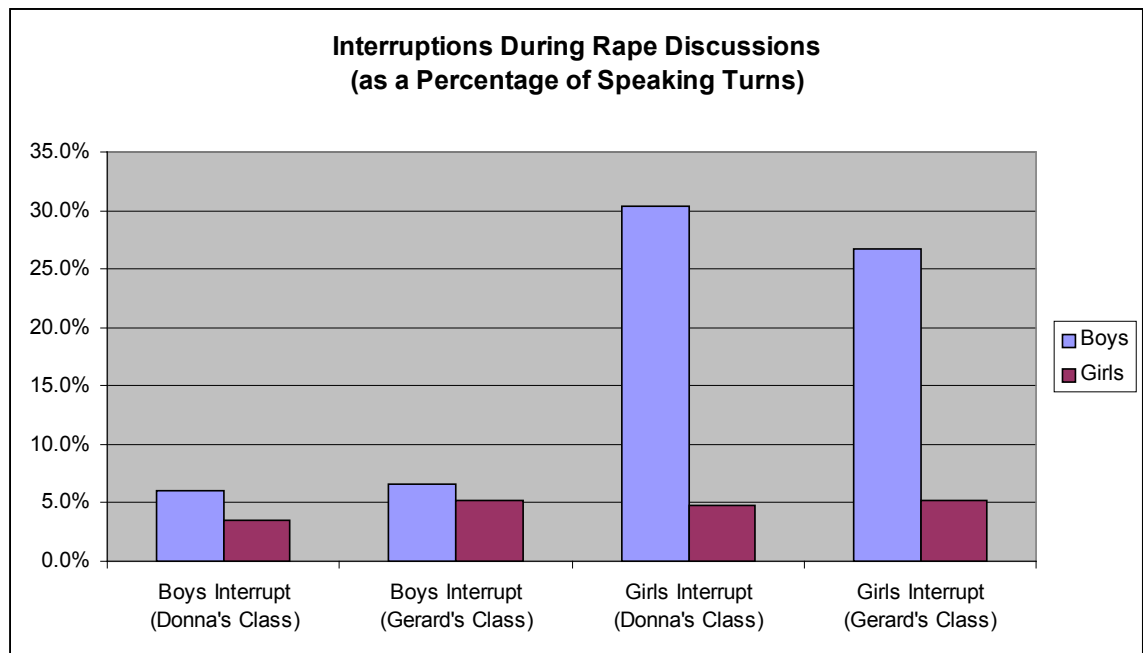
Topic control during typical discussions. Another method of achieving power in

classroom discourse is through topic-control. Controlling the topic of conversation

allows a more powerful participant to maintain unequal relations of power (Fairclough,

2001). Controlling the topic can serve to either afford or deny power. To revisit, topic

control represents the speaker's position as the authority to set the topic. I explore three

strategies by which one achieves power through topic control: initiated, changed, and

interrupted. "Initiated" refers to the act of beginning a discussion about a particular topic.

"Changed" refers to the initiation, and continued discussion, of a topic by a student

before discussion about the prior topic is completed. "Interrupted" refers to the initiation,

without continued discussion, of a topic by a student before discussion about the prior

topic is completed. (See Chapter 3 for a detailed description of the manner in which I

coded for topic control). My analysis reveals an inequity in Donna's classroom regarding

which students controlled the topic as the boys controlled the topic more than did the

girls (See Figure 5).

In Donna's class, the boys initiated and changed the topic more than did the girls. The girls, however, interrupted the topic more than did the boys. In Gerard's class, the boys initiated, changed and interrupted the topic more than did the girls (see Figure 5).

The discussion below illustrates a typical conversation in Donna's class in which the students exercised topic control.

Donna: Ok. So he's on this island. So what's happening what should we discuss about it?

Meghan: Can we talk about the Cyclops? Like were there more than one? I didn't quite get that.

Joe: I liked the part when Odysseus and his men were under the sheep. Like was weren't the sheep big? Is that it? How could they hide under the sheep?

Donna: They were these giant sheep. Remember ladies and gentlemen they were hanging on to the underside of the sheep so these were no ordinary sheep.

Griffith: What about the Cyclops' father? Poseidon right? Wasn't he the father? Didn't he like punish Odysseus?

Dora: I liked when they left and were on the water and had to get by those monsters. Like there was one on either side and they had to try to get past them and some of his Odysseus' men were killed.

Donna: Remember that Poseidon as Griffith said was the Cyclops' father. And he does punish Odysseus, right? Odysseus needs to get home by the sea so he's kind of at the mercy of Poseidon.

The above discussion illustrates Meghan's "initiating" a topic (whether or not there were more than one Cyclops on the island), which places her in a position of power. Joe's comments serve to "change" the topic because they redirect the discussion away from Meghan's questions (which were never answered) to his own questions. Joe, then, has placed himself in a position of power (and usurped Meghan's power) through his topic

change. Donna 's response to Joe further enhances his position, while Meghan is left
confused, "I didn't quite get that." As the discussion continues, Griffith "initiates"
another topic about Poseidon, but Dora "interrupts" the topic with comments about the
sea monsters. Dora has taken power away from Griffith until Donna responds to
Griffith's, rather than Dora's, question. Donna then positions Griffith in a powerful
position with her response to his comments. The above exchange illustrates the fluidity
of power in classroom discourse. As a poststructuralist I am interested in the way power
shifts and who controls the power. The above conversation illustrates the way students
positioned themselves (and others) by controlling the topic of conversation. As
mentioned, topic control proved more advantageous for the boys as they were placed in a
position of power more often than were the girls.

The discussion below illustrates a typical conversation that occurred in Gerard's
class in which the students were afforded or denied power based on the exercise of topic
control.

Gerard:	Ok. Shall we discuss perhaps the underworld a little more. What about when right after he meets his mother?
Lisa:	After he talks to his mother doesn't he like meet his friend who fell off the roof?
Gerard:	Ah. But did he fall off the roof?
Andrew:	He was drunk and I think they said he fell asleep.
Lisa:	But wasn't that on the island sometime on Circe's when he fell off?
Joe:	Who was Polythemus?
Gerard:	Does anyone remember who Polythemus was?
Mike:	When they went to Helios wasn't there these cattle that they eat?
Gerard:	Can we get a response for who Polythemus was?

Lisa: He met Odysseus in the underworld and spoke with him. Can I ask a question? Was he the one whose body they had to go back to burn to give a proper burial so he could his spirit could rest.

Pete: How long did it take anyway to get down to the underworld?

Mike: It was like really fast. But, the cattle were eaten right, when they were not supposed to be on that island?

Lora: The cattle weren't supposed to be eaten because it was the property of the sun god.

Gerard: What did the underworld look like? Cindy.

Cindy: Dark and gloomy. Was it kinda like purgatory or something cause they were not really in hell?

Henry: Was there like a death penalty in Greek society?

Gerard: Well their system of justice was different but yes they certainly remember how brutal Odysseus was.

The above conversation demonstrates the way in which power is afforded or denied because of the various topic control strategies. The discussion begins as Gerard initiates the topic to which Lisa responds. The conversation continues with power shifting between speakers until eventually Lisa asks a question. At this point Joe changes the topic. The power has now shifted from the last speaker, Lisa, to Joe who, rather than responding to Lisa, changes the topic. Lisa's power is further usurped and Joe's enhanced when, rather than answer Lisa's question, Gerard responds to Joe. Fairclough (1989) explains that topic control serves to constrain access to discourse as the person changing the topic is terminating discussion about the topic at hand, and dictating what is going to be discussed. Lisa's question was not answered because Joe (consciously or not) decided it was time for discussion about a different topic. This is followed by an interruption by Mike, who temporarily gains power, as he attempts to discuss a different topic. Gerard, however, remains on the topic initiated by Joe, thereby enhancing Joe's

power to control the discussion. Lisa answers Gerard's question and follows with her own question. The topic is changed by Pete who gains power with his control of the discussion. Simultaneously Lisa, who remained on topic, is positioned in a powerless position as her question was not answered. Pete's power is further enhanced as Mike responds to his question. Mike then gains power by again changing the topic – dictating what will be discussed. Lisa responds to Mike's question which further enhances Mike's power. Finally, Gerard himself changes the topic to which Cindy responds and follows with a question. Cindy's power is usurped as her question is ignored by Henry who changes the topic. Gerard, rather than recognize that Cindy's question went unanswered, agreed to discuss Henry's topic change by answering his question. Gerard further usurped Cindy's power.

What was significant in the above exchange was that the girls never changed or interrupted the topic. Rather, aside from Gerard, the boys were responsible for dictating what topic would be discussed which shifted power to whichever boy made that decision. Looking closely at the discussion reveals that the girls supported the change in topic by responding to the topic, thereby enhancing the power of the person who changed the topic. Further, at times the girls' power was diminished when they asked questions which went unanswered because the topic had been changed. What was demonstrated was the way power is afforded to those who control the topic. Foucault (1972) asserted that discourse organizes relations among actors, and subject positions with discourse are infused with racial and gender inequalities. As mentioned, in Gerard's class, as in Donna's, the boys controlled the topic more than did the girls and therefore were situated in a more powerful position.

To review, my analysis of Donna's class revealed that there was gender inequity in who controlled the topic with the boys controlling the topic more frequently, and therefore, being placed in a more powerful position (see Figure 5). Similarly, in Gerard's classroom, the boys were positioned in a more powerful position despite Gerard's attempts to ensure gender equity. While teachers' attitudes and beliefs may affect their teaching methods (Sanford, 2005), a teacher's progressive attitudes do not necessarily guarantee equitable pedagogical practices. In both Donna and Gerard's class the boys were positioned more powerfully than were the girls because of topic control.

Figure 5 Topic Control
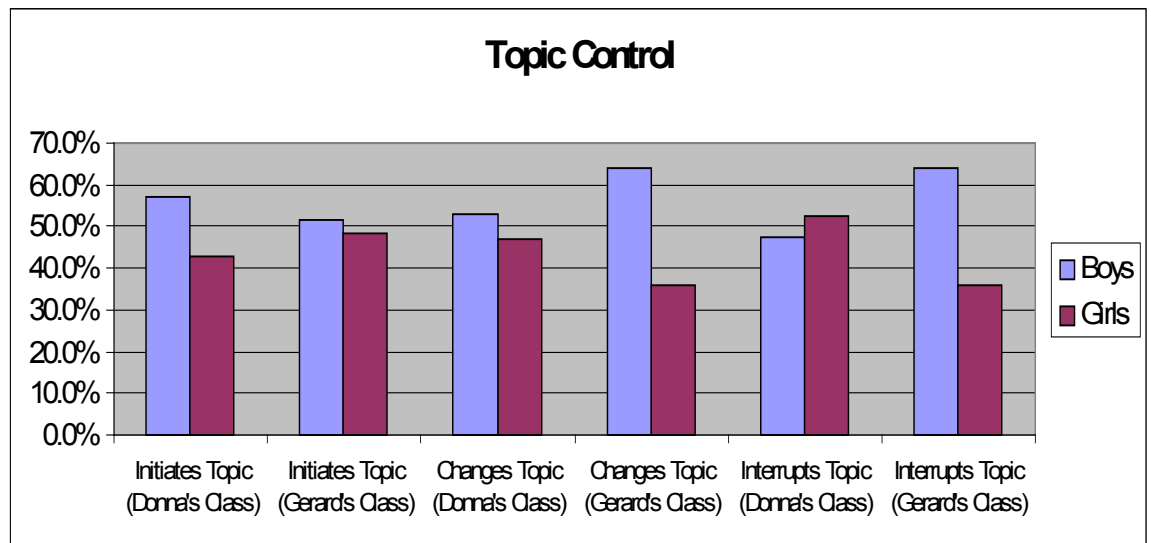
Topic control during rape discussions. As mentioned, during typical conversations the boys in both Donna and Gerard's class were positioned more powerfully because of topic control strategies. During discussions about rape, however, the power shifted and the girls, in both Donna and Gerard's class, were placed in a more powerful position than were the boys (see Figure 6) because of topic control strategies.

The discussion below illustrates a typical conversation about rape that occurred in Donna's class in which students exercised topic control, and in which the girls were placed in a position of power

Donna: Ok. So, shall we just take another look at King Alcinous
           and the island. What's what happens with the Queen and the
           barb? Remember she asks Odysseus where he got it?

Chenelle: Well she recognizes it.

Neil: He like doesn't answer he tries to conceal where he got it.

Dora: That's before the King tries to give away his daughter as
           a gift. He's like says something like I'll give you my daughter.
           And she's only twelve and she'd have to be his wife and
           share his bed.

Donna: So why does Odysseus conceal the barb?

Chenelle: Yeah, like take my daughter and marry her and I'll give
           you gifts. Ooh.

Danielle: How gross. Like she's only twelve and he doesn't care that he's
           she'll have to be his wife.

Lori: That's gross. That is so gross. Right? At twelve she'll have to
           have sex. Was that legal? That's rape.

Donna: Well, remember he's a guest and the King was very fond
           of him and honored him with a gift of his daughter. The King
           and Queen were very impressed with him so the King wanted
           him as his daughter's wife. I give you my daughter.

The above discussion illustrates the way the girls achieved power with topic control strategies. The conversation begins as Donna initiates a discussion about a barb that Odysseus wore. After Chenelle responds to Donna, Dora initiates a conversation about rape which places her in a position of power. Donna then returns to the original topic but her power is usurped by Chenelle who changes the topic to that of rape. Chenelle's power is further enhanced as the girls take turns discussing the grossness of the act. Additionally, Donna enhances the girls' power as, rather than discussing the original

topic of discussion, she responds to the girls' discussion about rape. In my journal I noted that "Neil and Joe discussing barb" amongst themselves as the girls are discussing the rape. The boys are relegated to a less powerful position as they are not afforded floor time because of the rape discussion. The point is that the girls acted atypically in the above discussion about rape which positioned them more powerfully than the boys.

The discussion below illustrates a typical conversation about rape that occurred in Gerard's class in which students exercised topic control. I will revisit a previously explored discussion to highlight the way in which the girls achieved power using topic control strategies.

Gerard: Ok. So let's pick up again when the suitors were in the house. What's going on with Telemachus?

Joe: Well, can we just talk again about trespassing in Odysseus' house. I don't think it would have trespassing because Telemachus didn't' really mind if they were in the house. They weren't like really doing anything destroying anything at this[

Mary: [The women were raped

Joe: But I think they weren't really trespassing they were just having dinner and so why would Telemachus he was just letting them stay in the house and [

Lisa: [the women were raped

Lora: They were doing something they were the women were like dragged through the house I think it said.

Gerard: Yeah. I mean they were raped alright. So let's again what did Odysseus do to the women?

Mike: But with Telemachus, didn't he not really mind?

Cindy: Odysseus ends up killing these women who were raped.

Lora: Yeah.

In the above discussion, Gerard initiates a conversation about Telemachus to which Joe responds. Mary interrupts the topic by initiating a discussion about rape. This places her temporarily in a position of power. Joe resumes the previous discussion but the topic is changed by Lisa. This places Lisa in a highly powerful position and Joe in a position of powerless as his attempts at answering the question of the topic initiated by Gerard are met with resistance by the girls. Lisa's power is further enhanced as Lora and Gerard respond to her change of topic and the discussion resumes about rape. Mike then temporarily gains power as he interrupts the topic to respond to Gerard's initial question, but his position is temporary as the topic resumes about rape. Significantly, while the boys were attempting to answer the topic Gerard initiated, the girls managed to cause Gerard to change the topic he initiated in favor of discussing the topic of their choosing. The above exchange illustrates the power vested in one who controls the topic. While the boys were attempting to respond to the topic Gerard initiated, the girls managed to change the topic and the discussion was redirected to rape.   Fairclough (1989) discusses the fact that the speaker who controls the topic is placed in a highly advantageous position. The above example depicts the advantageous position girls were afforded because of their control of the topic.

Figure 6 Topic Control During Rape Discussions
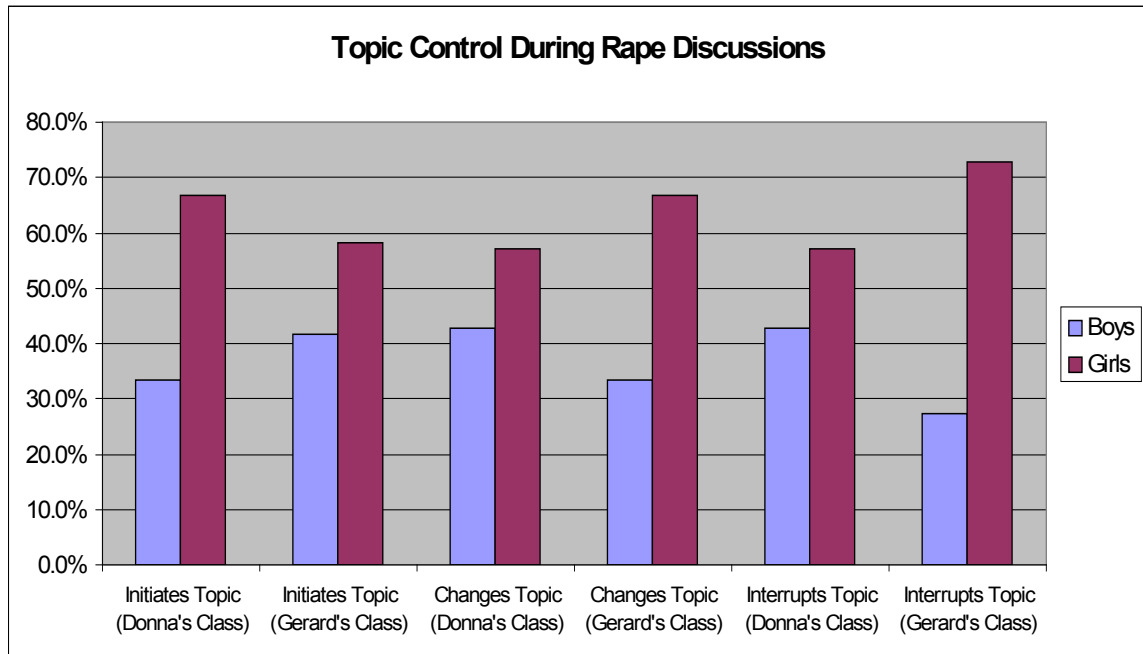
Deborah Cameron (1985) discussed the widely held feminist belief that men compete in conversations whereas women use cooperative strategies. Cameron (1985) asserts that this is not necessarily the case. Overall, my study indicates that the girls acted in a more cooperative manner than did the boys (they interrupted less, etc.). When looking at the discussion about rape, the girls cooperated with each other but appeared to disagree with (and compete more with) the boys. This speaks to Cameron's (1985) claim that a number of facts determine whether participants will be co-operative or competitive, one of which is the topic being discussed.

Just as Connell (1989) asserted that there are acceptable ways of displaying masculinity, Millard (1997) explained that boys are careful to align themselves, through discourse and actions, with other boys (and with actions deemed masculine) so as not to appear too effeminate. Since none of the boys in either classes seemed to agree with the girls that rape had occurred, I wondered if the boys felt a need to align themselves with each other (as seemed to be the case with the girls) in order to confirm their masculinity.

My focus now turns to the last chapter as I provide an overview of the findings. The discussion then focuses on the pedagogical implications of the findings, followed by a discussion about the significance for future research.

CHAPTER 7

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which two teachers discussed the gendered characters in a textbook in order to discover, in the interest of equality, whether the discoursal treatment of a text can be predicted by the text itself. That is, whether analysis of a text can determine the way in which the text will be discussed. I also wanted to examine the manner in which teachers' talk about the characters in the text served to position girls and boys. Further, I wanted to discover the way in which students respond to both the text, and the discourse about the text: I wished to explore what sense they make of the gendered characters, and to examine the ways in which the students' discussion about the text served to position themselves and others.

My motivation for investigating gender bias in classroom discourse about a text was a result of my discovering that in my children's English textbooks, the characters were often portrayed in stereotypical ways. I wondered if this portrayal of females and males was common in educational literacy practice. Through my exploration of gender bias in texts, I discovered the impact of classroom discourse as either perpetuating or exposing gender bias. With regards to my own role as interpreter, I approached this study from a feminist perspective, and in doing so, do not assume my interpretation to be universally self-evident.

In order to answer my research questions, I conducted an analysis of *The Odyssey* (Fagles, 1996), the text used, and observed (using audio recording and journal notes), two ninth grade English honors classes. I also conducted one interview with each teacher to determine their beliefs and attitudes about gender and literacy. My research drew from Fairclough's (1989) three-tiered CDA, and utilized a feminist poststructuralist

methodology. Further, this study expanded on Sunderland's (Sunderland, et al., 2001) pilot study that was used as a model for my analysis.

In this chapter, I begin with a discussion of the findings, followed by a conversation about the pedagogical implications of the findings, and a discussion about the significance of this study for future research. .

Gender, Pedagogy, Discourse and Power

I begin with a discussion about the manner in which Donna and Gerard discussed the text. The conversation then focuses on the teachers' attitudes, the students' responses, and finally, the way in which students were positioned by classroom discourse.

Moving beyond a binary way of discussing gender. In taking a closer look at Donna and Gerard's teaching methods, it is important to look beyond a binary way of thinking when analyzing the way in which they taught the text. Weedon (1999) contends that in Western culture, gender is informed by binary thinking which positions females and males as opposites and whose pairing is analogous to other dualisms: body:intellect, reason:irrationality, etc. This dualistic concept tends to privilege those attributes considered male over those considered female. It is also important, as a poststructuralist researcher, to remember that the way gender is thought of and discussed is fluid depending on the discourse one occupies (, Crouter & Tucker, 1999). The interpretation of gender has proliferated feminist scholarship with attempts being made at pinning down a precise definition (Hawkesworth, 2006). Feminist scholars adopted the concept of gender to differentiate culturally specific characteristics associated with femininity and masculinity from biological features associated with sex (Hawkesworth, 2006).

For poststructuralists, the concept of gender arises from discourse, and is socially constructed; this term refers to power differentials related to the cultural and social meanings attributed to being female or male (Van Wagenen, 2008; Weedon, 1999). This social construction suggests that men and women are naturally different from each other, and has been developed intentionally within relations of discourse and power. Weedon (1999) suggests that inherent in the "difference" between male and female is the assertion that traditionally, attributes associated with "male," is considered the norm and as such is elevated above attributes deemed "female."

In viewing Donna and Gerard's teaching methods from a poststructuralist standpoint, did either teacher move beyond a binary way of thinking about gender? Despite Gerard's efforts to teach equitably, he nonetheless failed to move the conversation beyond a dualistic discussion about gender. When Gerard attempted to discuss gender bias, his discourse tended to focus on the way in which males and females are typically presented. For instance, he examined the fact that men were not depicted as having traits normally considered reserved for females (such as tenderness), and females were not presented in roles typically assigned to men (as adventurers). His discussions never moved beyond viewing gender in terms of a binary way of thinking. Donna's discussion, like Gerard's, also never moved beyond a binary way of thinking as her conversation never went beyond males and females being discussed in a stereotypical manner.

As mentioned, poststructuralism views gender as being fluid rather than fixed. Further, depending on the discourse in which they are operating, women and men may occupy traits considered appropriate or "natural" for the opposite sex. Further, men and women may diverge unambiguously from the normative gender roles assigned their

particular sex and identify with the opposite sex (for example, a man may consider himself a female, just as a woman may identify herself as a male) (Bordo, 1990). To view gender in this manner means rather than viewing certain gendered traits as being associated with what it means to be a woman or a man, one needs to look at the fluidity of gender and how it changes depending on the discourse one occupies. Neither teacher approached gender in this manner as they failed to view it outside of the confines of binary thinking. This dualistic manner of viewing gender limits the options available to women and men, and fails to encourage students to explore their potential as complete people (Gilligan, 2006).

   Teachers' attitudes and pedagogical practices. The results of my interviews with Donna and Gerard suggested that they held very different attitudes with regards to gender. Further, Donna showed little awareness of issues involving gender equity, and Gerard appeared to be relatively knowledgeable about issues of gender inequality. Additionally, Donna and Gerard's pedagogical practices appeared to reflect, to a certain extent, their beliefs about, and knowledge of, gender equity. Gerard, who was very aware of issues involving gender equity, taught the text in a far more equitable manner than did Donna, who appeared to be very unaware of ideas regarding gender bias and sexism.

   These findings suggest that teachers' attitudes and beliefs play a role in the manner in which she/he teaches a text. Researchers (Davies, 1989; Gilbert, 1989; Pipher, 1994) contend that teachers' attitudes influence the way in which they teach the text, and their pedagogical practices affect the way in which children view themselves and their world. These attitudes can contribute to sexist attitudes and beliefs in children. Bronwyn Davies (1989) asserts that teachers' attitudes perpetuate gender bias. Kathy Sanford (2005) asserts that teachers' expectations frequently draw on stereotypical beliefs about

gender, thus limiting the options available for students, particularly girls. Donna claimed

to have little knowledge of gender equity, and that which she knew about the subject she

learned from the Board (which emphasized boys' literacy needs). Further, just as the

Board had emphasized that the boys' needs should be a priority, Donna felt that her focus

should be on the boys. This suggests that sociocultural influences, in Donna's case – the

school Board, affected the way in which teachers mediate a text. This speaks to

Fairclough's (1989) assertion that discourse is influenced by sociocultural factors as

Donna felt that the information disseminated by the Board informed her views on gender,

and influenced her pedagogical practices.   It should be noted that Gerard, like Donna,

was also informed by the Board that he should view the boys' needs as a priority, and he

received the same information as did Donna about boys' brains and the best way to

ensure their success in school.   As mentioned previously, Gerard, however, taught the

text very differently than did Donna. These findings suggest that while sociocultural

influences (such as that of the Board) play a role in the way in which teachers discuss a

text, prior knowledge or other sociocultural influences (such as Gerard's educational

background) can mitigate this influence.

My findings further suggest that boys' needs were being foregrounded. McFann

(2004) suggested that girls' literacy needs are a priority in schools, and "the male

perspective" is being neglected. Sanford (2004) claimed that in schools, boys' literacy

needs are taking precedence over that of girls. My research supports Sanford's (2004)

contention as the school's administration disseminated information about how to more

effectively teach boys. Comparable information was not disseminated about the girls.

Further, as previously mentioned, the Board placed a priority on boys' literacy needs

while claiming that the girls were doing well, and that their literacy needs were not a cause for concern.

Students' similar response to the text despite different teaching methods. Researchers (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994; Davies, 1989; Sunderland, et al., 2001; Wortham, 2006) emphasize the importance of teachers in making students aware of gender bias in texts to assist students in recognizing inequality. Despite the fact that Donna taught in a very stereotypically gendered manner, her students responded similarly to those of Gerard: the boys and girls questioned infidelity, and the girls exposed rape. These findings suggest that students' reaction to a text may be dependent on issues other than the manner in which the text is taught. Fairclough (1989) asserts that other factors, such as the communities in which children interact, affect the manner in which they respond to a text.

Poststructuralists assert that individuals are never outside of cultural practices and beliefs, and as such, are always influenced by them (Baxter, 2003). The results suggest that the students made sense of the text by identifying the text's characters with people/characters either from pop culture, or sociocultural or historical events. Further, at times students connected parents' influence or anecdotal information they had been subjected to, to their understanding of the characters. During various conversations about the text, the students connected Odysseus' excuse for his infidelity to pop culture, or social events. Their knowledge of President Clinton's affair informed their understanding of Penelope's role as the wife of an adulterer. The students were making sense of the text by using their prior knowledge, as a network of social factors influences one's interpretation of a text (Rosenblatt, 1995). This suggests that teachers are one source of influence, but other, competing forces affect students' understanding and interpretation of

gender. In the case of Gerard and Donna's students, influences outside of the classroom were more influential in the students' comprehension of the text than were the teachers' pedagogical practices.

Power and positioning – girls usurping boys' power. As mentioned, in both Donna and Gerard's classes, in the course of the six weeks of observations, the boys were positioned in a more powerful manner than were the girls; overall, the boys were afforded more speaking turns, and were interrupted on fewer occasions than were the girls, until the discussion turned to rape. On the basis of these findings, it appears that one can obtain power during discourse when there is a strong interest in the topic being discussed, despite other factors that may serve to limit one's power and agency.

Poststructuralist theory suggests that both women and men have agency depending on the discourse one occupies. Ramazanoglu (2002) discusses one as having agency when he/she has the ability to "choose their goals and act (more or less rationally) to achieve them," as opposed to ideas and actions being determined by one's social position, subconscious, genes, impersonal historical forces, or other factors (p. 10). Davies (2000) explains the poststructuralist view of agency as she describes the experience of being a person is "captured in the notion of subjectivity" (p. 57). Subjectivity, Davies (2000) asserts, is constituted through the discourses in which one is being positioned at any point in time, and through one's own and others' acts of speaking and writing.   The results of my findings suggest that even those who are marginalized can, at times, occupy a position of power and achieve agency when a topic is discussed that impassions them. Likewise, those who generally occupy a position of privilege can have their power usurped through discourse. The results further suggest that by acting as a support for each other, those who are marginalized can be elevated to a position of

power. It should be noted, however, that this power was very momentary and the power

shifted in favor of the boys once the discussion about rape ended.

To recap, despite the fact that Gerard taught the text more equitably than did

Donna, his discourse, like Donna's, failed to move the discussion beyond a dualistic

conversation about gender. Further, it appeared that both Donna and Gerard's beliefs and

knowledge about gender equity informed their teaching practices. Researchers

(Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994; Davies, 1989; Wortham, 2006) emphasize the

significant role that teachers play in making students aware of gender inequity in

textbooks. These findings suggest that students' understanding of a text may be

dependent on issues other than the way in which a teacher mediates a text. Finally,

despite the fact that the boys overall were positioned more powerfully than were the girls,

the girls managed to achieve power, temporarily, when a topic that impassioned them

was presented.

Pedagogical Implications

The discussion will now focus on the implications of the findings for practice and

future research. The conversation begins with an exploration of the role of teachers in

students' understanding of a textbook. The focus then turns to the way in which students

(girls) achieved power in the classroom despite inequitable pedagogical practices,

followed by a discussion about teachers' gender awareness and equitable pedagogical

practices. The conversation continues with an exploration of implications for future

research. Finally, I conclude by exploring the study's contributions to pedagogical

research.

Teachers' influence in students' understanding of a text. How much influence do

teachers actually have with regards to the sense their students make of a text?

Researchers (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994) emphasize the influence that teachers'

discourse has regarding the way in which students interpret a textbook. Alvermann &

Commeyras (1994) emphasize that being aware of the power differentials in texts

requires complicity on the reader's part. If students are not encouraged to discuss the

way in which the language of texts socially constructs gender, stereotypes will go

unnoticed and will be reconstituted with each reading. My study reveals that, despite the

fact that Donna discussed the text in stark contrast to the way in which Gerard did, the

students, nonetheless, responded similarly.

Alvermann (1994) asserts that it is imperative for the teacher, who is considered

to have superior knowledge of the text and who legitimizes the authority of the text, to

point out imbedded bias in the texts in order for students to recognize bias. On the basis

of my findings, it appears that the amount of influence that teachers have on the sense

their students make of the text, at least with regards to gender equity, is questionable.

Further, my findings suggest that perhaps teachers need to look at other avenues in which

to make students recognize gender bias in the text. Exploring ways in which the students

did recognize sexism may help shed light on how teachers may better approach helping

students discover gender bias in a textbook. Further, it was the students, without teacher

input, who discussed the characters in relation to pop culture and their knowledge of

historical events. The teachers were not actively involved in these discussions. This

suggests that by exploring the way in which pop culture resonates with the students,

teachers can be actively involved in the discussion and make connections to characters in

a way that is meaningful to students. By placing the text and the gendered characters in

the context of pop culture, teachers could help students recognize gender inequality in the

textbook. Moreover, certain television shows seemed to be of particular interest to the

students. Making connections to the characters in these shows with the ways in which

the characters in the text are stereotyped, could help students recognize bias.

For the most part, it was boys and girls alike, in both classes, who subverted the

gendered message when infidelity was discussed. This raises another question: why did

the students from both classes only subvert the gendered message when it concerned

infidelity. As mentioned, the students in both classes refused to accept Odysseus'

gendered excuse (as a man, he could not help himself).

Why did students react to infidelity in this manner and yet failed to recognize

other forms of gender bias in the text? What was common about the way in which the

students responded to infidelity was that, in both classes, the students made clear

sociocultural connections to the text to help them interpret it. Fairclough (1989)

emphasized the significance of sociocultural events to the manner in which a text is

interpreted.   The students, during various discussions, connected Odysseus' excuse for

his infidelity to social events, pop culture, or life experiences. The students understood

Penelope's suffering as the wife of an adulterer through their knowledge of the similar

role Hillary Clinton played in her marriage to President Clinton.   The students also

connected Odysseus' infidelity to male characters on the television show *Desperate

Housewives*. The students were making sense of the text by using their prior

understanding of the issue of infidelity, as a network of social factors influences one's

interpretation of a text (Rosenblatt, 1995). This speaks to Barthes' (1977) assertion that

the meaning one brings to a text is woven with citations of former experiences.

Interestingly, the students from both classes, while connecting to different sociocultural

events, nonetheless made the same connection to the gendered representation. What,

then, does this mean in terms of how teachers can assist students in recognizing gender

bias in a text? The students' responses to infidelity reflected the social context in which they were embedded (pop cultural, historical events), and which influenced the students' interpretation of the text. This perhaps suggests that teachers, rather than repeatedly point out the gender bias in a text, can be more effective if they connect textual references to sociocultural/historical events.

Researchers (Davies, 1989; Wortham, 2006) contend that in order to subvert sexist attitudes in the curriculum, teachers need to encourage dialog about gender bias. My study indicates that students acquire knowledge from lived experiences. Rampton's (2006) study revealed that students oriented to pop culture and media in the majority of the lessons he observed (50 out of 71). Rampton's (2006) study also ties in with Fairclough's (1989) three-tiered approach as the students were bringing to the discussion sociocultural influences. My research supports Rampton's (2006) study, and Fairclough's (1989) belief in sociocultural influence on classroom discourse. My results suggest that in order to help students recognize gender bias in textbooks, in their discussions about texts, teachers might be more effective if they connect pop culture and sociocultural events with the gendered characters. Since the students repeatedly used these methods to make sense of the gendered characters and to recognize gender bias, placing the text in the context of pop culture and social situations while illuminating the text's gender bias, could prove to be an effective method in assisting students to recognize gender inequity in the textbook. In this vein, as television shows in particular seemed to resonate with students, teachers could encourage students to explore the ways in which the characters are presented in television shows and the textbook, with regards to gender.

With regards to the issue of rape, unlike that of infidelity, only the girls seemed to make sociocultural connections; it was the girls who initially defined the women's being

taken as "rape," and connected the act to violence, suggesting that societal and cultural norms had an impact on the discussion. Additionally, the girls from both classes responded very similarly with both groups of girls expressing disgust verbally and through their body language (bouncing feet up and down, head placed on desk, etc.). These findings perhaps suggest that when students emotionally connect to an issue, they are more likely to become actively involved in discourse about the topic. This raises another question: why was it only the girls who verbalized that rape had occurred?

One explanation may lie in the fact that it was the women in the text who were raped, and also, rape is typically an act of violence perpetrated against women, suggesting a sociocultural connection. Studies (Cowan & Campbell, 1995; Godschilds & Zellman, 1984) indicate that adolescent girls view rape differently than do adolescent boys, as girls are more likely to view forced sexual relations as rape, and adolescent boys are more likely to blame the victim. Adolescent boys are more likely to believe in rape myths (such as the victim wore sexually suggestive clothing therefore it was her fault she was raped), than are girls (Clark & Carroll, 2007; Cowan & Campbell, 1995). My study supports this research as the boys (in both classes) at some point, placed the blame on the maids because "they were in bed with them so they must be guilty." The girls (also in both classes), responded assertively (and at times they seemed shocked by the allegation, "What!," "Is that really fair?," "They were raped").

Researchers (Dietz, 1998; McHale, et al., 1999; Mills, 1987) assert that gender role socialization is highly influential in the way in which students interpret the world, and the sense they make of gender roles, including the way in which females and males view rape. Moreover, gender role socialization is a central development process during childhood (Katz & Ksansnak, 1994; Servin, Powlishta, & Gulko, 1993). McHale

(McHale, et al., 1999) found that in a household, fathers had significantly more influence in the way in which the children viewed gender than did mothers. Further, in a household in which a father held traditional views of gender, the children were more likely to interpret gender roles in a traditional manner. Moreover, firstborn boys seemed most affected by gender stereotyping because of more rigid expectations for firstborn boys to conform to gender role norms. For second born children, the standards often become more relaxed. Dietz (1998) explains that traditional views of gender often include the idea that masculinity means toughness and assertiveness, and at times sexual aggression.

Dietz (1998) asserts that pop culture, including video games, can negatively impact girls and boys' view of gender. While debate focuses on the possible effects of viewing violence on children, researchers (Radecki,1990; Tan,1981) assert that viewing violent episodes (whether on television, through viewing movies, or through the use of video games) increases the likelihood that an individual will commit an act of violence. With regards to rape, Milkie (1994) claims that media images which emphasized sexual aggression and violence led to a callousness in boys toward rape (Burt, 1980; Bell, et al., 1992). Herman (1989) connects this somewhat apathetic view of rape to the way in which male dominance is eroticized. Thus, the notion of masculinity has come to be associated with male domination and sexual aggression.

Weedon (1997) claims that social power relations are often reproduced in the various discourses in which we operate. For Foucault, discourses are ways of constituting knowledge, together with power relations, social practices and forms of subjectivity that "inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them" (Weedon, 1997). Fairclough (1998) emphasized the importance of viewing "discourse as a part of a social process, as a social practice, showing how it is determined by social structures, and

what reproductive effects discourses can cumulatively have on those structures, sustaining them or changing them" (p. 163). Essentially, Fairclough (1989) uses the term discourse to refer to actual talk or writing, or discoursal action. Weedon (1997) asserted that a wide range of discourses and social practices constitute, fix and define gender differences and the way in which we understand gender. Further, certain discourses, such as the discourse of patriarchy, position women as being subordinate to men. This speaks to Herman's (1989) contention that the inevitable result in a society in which women are portrayed as being subordinate to men is the occurrence, acceptance and callousness about rape on the part of men. What does this mean in terms of the role of the teacher in discussing rape?

One approach teachers could utilize would involve the use of media images of gender roles to draw students' attention to the stereotypical manner in which males and females are depicted, especially in regards to males' being positioned in relation to violence, and women to victimization. This is relevant as researchers (Dietz, 1998; Herman, 1989; McHale, et al., 1999) contend that students' view of gender is due to socialization by parents, teachers, the media, etc. Further, as pop culture and historical events (Fairclough, 1989; Rampton, 2006) affect students' view of gender, teachers could discuss rape in terms of current and historical events such as war crimes and rape in areas such as Congo, Darfur, Serbia and Croatia. Further, gender equity could be discussed in relation to violence against women in areas such as Somali in which women can be executed for being raped (van Zeijl, 2006). Discussing rape in terms of contemporary international law may be a safe way for teachers to approach the subject without personalizing it. Moreover, for concerned parents, this could be a more palatable way to discuss rape.

What the findings also suggest is that, at times, students made sociocultural connections to the text with issues that resonated with them on an emotional level. This connection helped them to correctly interpret what was occurring in the text. This suggests that finding topics in which students are emotionally invested may help them in their attempts to interpret a text. This could apply not just to a traditional text, but also to other texts such as movies, music, etc.

Achieving power during classroom discourse despite inequitable pedagogy. Fairclough (1989) emphasized that during classroom discussions dialogue often occurs between unequals, with one person or group relegated to a less powerful position. Feminist poststructuralist theory argues that women and men have agency depending on the discourse they occupy. Poststructuralists (Baxter, 2003; Davies & Banks, 1992; Walkerdine, 1990) assert that individuals' relations to power are continuously shifting within discourses, making them at times powerful and other times powerless.

Weedon (2004) discusses power from a feminist poststructuralist viewpoint claiming that power is a relation. Further, it inheres in difference and is dynamic of compliance, control, and lack of control between discourses, and the subjects constituted by discourses, who are their agents. Power is exercised within discourses in the way the discourses govern and constitute individual subjects. Power organizes relations between different subjects across or within discourses. Fairclough (1989) discusses power in terms of power *in* discourse, and power *behind* discourse. Fairclough (1989) explains that power in discourse refers to, for example, face-to-face spoken discourse, and is concerned with discourse as a place where relations of power are exercised and enacted. Power *behind* discourse focuses on how orders of discourse, as a dimension of the social orders of societies or institutions, are themselves constituted and shaped by relations of

power.   Fairclough (1989) also asserts that power, either "in" or "behind" discourse, is fluid and is never definitively held by any one person or social grouping, because power can be exercised and won only in and through social struggles, in which it may also be lost.

My findings suggest that one way in which teachers can contribute to ensuring gender equity in the classroom is to try to ensure that texts serve the interest of all students. The results indicate that students whose power was limited gained power, temporarily, by finding a topic that impassioned them. This suggests that attempting to provide students with a diversity of texts about different topics could help ensure more equitable pedagogical practices by offering texts that resonate with the students. As mentioned, the girls in both classes were clearly more passionate about the rape discussions than any other topic that was discussed. As previously discussed, the explanation may lie in the fact that it was the women in the text who were raped, and also, it is almost always women who suffer rape, again suggesting a sociocultural connection. Studies (Cowan & Campbell, 1995; Godschilds & Zellman, 1984) indicate that adolescent girls view rape differently than do adolescent boys, as girls are more likely to view forced sexual relations as rape, and adolescent boys are more likely to blame the victim. The point is that teachers need to be cognizant of power inequities and as such, attempt to use pedagogical practices that interest those who are marginalized.

Fairclough (1989) emphasized that social control is often exercised by means of texts. What my study suggests is that despite the fact that the text that was used was highly traditional with the female characters occupying very minor roles relative to the men, the girls nonetheless managed to latch onto a topic that they found interesting and achieve some power through their discussion of that topic. The point is that texts

frequently present certain individuals in marginalized ways (Sanford, 2005). What is

needed is a balance in order to ensure equity for all students. On the basis of these

findings, even when teaching a traditional text, teachers can assist those students who are

positioned at a disadvantage to achieve power by, at times, focusing the discussion about

the text on an area that may be of interest to them. This could apply to any student who

is disadvantaged or marginalized whether for issues involving race, gender, disability,

etc. It is also worth noting that teachers need to be cognizant of bias in the text as it

relates to all students. Gerard, who was very aware of issues involving gender equity,

unlike Donna, made every effort to point out sexism in the text not only when it related to

the girls, but also to the boys. It is also important to point out that bias can include the

exclusion of certain characters in a text. For example, in *The Odyssey*, the majority of the

characters were male. In assessing a text for bias, teachers need to be aware of the

absence of certain characters whether because of race, religion or ability, in order to help

ensure more equitable pedagogical practice. This absence can be a part of the class

discussion in order to enlighten students about bias in general.

Teachers' Gender Awareness and Equitable Pedagogical Practices. Do

teachers' beliefs about gender equity affect their teaching practices? As mentioned,

during the course of classroom discussions about the gendered characters in the textbook,

Donna discussed the characters in a manner that was gender limiting, while Gerard

discussed the text in a manner that highlighted inequity and supported equality for both

genders. Gerard, who claims he was "aware of gender issues," and who had educated

himself about gender bias, taught the text in a far more equitable manner than did Donna.

This at least suggests the possibility that his education (formal and informal) about

gender equity affected his teaching methods. This speaks to the point that Andrew &

Ridenour (2006) make that there is a need to "educate," teachers about gender bias in texts and pedagogical practices, and the need to enlighten teachers about gender bias to ensure gender equality. While both teachers were instructed by the Board to make boys' literacy skills a priority, Gerard nonetheless taught in a far more equitable manner. Interestingly, both Gerard and Donna collaborated in determining how to teach the text yet their teaching methods were in stark contrast to each other. The interviews I conducted with both Donna and Gerard indicate that Gerard was much more aware of gender inequities in pedagogical practices than was Donna who claimed, "I haven't really been exposed to those issues [related to gender and literacy]." Gerard asserted that he makes every effort to recognize gender bias in texts and to enlighten students about sexism when he encounters it, "I try to point out when I see inequities in the text for both the girls and the boys." Additionally, Gerard indicated that his wife "really taught me about inequality and issues involving gender. I really was very unaware of these types of things before I met her." This response points to a sociocultural influence as Gerard claimed that he was enlightened about gender inequity by his spouse. Abraham (1989) suggested that teachers' ideological perspectives on gender strongly influenced their attitudes about designing an anti-sexist curriculum.

This poses the question, does being aware of issues of gender inequity insure equitable pedagogy? As mentioned, when Gerard discussed the text he did so in a far more progressive manner than did Donna. Gerard pointed out sexism as it related to both female and male characters while Donna tended to ignore sexism, and at times, to endorse it. With regards to the manner in which students were positioned (through speaking turns, interruptions, etc.), the students in Gerard's class were positioned more equitably than were those in Donna's class. However, as mentioned, the girls in Gerard's

class were nevertheless positioned in a less powerful position than were the boys (they were afforded less speaking turns, were interrupted more, etc.). Perhaps at least a partial explanation is that while Gerard was quite aware of issues of gender inequity, he still held some sexist beliefs such as his claim, during his interview, that overall girls speak more during classroom discourse than do boys. Researchers (Lafrance, 1991; Sanford, 2005) claim that teachers stereotypically believe that girls speak more than do boys during classroom conversation despite the fact that boys tend to out-talk girls.

On the basis of my findings, it would appear that merely attempting to teach the text in an equitable manner does not ensure equitable pedagogy. My study suggests that teachers need to be made aware of issues involving equal access to discourse, and to be enlightened about research that explores the way in which students are positioned more powerfully during discourse. Further, teachers need to be cognizant of who is afforded the opportunity to speak, and whose voice is being silenced. Possible approaches to educating teachers about gender equity might be to include a component about gender inequality in pre-service literature classes. Including a reflective element could also prove useful. Dewey (1910) explained that reflection contributes to the moral and intellectual development of a person. Moreover, reflection contributes to personal growth because it frees one from a single view of a situation and enables one to reframe problems (Roberts, 1998). Roberts (1998) explains that stimulus recall is an appropriate tool to help teachers revisit and reflect upon what they've said and done. Revisiting their pedagogical approaches and discussions about gender might help teachers realize that at times, gender bias is being overlooked. Other self-observational tools such as video recording a class for later viewing by the teacher may also facilitate a teacher's awareness of inequitable pedagogical practices. Journal writing may also be an effective

tool for teachers to utilize as they could record which students raised hands, which students participated, were interrupted, etc. The teachers could subsequently use the journal to reflect on which students were afforded floor time, who was interrupted, etc. Regarding future teachers, adding a segment focusing on gender equity and the role of teachers to their adolescent classes might be beneficial.

With regards to pedagogical practices, one technique teachers could employ during discussions about a text is to ensure that all students have a speaking turn when discussing the text. On a rare occasion in Donna and Gerard's class, the teachers went around the room with each student having a speaking turn; as a result, everyone was involved. These discussions appeared to be the most equitable as each of the students participated in the conversation, although utilizing this technique may perhaps be rather monotonous, and as it's a teacher-centered approach, rather limiting for students. Group discussions could also be employed in which all students within the group were encouraged to provide input. Also, small group work could also be utilized and might be especially helpful for those students who may be reticent about speaking in front of the entire class. Other techniques such as writing comments or reflections, and journal writing could possibly also provide more equitable pedagogy. Including different types of texts, such as movies, videos and posters, could address students' multiple literacies and the many different ways in which students learn.

Implications for Research

Literacy practices, including classroom discourse, may be gendered in the sense that they may play a role in the further gendering of students in shaping their femininities and masculinities (Connell, 2002). As was previously mentioned, a poststructuralist might view one as having agency when she/he has the ability to "choose their goals and

act (more or less rationally) to achieve them," as opposed to actions and ideas being determined by one's genes, social position, impersonal historical forces, subconscious or other factors (Ramazanoglu, 2002, p. 10). Additionally, the notion of individuals having agency suggests that learners' gender identities are constructed by their own social practices. This poststructuralist view of gender views language use (a form of social practice) not merely as a characteristic of gender, but rather as one of the influences that itself shapes gender (Sunderland, et al., 2001). This is significant as it suggests that teachers' and students' discourse serves to help shape students' femininities and masculinities. This ties in with Wortham's (2006) study that demonstrated that teachers' discourse influences the manner in which students view themselves, and the way in which students view each other.

Even though there exists a relatively substantial amount of research on sexism in textbooks, what is missing from the literature is research on classroom talk on gender when using the same textbook (Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, et al., 2001). What is also missing from the literature is a look, from a feminist perspective, at the manner in which high school students are positioned as a result of discourse about a text. In utilizing Fairclough's (1989) CDA, it is also important to discuss a text in broader terms. Texts are considered to be social actions, coherent and meaningful instances of written and spoken language use and include written texts (textbooks, letters), face-to-face conversations (classroom discourse), and electronic and multimodal texts (Luke, 2002). Significantly, it is imperative, to ensure equality for all students, that a text be discussed in a manner that highlights bias and supports equality for everyone (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994; Gilligan, 2006).

Researchers (Sanford, 2005; Wortham, 2006) have emphasized the significance of teachers' beliefs about gender and literacy, and how those attitudes affect their teaching methods. Few studies have been conducted that investigate high school teachers' attitudes about gender and literacy, and the manner in which they discuss the gendered characters in a text (Sunderland, et al., 2001; Wortham, 2006). This study expands on prior research (Sanford, 2005; Wortham, 2006) on teachers' beliefs about literacy practices in that it investigates teachers' attitudes about literacy and gender, and explores these beliefs in relation to their discussion about the gendered characters in the text. This study provides an opportunity to learn more about the connection between teachers' attitudes about gender and literacy, and their discussion about a text. It also offers a view of students' and teachers' response to gendered characters in the text, and the way in which classroom discourse serves to position students.

Future Directions

The limitations of this study include the fact that none of the students involved in the research were interviewed. Obtaining students' views about the gendered characters could provide a means to investigate their attitudes about the characters and their responses to the text. Discovering why the boys didn't recognize the fact that rape had occurred, while the girls did recognize that the women were raped would have helped understand the different ways in which girls and boys interpret a text. It would also have been interesting to learn why the students, girls and boys, recognized infidelity but failed to verbalize other forms of sexism in the text. This information could have informed teaching practices with regards to helping students recognize gender bias.

Another limitation is that the study did not explore spatial issues with regards to the students and teachers. There was a clear difference in the way in which Donna and

Gerard utilized space, as Donna very often walked around the classroom and used gestures such as hand waving and hair tossing when she spoke. Gerard, by contrast, almost always remained stationary at the front of the room when he spoke, and his gestures and other movements were minimal. The students also utilized space in a different manner, often depending on the topic of discussion. For example, at times the students, especially the girls, waved their hands very enthusiastically in an attempt to gain floor time. Researchers (Mulvaney, 2008; Secretariat, 2007) emphasize that women and men utilize space differently, and that space is a primary means by which society designates who has privilege. Researchers (Davidman, 1995; Mulvaney, 2008; Thorne, 1993) also suggest that overall men occupy more space than do women and as such are positioned advantageously. Mulvaney (2008) asserts that in areas in which women traditionally hold power, such as the household, their power is usually limited spatially as men are afforded more space than are women; further, while men tend to respond aggressively to an intruder who challenges their space, women are quick to yield their space. Since my study was viewed using a poststructuralist lens and was interested in the way in which power shifted during discourse, exploring the space the participants occupied would have afforded another look at power and positioning. This could have proved especially relevant in the discussions about rape in which the girls were the more powerful participants; however, investigating spatial issues did not fall within the boundaries of that which I intended to explore in this study and as such, represents one of the study's limitations.

Other possible limitations include the fact that I viewed the study from a feminist perspective and as such, my own personal bias could possibly have informed the way in which I viewed the data. It is my personal belief that females have, at times, been

marginalized in many areas of society, including that of education. There is a possibility that my tendency was to favor the female perspective by already assuming that the girls had been somewhat disadvantaged. Viewing data in this manner creates the possibility that gender stereotypes are recreated through categorization. To attempt to counter my own subjective views, I incorporated validity procedures such as obtaining a second reader, and member checking, into the analysis of the data.

This study was also limited in that it did not delve into why Donna was dismissive about rape and why, while Gerard explained that rape had occurred, he did not encourage a discussion by the students about rape. Utilizing a technique such as stimulus recall with Donna and Gerard might have shed light on why they taught the text in the manner in which they did. Moreover, while both teachers thought that the girls generally controlled the conversation, showing the teachers that this was not the case could have been valuable regarding their future teaching practices. Additionally, the study only looked at talk/discourse, which made it difficult to avoid binary categorizing. Had the study collected other forms for data such as that of student interviews or artifacts, this data could have been triangulated to get a broader view of the students' views on gender. Using stimulus recall would have provided additional information with which analyze the teachers' responses. For instance, using certain textual dialogue as a device with which to have the teachers recall the way in which they discussed the text, could help enlighten them as to whether they taught the text equitably.

Since the results of this study revealed that both teachers had disparate views on gender and literacy, and their knowledge about gender equity was very different, it might be worthwhile, in another study, exploring the discourse of teachers who share the same views on gender and literacy, and who are both aware of issues involving gender equity.

Other possible studies could examine a progressive text, and the way in which teachers

who share similar and different views about gender, respond to the gendered characters.

Possible questions might include, Are teachers more likely to endorse or subvert

textbooks produced by equality-minded textbook writers? The answer could have

interesting implications for textbook writers as well as classroom researchers. Other

studies might examine how the teacher and student talk varies with, for example, the

composition of the class (mixed – or single-sex).   Another possible study could

investigate whether more educated teachers actually recognize inequities in the text.

Finally, since pop culture played a role in the students' understanding of the text and

issues related to gender, a study investigating connecting pop culture to students'

understanding of gender roles could prove valuable for future teaching practices.

Conclusion

This study represents a methodological and theoretical contribution to the

understanding of the manner in which stereotypical ways of thinking can potentially be

undermined, or sustained, in the literacy classroom. Methodologically I have shown

how, utilizing a traditionally gendered text, teachers and students either endorsed,

subverted or ignored the gendered representation. I have also demonstrated how teachers

and students, through classroom discourse, can position students. My study also suggests

that teachers' attitudes about, and knowledge of, gender equity inform their teaching

practices. This speaks to researchers' (Andrews & Ridenour, 2006) contention that

teachers' knowledge of gender equity helps inform their teaching practices thereby

insuring more equitable pedagogy. Further, my study reveals that despite teachers'

attempts to teach the same text in similar ways, other influences, such as sociocultural

experiences, affect teachers' pedagogical practices (Fairclough, 1989). I have suggested

that, despite the very different ways in which teachers taught the text, students, nonetheless, responded in very similar ways

This study suggests that courses, such as those used for professional development that examine gender bias and sexist language, would serve to enlighten teachers about the limiting effects of gender stereotypes, and would result in more equitable pedagogy regarding issues of gender. Mulcahy (1994) agrees with Jane Roland Martin (1994) that, in education, the needs of boys have been emphasized and those of girls overlooked. Mulcahy (2002) asserts that educators need to enact a more holistic system whereby the interests of girls and boys are considered. Carol Gilligan (2006) explains that both sexes suffer when not encouraged to explore one's full range of human development.   I hope to have shown that, for those engaged in literacy research, rather than merely look in the text for gender bias, perhaps a more relevant focus may be the mediation of gender representation in texts by teachers and students. Further, in taking a broader look at the findings, and embracing the critical perspective with which the study was conducted, I hope that this study sheds light on ways in which teachers can ensure equitable pedagogical practices for all students with varying abilities.
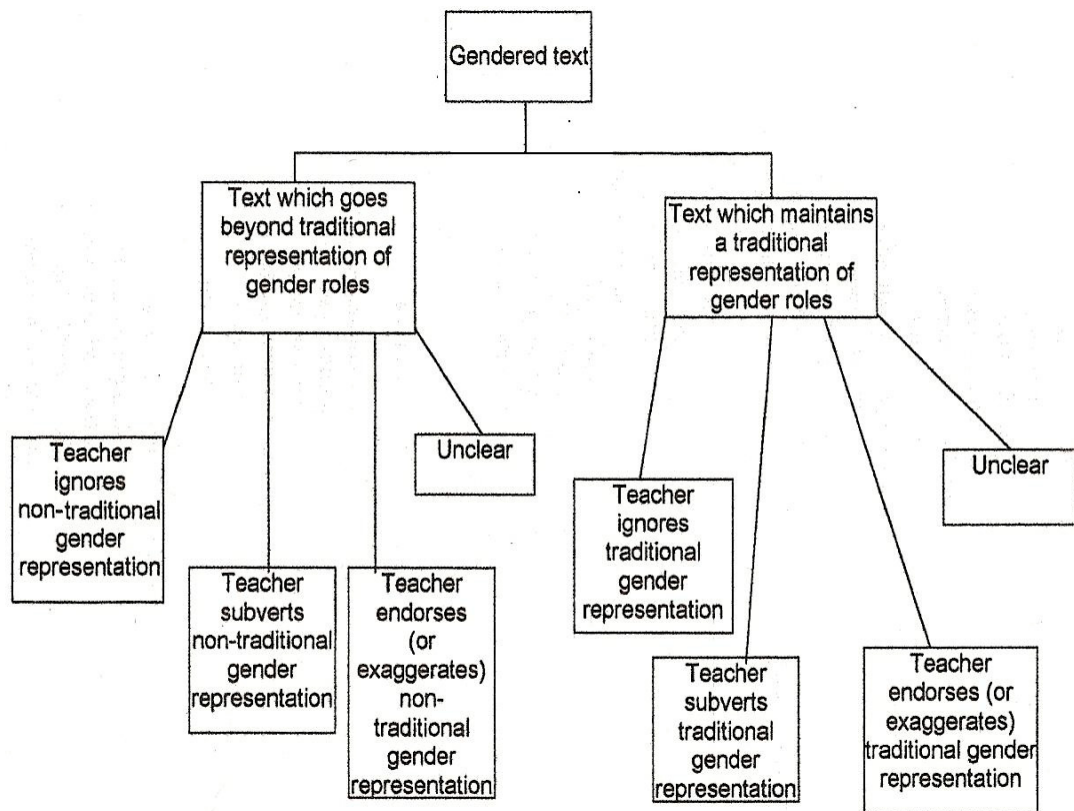
APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

The following interview questions will be asked of each of the teachers:

1). What, in your view, are the literacy needs of boys?

2). What, in your view, are the literacy needs of girls?

3). What is the criteria you use when selecting books for students to read?

4). What types of stories do boys like to read?

5). What types of stories do girls enjoy reading?

6). During discussion about texts, do girls or boys tend to speak more?

7). What do you see as the aims and goals of literacy, education, and the curriculum?

8). Why did you become a teacher?

APPENDIX B

Gendered Text and Teacher Response

APPENDIX C

Fairclough's (1989) Three-Tiered Approach to Analysis

Process of Production

Text (Description)

Ninth Grade Literary Textbook
Discussion About Text

Interpretation

Feminist Poststructuralism and
Critical Discourse Analysis

Explanation

Sociocultural Practice
(Situational, Institutional, Societal)

Discourse Within a School Setting
Within a Patriarchal Society
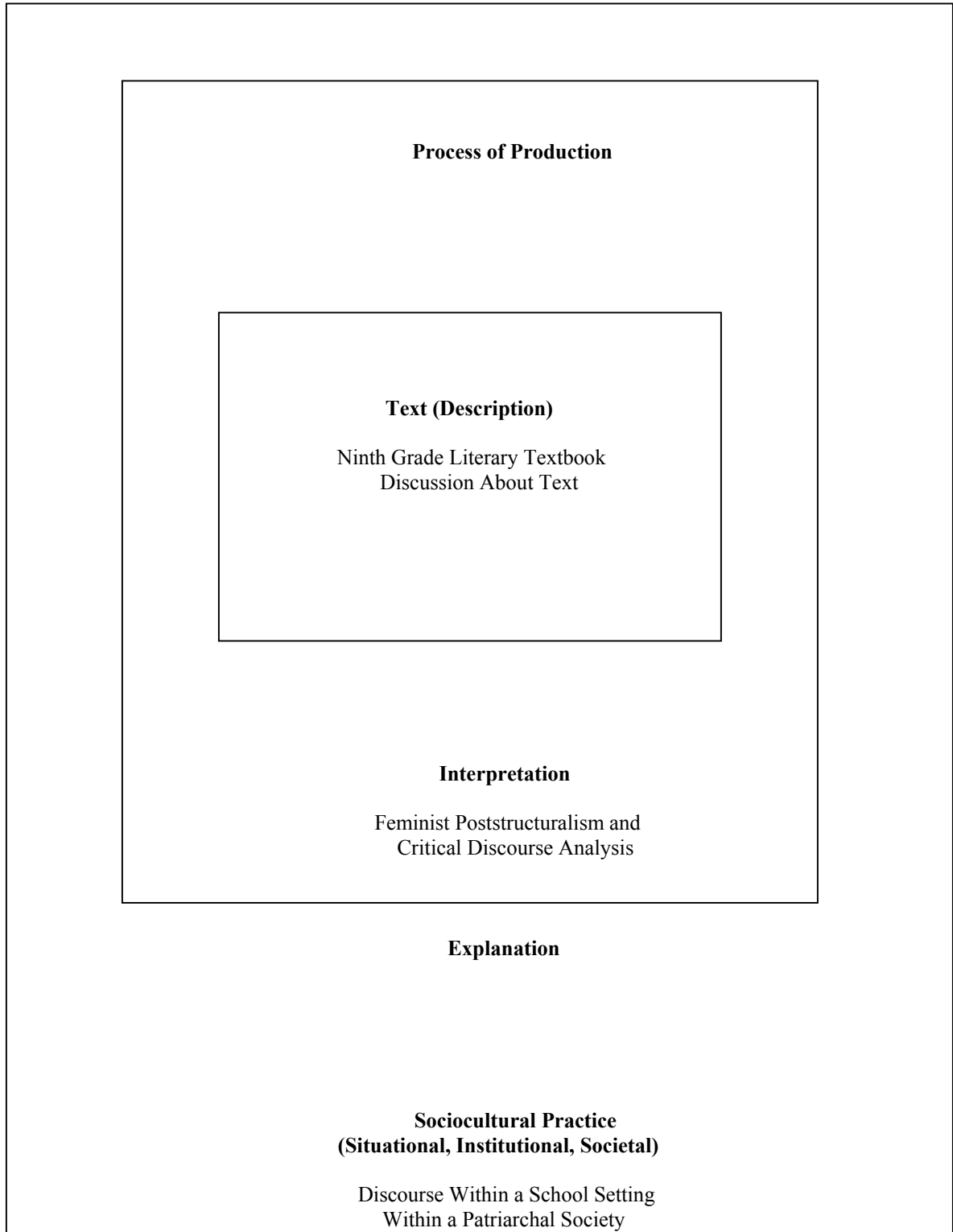
APPENDIX D

Microsoft Word Files

File #1 (Denise)	File #2 (Gerard)
Transcription of Classroom Discourse	Transcription of Classroom Discourse
Class Notes	Class Notes
Tally	Tally
Teacher Talk About Text	**Teacher Talk About Text**
Teacher Ignored:	Teacher Ignored:
Subverted:	Subverted:
Endorsed:	Endorsed:
Speaking Turn/Interruptions	**Speaking Turn/Interruptions**
Floor Access Boys:	Floor Access Boys:
Floor Access Girls:	Floor Access Girls:
Girls Interrupted Boys:	Girls Interrupted Boys:
Boys Interrupted Girls:	Boys Interrupted Girls:
Girls Interrupted Girls:	Girls Interrupted Girls:
Boys Interrupted Boys:	Boys Interrupted Boys:
Teacher Interrupted Girls:	Teacher Interrupted Girls:
Teacher Interrupted Boys:	Teacher Interrupted Boys:
Topic Control	**Topic Control**
Girls Initiate Topic:	Girls Initiate Topic:
Boys Initiate Topic:	Boys Initiate Topic:
Girls Change Topic:	Girls Change Topic:
Boys Change Topic:	Boys Change Topic:
Girls Interrupt Topic:	Girls Interrupt Topic:
Boys Interrupt Topic:	Boys Interrupt Topic:
Speaking Turn/Interruptions – Rape	**Speaking Turn/Interruptions – Rape**
Floor Access Boys:	Floor Access Boys:
Floor Access Girls:	Floor Access Girls:
Girls Interrupted Boys:	Girls Interrupted Boys:
Boys Interrupted Girls:	Boys Interrupted Girls:
Girls Interrupted Girls:	Girls Interrupted Girls:
Boys Interrupted Boys:	Boys Interrupted Boys:
Teacher Interrupted Girls:	Teacher Interrupted Girls:
Teacher Interrupted Boys:	Teacher Interrupted Boys:
Topic Control – Rape	**Topic Control – Rape**
Girls Initiate Topic:	Girls Initiate Topic:

Boys Initiate Topic: Girls Change Topic: Boys Change Topic: Girls Interrupt Topic: Boys Interrupt Topic: Interview Data	Boys Initiate Topic: Girls Change Topic: Boys Change Topic: Girls Interrupt Topic: Boys Interrupt Topic: Interview Data

APPENDIX E

Forms of Data Collected and Type of Analysis

Question	Data Source	Analysis
In what way does the teacher's discussion about the gendered characters serve to ignore, subvert, or endorse the gendered message in the text?	Text Classroom Discourse	Textual Analysis CDA
In what ways does the teachers' discussion about the gendered characters serve to relegate girls and boys to a powerful/powerless position?	Text Classroom Discourse	CDA
In what ways do students discuss the gendered characters with regards to the way in which they are portrayed (in a progressive or a traditional manner)	Text Classroom Discourse	CDA
In what ways to do the students' discussion about the gendered characters in the text serve to relegate themselves and other students to a powerful/powerless position?	Text Classroom Discourse	CDA: (speaking turns, interruptions, topic control)
What are teachers' beliefs and attitudes with regards to gender and literacy?	Interview	CDA

APPENDIX F

Textual Analysis Coding Scheme (Example)

"Pa, when can we go a huntin?" Joey yelled.   "T"

 Pa, smiling, said, "You let me worry bout that now. I told ya I'd let you know   "T"

when we can go. Not the right season just yet. Ma, where's dinner. This here

boy need to eat or he'll never grow."

"Now, you men always talkin bout huntin. You'd think that's all you was   "T"

 interested in. I fixed ya'll a nice meal - now eat" said Ma impatiently.

The baby starts crying. Pa says, "I'll go take care of Sunny. Maybe he just lonely." "P"

APPENDIX G

Coding Schemes

Transcript Coding Scheme

"TE"   – Teacher's discussion endorses gendered representation in text
"TI"   – Teacher's discussion ignores gendered representation in text
"TS"   – Teacher's discussion subverts the gendered representation in text
"TN"   – Teacher's discussion neutral
"SSG"   - Student's (girl) discourse subverts gender representation
"SSB"   - Student's (boy) discourse subverts gender representation
"SQG"   - Student's (girl) discourse questions gender representation
"SQB"   - Student's (boy) discourse questions gender representation
"GDN"   – Girl discussion neutral
"BDN"   – Boy discussion neutral
"BINT" - Boy initiate topic
"GINT" - Girl initiate topic
"BIT"   - Boy interrupt topic
"GIT"   - Girl interrupt topic
"BCT"   - Boy change topic
"GCT"   - Girl change topic
"BDR"   - Boy discuss rape
"GDR"   - Girl discuss rape
"GSR"   - Girl subvert rape
"BSR"   - Boy subvert rape
"GER"   - Girl endorse rape
"BER"   - Boy endorse rape
"BDI"   - Boy discuss infidelity
"GDI"   - Girl discuss infidelity
"BDO"   – Boy discuss Odysseus
"GDO"   – Girl discuss Odysseus
"BDC"   - Boy discuss Calypso
"GDC"   - Girl discuss Calypso
"BDC"   - Boy discuss Circe
"GDC"   - Girl discuss Circe
"BDA"   - Boy discuss Agamemnon
"GDA"   - Girl discuss Agamemnon
"BDM"   - Boy discuss maids
"GDM"   – Girl discuss maids
"BAF"   - Boy given access to the floor
"GAF"   - Girl given access to the floor
"TIB"   - Teacher interrupts boy
"TIG"   - Teacher interrupts girl
"GIN"   - Girl interrupts
"BIN"   - Boy interrupts
"GW"   - Girl waving

"BW" -   Boy waving

Text Coding Scheme

"P" Character represented in a "progressive" manner
"T" Character represented in a "traditional" manner

Interview Coding Scheme

"TIT" -   Teacher One (Donna) responds traditionally
"TIP" -   Teacher One (Donna) responds progressively
"T2T" -   Teacher Two (Gerard) responds traditionally
"T2P" -   Teacher Two (Gerard) responds progressively

APPENDIX H

Classroom Transcript Coding Scheme (Example)

Teacher: Did any one have any questions?

Girl {hand raised}   .   GAF

Teacher: Yes?

Girl: Morris' girl. Did she, is she, how did she come up with this great idea if   GCT

she's just a girl. I mean, didn't, doesn't it say that she, that the idea was hers. She

came up with this [SQG

Teacher: [She's not important, she's just mentioned, not really a character.   TRI

Girl: But she came up with this [

Boy: [What about the helicopter pilot, how could   BCT

he have such firing power?

Teacher: Helicopters are powerful. When I was in the Marines I flew a helicopter.

APPENDIX I

Students' Power and Positioning Tallies

Donna's Class:
Teacher – Talk about Text
Ignored: 25
Subverted: 16
Endorsed: 45
Speaking Turns/Interruptions
    Speaking Turns Boys: 717
    Speaking Turns Girls: 510
    Girls Interrupted Boys: 14
    Girls Interrupted Girls: 7
    Boys Interrupted Boys: 28
    Boys Interrupted Girls: 45
    Teacher Interrupted Girls: 33
    Teacher Interrupted Boys: 20
Topic Control
    Girls Initiate Topic: 9
    Boys Initiate Topic: 12
    Girls Change Topic: 25
    Boys Change Topic: 28
    Boys Interrupt Topic: 10
    Girls Interrupt Topic: 11
Speaking Turns/Interruptions During Rape Discussions:
    Speaking Turns Boys: 33
    Speaking Turns Girls: 62
    Girls Interrupted Boys: 10
    Girls Interrupted Girls: 3
    Boys Interrupted Boys: 2
    Boys Interrupted Girls: 2
    Teacher Interrupted Girls: 4
    Teacher Interrupted Boys: 2
Topic Control During Rape Discussions:
    Girls Initiate Topic: 6
    Boys Initiate Topic: 3
    Girls Change Topic: 8
    Boys Change Topic: 6
    Boys Interrupt Topic: 3
    Girls Interrupt Topic: 4

Gerard's Class:
Teacher – Talk about Text
Ignored: 12
Subverted: 52
Endorsed: 16
Speaking Turns/Interruptions

Speaking Turns Boys: 291
Speaking Turns Girls: 252
Girls Interrupted Boys: 10
Girls Interrupted Girls: 5
Boys Interrupted Boys: 11
Boys Interrupted Girls: 14
Teacher Interrupted Girls: 8
Teacher Interrupted Boys: 6

Topic Control

Girls Initiate Topic: 14
Boys Initiate Topic: 15
Girls Change Topic: 13
Boys Change Topic: 23
Boys Interrupt Topic: 16
Girls Interrupt Topic: 9

Speaking Turns/Interruptions During Rape Discussions:

Speaking Turns Boys: 30
Speaking Turns Girls: 58
Girls Interrupted Boys: 8
Girls Interrupted Girls: 3
Boys Interrupted Boys: 2
Boys Interrupted Girls: 3
Teacher Interrupted Girls: 1
Teacher Interrupted Boys: 1

Topic Control During Rape Discussions:

Girls Initiate Topic: 7
Boys Initiate Topic: 5
Girls Change Topic: 8
Boys Change Topic: 4
Boys Interrupt Topic: 3
Girls Interrupt Topic: 8

ATTACHMENT 1

Parents' Consent Form

A Qualitative Study Examining Classroom Discourse
Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

Dear Mr. And Mrs./Ms. _____

Description: Your child is invited to participate in a research study on classroom discourse in ninth grade. The researcher wishes to discover the manner in which the teacher and students respond to issues of gender in an English textbook. Your child's teacher and the students in her/his class will participate in this study. This study will involve the researcher observing the teacher and students interacting with each other and the discussion of the English textbook they use. One interview will be conducted of the teacher. No students will be interviewed in the study. The observations will occur for approximately 10 hours during the course of two weeks. The observations will be audio taped for the purpose of maintaining accurate records. These tapes will only be used by personnel involved in this study.

Risks and benefits: While there are no foreseeable risks associated with the study, there is always a slight chance that a subject's identity will be discovered. Every precaution, however, will be taken to insure confidentiality. Possible benefits from the study include the fact that the results from the study could help insure gender equity in schools and inform future teaching methods.

Time involvement: Your child's participation in this study will take no more than 10 hours.

Payments and costs: Your child's teacher will receive a one hundred dollar gift certificate to Borders bookstore to purchase books for the class library. There are no costs for you associated with your child's participation.

Subject's Rights: If you have read this form and have decided that your child will participate in this project, please understand that your child's participation is voluntary. **You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.**

Research products: Your child's name and organization will not be identified in any reports of the findings from this study. You will not be given a copy of this report describing the study's findings.

The principal investigator for this study is:
Carol King
214 Mountain Avenue
Summit, New Jersey 07901

If you have any questions about your child's rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at 732/932-1050 ext. 2104. Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. 3 Rutgers Plaza, New Brunswich, New Jersey 08901-8559.

Parent Signature_____

Date_____   Name_____

Signature of Investigator_____

For the purposes of accuracy, the observations will be audio recorded. By signing below you give permission to audio record your child's responses.

Parent Signature_____   Date_____

ATTACHMENT 2

Students' Consent Form

A Qualitative Study of Classroom Discourse
Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

Description: You are invited to participate in a research study on classroom discourse in a ninth grade classroom. The researchers wishes to discover the manner in which the teacher and students respond to issues of gender in an English textbook.   Your teacher and fellow classmates will participate in this study. This study will involve the researcher conducting approximately 10 hours of observation in your classroom   The observation will be audio taped for the purpose of maintaining accurate records. These tapes will only be used by personnel involved in this study. One interview will be conducted with your teacher. No students will be interviewed.

Risks and benefits: While there are no foreseeable risks associated with the study, there is always a slight chance that a subject's identity will be discovered. Every precaution, however, will be taken to insure confidentiality. Possible benefits from the study include the fact that the results from the study could help insure gender equity in schools and inform future teaching methods.

Time involvement: Your participation in this study will take no more than 10 hours.

Payments and costs: Your teacher will receive a one hundred dollar gift certificate to Borders to purchase books for the class library. There are no costs for you associated with your participation.

Subject's Rights: If you have read this form and have decided that you will participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary. **You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.**

Research products: Your name and organization will not be identified in any reports of the findings from this study. You will be given a copy of this report describing the study's findings.

The principal investigator for this study is:
Carol King
214 Mountain Avenue
Summit, New Jersey 07901

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at 732/932-1050 ext. 2104. Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. 3 Rutgers Plaza, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901-8559.

Student Signature_____

Date_____

Name_____ Witness _____

Signature of Investigator_____ Parent Signature_____

For the purposes of accuracy, the observations will be audio recorded. By signing below
you give permission to audio record your responses.

Student Signature_____ Date_____

ATTACHMENT 3

Teacher Consent Form

A Qualitative Study of Classroom Discourse
Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

Dear Mr./Ms. _____

Description: You are invited to participate in a research study on classroom discourse in a ninth grade classroom. The researcher wishes to discover the manner in which the teacher and students respond to characters in an English textbook.   You and your students will participate in this study. This study will involve the researcher conducting approximately 10 hours of observation in your classroom   Notes will be taken by the researchers and the observation will be audio taped for the purpose of maintaining accurate records. These tapes will only be used by personnel involved in this study. Additionally, one interview will be conducted of the teacher to determine her/his views of gender issues in literacy practices.

Risks and benefits: While there are no foreseeable risks associated with your study, there is always a slight chance that a subject's identity will be discovered.   Every precaution, however, will be taken to insure confidentiality. Possible benefits from the study include the fact that the results from the study could help inform future teaching methods. Additionally, you will be provided with a one hundred dollar gift certificate to Borders bookstore to purchase books for your class library.

Time involvement: Your participation in this study will take no more than 10 hours.

Payments and costs: You will receive a one hundred gift certificate to Borders bookstore. There are no costs for you associated with your participation.

Subject's Rights: If you have read this form and have decided that you will participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary. **You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.**

Research products: Your name and organization will not be identified in any reports of the findings from this study. You will not be given a copy of this report describing the study's findings.

The principal investigator for this study is:
Carol King
214 Mountain Avenue
Summit, New Jersey 07901

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at 732/932-1050 ext. 2104.

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. 3 Rutgers Plaza, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901-8559.

Teacher Signature_____

Date_____

Name_____

Signature of Investigator_____

For the purposes of accuracy, the observations will be audio recorded. By signing below you give permission to audio record your responses.

Teacher Signature_____ Date_____

ATTACHMENT 4

Introduction to Class

Good afternoon, may name is Carol King and I'm a researcher at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. I will be conducting a study on classroom discourse in a ninth grade language arts classroom to determine how the teacher discusses the characters and how students respond to the textbook and the discussion about the text. I will observe the exchange of ideas, by both teacher and students, about one of the stories in the text you are reading. I will be taking notes to be used in my research. I will also, separately, conduct an interview with your teacher. I will also provide you with consent forms for both you and your parents to sign. I would appreciate it if you would return them within the next week. Thank you for your attention and I look forward to observing your classroom discussion.

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