

**A GENDERED APPROACH TO MEDIA
NARRATIVES WITHIN THE ENGLISH
CLASSROOM AT SECONDARY SCHOOL
LEVEL.**

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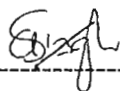
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DECLARATION

I, AKASHNIE SINGH, DECLARE THAT THIS RESEARCH PROJECT IS MY OWN WORK. THIS PROJECT HAS NOT BEEN SUBMITTED BEFORE FOR ANY DEGREE OR EXAMINATION IN ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY.



AKASHNIE SINGH

DURBAN, 15 TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 1999.

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INTRODUCTION

Sexism is constantly evident in the media in the treatment and representation of women, in the still dominant use of patriarchal discourses, and in its institutional subordination of women within the media. The perusal of virtually any media text will testify to the continuing dominance of patriarchal discourses and practices (Masterman 1985:211).

We live in a world where the media are omnipresent and the "experience of most of us is saturated by the media, no matter how resistant we take ourselves to be to their influence" (Masterman 1985:3). The media help to shape our ideas, thinking, perceptions, morals and values by providing us with ways of seeing and understanding the world. The media are 'consciousness industries' (1) (Masterman 1985), which provide perspectives of understanding and creating meaning about the world. This understanding and creation of meaning shapes our perceptions, thinking and identities.

Media theorist Dallas Smyth suggests that "the prime item on the agenda of consciousness industry is producing people"

(1981:13). Subjects are produced through the representations offered by the consciousness industry.

Ideologies, identities and subject positions are proposed and developed through the discourses offered by the media. Gendered identities are constructed and perpetuated through the media representations and narratives which appear as 'natural' or 'normal' (Weedon 1987). The media carry powerful representations of gender and it is through them that our perceptions of gender are constructed, reinforced or challenged:

No representations in the written and visual media are gender-neutral. They either confirm or challenge the status quo through the ways they construct or fail to construct images of femininity and masculinity (Weedon 1987:101).

The images and sign systems offered by the media are made to appear natural and unproblematic (Weedon 1987:102). They offer us a framework to interpret differences, gender roles and power relationships.

Given the power, influence and omnipresent nature of the media, the use of the media becomes an important site which educational institutions, like schools, possess to challenge inequalities, patriarchal discourses and practices in media texts.

Although schools are responsible for perpetuating, reproducing and reinforcing (cf reproduction theorists: Bowles & Gintis 1976 and Bourdieu 1977) gendered identities, sex roles and ideologies through its structure, curriculum, classroom behaviour and interaction, it is within this institutional setting that there are avenues for resistance, negotiation and contestation (Gilbert and Taylor 1991). The critical investigation of media texts is but one strategy that can be implemented to challenge inequalities, patriarchal discourses and practices.

The Gender Task Team believe that:

one of the most important things about the acquisition and reinforcement of sexist ideas that takes place in schools is that scholars learn about them in an unexamined manner (1997:77).

This reports acknowledges that gender is not an area of concern or scrutiny in schools and in particular the classroom.

In line with this position, the central question informing this study is :

How can meanings, particularly in relation to gender, be critically negotiated in media texts within the English classroom ?

In undertaking this study, theoretical insights in relation to gender, pedagogy, critical literacy and media will be drawn upon. Feminisms and its different theories, poststructuralism, feminist poststructuralism, the different strands in English teaching, critical pedagogy, critical literacy and its principles as well as media theory inform the theoretical areas of this study.

By proposing the above research question, the study aims to:

- Develop a theoretically informed approach of how teaching about the media can provide "a long - awaited injection of critical and radical thinking" (Masterman 1985:256), especially about gender and how meanings around gender can be critically negotiated in media texts.
- Explore ways in which students can re-look at gender constructions and become increasingly aware of how their own gender identity is fashioned, through the use of popular media texts.
- Show that "while schooling is an important site for reproduction of gender relations, it is also a site for intervention and change (Gilbert & Taylor 1991:129). Avenues and spaces (Gilbert & Taylor 1991) can be created for intervention and change by employing a gendered approach to texts in the classroom, engaging learners actively, changing teaching styles and by using exciting resources and materials.

In order to suggest possible classroom pedagogy, a theoretical framework for classroom pedagogy is identified that draws on a range of theories (poststructuralism, critical pedagogy, critical literacy and media theory) and how these theories can be used and adapted in classroom pedagogy and practice.

The Gender Equity Task Team of South Africa (1997) advocates more research in the area of gender and education. Therefore it is hoped that this study will contribute to the literature on gender and education, as there is very little research done in this area.

PREVIEW OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER ONE motivates for a feminist poststructuralist position in relation to the media.

CHAPTER TWO presents a overview of the different approaches in English teaching, to motivate for a critical literacy approach. It includes identifying links between critical pedagogy, poststructuralism and critical media education.

CHAPTER THREE is concerned with media discourse in relation to gender and so chooses to focus upon two areas of media studies, namely representation and narrative.

CHAPTER FOUR suggests a teaching module which demonstrates how the theoretical areas can be translated into concrete classroom practice.

The **CONCLUSION** collates the strands of the research and provides some recommendations.

Notes:

(1) The term 'consciousness industry' was coined by the Frankfurt School. The label of the 'Frankfurt School' is usually applied to the collective thought of those theorists - most notably, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Max Horkheimer - associated with the Institute for Social Research founded in Frankfurt in 1923. For the Frankfurt School, the media define the very terms in which we are able to 'think' (or not 'think') the world (Gurevitch et al 1982:44).

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

PERSPECTIVES IN FEMINISM

To develop strategies for teaching about gendered representations in the media requires that a gendered framework for media analysis be established. In this chapter, I shall develop the feminist position that informs this work by reference to a discussion of feminist theories that it responds to and their implications for media analysis before addressing media theory in the next chapter.

Feminism is not a singular construct and is articulated within different theories and perspectives (Tong 1989). These feminist theories have variously addressed patriarchy and the question of women's subordination. They are concerned with how and why subordination is perpetuated and how it might change. Feminist theories provide guides to understanding gender inequality and guides to action. Their political motivation is to transform patriarchy. Weedon refers to patriarchy as: "power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men" (1987:2). These power relations exist in all spheres of our lives. They are evident in social practices,

division of labour and most importantly play out in institutional sites. Institutions, like the family, school and media, are responsible to a large extent for perpetuating patriarchal power and patriarchal discourses.

Whilst there are different theories and perspectives on women's subordination, there are also corresponding debates among feminists of the representation of gender in the media. For the purpose of this study, the discussion will confine itself to three positions; namely the liberal, marxist and radical positions. These positions are considered to provide an adequate overview of the different perspectives held by feminists on the portrayal of gender in the media. The ensuing discussion will encapsulate these different theories that have contributed to feminist thought and how these versions have considered the role of the media. Thereafter a poststructuralist feminist position will be proposed as this study elects to work from a poststructuralist position and will explain this decision in relation to other feminist positions.

Within the liberal feminist position, the most important factor in achieving women's liberation is sexual equality or 'gender justice' (Tong 1989:28). According to Tong (1989), these feminists (Betty Friedan et al) advocate that gender stereotyping has been responsible for instilling oppressive roles and that women should be freed from such roles which

have been "used as excuses or justifications for giving women a lesser place" (Tong 1989:28). Liberal feminists argue that patriarchal society views women as being ideally suited only for certain occupations and restricts them from pursuing male dominated occupations. It is this restriction of occupation that inhibits individual freedom, reinforces stereotypes and creates unequal opportunities for both sexes.

This position holds that institutions, like the media, in a patriarchal society serve generally to reinforce or offer oppressive and restrictive roles to women:

media and other cultural forms encourage men and women to adopt behaviour that reinforces gender specific roles and to internalize the appropriateness of this as part of their own sense of identity (Macdonald 1995:13).

In relation to the media, a research focus would be on stereotyping and the images provided of women in the media (example Meehan in Kaplan 1987). Theorists have identified 'negative' and 'positive' stereotypes and they argue for positive stereotypes and that the media must be 'realistic' in its portrayal of the world (Macdonald 1995). Content analysis becomes an important element of research to identify the stereotypes and limited roles offered to women in the media. Meehan's (1995) analysis of television programmes which

focuses on kinds and frequency of female roles, is an example that reflects the main concerns of liberal feminist analysis of the media.

Three criticisms can be levelled at this approach. First, it does not make problematic what constitutes a positive stereotype. For example, there is nothing essentially negative about the portrayal of woman as mother or positive of woman as construction worker.

Second, although content analysis highlights which images and roles recur frequently, it neglects to consider the processes or structures that are responsible for producing such images.

Third, liberal feminists advocate for the 'realistic' portrayal of women in the media. However, they neglect to consider that in the first place no media 'reflect' society. The media are not a 'window on the world' but the result of processes of selection and construction where certain representations are more dominant than others. It overlooks the fact that a reflection, in any case, would present women in the subordinate roles of our patriarchal society.

If the main concern of liberal feminists is the restricted and oppressive roles offered to women, then institutions like the family should also be an area of scrutiny. Within the structure of the family, gendered or sex roles are constructed and developed. However, liberal feminists neglect to offer a

rigorous critique of the family and the family and its structure is taken for granted.

The discussion on marxist feminists focuses on two areas, namely the family and capitalism. In contrast to the liberal position, marxist feminists hold that the institution of the family is an economic unit whose structure serves to uphold capitalism. Although there are varying arguments among marxists feminists, they reach consensus that the unit of family and its structure should be destroyed (Tong 1989:61). It is argued that the division of labour in the family within a capitalist economy results in women being confined to domestic work which is trivialized. The responsibility of domestic work restricts women from entering into the public sphere. Women's economic well being is seen as the key to women's liberation.

Margaret Benston (in Tong 1989:54), claims that only by being free from the burden of housework can women attain freedom to enter the work place. Costa and James (in Tong 1989:179) view domestic work as productive and initiate the idea of wages for housework. The socializing of housework and childcare is advocated so that women can gain entry into the work force.

Whereas liberal feminists view the media as an agent which is largely responsible for reflecting attitudes and realities and which has potential importance for the eradication of embedded

sex roles, the main concern of marxist feminists is the media's role in upholding and sustaining capitalism through the portrayal of women in traditional and restricted roles of wife and mother which in turn reinforces patriarchy. The media is viewed as a capitalist institution (Kaplan 1987).

Kaplan looks at how, for example, television upholds capitalism and notes that its:

reliance on constructing numbers of viewers as commodities involves reproducing female images that accomodate prevailing (and dominant) conceptions of 'woman', particularly as these satisfy certain economic needs (1987:223).

She contends that gendered identities and changing subjectivities are influenced by consumerism through the media's powerful representations of men and women.

Lillian Robinson's (1976 in Kaplan) work on television reflects how the images of women are confined to motherhood or low status jobs and that the images of women are "one of the factors that influence the consciousness of women" (Kaplan 1987:224). These images are deemed responsible for developing what would be termed a 'false consciousness' (Kaplan 1987:224). The media articulates "the male-centred ideology of capitalism in an unconscious way" (Trowler 1988:102).

Critiques have been levelled at this approach that argue that capitalism, the means of production and ownership are considered to be the underlying factors of women's oppression and the elimination of capitalism is seen as necessary for women's liberation. Jaggar's critique of marxist feminism (in Tong 1989) point out that if "the elimination of capitalism is truly necessary for women's liberation, why then have the lives of women in socialist nations not been substantially transformed?" (Tong 1989:65). For Jaggar, socialism cannot claim to eliminate gender oppression. The achieving of economic independence does not necessarily mean that women are freed from patriarchal domination, especially in the media.

In a shift from the economic determinants, radical feminist positions propose patriarchy and women's biology as fundamental forms of oppression (like Shulamith Firestone 1970 in Tong). According to Millet (1970 in Tong):

patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have the dominant, or 'masculine' roles and that women always have the subordinate, or 'feminine' ones" (1970:96).

Within this position, the prime focus is on issues of sexuality and motherhood. Radical feminists propose several ways to free women from the cage of femininity and to escape from the sexual domination of men (Tong 1989:95). Men, it is

argued, control women's bodies through reproduction, sexuality and motherhood. Therefore, women would be required to re-conceive and re-imagine their sexuality in new ways and to regain control of their bodies.

This position suggests that women's sexuality is controlled through institutions in society, that institutions, like the family, school and media serve men's needs. The media is male dominated:

men hold dominant positions throughout the media and are able to use them to reflect the images of women which they desire (Trowler 1988:101).

The radical position accepts a manipulative model of the media (Trowler 1988) which argues that a select few own and control the media and its content, that bias in the media is deliberate and that the maintaining of the status quo of society is essential.

Carol Aschur's (1976 in Kaplan) work on television reflects a radical position. Her analysis of the media concentrates on how the media depicts women in traditional family life which is the key to all oppression and domination of women. The depiction and images of women as housewives, confined to their home, in for example soap operas, promises that "the life the women is in can fulfill her needs" (in Kaplan 1987:227). For

Aschur, such images of women in the media are debasing and should be challenged.

This position has been found wanting in certain respects.

By attributing women's biology as one of the most important factors in women's oppression, radical feminists assume that women's biology leads to a fixed and definite female psychology (Tong 1989:128). In analysing feminist positions, Jaggar's (in Tong) contention about women's biology is that it "is not in and of itself a prescription for her gender and sexuality; at most it is a recommendation" (1989:128). The implication of Jaggar's statement is that despite women's biology, her psychology, perceptions of female sexuality and moreover her subjectivity can undergo change and does not have to be fixed. This kind of understanding informs a poststructuralist position which views the subjectivity undergoing constant change.

The production of new forms of media can offer avenues to explore not only alternate readings but alternate subject positions which can change and influence fixed and definite female psychology. The feminist positions described above neglect to consider the language, discourse, power and subjectivity in the media and its influence on media representations and images. Given that the poststructuralist position accounts for multiple readings and changing

subjectivities. A poststructuralist perspective of the media is offered.

Baudrillard (cited in Kaplan 1987:247) has suggested that the television screen symbolizes a new era in which old forms of production and consumption have given way to what he calls a new "universe of communication". He sees this universe relying on connections, feedback and interface and that its processes are narcissistic and involve constant surface change. Baudrillard goes on to add that if

the television apparatus manifests a new stage of consciousness in which liberal/left humanism no longer has a place, this affects a majority of feminist positions; and feminism needs to address the changed situation....Feminists need to explore television's part in the changed and still changing relationship of self to image (ibid:247).

Even though Baudrillard concentrates on one form or example of media, his assertion holds true for most or other forms of media today.

It seems that due to the changing nature of the media, the discussions presented above on the three perspectives of feminism in relation to the media, do not adequately address the "new era", "a new universe of communication", and a "new stage of consciousness" (Baudrillard in Kaplan 1987:247). In light of the above, this study moves beyond the three feminist

positions discussed, and considers feminist poststructuralism as a feminist position that attempts to account for and explores the ever changing self.

Furthermore, even though the above theories provide perspectives of why and how women are depicted in the media and oppressed, they do not sufficiently deal with effective methods to combat this negative portrayal. The three feminist theories, do not offer an adequate understanding of why some women willingly take on subservient roles offered to them or an understanding of subjectivity, power and social institutions. Another shortfall of these theories, is their inability to consider how gendered subjectivities are constructed. This study turns to poststructuralism as it considers the relationship between language, subjectivity, discourse and power and its role in shaping and developing gendered identities.

Weedon (1987:2) explains that:

in patriarchal discourse the nature and social role of women are defined in relation to a norm which is male (1987:2).

Thus, the abovementioned feminist theories, neglect to consider or analyse how power is located in discourses and that there are strategies of power and control or resistance to power and control which are present in institutions and their practices. However, it is in the feminist

poststructuralist perspective that power and discourses become a focus, and resistance to patriarchal relations within institutions and their practices as well as strategies are considered. This feminist perspective provides possibilities of resistance and counter positions to patriarchal relations and understandings of gender.

Against the backdrop of these feminist theories I engage in more detailed discussion of the following approach on account of its complexity and because it constitutes the theoretical premise of this work. This theoretical approach to gender has been identified as poststructuralism.

Weedon sums up feminist poststructuralism as:

a mode of knowledge production which uses poststructuralist theories of language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions to understand existing power relations and to identify areas and strategies for change (1987:41).

Within the feminist poststructuralist position, language enables individuals to give meaning to the world, experience is given meaning in language through varying discursive systems and language exists in conflicting discourses. The individual is "the site of conflicting forms of subjectivity" (Weedon 1989:33) which has the potential to show change and resistance through language. Kaplan sees feminist poststructuralism as being:

the idea that we need to analyze the language order through which we learn to be what our culture calls 'women', as distinct from a group called 'men', as we attempt to bring about change beneficial to women (1987:216).

This position is considered central to this study as poststructuralist theories of language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions offer a useful part to analyse gender constructions and understandings in the media. In this light, the study utilizes feminist poststructuralism to identify areas and strategies for change in classroom practice. By describing and discussing poststructuralism, and its particular areas of concern, namely, language, subjectivity, discourse and power, I shall signal how it responds to what the above feminist theories lack to consider. Given that language, subjectivity, discourse and power are inter-related and depend on one another to create meaning, they cannot be considered in isolation.

Language

Poststructuralism draws upon Ferdinand de Saussure's understanding of language. He observed that "if words stood for pre-existing concepts, they would all have exact equivalents in meaning from one language to the next; but this is not true" (1974:116). Saussure viewed language as an

abstract system of a chain of signs. Each sign comprises of a signifier (sound and image) and a signified (meaning). There is an arbitrary relation between the signifier and signified and each sign derives meaning from its difference to all other signs. Meaning of words become possible only when placed against other signs. Although poststructuralism radically adapts Saussure's theory, it takes from Saussure that language does not have inherent meaning but signs acquire meaning through their difference and relationship with other signs, and then language proposes a potential site for struggle.

People advocating a poststructuralist position have drawn radically different insights from the work of Jacques Derrida.

Derrida (1973) moved beyond Saussure's notion that signs have stable meanings in relation to other signs and introduced the concept of 'différance'. He claimed that both the signifier and signified are unfixed and prone to a process of deferral (that is, the signifier and signified have identity only in difference from one another). Signifiers are located in a discursive context which determine meaning and seeing that signifiers are under constant deferral, meaning is only temporarily fixed. Therefore, meanings become plural and flexible. This does not mean that meanings disappear altogether but that any interpretation is temporary and specific to the discourse within which it is produced. Derrida asserted that there is 'nothing outside the text' and that the text in fact writes us (cited in Weedon 1987:25). This is

indeed a profound challenge to the widely held liberal notion of the individual because language is proposed to construct us as subjects within an interplay of meanings. The focus of this approach suggests language not as a tool to describe a real world but rather an arbitrary system which constitutes the subject. The construction of the subject within an interplay of meanings in language also offers a multiplicity of subject positions. In this way, various subject positions are offered to (among others) women. These subject positions can be both hegemonic (1) and counter hegemonic depending on the context, the interplay of meanings and the discourses operating within that discursive field.

From a poststructuralist perspective, language (2) constructs our sense of self and our identity. It is through the understanding and use of language that we are able to make sense of the world, that is, who we are and the roles we play in our society. In this way, we make sense of gender roles, acquire understanding of concepts like 'masculinity', 'femininity' and relationships by engaging in language. One's sense of self or subjectivity is socially produced and derived through the interaction with language. It is through words and signs or discourses available to us that we make sense of the world.

Language cannot be separated from lived experiences and from how people create a voice. Morgan et al (1996) states that:

language reflects the way the world already is. By the same token, the world is to an important extent the way it is because of the way our language is. Each shapes and constrains the other (1996:9).

Our lives and experiences derive meaning through language. Language and the ways in which we experience the world are connected with questions of power. Bakhtin reiterates the idea language is connected with power by stating that:

language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated-overpopulated with the intentions of others (1997:121).

Those who are powerful are able to dominate bodies or forms of knowledge. Power is also transmitted through language and its usage.

Weedon considers 'language' as:

the place where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity is constructed (1987:21).

The above quotation reinforces the idea that it is through language that meanings, forms of contestation and subjectivity

are derived but language can never be fixed or monolithic. The changing or unfixed nature of language allows for the possibility of our subjectivity undergoing change.

Subjectivity

Subjectivity is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world (Weedon 1987:32).

Language enables us to give meaning to our experiences and provides us with ways of thinking. These ways of thinking make up our consciousness and constitute our sense of self. One's sense of self is influenced by many social factors and institutions which includes the school and media. A sense of identity which is socially constructed is referred to as subjectivity, as opposed to the concept of individuality, which is produced through biology. Whilst the other feminist positions neglect to consider the effect language and discourse has on subjectivity, the poststructuralist position, views language and discourse as the ways in which our subjectivity works upon us.

According to Weedon (1987), one's subjectivity is never fixed but is constantly under going change with the different

discourses operating within language. It is through language and its discursive practices that subjectivity is articulated and constructed. Patriarchy proposes a hegemonic discourse around gender, femininity and masculinity.

In poststructuralist terms, meaning and significance are socially, culturally and historically manufactured (Weedon 1987). This implies that the concept of 'gender' is also a construction and is not intrinsic, fixed or a biological given. By extension, subjectivity, is also not absolute: the way we see ourselves and our knowledge of the world is ordered and constructed by our lived practices and representations. Texts propose positions for readers and audiences so that they come to understand its meaning in particular ways. The manner in which texts are structured frequently code and articulate gendered behaviour. In other words, particular meanings, values and behaviour are proposed or privileged by representations with which we are confronted and in this way we are positioned.

The implication of the aforementioned is that gender and subjectivity have political, economic, social and particularly ideological underpinnings. It follows then that the 'reality' represented in the media is not neutral, natural or transparent: it is operational within an ideological context and a discursive field. The media are important and powerful agents in constructing and developing our gendered identities

and subjectivities through the powerful discourses offered in representations, narratives and images.

Discourse and Power

As I have mentioned, these subjectivities are constructed within discourses. Discourse is a complex concept and is associated mostly with the writings of Foucault(eg. Foucault 1970). Discourses provide us with ways of living out meanings. They give order to our world and help us make sense of the world. Discourse incorporates notions of ideology and it is within discourses that individuals make sense of their world and lived experiences.

Any discourse is potentially powerful and it is at work in a specific time and place. Kress defines discourse as being a:

set of possible statements about a given area and organises and gives substance to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about, in that it provides descriptions, rules, permissions and prohibitions of social and individual actions (in Kenworthy 1996:1).

Discourse organises and gives structure to social practices and to any process of representation whether in written form or not (Weedon 1987:111). Language is a means of articulating

and promoting discourses. Powerful discourses therefore are likely to influence individual subjects, through language and the discourses operating within language.

Power is exercised within discourses through the construction, and governing of subjectivities. Institutional bases in our society are also controlled by as well as articulate discourses (Weedon 1987). These discourses tend to be powerful and dominant. Such discourses are often patriarchal.

The media constitutes one of the powerful discursive sites of our society. The dominant discourses in the media it is argued are powerful in that they privilege representations which validate the status quo and dominant images of patriarchy (Weedon 1987:102). "Discourses are ways of constituting knowledge" (Weedon 1987:108). Those who possess power in society are able to disseminate particular forms of knowledge and, invariably, by extension powerful discourses of knowledge and ideology.

Yet, within any discursive field, there are several possible discourses. Discourses are seen as structuring principles in society which are located in a discursive fields (Foucault in Weedon 1987:35). A discursive field offers the subject a range of subjectivities and subject positions. Consider the discourses in feminisms: even though radical, marxist and

liberal feminism contribute to feminist thought, their focus is different and they propose different subjects.

While there are competing discourses in any discursive field, they do not wield the same amount of power, and are constantly competing for power (Weedon 1987:41). In our society, patriarchal discourse is powerful and informs the hegemonic discourse. Hegemonic discourses are those that support, maintain and reproduce the status quo. Hegemonic discourses set up images of femininity and masculinity as binary oppositions, which see men as rational, strong, brave and so on and women as emotional, weak, irrational. Thus in the area of gender, discourses instill a binary divide (Kenworthy 1998). This binary opposition is evident in the media where, for example, men are shown in the public or work arena and women in the domestic or private arena.

A discourse that opposes the hegemonic, is a counter discourse and can often run parallel with the dominant discourse. Feminist works and writings are seen as counter discourses by those who advocate and uphold patriarchy.

RATIONALE FOR USING POSTSTRUCTURALISM IN THIS STUDY

Poststructuralism is a theoretical move beyond structuralism of varying kinds. Although poststructuralism borrows from structuralist theories, it goes beyond structuralism by

focusing on plurality of meanings and changing subjectivities which operate within powerful discourses. Thus, in contrast to structuralism, the poststructuralist perspective informs this study for the following reasons:

1. Within the poststructuralist position, the sign is not fixed and can undergo change according to different contexts. For the poststructuralist, it is through the unfixed nature of the sign, that meaning is open to plural interpretations and that meaning can change. According to Weedon (1987:12), it is in the poststructuralist perspective that "signifying practices consist of signs, which are ways of communicating meaning and are open to plural interpretations." Consequently, this study draws on and offers a poststructuralist position because it wishes to illustrate that it is through sign systems offered by the media that we interpret gender roles, behaviour and differences, which can be open to plural interpretations. Subjectivity is constructed and constantly being challenged by sign systems and discourses operating within certain images portrayed by the media. A feminist poststructuralist position is proposed in this study as it will by means of media texts and its critical readings, show how ways of communicating meaning is crucial and that meanings and understandings of gender can be opened to plural interpretations. The reason for locating feminist poststructuralism at the centre of this study is because the

examination and analysis of media texts invite a range of meanings and readings.

2. Secondly, poststructuralism is at the centre of this study because it does not only expose processes that sustain and uphold patriarchal ideology but also reveals ways to contest them. Weedon asserts that "a theory is useful if it is able to address the questions of how social power is exercised and how social relations of gender, class and race might be transformed" (Weedon 1987:20). In viewing language as a site of struggle and as a crucial factor in the construction of subjectivity which is constantly changing, poststructuralism offers ways in which social relations of gender can be transformed. It is in the poststructuralist perspective that language constructs our gender identities and that some attempt should be made to bring about change beneficial to women, that this study makes use of poststructuralism. Through the analysis of media texts and its inviting of a range of meanings and readings, patriarchal assumptions and ideology can be contested, challenged and reconstructed.

3. The third reason for using poststructuralism is that it is in the realm of poststructuralist thinking that language is seen as a structuring principle that articulates and constructs gendered subjectivity. It is through language that we derive an understanding of not only the world and our experiences but also our gendered identities and

subjectivities. In poststructuralist terms, the world becomes signified through elaborate codes and symbols which acquire meaning within their relation and shared context. These codes and symbols can offer a range of meanings and subject positions, therefore, even subjectivity is constantly shifting and mediated by ideological, discursive and unconscious processes (Weedon 1987).

This subjectivity undergoes constant change according to the social context. Language offers the individual a range of subject positions. This study draws on the poststructuralist understanding that there is a range of subject positions which is under constant construction and contestation.

A poststructuralist position has emerged in response to what structuralists positions did not offer (eg. changing and fluid subjectivities) and this becomes more urgent with the type of media saturation and developments which offer the subject a greater choice.

CONCLUSION

The above discussion has identified some of the limitations of feminist positions in relation to the media and advocates a poststructuralist approach that incorporates a notion of various gendered positions, changing subjectivities, plurality

of meaning and offers us an understanding of discourse and power relations.

In order to implement the poststructuralist understanding of language, subjectivity, discourse and power in the classroom, appropriate pedagogy is needed, therefore, the next chapter constructs an overview of the different versions of English teaching and learning and its implication for pedagogy.

At the centre of this discussion will be that of critical literacy, as it is a version of English teaching that this study draws on and uses in the analysis of classroom practice and recommendations. Links between critical pedagogy, poststructuralism and critical media education will be drawn on in the discussion of critical literacy.

Notes:

(1) The term hegemony was coined by Antonio Gramsci (1971). "Hegemony is leadership as much as domination across the economic, political, cultural and ideological domains of a society...Hegemony is the power over society as a whole" (Fairclough 1992:92)

(2) Language consists of chains of signs. Each sign derives its meaning from its difference from all other signs in the language chain (Weedon 1987:23).

CHAPTER TWO

THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF ENGLISH TEACHING AND THEIR RELATION TO LEARNING ABOUT MEDIA TEXTS.

As this study is concerned with strategies that might best develop gender sensitive approaches in an English classroom, I am concerned with the two central areas of gender and pedagogy.

Giroux (1992), whose work has focused upon resistant or critical education, provides the following account of pedagogy:

Pedagogy is, in part, a technology of power, language and practice that produces and legitimates forms of moral and political regulation, that construct and offer human beings particular views of themselves and the world...To invoke the importance of pedagogy is to raise questions not simply about how students learn but also how educators construct ideological and political positions from which they speak (1992:81).

Pedagogy is implicated in constructing and offering an understanding of the world, the formation of subject positions, ideology and learning processes. One element of shaping the subject must therefore incorporate gendered subject positions. Given that pedagogy propose and privilege particular subject positions, the nature and type of pedagogy must be recognized as an important area within education. Within English teaching, (or any other field), different paradigms and orientations exist. These in turn engage different pedagogies which have implications for gender. The following discussion will attempt to construct an overview of the different versions of English teaching in relation to their assumptions and the nature of their practice. Included in the discussion on each version of English teaching, will be the implication for pedagogy, implicit theories, and their relation to media texts.

I shall discuss the different versions of English teaching that theorists have identified. The different versions of English teaching that will be discussed are: skills based learning, cultural heritage, personal growth and critical literacy. Although different pedagogies have implications for gender, it is only the critical literacy approach that explicitly accounts for gender whilst the other approaches neglect to consider the interaction of pedagogy and gender.

Skills Based Learning

Skills based learning was the prevalent version of English teaching as early as the 19th century, with the introduction of mass elementary schooling. The central focus within this version of English teaching was on grammar and language skills:

The skills model...regards the procedural, mechanical skills of decoding and scribing written language...as both necessary and sufficient for the full control of literacy (Christie 1991:30).

These skills were seen to be adequate for basic literacy which entailed reading and writing. As this version of English teaching includes decoding and scribing, it is also known as functional literacy. The functional literacy or skills approach falls into a traditional or prescriptive model of teaching and learning (Stables 1992). In the traditional prescriptive model, "the accent is very much on the cognitive - on grammar as a thing to be learnt" (Stables 1992:8). Thus areas of study include parts of speech, sentence parsing and analysis, spelling and handwriting. A strong factual content base dominates the teaching and learning of reading and writing within this version of English teaching.

Based upon particular assumptions in relation to learning, the learner is understood to be a passive recipient of knowledge and in relation to language, rules and skills, are learnt via a transmission mode. The tasks are "closed tasks with right answers which can be arrived at by learning the rules" (Stables 1992:9). Thus emphasis is placed on technical procedures of reading and writing which does not propose for creative or critical thinking.

Within this version of English teaching, media texts are employed as a source of information and would merely be responsible for disseminating information. The use and analysis of media texts would be confined to comprehension skills to establish whether there is understanding of information. No critical analysis or concern for meaning in language would offered.

Cultural Heritage

This version of English became significant in the twentieth century with the spread of mass secondary education in England and Britain. Literature gained prominence and dominated this version of English teaching for several reasons: Arnold, poet and inspector of schools in England in the nineteenth century, viewed the teaching of English literature as an appropriate way of civilising people (Christie 1991). Literature was

envisaged to have a role in preventing social disruption, domesticating the working class and preventing the breakdown of law and order (Ball 1990). English literature was seen to be responsible for unifying the nation and "which would provide an effective vehicle to replace traditional roles and moral training" (Ball 1990:49). Literature was significant in civilising people and as being the cornerstone of culture.

F.R Leavis (working in Cambridge in the 1920's and 1930's) developed Arnold's ideas and extended the traditions of English literature teaching to tertiary and secondary level English in the twentieth century. The development of English literature in schools and universities developed opportunities for students to read literature to admire great works of literature but did not provide opportunities for students "to analyse literary texts, or to attempt to write these themselves" (Christie 1991:18).

The implication for pedagogy within a cultural heritage view emphasizes the need for schools to encourage pupils to appreciate works of literature. These works are considered to be the finest and worthy of study. This version of English draws attention to the importance of 'good' literature and is best summed up by the slogan "in reading we converse with the wise" (Christie 1991:2). The children's lived cultural experiences is not valued and given any worth, however, the

cultural experiences of writers and that of literature texts were valued and highly regarded.

In relation to media texts, this version of English teaching view media texts as "debilitating and degrading" (Leavis in Stables 1992:17). Given that the advocates of this version of English teaching (Leavis, Richards and Arnold), view literature as being academically rigorous and promoting high culture, media texts would not be worthy of study and would not be considered literary texts. Media texts would be viewed as low culture and would be discriminated against (Masterman 1985). Any classroom engagement would aim at protecting the learners from their perceived ill effects.

However, Stables argues that:

Within, English, media texts should be given the same kind of treatment as literary texts, on the assumption that the 'reading' of them can have positive consequences for our development, both as individuals and as thinking members of society (1992:34/35).

Personal Growth

The emergence of this approach is associated with an English conference on teaching held at Dartmouth College UK in 1966.

The focus was with individual growth through the exploration and investigation of language, reading and writing. John Dixon (1967), believed that language and personal growth are indivisible and that language competence develops through the use of language. For Dixon, the growth model "while acknowledging the values of literature teaching, stressed the significance of children's own experience, and it placed a strong emphasis on writing about personal and imaginative writing" (Christie 1991:203). The personal growth model gives value to the individual response and feeling.

In its report in 1989, the Cox Committee, defines the personal growth view as one that focuses on the child. It emphasizes the relationship between language and learning in the individual child and the role of literature in developing children's imaginative and aesthetic lives. The personal growth or expressivist position is child centred in that the pupil is active and is involved in creating material which forms part of the content of the learning area.

The emphasis in this perspective of English teaching is on language for personal growth by means of the individual seen as "growing" while developing personal meanings and on individuals constructing their own meanings. The aim was for pupils to grow as individuals through exploring language and literature and the content of English was to develop this

growth. For Christie (cited in Green 1997), the growth model that emerged actually promised more than it could ever really deliver, in terms of an improved pedagogy for the teaching of English. She sees two reasons for this:

First the growth model had an essentially romantic notion of the individual, conceived in some idealized sense as "growing" while developing personally important meanings and it failed to acknowledge the social nature of human existence.....the model focused primarily on persons constructing their "own" meanings in an idealized way, its effect was to deflect attention from the nature of language itself (Christie cited in Green 1997:12).

Whilst some critics see this model as placing the learner at the centre of the curriculum where learning is transforming information into personalized understandings, others see this model limiting meaning to be restricted by one's background and socio historical context (Christie 1991). Greater exposure to the world and experiences will enable more complex understandings, however, if a learner has not had the broad opportunities of other privileged learners then growth and understandings might be more limited.

The pedagogy implied by this model appears to focus on individual learning and discovery rather than on teacher instructed activities. This model is criticised for moving away from explicit teaching by the teacher and merely required the teacher to act as a facilitator. Edwards and Mercer (in Christie) critique this model because "it offered students far too little direction in their learning, and was confused about what teaching and learning actually involved" (1987:19).

Literary texts are privileged within this version of English teaching. These texts are considered worthy of study as opposed to media texts. In relation to media texts, no framework of critical analysis was offered.

Critical approach

The versions of English discussed above are informed by humanist ideas and consequently are concerned with the individual and not social power. It is not their concern to draw attention to the role of the written and spoken language in organising, maintaining, resisting and challenging social power. In contrast, critical literacy, through its focus on various textual and discursive practices, attempts to offer understandings and resistance to social power.

Drawing from poststructuralist research, Gilbert (1989) argues a model of English teaching, that is, "one which recognises that experience, knowledge, information and values are constructed in various textual or discursive practices" (in Christie 1991:18), so that, a social critical literacy can be developed where individuals are able to critique and challenge. This model of English teaching emanates out of poststructuralist theory and research (Christie 1991) and informs critical literacy.

Lankshear contends that:

Critical literacy is concerned with enabling us to take particular texts and explore the ways in which these texts are implicated in making the world the way it is; and in 'coercing' us to see the world in certain ways rather than others (cited in Prinsloo 1997:11).

Critical literacy involves the production, reproduction and critical interpretation of texts. Discourses operating in texts 'coerce' us or propose that we read texts in specific ways. One of Paulo Freire's concerns with reading was that, one should "read the world and not simply the word" (1987). The act of reading involves literacy but in order to read the world, critical literacy is required. Reading the world entails understanding the discourses that operate within the

world we live in. The world is composed of competing discourses (some hegemonic), that inform our perceptions, subjectivities and gendered identities. This understanding of discourse emanates from the poststructuralist position informed primarily by Foucault's work, which is dealt with in poststructuralism in chapter one.

In order to apply the ideas and principles expoused by critical literacy, critical pedagogy is needed. Critical literacy invokes critical pedagogy. The following discussion will briefly consider critical pedagogy and interwoven with this exposition will be links and similarities between critical pedagogy and poststructuralism.

Giroux argues that:

school and curriculum practices not only serve the interests of dominant groups, but contain within them, because of human agency, possibilities of emancipation(in Gibson 1986:60).

The central aim of Giroux's critical theory is to construct a critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy advocates an understanding of schooling that instills empowerment and self transformation in pupils' thinking and lives. The pedagogic process implicated in this

version is not where learners are passive recipients and meanings are fixed and non-negotiable. It is a process of active participation where meanings are open to plural interpretations. Giroux (1992) in discussing the principles of critical pedagogy suggests that curriculum knowledge should not be considered sacred but that a variety of readings and interpretations should be allowed. The invitation of a range of meanings within critical pedagogy can be linked to one of the grounding principles of poststructuralism:

Signifying practices consist of signs, which are ways of communicating meaning and are open to plural interpretations (Weedon 1987:12).

Giroux (1984) sees critical pedagogy as "providing conditions for changing subjectivity" and that an "essential aspect of critical pedagogy centres around the need for students to interrogate critically" (1984:319). Critical pedagogy makes attempts to understand how forms of subjectivity are regulated and transformed through language, discourse and power. This poststructuralist understanding of subjectivity proposes: "the individual is always a site of conflicting forms of subjectivity" (Weedon 1987:33), subjectivity is contradictory, unstable and subjectivity is influenced by discourse and power:

different discourses provide a range of modes of subjectivity and the ways in which particular discourses constitute subjectivity have implications for the process of reproducing or contesting power relations (Weedon 1987:92).

Power functions through discourse most effectively when it appears to be absent, similarly, pedagogy can act to control individuals without them even being aware of it. The importance of understanding the relationship between power and discourse for critical pedagogy is that it provides a basis for clearer understanding of how different discourses are inscribed in forms of educational discourse through which school and classroom practices are constituted. Within schools, discourses produce, perpetuate and legitimate ideology, values, morals, subjectivity and appropriate social behaviour. Although poststructuralism contends that the most powerful discourses in our society have firm institutional bases (example schools), these "dominant discourses governing the organization and practices of social institutions are under constant challenge" (Weedon 1987:109).

A central concern highlighted in the principles of critical pedagogy (Giroux 1992:74) is that educators must attempt to understand how different discourses offer students diverse ethics for structuring their relationships in wider society

Schools are often seen as sites of cultural reproduction, reproduction of gender relations as well as reproduction of gender inequalities (Bourdieu 1977, Bowles and Gintis 1976). Often classroom practices are responsible for such a reproduction, therefore it is hoped by adopting feminist pedagogical practices and the integration of feminist poststructuralism and critical pedagogy that schools and classrooms become a starting place for effecting change.

Given that critical literacy and critical pedagogy advocate for the critical interpretation of texts, active learning processes, plural interpretations of texts, and democratic learning processes, the use of media texts is appropriate tool within English teaching, to practically implement learning strategies expoused by critical pedagogy and critical literacy. The three other models (viz. skills based, cultural heritage and growth model) are discriminatory towards media texts. Yet apart from media texts being able to demonstrate how critical pedagogy can be effectively used in classrooms, it also aims to display how the implementation of the principles of critical pedagogy can aid in negotiating meanings in relation to gender.

The proceeding discussion will provide a motivation for the inclusion of media texts in English teaching and how it can be

used to implement the theoretical component of this study and its impact on gender constructions and understandings in the classroom.

WHY THE USE OF MEDIA TEXTS IN ENGLISH TEACHING ?

The media are important shapers of our perceptions, thinking and ideas. Masterman (1985) argues that the media not only provides information about the world but ways of seeing and understanding it. This understanding of the media has implications for the construction of gendered identities and the ways in which these identities are portrayed and perpetuated by media texts. The use of media then becomes an important vehicle in the classroom for the analysis of (among other factors), gendered identities and constructions.

Our daily lives are saturated by the media and its images. We are in constant contact with media texts, and to a large extent, rely on the media to create meanings and understandings. Therefore, Masterman (1985) advocates that the media should be an element which will inform the teaching of all subjects because our lives are dominated by different types of media whether we are aware of it or not and the use of media can provide "a long - awaited injection of critical and radical thinking". (Masterman 1985:256)

Given that this study draws from the theoretical underpinnings of poststructuralism and critical literacy, it is also located within the field of Media education.

[Media education] is.....concerned with how messages are put together, by whom and in whose interests...It is also concerned with how to construct media messages which are similar to those now available, and how to construct messages which are different....Media education is an endless enquiry into the way we make sense of the world and the way others make sense of the world for us (Ferguson in Prinsloo & Criticos 1991:19).

Media education can be seen as a form of critical literacy because it encourages critical thinking, creativity, active learning and equips learners with a range of strategies for analysing texts so that they begin to understand that texts and their information is produced by selection and mediation.

Media education within a critical framework aims to 'denaturalise' the media by challenging the naturalness of media messages and reveal them as constructs (Masterman 1994:54). Therefore, whatever forms of knowledge is presented through the media, is not the truth or reality but versions of it.

Critical theorists, like McLaren, argue that critical pedagogy too asks how and why knowledge gets constructed the way it does, and how some constructions of reality are legitimated and reinforced:

Certain types of knowledge legitimate certain gender, class and racial interests. Whose interests does this knowledge serve? Who gets excluded as a result? Who is marginalised? (McLaren 1989:169)

Media education, like critical literacy and critical pedagogy attempts to highlight that information within texts, specifically, media texts are constructs. It does so by focusing on production and representation. In analysing information inscribed within media texts as exploitative, manipulative or oppressive and knowledge as constructed, Media education would then also lead us to ask questions about how gender is constructed and articulated within media texts.

Critical media education is a form of critical literacy because it equips learners with a variety of possibilities and tools for analysing texts and to create their own meaning and judgement. Critical media education offers a more complete and integrated approach to textual investigation. It looks to critical pedagogy so that new and creative direction can be given to educators. Various readings of a text and the

consideration of learners' perceptions and subjectivities became important in this strand of media education. This form of media education considers representations, discourse and narratives.

One of the main reasons for locating the study within critical media education stems from the fact that:

it argues that teaching should be concerned with the negotiating of meaning and proposes narrative as the focus as it is the common textual experience of all learners (Prinsloo 1995:264).

The use of narratives is considered in this strand because its study will be significant in developing pupils understanding of gender constructions, structures, language, media agencies and power relationships:

When we see how stories are told and what stories are recurrently told or ignored, we understand more of the relationship between media stories and our social experience (Tilley 1991:78).

The principles of critical media education shares similarities with the principles of critical pedagogy and poststructuralism. Critical media education considers plural and multiple interpretations, power relations, language,

discourse, critical interrogation and the unfixed nature of subjectivity.

Critical literacy offers a rejection to traditional ways in which texts have been read with attention given only to the text and not to issues that lie beyond the text, for instance language, discourse and power. However by media education situating itself as an aspect and form of critical literacy, the six key areas of knowledge and understanding which inform media education bears relevance to critical literacy. Through the use of critical literacy, the 'signpost' questions (dealt with in greater detail in the following chapter) can be addressed in texts.

Media education advocates for a pedagogy that encourages dialogue, group work and where students are guided to question and make judgements. Students are encouraged to share what they think and question why they think as they do. Collaborative investigation and dialogue are some of the methodologies used when investigating and analysing the media. The use of these principles and its pedagogy will be beneficial in English teaching as it will enable pupils to articulate their meanings of texts, to become critical thinkers and to question their perceptions of gender, why they think how they do and question their thinking about gender. Another reason for employing media education in English is

because it brings into the classroom many new innovative, creative and exciting material.

CONCLUSION

Although many educators of English contend that the inclusion of media will undermine the subject and that of Literature (like the exponents of cultural heritage), it must be added that the inclusion of media texts will be a step in the right direction for change in English. Such change provides possibilities for a new kind of literacy (Hobbs 1997) which enables teachers to use a variety of methods and approaches and helps students to extend their analysis, evaluation and communication skills. (Hobbs 1997:180).

CHAPTER THREE

MEDIA THEORY

INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters have looked at the theoretical areas which inform this study. In light of the fact that theory informs and drives practice, the following chapter attempts to utilise the former theoretical framework to outline ways to translate it into concrete classroom practice by suggesting a module (chapter four). The previous chapter has indicated the centrality of media texts for critical literacy. Before designing a teaching module, this chapter will elaborate on particular elements of media theory that are considered relevant for this purpose.

This chapter focuses on elements of media theory, more specifically, on narrative theory. Although, the teaching module will draw centrally on narrative theory, other areas of knowledge and understanding that inform media education will necessarily be incorporated in the module. Also, this work is informed by the insight that these areas overlap and cannot be taught in isolation from one another. These areas are summarised by the following signpost questions:

MEDIA AGENCIES	Who produces a text; roles in production process; media institutions; economics and ideology; intentions and results.
MEDIA CATEGORIES	Different media (television, radio, cinema, etc.); forms (documentary, advertising, etc.); genres (science fiction, soap opera, etc.); other ways of categorising texts; how categorisation relates to understanding.
MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES	What kinds of technologies are available to whom, how to use them; the differences they make to the production processes as well as the final product.
MEDIA LANGUAGES	How the media produce meanings; codes and conventions; narrative and structures.
MEDIA AUDIENCES	How audiences are identified, constructed, addressed and reached; how audiences find, choose, consume and respond to texts.
MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS	The relation between media texts and actual places, people, events, ideas; stereotyping and its consequences.

SIX KEY AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING
PROPOSED BY THE BFI.

Source: *Critical Arts. A Journal for Cultural Studies*. Vol. 8 (1 & 2), 1994: 80.

MEDIA AGENCIES

The term media agencies refers to media institutions that are responsible for production, publishing and broadcasting. The importance of learning about media agencies relates to the critical understanding that media texts are produced by people: individuals or groups (Bazalgette 1992:205) and that this production involves the selection and construction of meanings. These meanings are produced in ways which enable them to reflect particular discourses.

MEDIA CATEGORIES

Media texts can be categorised in different ways. There are different kinds of media such as: radio, television, film and magazines and different media forms such as: documentary, drama series and news and different genres classify media texts into groups or categories (Bazalgette 1992). The benefit of learning about media categories will enable learners to distinguish between different media, their forms and genres.

MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

"Media technologies can play a major role in determining not only the meaning of a text, but to whom it can be made available" (Bazalgette 1992:210). Technology affects meaning, therefore any technological choice, constraint or opportunity

in the production of a text involves a decision about the meaning and not only the appearance of a text (Bazalgette 1992:210).

MEDIA AUDIENCES

This aspect of Media Education relates to the development of understanding how different audiences understand a text differently and how different factors affect readings of texts, Reading in terms of race, class or gender affects understandings of texts.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS

Masterman states that no media reflect reality but in fact represent reality:

The media are symbolic (or sign) systems which need to be actively read, and not unproblematic, self-explanatory reflections of external reality (Masterman 1992:20).

The media is actively involved in the processes of constructing or representing 'reality' rather than simply transmitting or reflecting it. Representation embodies the idea that the media construct meanings about the world - they represent and encode it, and in so doing, help audiences to read or view in a specific way.

The assumption, according to Alvarado and Barrett, is that the areas of experience covered by the media are experiences which are reconstructed, represented (re-presented. packaged and shaped into identifiable and characteristic forms by media institutions, media technologies and the practices of media professionals (1992:292). The media comes to be seen as powerful means of producing representations which influence how the world around us is described or represented.

Representations refer to the way images and language actively construct meanings according to sets of conventions shared by and familiar to makers and audiences (Swanson 1991:123).

Swanson further asserts that the media uses conventions which forms part of our cultural knowledge to construct meanings and understandings: we know 'what to do' with the media products we come across even if we don't do it. The conventions used are as familiar to the participants of a particular culture as the meanings they make. Conventions, therefore, refer to the unwritten, taken-for-granted expectations that derive from shared experience of members of a particular culture. This forms the context of meanings within which representations are produced and circulated. Not all meanings are given the same degree of importance: some meanings become dominant whilst others are marginalised. In this way, representations help to highlight what and whose meanings are dominant and why?

Representations offer us subject positions. Through these subject positions we recognize images as similar or different from ourselves and those around us. In relation to gender, representations provide us with appropriate behaviour, roles and dressing in terms of our gender.

MEDIA LANGUAGES

Language, codes and conventions assist us in 'reading' and understanding media texts. Learners knowledge of media language should be developed so that it can incorporate complex ideas about how meanings are produced in texts (Bazalgette 1992). The suggested teaching module focuses on one area of media language, that is, narratives.

NARRATIVES

The discussion on narratives is presented in order to indicate the importance of narratives in language education. Certain narrative theorists and their contribution to narrative theory will be outlined which will inform the suggested module.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NARRATIVES

This discussion deviates to first discuss subjectivity because of the role narratives is understood to play in shaping our

consciousness (Turner 1988). It is argued that narratives shape and construct subjectivity and this in turn implicates gendered identities. Secondly, because narratives are framed within discourses which influence or privilege certain meanings, discourse and power become a further focus. The discourses inherent within narratives make them powerful. This discussion clearly is informed by poststructuralist theory as discussed in earlier chapters.

It proposed that we come to understand the world and acquire knowledge of the world through narratives (Tilley 1991, Graham 1988). Narratives help us construct an understanding of the world and enables us to share our understandings and experiences of the world (Turner 1988). It is through narratives and the choices implied in their constructions that history, society and cultural discourses are articulated to shape meanings.

In post-structuralist terms, meanings and significance are socially, culturally and historically manufactured (Weedon 1987). By extension, gender does not refer to an essentialist notion but implies a social construction, not intrinsic, fixed or a biological given (Weedon 1987). Accordingly, subjectivity, also is not an absolute: the way people (subjects) understand themselves and their knowledge of the world is ordered and constructed by discursive practices, including narratives. Narrational representations propose

positions for a subject in order that they come to understand its meanings in particular ways. The manner in which representations are structured also codes and articulates gendered behaviour. In other words, particular meanings, values and behaviour are privileged by the discourses which we encounter in textual forms and in this way subjects tend to be positioned by and within these representational codes which are evident in narratives.

The implication of the aforementioned is that gender and subjectivity have political, economic, social and particularly ideological underpinnings. It follows then that the 'reality' represented in the media and its narratives is not neutral, natural or transparent: it is operational within an ideological context:

In forming positions for our understanding, narrative is nevertheless partial. Because it is selective, no single narrative, nor any set of narratives, can present the whole truth (Alvarado, Gutch & Wollen 1987:129).

Consequently, the media reflects hegemonic values in a way that creates 'truth', 'legitimacy' and 'natural order'. These dominant values are very often presented in the narratives of media texts. Simply, the narratives and representations of popular media which are considered legitimate, authentic and worthy by the dominant order are usually those texts that

endorse those ideological values held by that order. Those that overtly challenge these values tend to be marginalised and/or devalued.

Texts emerge from particular institutional circumstances. No text emerges without being positioned theoretically or ideologically. Any text therefore is a product of an agent, either an individual agent, an institutional agent or both (Bazalgette 1992). As each narrative is framed in a discourse (Turner 1988:79), they work in favour of that particular discourse. It is in relation to these discourses that stories either gain prominence, are re-told, re-framed or are discarded. Those narratives that wield power are often those that uphold the hegemonic discourse. The importance of narratives is that they are never independent of power relations and discourse.

Media and other narratives are centrally implicated, then, in shaping gendered identities. As a consequence, interrogating narratives becomes critical in the understanding of, amongst other issues, gendered subjectivities, language, discourse and power.

The section to follow will deal with the different narrative theorists and their contribution to narrative theory. The ideas and models presented by the different narrative

theorists are drawn upon in the analysis of texts in the module. The theorists that are drawn on here include: Propp, Todorov and Levi-Strauss.

Vladimir Propp (1975) analysed a group of Russian folk-tales in order to see if they shared common properties and discovered that they all shared certain structural features even though they differed in surface details (Turner 1988). The most common shared structural features were that of the functions of various sets of characters and actions within tales.

Propp's proposal is that narratives are constituted by thirty one narrative 'functions'. These functions organize the progression of a narrative (Tilley 1991). Thus Propp's main focus of narratives are events and characters. He identifies narrative characters: heroes, villains, donors, helper, the princess, false hero or magical agents. These characters occupy a number of roles or 'spheres of action' as Propp calls them. The characters participate within 'spheres of action' or functions which make up the story.

In the analysis of women in narrative structures, Kuhn (1982) states that women serve as a narrative function and that women become "a structure governing the organisation of story and plot in a narrative" (1982:32). Within most narratives the spheres of action available to women are very limited. There

is also a great degree of limitation in the allocation of gender roles in narratives because the hero is almost always the male. The module will draw on Propp's ideas of characters and their role functions.

Propp's model suggests that work on cultural function and structural characteristics of narrative can be applicable to many different types of media texts (something the module sets out to show). At the very least, it addresses the possibility that modern media forms and primitive fairy-tale serve similar functions for their respective audiences.

Another way of explaining the structure of narrative is to look at it as a process and it is to the work of Todorov that we turn to next.

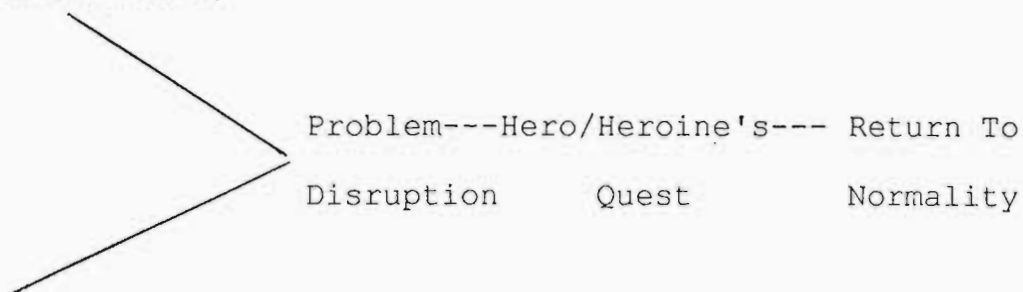
Tzevetan Todorov (1977) looks at structure of stories as comprising of a process that moves from initial equilibrium where there "may be a balance of social, psychological or moral elements according to the story genre" (Tilley 1991:52), a disruption and a new equilibrium.

He sees narrative beginning in a stable point of equilibrium or what he calls "plenitude - when things are satisfactory, peaceful, calm, or recognizably normal" (Turner 1988:76). The equilibrium or plenitude is disrupted by a force or power which results in disequilibrium. The notion of equilibrium

raises questions about how social order is represented and how it functions to effect closure within stories (Lusted 1991:56).

The mapping of equilibrium, disruption and new equilibrium enables learners to anticipate possible outcomes of narratives:

A (Hero/Heroine)



B (Agent of Change)

Todorov sees narrative beginning in a stable point of equilibrium or what he calls "plenitude - when things are satisfactory, peaceful, calm, or recognizably normal" (Turner 1988:76). The equilibrium or plenitude is disrupted by a force or power which results in disequilibrium. The return to normality or the restoring of equilibrium or plenitude is "through the action of a force directed against the disrupting force" (Turner 1988:77).

In relation to gender, the application of Todorov's understanding and explanation of structure to most narratives, enables the identification of women as disruption or a problem

is set into motion through the action of a woman. Kuhn's (1982) analysis of narrative structures in film is that it is often woman - as structure, character, or both - who constitutes the motivator of the narrative, the 'trouble' that sets the plot in motion(1982:34).

This links closely to Propp's 'spheres of action' which are limiting for women and hence we see the emergence of the structural role of "women as disruption". Research indicates that in most popular narratives women are controlled or contained by particular roles in the narrative. Haralovich (in Kuhn 1982) states that "narrative closure is always dependant on the resloution of enigmas centring on heterosexual courtship" (in Kuhn 1982:34) and the resolution of narratives depends on the resolution of the particular 'woman-question' set up by narratives: woman may thus have to be returned to her place so that order is restored to the world (1982:34).

This place is consonant with the dictates of patriarchy.

From Todorov's narrative theory it is possible to investigate a common structural process in narrative which gender theorists argue has a determining effect on what is selected and presented by the media. For this reason it is important to

consider the function of narrative through the lens of Levi-Strauss.

Claude Levi-Strauss (1966) looks at narratives and its functions. In looking at narrative and its functions, a particular area of analysis for Levi-Strauss is that of myths because they served a function for society and were "used to deal with the contradictions in experience, to explain the apparently inexplicable, and to justify the inevitable" (Turner 1988:72). Myths, he proposes, share a commonality and serve particular functions in society (Turner 1988). The world is understood through shared myths. Most media texts serve to uphold the dominant discourse of patriarchy through the use of myths. Myths negotiate between binary oppositions and are used to understand the world. Narratives display tensions in life. These can be separated into binary oppositions. Binary oppositions in narratives serve to reinforce the hegemonic and patriarchal gender order providing a binary divide between men and women.

Levi-Strauss used the concept of binary oppositions because it is from differences or similarities that we make meaning because "meaning is a product of the construction of difference and similarities" (Turner 1988:73). One of the ways in which humans understand the world is through dividing it into sets of mutually exclusive categories and in relation to gender, if males and females are opposites, then women are

what men are not (Turner 1988). Narrative theorists, like Levi-Strauss, point to the existence of binary oppositions and myths within narratives. In relation to gender, narratives also make use of myths and binary oppositions. Binary oppositions and myths within patriarchal discourses work to restrict certain roles to portray men and women in terms of difference, thus, further reproducing and privileging gender difference. The analysis of binary oppositions in texts are dealt with in greater detail in the module.

As narratives are central in proposing and naturalising gendered domains, in order to develop an understanding of gender, subjectivity, language, discourse and power, it is vital to teach and study narratives, in order to gain knowledge of how these understandings are used and manipulated in narratives and how what is offered to us as 'natural' in narratives.

THE NEED TO TEACH AND STUDY NARRATIVE

Studying narrative develops an understanding of how texts are organized, why and to what effect...Studying narrative enables us to get a purchase on the totality of a text, to see it in a complete structure, envisage and assess the choices that have made it the way it is (Graham 1988:61).

The studying of narrative is at the most obvious level, helpful in understanding the structure and process of narration of a story. It also enables a consideration of how stories are told, by whom, their discursive functions and for what purpose ? The analysis of the structure of narratives across a range of texts, especially media texts, enables us to understand better their effects on us as media consumers. An understanding of narratives "offers powerful analytical tools for understanding not only the media but our relations to it" (Tilley 1991:78).

The following section is concerned with discourse, power, genre, context and reception because these areas not only develop an understanding of how they influence, shape and construct meanings within narratives, but also how these areas develop students understandings of how narratives work, their influence and function.

The chief aim of teaching narrative will be to allow students to be conscious and critical of how meanings are constructed in narratives and "that however neutral or invisible those who have produced the text may appear to be, the text is nonetheless a narrative constructed from a particular point of view" (Hortop 1994:78). Narratives are never independent of power relationships. As established earlier on, there is always someone telling a story and stories often serve a

particular interest. Discourses and ideology operate in all narratives.

The study of narrative will also enable issues of power to be approached. Certain stories are re-told and gain more importance than others. Stories that wield power are generally those that uphold and sustain a hegemonic discourse. Every story is framed within a certain discourse which in turn provides the reader with ways of interpreting and understanding texts.

Genre has increasingly begun to inform critical or poststructuralist approaches to textual study. In teaching with a narrative focus, learners can develop an understanding of genre. Our 'reading' of a narrative rests on our familiarity with other narratives as well as our own personal insights. A genre groups stories into types (Tilley 1991) and places a narrative within a category. It is this category that provides an understanding of what the reader can expect in a certain type of story. Peim states that "textual identities are always mobile and can only be held in place by conventions and established ordering within discursive frameworks" (1993:58). Different discourses within genres divide narratives and give it meaning in different ways. Certain genres have codes which signal the reader to expect certain outcomes. These codes are responsible for transporting the reader through a narrative (Tilley 1991). However, codes and

their meanings are not produced by texts but are a kind of textual language (Peim 1993). This textual language can be interpreted in various ways, thus, leading to multiple readings which can either confirm or challenge.

Contexts affect interpretation of a narrative. Where and how a narrative appears affects its reading and understanding. For example, a narrative in an advertisement can be interpreted differently from that of the same narrative in a different context. The influence of context in shaping meanings within texts can be linked to the poststructuralist understanding of the sign which acquires new and different meaning according to its context (Weedon 1987).

In teaching about narratives, learners can develop an understanding that meaning is produced by the reader and not the text:

Narratives position their audience in particular ways, and audience, in turn in their infinite readings, reconstitute and reposition those narratives (Alvarado, Gutch & Wollen 1987:120).

No single interpretation can be given to a narrative. The idea of multifarious readings bears similarities with the poststructuralist understanding of "the free play of meaning" (Weedon 1987:19) and that meanings are open to plural interpretations.

Masterman proposes that the study and analysis of narratives can assist in developing the capacity for critical, active interrogators of texts by:

drawing attention to their modes of meaning,
by breaking through the mystifications of
'characters' to examine the narrative functions
they perform, by interrupting the narrative flow
in order to show how its continuity is produced,
and by clarifying some of the ways in which our
consciousness may be structured by narrative
forms (Masterman 1985:186).

The following chapter will contain the module which uses the theoretical framework of this chapter, namely, media theory and in particular narratives, to formulate lessons and to demonstrate how teaching with a narrative focus can incorporate poststructuralism, critical pedagogy and critical literacy.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TEACHING MODULE

Texts are constructed to be read.. from a particular reading position...where certain ways of thinking are taken for granted...the preferred reading position is one that supports traditional ways of thinking about gender. In this way, texts help reinforce gender assumptions, making them seem inevitable. This allows ideas about appropriate ways of behaving in terms of gender to appear natural and timeless, when, in fact they are constructed and variable (Martino & Mellor 1995:9).

The analysis of narratives in texts provides teachers with one possible strategy for addressing how texts are constructed and how gender is constructed within them, to challenge preferred reading positions and examine how gender constructions can change or be read in alternate ways. Using media texts, this chapter attempts to translate the complex theoretical framework of the preceeding chapters into concrete classroom practice by suggesting a module. This module does not attempt to be a prescriptive model or present its strategies as exhaustive, yet it does attempt to translate pedagogical and cultural theory into practice.

The intention of the module is to develop an awareness relating to three textual areas, namely: that texts are constructed from particular reading positions, that preferred reading positions supports hegemonic ways of thinking about gender and finally that appropriate ways of behaving in terms of gender are constructed and consequently variable. It is central to this undertaking to seek to develop an awareness that:

gender is a social (and discursive) construct, not something 'natural' or God-given, but constructed, patterned, by every society for its own purposes and according to its own ideology (Flemming in Kenworthy 1996:1).

In addressing the areas listed above, the module will focus on narrative elements identified in the previous chapter, namely, binary oppositions, role of characters, narrative functions, structure of narratives, hegemonic discourses, oppositional discourses, subjectivity and power.

PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT BE ENCOUNTERED WHEN TEACHING GENDER IN THE MODULE

The module offers new ways of working with texts in the classroom. One area of emphasis within texts is the examination of gender constructions. Seeing that gender

constructions emanate out of deeply entrenched beliefs, attitudes and ideology of society, "children may bring fixed and strongly held assumptions" (Davies 1986:14) of gender into the classroom. As a result, learners are likely to offer resistance to some of the gender constructions in texts or may find some constructions as unproblematic.

My intention, therefore, is to be aware of the investment which learners bring to particular subject positions and to do what Davies (1996) suggests about discrimination and prejudice:

one of the best ways to attack prejudice and discriminatory practices is to enable children to understand the processes through which they are constructed and consolidated (1996:14).

Pedagogic practices and processes become important in challenging and addressing problems that might be encountered when teaching gender. The employment of critical pedagogy is suggested because it offers "conditions for changing subjectivity" (Giroux 1984:319) and "centres around the need for students to interrogate critically" (1984:319). By being offered varying subject positions and critical thinking skills, learners can begin to further their understanding on how gender gets constructed and the implication for such constructions.

Through the use of critical pedagogy in the module, I examine gender constructions in texts, reading positions in relation to gender and I provide oppositional or alternate reading positions and strategies.

AIMS OF THE MODULE

In constructing the module, my intention has been to:

- Set into place strategies for teaching and learning which advocate the critical version of English teaching; To do this I draw upon the different theories (poststructuralism, critical literacy, media theory and feminism) outlined in the previous chapters to provide practical ways of working in the classroom;
- Draw upon insights of narrative theorists (Propp, Todorov, and Levi-Strauss) to analyse the role of characters, narrative action, narrative functions and the structure of narrative;
- Create an awareness on the role narratives play in often perpetuating gendered identities, discourse and power relations; and
- Increase and develop an awareness that different genres provide different discourses in relation to gender.

Title of module:

TEACHING ABOUT GENDER AND NARRATIVES IN THE MEDIA FOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS.

OVERVIEW OF THE MODULE:

This module is divided into four phases. Each phase has a specific focus area in relation to gender and narratives. Different types of media texts are used in each phase to exemplify the focus area.

Phase One: GENRE, STORY AND STRUCTURE

In this phase, learners extend their knowledge on different genres, articulate and develop their understanding of structure of stories and the basic components of narrative.

Phase Two: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE SUPPORTS HEGEMONIC GENDER ORDER
AND PATRIARCHAL ROLES

This phase considers how narratives tend to propose and support gendered roles in texts. In order to undertake this investigation of narrative structure, areas of examination include role of characters, narrative functions and binary oppositions because it is often these aspects that support

hegemonic ways of thinking about gender in texts and lead to the adoption of preferred reading positions.

Phase Three: READING POSITIONS - HEGEMONIC/PATRIARCHAL

DISCOURSE

Having looked at how gender is constructed along the lines of patriarchy within texts, this phase focuses on the reading of texts. Discourses in narratives and texts enable or are responsible for texts being constructed from particular positions. Therefore, this phase focuses specifically on hegemonic discourse and its role in constructing particular gendered positions.

Phase Four: DIFFERENT READINGS - COUNTER/OPPOSITIONAL

DISCOURSE

In this phase oppositional discourse is introduced and contrasted to hegemonic discourse. A comic is used as an example of oppositional discourse in order for learners to understand that gender is a social construction and these constructions can change, vary and offer a new subjectivity.

Phase Plans:

For each phase I provide a:

1. Preamble which includes motivation for the use of the text;

2. Synopsis of the text;
3. Theoretical areas and theorists that are drawn upon;
4. Objectives of the phase and
5. Procedure which includes activities and tasks for learners

Phase One: INTRODUCTION TO NARRATIVES, STRUCTURE AND GENRE

1. Preamble:

Pupils have encountered stories and are familiar with stories and their basic components. Stories that share similar structures are used to depict similarity of story structure and what they comprise of. The two stories that are used in the discussion share similar structures. The worksheet on genres extend knowledge and understanding of different genres.

2. Synopsis of text

Searching for Welcome (Gladys Thomas in WHAT'S IN A STORY):

During a shooting, Nopink loses her goat called Welcome. She is distraught and goes out looking for her goat. A friend, Mandla, helps her to look for her goat Welcome. Welcome is eventually found and taken back to the church hall where Nopink and her mother are seeking shelter.

Family gives thanks after dad survives horror hijack and crash

(Aldrin Naidu in POST NEWSPAPER October 1998): Mr Chinsamy arrived at work normally on a Tuesday morning when he was

confronted by robbers. After demanding money and assaulting Mr Chinsamy, the robbers shoved him on to the floor in the back of the vehicle. By speeding in a state of panic, the robbers crashed the vehicle under a bus. However, the three robbers were killed and Mr Chinsamy survived and was grateful to be alive.

3. Theoretical areas and theorists that are drawn on:

- a. Narrative structure is informed by Todorov's analysis of structure which consists of an introduction (initial equilibrium), upset/problem (disequilibrium), and an end (new equilibrium).
- b. The identification of characters in a story are those identified by Propp - hero, heroine, helper and villain.
- c. Stories fall into different groups or categories called genres (Peim 1993). The important aspects to be developed in genre include: specific narrative expectations, setting, action and conflict (Turner 1988). Genre theory (discussed in earlier chapter) is drawn on because our 'reading' of a narrative rests on our familiarity with other narratives.

4. Objectives:

- * to identify and articulate the structure inherent in stories

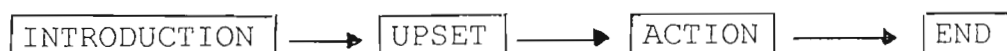
- * to further understanding of different genres and its influence on interpreting narratives.

5. Procedure:

* A proposed starting point is to generate discussion on what makes up a story or what are recognizable features of stories. The intention is to develop ideas on structure of stories. To do so, learners tell a joke or learners start a story that they know. From learners jokes and stories, ideas are brainstormed of what makes up a story.

* By examining two stories (*Searching for Welcome* Appendix 1 and *Family gives thanks after dad survives hijack and horror crash* Appendix 2), this leads to the acknowledgement that:

1. stories have similar structure - introduction, problem/upset, action and an end.



2. stories have different characters - hero/heroine, villain and helper

* Discussion on expectations we have of genres is guided. Two genres of stories have been selected, namely, Romance and Adventure.

Writing Activity:

Step 1: Identify a problem that will be resolved
 Identify the situation in which it has emerged
 Create a hero and other characters

Step 2: Now write your own story

* Genre Awareness

The learners will be presented with a worksheet (Types of Stories taken from PRIMARY LANGUAGE BOOKS 1, 2, 3 AND 4 - see attached worksheet on the next page) that requires them to match illustrations with written texts. The illustrations and texts have been selected as typical examples of the imagery, style and content of particular genres.

Discussion of selections and articulation of characteristics and expectations of genres.

No gender link has been established in this phase because the aim of this phase was to introduce narratives and its structure. This is done so that learners can first begin to develop their understanding and knowledge on narrative structure and characters before proceeding to analyse gender. Understanding of narrative structure, characters and genre will assist in the understanding of gender constructions in texts.

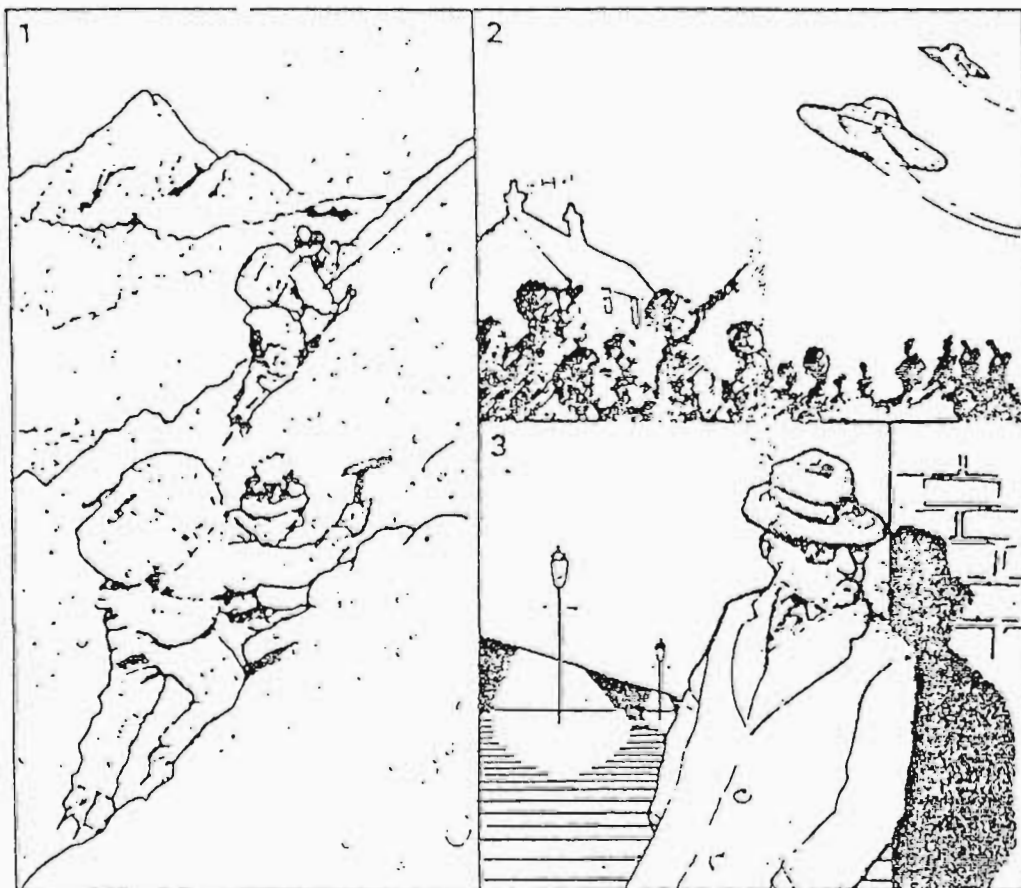
Types of stories

Here is a list of seven different types of stories:

Romance	Adventure
Spy	War
Detective	Horror
Science fiction	

Match each type to one of the pictures on this page. Then look at the extracts on pages 4 and 5 and say which extract belongs to which picture. Give reasons for your choice.

81(a)



A

'A man called Kennikin was the boss of the Russian side. My job was to get close to him. I did. He thought my name was Stewartson, and that I was Finnish. At last Kennikin took me on. He began to use me for small jobs. I was scared to death most of the time. Double agents usually are.'

B

Babe lay wide-eyed, and frozen, mounting pressure of terror stilling her lungs, making her heart shake the whole world. The monster came to the mouth of the little pocket, tried to walk to her and was stopped by the sides.

C

That night we went down to the breakwater together, and the moon was out; everything was black and silver, very lovely and romantic, and I couldn't bear to think that next day I had to go back to Hudley and never see him again.

D

They showed him the blood-stained dagger. Leopold used a handkerchief to pick it up carefully by the corners. 'Are we supposed to believe that Friese entered this place in the midst of sixty cops and killed Gibson without anybody seeing him?'

E

Meanwhile, the mist crept up stealthily, hardly visible at first; then, by the time they first realised it, the danger it brought was upon them. Moisture on anoraks and gloves started to freeze; haloes of frost glittered chilly on their hoods.

F

It was in the last days of the Empire. The tiny ship was far from home, and almost a hundred light-years from the great parent vessel searching through loosely packed stars at the rim of the Milky Way.

G

I was so numbed with shock and grief that I went into the second show of the day, dive-bombing German reinforcements coming up the road into Dieppe, with such abandoned fatalism that it was a miracle I survived. I did not bother to jink in the flak, and when we were bounced on the way back by half a dozen FW190s I hardly bothered with them either.

SOURCE: EXERCISES FROM PRIMARY LANGUAGE BOOKS 1,2,3 & 4.

PHASE TWO

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE SUPPORTS HEGEMONIC GENDER ORDER AND PATRIARCHAL ROLES

1. Preamble:

This phase is concerned with how the hegemonic gender order and patriarchal ways of thinking about gender are reinforced through narrative function, structure and characters.

2. Synopsis of the text: *The Claws of the Cat (STUART CLOETE IN CLOSE TO THE SUN: STORIES FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA).*

Japie and his parents lived on a farm in Baviaansfontein. One day his father got ill and had to visit a hospital in Cape Town. The farm could not be left unattended therefore, Japie volunteered to stay behind and take care of the farm whilst his mother accompanied the father to hospital which was a long way from home. Japie's mother expressed fear at the thought of Japie being alone on the farm. During his parents absence, Japie had to be brave and responsible because he has many chores to perform and he had to take care of the sheep. He was able to perform his chores through the help of his companion, a dog, called Moskou. One evening, however, Moskou became very uneasy because he barked and growled several times. Upon investigation, Japie discovered a dead sheep and prints of a

lynx in the sheep kraal. Japie directs Moskou to help him trace the lynx so that he could kill it. However when Moskou does eventually find the lynx, Japie's gun misfires and the lynx attacks Japie. Moskou charges into the lynx to prevent it from further attacking Japie and the lynx and the dog get into a vicious attack where both are killed. Moskou dies after trying to save Japie's life. Although Japie wishes to show emotion it is concealed when his parents arrive home and his father reiterates his braveness and manhood.

3. Theoretical areas and theorists that are drawn upon:

a. Todorov is drawn on in the identification of the structure of the story.

b. The character types are those identified by Propp.

c. The narrative theorist that is drawn on in the section of the binary oppositions is Levi Strauss. Levi-Strauss suggests that "one of the ways in which humans understand the world is through dividing it into sets of mutually exclusive categories" (Turner 1988:73). These categories are binary oppositions which divide up and structure our understanding of the world. In relation to gender, assuming male and female are opposites, then it means that, automatically, women are what men are not; if the male is strong, then the female must be weak and so forth (Turner 1988).

d. The theorists that are drawn on in this section of the phase include Swanson (1991) and Davies (1986). In the story *The Claws of the Cat*, stereotypical roles are given to the woman and man. The woman is given the stereotypical role of mother, care giver, emotional and frightened whilst the man is given the role of father, provider, rational and brave. The analysis of stereotypes in the story enables the teacher to point out how stereotypes propose and reinforce gendered roles and behaviour and that stereotypes can be challenged.

4. Objectives:

- * to identify role and narrative functions in terms of Propp's theory and how these influence meaning and understanding around gender.
- * to develop an understanding on how the use of binary oppositions in narratives uphold the patriarchal gender order.

5. Procedure:

- * Extend ideas about how characters functions in narratives in terms of gender roles.

Read *The Claws of the Cat* (Appendix 3) and identify structure as before but focus on characters.

Activity

a. Discussion questions:

Who are heros ?

What do heros do ?

b. The following table has seven character functions. They are not all found in every story. Can you identify any of these in *The Claws of the Cat* ? Fill them in on the table below:

CHARACTER FUNCTIONS

villain	
donor or provider (who gives the magical agent or helper)	
helper (to the hero)	
father	
dispatcher (who sends the hero on the task)	
hero or victim	
false hero	

* Investigating Stereotypes

Preamble:

One of the more obvious ways to work to illustrate the dominant gendered order is to introduce the notion of stereotypes. Stereotyping of gender roles are evident in most stories and it impacts greatly on the characters and their roles.

Activity:

By referring to the set of pictures (Appendix 4), with whom would you associate the following occupations:

- a. an entertainer
- b. a college professor
- c. a rugby player
- d. a hairdresser

Learners are presented with images of people. They are required to identify which of these four people would suit the occupations listed.

Discussion of selection and articulation of choices include the following questions:

Why were such choices made ?

What led us to make these choices ?

By drawing and building from the responses of the first two questions, the teacher leads into the discussion on the creation and effects of stereotypes:

How does a stereotype get created ?

What does stereotyping do ?

From the above discussion the following is intended to emerge and be discussed (Davies 1986):

1. Stereotyping is a process of categorisation and evaluation
2. Stereotypes are powerful.
3. Stereotyping affects the behaviour of those being stereotyped and those doing the stereotyping.
4. Stereotyping is one way of making sure that relationships seem natural.

* Back To *The Claws of the Cat*: Stereotypes

Activity one:

Design a cover for this story. Your illustration should include all the characters as they are portrayed in the story.

The discussion and reflection of cover designs are a starting point to reflect on stereotypes and the portrayal of characters: mother is likely to be seen doing domestic chores in the kitchen and Japie and father doing manual labour on the farm or out hunting.

Transform the story in the newspaper article into a comic strip. The aim of this exercise is to make students aware that styles of narratives vary and that different types of texts require different conventions. For example, a comic strip is different in its layout, language and so forth from a newspaper article.

b. Characters:

Who are the characters and what are their narrative roles:

	DUTY	NARRATIVE ROLE
JAPIE		
MOTHER		
FATHER		
MOSKOU		

* Binary Oppositions

Stereotypes of males and females in the story are constructed as opposites. Therefore the fourth area of analysis is binary oppositions. Dominant discourses in texts set up and regulate binary oppositions.

Many binary oppositions or opposites can be found in this text. The teacher leads this discussion and together with learners construct a grid showing opposites. The suggested grid identifies some of the possibilities of oppositions of males and females in the story:

FATHER/SON (Man)	MOTHER (Woman)
1. fearless/ brave	fearful/frightened
2. Rational	Emotional
3. Violent	passive
4. Assertive	Submissive

PHASE THREE

READING POSITIONS - HEGEMONIC/PATRIARCHAL DISCOURSE

1. Preamble:

News stories share similarities with other narratives and their structure. Often in news stories the heroes are those who help in defending social order whilst the villains will seek to destroy it. The text used in this phase is a news story from a local newspaper entitled: *Premonition Saved My Life, Says Traffic Cop*. This text is used because it is an example of how hegemonic or patriarchal ways of thinking about gender leads to preferred reading positions or a particular reading position.

2. Synopsis of text: *Premonition Saved My Life, Says Traffic Cop*

In *Premonition Saved My Life, Says Traffic Cop* (Appendix 5), the injured police officer is seen to be the hero for he defends social order, he was pulling vehicles for routine checks when he was hit by a truck. The truck driver can be categorised as the villain for he was obviously trying to avoid the routine check by speeding off and injuring the officer. The idea of hero, villain and helper which Propp uses in his narrative functions can be identified in this newspaper

article. The police officer is the hero, the truck driver the villain and the nurse the helper. Although the picture (which in itself tells a story), has the woman, as the helper. The actual article, however, makes no mention of the nurse.

3. Theoretical areas and theorists that are drawn upon:

a. News stories are also made up of some of the characters that Propp identifies: hero, heroine, villain, magical agent and helper and share similarities with the structure of narratives proposed by Todorov (initial equilibrium, upset/problem, resolution/new equilibrium).

b. Any media text or product is spoken by someone or some people, it is termed "discourse". Every narrative is framed in a discourse. Narratives work in favour of certain discourses. These discourses in narratives construct particular positions.

Different discourses provide for a range of modes of subjectivity and the ways in which particular discourses constitute subjectivity have implications for the process of reproducing or contesting power relations (Weedon 1987:92).

This section draws on the poststructuralist understanding of discourse, power and subjectivity (as discussed in chapter one). Texts encourage us to take up certain 'reading

positions' (Morgan 1996:9). These positions are linked with subject positions.

The news story is framed within a particular discourse which provides a subjectivity that reproduces patriarchal power. The reproduction of patriarchal gender order also reinforces a subjectivity which conforms to hegemonic ways of thinking and behaving in terms of gender. Dominant discourses are those that "legitimate, support, maintain and reproduce the status quo" (Kenworthy 1996:1). In relation to gender, discourses set up a binary divide in which men and women are constructed as opposites. The discourse in the news story is hegemonic because it upholds and reinforces patriarchy by providing binary oppositions of men and women in their depiction of roles.

4. Objectives:

- * To develop an understanding of how certain narratives circulate and reinforce gendered identities and behaviour.
- * To develop an awareness that discourse operates in all stories.

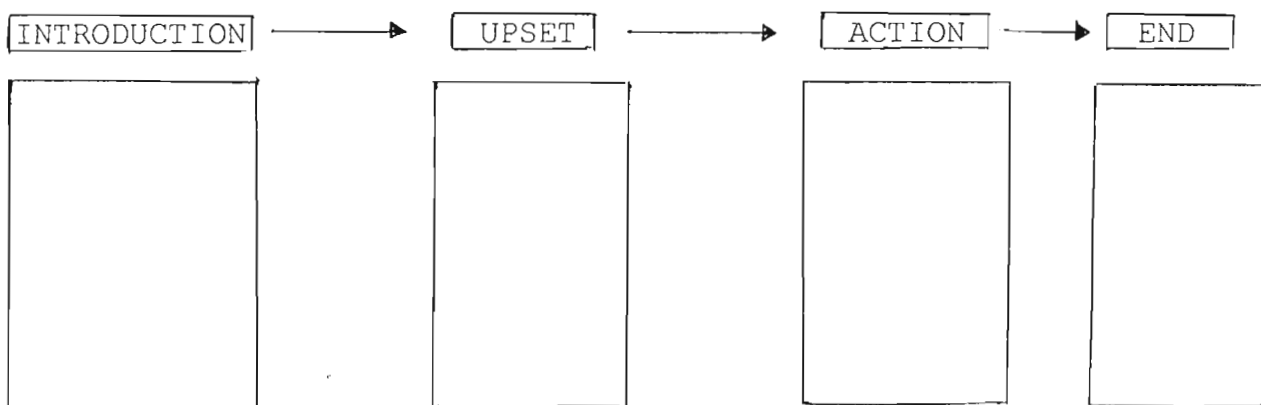
5. Procedure:

Structure:

A proposed starting point on the structure of the story is to get pupils to dramatize or act out in groups what happens in the story. The reflection and discussion on the dramatization of this story will reflect its structure and its similarity with other stories analysed in the previous phases.

Activity:

Most stories have an introduction (initial equilibrium), upset/problem (disequilibrium), and an end (new equilibrium). In your group, identify these areas, by filling in the appropriate grids. The aim of this exercise is to assist pupils to understand how the notion of equilibrium raises questions about how social order is represented and how it functions to effect closure within stories.



Leading on from this discussion, roles and duties of men and women in a patriarchal society and stereotypes of men and

women are developed on a chart to show binary construction of masculinity and femininity:

	MEN	WOMEN
roles	father	mother
qualities	strong/brave	weak/scared
occupations	police	nurse
spheres	public	private

* Discourse

a. Discussion Questions

The following discussion questions aim to introduce the concept of discourse:

1. Who is speaking ? For Whom ?
2. Is the nurse part of the story ? Why ? Should the nurse be included in the written part of the text ?

b. Writing Activity

Rewrite the article to include the nurse in the written part of the text as the heroine of the story.

PHASE FOUR

READING POSITIONS - COUNTER/OPPOSITIONAL DISCOURSES

1. Preamble:

The text, *Big Ethel*, is used in this phase because it depicts counter discourse and how it functions to illustrate that gender is a construction and that these constructions can vary and be challenged. *Big Ethel* is chosen because its story is unconventional. The female is portrayed as the heroine and as being smarter than the male. The motivation for using such a text stems from the fact that it is different and goes against the normal conventions of the male being the hero. This cartoon offers an alternative or oppositional discourse. BIG ETHEL also serves to dispute stereotypical behaviour of males and females.

2. Synopsis of the text: *Big Ethel*

Ethel approaches the school coach to be part of the wrestling team however, the coach does not take her seriously and dismisses her request. His reason for denying Ethel an opportunity to be part of the team is that girls are not allowed to participate in contact sports. Ethel gets permission from the school board and produces this in writing to the coach. Reggie, one of the wrestlers, hears about Ethel's request and out of sheer ridicule challenges Ethel to a match. After Ethel is victorious, the coach decides to give Ethel a

chance to be on the team. Ethel wrestles on behalf of her school and does her school proud by winning the match for her school. She is honoured by her school and the media that have come to acknowledge her achievement.

3. Theoretical areas and theorists that are drawn upon:

a. Structure - The model offered by Todorov is used in this text.

b. The theoretical area and theorists drawn on in the section of discourse is the same as in phase three. The understanding of hegemonic and oppositional discourse discussed in chapter one is used in this phase.

The discourse in this text is an oppositional one in that it does not reinforce the patriarchal gender order. This text allows us to take up a reading position which offers a change of subjectivity by challenging the patriarchal gender order.

c. Representations:

Alternative forms of representations might be brought into the classroom to present different images and provide different forms of engagement...Studying alternative... media texts helps to re-pose questions concerning how identities are understood (Swanson 1991:141).

Alternative media products show us how learned our familiarities and expectations are. They encourage us to look at what is included, what is excluded and most importantly introduce humour in the classroom. Narrational representations also propose positions for a subject so that they come to understand its meanings in particular ways.

4. Objectives:

- * to understand that gender is a construction which can vary and be challenged
- * oppositional or counter discourses in texts provide different and new ways of reading

5. Procedure:

- * Structure: Read the story *Big Ethel* (Appendix 6) and identify the following:
 - a. the problem
 - b. elaboration of the problem
 - c. resolution of the problem

Learners identify introduction, upset/problem and resolution.

* Changing the Text

Activity: Write a snippet for your school newspaper on the wrestling match and its outcome.

* Same as or Different

In this text, the gender constructions are different from other texts that are normally encountered, therefore in order for pupils to be made aware of this, the following activities are suggested.

Activity:

a. Discussion questions

The text appears to construct boys and girls as opposites. How is this done and why ? How is Ethel different ?

b. In your groups complete the following grid:

	What is this attitude ?	Who else holds this attitude?	Who has a different attitude ?
ATTITUDES TOWARDS ETHEL			
1. Reggie			
2. Jughead			

CHANGE OF ATTITUDE	SAME WHY?	DIFFERENT WHY?
1. Reggie		
2. Jughead		

* Hegemonic discourse Versus Oppositional discourse

Activity:

In groups of five, draw contrasts between *Big Ethel* and the other texts used in phase two and three. This comparison will enable pupils to understand more clearly the different discourses and how it serves to either reinforce or challenge gender constructions. The following is a suggested chart to show contrasts:

	MEN	WOMEN
CLAWS OF THE CAT/ PREMONITION SAVED MY LIFE	brave, strong fearless, fighters hunters, policemen	weak, scared, fearful mother, nurse
BIG ETHEL	weak frightened	brave, strong fearless,

* Writing a text that counters gender stereotypes:

Activity:

Write a detective story which has the following:

- a. a problem which a man has
- b. a heroine who solves the problem
- c. a resolution to the problem

Compare and discuss your story with other conventional detective stories.

CONCLUSION

The module has attempted to introduce issues of subjectivities, discourse, power and critical thinking in the suggested activities. To this end, it has examined the narrative functions of characters and explored some of the ways in which our consciousness may be structured by narrative forms.

The lessons are by no means exhaustive but intend to initiate similar and more comprehensive ideas for educators to adopt in fostering gender sensitive education. It is hoped that by sharing such ideas, the danger of narratives turning audiences into passive recipients of texts will be curbed by

enlightening audiences and thereby transforming them into active interrogators of the text.

CONCLUSION

The study attempted to offer insights on how texts and classroom practices contribute to shaping and reinforcing gendered subjectivities, gendered behaviour and power relations and how through the use of critical literacy and critical pedagogy, learners can begin to question processes that contribute to the shaping of gendered subjectivities.

The study explored how media texts are involved in reproducing gender ideologies and in what ways they might be used in the classroom to challenge these ideologies (Gilbert and Taylor 1991:6). A teaching module was suggested because students learn about ideologies when they actually have to confront them in a practical situation. In Williamson's view, students can never understand these issues purely intellectually; they need to bump up against ideologies in the course of practical productive work (1981:2).

The teaching module also suggested how classroom practices can be used to challenge the reproduction of gender relations and how to understand the construction of gender. It provides the educator with new and creative ways of working in the classroom. These new ways of working in the classroom include pedagogical practices that instill a new definition of literacy which has the ability "to access, analyze, evaluate,

and communicate messages in a variety of forms" (Hobbs 1997:165).

Educators should start to include a variety of texts for analysis in the classroom so that there is "an expansion of the concept of 'text' to include messages of all sorts" (Hobbs 1997:166).

The module and its suggestions are by no means the only ways of introducing change into the classroom and its practices. Educators can bring change into the classroom by changing their own thinking and perceptions, therefore, another important area that needs to undergo change so that teaching practices and methodologies can change is teachers perceptions. Educators themselves need to change their own mind set before delving into new ways of working in the classroom because "educational change depends on what teachers do and think" (Fullan 1982:176). Only by questioning and challenging their own perceptions of gender can teachers begin to review their teaching methods and start to adopt pedagogical practices expoused by the teaching module.

In translating the theoretical framework of this study into concrete classroom practice, this study's key implication was to illustrate that:

while schooling is a site for the reproduction of gender relations, it is also a site for intervention and change (Gilbert and Taylor 1991:5).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Searching for Welcome

by Gladys Thomas

Nopink awoke early that cold June morning. It still seemed unusually dark and quiet. She sat up and rubbed the sleep from her eyes. She looked around at the many mothers and children who lay sleeping on the wooden floor of the big hall. Then slowly she remembered everything... The people running blindly through the smoke, the sickening smell of burning blankets and the desperate shouting, the crying of a lost child, the rumbling, shooting Casspirs.

Now everyone felt safe in the church hall, away from the fighting and burning in Crossroads. Nopink rolled up her blanket and placed it neatly against the wall with their other belongings. Then she crawled over to where the grown-ups slept. Her mother stirred when she felt Nopink moving.

"Why are you awake so early, Nopink?" she asked.

"Mother, we must go and look for Welcome. What will become of her?" Nopink whispered.

"Yes, the poor goat. But I cannot go with you, my child. We mothers have to cook soup for the many hungry people here today. Why don't you ask your friend Mandla to help you look for Welcome? But please be very, very careful out there. If they start fighting again, you must hide in the bushes. If they shoot with birdshot, lie flat on the ground and don't move until the police have left," warned her mother, pulling her dress over her head. "If there's trouble, come back immediately."

Nopink stepped softly between the sleeping people in the hall, looking for her friend Mandla. She found him at the other end of the hall. Soon the two of them were walking through the cold morning, the air still heavy with the smell of teargas and the stench of smouldering shacks.

"Where did you get the goat from?" Mandla asked as they walked along the rough gravel road, rubbing their hands to warm them. "My father was working at the abattoir in Maitland," Nopink answered. "One cold winter night he came home with a little goat under his jacket. We all went wild with excitement and my mother prepared a bottle of milk for the hungry kid. We called her Welcome, and later my mother taught me how to feed her. I loved looking after her. She used to suck at my fingers sometimes. Welcome grew up into a big nanny-goat. You should see her big titties, which I used to milk every day. Now she's gone and I miss her so much!"

"Don't worry, we'll find her. Someone must have cut her rope when our homes were burnt down. I'm sure she ran away and is hiding somewhere," said Mandla to comfort her.

Soon they reached the sand dunes and burnt-out shacks. They called Welcome's name as loudly as they could, but only a lone, lost dog howled in the distance. As they walked on they passed a few people, some carrying bundles of blankets and furniture on their heads, others collecting blackened corrugated iron sheets and half-burnt poles to rebuild their homes.

Then they reached the site where Nopink's home had stood. Smoke was still rising from the pile of roofing iron, and under a twisted metal door they could see her mother's burnt-out bedstead. Nopink suddenly felt completely deserted. She turned away quickly, and they walked on until they reached Lansdowne Road. Mandla stopped suddenly, and then Nopink heard it too - an angry rumble that crept nearer and nearer.

Terrified, they crouched down behind a clump of Port Jackson willows. A convoy of army trucks and Casspirs packed with soldiers and police thundered past. Like people going to a war, Nopink thought. The sand was wet under her and she felt Mandla's body trembling next to hers. After the convoy had passed, they darted across the road.

Deeper in the bush, in a clearing, they found some families who were hiding from the terrible things that were happening in Crossroads. They saw mothers breast-feeding their babies, with nothing but a few bundles of clothing at their feet.

"Have you seen my goat?" Nopink asked the people time and again. But no one had seen Welcome.

Then they came upon a dam of muddy water with oil drums and plastic bags floating on it. But there was no sign of Welcome. Mandla went searching for tadpoles, while Nopink walked around the edge of the dam, poking listlessly at the plastic bags with a long stick.

Mischievously, Mandla crept up behind and pushed Nopink forward into the water. She screamed, struggling to keep her balance, and Mandla pulled her back quickly. She was furious with him, and sat down on the grass and sulked. They were tired and both sat in silence for a while. Suddenly they heard the stuttering of a goat. "Blaa! Blaa!" They jumped up and ran towards the sound, and there, behind an old drum among the trees, stood Welcome, her black-and-white coat dirty and splattered with mud. The goat looked at Nopink with her big yellow eyes. "Blaa!" she called again. Nopink threw her arms around the animal's neck and kissed her on her black lips. She was beside herself with happiness. Mandla found an old tin and brought Welcome some water. It seemed that she had had sufficient grass to eat, as her udder hung heavy with milk.

Nopink and Mandla took Welcome back over Lansdowne Road to Crossroads, walking her cautiously so as not to cause her discomfort. The goat followed them meekly, keeping to Nopink's heels. Over the sand dunes they struggled with her, until they eventually arrived at the church hall.

Nopink and Mandla took Welcome back over Lansdowne Road to Crossroads, walking her cautiously so as not to cause her discomfort. The goat followed them meekly, keeping to Nopink's heels. Over the sand dunes they struggled with her, until they eventually arrived at the church hall.

All the children and their mothers came out to see the goat. Nopink milked her while the other children looked on curiously. She was both proud and happy, and she handed the first jug of goat's milk to a mother whose baby was sick. The women said that the fresh goat's milk would surely make the baby well again.

That night Nopink let Welcome sleep next to her in a corner of the church hall. The day had ended well after all. Welcome was back, and soon the baby would be better again. "Dear God, let peace and quiet return to Crossroads, so that Father can begin to build us a new home..."

***SOURCE: TAKEN FROM "WHAT'S IN A STORY?"
BY GLADYS THOMAS.***

APPENDIX 2



Mr Danny Chinsamy ... lucky to be alive

Family gives thanks after dad survives horror hijack and crash

By Aldrin Naidu

The family of Mr Danny Chinsamy - the victim of a horror hijacking which ended when his car crashed under a bus in Inanda Road, Newlands - have given thanks this Diwali that he survived.

Speaking about the ordeal from his hospital bed, Mr Chinsamy, 41, of Landbury Drive, Unit 7, believed he could have died at the hands of his captors in the back seat of his Nissan Skyline or in the crash.

Three of the four hijackers were killed.

"I am very lucky, very, very lucky to be alive," said the father of three.

The incident happened last Tuesday morning when Mr Chinsamy, an office manager at Phoenix Flooring in Springfield Park, arrived to open the business at about 6.30am.

His brother, who also works for the company and who did not want to be named, said Mr Chinsamy, normally the first at work, was confronted by the hijackers.

"All he had was R70 in his wallet. It is believed the robbers assaulted him, and then shoved him on to the floor in the back of the vehicle.

"They may have began speeding in a state of panic," he said.

Mr Chinsamy, who had broken limbs, mumbled to Post: "Everything happened suddenly. I am glad to be alive."

Shortly after this, he was wheeled off to the theatre for yet another operation.

His wife, Mrs Rachel Chinsamy, 39, a housewife, said she could not stop thanking God for saving her husband's life.

SOURCE: POST NEWSPAPER, OCTOBER 1998.

APPENDIX 3

The Claws of the Cat

Stuart Cloete

'I am old enough,' the boy said.

'He is old enough,' his father said from the bed.

'He's only twelve,' the woman said.

'And I'm not afraid,' the boy said.

'That's it,' his mother said, putting her hand on his shoulder. 'It makes me afraid that you are afraid of nothing.'

'It's his blood,' his father said. 'He has bold blood from both sides.'

'Ja, Jan!' the woman said. 'And look where our boldness has got us. Because of it you are crippled.'

'I shall get well,' the man said. 'The doctor has promised it. Besides, how could I refuse to ride the horse? If there had been no rain he would not have slipped and fallen on me.'

'I have Moskou!' the boy said, pointing to the big hound. A mongrel, half foxhound and half collie. 'And I have the gun.'

'He's young to leave alone on the farm,' the woman said again.

She looked round the kitchen. She looked at the door of the great oven where she baked bread, where her mother had baked bread before her. At the wood-burning stove, at the clay floors so carefully smeared with cow dung from the bucket outside the door. She looked at the wall recess that held the crockery. This was reality to her. All that was real in the world. Her home, her husband, her son. She had been born here and had never slept away from the place, except when they went camping each year by the sea, till she was grown up.

And now she must leave all this and go with her husband to Cape Town, to the hospital. The doctor had said she must be there, just in case. Besides, she knew that Jan would not be happy if she was not near him. Like a big black-bearded baby was this bold husband of hers. Kaapstad, Cape Town, she

said to herself. And in a motor-car. She had never been in a car. But it would get them there in a day, and it would take five with horses. Besides, the horses had never been in a town any more than she had. And though she could drive them in the open veld and over the mountains, she would be as frightened as they in a great town.

A bed had been moved into the kitchen because it was easier to take care of her husband there. A man put his head through the half-door and said, 'It is here.' That was the motor-car.

'I do not hear it,' she said.

'It's a new one,' he said. 'It moves quietly.'

'You have the gun,' the man said.

'Ja, Pa, I have the gun.'

The man and the boy stared at the old Mauser hanging from a nail on the wall. The nail was as old as the house, hand-forged.

'And the dog,' the man said.

'Ja, and the dog.'

'And your blood that knows no fear,' the man said. 'The blood of the Swarts and de Wets. A good cross,' he said. 'Ja, a good mixture, like Moskou.'

Two men came in, followed by the doctor. He said, 'We'll take you now, Jan, if you're ready.'

'I'm ready,' he said.

The two men picked Jan Swart up. He was a big man and they staggered under his weight. His wife followed them to the car, and the boy followed his mother.

The doctor propped the sick man up, wedging him in the corner of the back seat. 'Get in, wife,' he said.

Japie pushed past her to kiss his father.

'Do not fear for me,' his father said. 'I cannot die. I can only be killed. It is not reasonable to think that I shall be the first of my race to die in bed like a woman. Fear nothing,' he said, 'and do what your heart prompts you, for through it courses the wild blood of your people.'

'I shall fear nothing,' the boy said. He backed out of the car, and his mother held him to her.

'Be good,' she said, 'and take care of yourself.' She got

in beside his father and wiped her eyes on a blue cotton handkerchief.

The doctor took the wheel. The car started.

The boy shouted, 'Good-bye, tot siens, till I see you.'

'Tot siens,' shouted his father.

The car got smaller. In a few minutes it had stopped being a real car and became a toy. Then it stopped being even that. It disappeared behind a shoulder of the hill and was gone.

Then Herman Smit, the bigger of the two men, said, 'It's gone. If you have any trouble, Japie, come over to us.'

His brother said, 'Yes, come. And one of us will ride over every now and again to see how you are doing.'

'Baie dankie,' the boy said; 'thank you very much, but I shall be all right.'

'Ja, you will be all right,' Herman said, 'but all the same we shall come, for we are neighbours. And now we must go. It's a long walk back.' The brothers laughed, because a walk of six miles over the mountains was nothing to them.

'Tot siens, Japie,' they said.

'Tot siens,' the boy said, 'and baie dankie again.'

He watched them go up the face of the hill, the pink heath closing about their knees as they climbed. They, too, got smaller and smaller. He saw them reach the top of the hill, where the white limestone was bare from the last-year burn. They turned and waved to him. Then their legs disappeared, their bodies, their heads. For a moment Hendrik's hat was visible, then that, too, fell below the ridge.

Now he was really alone. Moskou pushed his head into his hand. He reached a little higher than his hand, because without bending, the boy could hold his collar.

Moskou was yellow all over, a pale golden chestnut, lemon, as it is called, with a thick smooth coat, and eyes like yellow, black-centred agates. The only other black things about him were his wet nose, and the short nails of his round, cat-like feet. He stood twenty-seven inches at the shoulder and had the legs of a foxhound. They were strong and straight, set on at the corners of his body. He appeared to have no hocks or pasterns and his body was deep and thick. Round his neck he had a ruffle of thicker hair from his collie mother, but for the

rest of him he resembled a great golden fox-hound. As a matter of fact, his grandfather has come to Africa from a famous English pack, so there was good blood in Moskou. The blood that had hunted the fox and the buck for centuries, and before that had hunted the wild boar, the wolf and the bear, when such hounds had been called St Huberts, and England was still a forest.

His dam, the collie, was guardian of sheep, swift and vigilant, the servant and companion of man. And Moskou combined the qualities of his parents—the great speed, weight and nose of his sire and grandsire, and the wisdom and affectionate nature of his dam.

Moskou was in his prime, four years old. His tail was slightly feathered and fastened strongly on to his back. When he was hunting, it lashed back and forth like a golden plume. When he got a hot scent he gave tongue, first whimpering, and then as the scent grew hotter giving his deep, bell-like bay, which in still weather would carry a mile or more over the mountains.

It seemed as if he knew his responsibility. As if he knew they were alone on the farm, the sole protectors of the homestead and the stock, because he came closer to the boy, his great shoulders rubbing against Japie's thigh.

Alone, the boy thought as he stroked the dog's head and gently pulled his ears. He was not afraid, but he was uneasy. It was a new experience and a great responsibility. He had been alone with his mother before, once when his father had been gone a week, seeking a lost heifer. But quite alone like this he had never been, and the silence of the hills and their mystery fell upon him, covering him like a cloak. A green-and-scarlet sugarbird flew into the pomegranate by the orchard gate. It was like a jewel, he thought, that shone and sparkled in the light. Then it, too, flew away and the world seemed quite empty.

He thought of his mother and tears came into his eyes. He thought of how she had married his father. She had told him the tale many times. Of how he had come courting her on the strong wild horses he was breaking, and how her heart had fluttered like a bird in her breast when she saw this great

bearded man on a big wild horse. Breaking and training horses and oxen for draught and saddle was his business and his pleasure. He was also a kind of vet, attending animals when they were sick and curing many of them with simple country remedies. He had a great way with dumb things, and his wife often laughed about it, saying, 'I was as tame as a cow with that man from the first.'

People paid him for his work in cash and in kind, but mostly in kind, so that he had effects of all sorts on his place. Crippled animals that had been given to him, broken ploughs and carts, poultry, and the like, that he doctored up or mended and sold. People said, 'If you can do anything with that, you can have it.' And he took it—the plough or the mare. And he mended them, or fattened them, or tamed them, and out of them made enough to buy himself food and clothing; and what was more important to him, he had the friendship of all, for they sent for him only when they needed help, and were always glad to see him when he came.

At first, though his coming had made his mother's heart flutter, she had not wished to marry him because of his wildness and his lack of education. But when she had inherited the farm and he had said, 'My heart, let us go into the mountains together and farm the place,' she had agreed. Because otherwise she would have had to sell it, and big as it was—it was four thousand morgen—it was worth little, being all mountain, bush and forest. A place only half-tamed. But as he said, it was not right to sell the home of one's ancestors, the house where one had been born, when there was a man like him ready to help her with it.

His argument and the beating of her heart, which was never stilled when he was near, had convinced her. And for thirteen years they had lived on Baviaansfontein—Baboon Spring—and he had tamed it again, building dams, clearing bush and ploughing the patches of old arable land that they had discovered among the trees and rocks. Little lands like big handkerchiefs dropped into the mountains from the sky. His mother had been helping a cousin on his farm when his pa had courted her and the old people on the home place had let it go.

And now all this was in Japie's hands—the stock, four horses, six cows, four calves, eight oxen, one mule a flock of twenty sheep and the poultry. This was all they owned in the world. It was their capital and income. It had been come by hardly. Bred, worked for, suffered for, and was, if lost, irreplaceable. It took three years to turn a calf into a cow, or four, into a marketable ox. A horse could be worked at two, but was not at its best until five. And sheep, if they bred more quickly, died more easily, so that the flock they were trying to breed up grew more slowly than they had hoped.

Now, till his parents came back, he was the master of all this. The master, but also the servant. For man is the slave of the land and the beasts that require tending upon it. All must be watered and fed, cows must be milked, eggs picked up, sheep herded into their kraal at night, fences kept in order, and the weeds in the lands kept in check, before becoming so strong that they overwhelm it. All, now, looked to him. It seemed to him that even the wheat in the land below the house swung in the breeze towards him saying, 'Keep the beasts from eating us up.' And the chickens walking on the short grass near the house said, 'Protect us at night from the wild prowling things.' A cow lowed in a field and her calf answered. And it was he who must bring the cow's overflowing udder to the calf's hungry mouth before evening fell.

His father had said he was old enough, and he was. But only just. His father had said he must not be afraid, and he was not afraid. Not much afraid. His father had said he could count on the bold blood that ran in his veins, and his father never lied. But his blood and his nerve were untested, like those of a young soldier going into battle for the first time. What he feared was fear—what he was most afraid of, was being afraid.

His work he knew. All of it—feeding, milking, herding, weeding. There was no work he could not do, save the heaviest, and that was not because of lack of knowledge, but because of his lack of strength. All of it he had done many times before, but never with no one to talk to about it. This was the first thing he noticed. When he found that the red hen, sitting in a barrel, had hatched ten chicks, and he had put

her in the big barn and given her water and mealies and bread crumbs, there was no one to whom he could say, 'The red hen has ten chicks and I have put her in the barn and watered and fed them.'

He told Moskou, and Moskou wagged his yellow tail, and smiled up at him with open jaws. And so the first day went by, with all the work well done, and after cooking his mealie porridge and making coffee he went to bed in his father's bed in the kitchen. The comfortable smell of the man still lingered in it, and he lay with the dog stretched out beside him, and the Mauser leaning against the wall in the corner, and matches and a home-made candle on a shelf behind his head.

The next day passed quickly. There was no time to think till evening when all the work was done, and then he was too tired. All he could do was go over the day's work in his mind. Yes, everything was done. The cows milked, the calves shut in their hok, the horses watered and fed, the chickens shut up, the sheep counted and safely kraaled. He had cut wood for the fire in the morning. He had drawn a bucket of water from the fountain, bailing it out with a dipper from the cleft in the rocks that was worn with the steps of his ancestors' comings and goings, and the scraping of their vessel, as they had for a hundred years bailed the sweet fresh water from the rocky pool, into the buckets they carried to the house. The little path was worn deep with footprints so that it was a green, sunken ribbon that led from the house, past the bananas, to the hillside.

'Everything is done,' he said aloud, and Moskou wagged his tail so that it thumped on the dung-smeared floor. Japie was proud of himself. He had accomplished the work of a man this day. I am, he thought, a boy no longer, since I can do a man's work. The responsibility which had weighted him down disappeared, cancelled by his ability to meet the demands which had been put upon him. He dreamed, half-awake and half-asleep, of the time when the twenty sheep would number a hundred, five hundred. When the six cows would be a herd of fifty, when—and then he slept, his arm thrown out and hanging beside his dog's head. The dog licked his hand and then curled up beside him on the floor.

The next day Herman Smit rode over to see if he was all right.

'Ja,' he said, 'I am all right.'

'That is good,' Herman said.

The boy put the coffee on the fire, and when he had drunk, Herman mounted and rode away.

When he had gone, Japie almost wished he hadn't come, because a loneliness he had not felt before now descended upon him. Five more days went by, days filled with the work of the farm, the ministering to the beasts and birds that depended upon him, and upon which his welfare and that of his parents depended.

Then Herman rode over again. He said; 'I have had news from the Dorp, a man passed—Piet Fourie—with a message from your pa.'

'My pa?' Japie said, and his heart almost stopped as he spoke. 'He is well?' he asked.

'Ja, he is well. It is all over. They cut something out of him. He has it in a bottle and is bringing it to show you.'

'When are they coming?' Japie asked.

'That is the message,' Herman said. 'They will be here Tuesday, if God is willing and all goes well.'

'I will pray that all goes well,' Japie said. 'I have prayed it every night and morning since they went away, but now I will pray more strongly.' In his heart he prayed already, Dear God, let nothing happen. Let them come back, for this burden is too great for a small son like me.

For though he was bold enough and unafraid with one part of him, the other part cried for the presence of his mother in the kitchen and the sight of his tall father working on the lands. The world was empty without them. Without the clatter of his mother's pans and the sound of her singing as she worked, and the shouts of his father to the horses as he ploughed. They were sounds that were a part of his life, as much a part as the cry of the plover in the moonlight, the bark of the baboons in the hills, and the clattering cry of a bush pheasant when it got up in front of him with whirring wings. The sounds of his parents at work were a part of what his ears were accustomed to hearing, and the sight of them about the

house and in the lands and fields helped to fill his eyes, rounding off, as it were, the landscape, giving it cause and reason.

'Today is Saturday,' Herman said.

'Ja,' Japie said.

'There is Sunday,' Herman said, 'and Monday, and then they will be here, if God is willing.'

'Ja,' Japie said, 'if God is willing.' To himself he said, 'The day after to-morrow, I will be able to say to-morrow.'

'If there is more news, good or bad,' Herman said, 'I will bring it.'

Then he mounted and rode away, leaving a space behind him. A space that was filled by the thought that the day after to-morrow he could say, 'To-morrow.'

Sunday passed, also a working day for a boy alone, since the beasts must be tended. But he read from the Gospel of St John, which was where his father had left off. Each Sunday he read a chapter aloud, reading the Bible through from end to end. In that Bible were the names of his forebears, the dates of their births, marriages and deaths. It belonged to his mother, and he saw her birthday. She was thirty-one, and then he began working out the dates on the calendar that his father had been given by the storekeeper. Tuesday the twelfth of September was his mother's birthday. That was a good omen. How strange that in the press of events he had forgotten it.

He wished he could bake her a cake or give her some gift. He generally managed to buy something. His father used to take him to the store, ten miles away, for the purpose. But now there was nothing he could do. He could not leave the farm to ride twenty miles. It would take too long. And then the violets came to his mind. Some were in bloom by the pomegranate trees. His mother loved flowers and if he picked them now they would last.

He went out to get them and arranged them in a glass, with a border of their own leaves. Their perfume filled the room. He set them on the little table by his parents' bed, and he closed the door to hold it in. Then he went to skim the cream from the milk he had set in pans in the dairy in the morning, and from there to the stable yards and kraals to shut up for

the night. It was a still evening. Very beautiful, and all was well. He watched the last bees coming home to the box-hives. How late some of them worked. And to-morrow, he could say, 'To-morrow.'

He was up before dawn saying it, 'To-morrow, to-morrow.' He said it to himself, and then he saw Herman coming on his black horse. News, he thought. 'Good or bad,' Herman had said.

And the news he brought was bad. His father was wonderfully well, but they were not coming until Thursday—not for three days. Well, three days would pass, as the others, but it was a blow to him. His mother would not be home for her birthday and the violets would not last. Still, there had been plenty of flowers, and on Wednesday, he would pick more. The days went quickly enough, because there was so much work. And the few days that separated him from his parents would go quickly too.

'You are a good boy,' Herman said. 'Your father will be proud of you, for it is not every young son who could have done what you have done. And many would have been afraid.'

'I have Moskou and the gun,' the boy said.

'Nevertheless,' Herman said, 'many would be afraid. Why,' he said, 'many men even would fear to be alone in so wild a place.'

'It's my woonplek—my living place,' Japie said. 'I know no other place, and I am not lonely with the animals and birds about me.'

And again Herman rode away, but this time he left no space behind him; Japie was getting used to being left alone. As he watched him go he saw the sheep coming in, led by a big white goat. He had a bell fastened to a strap around his neck, and each evening he got a handful of mealies, as a reward for leading the flock home. Behind him came the ram and, strung out behind them, the ewes and lambs.

That night Moskou was uneasy. He barked once and growled.

Japie got up, and taking the gun from its nail, went out with the dog. But they saw nothing. All was still.

In the morning when he went to the sheep kraal, one ewe lay dead. There was no mark on her, no blood. Perhaps she had died of illness, a sickness, but when they had come in last night all had been well. They had moved quickly and their eyes had been bright.

While he wondered, Moskou began to whimper. He went to the dog, and there on the soft ground outside the kraal was a spoor. It was big and round—a cat spoor, but nearly three inches across. 'Rooikat,' he said—lynx—and then, calling the dog to him he went back into the kraal and, parting the heavy wool round the ewe's neck under the yellow yolk that water-proofed her white skin, he found the tooth marks.

He dragged the sheep to the back veranda and fastening a strap about its hocks, hoisted it on to a beam and made the strap fast. Later he would skin it for the meat would be good. But now he must make a plan. He worked quickly, milking, watering, feeding, and turning out the stock.

Plan? There was only one plan. He must do as his pa would have done. He must kill the lynx, for it would be back. There had been a shower in the night. The scent would be good and the spoor easy to see. He went into the house for the gun.

Then he went back to the kraal, patted Moskou and pointed to the spoor, saying, 'Now go and find him and we will kill him, before he kills more of our sheep.'

The dog put his nose to the ground. His tail lashed furiously, and he was off at a canter. He went up the mountain, giving tongue. Japie ran behind him. The gun was heavy in his hand, and the bandolier bumped up and down against his hip. He could hear Moskou, the bell-like note of his cry coming from not more than a hundred yards ahead, and then he came up to him. The hound had checked. Marking the place where he had lost the scent on a rocky flat, Japie cast round in a circle with the dog and picked it up again. This time it was hotter and the hound went faster. The note of his voice deepened to a bay.

He is near, Japie thought, and ran hard. Then in some heavy milk bush he heard Moskou barking loudly. He's treed him, he thought. Then came savage yelps and deep bays, as the lynx broke cover with the dog close behind him.

Japie thought, he's seen me and he knows I can shoot him down from a tree. With the dog alone he would have stayed up there. The lynx ran up a steep cliff, and turned into a small cave in the limestone. Now we've got him, Japie thought, because Moskou was barking at the entrance and looking back at him as he climbed.

The cave gave on to a ledge, and as he reached it he saw the lynx crouched on the floor, glaring at him. Its great yellow eyes were narrowed slits, and its lips were drawn back over its bared fangs. Its brown body was flat on the ground, its short tail raised. Its black tufted ears were laid back against its neck.

Japie put up his gun and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened. He opened the bolt, reloaded, and fired again. This time the cartridge exploded, but as he shot, the animal charged. The boy warded it off with the barrel, but the lynx bit him in the arm and scratched him from neck to belt with its sharp claws. He felt its breath on his face.

Dropping the rifle he gripped its throat, trying to keep it away from his face, and felt with his other hand for the knife in his belt.

As the lynx jumped at Japie, Moskou had sprung at it, seizing it in the loin. The lynx turned away from the boy as he stabbed it in the side, and swung back on the dog. As it turned, Japie passed his hand over its back and drove the hunting-knife in again behind its shoulder blade. Dropping him completely, the lynx fell on its back and, reaching upwards, seized Moskou by the throat from below. The hound and the lynx became an indistinguishable blur of red fur and yellow skin. A spitting, snarling, growling, bloody mass.

Moskou shook himself free and stood over the lynx, his ruff covered with thick dark blood. With a savage roar he closed in again, his jaws on the lynx's throat. It was dead now—limp but twitching still. The hound stood over it for an instant and then staggered and fell. Half-skinned alive, the great muscles of his side exposed, one cheek torn out, he lay and, turning his golden eyes to Japie, he died on top of the lynx. His eyes never closed, they simply lost expression, glazing slowly as death came to him.

Japie sat down on the bloody floor of the cave. They had done it. The lynx was finished, but Moskou was dead, and without Moskou the lynx might have killed him. The dog had died so that he might live. He looked at his arm. It was badly torn and bleeding. He took off his shirt and cut it into strips with his knife and bandaged himself as well as he could. When he got home he would put turpentine on it from the bottle on the shelf, and cover it with cobwebs.

He was very cool now. He must fix up his wounds and then fetch the dog and the lynx. He must come back with a horse. He went over the horses in his mind. There was only one, old Meisie, that was tame enough for the job. Horses did not like the smell of blood. He sat a little longer and then took off his bandolier. It was badly scratched and had helped to save him. He laid it in a corner of the cave and stood the rifle beside it. His pa had said, 'You have the dog, and the gun, and your blood.' Now he had neither the dog nor the gun, but his blood had saved him, the fury of it that had boiled over when the lynx's fangs had broken the skin and muscles of his arm.

He went slowly home, his arm in a rough sling made from the rest of his shirt. At the house he took the brandy bottle from the cupboard, and drank half a cup. He had never tasted brandy before, and it burnt him, but made him feel better. Then he poured turpentine on his wounds. It bit him, stung like a hot iron. He walked up and down until the pain was less severe and then, poking some cobwebs from the thatch, he covered the wound and bandaged his arm with the strips of old linen that his mother kept rolled and ready for accidents.

Now for Meisie. She was near the house and easy to catch. He bridled and saddled her. He got two riems from the wagon shed and led her up the mountain. Twice he had to rest. When he got near the cave he tied the mare to a tree, and dragged out the dead dog and the lynx. He succeeded in getting them on to a flat rock that was almost as high as the saddle. Then he took off his coat, covered the old mare's head with it, crossed the stirrup leathers and hoisted the lynx from the rock on the mare's back, tied it, passing the riem from its legs through the stirrup irons. Now for the dog.

As he tied Moskou beside the lynx he could hardly see for

his tears. Then taking his coat off the mare he led her back. His mind was very clear. He knew what he must do. He knew he must do it quickly, because if he once stopped he knew he could not go on. The cows. The cows must be allowed to run with their calves. He would not be able to milk. The horses could run. If the kraal was left open, the goat would bring in the sheep. The poultry he would feed heavily and then they must manage for themselves.

He off-saddled the mare, letting the saddle fall to the ground with its burden. Then he washed her back and flanks free of blood, because blood would cause her hair to come out. Then, running a riem through a pulley on one of the beams of the barn, he hoisted the dead body of the lynx and tied its end. It could hang there, beside the sheep it had killed, till to-morrow when his father came.

The grave for Moskou was another matter. It was hard to dig with one hand. He drove in the spade, pressed it home with his foot, and then scooped out the earth, levering the spade shaft against his knee. It was not a proper grave. It was more of a scraping in the black ground that ended, when he had dragged Moskou into it, as a mound beside the violet bed. That had been the only place to bury him. Here he would be remembered, and safe.

With the grave finished, and the dog covered under a soft blanket of rich brown earth, Japie dropped the spade and went into the house. He did not undress. He took off his shoes and fell on his father's bed. His father would be back to-morrow. Until to-morrow everything must take care of itself. He had done what he could and could do no more.

Not even with his blood could he do more. For a while he tossed about. Then he slept. Then he dreamed of his fight again, saw the green glazing eyes so near his own. Once more he saw the bare fangs, the white cheeks, the black whiskers, the tufted ears laid back, heard the snarls, and flung himself about in the frenzy of battle. Then he slept again.

His father looked about the room. The boy had not heard them come. 'Where's Moskou?' he said.

His father looked pale and much thinner, Japie thought.

His mother said, 'What happened, Japie?'

'Nothing,' he said. 'The rooikat scratched me.'

'Lynx?' his father said.

'Ja,' the boy said. 'The lynx. We killed it. All is well but one sheep. He killed the sheep, Pa.'

'And Moskou?' his father said again.

'Moskou is dead,' he said. 'I buried him. Ja,' he said, 'I buried him by the violets under the mulberry tree.'

'A brave dog,' his father said. 'Ja, a brave dog.'

'A brave boy,' his mother said, stroking Japie's forehead.

'Ja, he is brave,' his father said, 'but what else could he be with his blood?' Then he said, 'How did you kill him, Japie?'

'With my knife,' Japie said.

'But the gun? Surely you took the gun.'

'I took the gun. But the shells are old, Pa. It misfired and he charged. Moskou took him from behind, but he turned on him . . . and then I drove home the knife.'

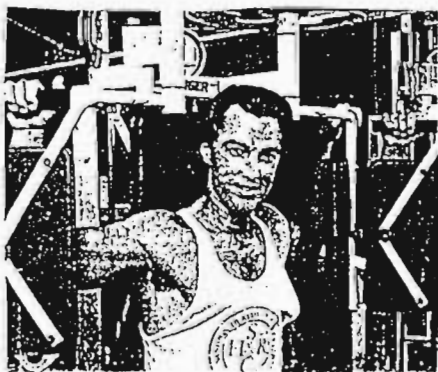
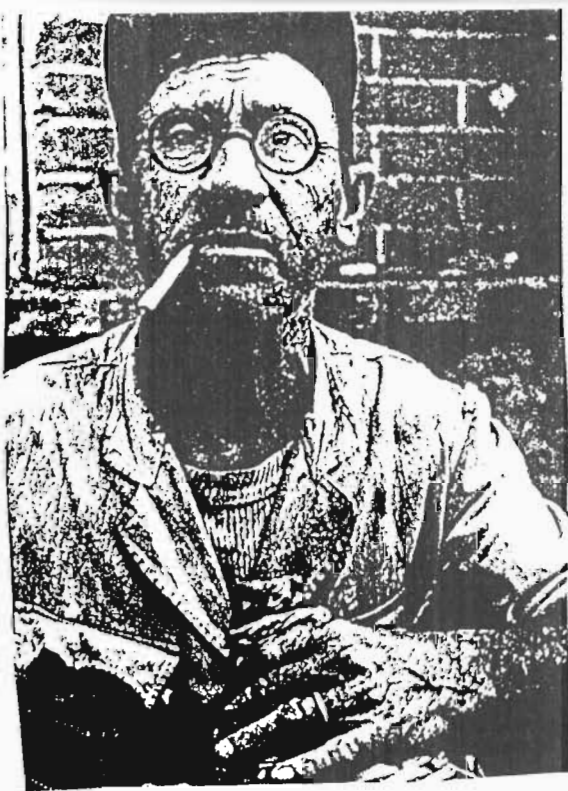
'I should not have left him,' his mother said.

'He was big enough,' his father said. 'To kill a lynx with a dog and a knife is big enough.'

'Moskou is dead,' the boy said again, and turned his face to the wall.

'Groot genoeg,' his father said. 'Big enough.'

APPENDIX 4



STEREOTYPES

APPENDIX 5

SOURCE: DAILY NEWSPAPER, MARCH 1996.



PICTURE: SHELLEY KJONSTAD

LUCKY ESCAPE: Sister Vidya Naidoo attends to Traffic Officer Warren Roets in the high care section of St Augustine's Hospital.

Premonition saved my life, says traffic cop

KEITH ROSS
CHIEF REPORTER

A SUDDEN premonition of danger probably saved the life of a traffic officer who was badly injured when struck by a truck on a Durban highway. The premonition caused Mr Warren Roets to leap to safety a split second before the truck hit him.

He believes he would have been crushed to death between the truck and another vehicle if he had not moved at the last moment.

Mr Roets, who is in the high care section of St Augustine's Hospital, said his escape from death happened on Monday when he and five other officers were doing routine vehicle checks on the N2 highway.

They were pulling off vehicles at the Edwin Swales off-ramp on Monday when Mr Roets went to speak to the driver of a car that had stopped in the

emergency lane.

"I had a sudden feeling I must look to the side," he said. "I did and I saw a truck coming at me. and I jumped."

Mr Roets said he was in mid-air when the truck hit him and he was flung to the roadside.

"I remember lying there thinking, 'Keep calm, keep calm'," he said. "I knew I was badly injured."

Mr Roets was taken to hospital by helicopter. He underwent surgery to insert a pin into his shattered left femur.

"My left ear had been torn off and had to be sewn back," he said.

His pelvis was also cracked, and he had severe bruises. "The doctors say I will be off work for six months.

"But I want to be back in about three weeks. I enjoy my job; besides, I can't do without my overtime. Our pay is pathetic and I need my overtime to live."

APPENDIX 6

BIG Ethel "WRESTLEMANIA"





