TEACHING GENDER IN ENGLISH LITERATURE AT A SOUTH AFRICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL IN KWAZULU NATAL (KZN).

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DECEMBER, 1998.

DECLARATION

I, NAVEEN 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.

NAVEEN SINGH

DURBAN, 15 TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 1998.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	-	ACQUIRED IMMUNITY DEFICIENCY SYNDROME
ANC	-	AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
B 1	-	BOY 1
BED	-	BACHELOR OF EDUCATION DEGREE
CNE	-	CHRISTIAN NATIONAL EDUCATION
COSATU	-	CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS
DNE	-	DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION
DOE	-	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EMIS	-	EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
G 1	-	GIRL 1
GETT	-	GENDER EQUITY TASK TEAM
GNU	-	GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY
HOD	-	HOUSE OF DELEGATES
KZN	-	KWAZULU NATAL
LLC	-	LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION
OBE	-	OUTCOMES BASED EDUCATION
PAC	-	PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESS
RDP	-	RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
SACP	-	SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY
SADTU	-	SOUTH AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC TEACHER'S UNION

ABSTRACT

Work on gender in education has only recently gained impetus in South Africa. The GETT report (1997) draws attention to the paucity of context-based and qualitative research in this area particularly with regard to the extent to "which knowledge, skills and attitudes developed by boys and girls through schooling are gendered, and the extent to which such factors as...teaching practices and out-of-school experiences are involved" (GETT, 1997: 116).

It was in specific response to the above area of concern that this project was conceived. In this light, the project provides a detailed analysis of a classroom in which the teacher taught (what she considered) a seemingly innocuous, 'gender neutral' short-story to a grade 10 (standard eight) class. An in-depth examination of how pupils interacted with the short-story as well as the teacher's approach to the text was undertaken to establish how a gendered discourse was generated and how that discourse fed into, or undermined, dominant hegemonic gender practices. In addition, a closer look at *interactional processes* (that is, learning styles and strategies; and teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction) was conducted to uncover whether gender was implicated in their operation within the classroom. Hence, the project constitutes an attempt to explore the extent to which the text, pedagogical practices, and out-of-school (lived) experiences were involved in shaping the pupils' knowledge and understanding of their gender identities.

The particular class of forty grade 10 pupils who formed the main focus of the study came from an ex-House of Delegates (HOD) secondary school at which I am presently a senior teacher of English. The school was established in 1961 in Asherville, a middle- to working class Indian residential area about 5 kilometres west of Durban's Central Business District. The school serves about 950 pupils from the surrounding areas of Clare Estate, Overport and Sydenham. It must be borne in mind that despite its location, there are pupils from as far as Umlazi, Chesterville and Kwa Mashu which are former apartheid townships for a largely African population.

The complexity of this project required careful planning of the research design and methodology. The data drawn on here was collected using three different methods, namely, questionnaires; interviews; and classroom observation. The questionnaire was designed in a way to draw on the pupils' 'lived experiences' in order to understand how they positioned themselves with regard to the shaping of their 'masculinities ' and 'femininities'; and, to discover the kind of gender identities they were developing in response to the text. The primary aim of the interview phase was to solicit the pupils' attitudes towards their teacher's pedagogical approach to the text. It also involved participants reflecting on their own lives . The former was an attempt to understand how their sets of learned gendered experiences (which they brought with them into the classroom) interacted with the teaching-learning context. Because of my commitment to qualitative research, the data obtained was entirely the participants' personal reflections.

The theoretical considerations underpinning the study are based on perspectives of gender and education with particular reference to the role that school textbooks play in the construction and articulation of gendered subjectivities and classroom interaction investigations of conversation (talk). Interwoven with the overall theoretical discussion will be post-structuralist feminist perspectives on language and gender.

This contextual approach project demonstrated that the gendered meanings which were generated during the English lesson were deeply embedded in the variety of lived experiences and discourses that the pupils drew on to make sense of their lives. In other words, it showed how the text, pedagogical practices, and lived experiences interacted in shaping the pupils' gendered identities. Through the analysis of classroom interactional processes, it also became evident that although the teacher played a considerable role in influencing the pupils, they were not without agency as some of them were capable of resisting the ideologically hegemonic patterns and even influencing the teacher.

Although constrained by some limitations, this research project has implications both for further research on discourse patterns in the classroom and for strategies to foster gender sensitive education. I believe that I have identified an important area in South African education which should be explored in much greater depth. Whatever the outcomes are of such comprehensive qualitative research, the urgency is still the same - to sensitise

teachers to practices which subtly implicate gender differentiation in their operation within a classroom.

It is hoped that teachers cognisant of the processes illuminated in the study may translate these insights into concrete action for change through collective efforts.

1.
INTRODUCTION

1.1. PREAMBLE

Gender only became an educational issue in the 1990's but since then has gained momentum. With the dawn of the first multiracial elections in 1994, the wheels of transformation in all spheres of South African society (including education) began turning. Although gender was not a key element in this transformation, its role in education increasingly came to be recognised by both the government and educationists. This has triggered a series of discussion documents and proposed policies in respect of post-apartheid education with the view to creating a non-racial, non-sexist education system.

In keeping with the above mentioned vision and to begin implementing steps to ensure the principle of gender equality, the Department of Education (DOE) appointed a Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) to advise on the establishment of a Gender Equity Unit (GEU) in the National Department of Education. The GETT report (October, 1997) "breaks new ground in that there is no existing text analysing all different levels of education from a gender perspective" (GETT, 1997 : 1). Accordingly, the report (ibid., 104) identifies numerous concerns with regard to sexism in schooling and proposes measures for :

making schools safe and establishing schools

as sites where there is critical and active promotion

of all forms of human rights, including rights based

on sex, gender and sexual orientation.

One of the central concerns highlighted by the GETT report was the lack of empirical data and context-based research into issues of gender in schooling. Consequently, in addressing the aforementioned problem, it recommends that research be undertaken by

smaller scale, finely focused studies enabling the

incorporation of qualitative differences in the

experiences of boys and girls of different cultural

backgrounds in different locations and school types.

(1997: 115)

In addition, the report suggests sample studies on:

the extent to which the knowledge, skills and

attitudes developed by boys and girls through

schooling are gendered, and the extent to which

such factors as the social experience of schooling,

the curriculum, organisational issues in schooling,

teaching practices and out-of-school experiences

are involved.

(1997 : 116)

It was in specific response to these two areas of concern and recommendations that this project was conceived. In this light, the project provides a detailed analysis of a classroom in which the teacher taught (what she considered) a seemingly innocuous, 'gender neutral' short-story to a grade 10 (standard eight) class. An in-depth examination of how pupils interacted with the short-story as well as the teacher's approach to the text was undertaken to establish how a gendered discourse was generated and how that discourse fed into, or undermined, dominant hegemonic gender practices. In addition, a closer look at *interactional processes* (that is, learning styles and strategies; and teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction) was conducted to uncover whether gender was implicated in their operation within the classroom. Hence, the project constitutes an attempt to explore the extent to which the text, pedagogical practices, and out-of-school (lived) experiences were involved in shaping the pupils' knowledge and understanding of their gender identities.

The particular class of forty grade 10 pupils who formed the main focus of the study came from an ex-House of Delegates (HOD) secondary school at which I am presently a senior teacher of English. The school was established in 1961 in Asherville, a middle- to working class Indian residential area about 5 kilometres west of Durban's Central Business District (Refer to map in *Appendix A*). The school serves about 950 pupils from the surrounding areas of Clare Estate, Overport and Sydenham. It must be borne in mind that despite its location, there are pupils from as far as Umlazi, Chesterville and

KwaMashu which are former apartheid townships for a largely African population. Some of the gendered features of school life include:

- although there has been an absence of sexual violence at school, there have been isolated cases of sexual harassment;

- girls are expected to be quiet and submissive while it is acceptable that boys are aggressive and outspoken;

- manual tasks are assigned to boys while girls get the more 'domesticated' chores of catering or preparing the tables for functions and so on;

- subjects like Home Economics are regarded as 'feminine' while subjects like Technika Electronics, Woodwork and Metalwork are considered 'masculine' (refer to *Appendix B* to verify the vast gender differentiation between 'technical' and 'social/skills' subjects) ;

- sports like soccer and cricket are completely dominated by boys;

- boys and girls are reprimanded in different ways where harsher measures are inflicted on boys; and

- language usage by teachers and pupils like the generic use of *'he'* to denote people of both sexes and more frequent use of examples using males to illustrate points of view are common.

The theoretical considerations underpinning the study are based on perspectives of gender and education with particular reference to the role that school textbooks play in the construction and articulation of gendered subjectivities and classroom interaction investigations of conversation (talk). Interwoven with the overall theoretical discussion will be post-structuralist

feminist thinking on language and gender. Throughout the study I use the term 'gender' according to Flemming's (1988) definition (cited in Kenworthy, 1998: 1) to mean 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.

The complexity of this project required careful planning of the research design and methodology. The data drawn on here was collected using three different methods, namely, questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation.

The project also takes up the current theme in South African education of the dire need for qualitative research in the belief that, as opposed to quantitative research which focuses primarily on statistical information, it takes into account complex interrelationships between the participants under study. In this way, processes like contestation, deviance, accommodation and other social factors that impact on gender relations are examined. Furthermore, underlining the rationale for adopting a qualitative approach is my intention to assist in developing teaching strategies through which pupils' attitudes and perceptions about *gender* may be appropriately developed. Therefore, what I share through the research is the central concern about the *processes* by which learning takes place about gender subjectivities in a literature classroom. It is my desire to assist teachers to develop their own awareness of these *processes*

which they will be able to draw on in their daily teaching and build into their own teaching approaches to foster gender-sensitivity in education.

Since the study is limited to a single ex-HOD school, it becomes difficult to generalise from a small sample such as this. Nonetheless, it proves valuable to examine, in depth, the text and practices related to the issue of the construction of gender identities in a particular environment as a quantitative survey would not provide such detailed and specific evidence. Given the contemporary concern with South African education for more qualitative research it is important to have grounded descriptions of what actually occurs in classrooms so that classroom practices and even policy making can be properly informed. In this way, practices that entrench stereotypical notions of gender within a classroom are made explicit to teachers and, in doing so, this awareness is made accessible for future action.

1.2. BRIEF REVIEW OF POLITICAL INITIATIVES WITH REGARD TO GENDER POLICIES IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION

Previous to the 1994 elections, the General Education Affairs Act, number 76 of 1984 introduced the Tricameral parliamentary principle into the education sector. Accordingly, schooling for Whites, Indians, Africans and Coloureds was designated to racially separated education departments. According to the ANC Discussion Document (1994) there were 19 Departments of Education prior to the 1994 elections. Each of these Departments administered the different norms, standards, funding, syllabi and so forth for the racial group

for which they were responsible. Apart from the fact that during this time, education provision reflected Apartheid policies which legitimated Afrikaner Christian National Education (CNE), there was little attention given to the issue of gender equality. As the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994 : 58) reiterated that education and training under apartheid was characterised by the features that

the system [was] fragmented along racial and ethnic lines,
and [was] saturated with the racist and sexist ideology and
educational doctrines of apartheid.

According to Truscott (1994), the emphasis in South African education research writings had been on class and race and strikingly did not specifically include the issue of gender discrimination. There were some occasional contributions about gender in education by people like Cock (1980), Chisholm (1984) and Christie (1985) - but nothing significant that addressed the issue directly. Little attention was given to gendered relationships in the South African education system.

The early 1990's saw the beginning of gender education policy writing. However, Truscott (1994: 57-67) points out further that education policies like the Education Renewal Strategy (1991), the ANC's Discussion Paper on Education Policy (1991), the PAC's Education Policy and Programme for a Free and Democratic Azania (undated) and other policies by COSATU

(1991-2), and The National Education Conference (1992) have *not* addressed the issue of gender specifically.

With the emergence of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in April 1994, a new vision for South African society was articulated in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). As a result for South Africa, the issue of gender was identified by the education ministry and political parties as imperative to the process of transforming education. Accordingly, the principle of gender equality has been acknowledged in a number of discussion and policy documents since then. Despite these recent meritorious endeavours by the parties concerned there are, and remain, significant gender biases in education. This is due to a number of factors: At a local level, the provinces do not have the formal structures, proper resources and clearly spelt out strategies to promote gender equity. In the absence of adequate research and knowledge in this field, there is insufficient data to formulate designs to accomplish this end. Although in the last few years there has been an augmentation in the study of gender and education in South Africa, the emphasis of many of these initiatives have been on 'empowering women'. In other words, these initiatives have focused on professional and organisational discrimination within the teaching fraternity rather than on sexism in the syllabus, in textbooks, and inside classrooms.

With the Government's policy commitment to gender equality, one would assume that considerable strides would have been made in the area of research

in gender in education in South Africa. Interestingly, it must be noted that the GETT's report dated October *1997* makes the following remark:

> *The Task Team recognised that it was working*
>
> *in uncharted territory...Concrete data, research*
>
> *and expertise relating to all facets of gender and*
>
> *education are minimal.*

(GETT report, 1997: 5-6)

1.3. RECENT POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION WITH REGARD TO GENDER

Gender equality is now enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa and this marks a new orientation towards gender and schooling. With regard to gender, the Constitution (1996) makes the following reference:

CHAPTER 1: FOUNDING PROVISIONS

1. The Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state

founded on the following values:

(a) Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the

advancement of human rights and freedoms.

(b) Non-racialism and non-sexism.

(1997: 3)

In essence, the 'supreme law of the Republic' concedes how gender is central to our lives as it plays an inextricable role in both the public and private worlds of people. Yet it would be very naive and simplistic of people to believe that gender equality can be achieved in a short space of time. Given the history of our country, the political struggle focused primarily on equalising racial distortion and inequality rather than on the fight against sexism.

In an attempt to address the issue of sex discrimination and education, the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP): A policy framework (1994) recognised that:

3.3. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

3.3.1. We must develop an integrated system of education and training that provides equal opportunities to all irrespective of race, colour, sex, class, language...

3.3.3. A new national human resources development strategy must be based on the principles of democracy, non-racism, non-sexism, equity and redress to avoid the pitfalls of the past.

(ibid.. 60)

The emergence of the White Paper on Education and Training in 1995 cast new hope for addressing gender inequities in education by proposing the creation of a Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) in paragraphs 63-69. Amongst other things, the GETT was to:

> *Identify means of correcting gender imbalances in enrolment, dropout, subject choice, career paths, and performance.*

> *Propose a complete strategy, including legislation, to counter and eliminate sexism, sexual harassment and violence throughout the education system.*

> *(1995: 53-54)*

In terms of the Department of Education's Policy Document on *Curriculum 2005* (October 1997), it states:

> *In the past the curriculum has perpetuated race, class, gender, and ethnic divisions and has emphasised separateness, rather than common citizenship and nationhood. It is therefore imperative that the curriculum be restructured to reflect the values and principles of our new democratic society.*

> *(1997: 1)*

1.4. DIFFICULTIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES

The gap between mandated policy in theory and policy in practice is prodigious. Research has shown that teachers behind closed doors can be relatively independent and immune from policy mandates. It follows then that policy does not necessarily ensure the successful implementation of it's goal. As Jonathan Jansen (1998: 1) in his address about *How policy creates inequality* argues that:

> ...education policy since 1994 not only has sustained
> and exacerbated inherited racial inequalities, but also
> created new inequalities in the education system.

In response to the state's lack of concern about gender because priority was being given to other sectors that demanded reform, organisations like trade unions took up the battle in the 1990's. However, these unions (like SADTU, for instance, which was launched in October 1990) consumed most of their energies in addressing issues like service conditions of teachers, sexual harassment, AIDS awareness and so forth. Unfortunately, little attention was given to issues like ways of fostering gender-sensitive education in a post-apartheid classroom.

Given the lack of capacity and resources necessary for teachers to develop their own materials and the absence of proper strategies for materials provision by provincial education departments (*The Teacher*, May 1997: 16),

the implementation of policies is stifled. Even the new model for education in South Africa called *Curriculum 2005* which has already been implemented in grade one is critiqued by the Gender Equity Task Team (GETT, 1997) and the stumbling blocks that are exposed include, inter alia : lack of teacher training and qualifications; the need to develop teaching skills and methodologies to challenge sexism and racism; and, the dire demand for the revival of the culture of learning among students (ibid., 96-97).

However, sexism in schools still exists in classroom interaction and practice despite South Africa's policy commitments to combat gender inequality. Also, it must be noted that the slow pace of gender change cannot be placed solely on the shoulders of the state. Teachers still rely quite heavily on textbooks which contain sexist images and language. In addition, classroom management styles and teaching methodologies occur along traditionalist and gender biased ways. It follows then that the implementation of policies may be hampered by teachers themselves. As Blade Nzimande, the General Secretary of the SACP acknowledges:

> Government has developed a comprehensive set of
> legislation and policies, it is our turn to fulfil our side
> of the deal by making these a reality on the ground.

> (*The Educator's Voice*, 1998 : 6)

There also exists a need for new curriculum prerogatives or learning programmes to be sought which take gender into account. This could be closely linked with what Professor Jonathan Jansen, the dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Durban-Westville has argued in a local newspaper with regard to the present attempts being made to review the apartheid syllabi prevalent at schools. He asserted:

> While cosmetic changes were made to some
>
> syllabi most remained unchanged and not
>
> a single intervention was made to support or
>
> enable these minor changes to be realised
>
> in the classrooms.

(***POST NATAL***, July 22-25 1998: 11)

Professor Jansen, in the same article, adds further that idealistic policies like the controversial *CURRICULUM 2005* "were being exacerbated by the fact that senior education bureaucrats and ministerial advisers had little experience of what happened in classrooms" (ibid., 11).

It is anticipated that the findings and ensuing recommendations of this project will provide more effective ways of teaching gender sensitivity in an English lesson. Furthermore, with the imminence of *CURRICULUM 2005*, there exists a need for new curriculum prerogatives or learning programmes to be sought. In response to such changes, this research project undertakes to offer some

insights into practices with regard to classroom gender relations which educators may translate into concrete action for change through collective efforts.

1.5. MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

My interest and concern about gender arose from my studies at university towards my Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree which included a course component on 'Gender and Education'. Prior to this, even when I was growing up, the issue of gender was not of concern and my assumptions about the characteristics of males and females were largely taken for granted as 'natural' and 'normal' differences. In addition, I did not consider 'gender' to be as important an organising category in society as race or class. But during my postgraduate years of study, I was fortunate to have had a particular female lecturer who offered intriguing insights into feminist thinking and action. Hence, my understanding of gender relations was continuously invigorated by discussions with her and fellow students.

Following from my newly acquired interest, I enrolled for a Master of Arts degree in Gender Studies. This degree being an interdisciplinary one, in that, it drew on lecturers from various disciplines including Education, Psychology, History, and Language and Media Studies, immensely broadened my foray into the area of gender. Through my exposure to these various disciplines which shared wonderful insights, my conception about gender relations was

enriched. In this way, I was afforded an opportunity to explore this area of concern with particular application to the teaching of English since I have been a teacher of English for the past eight years at the secondary school under study.

The above mentioned studies sensitised me about the issue of gender; and about the purpose of teaching literature; and the quality of prescribed school texts that pupils read and analyse. It spurred me on to reflect on some of the books I had to study during my schooling days and this concern has grown during my years of teaching English at secondary school level when I realised that such sexist texts were still prevalent. As a result of a commitment to a strong vision of a non-sexist and non-racist education, this project was undertaken to establish whether, in a country pervaded by policy commitment to gender equality, there was still sexism in schools, in classroom interaction, and in texts currently being used. The aforementioned overarching concern is related to my view that unless efforts are made to discover what happens within classrooms with regard to the ways in which dominant gender ideologies are sustained or contested, it would be difficult for proactive teachers to adopt progressive pedagogical strategies to spearhead innovation in their classrooms.

The project I describe was conceived while I was a teacher of English at what is presently the senior secondary phase (grades 10 to 12). Interestingly, I noted that the *Interim Core Syllabus for English (1995)* by the National Department of Education succinctly states:

> *In terms of the interim Constitution South Africa*
>
> *is now a democratic country in which all people*
>
> *are guaranteed equality, non-discrimination,*
>
> *cultural freedom and diversity, the right to basic*
>
> *education and equal access to all educational*
>
> *institutions. English, as one of the many languages*
>
> *in South Africa, has an important role to play in the*
>
> *development of a nation which honours and abides*
>
> *by these principles.*

It follows from the extract that if English has such a vital role to play in the development of our country, it would be contradictory if the English classroom was reinforcing gender discrimination rather than equipping pupils to counteract it. Hence, it is my desire that the findings of the study will conscientise teachers about *'practices'* in a classroom which perpetuate conventional gender relations. Furthermore, given the reality of the lack of funds in many schools which prevents them from purchasing more 'progressive' textbooks, the existing texts will remain until such time that they are replaced. Consequently, if teachers are made aware of *how* notions of gendered behaviour are compounded by such texts, this would enlighten them about ways to create English literature lessons into arenas where they could become the explicator of the text's meanings and embark on a critical and emancipatory teaching approach. This, I believe, would allow their pupils to

engage in a critical deconstruction and reconstruction of the knowledge presented in texts.

Coupled with the above is my opinion that merely replacing one set of texts with another in the belief that it would redress the imbalance and provide a non-sexist lesson is a false notion. If the teacher's approach to teaching the text and interaction in the classroom does not change then it is an exercise in futility. Undertaking a qualitative research project would allow for an understanding of the complexity of human behaviour by shedding light on how pupils interact not only with the text but also with the teacher's approach.

From my personal encounters with colleagues, supported by numerous readings by South African academics, I realised that many secondary school teachers of English are themselves not specifically trained or have the background knowledge to develop an effective gender-sensitive teaching-learning approach to the subject. An awareness of this indicated a dire need for a study of this nature to reveal to such teachers the implications of their lack of knowledge and training.

My initial readings on gender, education and teaching of English suggested that there was a need for this area to be given greater attention by the education system in South Africa. Despite the impetus in studies of gender in South Africa over the last few years, much of the research has focused on professional and organisational discrimination like wages, promotion, sexual harassment and so forth. However, little consideration has been given to issues

of how textbooks are used and understood by pupils inside classrooms. Morrell (1992: 15) alludes to the view that very little is known about classroom dynamics in gender terms in South Africa while in the first world context there is much research which shows how interaction between teachers, pupils, and texts within the classroom entrenches gender discrimination. The former view is confirmed by Gilbert and Taylor (1991 : 1) who contend:

> Much has been written in the last decade or so about
>
> the ways in which popular cultural texts construct
>
> and legitimate particular images of femininity and
>
> masculinity.

In this light, it is anticipated that this study will assist in clarifying and illuminating the above mentioned area of South African education pertaining to how textbooks used in classrooms articulate attitudes and knowledge about gender relations. At this point, mention must be made of my Union involvement which played a contributory role in the motivation for the project. My portfolio as gender convenor since 1995 for the Durban-West Branch of SADTU has revealed that despite admirable progress made by the Gender Desk in respect of female teachers and their difficulties arising from sexual discrimination, most of their energy was spent on sexism in schools in respect of maternal and work conditions. No priority or emphasis was given to sexism in texts and how these could be approached by pupils and teachers.

Hence, it is hoped that the study will help to formulate a trenchant and theoretical base for policy makers and educationists to possibly follow and contribute to one of the tasks of the Gender Equity Unit (GEU) of proposing "guidelines to address sexism in curricula, textbooks, teaching and guidance" (White Paper on Education and Training, 1995 : 53-54).

1.6. MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There is plenty of theoretical justification for asserting that one's identity pertaining to 'femininity' and 'masculinity' is socially constructed through a variety of ways and contexts (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991; Maybin, 1991; Graddol, 1993). These may include educational contexts, socio-economic backgrounds and a myriad of other discourses. The way school texts are used and understood with regard to the construction and legitimation of gender identities is an area of interest and concern in the South African education scenario (GETT report, 1997). Accordingly, the critical questions which guided the research were:

(i)   How does a short-story articulate and construct gendered subjectivity ? ;

(ii)   How does a teacher teach the story ? ;

(iii) How do pupils perceive the gendered messages in a short-story ? ; and

(iv)   How do pupils interact with a teacher's teaching of the story ?

1.7. AIMS OF THE STUDY

This project is primarily a qualitative investigation, the purpose of which was not to test a particular set of hypotheses, but rather to develop an exploratory analysis of an English literature lesson in a secondary school in KZN. In light of the lack of empirical research and exploration of gender teaching of a contextual nature in South African schools (GETT, 1997: 6), the study aims to:

- locate the areas of gender bias in a seemingly innocuous short-story taught to a standard eight (grade 10) class;

- investigate the pupils' and teacher's perceptions of the gendered messages in the short-story;

- identify the interactional processes (i.e. learning styles and strategies; and teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction) in the English literature lesson which reinforced or contested gender divisions within the classroom;

- analyse the findings according to various theoretical perspectives of gender and education; gender and language; and classroom interaction investigations to understand these issues; and

- make some recommendations by which gender-biased teaching could be redressed in future English classes in a changing South African education scenario.

The parameters of this project are indicated in the title. Although limited to *a* particular (ex-House of Delegates) secondary school (the details and context of which are described in Chapter 3), much of what is found and recommended may be of value to improve pedagogical practices in a classroom environment which is presently far from being gender sensitive.

1.8. ENGLISH LITERATURE AS A 'TOOL' FOR FOSTERING GENDER-SENSITIVE EDUCATION

Underpinning the research is the basic premise that English literature lessons at school level can provide an effective 'tool' to foster gender-sensitive education.

Recent trends in education have been characterised by the growing concern with pupil-centred-education, that is, with 'learning' rather than 'teaching'. This is best epitomised by Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) which emphasises a shift from the traditional 'aims-and-objectives' approach to outcomes-based education. The Department of Education's Policy Document (October 1997) stresses that this paradigm shift to *"Lifelong Learning"* is

a necessary prerequisite for the achievement of the following vision for South Africa:

A prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice.

(DOE-Policy Document, 1997: 1)

In view of the subject English falling into the Learning Area of *Language, Literacy and Communication*, the Policy Document (p.LLC-2) posits that language learning should empower people, inter alia, to:

* *think and express their thoughts and emotions logically, critically and creatively;*
* *respond with empathy to the thoughts and emotions of others; and*
* *interact and participate socially, politically, economically, culturally and spiritually.*

The above extract evidences that English, as a school subject, is in the process of changing. Consequently, there is immense scepticism among teachers about what English is going to look like in future. It follows then that teachers of English (and other subjects) must adapt to the changing world and as Giroux (1997: 268) postulated that they

must bring to bear in their classrooms and other

pedagogical sites the courage, analytical tools,

moral vision, time, and dedication...creating a

public sphere in which citizens are able to

exercise power over their own lives and

especially over the conditions of knowledge

acquisition.

In this spirit, the *Interim Core Syllabus for English (1995/1996)* has revised

the English literature syllabus in keeping with a non-racist and non-sexist

South Africa:

> *should text books or set works contain material which*
>
> *is contentious, sensitive or stereotypical, teachers should*
>
> *deal with such material in a way which will contribute*
>
> *to the development in pupils of a critical awareness and*
>
> *will help to equip them with strategies for dealing*
>
> *sensitively with diverse opinions on a variety of issues.*

> *(paragraph 4.3.4. under the section "Reading")*

Despite the advent of *Lifelong Learning* through a *National Curriculum*

Framework Document, educationists, teachers and critics still continue to

grapple with what exactly constitutes the purposes of teaching literature in the

South African context. Whatever the end result of such deliberation, I

subscribe to the view that English literature lessons at secondary schools can be immensely valuable in countering the distorted realities created via school texts, classroom interaction and classroom practice. In essence, such lessons can provide ideal opportunities for issues to be raised which promote awareness of alternative behaviour to discriminatory social practices and generate new ways of seeing issues. Thus, the English classroom context can be used as a starting point to inculcate a better understanding of gender relations by girls and boys and in so doing would:

> *be responsible for assisting students to understand,*
>
> *in an informed way, the broader processes and*
>
> *structures that contribute to gender based inequality*
>
> *in areas beyond the school yard.*

> *(GETT Report, 1997: 77)*

The English lesson can provide a suitable terrain for the teacher to choose texts or stories that conscientise pupils about the social construction of 'femininity' and 'masculinity'. By interrogating such stories pupils will be become aware of how such categories are made 'natural' and internalised by people. Hence, lessons may be geared to reveal to pupils that such notions of femininity and masculinity are not static or fixed. The text can be used as an avenue to lure pupils to oppose or at least question the social, stereotypical constructions of gender. Such opportunities become valuable for classroom practice geared towards gender-sensitive education. Thus, by studying such

stories, it will also be "about learning to understand the discursive construction of subjectivity and the potential spaces for resistance and rewriting" (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 150).

I opted to focus on the short-story entitled THE CLAWS OF THE CAT by Stuart Cloete (see *Appendix C*). Cloete was educated in Paris and after the First World War he came to South Africa where he took up his interest in writing. In 1937 he achieved world wide success with his first novel entitled *Turning Wheels* which dealt with the Great Trek. Thereafter, he wrote other well known books and before his death in 1976 he completed two volumes of autobiography (de Villiers, 1987: 117). I chose the above mentioned short-story primarily for three reasons: Firstly, it offered an opportunity to focus on gender issues as I believed it was written from a perspective strongly indicating gender bias. Secondly, I was attracted by the story's potential to provide an example of teaching material that allowed for a direct engagement with the problem of gender stereotyping and open up for pupils a new focus on social relationships and prejudice.

My third reason stemmed from the fact that short-stories are *narratives*, that is, their primary function is to tell a story. *Narratives* may be regarded not only as a means of accessing knowledge, but also as a means of structuring meaning. The manner in which narratives are structured may even code and articulate gendered behaviour. In other words, the narrative structure or 'story line' may be powerful in embedding gender patterns and behaviour. Consequently, the selection of the story arose partly out of my curiosity as a

classroom practitioner to examine how the text was understood, and the extent to which it functioned to shape and articulate notions of 'femininity' and 'masculinities' within the classroom.

1.9. A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

In a new country embraced with democratic principles of, inter alia, non-sexism and non-racism, the project uses the socially constructed racial categories of "Indian", "Coloured", "African" and "Whites" because existing information and analyses have also used these categories. It must be borne in mind that these aforementioned categories are used for clarification and convenience and are not, in any way whatsoever, used as derogatory terms.

1.10. A PREVIEW OF OTHER CHAPTERS

The ensuing chapters will elucidate the following:

CHAPTER TWO - will provide the theoretical and conceptual considerations that underpin the research.

CHAPTER THREE - outlines the research methodology used. These will include: a situational overview of the research site; a motivation for qualitative research; classroom observation; undertaking interviews with pupils and teachers; administering of questionnaires; and, a roundup on validity and reliability by using 'triangulation'.

CHAPTER FOUR - presents the research findings and an analysis of the data gleaned from the foregoing procedures and methods.

CHAPTER FIVE - collates the strands of the research by highlighting an overview of the project; limitations and strengths; implications; recommendations; and conclusion.

2.
THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.1. INTRODUCTION

A plethora of studies about gender and education imply that schools play an important part in the articulation, legitimation and even contestation of notions about 'femininity' and 'masculinity' (*cf.* Gilbert and Taylor, 1991; Acker, 1994; Truscott, 1994; The GETT report, 1997). As Connell (1987: 99) asserts :

> we find various institutional settings such as schools,
>
> families and the workplace, where social practices
>
> are gender structured. The understanding of what it
>
> means to be female and male, develop in relation to
>
> each other in particular historical and social situations.

With regard to schooling, the above mentioned studies indicate that such practices outlined in the preceding quotation occur in either a *direct* way through the 'official curriculum' or in a more *indirect* fashion via the 'hidden' or 'unofficial' curriculum. However, it must be borne in mind that just as much as schools may play an integral role in the (re)production and maintenance of gender ideologies it is also "a site for intervention and change" (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991 : 5)

The 'official' curriculum refers to the most observable or obvious ways in which schools entrench gender ideologies like, inter alia, the differential treatment of boys and girls or where teachers' expectations of pupils vary on the basis of gender.

On the other hand, there is the 'hidden curriculum' through which "many unintended and unexamined messages are passed through school processes" (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991 : 22). Kessler et al (1985: 42) use the term *'gender regime'* to describe practices which they posit refer to "the pattern of practices that constructs various kinds of masculinity and femininity among staff and students, orders them in terms of prestige and power, and constructs a sexual division of labor within the institution." Closely linked with the aforementioned is Arnot's (1982) concept of the *'gender code'* in which activities at school are seen as transmitting implicit rules (or 'codes') to pupils in a way that causes them to "recognise and make sense of a wide range and variety of contradictory and miscellaneous inputs" (ibid., 84). Although Acker (1994: 93) points out that there is a paucity of empirical research with regard to the aforementioned concepts of *'gender regime'* and *'gender codes'*, she argues that "they demonstrate that gender is a major organising principle, applied to uniforms, curricular subjects, administrative practices, classroom activities and even the use of space within and around the school."

I will not indulge in a detailed discussion about other ways in which schooling perpetuates gender inequalities since these are comprehensively covered in a multitude of works on gender and education. Instead, in keeping with the

central concern of the project, I will focus on school texts (like the short-story under study) to highlight their role in the perpetuation (and contestation) of gendered subjectivities. As Gilbert and Taylor (1991: 27) argue not only does the content of textbooks need to be examined but also how they are "used and the way they function in schools...and what happens to it in the classroom."

In the above light, this sub-section will elucidate the importance of school texts in contributing to the construction of gender identities by examining the following three domains: ways in which texts articulate and construct gender subjectivities; teachers' pedagogical approach to texts; and the ways in which pupils make sense of (or receive) texts.

2.1.1. WAYS IN WHICH SCHOOL TEXTS CONSTRUCT AND ARTICULATE GENDERED SUBJECTIVITIES

Gilbert and Taylor (1991: 28) contend that although the construction of gender identities of school children has been seen to include curriculum materials, classroom interactions, and teacher expectations, it must be remembered that "whatever texts are introduced into classrooms - be they the popular contemporary texts of a consumer culture, or the elitist classical texts of a literary culture," also need to be considered. In essence, their argument stems from the belief that "popular texts construct and legitimate particular images of femininity and masculinity" (ibid., 1). Amidst a vast literature on the ways in which texts foster notions of gender relations, the following sub-section

will focus on a brief description of four (4) areas in which texts create a sexist impression. The four areas include: *representations; the relationship between ideology and texts; sex stereotyping;* and, *narrative structure.*

School texts, like other forms of media, are involved in the construction of events, information, knowledge, and attitudes and not just in their presentation. In this way, texts are actively involved in processes of **constructing** or **representing** *'reality'* rather than simply transmitting or reflecting it (Masterman, 1992). The concept of **representation** embodies the idea that texts construct meanings about the world - they represent and encode it, and in so doing, help audiences to read or view in a specific way. Hence, according to Alvarado and Barrett (1992: 292), the areas of experience covered by texts and other media forms are experiences which are reconstructed or **re**-presented, that is, packaged and shaped into identifiable and characteristic ('taken-for-granted' or 'common sense') ways which influence HOW the world around us is described.

Gender, like race or class, is a category of representations. It is a linguistic category which refers to social construction and interpretation (Davies, 1997). In other words, characteristics associated with this category (which includes the way we look or how we behave) help to organise our sense of 'self' according to the expectations inscribed by this category. For example, the way the two sexes dress may conform to gender expectations and that is why, over time, ways of speaking or dressing come to be associated with one sex or the other. However, they may, of course, be resisted by some groups or

individuals. Accordingly, the way representations are constructed is as important as the ideas and meanings they project because they offer subject positions for us. Through these subject positions we come to recognise images as similar or different from ourselves and those around us. In other words, the way we understand ourselves and define our identities depends very much on how we see ourselves in others like friends, parents, popular figures or even characters in a story. This process is termed *'identification'* (Lusted, 1991). Via representations in texts. this sense or image we have of our 'self' is constructed through the feeling we have of becoming absorbed in a character's role or position in a story by understanding her/his thoughts, feelings, reactions and taking on her/his point of view.

Following the above argument, Hellsten (1994 : 193) maintains the view that school readers are chosen by authorities to guide pupils into 'acceptable social' roles. Therefore, she believes that "such texts incorporate certain political and social values which are expected to be readily adopted by the pupils." In this way, texts develop pupils' self concept as they promote desired norms and values (Baker and Freebody, 1989). Baker and Freebody (1989) cited in Hellsten (1994: 198) add further that the former is achieved through the characters in a story who exhibit roles and ways that are valued in society. They believe that the characters within a story foster a child's sense of identity and therefore the "portrayal of gender is also likely to be significant in a child's identity formation" because the "characters are allocated tasks according to stereotypical sex role divisions which exemplify the desired normative behaviour to the reading audience" (ibid., 199- 201). At this point,

it must be pointed out that identities are not necessarily internalised passively by readers. There always exists the possibility of opposition or contestation. The aforementioned will be elucidated during the course of the discussion in this sub- section.

It must be remembered that although there may be shared recognition of the world as represented through familiar or dominant images and ideas, there is little social agreement about how to interpret these representations and there exists always the possibility of alternative representations, that is, other kinds of representations that allow us to make different meanings. In addition, meanings are not found *in* texts, they are produced in the act of 'reading'. The 'reading' of a text is an active, social process and also a site of social struggle (Bloome, 1994) : popular texts which are generally characterised as vehicles for dominant ideologies, can at the same time offer potential sites for resistance of that dominant ideology.

As already mentioned above, representations construct particular meanings, values and behaviour, and in this way we are positioned (but not automatically and in a linear way) *by* and *within* these codes and messages in the text. The implication of the aforementioned is that texts have political, economic, social and particularly ideological underpinnings as texts become "more like a discourse - meanings are negotiated, as it were, between author and reader, even if each plays a rather different role" (Graddol, Cheshire and Swann, 1987: 178) . It follows then that the *'reality' re*presented in texts is not neutral, natural or transparent - it is operational within an ideological context.

Consequently, texts may reflect dominant values in a way that creates *'truth'*, *'legitimacy'* and *'natural order'* (Weedon, 1987). Simply, popular cultural texts which are considered legitimate, authentic and worthy by the dominant order are usually those texts that endorse those ideological values held by that order (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991). Those that are overtly challenging to these values are, very often but not always, marginalised and devalued.

Michel Foucault (1977) concurs with the notion that *ideology* is an intrinsic part of society and that modern society has devised deviously invisible modes of oppression and imprisonment that never existed before. Foucault's conception of *ideology* demonstrates how domination is concealed and that ideology operates in a way to render the world *'natural'*. The phrase *'discourse and power'* is perhaps Foucault's best-known contribution to method in media and textual theory. Therefore, by appropriating Foucault's perspective, school texts may be considered as ideological sites of struggle because of their representation of particular interests as universal ones. In this light, such school texts can be viewed as ideologically effective and intrinsically involved in reproduction of a given society - by reproducing the structures of domination in societies.

Closely linked with representations and ideology within texts is the use of *gender stereotyping*. For sociologists investigating gender, texts play an important part in setting stereotypes and promoting a limited number of role models. Tessa Perkins (1979:30) defines *a stereotype* as "a group concept (it is held by a social group, about a social group) which gives rise to a simple

structure that often hides complexity based on an 'inferior judgmental process' (that is, one which is in some sense less than fully rational)." Put simply, stereotyping takes a feature or characteristic presumed to belong to a group, places it at the centre of a description of the group, and suggests that all members of the group described always have that feature. The process of stereotyping also assumes that the members of one group all share the same view of another group and tries to ensure that they keep that view. But cognisance must be taken of the fact that the aforementioned is a possible, though not necessary, outcome. The difficulty with stereotyping is that it forecloses on different ways of conceptualising problems and produces static categories.

Stereotypes are ideologically underpinned since they are culturally created and culturally specific. In other words, dominant discourse is imprinted *by* and registered *in* stereotypes and in this way they are used to perpetuate relationships of dominance and subordination. Like ideology, stereotypes work by convincing people that they are not entirely false but contain a degree of truth. They become *naturalised* by their constant repetition and these representations become normalised as the status quo. Within the criticism generated around school textbooks, feminist critics have focused on pervasive sex role stereotyping as a means of maintaining sexual inequality in society. Of course, the way in which these messages will be received is dependent on the reader: some may accept or endorse them whilst some will reject them.

School texts may be regarded as **narratives** as their primary function is to tell a story. The images, representations, language and stereotypes in texts are organised and given meaning around their narrative structure. Much research (cf. Barthes, 1966; Levi-Strauss, 1966; Propp, 1975; Todorov, 1977; Alvarado, Gutch and Wollen, 1987; Graham and Mayman, 1988) has been done on what constitutes the structures and functions of narratives. Feminists have appropriated the findings of the aforementioned theorists in their analysis of texts and have come to the conclusion that narrative structures are vital when investigating how women and men are positioned as subjects by certain texts. In this way, narratives play a significant role in ordering and constructing our knowledge of the world by creating positions for its readers so that they come to understand its meanings in particular ways. Hence, the manner in which narratives are structured may even code and articulate gendered behaviour.

By problematising Propp's (1975) analysis of narrative structures of folk tales, for example, feminist critics have discovered that the character roles or *'spheres of action'* within stories are generally gender biased as the roles for women are very limited, in that, they are seen as inactive, submissive and insignificant in comparison to the *'spheres of action'* occupied by male characters. Similarly, they appropriated Levi Strauss' (1966) conclusion that narratives were important for the function they served in society because the contradictions and inequities that could not be resolved in the real world are resolved symbolically within narrative structures. These contradictions and inequities arose from what Levi-Strauss called *'binary oppositions'*, that is, one of the ways in which one comes to understand the world is through

dividing it into sets of mutually exclusive categories like 'man' and 'women', 'good' and 'bad' and so forth. In this way, one generally defines things not only in terms of what they *are*, but also in terms of what they *are not*. Therefore, by adopting this perspective, critics consider that one of the central functions of narratives is subtly to influence men and women to accept these contradictions as part of their natural existence and not live life agonising over them.

Another vital way in which texts articulate and construct gender subjectivities is through the use of **language**. As Biggs and Edwards (1994: 82) state that:

> ...language is the most powerful instrument
> of learning and that this is so not only in
> subjects like English and Modern Languages,
> but in other areas of the school curriculum.

For the post-structuralist critic as well as the feminist post-structuralist critic investigating language, meaning and significance are socially, culturally and historically constructed. This implies that meaning is neither intrinsic, apparent (obvious) nor absolute.

In post-structuralist terms, the world becomes signified by language (i.e. elaborate codes and symbols) which acquire meaning within their relation and shared context. Even subjectivity is constantly being subdued, mediated and amended by ideological and unconscious processes. It is in the realm of the

post-structuralist philosophy that language is seen as a place where our sense of ourselves, our *subjectivity*, is constructed.

> **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)

Weedon (1987: 97) points out that subjectivity is produced in a whole range of discursive practices which makes it neither unified nor fixed. As a result, an individual's subjectivity is always open to change and as *language* is acquired, meaning is given to experience and we understand it according to particular ways of thinking and particular discourses.

2.1.2. TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO TEXTS

There is another aspect which is of importance when considering the relationship between school texts and the classroom, namely: *How do teachers teach these texts ?* The ensuing discussion will centre around how teachers' pedagogical practices may have an impact on the way a text is used and understood in the classroom.

Acker (1994: 97-8) argues that in order for implementation of an innovation to occur, like in the teaching of texts in classrooms, changes to teaching approaches and teachers' beliefs are crucial. She adds that "materials are the simplest to alter, beliefs the most difficult, as they may be buried at the level of unconscious assumptions" (ibid., 98). Acker posits that these beliefs that teachers may have can be elaborated into an *ideology*. Teachers' ideologies specifically about gender and even about education in general may "set limits to what changes and challenges teachers are likely to accept" (ibid., 98). The implication then is that the way in which classroom practitioners decide to approach the gendered messages in texts is largely dependent on their *own* ideological assumptions about the subject. Interwoven with the aforementioned idea is Delamont's (1980) hypothesis that teachers' own gendered histories, roles and positions within and outside schools help shape their varying views on gender - they either accept conventional stereotypes or challenge them. Hence, these will impinge on teachers' attitudes to gender sensitive education and their belief about what reform is possible or desirable in class when teaching texts, for instance.

Other researchers like Pratt (1985); Joyce (1987); Ball (1987); and Riddell (1988) also looked into the issue about teachers' attitudes and ideologies with regard to gender. Some of the findings of their research include the following observations: Firstly, some teachers (in their studies) appeared to be in favour of gender equality but lacked the motivation or knowledge to embark on practical strategies to alter existing school practices. Secondly, Riddell's (1988) study revealed that the majority of teachers she researched believed in

equality of opportunity but their actions in class very often belied their words as their reaction to the boys and girls in class had the effect of reinforcing traditional gender codes. Furthermore, she discovered that male teachers had little incentive to reappraise their own attitudes and a few female teachers who recognised their subordination and who attempted to establish an understanding of their positions within school, showed that their attempts were seen as a threat to the institution (Riddell, 1992: 88). Thirdly, Pratt (1985) and Riddell (1988) found some teachers in their studies were holding an ideology of 'neutrality', that is, they considered it to be ethically wrong to interfere or alter differential gender practices at school because they believed that the role of a school was to provide a democratic environment in which pupils and teachers were at liberty to exercise freedom of choice. However, they noted that there were contradictions to these claims because there was a number of administrative and pedagogical practices in the school which in itself perpetuated traditional gender ideologies (Acker, 1994 : 99).

Some teachers may support equal opportunities in principle but their actions and teaching approaches may very often run contrary to their beliefs. Biggs and Edwards (1994 : 92) assert that one such arena where this has a significant effect is on the pattern of interactions in the classroom. Information gathered by Biggs and Edwards (1991) as part of a triangulation exercise to explore the similarities between classroom dynamics with regard to gender differentiation and ethnicity indicate that the language that teachers (unwittingly) used very often degraded ethnic minority children and female pupils. They also concur with research findings from Coates (1986) and Graddol and Swann (1989)

about the role which teachers play in determining the nature of interactions in classrooms where there are striking differences between the treatment of girls and boys (and ethnic minority children) with regard to interactional styles like non-verbal cues, comments and use of praise. The aforementioned scenario's, they believe, may be largely attributed to teachers' preconceived notions about gender relations.

Following from the above idea, Acker (1994: 94) admits that despite teachers' commitments to advance the interests of pupils in their care, gender-sensitive initiatives in classroom practice are scarce because teachers' attitudes and expectations and consequent actions are not yet transformed. Gilbert and Taylor (1991: 31) also support the view that patterns of classroom interaction and teaching approaches are "typical of a much broader problem: stereotypical teacher - and societal - expectations" where "teachers' expectations about different interests, abilities and likely futures of girls and boys are subtly conveyed through classroom practice" (ibid., 22). However, at the same time, Acker (1994) points out that teachers' 'unwitting' pedagogical practices which entrench gender differentiation may result from the fact that school processes may appear hegemonic enough so that such teachers' actions are seen as 'acceptable'. Furthermore, in order to quell the notion that teachers are 'conspirational' in their actions she maintains that "teacher action seems rooted in tradition and common sense rather than malice" (ibid., 93).

An array of research (cf. Spender,1982; Connell, 1982; Graddol and Swann, 1988) indicate that teachers not only choose materials and texts that are more

suitable for boys, but also seem to have greater expectations for boys' abilities. Consequently, they demonstrate a preference for boys' ideas and interact with them more although they may be unaware that they are doing so. The former characteristics form part of the 'hidden' curriculum or 'gender codes' which were referred to earlier in this chapter. Acker (1994: 38) quoting Macdonald (1980) explains that these *gender codes* usually have "strong classification which re-produces the power relations of male-female hierarchy and strong framing where teachers play a large part in determining gender definitions and control." In this way, through teachers' actions, pupils are actively involved in inferring the underlying rules and learning to make sense of a variety of contradictory understandings about gender relations.

Accordingly, Naidoo (1994: 65) in her investigation into the potential of certain works of literature to develop critical thinking about the nature of society, also acknowledges the vital role of the teacher to modify attitudes and behaviour about what pupils read in texts. She claims that the conditions under which the reading of the text is done and the teacher's approach "will determine which will have the greatest impact, the reader or the printed message" (ibid., 66). Thus, it follows then that the teacher's attitudes and beliefs are important in establishing a conducive classroom context for raising issues of inequality. Therefore, Naidoo (1994) elucidates further that the role of the teacher is undoubtedly a difficult one to support and challenge. She states that "unless the teacher can create a trusting and supportive atmosphere, students will merely become defensive. And unless there is challenge, students will remain unchanged" (ibid., 74).

In this sub-section, I briefly considered the contribution of teachers towards the understanding of texts taught in classrooms. However, teachers never exert complete control over their pupils and the lesson. As Whyld (1983 : 60) affirms it would be too "simplistic to place the blame of gender divisions squarely on teacher's shoulders, as pupils themselves are ordering their own world on the basis of gender and do, in fact, exert some influence on their teachers." Although teachers' conceptions about gender related behaviours may have some influence on classroom practice, and in so doing play an influential role in the formation of boys' and girls' notions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity', cognisance must be taken of the fact that within classrooms there are always possibilities of alternative discourses which may challenge dominant understandings of gender relationships. Katherine Clarricoates in her investigation of classroom interaction noted as early as 1981 that:

> The social dynamics of gender, in fact, are worked
>
> out in every classroom, every day, not just by teachers
>
> but by every pupil in his or her own peculiar way.

(Clarricoates cited in Whyld, 1983: 50)

The aforementioned quotation reveals that "gender ideologies are not passively internalised but are actively negotiated and resisted" (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 23) by boys and girls within a classroom context.

2.1.3. <u>WAYS IN WHICH PUPILS MAKE SENSE OF TEXTS</u>

In as much as a teacher's approach to texts may mediate how pupils interpret what they are about and what it means, the role of pupils themselves in the way they make sense of texts is also a crucial factor to consider in teacher-pupil-text interactions. The issues touched on in this sub-section is by no means comprehensive as there is vast research available on how texts are perceived by readers. For the purpose of this project the following aspects will be elucidated: reading practices; reader identities; readers' histories (background); and readers' resistance.

Recent research (cf. Bloome, 1994; Millard, 1997; Epstein, 1997, Davies, 1997) on *reading* views it as a 'social process'. For heuristic purposes, such research can be divided into two groups. A first group of studies is concerned with the *social uses* of reading, that is, reading is viewed as manifestations and reflections of culture. The second group, sees reading as a *sociocognitive process*, that is, reading is regarded as part of a society's enculturation process where pupils, through reading, learn culturally appropriate values, beliefs as well as perceptions of the world.

Borrowing predominantly from the above mentioned studies, Bloome (1994: 100) contends that *'reading'* is a social and cultural process which "mediates students interaction with and interpretation of printed text." Underlying his argument is the view that *reading* is a process of becoming a member of a *'community'*, that is, a group of people, a family or a classroom. Irrespective

of how a *community* is defined. Bloome believes that the *community* sets the standards and 'appropriate' ways of how pupils should interact with and interpret the text. His conclusion is that pupils' reading process are "culturally bound ways of mediating reality" (ibid., 104).

Adopting a similar stance, Davies (1997: 9) posits that gender is constructed in a variety of intersecting ways (which are neither conscious nor intended) and are inherent in the structures of language and texts through which one's culture is constructed and maintained. She adds that such language structures and story lines in texts combine and have a powerful impact on the conscious and unconscious minds of the reader and to shape their desires and identities. In this way, the discourse within which pupils are located will shape them into gendered beings as their thinking, speaking, writing and even behaviour will be shaped according to the expectations of that particular culture. Hence, boys and girls will, through their *reading*, position themselves in multiple subjectivities which they can recognise as 'appropriate' to their sex and claim as their own (ibid., 26).

Millard (1997: 43- 44) also supports the notion that *reading* plays a significant role in marking gender difference. Millard suggests that boys and girls adapt to and assume the variety of roles that are presented by reading: the role models which they encounter in texts reinforce the positive aspects of femininity and masculinity and boys and girls are highly resistant to transgress these gender identities which they have constructed. Closely linked with Millard's view of how pupils relate to the gender roles of the characters in

texts, is Naidoo's (1994) study where she discovered how pupils shared identities with characters from texts and constructed their attitudes from personal 'identification' with these characters. Works such as the former are based on the premise that when pupils read, they read according to the cultural roles assigned to them on the basis of their sex. Thus, by adopting these roles which are considered appropriate to their gender, they perpetuate the social order which reinforces gender distinctions.

Another integral factor to consider is that pupils bring to the text "a network of past experiences in literature and life" (Naidoo, 1994: 65 citing Rosenblatt, 1985: 35). If the reader creates meaning individually, then it must be borne in mind that the reader's personal meaning is situated within a broader cultural context of his or her background and histories. As Gilbert and Taylor (1991: 39) attest the different readings of a text are not entirely idiosyncratic because they demonstrate the different histories of readers. These histories, they believe, influence the way in which "readers will take up different reading positions or stances in relation to different texts, and then proceed to apply different reading practices or methods in their attempts to find order, meaning and purpose in various texts" (ibid., 39).

It follows from the above that pupils come to the classroom with a variety of culturally based beliefs and practices which contribute to the ways in which they make sense of texts. Thus, it is safe to assume that pupils' understanding of texts are arrived at by making inferences from their 'general' knowledge, that is, information or experiences which lie outside the text (Graddol,

Cheshire and Swann, 1987: 201). Consequently, when analysing the ways in which pupils perceive gendered messages in texts, their cultural backgrounds and lived experiences must be taken into account as these influence the formation of their gender ideologies.

Harris et al (1993), in their attempt to describe how school practices construct numerous kinds of masculinity and femininity in relation to those that exist outside schools, concluded that there are *contradictory* aspects of gender relations given to pupils by schools, parents and the wider community (Millard, 1997: 43). They contend that young people are "caught in overlapping gender regimes - the regime of the community, the regime of the peer culture and the regime of the school" (Harris et al, 1993: 5). They add that although schools may offer challenges to external regimes, the influence of these external regimes still proves to be strong.

Taking the foregoing ideas into account, it is not surprising that Freire and Macedo (1995: 394-5) claim that what we need to understand is:

> (a) there are inter cultural differences that exist due to
>
>   the presence of such factors as class, race and gender
>
>   and, as an extension of these you have national
>
>   differences; and
>
> (b) these differences generate ideologies that, on the one
>
>   hand, support discriminatory practices and, on the
>
>   other hand, create resistance.

An implication of the former assertion for the project is that it would be too simplistic to believe that there is uniformity in girls' and boys' responses to a text. In other words, the ways in which pupils respond to a text may vary in a number of ways. Furthermore, in light of contradictory discourses which exist within society with regard to gender ideologies, the idea of 'resistance' to dominant ideologies must be acknowledged. Theorists (cf. Beechy and Donald, 1985; Fiske, 1987) involved in investigating the ways in which readers interpret texts have introduced the concept of *'the subject'* in place of *'the individual'*. While the concept of *'the individual'* has biological connotations to it, *'the subject'* refers to a constructed sense of identity within a myriad of social relations. As Fiske (1987 : 49) highlights :

> Our subjectivity is...the product of the various social
> agencies to which we are subject, and thus is what
> we share with others.

Such a conception provides a useful explanation for the contradictory ways in gender ideologies are experienced which may account for pupils either accepting or rejecting dominant discourses. Consequently, Naidoo (1994: 65) argues that ideologies are not something that are passively transferred from texts to readers. Readers already have ideologies from their lived experiences and therefore they will not necessarily make sense of the text in a way in which the author or even a teacher expects them to. Basically then, Naidoo believes that despite external influences of attitudes, values and behaviour, it is left to readers to make sense of what they have read because they will select

what they want to support their pre-dispositions rather than to change them (ibid., 65).

2.2. CLASSROOM CONVERSATION (TALK) ANALYSIS

The preceding discussion focused on the ways in which pupils may interact with texts as well pedagogical practices. Intricately interwoven with the aforementioned is the conversation (talk) which takes place between participants within a classroom. Hence, the interaction that takes place between the teacher and pupils, and between pupils themselves becomes a crucial area for investigation. Graddol, Cheshire and Swann (1987: 162) contend that how a researcher sets out to analyse an interaction depends on the type of interaction; the aims of the investigation; and on the questions which the investigation is intended to address. Hence, they argue that there is no one 'all-purpose' theoretical perspective or method for analysis. Accordingly, in keeping with the four main research questions mentioned in Chapter One, I chose to employ one (1) approach to classroom conversation analysis, namely, the *'Dialogic Model'*.

2.2.1. THE DIALOGIC MODEL

According to Graddol and Swann (1994: 166), "classroom talk...forms part of the hidden curriculum of gender roles in many ways." One such way, they believe, consists of children learning gender appropriate roles because it is through talking that children "make meanings their own; to work through and

solve problems; to spur each other on to explicit understandings and so on"
(ibid., 151 - 152). Consequently, through their research they conclude that
classroom talk plays a vital part in the reproduction of gender inequalities in
interactional power.

Maybin (1994: 131), alludes to the idea that talk in school provides an arena
for "children's negotiation and construction of knowledge and understanding."
'Meanings', she asserts are collaboratively and interactionally constructed
between people and not just created by one person and then passed on to
another through talk (ibid., 147).

Following from Graddol and Swann's (1994) and Maybin's (1994) point of
view on classroom talk, I decided to adopt a framework for analysis which
Wells (1992) calls the *'Dialogic Model'*. Unlike transmission models which
regard talk as simply a linear relationship between speaker and listener, the
'Dialogic Model' addresses the complexities of talk. In other words, this
model takes into account that the meanings of talk cannot be ascertained in a
vacuum and that cultural and social factors which influence talk interactions
in classrooms (or elsewhere) must also be considered. Furthermore,
proponents of the *'Dialogic Model'* like Volosinov (1973), Bakhtin (1986)
and Vygotsky (1986) share a similar view of language as outlined in
subsection 2.2. of this chapter as they also believe that language and meaning
are socially and culturally created. They suggest that the words people learn,
use, and to which they attach meanings, are not necessarily from dictionaries
but from other people's usage. Thus, they posit that the use of other people's

words plays a role in our own ideological development and our making of meaning. In this way, Volosinov, Bakhtin and Vygotsky argue that because people take on the 'voices' (words) of other people, it has a direct impact on their internal thought processes because "conversations are internalised to become inner dialogues" (Maybin, 1994: 146-7) which Vygotsky calls 'inner speech'.

In the above light, this project attempted to operationalise the *'Dialogic Model'* as the framework to analyse the talk (conversation) during the English lesson. In relation to the aims of my project, I focused on the extent to which the 'teacher-pupil' and 'pupil-pupil' talk in the classroom was a site that influenced the construction of meanings and knowledge about gender relations and how these were tied up with pupils' developing identities.

2.3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Out of the theoretical approaches and perspectives outlined above, there is none that uniquely and magically illuminates the project at hand. But if the intention is to critically examine an English lesson and to argue for a more progressive approach to teaching gender which allows pupils to challenge and deconstruct elements of school texts, there is a need to have an informed position from which to approach this. The theories described above collectively provide a theoretical base from which to start.

The next chapter will outline the research methodology used in the research.

3.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW

3.1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

LOCATION AND POPULATION:

The site for this research project was Centenary Secondary School. It was established in 1961 as a school for Indians as part of the racially segegrated Apartheid education system. The school is situated in Asherville, a working-to middle-class Indian residential area (under the former apartheid Group Areas legislation) about 5 kilometres from Durban's CBD. Centenary Secondary is a co-education school catering for grades 8 to 12. The school serves approximately 950 pupils from the predominantly Indian suburbs of Clare Estate, Overport, and Sydenham. In 1993 the school began admitting African pupils from the surrounding townships. Consequently, despite the school's location there is a mixed racial intake and some pupils come from as far as Umlazi, Chesterville and Kwa Mashu which are former apartheid townships but still places of a largely working-class African population.

According to the Educational Management Information Services (EMIS) survey which is carried out annually at schools by the Department of Education, the school in 1998 has pupils ranging from 12 years (Grade 8) to 20 years old (Grade 12). The racial intake is 14 % Africans, 2% Coloureds

and 84% Indians. The gender composition of pupils is 48% females and 52% males.

The teaching staff consists of a male principal, a male deputy principal, three (3) male Head of Departments and twenty five (24) educators of which three (3) female teachers, who were previously retrenched by the Department, were re-employed as temporary teachers by them. The gender composition of the staff is 51% females and 49% males. There are two (2) secretaries, one male and one female and a library assistant who is female. All members of staff are Indian.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE:

In keeping with the latest provisions of the South African Schools Act of 1996 and the Provincial Gazette of KZN, number 5202 of 1997, a School Governing Body has been elected by parents to govern the affairs of the school. Some of the areas in which the Governing Body now plays an integral role are funding, staff promotions, school times, and hiring of extra teaching personnel. Despite a 'School Constitution' and a 'Code of Conduct' being drawn up which, inter alia, aim at fostering conducive social relations, there is a dire absence of initiative by the School Governing Body to promote processes through which gender issues are addressed. The former is largely due to the fact that race and discipline are the main concerns.

The school charges pupils a nominal fee to facilitate the smooth running of the school. However, the collection of fees has been a difficult task resulting in a dire textbook and paper shortage as well as a lack of teaching resources like overhead projectors, tape-recorders and even chart paper. The lack of funds also means that existing textbooks, many of which, for instance, reflect stereotypical gender ideologies, will continue to be used until such time they are replaced by newer, more 'progressive' textbooks.

3.1.2. THE SUBJECTS UNDER STUDY

A standard eight (grade 10) class was chosen for the study on the basis of the researcher's familiarity with this standard and the fact that the short story, THE CLAWS OF THE CAT, was at the time one of the short stories chosen by the English teacher for the grade ten's at school.

The class comprised 40 pupils of whom 19 were boys and 21 were girls. The age of the pupils ranged from 14 years to 17 years old. Religious groupings of the pupils were Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Jehovah's Witnesses. The racial composition reflected 38 Indians and 2 African females. Home languages included English and Zulu. The socio-economic backgrounds varied from middle- to working class. It must also be mentioned that 2 pupils came from single parent homes, that is, they lived with their mothers only.

The actual names of the subjects in the study have not been used and the researcher preferred to create fictitious names for each pupil. This was done to

maintain confidentiality although all the subjects had volunteered to be part of the study and were even prepared for their identities to be disclosed.

The teacher under study was a graduate from the University of Durban-Westville with English and Speech and Drama as her major subjects. She also has an Honours degree in Speech and Drama from the same university. The teacher has been teaching English and Speech and Drama for the last nine years to grades 8 to 12 at Centenary Secondary. She is a devout Christian and hails from a middle-class background.

3.2. A MOTIVATION FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

A largely qualitative orientation underpins the methodology behind the research. The move towards such an approach stemmed largely from the current concern in South African education that there is a paucity of work in this area with regard to gender (GETT, 1997). Secondly, because the central foci of the project are the context of teaching and learning (i.e. interactional processes) in an English classroom and the ways in which perceptions of pupils and the teacher towards the text shaped the learning environment, I opted for qualitative research as it " is holistic, in the sense that it attempts to provide a contextual understanding of the complex interrelationships of causes and consequences that affect human behaviour" (Brock-Utne, 1996: 605).

Thirdly, in light of qualitative research being 'holistic', an added advantage is that it is not confined to any one methodology or research practice. For the

study this proved advantageous as I attempted to glean data from classroom observation; interviews; as well as questionnaires. Finally, since qualitative research has " no theory, or paradigm, that is distinctly its own" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 26), it allowed me to include a range of theoretical paradigms including post-structuralism and feminism in the study.

3.3. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

3.3.1. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

In this investigation I used non-participant observation as I did not take part in the lesson but listened and observed the classroom situation. The purpose of the aforementioned was to "uncover constructions, and to facilitate immersing oneself in and understanding the context's culture" (Ely, 1991: 51). In that way, I attained an in-depth understanding of classroom dynamics and was then able to ascertain what was valid and consequential for the study.

Ely (ibid.: 45) when referring to Walcott (1988) identifies three types of participant-observer styles: *active; privileged;* and *limited.* To delve into a discussion of each is not necessary. Suffice it to say that I saw myself adopting a both *'privileged'* and *'limited'* style. This was possible because a *'privileged'* observer is someone who is known and trusted in the setting and has easy access to information about the context. Because I undertook the research at my own school, I naturally became *privileged.* Since my role was

to only observe the English class and not actively participate in the lesson, my participant-observer style was *'limited'*

3.3.2. DATA RECORDING

Following Swann's (1994: 30) suggestion, I used *'on the spot'* observation which involved observing in detail while someone else was teaching. I also used *field-notes* to record details about classroom interaction. My note-taking was constantly guided by the main research questions outlined earlier in Chapter 1 which helped in identifying salient features which were jotted down together with my personal comments about it. One such salient feature was the teacher's and pupils' non- verbal gestures during the lesson which, of course, could not be solicited from the tape recording. Hence, my approach of using *'on the spot'* observation and *field notes* provided "useful evidence about the quality of an interaction and about broad patterns in the distribution of talk between participants" (ibid., 35).

In addition , a tape-recording was made. I obtained permission first from the participants before the recording-device was used. Fortunately, because of my familiarity and good rapport established, the participants were not intimidated or inhibited by the tape-recorder. The recording proved to be invaluable when analysing the data and for providing quotations to substantiate findings.

3.3.3. DATA ANALYSIS

A rough transcript was made first to identify general patterns in the lesson. Thereafter, a more detailed transcript was made of the relevant extracts. I used a *'standard'* layout (Swann, 1994) for the transcript which took the form of a dialogue where speaking turns followed one after the other in sequence. The transcript was read several times to engender a sense of coherence as a whole and to perceive the features of tone, pitch and so forth (Hitchkock and Hughes, 1995 : 173). In this way general *'units of meaning'* (ibid., 174) , that is, issues that were related to the focus of the lesson like language usage, examples used, the teacher' response to questions, tasks set and so on, were identified and extracted. The field notes were used to support the verbal information contained in the transcript by providing contextual and non-verbal information.

During the analysis I had to take into account the possible consequence of my presence in the classroom. I believe that my position as a teacher within the school and my familiarity with the subjects under study helped to minimise the possible effects on the behaviour of both pupils and the teacher during data collection from the lesson.

3.4. <u>INTERVIEWS</u>

3.4.1. <u>A MOTIVATION FOR AND DEFINITION OF 'INTERVIEWS'</u>

The rationale for using interviews as one of the instruments for data collection stemmed from the suggestion made by Ackroyd and Hughes (1992: 102) that:

> An interview allows the individuals to report on what
> they feel, are, have, tell others about their lives, disclose
> what their hopes and fears are, offer their opinions,
> state what they believe in,... and so on; in short , they
> can impart masses of information about themselves.

Bearing the above suggestion in mind, and in keeping with the central concern of this project which focused primarily on the participants' feelings, I realised that it would be a suitable research tool. The flexibility of interviews also allowed for opportunities to solicit attitudes and understandings about issues that were experienced by pupils and the teacher during classroom interaction. Therefore, the aim of the *pupil* interviews was to identify their perceptions about pedagogical practices which may have, either explicitly or implicitly, contributed towards shaping their stereotypical notions of gender relations during the English lesson. Also, the purpose of the *teacher* interview was to determine her beliefs and assumptions about the text and her teaching strategy employed to ascertain whether such issues might themselves have played a role in bringing about gender differentiation.

An added advantage of the interview technique was its scope for hatching issues and leading pupils and the teacher into an in-depth discussion about matters pertaining to the study at hand. Thus, the 'open' questions allowed the interviewees to expand at length on their views. Furthermore, the interviews allowed the interviewer to follow up and probe any interesting or unexpected issues that arose. This served to generate more comprehensive answers that gave a better, more informed understanding of the situation.

Following from the foregoing reasons which prompted the choice of this technique, it is crucial to define what an 'interview' is. Ely (1991: 58) quoting Bogdan and Biklen (1982: 135) defines an 'interview' as:

> ...a purposeful conversation usually between
>
> two people (but sometimes involving more)
>
> that is directed by one in order to get information.

The above quotation makes it clear that an interview allows the researcher to attain clarity on issues and in this way understand the context better. It follows then that the central purpose of an interview is to "learn to see the world from the eyes of the person being interviewed. In striving to come closer to understanding people's meanings, the ethnographic interviewer learns from them as informants and seeks to discover how they organise their behaviour" (Ely, 1991: 58).

3.4.2. THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

The semi-structured interview was chosen in order to allow me to delve deeper into the attitudes of both pupils and the teacher towards the issues under study. Unlike a formal or structured interview , the semi-structured one allowed for questions to be repeated or redirected when the interviewee could not grasp the essence of the question. Because I was known to the pupils and teacher, the interviewees were relaxed and informal. An added advantage was that I could introduce material into the conversation which was not considered before and emerged only as the interview was progressing.

3.4.3. FORMULATION OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The interview schedule (for both pupils and the teacher) was so designed as to gather as much information as possible in relation to their perceptions and attitudes towards the gendered messages in the text as well as the interactional processes during the lesson. I intentionally designed the interview schedule in such a way as to contain mainly 'open-ended' questions in order to allow for individual interpretation and personal opinions so that I could get deeper interpretations of the pertinent issues. I needed to find out from the pupils themselves about their views and attitudes of *how* the content of the text was understood and imparted by the teacher since this data would directly reflect on the effectiveness of the teacher's methodology. These perceptions would assist in highlighting any problems the pupils experienced in interpreting the short-story (particularly with regard to gender ideologies) and any

shortcomings with the teacher's approach. The findings from the interviews formed the basis for the critique and recommendations of the project.

3.4.4. CONDUCTING OF THE INTERVIEWS

3.4.4.1. THE SAMPLE

In total twelve (12) pupils from the grade 10 class were selected taking gender and ethnicity into account. Accordingly, four Indian and two African females were chosen while all 6 boys were Indian.

The teacher formed part of the sample as she was also interviewed.

3.4.4.2. PROCEDURE

I managed to secure a private and quiet room on the school premises to minimise distractions that could affect the proceedings. Interviews were conducted during non-teaching time and each pupil interview lasted for approximately forty-five minutes while the teacher's interview was about seventy -five minutes long. I decided to complete the pupil interviews first before proceeding to the teacher's interview. This was done on the assumption that the pupils would shed some light on the teacher's methodology and interactional processes which would form the basis for asking the teacher more detailed questions about her classroom practice in that regard

3.4.4.3. DATA RECORDING

I decided not to use a tape recorder in the belief that it would be intrusive. Rather I took notes as the interview was happening and occasionally verbatim quotations were noted. The main features and exchanges of the interview were written up immediately after the interview was completed.

3.5. QUESTIONNAIRES

3.5.1. MOTIVATION FOR THE CHOICE OF A QUESTIONNAIRE

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argue that qualitative research allows for the incorporation of a range of techniques and instruments to gather data. One of the instruments that qualitative researchers may employ is the questionnaire. The use of questionnaires is often misunderstood to be undertaken only in quantitative research. However, Hitchkoch and Hughes (1995 : 95-6) argue that "there is no 'best method' and that we should suit our methods more closely to the topics being explored." It was from the former rationale that I chose the questionnaire method to be one of the data collecting instruments on the basis that it would adequately serve to supplement my qualitative findings of the research. This was largely because the way the questionnaire was designed aimed to elicit from the pupils their attitudes and beliefs towards the messages in the text.

Bryman and Burgess (1994 : 222) support the view that qualitative research can be undertaken in tandem with quantitative techniques of data collection. They refer to a host of researchers like Sieber (1982); Mason (1992); and Bryman (1992) who have already done that. Special mention was made of Mason (1992) who successfully used such an approach in an investigation on attitudes about family obligations. Following suit, the purpose of such an approach in my research was to allow the quantitative component (namely, the "Yes/No" questions) in the questionnaire to first map out the general patterns and the qualitative component (namely, the open-ended questions) to reveal the attitudes and assumptions of the respondents towards various issues pertaining to the gendered messages in the text. Basically then, the questionnaire was geared towards obtaining personalised information about the pupils' feelings about the short-story.

3.5.2. CONSTRUCTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was designed primarily to gauge the extent to which the pupils' already existing perceptions, attitudes and insights interacted with the text to shape their gendered identities. The following features characterised the questionnaire:

Firstly, it was divided into two (2) sections, namely:

(i) SECTION A which required personal (biographical) information; and

(ii) SECTION B which focused solely on the short story and was aimed at

gauging pupils' understanding of the gendered messages in the story.

Secondly, since pupil attitudes and opinions were the basis of the study, most

questions were 'open-ended' because it allowed for flexibility of responses

and full explanations. At this point, mention must be made of the fact that the

questions in Section B were orientated, as far as possible, towards the 'lived

experiences' of pupils. This was intentionally done to determine the way in

which pupils positioned themselves in relation to other people. The idea was

taken from Pattman (1998) who undertook research about the identities of

11-14 year old boys in a school in London. Pattman (1998: 3) states that " an

important assumption underlying the research was that people produce

versions of themselves when talking about others." In this way, I also sought

to relate questions about the text to the pupils' everyday lives in order to

understand how they positioned themselves with regard to the construction of

'masculinities' and 'femininities' and to discover the kind of gender identities

they were developing in response to the text.

3.5.3. PRE-TESTING

Before arriving at the final version of the questionnaire, it was pre-tested with

pupils to determine the clarity and validity of the questions asked. The idea of

pre-testing was in keeping with Simon (1986: 47) who stated that:

...the pre-test should prove most valuable in

demonstrating redundant questions, ambiguity

and bias.

The first pilot study was conducted at a neighbouring school where the pupils were asked to scrutinise the contents of the questionnaire and to change, modify, or even delete any word/s, item/s or instruction/s which they felt was unnecessary, unclear or difficult. These pupils were also at liberty to rearrange the order of the questions or sections so that the questionnaire would be clear and easily understood by peers. Although the questionnaire was to be ultimately administered to standard eight (grade ten) pupils, the first instrument was trialled on nine pupils: three each from standard seven (grade nine), standard eight (grade ten) and standard nine (grade eleven). From the first trailling, it became clear that there were a number of items on the questionnaire that had to be changed.

Taking these pupils inputs into account I constructed a second draft questionnaire. The same procedure discussed above was followed but this time it was done at another neighbouring school with the assistance of a colleague. The second trailling necessitated minimal changes to certain words and phrases. My supervisor assisted me in refining and finalising the questionnaire before it was used at school. The final version of the questionnaire appears in *Appendix D*. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire as a research instrument was established through these pilot studies.

3.5.4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaires were administered immediately to the pupils after the teacher completed her lesson. I gave a brief explanation of the purpose of my study and explained what was required of them. The pupils were reminded that filling in the questionnaire was voluntary although all of them readily participated. I personally handed out the questionnaires to each pupil and remained in the classroom until every pupil completed them in the event of any queries being raised or clarity sought. Consequently, I had a hundred percent response rate as the forty (40) pupils were required to finish and return the questionnaire during the session provided for it.

3.5.5. DATA ANALYSIS

The questionnaire responses were manually *coded*. Because varying views exist about what exactly *'coding'* means and entails (Richards and Richards, 1987; Strauss, 1987 and Bryman, 1990), it becomes necessary to define what this term means for the study. In the study, Bryman and Burgess' (1994: 218) interpretation of *coding* is adopted where it is seen as "a key process since it serves to organise" the pupils responses that were elicited from the questionnaire and "represents the first step in the conceptualisation of the data." In other words, *coding* entailed the identification of recurring patterns or trends in responses and fitting them under certain headings or categories (ibid., 218). *Coding*, was therefore, a 'sifting' process in the research where I interrogated (sifted) the data gathered to determine patterns for convergence

and divergence among them. In support of my method employed, Corrie and Zakulukiewicz (1985: 133) point out that such data analysis is one "in which distinct points are first located and separated and in which related points are assembled for discussion under a particular heading...Analysis consists of discovering groupings and relationships among the body of the data as a whole."

3.5.6. TRIANGULATION

For any research project it is vital to check the truth (*validity*) and accuracy (*reliability*) of the findings and explanations offered. Hitchkock and Hughes (1995: 105) argue that in order to find out how convincing the evidence of a research project is, it is necessary to "consider the nature and quality of the descriptions provided. To ask whether the research is convincing."

Accordingly, I chose to use the technique of *'triangulation'* to establish the *validity* and *reliability* of the study. *'Triangulation'* allows for the data collected from the different research instruments to be scrutinised, compared and cross-checked to establish its trustworthiness. In the event of any divergent interpretations arising, this would only serve to expand one's understanding of the interrelationships between the data collected through the various instruments used. Via this process I was able to get a more informed profile of the research context because I was able to see the issue from a number of points of view.

In the study, three (3) main research techniques, namely, classroom observation; interviews; and questionnaires were used to investigate the same phenomena. Hence, the *triangulation* technique was used to verify the pupils' data gleaned through the questionnaire and interviews by examining the data according to the following schema:

questionnaires

pupil interview ⟷ classroom observation
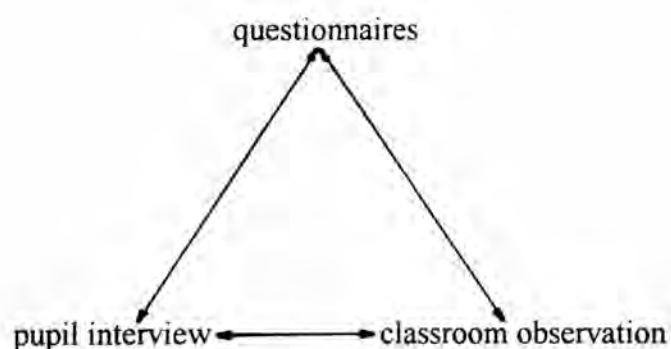
The inputs attained from these various instruments were cross-referenced to establish the convergence of data and its reliability and validity. The common perceptions of the pupils were grouped together to represent a consistent account of the pupils' responses.

The teacher's responses was also subjected to triangulation to check for consistencies. The following schema was used:
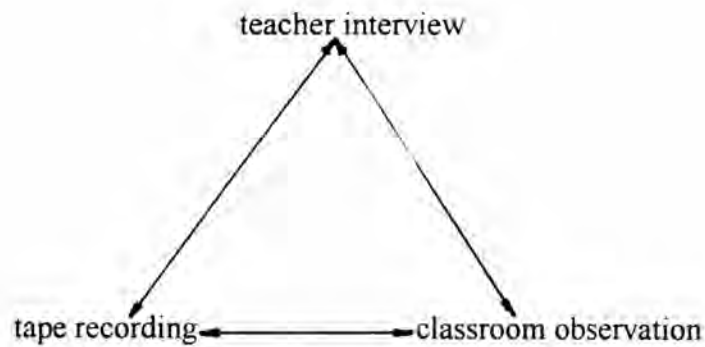
To verify the teacher's data, the findings from the interview were cross-checked with the tape-recording and what the researcher observed in class.

It must be borne in mind that because this qualitative research was aimed at establishing pupils' and the teacher's perceptions it was prone to a variety of attitudinal data which made it difficult to subject them all to any reliability tests. Consequently, some of the data in this study were not subjected to any test to ascertain its trustworthiness and were accepted as is.

The findings and analysis of data are presented in the following chapter.

4.
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This project examined the ways in which pupils' gendered subjectivities were influenced by the messages in a short-story textbook as well as interactional processes (that is, learning styles and strategies; teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction) in a classroom. Through an analysis of a grade 10 literature lesson, I provide evidence of how the implicit gendered messages in the text and the interactional processes generated a gendered discourse that fed into and, occasionally, undermined dominant (hegemonic) gender practices.

The project demonstrates that routine pedagogical practices can combine with pupils' gendered histories to either reinforce or contest notions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. In addition, the findings indicate the ways in which an unwary teacher confirmed conventional gender understandings despite her expressed belief in gender equality.

4.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE LESSON OBJECTIVE AND LESSON PLAN

4.2.1. INTENDED OBJECTIVE

During the interview phase, the teacher articulated the following objectives for the lesson:

(i) pupils should be able to understand 'fear' ;

(ii) pupils should come to realise that in order to overcome fear they need to confront it ; and

(iii) pupils should be able to realise that age and responsibility are relative, that is, responsibility is not dependent on a person's age.

4.2.2. THE LESSON PLAN

The lesson exhibited an 'initiation-reply-evaluation' format (Baker and Davies, 1989: 61) where the teacher asked questions, the pupils offered replies to questions and the teacher evaluated the answers. The lesson focused on a short-story entitled The Claws of the Cat. Previously, the pupils had been given the task of reading the story as homework.

First, the teacher randomly divided the class into groups. The lesson began by the teacher asking the pupils about their reactions to the loss of a loved one. The pupils' responses varied from reactions like crying, not being affected by it, and undertaking prayer rituals. At that point, the teacher interjected by reminding the class that she was more concerned about the feelings they experienced rather than religious practices when someone died.

She then attempted to elicit the pupils' feelings about the loss of a pet. In response to the question, some pupils said that they would be sad while others asserted that they would not be affected very much because it was an animal and not a person. Interestingly, all the boys who responded to the question

stated that they would not cry, while the few girls who answered replied that they would be very 'emotional' and 'sad'.

Following the above segment, the teacher created a scenario about a male intruder in the pupils' house at night and invited the pupils to discuss how they would react to the situation if they were all alone. The discussion which followed was overtly male dominated in which ideas of using 'baseball bats', 'cricket bats', 'pellet guns' and 'real guns' to confront the intruder were sanctioned while the teacher dismissed ideas like 'calling the police', 'screaming' or 'creeping under the bed.'

Once the pupils forwarded their views on the above mentioned scenario, the teacher argued that it would either be 'courage' which would allow them to 'boldly' confront the intruder or 'fear' that would prevent them from acting in a 'brave' way and cause them to 'crawl under the bed and hide'. In that way, she introduced to them the emotions of 'fear' and 'courage' which were briefly discussed. In the discussion, the teacher illustrated that 'courage' was a more preferable emotion than 'fear'.

The teacher then gave four groups the following instructions:

(i) Group One   : 'Write a letter to Japie (who was left alone to take care of the farm during his parents' absence and who killed the lynx which attacked one of their sheep) and tell him your opinions about what he did.'

(ii) Group Two : 'You are reporters who get to the house after the incident. Write an article about the events that evening.'

(iii) Group Three : 'You are Japie's neighbours. What are your impressions about Japie and what he did ?'

(iv) Group Four : 'You are Japie's critical parents. What gift would you give him and why ?'

After the report back session, the teacher asked the groups if their responses would change if Japie was injured when he killed the lynx. She gleaned views from the four groups once again.

Attention was thereafter focused on the story more directly. The teacher led a discussion to recap the plot of the story by employing a series of closed-ended questions. Once the plot was summarised, the teacher focused on the main protagonist, Japie, where she emphasised his 'bravery', 'courage' and 'responsibility' despite his youth.

Finally, the teacher assigned the pupils the following activity: *All* the pupils had to imagine that they were a twelve year old boy named Japie. They had to write diary entries of the events that occurred from the time their parents left them alone at home till their parents' return. Emphasis in these diary entries was on their feelings during that time.

4.2.3. <u>A DESCRIPTION OF THE DIARY ENTRIES</u>

A feature of certain boys' and girls' responses was their readiness to stay at home alone and their unhesitant reaction of wanting to track down the lynx and kill it. Some of the responses expressed in this regard were:

Boy : I knew I would be able to stay alone and look after the farm because I'm a guy.

Girl : I was fearless and brave and could handle the situation cos that's what men must do !

There were a few examples of diary entries which suggested that the pupils would have been afraid to stay alone or to have killed the sheep. For instance :

Girl : I was feeling quite confident before my parents left. That didn't last long. Soon I was feeling quite lonely and afraid...When I discovered the dead sheep, I was very apprehensive about tracking it down and killing it...

Boy : As pa and ma left the farm they left an empty space in me- a sort of emptiness and loneliness..

While the pupils described above showed reservations about staying at home alone or killing the lynx, there were others who also indicated that although they were afraid, they would attempt to kill the lynx because of their responsibilities; their sense of victory and independence; and parental expectations. Some of the entries included:

Girl : I was afraid but I realised I have a big responsibility i.e. to take over my

father's responsibilities.

Boy : Being alone on the farm was frightening for me but I realised I had to do it for

gaining my independence.

These entries are an important area to explore in greater depth as there are obviously questions concerning the extent to which the task assigned to the pupils contributed to the shaping of their gendered attitudes and identities. However, in the discussion that follows, I offer a detailed analysis of the pupils' and the teacher's perceptions of the text and pedagogical practices. This, I believe, constitutes a feasible attempt to make explicit the degree to which the issue of gendered subjectivities was implicated in these diary entries.

4.3. AN ANALYSIS OF PUPILS' AND THE TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE TEXT

4.3.1. INTRODUCTION

The primary intention of the questionnaires administered was to ascertain pupils' personal awareness, attitudes, insights and perceptions about the short story with particular reference to how it contributed towards the construction and articulation of the pupils' gendered subjectivities. Interwoven with the discussion are findings from the teacher's interview which were concerned with her understanding of the gendered messages in the text. I explored the

teacher's responses in an attempt to discover whether her own ideological beliefs were implicated in perpetuating gender differentiation.

In the analysis of the data from the questionnaires and interviews, I looked for patterns, overlapping views and/or comments, differences and similarities in the opinions of the respondents with regard to their perceptions of the text. Hence, the analysis of the pupils' perceptions will be presented within the following framework:

4.3.2. The nuclear family;

4.3.3. The sexual division of labour within the family;

4.3.4. Stereotypical assumptions about male and female sexuality; and

4.3.5. Representations of men's and women's bodies.

It must be noted that in reporting the findings, I chose to use the pupils' exact quotations (which contained grammatical errors) as well as the teacher's exact words in order to maintain authenticity.

4.3.2. THE NUCLEAR FAMILY

The concept of the 'family' is seen by radical and socialist feminists as an instrument to oppress women and subordinate them to male domination (Weedon, 1987: 40). Yet the idea of the 'nuclear family' as a *proper* and *natural* structure with an unquestioned constitutive (that is, father, mother and children) is propagated through other social institutions like education,

religion, law, the media and so on. This taken-for-granted assumption is even reinforced in school texts and other materials.

With the above in mind, it was interesting to note that from the 40 pupils who completed the questionnaires, 35 of them regarded the Swart family as a *'typical'* (normal) representation of a family. Some reasons forwarded included the following:

Male : *There is a father, a mother and a child. They even have*
a pet like most families.

Female : *Because every family has or there is a mother, a father,*
and a child and in this story there is a mother, a father
and a child.

The recurring understanding from the above quotations was that a *'typical family'* must consist of a father, a mother and a child and/or a pet. Such assertions revealed that the short-story helped reinforce within pupils the dominant patriarchal framework of culture which normalises the nuclear family situation as *natural* and *preferable*.

Only 5 pupils did not regard the Swart family as *'typical'* and the following encapsulates the key reasons: *the father was a cripple; they lived on a farm;* and, *parents would never leave a 12 year old alone at home.* However, the use of words like 'parents', '*most* families' and '*ordinary* family' in their

reasons revealed that these pupils' understanding was still in keeping with the notion which legitimised patriarchal understandings of a 'family'.

Only one female respondent argued that the Swart family was *not* typical because:

> *Nowadays, in families the father and mother*
>
> *can both work and be equal breadwinners and*
>
> *are not like the Swart family were mother is*
>
> *shown as a house wife only.*

A deeper examination of this seemingly counter-hegemonic response showed that despite the acknowledgement that women could also be breadwinners, it was overshadowed by the pupil's conception of the family consisting of a 'father' and 'mother' which still favours the dominant understanding of the 'family unit'. The pupils' views about the 'family' could be largely attributed to the fact that since most (some came from single-parent homes) of them came from nuclear families they considered these as 'normal'. Consequently, this made them subject to certain understandings of what 'families' are, as well as what it means to be 'male' or 'female'.

From the views expressed by the respondents, it became evident that there was not a lot of criticism of gender messages by pupils. This may have arisen because such representations of family life resonated with the lived experiences of the participants who unquestionably accepted it as a 'natural'

social reality. Gibson (1986: 122) reiterated the idea that "the family is the prime site of personality formation conditioned by wider structural and ideological pressures."

The teacher interviewed also revealed a variety of thoughts on the issue of a 'family' but, in essence, they were similar to those expressed by the pupils. She stated:

It was an ordinary household with a father, a dutiful wife and

a responsible son.

From the teacher's explanation, the emerging idea of the traditional gender roles of 'a dutiful wife' and 'a responsible son' was brought to light. The aforementioned view affirmed the teacher's choice of the short-story as she regarded it as 'unproblematic' because she saw it as 'representing reality quite vividly'. Consequently, she directed her lesson towards the conviction that Japie's father was naturally the 'head' of the family and, in doing so, offered no contestation to the dominant depiction of the role of males and females in 'the family'. However, what the teacher considered to be a 'value-neutral' story was tacitly conveying dominant gender ideologies which the pupils saw as 'familiar' and thus accepted it as 'normal'.

Hence, the pupils' responses to question 13 yielded very common trends in the data. Question 13.1. which attempted to elicit the pupils' views on why Japie

accepted his father's decision and not his mother's included some of the following comments:

Female : He listens to his father because his mother is inferior

and most boys in society normally listen to their

fathers because they want to be like them.

Male : He considers his father as superior and head of the

household and follows his decision.

The comments demonstrated that the pupils saw the power relationships in the Swart family as 'real' because they based it on their own experiences of family life. Only one female pupil offered the following response:

Japie shouldn't have accepted only his father's decision.

I wouldn't ignore what my mother had to say because

she also has a say in my life. I'll let my parents discuss

the problem and come to a decision together.

Consequently, because the text 'showed' that Japie's father was 'in charge', the pupils related more closely to the story and had no reservations about Japie's father being the most influential in the family. This was evident from their reaction to question 7 where the majority (37) of the pupils accepted Japie's father as the 'head' and their reason could be summed up by the following assertion, "the father is normally the head of the house and therefore everybody living in that house has to listen and do whatever he

says." Three (3) pupils considered Japie to be most influential because he influenced the decisions of his parents. In this way, the manner in which the Swart family was depicted helped to legitimise male and female familial roles. The different subject positions that the story offered were internalised by pupils who came to understand them in particular ways as illustrated by their responses.

Another revelation made while analysing the findings with regard to the notion of the 'family' was the idea of *heterosexuality*. The relationship within the 'typical' family was always assumed to be heterosexual, for instance:

Female : *Because every family consists of a father who*
must marry a women (mother) and have children.

Male : *Normally in life, a man marries a woman who becomes*
a mother and the father's duty is to manage the house.

Embedded in these quotations was the conventional hegemonic idea that heterosexual relationships are *natural* and *real*. At the same time pupils conveyed the idea that other kinds of relationships were *weird, unnatural* and *unacceptable* in respect to the dominant image of the nuclear family, for example:

Male : *I thought the family was natural because it showed*
a male and female relationship and nothing else.

Girl : *It showed a mother-father relationship and not anything*

weird like 'Homo's' and all.

Thorne (1993: 155) concurs that children structure their gender relations around heterosexuality and "assert an increasingly vocal taboo against other forms of sexuality." Once again, it could be noted that the depiction of the Swart family in the short-story subtly articulated particular notions of 'masculinities' and 'femininities' for the pupils by creating positions for the ways in which girls and boys must be. Debbie Epstein (1997: 106) also supports the contention that the "normative heterosexual family is, by implication if not definition, white and middle class; heterosexuality, masculinities and femininities are all played out in relation to this particular 'imagined community' of this fantasy happy family."

When asked about the idea of heterosexuality being transmitted via the story the teacher categorically stated that:

It would be simply immoral to teach the children otherwise!

Even if the story contained any reference to homosexuality

or lesbianism, I would not have touched on it in the lesson.

I won't want girls and boys to be 'different'..

The teacher's reaction confirmed the argument by some researchers like Riddell (1988) and Sunderland (1992) who believe that the teacher's own ideological beliefs about gender may in fact influence their teaching to the extent that their actions often reinforce *their* beliefs about traditional gender

codes. Closely aligned with the former assertion that teachers need to play an integral role in assisting pupils to question conventional gender relations, is Thorne's view (1993: 172) that "the culture of heterosexual romance needs fundamental reconstruction so that it no longer overshadows other possibilities for intimacy and sexuality."

4.3.3. THE SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR WITHIN THE FAMILY

In the story, during the absence of Japie's parents, he constantly thought about his mother being in the kitchen and considered that to be her only 'reality'. On the other hand he pictured his father as the 'master' of the farm who worked in the fields to generate income for the family. The respondents generally viewed this as 'obvious' and basically argued that:

> *The father ought to be the breadwinner and the mother*
> *should look after the house.*

In this instance, the teacher remarked that:

> *If that was the function of the mother- so be it !*

These replies reflected a deeper understanding of the devaluation of women's domestic work which is in keeping with dominant hegemonic discourses which socially define a women's proper place as being at home while men are seen as the more important wage-earner or 'breadwinner' of the family. This

conception was further exemplified when pupils were asked whether they considered both of their parents' work as important. Thirty (30) pupils felt that their parent's jobs were *not* equal and the core reason stated was that their fathers worked every day to support the family while their mothers were housewives.

In essence, the pupils who considered their parents' jobs as unequal judged it on the fact that their mothers were housewives and that such 'work at home' was not as 'hard' as their father's because he went out to work and brought in money. The former attitudes could be largely attributed to the images of women's and men's social roles which are prevalent in almost all forms of media and which may impact on individuals' thinking and behaviour. Alvarado et al (1987: 185) concur that such attitudes exist chiefly because "women in domestic labour are usually represented in the media as (house)wives and mothers...the home (where a man's heart is) is, of course, the woman's place."

The six (6) pupils who believed that their parents' jobs were equal basically posited that 'both parents worked'. However, as noble as their assertions may appeared to have been, important undertones were embedded in their reasons. From my analysis it became clear that these pupils who viewed their mothers' jobs as important based them on monetary value. Unlike the other 30 pupils who felt that their mothers' jobs as housewives were meaningless because they did not generate income, these pupils demonstrated the belief that their mothers' jobs were valued because they earned money just like their fathers.

Admittedly, amidst a climate of massive unemployment in South Africa, a wage earner (whether male or female) is important in a domestic unit. However, what must be noted from the pupils' inputs is their assumption that domestic labour is not in itself valuable.

Besides two pupils who regarded their parents' jobs equally because they came from single-parent homes, the only other two respondents who placed considerable value on domestic labour asserted that:

Male   :   *Even though my father has to work, my mother is a housewife and works just as hard to run the household everyday than to work everyday.*

Female :   *Because the provision from my father (e.g.. food) would be useless without the cooking from my mother, sufficient income has to balance with household management.*

These views evidence that there always exists the possibility of alternative interpretations to the understanding of the sexual division of labour within the pupils' homes and that such understandings run contrary to those held by dominant patriarchal ideologies.

It was intriguing to note how representations in the story about labour within the family were internalised by some pupils. For example, when pupils were asked whether they would have done the same thing Japie did by taking on his father's chores only thirteen (13) boys stated that they would because:

Like Japie, I will never do a lady's work.

I don't know how to cook and clean the house and just as Japie knew what his father did around the house, so will I do the same.

The six (6) boys who disagreed basically stated that:

I would take on both parent's responsibilities to the best of my ability.

On the other hand, fourteen (14) girls contended that they would *not* have taken on their father's responsibilities because:

I am not used to male chores.

Girls cannot do what boys are supposed to do.

The seven (7) girls who said they would undertake their father's tasks stated that they would do it out of fear of being 'punished by their dads'.

The preceding reactions strengthened the idea that the father was regarded as the 'head' of the household and his expectations are deemed the most important. The two (2) counter-hegemonic responses were:

I'll do it just to prove that anything guys can do, girls can do better.

I would take on both responsibilities because what a woman does is just as

important as what a man does.

What became noticeable from the analysis of the foregoing responses was that although the short story impacted on the pupils' understanding of gender relations, the findings also highlighted that the girls and boys did not necessarily share the same attitudes towards gender issues. The former served to reinforce the argument that the notions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are *not* static or fixed as they are open to constant reinterpretation and opposition.

4.3.4. STEREOTYPICAL ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT FEMALE AND MALE SEXUALITY

Sexuality refers to the ways in which males and females understand their bodies and their selves. This, in turn, affects the way in which they think about themselves. Consequently, what underlines the significance of *sexuality* is the understanding of how different agents of socialisation shape men's and women's thinking about their bodies and themselves (Thorne, 1993; Walters and Manicom, 1996).

In the story, even though it may not have been blatant, stereotypical images of male and female sexuality were prevalent. When pupils were asked to list, what they considered to be, the differences between the characters of mother and father (question 6) *all* the respondents described the father as *'brave'*, *'strong'*, *'bold'*, *'fearless'*, *'influential'* and *'assertive'*. By comparison, the

mother was seen as *'submissive'*, *'weak'*, *'doubtful'*, *'fearful'* , *'emotional'*. The pupils regarded these qualities and differences as *'normal'*.

The teacher admitted that the characters of father and mother were stereotyped but felt that it was 'an advantage' as the pupils could 'more easily have identified with them as they encounter them daily in their environment.' Consequently, she claimed that there was no need to have conscientised pupils about the stereotypical images as they were a 'natural reality' to the pupils. In addition, the teacher explained that she sought not to highlight that issue in the story simply because she did not consider it to be what the author intended.

The views expressed by pupils and the teacher evidenced how the text played a contributory role in circulating ways of thinking about what it means to be 'male' or 'female'. These responses reflected the subtle way in which the text interacted with the pupils' 'common sense' beliefs to shape their perceptions about 'expected' characteristics about men and women. Swanson (1991: 123 - 24) illuminates how categories of gender representations in the media organise an individual's sense of 'self'. She claims that from such representations, we come to recognise how certain characteristics are considered more or less socially appropriate or acceptable for males and females. Therefore, it was not surprising that in response to question 9, sixteen (16) boys stated that they would also not cry because they felt that a boy 'should not be emotional' and that it was regarded as 'feminine' to cry. The other three (3) boys felt that crying was 'the least they could do' for their dog as it saved their life. With the exception of one girl who said she would not cry as she 'would think about

something else', all the rest admitted that it was 'normal' for them to be 'emotional' and 'sentimental' and would have cried 'a lot' and 'for days'.

What could not be overlooked was that these social constructions of gender involved the girls and boys drawing upon characteristics which they perceived to be appropriate to their gender group. Thus, thirty-seven (37) pupils claimed that the characters in the story were like characters in real life because:

Fathers are always brave and fearless and sons are also like their father.

Mothers and girls are always gentle and overprotective

The teacher felt that the portrayal of mother and father was 'acceptable' as:

The general understanding of men and women is to possess these

qualities as depicted by the story.

The three (3) pupils who did not consider the characters to be realistic basically argued that 'parents would not leave a twelve year old child alone at home.' What was confirmed time and time again through the analysis of these questions was that the messages in the text impacted on pupils' beliefs about 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. This facilitated my understanding of the process of socialisation and to acknowledge the multiple factors that simultaneously shape the pupils' understandings of gender relations.

Coupled with the above stereotypical assumptions about male and female sexuality was the pupils reactions to question 4 which asked:

"Do you think that the story would be any different if Japie was a girl ?"

Thirty-five (35) of the respondents argued that *it would be different* and the quotation which best summarises the reasons forwarded was:

> *If Japie was a girl, she would be too fragile, weak and scared to*
> *shoot a lynx and would even be able to stay in the house alone*

The teacher indirectly concurred with the view expressed above because she assumed that 'Japie was the only child and the parents would be forced to leave the girl alone on the farm whether they liked it or not.'

The other five (5) pupils felt that the story would *not* be different because:

Female : *...my belief is that a girl could do a job just as well as a man*
could.

Male : *There are girls who are strong and just as brave as Japie.*

What I found most conspicuous from the pupils' and teacher's responses was that the criteria on which they based their judgements was 'aggression', 'violence' and 'ability'. Seemingly, their overall understanding of female sexuality was defined as 'naturally passive' together with the dominant social

definition of women being 'opposite' or 'the other' of men. In other words, they based (although unknowingly) their decision against 'masculine' norms. Weedon (1987: 36) concurs that beliefs, values and norms which prevail in society, and which women and men adopt may invariably serve the interests of hegemonic gender practices.

Closely linked with the preceding observation was the answers to the question:

What about the story did you find most enjoyable and why ?

The data gleaned revealed that both boys and girls found the 'violence and the killing of the lynx' most enjoyable. It seemed that the idea of masculinity being characterised by 'violence' and being 'macho' was readily accepted by boys who derived enjoyment from such representations of 'manhood' in the story. Even the girls who enjoyed the violence also saw it as a sign of 'manliness'. Such an occurrence is not very unusual as Carol Gilligan's (1982) research on gender and moral reasoning also acknowledged that although males and females may have 'different voices', they sometimes use the same 'voices' mixing them as 'contrapuntal' themes, that is, the symbolic notions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' may be sometimes shared by boys and girls. On the other hand, the reality that the other girls found the story 'boring' may be attributed to the fact that the violence and killing did not form part of their 'repertoire' of what it means to 'be female'.

Another question aimed at ascertaining the pupils assumptions about male and female sexuality was Question 2 which attempted to establish with which character the pupils best identified. In response, eighteen boys (18) claimed that they identified with Japie while one boy felt that he related to Japie's father as 'the father was a male and a leader like him.' Some of the reasons the boys elucidated for relating best to Japie were:

He was a boy and I am a boy and I can relate to his actions.

He is brave, courageous and violent and boys are generally like that.
His character is one that every boy would want to have.

Although the majority of the girls (18) stated that they could relate best to Japie, they provided two basic reasons:

(i) They also have responsibilities at home; and

(ii) They would also do what their parents expect of them.

One girl identified with the father on the basis that he was 'hopeful' and the other two identified with mother as they saw themselves as 'soft' and 'gentle'.

Although it was borne in mind that the acceptance by pupils of parts of Japie's behaviour was selective and did not necessarily involve accepting a total stereotype, what was important to note was the reasons why the boys and girls identified with Japie. What emerged from a comparison between the reasons

was that the boys saw in Japie an extension of what they considered to be 'masculine' characteristics which they wanted to claim for themselves. The girls' responses showed that they did not 'identify' with Japie because of 'shared' masculine characteristics.

During the interview, the teacher repeatedly articulated her admiration for Japie because:

> *...the story was about him - about the boy who*
>
> *wanted to take charge and be bold like his father -*
>
> *to show that age does not matter.*

It was for that reason that the teacher constantly stressed Japie's character and ability throughout the lesson. However, the boys' responses reflected that the manner in which Japie's character was portrayed in the story (compounded by the teacher's emphasis on him) contributed towards shaping the boys' sense or image of them 'self ' by becoming absorbed in his character role and by understanding his thoughts and feelings which they appropriated as part of their own identities.

On the other hand, the girls' responses may be seen as a reinforcement of particular ways of being a girl: of being 'soft' and 'gentle'. Moreover, the general responses of the pupils to the questions pertaining to sexuality demonstrated the degree to which the story influenced them to perceive the

co-construction of femininity and masculinity as *binary*, that is, opposite to each other.

4.3.5. REPRESENTATIONS OF THE BODIES OF MEN AND WOMEN

My readings on representations (cf. Alvarado, Gutch and Wollen, 1987; Lusted, 1991; Masterman, 1992) sparked-off a feeling of curiosity in me to discover how the pupils pictured or conceptualised the physical appearance of the three central characters in the story. Because no specific description of the characters were given in the story, I posed the following question to the pupils:

Q. 12.   *Give a brief description of how you think the following*

          characters look: Father; Mother; and Japie.

Q. 12.1. Explain why you described the above characters in the way you did.

The following represents a summary of the pupils' responses:

(i) FATHER :

Big, broad shoulders. Muscular and tall. Dressed in jeans and T-shirt.

Reasons:

He is a typical male, assertive and wields power in the family therefore he is muscular and strong. Since he is a farmer, he will wear jeans and T-shirt. That's the way in which men are shown in TV programmes.

(ii) MOTHER :

She is attractive, thin, small built and fragile with apron; long hair, fair, slender, sweet voiced and wearing an old fashioned dress.

Reasons:

She is not assertive therefore she will look small built, slender and have a sweet voice.

She is fair because of the creams she uses on her face like the adverts on TV and magazines.

She is overprotective therefore creating the impression that she is old fashioned.

She is a normal housewife and therefore a typical mother who wears an apron.

She is slender because she does not do strenuous jobs and keeps herself attractive for her husband as she has the time.

(iii) JAPIE:

Strong, healthy and well built for a 12 year old.

Reasons :

He is like his father because he is his father's son; works a lot therefore he is healthy and strong.

Interestingly, the range of descriptions given by the participants were similar to those echoed by the teacher. Basically, she believed that 'if she described these characters in any other way they would not be realistic.'

A closer analysis of these descriptions revealed deeper, preconceived assumptions that pupils had about the representations of men's and women's bodies, that is, they assume men to be physically stronger while women are regarded as physically weaker and objects of men's desire. The pupils' references to 'adverts', 'TV' and 'magazines' highlighted the implicit, but powerful ways in which the media shapes pupils' perceptions, whether of their own (or other's) bodies or in the manner in which males and females ought to dress. However, this does not insinuate that pupils are without agency as they can resist such influences. The aforementioned was demonstrated by some pupils' descriptions where mother was depicted as a physically *'strong'* and *'powerful'* person as she had to look after father because he was injured. Japie's father, in comparison, was considered by some pupils as *'weak'* because *'he did not do the work himself but just delegated it to either mother or Japie.'*

A further observation from the pupils' and teacher's remarks was that they were constructing and associating weak and strong personalities with weak and strong looks, for instance, because father was 'assertive', he was considered to be 'big' and 'muscular'. Mother, on the other hand, in light of her being deemed 'submissive' was connected with 'slender' and 'fragile' looks. Even the clothes that the pupils pictured them wearing had a deep-seated gender bias in it: Father wore 'jeans' and a 'T-shirt', while mother wore 'a dress with an apron'. Thus, the pupils constructed again the appearance of the males and females in the story in relation to their own

gendered identities, that is, their conventional thinking about how men and women should look.

4.4. AN ANALYSIS OF PUPILS' AND THE TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE CLASSROOM PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

4.4.1. INTRODUCTION

The central purpose of the teacher's and pupils' interviews was twofold: Firstly, to gain an insight into their learned experiences about femininity and masculinity which they brought into the classroom; and secondly, to focus on the *processes* (that is, learning styles and strategies, teacher-pupil interaction and pupil-pupil interaction) by which learning about gender took place during the lesson.

In order to get a more in-depth understanding of the *processes* during the literature lesson, I undertook classroom observation and recorded the lesson. A verbatim transcript was drawn up from which an analysis was made to supplement the findings from the pupils' and the teacher's interviews. The analysis which follows was based on an idea about "sub-texts" included in Baker and Davies' (1989) analysis of a lesson on sex roles in an Australian secondary school.

Baker and Davies (1989: 63) suggested that there are two texts in a lesson:

(a) "The official on-the-board information [which is really the teacher's intended objective for the lesson]; and

(b) The sub-text, comprising the social relations and associated implicit reasoning which are used to produce that information."

In the above light, I chose to adopt Baker and Davies' (ibid., 63) idea sharing their belief that "what the students are learning most directly (and occasionally trying to challenge) is the organisation of the sub-text." Therefore, in presenting the analysis of the pupils' and the teacher's views on classroom pedagogical practices, selected excerpts from the transcript are utilised to highlight some ways in which gender was implicated in them.

In keeping with my commitment to confidentiality, I decided to use fictitious names for the twelve (12) pupils interviewed. The pupils Nirdesh, Shridhar, Abhay, Farhaad, Sheikh and Ryan were male and the pupils Shreyah, Akashnie, Princess, Jabu, Farhana and Jamilla were female. With the exception of Princess and Jabu who were African, all the other pupils were Indian. It must be pointed out that although race does play a crucial role in shaping pupils' perceptions (cf. Naidoo, 1994; Biggs and Edwards, 1994), I chose not to explicitly focus on this aspect because of the attention that it has been given in previous research on gender in South African education (cf. Unterhalter, 1989; Morrell, 1992; Truscott, 1994).

4.4.2. PUPILS' AND THE TEACHER'S CONCEPTIONS OF 'FEMININITY' AND

'MASCULINITY'

From the 12 pupils interviewed, 11 of them understood the stereotypical

characteristics attributed to men and women as 'natural' and 'normal'. For

them 'male' and 'female' were 'two separate and opposite entities'. They

distinguished one from the other through *appearances* (like 'boys wear pants

and girls wear dresses'); *behaviour* (like 'boys are outspoken and girls are

shy'); *manner of speaking* (like 'males have a loud voice and girls have a soft

voice'); and *personality* (like 'boys are macho and girls are less forceful').

Only one girl, Akashnie, acknowledged that despite the physical differences

between male and female with regard to 'their private parts', girls and boys

were:

> *...brought up thinking that they were different. People*
>
> *and society make us believe that were are supposed to*
>
> *be like this or that.*

Despite the fact that the teacher acknowledged that masculinity and femininity

were socially inscribed and that she believed in gender equality, her unwitting

actions in the classroom very often belied her words. My purpose for

ascertaining the aforementioned information stemmed from Riddell (1992: 66

-94) who maintained that teachers who subscribe to gender stereotypes may

impose the same set of beliefs onto their pupils and in that way perpetuate

gender differentiation. During the interview, I asked the teacher whether she

perceived any gender bias in the story. She responded that she 'did not' and 'felt that the story was very appropriate because it was a realistic story which the pupils could relate to.' The comment illustrated that because the teacher felt that the story was 'appropriate' and 'realistic', she taught it in a way that contributed to the pupils believing that the gendered messages in the text were 'real' and 'natural'. Naidoo (1994: 75) points out that a teacher who has not begun to examine his or her own prejudices "will not be in a position to help students engage in that difficult and often uncomfortable task" of assisting pupils to uncover their beliefs about pejorative gender differentiation.

The overall data gleaned confirmed that the teacher's and pupils' existing understanding of gender relations had a considerable impact on the pupils' interaction with the text and the teacher's instructional approach during the lesson. What became strikingly evident was despite the fact that the teacher (by her own admission) had *no* intention of addressing the issue of *gender* in the English lesson, what happened in the classroom during the lesson reaffirmed the stereotypical notions of what it means to be 'male' or 'female'. The discussion to follow will elucidate the claim further.

4.4.3. THE TEACHER'S RESPONSES TO VIEWS AND ANSWERS FROM PUPILS

T   :   **What would you do if you don't have a baseball bat ?**

          (buzz of chatter)

G 1 :   **Press the alarm...**

G 2 :   **Scream for the neighbours...**

T   :   **Come on people, I'm waiting.**

G 3 :   **Telephone the police...**

B 1 :   **I'll get my cricket bat.**

G 3 :   **Creep under the bed...**

B 2 :   **Look for the gun.**

T   :   **Yes, somebody said they get a cricket bat and somebody'd look**

          for a gun. OK, you know where your father's safe is. Do you know

          how to use a gun ?

The little excerpt above typifies a recurrent feature in the lesson of the teacher consistently disregarding responses from the girls in favour of boys' inputs. By the teacher reacting to the girls in that manner, they were positioned in a particular way in the classroom discourse where they tended to see themselves as 'inadequate' because their inputs were 'ignored' and 'not taken seriously'. Five out of the six girls conceded the demotivatory effect it had on them by being 'constantly ignored', for example:

Farhana   :   It made me think about myself as useless, inadequate...er...

like girls are not worth anything unlike the boys.

Only one girl, Jamilla, stated that:

> *It made no effect on me cos I'm not bothered whether the teacher listens to me or not. As long as I know that what I think makes sense.*

Ironically, the teacher was convinced that the girls actively participated in the lesson and that she 'in no way ignored the girls' responses.' However, the responses indicated quite clearly that the teacher's failure to acknowledge the responses of the girls had an impact on their gender identities by making them feel 'powerless as females'. In this way, the teacher (through her actions) covertly signalled to the pupils what their classroom speaking roles were to be, respectively that girls were to 'listen' and boys would 'lead'.

The boys on the other hand also confessed to noticing how the teacher responded more 'positively' to their answers and Shridhar asserted that it made him 'feel more superior and better than the girls.' The other 5 boys agreed that by the teacher giving their answers more attention, they 'felt more comfortable' and thought of the story as more realistic because 'by listening to our views mam was trying to prove that all boys are brave and strong like Japie.' Swann and Graddol (1994:166) argue that by such unequal participation, girls tend to take it for granted that such a scenario is 'normal' and learn to "expect a lower participation level than boys, and boys seem to have learnt that their share is a larger one."

Intriguingly, the teacher attributed the boys 'more eager' participation to the fact that they 'understood the lesson better than the girls and therefore the girls were quieter.' Ironically, she saw the boys' 'eager' responses as an indication that 'her lesson was a success' and that her 'objectives were accomplished.' During the interview she stressed that she saw 'no differences in the expectations of the boys and girls with regard to the story.' However in practice, the teacher constructed different positions for the boys and girls in the classroom. Because these positions are not always accepted by pupils, some of the girls resisted it by becoming quieter. The view was substantiated by the girls who admitted that they basically 'began to lose interest and kept quiet because the teacher did not value what the girls said.' In addition, one boy (Ryan) acknowledged that the teacher was 'being unfair' and also decided not to participate in the lesson.

Consequently, the teacher's oblivious action of constantly 'sidelining' the girls' inputs reinforced among them the gendered understanding of being marginal while boys were more dominant. This assertion is supported by Riddell (1992 : 102) who pointed out that "adolescent pupils are actively involved in the construction and maintenance of gender identities," by them "recontextualis[ing] externally received models of masculinity and femininity..."

4.4.4. THE TEACHER'S ATTENTION

Intimately intertwined with the preceding discussion was the teacher's attention to particular characters in the story. With regard to the former the teacher persistently emphasised the male characters in the story, namely, Japie and his father. The 12 interviewees mentioned this time and time again and Jabu stressed that the 'teacher was most interested in the males in the story and she did not bother about the females - she even spoke about the dog who also was a male.' The effect of such bias was that it reaffirmed for the boys and girls that male interests were considered more valued in class. The general perception created by the teacher was summed up by Abhay who said:

> *By focusing so much on male heroism...mam was*
> *telling us that girls would not be able to do that and we will*
> *not know what to do in same situation.*

The teacher's lack of attention stemmed from her belief that mother was of 'no significance' in the story because 'Japie was trying to appease his father and not his mother.' Hence, by relegating mother's character and making her central focus the bravery, heroism and courage of Japie and his father, the teacher unwittingly 'taught' the pupils to devalue female's experiences and worth and to consider male activity as more valuable.

The effect of the teacher concentrating primarily on the male characters in the story and by 'marginalising' females' responses contributed to the creation of

a classroom discourse that promoted a hegemonic gender discourse. Pupils were positioned as 'powerful' or 'powerless' in this gender discourse during the lesson.

The following transcript follows on from the one cited previously:

G 2 : **I'll get a pellet gun, then.**

T : *(looking at a group of boys)* **If she's going to get a pellet gun do you think it will be an effective weapon ?**

Boys : **No...**

T : **Is it an effective weapon ?**

(laughter in class)

B : **It wouldn't be an effective weapon.**

T : **OK. If possible you could see the person will that be different ? How are you going to respond ? Will you respond in the first place? Or will many of us just creep under the bed like a sissy ...they'll probably take the safer way. Others who are bolder and face it head on and attack, and so we are all thinking of attack, and not go scurrying around under the covers or scream...So we establish there's an intruder, she's going to get a pellet gun, he will get a basketball bat.** *(Looking at girl)* **What are you going to do with it ?**

(laughter in class)

G 2 : Scare the person off...

T   : How are you going to take the pellet gun ?...How...What are you

   going to say...Freeze ?

(laughter in class)

By the teacher privileging the boys' responses of 'a gun' and a 'cricket bat'

and by her relegating the girl's choice of a 'pellet gun' as an 'ineffective

weapon', the teacher through her approach and disposition (of being

'aggressive'), signalled to the pupils her expectations of more 'violent' and

'confrontational' means of dealing with the intruder. The girls recognised that

their options were limited and girl (2) after failing at her first attempt to get

the attention of the teacher proposed that, 'I'll get a pellet gun *then.*' That

managed to get the teacher's interest although the girl's intention of what she

was going to do with it was rebutted.

Furthermore, by the teacher cross-questioning girl two's (G2) suggestion of a

'pellet gun' by asking whether it 'would be an effective weapon,' the

impression that Abhay and the others got was that:

> *the teacher was telling the girl that her idea was*
>
> *not good enough, therefore she asked the boys*
>
> *their opinion about it to verify that the girl's idea*
>
> *was not good enough.*

Also, it was pointed out to me by another female pupil that the teacher was

'mocking' her (through the question) for considering a *pellet* gun rather than a

'real' gun. Even the teacher's rebuttal of the girl's suggestion to 'scare of ' the intruder was construed by the pupils as an indication of the 'teacher's doubt of whether a girl would be capable of doing that.'

When questioned about 'challenging' pupils' answers, the teacher stated that she was 'totally unaware of it'. She added that she only did it when 'a response didn't seem appropriate' or 'to leave space for others to respond.' Taking the former reason into account, the teacher insinuated that the suggestion of a 'pellet gun' was for *her* an inappropriate response because *she* expected more 'effective' weapons to be suggested.

The teacher's assumption that '*we are all* thinking of attack' served to further strengthen the argument about the teacher having preconceived ideas. The impression she created through her statement that those who are not 'bold' would 'creep under the bed like a sissy' forced the pupils to adopt *her* predetermined belief about how to handle the situation. Consequently, the girls perceived that the teacher's message to be one that undermined their potential as 'girls to effectively handle the situation.' In comparison, the boys accepted this to be a affirmation of their ability of being more 'daring' and 'capable' to confront the intruder. For the boys, the teacher's attention towards more 'aggressive' methods was associated with what it means to be 'a real man'.

Moreover, the way the teacher discredited the girl's 'less violent' ideas of 'creeping under the bed' or 'scaring the intruder with a pellet gun' had a

debilitating effect on the girls who admitted that they decided not to attempt to offer any more suggestions because they felt it would be 'stupid'. For instance, Jamilla (who initially suggested 'creeping under the bed') said that she 'gave up and did not finish what she was going to say' because the teacher showed no interest in her 'girlish' suggestion. Jamilla felt that it was 'safer' to remain silent and not pursue her idea.

Although the teacher did not notice the above, the boys in the interview maintained that the teacher allowed them to dominate because 'the story was about a boy and males could easily relate to the situation.' Nirdesh added that, 'We were loud and could get our message out clearly. We boys were considered as more important to mam's lesson because it was to do with *our* abilities.' In essence, the boys attributed their enthusiasm for the lesson to the fact that they were 'enjoying getting one over the girls in class' because 'the girls are the ones who normally do better in the tests.' By unintentionally allowing the classroom to be male-dominated, the teacher provided an arena for the boys to mark and sustain their 'taken-for-granted' rank of higher status than the girls. Thorne (1993: 92) supports the claim that "boys' social relations tend to be overtly hierarchical and competitive." This does not mean that girls are less competitive but as Sheldon (1992) cited in Thorne (ibid., 106) points out, girls tend to mask their competitive nature when they "avoid the appearance of hierarchy and overt conflict."

From the various responses it became evident that the pupils perceived a predominantly 'male' culture in the classroom. Both boys and girls pointed

out their belief that the teacher conducted the lesson in a way that 'pandered' to the boys interests. In this way, my analysis revealed the English classroom to be a sphere of school life which entrenched unequal *power relationships* (Davies, 1997) between boys and girls.

4.4.5. THE LANGUAGE USED BY THE TEACHER

In response to the teacher's opinion about her language usage in the classroom, she stated:

> *I am very conscious about words that are offensive and derogatory especially*
>
> *with regard to race. I believe that my use of 'he' is understood by the class*
>
> *to mean all people.*

On the other hand, the interviewees conceded that the teacher's language did influence their thinking about male and females. What they found most conspicuous was the teacher's emphasis of the words 'brave' and 'strong' throughout the lesson. For instance, Jabu claimed that:

> *the way the mam said each word...was very deliberate..er...*
>
> *persuasive and made me think that only males are strong and*
>
> *brave and that no other way is right.*

The above view was shared by the other girls who were interviewed. They acknowledged that the teacher's 'expression' created the belief that the teacher was 'deliberately reminding them' that they are 'not as good as boys.'

The effect of the teacher's tone, pitch, pace and volume in contributing to the pupils' perceptions about the differences between girls and boys was also alluded to by the other respondents.

In addition, mention was also made of the 'positiveness' attached to these words. The feelings that the girls conveyed were that the teacher was attempting to draw a distinction between the girls and boys in the class with regard to their abilities. Generally, the female interviewees perceived that the teacher attached more 'positive' connotations to the boys by such word usage in comparison with the 'negativeness' she associated with the girls. Their perception stemmed largely from the teacher's initial comment that:

> **Others** *who are bolder and face it head on and attack*
> *and, so we are all thinking of attack, and not go scurrying*
> *around under the covers or scream...*

In light of the fact that *'scurrying under the covers or scream'* were suggestions made earlier on in the lesson by the girls, they understood the *'others'* in the teacher's comment to refer to the boys. Consequently, the girls understood the teacher's comment as a indictment on them *not* being 'bold' or 'brave' like the boys in the class. Hence, because the pupils were the collective subject of the teacher, she created subject positions for the boys as the *other* around the issue of bravery and strength and in so doing defined the girls as inept.

For the boys, the teacher's choice of words and her focus on them served to entrench their 'macho' disposition as it made them 'feel mighty' and not 'cowardly like girls'. Interestingly, Shreyah reacted that 'mam's positive words about the males did not influence me...I don't think of them like that so it didn't make a difference.' Shreyah's statement revealed that teachers do not have complete power over their pupils and that pupils are not necessarily passive recipients of teachers' influences.

Several references were made to the teacher's use of the word 'sissy'. The girls immediately latched onto the word to illustrate their immense contempt as they found it 'derogatory' and 'insulting'.

In comparison, the boys gloated at the teacher's use of the word. They received its usage as a sign that the teacher 'wanted the girls to know that *we* are better, stronger and fearless.' The boys adopted a conceited disposition during the interview since the teacher acknowledged them as 'better than the girls so they are not supposed to act like them.' Millard (1997: 44), when speaking about the significance of the usage of the word 'sissy' refers to Bourdieu (1990) who states that social contexts like the school, for instance:

legitimates the activities of the boys and girls who have conventional interests, while those who behave differently may be marked as deviant and...attract the label...'sissy' for a more passive and gentle boy.

By the teacher using the word 'sissy' she not only defined "the sexuality of boys but also [indicated] forms of masculinity they are likely to adopt, at least within the school context" (Epstein, 1997: 110).

The discussion in this sub-section highlighted that the teacher's conviction that she used 'neutral' language was clearly refuted by the pupils' reactions. This false perception led to the classroom context being so overwhelmed by a masculine discourse that some girls found it too formidable to overcome and just 'lost interest'.

4.5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The preceding analysis and discussion demonstrated the ways in which pupils interacted with the text as well as the teacher's pedagogical practice. What became clear was that the gendered meanings which were generated during the English lesson were deeply embedded in the variety of lived experiences and discourses that the pupils drew on to make sense of their lives. In other words, it showed how the text, pedagogical practices, and lived experiences interacted in shaping the pupils' gendered identities. Through the analysis of classroom interactional processes it also became evident that although the teacher played a considerable role in influencing the pupils, they were not without agency as some of them were capable of resisting the ideologically hegemonic patterns and even influencing the teacher.

A teacher cognisant of these processes may serve to nurture a gender-sensitive approach in English teaching. Improved pedagogical practices may prevent the entrenchment of gender differentiation in the classroom and also serve to enhance the pupils understanding of gender sensitivity.

These findings should shed some light in developing strategies that would be sensitive to the different genders prevalent in the classroom.

The next chapter will focus on some recommendations in this regard.

5.
CONCLUSION

5.1. OVERVIEW OF THIS PROJECT

Work on gender in education has only recently gained impetus in South Africa. The GETT report (1997) draws attention to the paucity of context-based and qualitative research in this area particularly with regard to the extent to "which knowledge, skills and attitudes developed by boys and girls through schooling are gendered, and the extent to which such factors as...teaching practices and out-of-school experiences are involved" (GETT, 1997: 116).

It was in response to the above mentioned concern that the project provided a detailed analysis of a grade 10 English short-story lesson. The project aimed at an in-depth examination of how the short-story as well as pedagogical practices were perceived by the pupils. This was undertaken to gauge the extent to which a gendered discourse was generated within the classroom and how that discourse fed into, or undermined dominant hegemonic gender practices. In addition, classroom interactional processes were investigated to ascertain whether gender was implicated in their operation within the classroom.

The data drawn on in the project was collected using 3 different methods, namely, questionnaires; interviews; and classroom observation. The

questionnaire was designed in a way to draw on the pupils' 'lived experiences' in order to understand how they positioned themselves with regard to the shaping of their 'masculinities ' and 'femininities'; and, to discover the kind of gender identities they were developing in response to the text. The primary aim of the interview phase was to solicit the pupils' attitudes towards their teacher's pedagogical approach to the text. It also involved participants reflecting on their own lives . The former was an attempt to understand how their sets of learned gendered experiences, which they brought with them into the classroom, interacted with the teaching-learning context. Because of my commitment to qualitative research, the data obtained was entirely the participants' personal reflections. The summary of the findings will be briefly elucidated in the ensuing discussion.

In essence, the findings showed that the teacher and the majority of the pupils saw the concept of the 'nuclear family', heterosexuality, and male dominance within the family unit as 'proper' and 'acceptable'. With regard to the sexual division of labour within the family, the responses indicated a devaluation of domestic labour in comparison to the father's waged labour. The pupils' stereotypical assumptions about female and male sexuality reflected their persistent dichotomising of 'males' and 'females' into categories like *'strong'* versus *'weak'* and so forth. Closely linked with the former were the descriptions of Japie, his father, and his mother. The descriptions revealed deeper, preconceived assumptions about men being physically stronger than women. In addition, the pupils constructed and associated weak and strong personalities with weak and strong looks, for example, because Japie's father

was assumed to be assertive, he was considered to be 'muscular' while mother was described as 'weak' because she was 'dominated' by her husband.

In response to the teacher's pedagogical practices, the pupils highlighted the teacher's consistent disregard for responses from girls. Although the teacher was unaware of her actions, the effect of her actions was that the girls were positioned in a particular way in the classroom discourse where they tended to regard themselves as 'inadequate' and 'inferior'. The boys, on the other hand, understood this as a mark of their 'superiority' and monopolised the lesson.

In addition, through the teacher's unwitting challenging of female responses and her relentless emphasis on the male characters in the story, the respondents perceived a predominantly 'male' culture in the classroom. Both the boys and girls stressed that the teacher was pandering to the boys' interests. In response, the female interviewees and even one male admitted that they lost interest and simply kept quiet.

Another area of concern brought to light via the interviewees was the teacher's language usage. Although the teacher believed that her language was 'neutral', the pupils refuted this claim. The boys and girls referred to the teacher's use of the generic *he*; the 'positiveness' attached to words associated with the male characters coupled with her tone, pitch and expression which entrenched the belief that the boys were 'better than the girls'. In that way, because the pupils were a collective subject of the teacher, she created subject

positions for them where the boys were defined as 'powerful' while the girls were seen as 'powerless'.

It must be pointed out that the research also illuminated the fact that pupils are not without agency, that is, they are not passive recipients of ideologies or the teacher's influence. In other words, they are capable of recreation, resistance and contestation. There were instances where pupils offered counter hegemonic responses to the findings mentioned in the foregoing discussion. These reactions served to reinforce the argument that boys and girls do not necessarily share the same attitudes towards gender relations and that the notions of 'maculininity' and 'femininity' are always open to change and resistance.

In the final analysis, the data gleaned revealed that the gendered meanings which were generated during the lesson were deeply embedded in a myriad of lived experiences and discourses which the pupils brought with them into the classroom. When the pupils interacted with the text and the teacher's approach, they drew on their 'out-of-school' experiences to shape their understandings of gender relations.

5.2. LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS

The project attempted to offer some insights into an area of research pertaining to the ways in which a text together with classroom interactional processes contributed towards shaping pupils' gendered subjectivities. It

becomes clear that there is no degree of certainty about such findings as limitations of data, sample and other factors precludes any substantial conclusions or generalisations. However, the data may be seen as valuable for illuminating how texts are used by both pupils and teachers and how these participants interacted with the teaching-learning context to determine how gender understandings are constructed and articulated.

One further problem with this research is that it has focused primarily on general lived experiences as mediating pupils understandings. The complexities of race and class have not been considered. From the previous chapter it can be seen that the pupils who participated in the study were predominantly Indian while only two female participants were of African descent. I recognise that in a study of this nature, race and class would play a significant role, but for the purposes of this research project these influences were not specifically investigated. I believe that these factors could be the areas of concern for other qualitative studies to provide more comprehensive analysis.

While the study might not provide precise conclusions, it does however help to point to certain aspects of classroom life that can be addressed in order to curb or even eradicate practices that play a role in entrenching gender inequalities as well as in affecting learning experiences. I also subscribe to the view that there will be obvious gaps in this research but with hindsight and future research, these gaps may be identified and steps taken to avoid them.

5.3. <u>GENERAL IMPLICATIONS</u>

Despite its limitations this research project has implications for teaching practices and for positive future interventions to promote gender-sensitive education. The following attempts to encompass some of the key implications of this study:

- Classrooms are not only important sites for the reproduction of gender relations but also offer arenas for intervention and resistance to dominant gender ideologies ;

- School textbooks play a contributory role in shaping pupils' notions about 'femininity' and 'masculinity' as they are actively involved in processes of constructing or representing 'reality' rather than simply transmitting or reflecting it ;

- Gender operates at more than the level of sexist texts or materials in a classroom - it includes other levels like interactional processes (that is, teaching and learning strategies; teacher-pupil interaction; and pupil-pupil interaction) ;

- Gender also manifests itself in a classroom through pupils' 'out-of-school' experiences which they draw on to create gender meanings ;

- If the teacher is unwary about the above-mentioned processes then stereotypical assumptions about gender may unwittingly be reinforced in classrooms ;

- Teachers' own ideological assumptions about gender may impact on their attitude towards gender-sensitive education and about what reform is possible or desirable in the classroom ;

- Some teachers may support equal opportunities in principle but their actions may run contrary to their beliefs ;

- Teachers never exert complete control and influence over their pupils as "pupils themselves are ordering their own world on the basis of gender and do, in fact, exert some influence on the teacher" (Whyld, 1983: 60) ;

- The gendered meanings that pupils give to texts are deeply embedded in discourses that they are exposed to like the media, for instance, which encourages them "to adopt behaviour that reinforces gender-specific roles" (Macdonald, 1995: 13); and

- Although dominant ideals of 'masculinity' and 'masculinity' may exert influence over pupils, they are not necessarily passively internalised by them and pupils develop "varied forms of accommodation, reinterpretation, and resistance to ideologically hegemonic patterns" (Connell, 1982 cited in Thorne, 1993: 106).

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS.

In developing approaches for classroom practice, we need to ask the following question:

How do we use textbooks in the classroom to challenge traditional

versions of gender relations and to develop new and alternative versions ?

In keeping with the belief that "while schooling is an important site for the reproduction of gender relations, it is also a site for intervention and change" (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 129), the following suggestions attempt to offer some possibilities for practice:

5.4.1 CHANGING TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT GENDER

Fullan (1982: 176) notes that:

> Educational change depends on what
>
> teachers do and think - it's as simple
>
> and complex as that.

The above quotation implies that in order to change teaching practices and ensuing learning environments, the thinking and actions of teachers need to change first. However, such attitudinal change is not a simple process as our perceptions about gender emerge from strongly held beliefs that may not always be conscious . Biggs and Edwards (1994: 97) concur that as teachers "we clearly need to look critically and in depth at the effects of our socialisation on the stereotypes which we may unconsciously hold." It follows then that it is only by challenging our perceptions, as teachers, that we can begin to examine own expectations about gender differences and then reassess our teaching methods (Rose, 1983).

The central assumption underlying this project was that teachers are willing to institute change at school level with regard to addressing gender equality.

However, the aforementioned can only be achieved if teachers first attempt to develop their own personal philosophy of education and teaching gender. If this can be realised then the way in which they see things will change and soon the way they do things will also change. In this way, those teachers "who may well be unaware of their own prejudices, will... recognise their forms of behaviour and how it impacts negatively on their charges" (GETT, 1997: 7).

Only when teachers undergo such a 'perception change' will they be able to "eliminate the gender typing of tasks and activities, of allocating opportunities, resources, and teacher attention without regard to social categories of students" (Thorne, 1993 : 159).

Studies (*cf.* Baker and Davies, 1989; Gilbert and Taylor, 1991; GETT, 1997) indicate that teacher training institutions do not provide future educators with the training or knowledge to undertake gender sensitive education. Therefore, knowledge about gender needs to be made available in teacher education programmes. For teachers who are already immersed in the 'system', in-service education and training (INSET) programmes should be implemented.

5.4.2. CHANGING THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS THEMSELVES

The preceding discussion placed emphasis on changing teachers' perceptions about gender. But if we are to consider school life more fully, focus must be placed on the other integral partner in the process, namely, the pupils.

One of the greatest challenges facing the gender-sensitive teacher is to assist boys and girls to reflect critically on their own lives and understandings of gendered experiences. Judith Williamson (1982) argues that teachers cannot teach ideologies or even teach about ideologies. Rather, teachers should attempt to bring pupils to an understanding from their own histories about the way they are enmeshed in ideological processes in their daily lives. In other words, if pupils cannot make sense of such issues by drawing on their own lived experiences, then they will be unable to identify or even resist dominant gender practice (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991: 133).

Giroux (1984), a proponent of a radical pedagogy, also argued that the subjective awareness of pupils is the first step towards transforming their perceptions. He (1984: 319) points out that the "essential aspect of radical pedagogy centres around the need for students to interrogate critically their inner histories and experiences." Hence, the teacher must challenge pupils to move from their present conceptions about gender relations via pedagogical practices geared towards that end. Texts, for instance, can be used as 'spring boards' to stimulate pupils to open themselves to new and challenging perspectives about gender issues. Thus, the teachers' role would include encouraging pupils to adopt a critical and inquisitive mind about gendered messages and norms expoused in school texts.

5.4.3. TEXTS AS A STARTING POINT

Given the reality of the lack of funds in many schools to purchase newer, more progressive textbooks and the difficulty of finding non-sexist books and materials, teachers may have to make do with existing texts. However, it must be borne in mind that a non-credible (sexist) text like THE CLAWS OF THE CAT, for instance, does not necessarily mean that it should be disregarded - it depends on what is done with it. It can be used as a stimulus where boys' and girls' perceptions about it can be explored (Sunderland, 1992). In this way, the text can be used as a starting point for analysing the credibility of the portrayals of male and female characters in the story.

Rose (1983) argues that although English teachers are often bombarded with texts that represent very stereotypical images of men and women, they are not restricted by the demands of imparting bodies of knowledge as is. She believes that teachers can redress the balance by setting tasks, supplementing the lesson with other material, and by adapting classroom practice to develop alternative ways of looking at texts.

It becomes evident that sexist textbooks lend themselves to igniting in-depth analyses where pupils offer critical responses which are often referred to as *'reading against the grain'*. The former involves the readers' resistance to obvious textual subjectivities on offer and searches instead for discrepancies, loopholes and illogicalities to produce a 'subversive' reading. Davies (1997: 10-11) suggests that through *'reading against the grain'* readers would be

able to "discover other dominant truths embedded in [their] experiences and in the possibilities the culture holds open to [them], [they] must look again, and more closely, at how discourse works to shape [them] as beings within the two-sex model."

By using existing sexist texts as starting points, pupils will be able to identify the discursive frameworks to which they are exposed and be able to critically consider the generic conventions and expectations that serve to maintain dominant hegemonic practices within stories. On a more practical level, for instance, when pupils are interrogating texts, they may be asked to address the following three fundamental questions in some way or the other:

- Who gets represented ? (and who doesn't ?)

- How are they shown ?

- Who made the representation and why did they make it ?

5.4.4. CRITICAL LITERACIES

Closely intertwined with the above process of critical readings of sexist texts is the idea of *critical literacies* which has informed textual studies and impacted upon the development of English teaching.

According to Kamler and Comber (1996: 1), *critical literacy* enables us to look at particular texts and explore the ways in which "the meanings constructed in texts are ideological and involved in producing, reproducing and maintaining arrangements of power which are unequal."

Davies (1997 : 25) shares a similar idea that *critical literacy* opens up the possibility of pupils and teachers being reflexively aware of the way in which taken-for-granted representations about males and females construct themselves and others. Hence, *critical literacy* skills will assist pupils to see that the written word is not static and restricted to fixed meanings. In this way, pupils will come to realise that whatever content or texts with which they are confronted, are open to re-readings and contestations. In other words, pupils will discover that meanings are plural and the providers of meaning are pupils themselves.

For classroom practice, Prinsloo (1998: 12) suggests activities like juxtaposing texts, disrupting texts, role playing, creating alternative endings and role reversal as just some practical ideas that teachers may implement in keeping with the principles of teaching critical literacy.

5.5. CONCLUSION

In this case study of a grade 10 literature lesson, I have sought to demonstrate, with as detailed analysis as possible, the process of how pupils interacted with the short-story text as well as pedagogical practices to shape their understandings about gender relations. I have argued, from the findings, that pupils bring into the classroom a myriad of lived experiences which they draw on to make sense of their gendered experiences. Hence, I have substantiated the claim that gender is socially constructed and have focused on pupils as

'social actors' (Thorne, 1994) who are prone to larger social factors that have a bearing on their already existing gender identities.

This research project has implications both for further research on discourse patterns in the classroom and for strategies to foster gender-sensitive education. I believe that I have identified an important area in South African education which should be explored in much greater depth. Whatever the outcomes are of such comprehensive qualitative research, the urgency is still the same - to sensitise teachers to practices which subtly implicate gender differentiation in their operation within a classroom. As Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki (*The Educator's Voice*, 1998: 5), stated:

> The success of the revolution in which we are engaged
>
> depends on what the educators do. What the educators do
>
> depends on what you, the revolutionary vanguard among
>
> the educators, do, to...mobilise both educator and student
>
> to conduct themselves as the cutting edge of the process
>
> of the fundamental renewal of our country.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MAP LOCATING THE SCHOOL
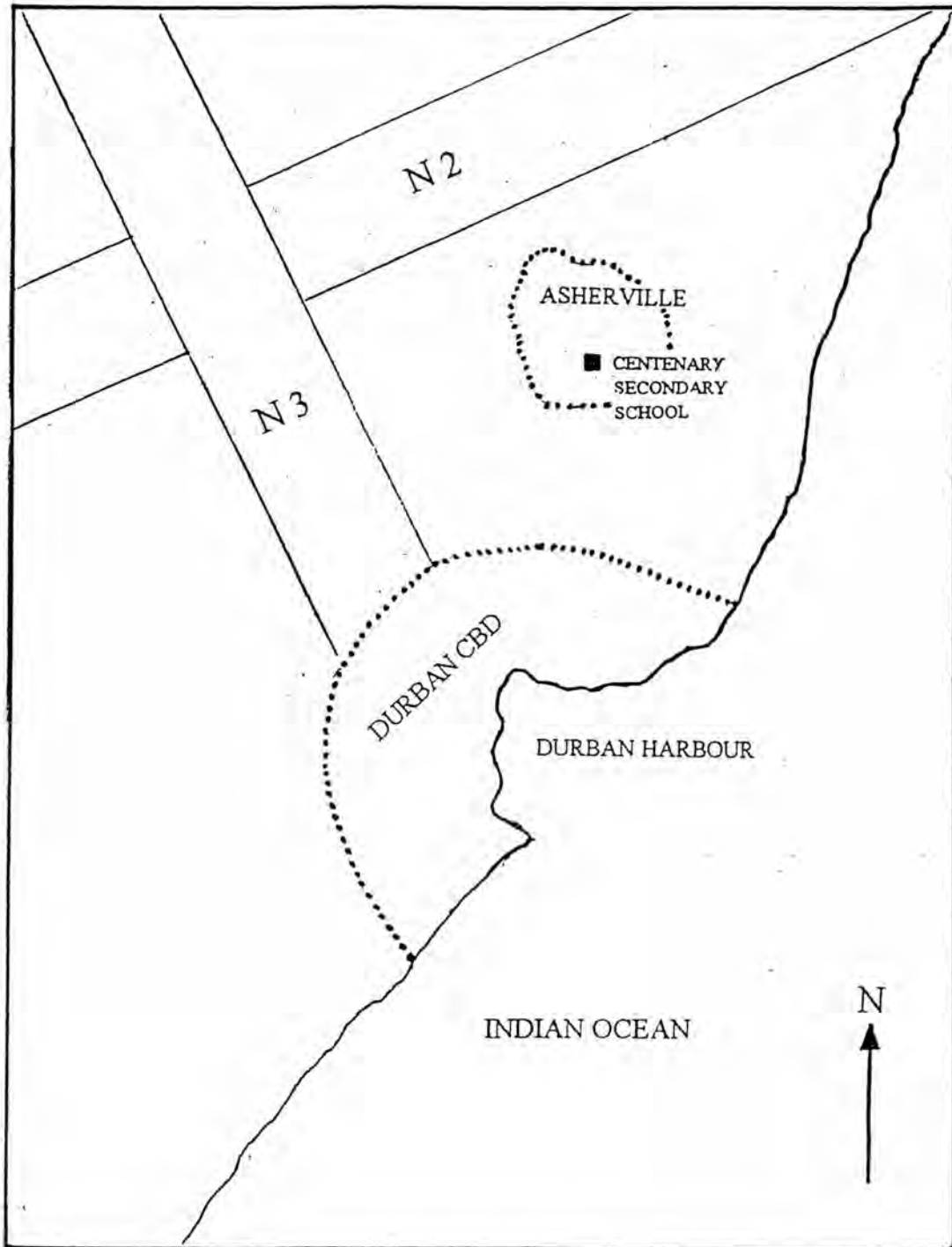
APPENDIX B
B1: GENDER DISTRIBUTION AS PER TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

PHYSICAL SCIENCE

BIOLOGY

COMPUTER STUDIES
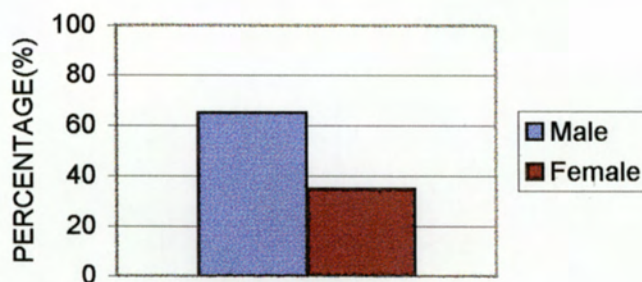
TECHNICAL DRAWING

B2: GENDER DISTRIBUTION AS PER SKILLS/SOCIAL SUBJECTS

METAL WORK

HOME ECONOMICS

TYPING

INDUSTRIAL ARTS

SPEECH & DRAMA

APPENDIX C

SHORT-STORY:

THE CLAWS OF THE CAT

BY : STUART CLOETE

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.

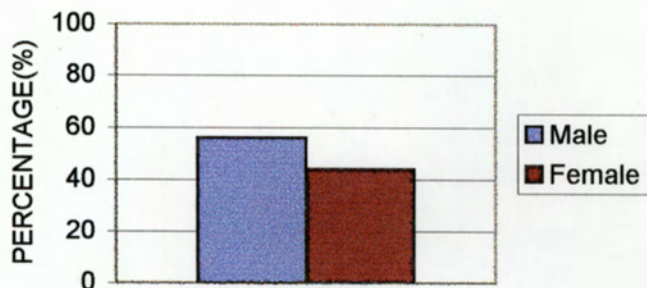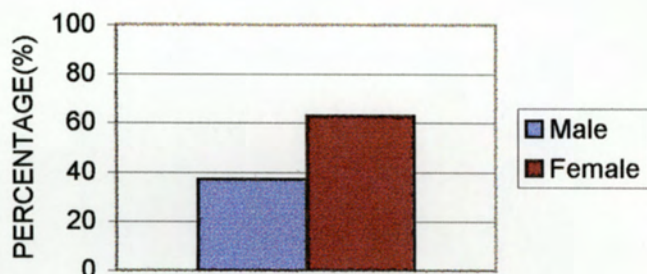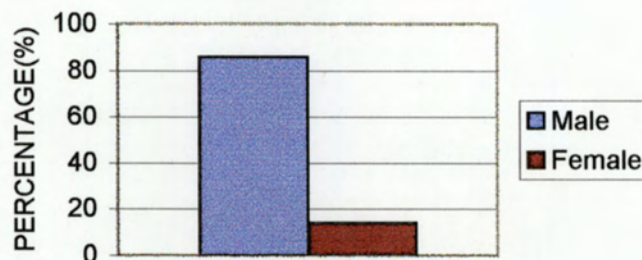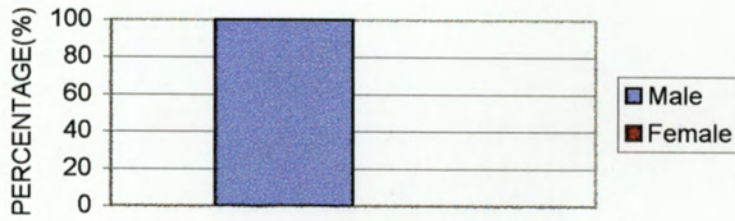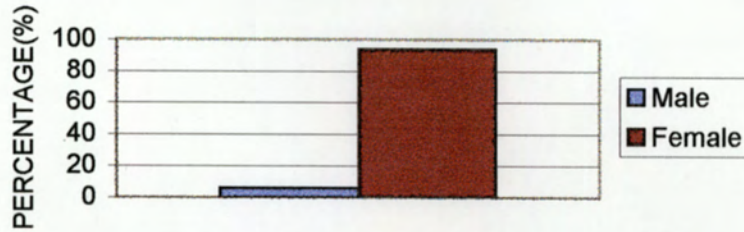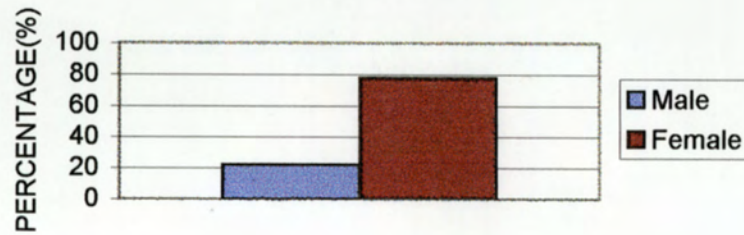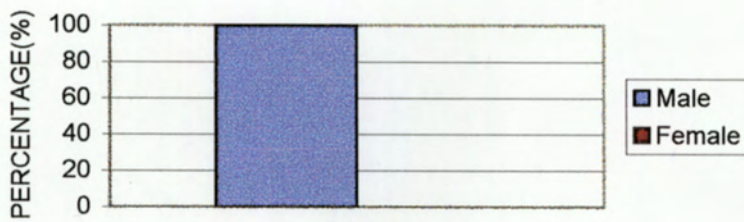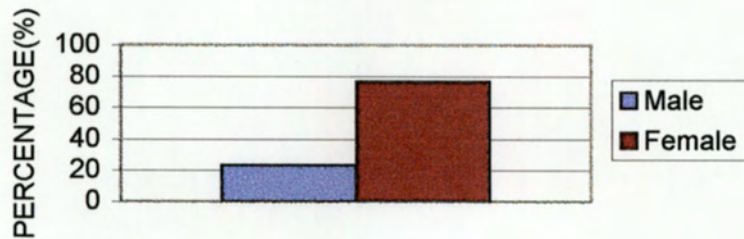'That's it,' his mother said, putting her hand on his shoulder. 'It makes me afraid that you are afraid of nothing.'

'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 it 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

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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?'

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'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 D

PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

Pupil Questionnaire

Instructions
1. Tick the appropriate box - eg. ☑ (This will be your answer)
2. Blank spaces are provided where you are required to write in an answer - eg .
   _____
3. If there is not enough space for your answer to a question, please use the back of the relevant page to complete your answer. Remember to write in the number of the question next to the answer.

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. GENDER: MALE ❑   FEMALE ❑

2. AGE: _____ Years

3. RELIGION: CHRISTIAN ❑   HINDU ❑

                      MUSLIM ❑   ZIONIST ❑

                      OTHER (please state) _____

4. RESIDENTIAL SUBURB:

Central Durban❑	Overport❑
Asherville❑	Clare Estate❑
Reservoir Hills❑	Berea❑
Musgrave❑	Phoenix❑
Umlazi❑	Kwa Dabeka❑
Lamontville❑	Chesterville❑
Kwa Mashu❑	Isipingo❑
Lotus Park❑	Chatsworth❑
Folweni ❑	Malagasy ❑
❑ Other (Please state) _____	

5. FATHER'S / GUARDIAN'S
    OCCUPATION:

    Foreman ☐   Teacher ☐

    Manager ☐   Doctor ☐

    Lawyer ☐   Labourer ☐

    Shop Assistant ☐   Farmer ☐

    Mineworker ☐   Gardener ☐

    ☐   Other (Please State) _____

6. MOTHER'S/GUARDIAN'S
    OCCUPATION :

    Housewife ☐   Teacher ☐

    Lawyer ☐   Nurse ☐

    Shop Assistant ☐   Machinist ☐

    Doctor ☐   Gardener ☐

    Factory Worker ☐   Manageress ☐

    Domestic Worker ☐   Receptionist ☐

    ☐   Other (Please state) _____

8. LANGUAGE OF FOREFATHERS (Grandparents):

    English ☐   Zulu ☐

    Hindi ☐   Gujerati ☐

    Urdu ☐   Tamil ☐

    Telegu ☐   Sotho ☐

    Xhosa ☐   Afrikaans ☐

    ☐   Other (Please state) _____

SECTION B: THE STORY "CLAWS OF THE CAT"

1. What about the story did you find most enjoyable ?

_____

_____

_____

1.1 Why was this so ?

_____

_____

_____

2. With which character in the story do **you** best relate to ?

_____

2.1.Why ?

_____

_____

_____

3. Are the characters in the story like characters in 'real life' ?

YES ❑   NO ❑

3.1 If YES, why do you think this.

_____

_____

_____

3.2. If NO, why do you think so ?

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you think that the story would be any different if Japie was a girl?

YES ❑   NO ❑

4.1 If YES, how would it be different?

_____

_____

_____

4.2 If NO, how would this be possible?

_____

_____

_____

5. Would you regard the Swart Family as a 'typical' representation (depiction)l of a family ?

<div align="center">YES ☐   NO ☐</div>

5.1 If YES, what makes the family 'typical' ?

_____
_____
_____

5.2 If NO, what makes the family different ?

_____
_____
_____

6. Think about the characters of **mother** and **father**.
List 4 major **character** differences you find between them in the table provided below:

FATHER	MOTHER
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

6.1 Would you regard the above differences as 'normal' ?

<div align="center">YES ☐   NO ☐</div>

6.1.1. If YES, why would you regard it as 'normal' ?

_____
_____
_____

6.1.2. If NO, why would you regard it as *not* being 'normal' ?

_____
_____
_____

7. If you look at the Swart Family, who would you consider to have the most influence?

FATHER ❑   MOTHER ❑   JAPIE ❑

7.1. Why do you believe this to be so ?

_____
_____
_____

7.2 Who makes the decisions in **your** family ?

_____.

7.2.1. Why do you think this to be the case ?

_____
_____
_____

7.2.2. Give a minimum of **3 examples** of the kinds of decisions made by the person/s you mentioned in question 7.2.

_____
_____
_____

8. Which character did you admire the most?

FATHER ❑   MOTHER ❑   JAPIE ❑

8.1. Why ?

_____
_____
_____

9. Japie did not cry when his dog died.

9.1. What would you have done in a similar situation ?

_____
_____
_____

9.2. Why would you have done that ?

_____

_____

_____

10. When Japie's parents are away he constantly thinks about his father working on the fields in order to support the family and his mother being in the kitchen.

   In your family, do you consider the jobs of **both** your parents (or guardians) as being of equal importance ?

   YES ❑   NO ❑

10.1. If YES, why would you consider it to be equal ?

_____

_____

_____

10.2. If NO, why would you consider it as *not* being equal ?

_____

_____

_____

11. Some of the chores that Japie did during his parents' absence was to milk the cows, pick the eggs and bring the cow's udder to the calf's mouth.

   If you knew how, would you do such chores ?

   YES ❑   NO ❑

11.1. If YES, why would you do it ?

_____

_____

_____

11.2. If NO, why would you *not* do it ?

_____

_____

_____

12. No detailed description is given about how each character looks. Give a brief description of *how*, **you think**, the following characters look:

FATHER :_____
_____
_____

MOTHER:_____
_____
_____

JAPIE   :_____
_____
_____

12.1. Explain why you described the above characters in the way in which you did ?

FATHER:_____
_____
_____

MOTHER:_____
_____
_____

JAPIE   :_____
_____
_____

13. At the beginning of the story, Japie accepts his father's decision to allow him to stay alone on the farm but rejects his mother's decision for him not to stay alone.

13.1. Why do you think he does this ?

_____
_____
_____

13.2. Would you have done the same thing if faced with a similar situation at home ?

YES ❑   NO ❑

13.2.1. If YES, why would you have done the same thing ?

_____
_____
_____

13.2.2. If NO, why would you have *not* done the same thing ?

_____
_____
_____

14. Although Japie is 12 years old his father gives him a gun to use.

In a crisis situation, do you think that your parent/s or guardian/s would give you a gun to use ?

YES ❑   NO ❑

14.1. If YES, why would s/he do it ?

_____
_____
_____

14.2. If NO, why would s/he not do it ?

_____
_____
_____

14.3. Would you accept his/her decision ?

YES ❑   NO ❑

14.3.1. Why ?

_____
_____
_____

15. In the story mother's concern was to take care of the the home, the cooking and the kitchen while father's duty was to protect the homestead and provide income.

Do you see any similarities between the Swart family and your family ?

YES ☐   NO ☐

15.1. If YES, in what way/s are they similar ?

_____
_____
_____

15.2. If NO, in what way/s are they different ?

_____
_____
_____

15.3. Do you think that this is acceptable in your family ?

YES ☐   NO ☐

Why ?

_____
_____
_____

16. Throughout the story, mother is shown to be always caring and afraid while father is strong and brave.

Do you see any similarities between your parent/s (or guardian/s) and the parents in the text ?

YES ☐   NO ☐

16.1. If YES, in what way/s are they similar ?

_____
_____
_____

16.2. If NO, in what way/s are they different ?

_____
_____
_____

17. Mother calls her husband by his first name, "Jan" but Japie's father refers to her as "wife".

Do you find their way of referring to one another acceptable ?

YES ☐   NO ☐

17.1. If YES, why is it acceptable ?

_____
_____
_____

17.2. If NO, why is it *not* acceptable ?

_____
_____
_____

17.3. How do your parents (or guardians) refer to one another at home ?

_____
_____
_____

17.4. Do you find the above acceptable ?

YES ☐   NO ☐

Why ?

_____
_____
_____

18. Jan Swart on page 119 says: " It is *not* reasonable to think that I shall be the first of my race to die in bed like a woman."

18.1. Why do you think, does Jan Swart believe that it is "not reasonable" for anyone to think that he would "die in bed like a woman" ?

_____
_____
_____

18.2. Do you agree with his view ?

YES ☐   NO ☐

Why ?

_____
_____
_____

19. When Japie's parents left, he took on his father's responsibilities only.

19.1. Why do you think he did that ?

_____
_____
_____

19.2. If your parent/s (or guardian/s) left you alone at home would you do the same thing ?

               YES ❑   NO ❑

Why ?

_____
_____
_____

THE END

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE ANSWERED EVERY QUESTION

NAVEEN SINGH