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A feminist post-structuralist analysis of an exemplar South African school History text

Jill Fardon and Sonja Schoeman
schoes@unisa.ac.za

A feminist post-structuralist perspective offers an alternative paradigm for the study of gender bias in History texts. It focuses on multiple perspectives and open interpretation, opens up space for female voices of the past and present, and deconstructs realist historical narrative. Our aim in this article is to discuss feminist post-structuralism as an innovative approach to History as a school subject, and to demonstrate its implications for the analysis of school History texts. We seek to identify and expose biases that marginalise women in school History texts and contribute to correcting these. Additionally, we seek to develop new knowledge for understanding gender differences. An example of the empirical application of the feminist post-structuralist perspective is provided. The exemplar text analysed supports masculine historical narrative, using a neutral and naturalising style, and renders women and the feminine meaning invisible. It is suggested that non-traditional forms of writing will help to dislodge the inherent hegemony in History texts and challenge the masculine status quo *in school History texts.*

Keywords: deconstruction; discourse analysis; feminist post-structuralism; gender; History texts; language; open interpretation

Introduction, problem statement and purpose of the study

At the time of writing (2010), gender-fair History teaching in public schools is not an area of urgent concern. To demonstrate how little most learners know about women in History, during school visits conducted by the researchers in 2009 learners were asked to name famous South African women, past or present, excluding those in the fields of sports and entertainment. Within the five-minute timeframe allowed, the learners were able to provide the name of only one historically noteworthy woman (School visits, 2009:personal experience). Twenty-five Grade 9 learners from three previously advantaged secondary schools located on the East Rand in the province of Gauteng were involved in the survey. The sample comprised female and male black, Indian and white learners.

Apple (1992:4,6), Baldwin and Baldwin (1992:110-111), and Chisholm (2003:2) caution that since textbooks are often the only books referred to in History teaching, and may be regarded as truth, they indeed exert considerable influence. These authors suggest that urgent attention needs to be paid to the role of the textbook as a transmitter of gender bias within the context of wider power relations. Sadker (2005:1-12) contends that "learners know little about women because their books tell them little", and articulates the outcome of this shortcoming as follows: "When girls do not see themselves in the pages of textbooks, when teachers do not point out or confront the

omissions, our daughters learn that to be female is to be an absent partner in the development of our nation".

According to Fardon (2007:8), the gender equality imperative as set out in curriculum documents is being sidelined in school History teaching for various reasons, the most significant of which may be the lack of awareness of the constitutive nature of discourse within language in textbooks. She recommends feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis as a means of exploring notions of power in History texts so as to open up space for female voices of the past and present and to deconstruct realist historical narrative. Delaney (2008:54), Marshall (1997:2) and Osler (1994:221-222) conducted similar evaluations of History textbooks for gender partiality and bias, and noted that despite government legislation, sexism remains in much of the material. Barrett (2005:79), Smith-Fullerton (2004:2-3) and Weedon (1997: 3-12) also recommend feminist post-structuralist analysis as a means of identifying the ways in which gender/sex is constituted through discourse practice. According to Baxter (2002:5), feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis is much more than just an effective tool with which to deconstruct the cultural processes responsible for constituting structures of oppression: it provides a way of understanding the world through a rich plurality of voices and perspectives, which may lead to a greater recognition and connection among people who hold competing viewpoints, and ultimately may prompt social and educational transformation.

Against the backdrop of the above discussion, the following research questions were formulated: (a) What new knowledge does feminist post-structuralism bring to the gender debate in History as a school subject? and (b) How does feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis open up space for plural gender interpretation of school History texts? Given these research questions, the study reported on here reviews some of the theories seminal to feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis. More specifically, the utility of these theories for the analysis of an exemplar South African school History text taken from a post-1994 textbook is examined to identify the gender biases that marginalise women in the text and to highlight the current situation with regard to gender fairness. The article ends by offering conclusions and recommendations regarding feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis as alternative paradigm for the study of gender bias in History texts, and as a means to nurture learners' critical awareness of their own and others', often subordinated, position within existing History discourses. Before proceeding further, it is important to clarify what is meant by feminist post-structuralism.

Clarification of the concept of feminist post-structuralism

Many and varied definitions of the concept of post-structuralism exist. In this study the concept refers to "the working of cultural theory in a post-modern context" (Lather, 1991:4). Post-structuralists see no essential connection between the word and its meaning. Therefore, meanings do not exist prior to

events, experiences or discourses; they exist when they are articulated in language (Weedon, 1997:20). What feminism brings to post-structuralism is the ability "to address the question of how social power is exercised and how social relations of gender, class, and race might be transformed" (Weedon, 1997:20). According to Hollingsworth (2006:29), "[f]eminist activist research consciously seeks to break up social silences to make spaces for fracturing the very ideologies that justify power inequalities — *even feminist ideologies*". Inherent in feminist post-structuralism is an attention to issues related to selves and identities. Weedon (1997:20) notes that, "while different forms of poststructuralism vary in both their practice and in their political implications, they share certain fundamental assumptions about language, meaning and subjectivity". Another defining feature of feminist post-structuralism is deconstruction — its intention to set up procedures to demystify structures and open them up to scrutiny and analysis (Barrett, 2005:80).

Method

Literature review

Thomson and Outsuji (2003:186) and Smith-Fullerton (2004:1-2) argue in favour of some sort of textual and discourse analysis in order to explore notions of power in teaching and learning support material, and to expose male control lodged within it. According to Baxter (2002:11), discourse analysis is conducted on two levels, namely that of denotative analysis, which makes close and detailed reference to the evidence, but which is a form of interpretation involving a selection of foci in which certain aspects are highlighted; and connotative analysis, which attempts to weave possible perspectives relating to the material together in relation to gender representation. In some instances the two levels are linked in the analysis process.

The Department of Education (2002:23) suggests springboard questions which relate to textual analysis for gender-fair History teaching in South African public schools. These questions relate to content (what the text is about), structure (what form the text takes), message (what the writer or maker is trying to say), method (how the writer or maker is choosing to say it), time (when the text was produced), situation (what the context or the situation was), reason (why the text was produced and for whom) and meaning (what it can tell about people, places, events and society, and how useful it will be in helping to answer the question asked).

A useful approach that offers a means of deconstructing texts is structuralist narrative analysis of story structure and functions using Todorov's (1977:1-9) structural approach to literary genre, and Propp's (1968:25,74,79-80,81) morphology of the folktale. Todorov (1977:1-9) argues that all stories begin with initial "equilibrium" or *status quo*, at which point any potentially opposing forces are in balance. This equilibrium is then disrupted by some event, "disequilibrium", which sets a series of other events in motion, leading to restored "equilibrium" that closes the story. Propp (1968:25,74,79-80,81) identifies seven character functions and thirty-one narrative functions which

relate to ways in which folktales work. The seven character functions are villain (who struggles against the hero) (1), donor or provider (who provides the magical agent or helper) (2), helper (to the hero) (3), princess and father (who is sought, assigns tasks, etc.) (4), dispatcher (who sends the hero on the task) (5), hero or victim (who reacts to the donor, weds the princess) (6), and false hero (who potentially claims the hero's sphere of action or tries to marry the princess) (7). Those of Propp's (1968:74,79-80,81) narrative functions which are applicable to this study are NF_1 (A member of the family leaves home); NF_2 (A prohibition or rule is imposed on the hero); NF_3 (This prohibition is broken); NF_7 (The villain harms a member of the family); NF_{8a} (A member of the family lacks or desires something); NF_{26} (The task is accomplished); and NF_{27} (The hero is recognised).

Fairclough (1995:55,58,60) recommends textually oriented discourse analysis to compare types of discourse functions, namely, mode, which refers to direct and indirect discourse; boundary maintenance, which refers to ambivalence of voices, that is, separation and merging of primary and secondary discourse; stylisticity and situationality, which refer to the extent to which non-ideational, interpersonal meanings of secondary discourse are represented, and the degree to which the context or situation of secondary discourse is represented; and setting, which refers to the extent to which (illocutionary force) and the ways in which (formulation) the reader's interpretation of secondary discourse is controlled by its placement in textual context or "cotext".

Stitt and Erekson (1988:101-104,106,108-110) suggest six forms of gender bias which they consider problematic in the context of History textbooks. These are "invisibility," which refers to few or no women in texts; "stereotyping," defined as ascriptive of rigid traits based on "selectivity" and "imbalance," which refer to inclusions and exclusions in texts; "unreality," which suggests the ignoring of certain issues; "isolation," described as the inclusion of separate sections to update books politically; and "linguistic bias," which refers to the use of masculine terms which marginalise women as other. Zittleman and Sadker (2003:62) highlight the same forms of gender bias, and include cosmetic bias, which refers to the "illusion of equity" beneath which gender bias persists.

According to Osler (1994:23), text types in relation to gender are conforming when they refer to the general absence of women and the acknowledgement only of prominent or great women; reforming when they refer to women being recognised as disadvantaged and learners are encouraged to consider why this is the case; affirming when they refer to women being studied on their own terms and with regard to their contribution; challenging when they refer to women being a challenge to the existing order of historical knowledge; and transforming when they refer to an examination of the experiences of women and men together.

With the information obtained from the literature review as theoretical foundation, an empirical study surveying the gender representation in an exemplar post-1994 South African school History text was planned.

Empirical study

A qualitative intrinsic case study was conducted to determine the gender representation in a post-1994 South African school History text.

Sampling

The non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to identify the textbook and text sample from the working population. A questionnaire-type letter was sent to 10 FET History teachers at schools chosen randomly in the Pinetown district of the Ethekweni region of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, using the Pinetown District School List. The questionnaire-type letter included three open-ended questions dealing with the FET History teachers' views of textbook utilisation in their schools, namely, Which textbooks are most commonly used in your school?; Which factors influence your school's textbook selection?; and Which aspects are viewed as essential in your school's textbooks? The sample selection was made on the basis of the data returned by the teachers and information gleaned from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education textbook catalogue. Purposive sampling was used to arrive at a textbook sample. The researchers decided to investigate an exemplar text from a textbook that could be used throughout the country, by P Ellis and P Olivier (eds), entitled *Shuters History. Grade 10. Learner's Book*, published in 2005 in Pietermaritzburg by Shuter and Shooter. Systematic sampling was used to select the sample text, which appears on page 259 of the textbook:

What other problems added to the conflict on the eastern frontier? (line 1)
European control of the Cape Colony changed (line 2) hands three times between 1795 and 1806. The (line 3) Dutch were the first to establish a settlement at the (line 4) Cape, as you learnt in Chapter 2. This settlement (line 5) grew to become Cape Town (line 6). In 1795 during the Revolutionary Wars in Europe, (line 7) Britain seized control of the Cape Colony from the (line 8) Dutch, who were allies of the French. In 1803, (line 9) following the signing of a peace treaty between (line 10) Britain and France, Britain returned the Cape (line 11) Colony to the Dutch (line 12). However, in 1806 war broke out again and Britain (line 13) once again seized the Cape. At the end of (line 14) the Napoleonic Wars Britain decided to keep control (line 15) of the Cape and annexed it in 1814 (line 16). These changes in government meant that there was, (line 17) for eleven years, no fixed policy concerning events (line 18) on the eastern frontier and, therefore, firm control (line 19) over the area was difficult to establish. The (line 20) reluctance of both the Dutch and the British (line 21) governments to spend money on the eastern (line 22) frontier also contributed to the problems there (line 23). The lack of unity among the different groups in the (line 24) region also made matters worse. It was not simply a (line 25) matter of White against Black. Many of the Dutch (line 26) frontier farmers resented British rule after 1814 and (line 27) the British authorities' apparent lack of will to (line 28) support them against the Xhosa (line 29). The Xhosa themselves were not united. After the (line 30) death of paramount chief Phalos in 1775 they split (line 31) into three main chiefdoms — the Gcaleka Xhosa (line 32) who lived east of the Kei River, the Ngqika Xhosa (line 33) and the Ndlambe Xhosa who lived west of the Kei (line 34) in the area later known as British Kaffraria (the (line 35) area around present day East London) (line 36). Further complicating this situation was the (line 37) presence of thousands of Mfengu people, who (line 38) were refugees from the Mfecane. They sought (line 39) shelter amongst the Xhosa but later formed into a (line 40) separate group and turned against the Xhosa (line 41).

Did you know? (line 42) There have been three different ways of interpreting the (line 43) history of the Cape frontier (line 44). Traditionally, the Settler school of history has seen eastern (line 45) Cape frontier history in terms of conflict between two (line 46) hostile groups — White and Blacks. Liberal historians (line 47) reinterpreted this period of history and emphasized instead, (line 48) the peaceful co-operation and coexistence of the two main (line 49) frontier groups (line 50). Revisionist historians have accepted that, although conflict (line 51) was basic to the situation, other aspects deserve attention, (line 52) for example, cross-racial agreements or the banding (line 53) together of classes across racial lines. They point out that the (line 54) different groups formed a system of relationships whereby (line 55) they were able to interact with one another to maintain a (line 56) balance of "*no war — no peace*" (line 57).

Document study

A detailed feminist post-structuralist analysis of the gender representation in the above text was conducted, drawing on the approaches of Baxter (2002:11), Fairclough (1995:55,58,60), Osler (1994:23), Propp (1968:25,78,79-88), Stitt and Erekson (1998:101-104,106,108-110,111), Todorov (1977:1-9) and Zittleman and Sadker (2003:62). A data collection instrument was used to capture the data. Categories on the data collection instrument relating to the Department of Education's (2002:23) springboard questions dealing with content, structure, message, method, time, situation, reason, meaning and significance were used to categorise, summarise, file and count the data. The data were captured on the data collection instrument using the line reference method. This study does not assume objectivity, and is small scale. Feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis is space consuming, and in order to provide a discourse analysis of sufficient complexity, interest and depth, an article of this length can do justice to no more than a limited sample.

Results

The data relating to the analysis of the gender representation in the exemplar text are provided in Table 1.

An analysis of the content of the text revealed that the overall gender representation in terms of the incidence of females (F_1) and males (M_1) is (#) (F_1)0 (M_1)5, and incidence of occupations and activities associated with females (F_2) and males (M_2) is (#) (F_2)0 (M_2) (D)40 (C)24. A denotative (D) analysis of the incidence of females (F) and males (M) in the text revealed that no reference was made to female characters, but that reference was made to five male characters. A denotative (D) analysis of the incidence of occupations and activities associated with females (F_2) and males (M_2) indicated that the activities associated with males only were centred. A connotative (C) analysis of the incidence of occupations and activities associated with females (F) and males (M) indicated invisibility in terms of females and emphasis on male attributes linked to masculine activity.

An analysis of the structure of the text revealed that the overall gender representation in terms of narrative structure (NS) is (#) (EQ_1)0, (DISEQ)25, (EQ_2)4. A denotative (D) and connotative (C) analysis of the (NS) suggested that (EQ_1)0 (not represented here) is disturbed by 25 incidences of (DISEQ).

Table 1 Data relating to the analysis of gender representation in the exemplar text

CONTENT	1	Incidence of females (F) and males (M)	F_1=0 M_1=5
	2	Incidence of occupations and activities associated with females (F) and males (M)	F_2=0 M_2=(D)40 (C)24
STRUCTURE	1	Incidence of use of narrative structure (NS): initial equilibrium (EQ_1), disequilibrium (DISEQ), restored equilibrium (EQ_2) in relation to gender	NS= (EQ_1)0; (DISEQ)25; (EQ_2)4
	2	Incidence of use of character functions (CF) and narrative functions (NF) in relation to gender	CF= (CF_1)13; (CF_2)11; (CF_3)2; (CF_4)21; (CF_5)5; (CF_6)4; (CF_7)0 NF=(NF_1)20; (NF_2)8; (NF_3)4; (NF_7)10; (NF_{8a})16; (NF_{26})3; (NF_{27})3
	3	Incidence of modes of representation: direct discourse (DD), indirect discourse (ID), indirect discourse (ID) slipping into direct discourse (DD), secondary discourse (SD) appearing unsignalled (UNSIG) in primary discourse (PD) in relation to gender	DD=0 ID=57 ID-DD=0 SD UNSIG PD=0
	4	Incidence of boundary maintenance (BM) in relation to gender	BM=0
	5	Incidence of setting with regard to stylisticity (STY) in relation to gender	STY=0
	6	Incidence of setting with regard to situationality (SIT) in relation to gender	SIT=20
	7	Incidence of types of setting such as illocutionary force (IF) and formulation (FO) in relation to gender	IF=9; FO=14
MESSAGE	1	Incidence of gender inequity (INEQ)	INEQ=21
	2	Incidence of gender equity (EQ)	EQ=0
METHOD	1	Incidence of forms of gender bias	
		• Invisibility (INV)	INV=21
		• Stereotyping (STE)	STE=21
		• Selectivity (SE) and imbalance (IM)	SE=21; IM=21
		• Unreality (UNR)	UNR=21
		• Fragmentation (FR) and isolation (IS)	FR=5/0; IS=0
		• Linguistic bias (LINB)	LINB=21
		• Cosmetic bias (COSB)	COSB=0

Table 1 Continued

TIME	The past (PAS) The present (PRES)	PAS=21 PRES=23
SITUATION	Social/Cultural (SOCUL) situation Economic (ECON) situation Political (POL) situation	SOCUL=36 (D)18 (C)18 ECON=13 POL=20
REASON	Reason (REAS) for production of the text in relation to gender Audience (AUD) targeted in relation to gender	REAS=21 AUD=23
MEANING	Gender meaning in relation to • People (PEO) • Places (PLA) • Events (EVE) • Society (SOCI)	 PEO=18 (D)9 (C)9 PLA=48 (D)24 (C) 24 EVE=17 (D)12 (C) 5 SOCI=88 (D) 44 (C)44
SIGNIFICANCE	Text type in relation to gender equality • Confirming (CON) • Reforming (REF) • Affirming (AFF) • Challenging (CHA) • Transforming (TRAN)	 CON=√ REF= AFF= CHA= TRAN=

The 4 incidences of (EQ_2) centred on patriarchal power and meaning making. The overall gender representation in terms of character functions (CF) is (#) (CF_1)13, (CF_2)11, (CF_3)2, (CF_4)21, (CF_5)5, (CF_6)4, (CF_7)0. A denotative (D) and connotative (C) analysis of (CF) revealed that (CF_1)13, villain, belongs to masculine historical narrative stated matter of factly in an informative style, and women are invisible. The information concerning (CF_2)11, donor or provider, is offered in a neutral tone, resulting in concealment of gendering of messages. (CF_3)2, helper, belongs to masculine historical narrative and women are invisible. (CF_4)21, princess and father, is presented in an informative neutral style within masculine power, which renders feminine meaning invisible. (CF_5)5, dispatcher, belongs to masculine historical narrative and feminine meaning is invisible. (CF_6)4, hero or victim, is presented in a neutral style and supports normalisation rather than gendering of historical narrative. (CF_7)0, false hero, is not presented.

The overall gender representation in terms of narrative function (NF) is (#) (NF_1)20, (NF_2)8, (NF_3)4, (NF_7)10, (NF_{8a})16, (NF_{26})3, (NF_{27})3. A denotative (D) and connotative (C) analysis of (NF) revealed that (NF_1)20, a member of the family leaves home, centres masculine historical narrative and ignores female connotations altogether. (NF_2), a prohibition or rule is imposed on the hero, is male-centred and emphasises patriarchal power politics. (NF_3)4, the prohibition is broken, is male-centred and emphasises patriarchal meaning. (NF_7)10, the victim unknowingly helps the villain by being deceived or influenced by the villain, supports patriarchal ideology in that female connotations are excluded, unless it is possible to establish a tenuous semantic link with the words "peaceful cooperation" and "co-existence" in # lines 49 to 50 as in submission in "like women". (NF_{8a})16, a member of the family lacks or desires something, centres masculine dominance and excludes meaning relating to women completely. (NF_{26})3, the task is accomplished, although still centring male meaning, offers alternative points of view. (NF_{27})3, the hero is recognised, presents an alternative view, but is seen as operating within male power relations.

The overall gender representation in terms of modes of representation is (#) (DD)0, (ID)57, (ID-DD)0, (SD UNSIG PD)0. A denotative (D) and connotative (C) analysis revealed that (DD)0 does not appear within the text. (ID)57 inheres in the entire text in a neutral style that naturalises male power relations. Consequently, (ID-DD)0 and (SD UNSIGN PD)0 do not inhere within this text. (BM)0 does not inhere within this text because all the written information is of the secondary discourse type, centring male meaning. Setting with regard to (STY)0 does not inhere in the text. Setting with regard to (SIT) 20 inheres throughout the main text in relation to masculine power relations, and centres male meaning, rendering women invisible. Types of setting such as (IF)9 and (FO)14 inhere in the main and inset texts in masculine words and context, and centre masculine power relations.

An analysis of the message of the text revealed that the overall gender representation in terms of message is (#) (INEQ)21, (EQ)0. A denotative (D) and connotative (C) analysis of the text revealed that as far as (INEQ)21 is concerned, this text is contextualised within masculine or patriarchal meaning in its entirety, leaving no space for the female voice. Thus, (EQ) does not inhere within the text.

An analysis of the method of the text revealed that the overall gender representation in the text in terms of method is (#) (INV)21, (STE)21, (SE)21, (IM)21, (UNR)21, (FR)5/0, (IS)0, (LINB)21, (COSB)0. A denotative and connotative analysis of the text revealed female (INV)21 with regard to language use to present a patriarchal perspective. The entire text supports masculine meaning despite its matter-of-fact, naturalising tone and its presentation of alternative views. (STE)21 does appear to inhere within the text because the masculine understanding represented within this historical discourse typically excludes feminine meaning alongside that of males. (SE)21 and (IM)21 inhere within the text in terms of masculine meaning, thus creating one-sided

gender representation. (UNR)21 inheres throughout the text because of its masculine bias. Despite the neutral style in which the discourse is couched, females and their activities are excluded, which skews the gender representation completely. (FR)5/0 inheres in terms of the inset text and refers directly to the main text, since it offers information with regard to alternative masculine perspectives. Feminine perspectives are not directly referred to. The data count for fragmentation therefore appears as 5/0 (5 sentences within the inset text and no fragmentation of the masculine agenda). In terms of the masculine agenda discussed above, (IS)0 is not present within the gender representation of this text. (LINB)21 inheres in the main and inset texts. Masculine ideological meaning is supported by the matter-of-fact, neutral style seeking to conceal women's invisibility in terms of their contributions alongside those of men. (COSB)0 does not inhere in this text, since no reference to women can be found; the conclusion is drawn that this dishonest method of production, which seeks to appear to empower women, does not inhere within this text.

An analysis of the time of the text indicated that the overall gender representation in the text in terms of time is # (PAS)21, (PRES)23. A denotative (D) and connotative (C) analysis of the text revealed that the main and inset texts have been written in the present about the past, and the information about the past is offered in a neutral style. The present discursive textual representation supports patriarchal historical understanding.

An analysis of the situation of the text revealed that the overall gender representation in the text in terms of situation is # (SOCUL)39 (D)18 (C)18, (ECON)13, (POL)20. A denotative (D) analysis of the text revealed that the (SOCUL)18 situation within which the gender representation is couched relates to the relationships on the eastern frontier within the context of foreign governmental changes in the 18th and 19th centuries, and to historical interpretations thereof. A connotative (C) analysis of the (SOCUL)18 situation revealed support for patriarchal power relations in that the neutral style not only fails to question the lack of female inclusion, but also fails to include females and female meaning alongside males and male meaning. A denotative (D) analysis of the (ECON)13 situation inheres in conjunction with the (POL) 20 situation. A connotative (C) analysis of the (ECON) and (POL) situations revealed masculine representation which renders women invisible despite its naturalised information-giving tone.

An analysis of the text in terms of reason revealed that the overall gender representation in terms of the reason for and audience of the text is # (REAS) 21, (AUD)23. A denotative (D) and connotative (C) analysis of the text revealed that the reason for the production of the text is to provide information; it is an information-giving resource. It seems reasonable to argue that the naturalised representation of the text serves to conceal support for masculine meaning to the exclusion of females. Since this text is part of a school History textbook for Grade 10 learners, the (AUD)23 of the text is the learners and the educators who will guide the learners in their use of the text as a context via

which the learning outcomes and assessment standards can be achieved.

An analysis of the text in terms of meaning revealed that the overall gender representation in terms of the meaning of the text is (#) (PEO)18 (D)9 (C)9, (PLA)48 (D)24 (C)24, (EVE)17 (D)12 (C)5, SOCI(88) (D)44 (C)44. A denotative (D) analysis in relation to (PEO)9 revealed a framing of the story within far wider power relations that existed in the 18th and 19th centuries. With regard to the connotative (C) analysis, it may be argued that the text purports neutrality and naturalisation in terms of patriarchal meaning. Gender meaning in relation to people contextualised within this text probably refers to males, since male meaning is dominant throughout the discourse. A denotative (D) analysis in relation to (PLA)24 revealed a framing of the story within the far wider power relations that existed in the 18th and 19th centuries. A connotative (C) analysis in relation to (PLA)24 revealed that the places exist in terms of the context (social, economic, cultural, political) within which the places are situated. All the places mentioned are supportive of male centring in that masculine meaning is omnipresent within this textual discourse in terms of the focal historical period.

A denotative (D) analysis of (EVE)12 revealed that various events are embedded within the main text. A connotative (C) analysis of (EVE)5 revealed that the fact-providing nature of most of the main text consists of events that occurred at the time, supports the normalisation of male power relations, and exposes binarisms, exclusions and normalisation as strategies used within the text. All the events are contextualised within male-centred historical understanding. A denotative (D) analysis of the information in the inset text revealed different views about historical events. A connotative (C) analysis of the inset text revealed that the reader is encouraged to adopt a more open-ended interpretation, but that the historical understanding continues to support masculine power relations. A denotative (D) and connotative (C) analysis of (SOCI)44 (D)24 (C)24 revealed the permeation of the text by patriarchal language through the use of vocabulary oriented towards western, masculine societal concepts. A denotative (D) analysis in terms of (SOCI)24 revealed that the gender meaning represented by the language used (a connotative (C) analysis) ignores the issues of male exploitation and female contribution, and therefore selections in terms of gender-biased reference to (SOCI) are present within the text.

The significance of the text in the context of gender equality is that it falls within the conforming (CON) category. The language and seemingly neutral style in which the discursive gender representation is couched fall within masculine meaning that ignores women, and supports opposition between the masculine and the feminine.

Discussion

From the feminist post-structuralist analysis of the gender representation in the selected exemplar text, it became clear that power relations are embedded in it. The text falls within Osler's (1995:23) conforming category, with a gene-

ral absence of women within the discursive representation of the text, and supports patriarchal meaning making. In the content of the text there is no reference to female characters or female occupations or activities. The text is about males and masculine activities and occupations — the average count reveals 5 incidences of male characters and 64 incidences of male occupations and activities.

The structure of the text employs mainstream narrative structure and character and narrative functions in relation to gender. Disequilibrium (DISEQ) sets a series of events in motion, leading to restored equilibrium (EQ) that controls the discursive representation in the text and supports male power relations in terms of the narrative structure — the average count is 25 and 4 instances, respectively. Realist character functions (CF) and narrative functions (NF) inhere within the discursive representation of the text, and all of the character functions (CF) and narrative functions (NF) support masculine meaning — the average count is 56 and 64 instances respectively.

A textually oriented discourse analysis was applied to the exemplar text. The types of discourse functions in the text were compared, and the linguistic structural elements relating to modes of representation and setting with regard to the discursive representation in the text revealed an average count of 57 instances of indirect discourse (ID) of a secondary type that naturalises male power relations. However, the masculine public sphere supports words selected to express the content effectively. The average count for the incidence of setting with regard to situationality (SIT) in relation to gender is 20 instances. The reader's interpretation of the (SD) is controlled by masculine words and contexts and centred power relations; women are invisible. The average count for the incidence of types of setting such as illocutionary force (IF) and formulation (FO) in relation to gender is 9 and 14 instances, respectively.

With regard to the representational method of the text, skewed gender power relations are inherent to the point of rendering female meaning invisible. The text employs forms of masculine gender bias which include invisibility (INV) in an average of 21 instances, fragmentation (FR) in an average of 5 instances, and stereotyping (STE), selectivity (SE) and imbalance (IM) in an average of 21 instances, respectively. Unreality (UNR) and linguistic bias (LINB) are present in an average of 21 instances, respectively. All of the discursive representational methods favour masculine (mainstream) meaning. The message of the text represents skewed gender power relations in a way that obscures women altogether — inequity (INEQ) is evident in an average of 21 instances.

The time of the discursive representation relates to past (PAS) dominance of male power relations and targets (via introductions and questions) present (PRES) readers. The average number of instances is 21 and 23, respectively. The past social/cultural (SOCUL), economic (ECON) and political (POL) situatedness of the text which relates to people, places, events and society is conveyed in a naturalised style (even in the case of alternative masculine perspectives) within masculine historical narrative and is dominated by patri-

archal power assumptions relating to public and private spheres which marginalise females to the point of invisibility. The average count is people (PEO) 18 instances, places (PLA) 48 instances, events (EVE) 17 instances and society (SOCI) 88 instances. The reason (REAS) for the production of the text is viewed as the offering of information, within a gender political context, the target audience (AUD) being learners studying History at Grade 10 level in South African public schools.

Even this single sample provides a reason for arguing that historical discursive representation relating to Grade 10 school History texts is still at odds with South Africa's gender equality imperative. The exemplar text supports masculine historical narrative, using a neutral and naturalising style, and renders women and feminine meaning invisible. It would appear that school History textbook producers in South Africa are lagging behind with regard to gender-fair content.

Conclusion and recommendations

In the study reported on here we analysed the gender representation inscribed in the exemplar South African school History text using feminist post-structuralist analysis. The feminist post-structuralist position was found to be useful as theoretical foundation because it allowed us to generate questions on the basis of which to examine the gender representation in a school History text and then to articulate observations about social relations as a whole. We thus marshalled feminist post-structuralism as "a mode of knowledge production which uses post-structuralist theories of language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions to understand existing power relations and to identify areas and strategies for change" (Weedon, 1997:40).

Nolan (2004:22) suggests that non-traditional forms of writing will help to dislodge the inherent hegemony in texts, with Dalton and Rotundo (2000: 1715-1720) having proposed that feminising historical content in History textbooks is a vital step in this regard. During the latter process, strategies of deconstruction of mainstream content could play a pivotal role in raising the awareness of learners. Smith-Fullerton (2004:2-3) recommends an open-interpretation (feminist post-structuralist) approach, where learners, in order to analyse and develop critical perspectives relating to representations of gender in school texts, need to see, hear and feel exposed to gender-biased material as a way of making make them examine and foreground their complicity as well as their own (possible) victimisation (Smith-Fullerton, 2004:15). Learners must then articulate their positions on the material in a meaningful manner. Through articulating their points of view, learners will understand that power is not something that can merely be appropriated and maintained by people at the top of a rigid hierarchical system. Instead, power comes to be understood as something which can be exercised by people and institutions at many levels in a social system (Smith-Fullerton, 2004:16).

With the above in mind, this study recommends a feminist pedagogy-practice approach to promote gender-fair History teaching in South African public schools. Such an approach would entail two components: feminist pe-

dagogy, which aims to feminise discussion of the historical content of a text; and feminist practice (a feminist post-structuralist approach), which aims to deconstruct mainstream content through increasing the gender awareness of learners.

According to Luke and Gore (2002:8), feminist pedagogy has emerged from a growing discontent with the patriarchy of schooling; these authors draw attention to the absence of gender as a category of interest or analysis in most pedagogical theory, including those discourses that have proclaimed themselves to be progressive and critical. The twin goals of feminist pedagogy are to provide learners with the skills to continue to promote gender fairness once their education is deemed complete, and to provide an alternative educational experience to those conventionally on offer (Weiler, 1994:456). As a means of introducing and promoting feminist pedagogy among History curriculum developers, teacher educators and teachers in South Africa, the researchers propose a gender conference intended to provide a forum for the identification and exploration of gender questions and issues particularly pertinent to teacher education; to secure a place for values questions involving gender and sexuality within the teacher education curriculum; to create a safe space where the full range of student voices can emerge, and, if necessary, challenge one another; to outline the principles upon which feminist pedagogy are based; and to determine the kinds of practical outcomes that are likely to arise from feminist pedagogy pertaining to History education. The outcomes of the conference should be the starting point for discussion in a variety of educational settings and cultural contexts.

The feminist post-structuralist approach has the potential to provide learners with the tools to detect gender bias in a text and reconstitute the text in terms of its gender meaning. A feminist post-structuralist teaching strategy might include the following: If the knowledge focus area were the **transformations in South Africa, 1750 to 1850**, and the lesson topic **the migration into the interior, 1750 to 1850**, the facilitator could read an extract to the learners from the book *Frontiers. The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* by N Mostert. This could be followed by a class discussion of the role of the British army on the eastern frontier, the decapitation of the Xhosa king, Hintsa, and the devastating conditions after 1818. The facilitator could then distribute a handout containing the following text from the textbook entitled *Shuters History. Grade 10. Learner's Book* by P Ellis and P Olivier (eds), published in 2005 by Shuter and Shooter, pages 268 to 269.

SOURCE A (line 1)

Smith's own horse at that point was racing too wildly (line 2) to round easily, but George Southey and the other (line 3) guides had caught up. "Shoot, George", and (line 4) he shouted back. Southey fired (line 5) and hit Hintsa in the left leg. The Chief stumbled, but (line 6) got to his feet again. Smith, galloping back, yelled, (line 7) "Be damned to you, shoot again!", Southey fired, and (line 8) Hintsa pitched forward. But once more he struggled (line 9) to his feet, and managed to reach thick cover along (line 10) the banks of the river. (line 11) Southey and Smith's aide-de-camp, Lieutenant (line 12) Paddy Balfour, went down to the river, followed by (line 13) others.

Southey was climbing over a rock when (line 14) an assegai struck the surface close by. Turning he (line 15) saw Hintsa in the water, submerged except for his head. (line 16) A Khoikhoi trooper wading through the river had also (line 17) spotted the chief, who then stood up and called out (line 18) several times in Xhosa, "Mercy." George Southey, who (line 19) spoke Xhosa fluently, took aim and fired, shattering (line 20) Hintsa's head and scattering his brains and skull (line 21) fragments over the bank. (line 22) Southey was first beside the body and quickly took (line 23) Hintsa's brass ornaments for himself. As the others (line 24) gathered around, they grabbed for what was left of (line 25) Hintsa's beads and bracelets. George Southey or his (line 26) brother William cut off one of Hintsa's ears and someone (line 27) else took the other ear. Assistant Surgeon Ford of the (line 28) 72nd Highlanders was seen trying to extract some of (line 29) the Chief's teeth. "This was a very wrong and barbarous (line 30) thing to do, but we did not think so at the time." Another (line 31) Provisional Captain, William Gilfillan, did not want for the (line 32) far future to regard it all as bestial. That night he (line 33) expressed in his diary his regret that some had allowed (line 34) "their insatiable thirst of possessing a relic of so great a (line 35) man to get the better of their humanity and better feeling, (line 36) which teaches us not to trample on a fallen foe." (line 37).

The facilitator could explain the concepts of gender, patriarchy and the feminist post-structuralist approach to the learners; this could be followed by a discussion of text analysis as a means to determine the gender representation in the text. The practical application of the symbols (D) denotative (dictionary meaning of words), # (number), (F) female, and (M) male would be provided.

The learners in partner pairs would read the text. They would then begin the gender deconstruction of the text by reflecting on the reason for reading the text; by skim reading the text, focusing on headings, and by reading parts of the text; by taking note of the structure of the text; and by re-reading the text for a "deeper reading". The learners would then answer the following questions: What is the text about? What are the content, situation and location of the text? They would then identify and count the incidences of females (F) and males (M) in the text by analysing each of the numbered lines for the denotative meaning (D) of the words. The results of the denotative analysis would be presented as follows: Smith (# lines 2, 5, 7, 12); George Southey/ George/you/Southey/he/himself (# lines 3, 4, 5, 8, 12, 14, 15, 19, 23, 24, 26), and so on. The total number of incidences of females and males in all the lines of the text is presented as: (Total (#) (F)0 (M)56). The conclusion to be drawn is that the denotative analysis of Source A in terms of incidence of females (F) and males (M) revealed no females, and that the number of males named in one way or another is 56.

Finally, the learners, in groups of 3, could compile a report with regard to gender representation past and present, focusing on gender and race representation in early and later colonial society; the impact of such representation on women's identity; and the ways in which patriarchal gender bias could be resisted. The reporter of each group would read her/his group's response to the class as a whole, and a comprehensive discussion would follow.

We have demonstrated feminist post-structuralism as an alternative paradigm for the study of gender bias in school History texts. It is hoped that the results of this study may prompt curriculum developers, teacher educators and teachers to incorporate this into curriculum policy documents, teacher

education modules and learning and teaching support material for classroom use with a view to identifying and explaining bias that marginalises women in school History texts, to putting women back into history, and to avoiding the practice of filler feminism.

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Authors

Jill Fardon, formerly subject advisor for Social Sciences in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, teaches English as a second language. Her research focus is on education feminism, history didactics, and teacher education.

Sonja Schoeman is Professor in the Department of Teacher Education at the University of South Africa. Her research focus is on education feminism, history and social sciences didactics, and teacher education.